

## "Saffron Crocus and Yellow Garments in Aegean Wall-Painting"

PAUL REHAK  
DEPARTMENT OF CLASSICS  
UNIVERSITY OF KANSAS

### Abstract:

The discovery of well-preserved frescoes at Akrotiri on Thera has vastly expanded our awareness of the importance of color in Aegean Bronze Age costumes (C. Doumas, *The Wall-Paintings of Thera*, 1992, for good illustrations). Yellow dye, derived from saffron crocus, is particularly important in women's clothing at different stages in life, and some of these garments are further embellished with embroidered or printed crocus blossoms. By contrast, only one representation survives of a man wearing a yellow kilt.

This paper explores the significance of color in early Greek costume as a means of communicating inclusion/exclusion; among women, clothes dyed yellow or decorated with crocus may signal the owner's participation in special rites or membership within special groups. Furthermore, the creation of such specialized clothing represents a means of transmitting social and craft skills from one generation to the next. The use of colored clothing as a type of visual language is well attested in other cultures and time periods; such comparisons help elucidate the ways in which Aegean costumes may have functioned.

The gendered nature of the color yellow survives the transition from Bronze to Iron Age. In later periods of Greek culture, yellow continues to be an appropriate female color (e.g., the *krokotos* worn by the girls who served Artemis at Brauron). For males, it carries negative connotations (Jason's cloak in Pindar; Darius' shoes in Aeschylus; garments of effeminate politicians in Aristophanes) or signals sexual "otherness" (Dionysos' saffron tunic in the Pompe of Ptolemy II).

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Text:

### INTRODUCTION

In most human societies, both ancient to modern, color in costume serves to communicate and reinforce social, economic, religious, political, and even age and gender roles. Most of us are familiar with the use in many countries and cultures of black to express mourning, white as a symbol of virginity in marriage, khaki or navy for military uniforms, and gold and purple as symbols of royalty. Pink and blue have been used in the western world to connote femininity or masculinity, and until fairly recently in Greece, red was a color deemed inappropriate for males to wear. In the context of this conference on Colours in Antiquity, I would like to focus on my recent research into the gendered significance of saffron yellow dye in the prehistoric Aegean cultures of Crete and the Cyclades, with some attention to its continued use in historical times in the Greek world. Because Aegean frescoes show saffron cultivation as an activity restricted to women, I will suggest that the color yellow also emphasized inclusion/exclusion.

### BACKGROUND

During the first century of Aegean archaeology, roughly 1870-1970, relatively little was known for certain about prehistoric Greek costume. Actual examples of cloth and clothing have a poor survival rate in the Greek world, and most of our evidence came from sources like terracotta figurines, representations of the human figure in metalwork, and the scrappy and incomplete fresco paintings that survived from palatial sites like Knossos on Crete, and Mycenae, Tiryns, Pylos and Thebes on the mainland. After World War II, our information was supplemented by the decipherment of Linear B, and by the increasing attention paid to the material evidence for textile manufacture at archaeological sites. It was only with the beginning of the excavations at Akrotiri on Thera in the 1970s, however, that well-preserved buildings with relatively complete fresco decoration came to light. It is no exaggeration to say that the Thera paintings have revolutionized our understanding of prehistoric textiles, their colors, and meaning. **[plan site]** Three buildings at Akrotiri have produced megalographic paintings that depict colored costume. These include the structures imaginatively called the West House, the House of the Ladies, and Xeste 3.

## XESTE 3

Xeste 3 is a large, freestanding building partially constructed of ashlar block; details of its architecture suggest that it may have had a public function. Several of the compositions that decorated its walls establish a link between the cultivation of saffron crocus, the use of its stigmas or stamens to produce yellow dye, and activities that involve women at all stages in their lives.

Two walls of an upper floor room depict four prepubescent girls picking crocus blossoms with their stigmas and gathering them in baskets. In the color convention used in Aegean art, plants have yellow, not green, leaves, while the blossoms were painted a fugitive pale purple which has often faded or turned gray; finally, the natural yellow stigmas are represented as blood red, the color that they assume only when dried. Nevertheless, the importance of the crocus plants is emphasized by their depiction as a repeating background pattern reminiscent of a wallpaper design. One of the girls empties the contents of her pail into a pannier at the foot of a platform; on a higher step a blue monkey offers the stigmas to an enthroned goddess, who is also attended by a winged griffin tied up with a red leash.

