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JOHN COLLIER'S PAINTINGS OF CLYTEMNESTRA

Abstract: The British artist John Maler Collier produced two paintings of the legendary Mycenaean queen Clytemnestra, in which he incorporated elements of contemporary archaeological discoveries. Archaeological excavations in Europe in the late 19th century included Heinrich Schliemann's work at Hisarlık (identified as Troy) and Mycenae. These were followed in the early 20th century by archaeological excavations on Crete, revealing Minoan society, including those by Arthur Evans. Collier gave the paintings, one from 1882 and the other from around 1914, the simple title 'Clytemnestra', both depicting the moment the queen has just murdered her husband Agamemnon at Mycenae, as related by several classical authors. The earlier version of the painting depicts Clytemnestra wearing a costume reminiscent of Archaic or Classical Greece, albeit with accessories that have parallels from much earlier periods, specifically Early Bronze Age Hisarlık, Mycenaean Greece and Early Iron Age Greece. The later version shows Clytemnestra wearing a costume that has elements from Minoan Crete, radically different from the earlier version, although again with Trojan and Mycenaean accessories. In both paintings, Collier created an architectural setting featuring Mycenaean motifs, very accurately rendered but used in a somewhat anachronistic manner. The author considers the two differing depictions of Clytemnestra using the methodology of identifying specific archaeological objects that Collier incorporated into his two paintings and, in addition, suggests ways in which he could have encountered them. The conclusion is that for both paintings, Collier followed the principles outlined in his treatise 'A Manual

of Oil Painting' to make use of all knowledge available to him at the time of the latest archaeological discoveries from the Aegean Bronze Age.

Keywords: John Collier, oil painting, Clytemnestra, Agamemnon, Ancient Greece, Ancient Crete, Mycenae, Minoan, Schliemann, Evans

Among the works by the British artist John Maler Collier (1850-1934) are two varying images of the legendary Mycenaean queen Clytemnestra, one painted in 1882 (Guildhall Art Gallery, London, Accession Number 577; Pl. 1: 1) and the other around 1914 (Worcester City Art Gallery & Museum, Accession Number FAO3; Pl. 1: 2). The identity of the subject is not in doubt; Collier gave both works the simple title 'Clytemnestra'. Ancient literary sources relate that the legend of Clytemnestra's murder of her husband Agamemnon, ruler of Mycenae, occurred as Agamemnon returned from the Trojan War. At the time when Collier was painting his earlier version of Clytemnestra in 1882, shortly after Schliemann began his excavations at Mycenae in 1874, these events were considered by archaeologists to have taken place in the Late Bronze Age (Sherratt 1990, 808).

John Collier was born in London in 1850, the second son of an affluent family. Collier was encouraged to study art by his father, Sir Robert Porrett Collier, later the first Baron Monkswell, who was a lawyer and politician. John Collier initially studied at the Slade School of Fine Art in London and subsequently in Munich and Paris. Although Collier's intended career had been in the diplomatic service, he was encouraged to study art by his father, who was himself a talented artist (Springall 2023). Collier first exhibited at the Royal Academy of Arts in London in 1874, with a 'Study of a Head' (Gallery No. IV, No. 382), adjacent to a work by his father entitled 'On the Mer de Glace' (Gallery No. IV, No. 381; Royal Academy of Arts 1874, 25).

Between 1874 until his death in 1934, Collier listed his paintings in terms of date, engraving, subject, size, exhibited, owner and price in his 'Register of Paintings', a photocopy of which is held in the Heinz Archive and Library, London, under the title 'Hon. John Collier Sitters Book 1874-1934'. This document indicates that by the time Collier painted his first version of Clytemnestra in 1882, he had already completed seventy-five paintings, the majority of which were portraits. However, from that time onwards, although Collier continued to undertake commissioned portraits throughout his career, he began to work on mythological, legendary and historical subjects, including prominent works

such as 'Lilith' (1887, Southport, Atkinson Art Gallery BOOAG:188), 'The Death of Cleopatra' (1890, Oldham, Gallery Oldham 3.91), 'The Priestess of Delphi' (1891, Adelaide, The Art Gallery of South Australia 0.108) and 'A Glass of Wine with Caesar Borgia' (1893, Ipswich, Ipswich Art Gallery R.1913-22).

This article examines possible reasons why Collier chose to alter his depiction of Clytemnestra in the thirty years between the two paintings and the extent to which he drew on the latest archaeological discoveries alongside literary evidence. It is apparent, as noted by Baker (2020, 106-108) and Barrow (2007, 73-74), that these two paintings highlight the way Collier drew on the latest archaeological discoveries to give an air of historical authenticity to his depictions of Clytemnestra, incorporating new discoveries that account for the differences, particularly in the queen's dress. This article will delve further into this question by examining the details of the two paintings, demonstrating Collier's meticulous research into two publications: specifically, Heinrich Schliemann's book on his excavations at Mycenae and Tiryns, published in English in 1878, and an article by Arthur Evans, published as a provisional report in the Annual of the British School at Athens following his excavations at the Palace of Knossos in 1903.

In addition, Collier would have had access to literary sources from antiquity that place Clytemnestra as a main character in the legend of the house of Atreus, as related in the play 'Agamemnon' by Aeschylus, and in the two plays named Electra, one by Sophocles and the other by Euripides. In the former, Cassandra foretells Agamemnon's death (Aesch. *Ag.* 1107-1118), and later, Clytemnestra gives a first-hand account of the way in which she killed Agamemnon (Aesch. *Ag.* 1381-1385). In both versions of 'Electra', the texts suggest that Agamemnon's murder was orchestrated by Clytemnestra and carried out by her lover Aegisthus (Soph. *El.* 94-98; Eur. *El.* 10-13). Furthermore, there are several passages in Homer's 'Odyssey' that refer to Agamemnon's murder on his return to Mycenae following the Trojan War, specifically in Books I, III and particularly XI, in which Odysseus meets the shade of Agamemnon, who gives him an account of his murder, where Agamemnon's rage is directed towards Clytemnestra (full references in Montanari 2023, 221-225).

Although images of the murder of Agamemnon are found in Ancient Greek art from the 7th century BC onwards (documented in *LIMC* Klytaimestra; see also a comprehensive survey of representations of Clytemnestra on Athenian painted pottery, Viret Bernal 1997), it is by no means certain how many, if any,

Collier was able to consult. Some examples show Clytemnestra armed with a sword, while others depict her with a double axe.

The tradition of depicting Clytemnestra with an