Two of the girls wear costumes that include yellow, while two others have aprons embroidered or woven with patterns of stylized crocus stigmas. The elaborately clad goddess wears a costume in two shades of blue, but her bodice is painted and bordered with repeating patterns of crocus blossoms and stigmas; underscoring this association as a crocus blossom draped over one ear, hanging next to her cheek.

An adjacent wall on the upper floor depicts several mature women in procession. These individuals have their hair bound in kerchiefs or snoods and wear a fluffy mantle draped diagonally over one shoulder. All carry bouquets of flowers, but one woman is draped in a red mantle over a sheer yellow bodice covered with crocus blossoms and stigmas. In addition, she wears a crocus blossom over one ear (like the goddess), and she also carries a bucket like the flower gathering girls in the other composition -- perhaps she too served as a crocus gatherer in her youth.

Room 3 on the ground floor has been subdivided into compartments by pier and door partitions (*polythyra*), a feature that allowed parts of ceremonial rooms to be opened up or closed off from view. One compartment, a sunken pit or "lustral basin" is set into the northeast corner of the ground floor room 3, approached by a short flight of steps. The two walls above it are painted with a Minoan-style shrine facade and a composition of three women in a rocky landscape that includes crocuses. The function of "lustral basins" has received much attention, but no consensus has been reached; they are evidently not bathrooms since they lack drains, and because they have flights of steps they were obviously meant to be entered. Some have a low

balustrade along one side, evidently so observers could watch from above: thus the basis were settings for spectacle.

The shrine facade painted on one wall is surmounted by the so-called "horns of consecration" which probably represent a stylized mountain peak rather than animal horns. Extraordinarily, the horns are streaked red. These streaks were first interpreted as drops of blood, but a recent examination suggests instead that they are coated with saffron stigmas. Set in the painted facade below is a pair of door panels, likewise streaked with stigmas and carrying a design of red lily flowers.

[This facade is reminiscent of the peak sanctuary carved in low relief on the impressive stone "Sanctuary Rhyton" from Zakros in east Crete. That shrine is set in a mountainous landscape which also includes rockwork with crocus, wild goats (*agrimia*), and birds, but no human figures. The shrine painting on the lustral basin wall, however, suggests that the observer is located out of doors in a mountain setting, not in a sunken pit. Perhaps the floor of the lustral basin can be equated with the courtyard in front of the shrine as represented on the stone vase.]

On one of the lustral basin walls, we see three female figures: these include, from left to right, a woman swinging a necklace, a seated woman with a bleeding foot, and a girl on tiptoe enveloped in a yellow veil spotted with red. The Necklace Swinger and seated Wounded Woman have similar long coiffures, firm chins, shallow breasts, and ankle-length skirts that indicate that they are fully pubescent and sexually mature, about 14-16 years of age. By contrast, the shorter, slighter Veiled Girl to right is still in early pubescence, age 12-14: since she extends both arms in front of her we cannot see her chest, but her short, calf-length skirt and partially shaved head with a few long locks indicate that she is not yet an adult.

A shared groundline and close physical proximity link the Wounded Woman and Veiled Girl and locate them in the open area before the shrine facade; the Necklace Swinger stands apart at a lower level, as if approaching the sanctuary with an offering of jewelry. The similarity in physiognomy and hairstyle link the Necklace Swinger and Wounded Woman, but their differences in costume and jewelry clearly distinguish the one from the other.

Several features call attention to the Wounded Woman in this composition: she is located near the center of the scene, she is much larger in scale than the others, and she is framed by the rockwork on which she sits and by pendant rockwork which hangs from the top of the scene like a canopy. Since she is the only one so framed, she seems isolated from the other two figures.

Seated figures in Aegean art are often goddesses or important individuals, but the posture of the Wounded Woman is unique: she appears to have her right leg crossed over the left knee, and she leans forward slightly. She rests her head against the palm of her left hand, and extends the right arm toward her foot, the sole of which is elevated slightly above the groundline. Red streaks of blood stream from the underside of the foot toward a single large crocus blossom

underneath it. It is not clear whether the young woman is reaching to touch her bleeding foot or to pick up the blossom, but since this flower is not attached to a plant and simply hangs in space, it must serve as a sign or symbol standing for or referring to something else, and perhaps carries a multiplicity of associations.

In addition to the unique pose, the Wounded Woman has an unusual costume and jewelry. Along with her blouse which is open to reveal the chest, she wears a draped but untied apron with lappets that somewhat recall the dangling strands of a hula skirt. In historical times, the loosened belt can be a reference to impending childbirth, but the Wounded Woman's abdomen is slim and flat, indicating that she is not pregnant. The form of the apron also recalls that of the prehistoric "string skirt" which Elizabeth Barber has noted was used in many early European societies to advertise sexual maturity, readiness for marriage, and sexual activity.

As in the scenes from the upper floor, the lustral basin painting makes repeated reference to saffron and crocus. The bodices of the Necklace Swinger and the Veiled Girl are patterned with crocus blossoms and stigmas, and their aprons carry the pattern of stylized stigmas. The costumes of all three women in the scene include yellow, and the diaphanous yellow wrap of the Veiled Girl is surely saffron dyed. (Its red dots could be woven or stamped, but sewn cornelian beads would probably be too heavy for such light cloth). The central Wounded Woman sits on a rocky outcrop with clumps of crocus, she wears a unique apron decorated with a repeating pattern of crocus buds, and her bleeding foot is raised over a single large crocus flower that is not attached to a plant -- it must therefore serve as a sign or symbol connected with the shedding of female blood.

Inevitably, the rich and complex decorative scheme of Xeste 3 has attracted the efforts of numerous interpreters, including Nanno Marinatos, Suzanne Amigues, Ellen Davis, and others. Recently, I have summarized these and offered my own: that Xeste 3 was a building devoted to the celebration of women's rites at all stages of life, and that the cultivation and medicinal use of saffron was central to the decoration of the building. But before returning to the issue of interpretation, I would like to examine several other compositions at Akrotiri.

## THE HOUSE OF THE LADIES

At the northern end of the excavated area at Akrotiri stands the so-called House of the Ladies. One painted composition from this building has been reconstructed as a robing scene involving at least three women. Two of these wear saffron colored robes with borders of contrasting colors. A third woman wears a white robe, and prepares to assist one of the others in putting on a ceremonial apron of the type seen in other depictions: the garment was tied around the waist and secured with strings. Attention has been drawn to the white-robed woman because

of the unusual depiction of her pendulous breast with pronounced nipple, which might suggest an attempt by the artist to suggest that she is lactating.

One of the yellow-clad women is only partially preserved, and Nanno Marinatos has restored her as a seated figure. In a recent paper, however, Suzanne Petersen Murray has suggested that this reconstruction is incorrect, and proposes that the fragmentary woman is standing. This proposal makes better sense of the evidence, since it would be difficult to wrap an apron around the waist of a seated figure, but it does not clarify who the third figure is -- woman, priestess, or goddess. Nevertheless, the presence of saffron yellow garments in the scene is noteworthy.

## THE WEST HOUSE

A third building that has produced a yellow-clad figure is the West House at Akrotiri. Much of the scholarly discussion of the building has centered around the iconography and reconstruction of the famous Ship Fresco. Room 5 on the upper floor, however, included a panel painting of a young girl who wears a fringed yellow mantle draped diagonally over a blue and white costume. Other details of this figure are also unusual: she has a partially shaved head with a single long serpentine lock of hair, a red-tinted ear, and a large round earring. In her left hand she holds a small vessel, perhaps a brazier or thurible which contains red-painted objects (coals?). Her right hand sprinkles yellow-red strands which might represent saffron stigmas over the top of the vessel.<sup>1</sup>

## OTHER AEGEAN SITES

The Thera evidence allows us to reconsider the evidence for colored costumes at other Aegean sites. The depiction of crocus flowers and buds is not restricted to Thera art. Crocus is a popular decoration on Neopalatial pottery on Thera and Crete. At Akrotiri, crocus buds also occur as pendants on a garland decorating the rigging of a ship from the Miniature Fresco of the West House, on one of the stern cabins from the same building, and as an element on a jewelry

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<sup>1</sup> The notion that the girl is burning saffron was first proposed by L. Morgan. For recent discussion of the possibilities, see I. Papageorgiou, "On the Rites de Passage in Late Cycladic Akrotiri, Thera: A Reconsideration of the Frescoes of the 'Priestess' and the 'Fishermen' of the West House," Thera Painting Conf. II, 958-69. Her suggestion that the girl pours saffron onto the coals from a stone ladle seems implausible, in part because a stone relief vessel fragment from Crete shows men carrying such ladles in a different fashion.

mold and a painting from the palace at Knossos.<sup>2</sup>

The Xeste 3 frescoes are also illustrative of a broader Aegean interest in crocus which centers on Crete, Knossos in particular. In the East Temple Repository in the West Wing of the Knossos palace, Sir Arthur Evans discovered a large deposit of faience, including several model costumes with crocus decoration.<sup>3</sup> These include two nearly complete dresses, a fragment of a third, and a double belt or "girdle" like those worn by some women in other media.<sup>4</sup>

The faience costumes from Knossos (MM III B or perhaps early LM I A) are presently the earliest known Aegean garments with crocus decoration. The repositories apparently were sealed following a destruction in the West Wing of the palace near the beginning of the Neopalatial period on Crete.<sup>5</sup> The back of each plaque is flat, and the more complete specimens preserve holes for threading so the objects could be suspended.<sup>6</sup> The crocus blossoms are painted in a brownish-purple color, perhaps an attempt to reproduce the mauve color of saffron crocuses. Evans considered the models to be votive in character, and the evidence from Xeste 3 suggests that such dresses would be appropriate gifts from women to the goddess. The piping of the blouses on the faience plaques appears identical to that on the dress of the Veiled Girl.

The decoration of the largest dress plaque is also the most elaborate. Above the waist, the blouse of the costume is painted with thick lines which may reproduce the piping applied to the hems and sleeves. A thick double band or girdle encircles the waist. The decoration on the skirt occupies three main zones. Immediately below the waist is a series of closely spaced, horizontal lines. A roughly triangular area is reserved in the middle of the faience skirt, framed around its upper edge by a pair of undulating lines. Similar wavy bands on frescoes and rings may represent a stylized mountainous landscape.<sup>7</sup> On a reserved area in the center of the skirt, crocus blossoms and buds grow in a symmetrical arrangement from a central clump, framed at

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<sup>2</sup> E.g., the necklace of one of the "Ladies in Blue" from the Knossos palace: Evans 1921, pp. 546-47, 544 fig. 397, 546 fig. 398; Immerwahr 1990 p. 172 Kn no. 11. A fragment of a jewelry mold found at the Kephala tholos at Knossos carries a similar design: Hutchinson 1956, p. 80 no. 49, pl. 12 e.

<sup>3</sup> Catalogue nos. 6, 7, 9. Separately modeled faience crocus buds and stems were also found in the deposit.

<sup>4</sup> E.g., the Kea terracotta figurines: Caskey 1986; one woman on a gold ring from Isopata: Platon and Pini 1984, pp. 61-62 no. 51.

<sup>5</sup> For recent survey of this period, see Rehak and Younger 1998.

<sup>6</sup> Cf. the miniature ivory double axes from the Zakros palace which also have suspension holes: Platon 1971, p. 131 fig.

<sup>7</sup> Immerwahr 1990, pp. 46, 59. E.g., the House of the Frescoes at Knossos: Evans 1927 p. 459 fig. 271. Elsewhere, these bands may represent the sky, as in the House of the Ladies at Akrotiri: Doulas 1992, pls. 6, 7. Cf. the gold ring from the Akropolis Treasure at Mycenae: Sakellariou 1964, pp. 30-31 no. 17.

either side by leaves. A narrow horizontal register occupies the hem of the skirt, with a repeating pattern of crocus leaves and blossoms, identically slanting to the left.

The other two dresses carry somewhat simpler versions of this decorative scheme. The better preserved example omits the horizontal bands at the top of the skirt, as well as the horizontal register of repeated blossoms at the hem; in the middle of the skirt, the clump of crocus rises from a flat groundline. The third dress is only partially preserved.<sup>8</sup> The lower half of the girdle survives, painted with a wavy band. The upper part of the skirt is plain, but in the center the undulating framing lines are visible at the top, along with the tips of the crocus flowers.

One of two models of double "girdles" preserved in the Temple Repositories has crocus decoration consisting of blossoms with curling stems, arranged horizontally.<sup>9</sup> The rest of the surface is covered with irregular blobs of paint which do not form a recognizable pattern.

The patterns on the faience dresses from Knossos have been discussed by Barber in her study of prehistoric textile production and use.<sup>10</sup> She considers them "unitary" designs, which are generally more difficult to manufacture than other woven designs.

Another possible costume with crocus decoration occurs on a fresco fragment found in the early investigations at Palaikastro in east Crete.<sup>11</sup> The finds from House E included an arm in stucco relief, white in color and therefore presumably female. Associated with it was a small fresco fragment with crocus blossoms that may belong to the skirt or -- more probably -- the blouse of this figure. Although too little of the figure survives for an attempt at reconstruction, other stucco relief depictions of women with elaborate costumes are known from a LM I B shrine in the small town on the island of Pseira and from the site of Khania.<sup>12</sup> Relief fresco seems to be a characteristic of the decoration of the Knossos palace during the Neopalatial period, and when it occurs at other sites it can be interpreted as influence from, or emulation of, that center.<sup>13</sup>

Other evidence supports the notion that crocus was particularly important at Neopalatial Knossos. A fresco from a room north of the central court includes at least two monkeys picking

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<sup>8</sup> Catalogue no. 8.

<sup>9</sup> Catalogue no. 9.

<sup>10</sup> Barber 1991, pp. 320-21.

<sup>11</sup> Catalogue no. 10.

<sup>12</sup> Pseira: Immerwahr 1990, pp. 184 Ps. no. 1. Recent excavation of the site shows that the construction of the shrine dates to LM I B; Immerwahr's LM I A date for the fresco is therefore too early. Khania: Immerwahr 1990, pp. 181-82 Ch. no. 1.

<sup>13</sup> Rehak 1997a, pp. 165, 166 fig. 3: Distribution map of relief frescoes.

crocus blossoms and putting them into garlanded baskets,<sup>14</sup> a scene which recalls several elements in Xeste 3. Real monkeys were probably imported to Knossos from Egypt as an element in international gift exchanges, and the ones painted in Xeste 3 may have been inspired by secondary exchanges between Crete and Thera.<sup>15</sup>

Another small room in the palace housed the miniature Grandstand Fresco and the Sacred Grove and dance compositions, which are thought to show other ceremonies of a public nature held in or near the palace -- the Central Court and Theatral Area to the north have both been suggested as locations. Once again, we see important women, represented at a larger scale in the Grandstand fresco, whose garments include yellow zones. Even the slightly later Taureador frescoes show white skinned, and therefore presumably female, figures, one of whom wears a yellow codpiece. Finally, a "dancing woman" with streaming hair from the Domestic quarter is also garbed in yellow.

The wall paintings in the House of the Frescoes at Knossos included blue monkeys and clumps of crocus related compositionally to those in Xeste 3,<sup>16</sup> and the Fresco of the Garlands found near the Stratigraphic Museum includes a wreath of crocus flowers.<sup>17</sup> One of the richly dressed "Women in Blue" from the Knossos palace wears a garment of the same diaphanous blue fabric as several of the Thera women, and she fingers a necklace of crocus buds.<sup>18</sup> A fresco in a small shrine at Ayia Triada includes a landscape with women, animals, and clumps of crocus and lilies.<sup>19</sup> The Zakro Sanctuary Rhyton, a product of a palatial workshop, includes a clump of crocus in relief near a peak sanctuary which generally resembles the one on the wall of the Thera lustral basin.<sup>20</sup>

Relatively few men, however, are shown with yellow garments. These include part of a processional figure from Knossos, and several of the men in the Procession Fresco from the West Entrance Corridor of the palace, including the well-known and frequently illustrated Cupbearer. The Procession fresco, probably of LM I B date, depicts mostly men, but may have centered on an important woman, who is now represented only by her surviving feet and the lower portions of her elaborate dress. Thus, we can conclude that yellow costume does not seem to be regular

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<sup>14</sup> Evans 1921, p. 265, pl. IV; Immerwahr 1990, pp. 170 Kn no. 1, pls. 10-11; Platon 1947.

<sup>15</sup> Strasser 1997; Parker 1997.

<sup>16</sup> House of the Frescoes at Knossos, Evans 1927, p. 459 fig. 271; Cameron 1968. Birds with nests appear in both locations; at Knossos, the monkeys appear to be eating the birds' eggs.

<sup>17</sup> Warren 1985; Warren 1987.

<sup>18</sup> *Supra* n. 57.

<sup>19</sup> Smith 1965, pp. 77-79, fig. 107 (woman kneeling among flowers), cf. fig. 108; Rehak 1997a; Militello 1992.

<sup>20</sup> Sanctuary Rhyton: *supra* n. 11.

wear for men, and in the rare occasions on which it occurs it seems to suggest a special palatial setting or activity. The Neopalatial period ends with a wave of destructions across Crete; after that, crocus decoration on costumes and pottery virtually disappears.<sup>21</sup> Several echoes of yellow garments survive from later mainland sites, however, including the finely painted "Mycenaean woman" from the Cult Center at Mycenae.

## SUMMARY

The evidence surveyed here suggests that the importance of crocus and saffron yellow-dyed garments centers on Knossos during the early Neopalatial period, and may have spread from there to other sites which were particularly open to Knossian influences. While we cannot be sure whether these "influences" should be characterized as cultural, religious, or political (of some combination of the three), our visual sources suggest that the wearing of yellow costumes was virtually restricted to women.

## THE HISTORICAL GREEK WORLD

The prehistoric evidence surveyed here helps us better understand the significance of saffron garments and crocus in historical times. The gendered nature of the color yellow survives the transition from Bronze to Iron Age. In later periods of Greek culture, yellow continues to be an appropriate female color (e.g., the *krokotos* worn by the girls who served Artemis at Brauron), and the wedding veil and costume of Athenian brides (several famous and problematic lines in Aeschylus' *Agamemnon* [239-41] describes the saffron garment in which Iphigeneia is sacrificed in a perversion of the nuptial ceremony: "Then, as her yellow robe slipped to the ground, she struck each of her sacrifices with a glance entreating pity").

Perhaps the most famous saffron yellow garment is the peplos of Athena, and embroidered in purple with scenes of the Gigantomachy. Our sources of evidence for the object have been much debated: was there one or two peploi, and was the garment presented annually at the Panathenaic festival, or only every fourth year at the Greater Panathenaia. (see Barber 1991, Barber 1992).

Other women's associations with saffron crocus are less fortunate. In the *Homeric Hymn to Demeter*, Persephone is raped by her uncle, Hades, while she and her companions were gathering flowers in the Nysian plain at Eleusis. It seems significant that the rape is foreshadowed at the beginning of the poem by Zeus's deliberate creation of a narcissus "as yellow as a crocus" which

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<sup>21</sup> Rehak 1997b. For a later scrap of wall painting from Pylos with crocus, see Lang 1969, pp. 130-31 15 N sw col. pl. H (identified as "anemones").

the unwary girl picks -- she apparently selects the wrong flower, precipitating the attack -- but the blossom itself has been designed as a trap.

Euripides' description in the *Ion* of the rape of the Athenian princess Creusa by Apollo is clearly reminiscent of the *Hymn*: (*Ion* 887-90):

ἦλθες μοι χρυσῶ χαίταν  
μαρμαίρων, εἴτ' ἔς κόλπους  
κρόκεα πέταλα φάρεσιν ἔδρεπον,  
ἀνθίζειν χρυσανταυγῆ.

"you approached me with your gold hair shining  
as I was gathering crocus flowers  
in the lap (*kolpos*) of my dress --  
flowers that blazed with golden light."

For males, however, yellow carries negative connotations. Examples include the unwarlike Jason's cloak in Pindar's *Fourth Olympian Ode* (232); Darius' shoes in Aeschylus's *Persians* (660); and the garments of effeminate politicians in Aristophanes' *Ekkleziazousai*, 331-32). In the Pompeii held at Alexandria under Ptolemy in the third century BC, Dionysos' statue was draped diaphanous saffron tunic (krokwtō; n duafanh~: Athenaios' *Deipnosophistai* 5.198c). It is perhaps interesting in this context that the lifesized Etruscan terracotta figure of Apollo from Veii wears a yellow tunic.

## CONCLUSION

To conclude. The color yellow in the prehistoric and historic Greek world, derived from the cultivation of saffron crocus, seems to be virtually restricted to women, and was a color generally deemed inappropriate for men. When males wear it, it may suggest androgyny or effeminacy. Yellow thus may be an early example of a gendered color, and one that emphasized female exclusivity from males.

Catalogue I - Aegean Costumes with Crocus Decoration:

1. Akrotiri, Thera. Necklace Swinger  
N. Marinatos 1984, p. 81.  
Televantou 1992a, 156-57 no. 25 a, with additional references.  
Televantou 1992b, pl. 20 a.  
Younger 1992, p. 278-79 no. 16, pl. LXVa.  
Doumas 1992, pls. 100-104.  
N. Marinatos 1993, p. 209.
  
2. Akrotiri, Thera. Wounded Woman  
Marinatos 1984, pp. 78-81, 79 fig. 56.  
Televantou 1992a, 156-57 no. 25 b, pl. XXXIV a, XXXVI a, with additional references.  
Televantou 1992b, pl. 20 a.  
Younger 1992, p. 278 no. 15, pl. LXIV d.  
Doumas 1992, pls. 100, 105-106.  
N. Marinatos 1993, pp. 207-209.
  
3. Akrotiri, Thera. Veiled Girl.  
Marinatos 1984, pp. 77-81, 78 fig. 55.  
Televantou 1992a, 156-57 no. 25 c, pl. XXXIV b, XXXVI with additional references.  
Televantou 1992b, pl. 20 a, b (detail of head).  
Younger 1992, p. 278 no. 14, pl. LXIV c.  
Doumas 1992, pls. 100, 107-108.  
N. Marinatos 1993, pp. 206-207.
  
4. Akrotiri, Thera. Goddess.  
Marinatos 1984, pp. 61-62.  
Televantou 1992a, p. 157 no. 30, with additional references.  
Younger 1992, p. 277-78 no. 9, pl. LXIII c.  
Doumas 1992, pl. 122, 125-26.  
N. Marinatos 1993, pp. 141, 151.
  
5. Akrotiri, Thera. Mature Woman.  
Marinatos 1984, pp. 64-65, 68 fig. 46.  
Televantou 1992a, p. 158 no. 33.

Doumas 1992, pls. 131-32.

6. Knossos, E. Repository. Faience dress  
Evans 1921, p. 505 and fig. 364 a.  
Foster 1979, p. 86, 87 pl. 17, 88 fig. 17.  
N. Marinatos 1993, pp. 141, 142 fig. 111.
7. Knossos, E. Repository. Faience dress  
Evans 1921, p. 505 and fig. 364 b.  
Foster 1979, p. 86, 88 and fig. 18.  
N. Marinatos 1993, pp. 141, 142 fig. 111.
8. Knossos, E. Repository. Partial faience dress.  
Panagiotaki 1993, pp. 59, 61, fig. D.
9. Knossos, E. Repository. Faience girdle.  
Evans 1921, p. 505-506 and fig. 364 d.  
Foster 1979, p. 89 and fig. 19.  
N. Marinatos 1993, pp. 141, 142 fig. 111.
10. Palaikastro, House E. ? skirt fragment with crocus.  
Bosanquet and Dawkins 1923, p. 148, fig. 3.  
Immerwahr 1990, pp. 182-83 Pa no. 1.

extra: Knossos: fresco of the garlands

Ayia Triadha shrine fresco.

Catalogue II: Yellow (saffron dyed?) Costumes in Aegean Wall Paintings:

Knossos palace. fresco fragment from Knossos with upper half of the figure of a "dancing girl" wearing a short-sleeved yellow bodice with blue and black piping: 369-71, *PM III* col. pl. XXV (below) from area of "Queen's Megaron". dated by Evans to LM IA. *PM III* 71 fig. 40: Band W illustration.

Knossos palace. Taureador fresco panel from KN with yellow background: white-skinned figure with yellow codpiece, seen from front. *PM III* col. pl. XXI.

Knossos palace. seated women in Miniature Fresco from the Knossos palace wear costumes that include blue, red, black, white and yellow. these are shown at larger scale than other individuals in the scene. *PM* III col. pl. XVI between 46 and 47. details of the seated figures in col. pl. XVII facing p. 49. discussion pp. 46-62.

Knossos palace. larger scale women in Sacred Grove and Dance fresco, *PM* III col. pl. XVIII. discussion 66-69. 67: "They wear short-sleeved jackets open at the bosom, diaphanous chemises, and flounced gowns, the prevailing saffron hue of which had perhaps religious associations."

Knossos palace. purple and yellow faience "votive robes" from the KN Temple Repositories: *PM* I 506 fig. 364 a and b (dresses with crocus), d (girdle with crocus).

House of the Ladies at Akrotiri: standing women (Doumas 1992, pl. 6, 11 and woman being dressed in robing scene: Doumas pl. 7).

girl from room 5 in the West House: Doumas 1992 pls. 24-25.

Xeste 3, lustral basin: Doumas pls. 100-108. red-spotted yellow veiled girl -- red spotted yellow used for one of the stern cabins in flotilla from the west house.

Xeste 3, flower gathering girls: Doumas pls. 116-126, 129-30.

Xeste 3, mature women: Doumas pls. 131-134.

processional women from Pylos palace: Lang, *PN* II col. pl. O.

#### Historical Greek Sources:

Homeric Hymn to Demeter: rape of Persephone

Euripides, *Ion* 887-90: description of the rape of Creusa, princess of Athens, by Apollo, while she was gathering flowers in a meadow and collecting them in a fold of her dress. the golden stamens of the crocus flowers reflect the golden shine of the god's hair.

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The list on p.144 gives the following identifications for the pigments on Cretan frescoes:

Sky blue	Egyptian Blue
Grey blue	Riebeckite
Red	Iron oxide (eg. hematite, limonite)
Yellow	Iron oxide
Brown	Iron oxide
Black	Carbon (eg. charcoal, bone ash)
Grey	Carbon diluted with clay or other mineral
Green	Often riebeckite over a yellowish pigment
White	Lime

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Colours Conference: <http://www.arts.ed.ac.uk/classics/colours/index.html>

On 10-13 September 2001, the Department of Classics, University of Edinburgh will host a conference entitled *Colours in Antiquity: Towards an Archaeology of Seeing*. This interdisciplinary conference will address color and hue in the ancient Mediterranean world, including the Middle East, Egypt, Minoan Crete, Mycenaean and later Greece, and the Roman and Byzantine worlds. Conference organizers Karen Stears and Glenys Davies can be contacted at Colours Conference, Dept of Classics, University of Edinburgh, David Hume Tower, George Square, Edinburgh EH15 1LW, UK; telephone: +44 (0)131 6503580/2; e-mail: [colours@ed.ac.uk](mailto:colours@ed.ac.uk). Papers of interest to Nestor readers will provisionally include:

F. Blakolmer, "Colour in the Aegean Bronze Age: From Monochromy to Polychromy"

A. Brysbaert, "Take it or leave it? Implications and results of destructive versus non-destructive analysis of Bronze Age painted plasters in the Eastern Aegean"

C. Gillis, "Colour Symbolism in the Aegean Late Bronze Age"

G. Muskett, "The Artist's Palette in Mycenaean Art"

M.-L. Nosch, "The Colours of Wool and Textiles in the Linear B Inscriptions"

P. Rehak, "Saffron Crocus and Yellow Garments in Aegean Wall-Painting"

E. Ribeiro, "The Colour Purple: prestigious pigments and the crocus flower in LBA Akrotiri"

G. Vavouranakis, "Polychromy and the building of power in the Cretan Bronze Age"

L. Steel, "The colour of pottery"

B. Burke, "Early Purple Dye Production on Crete"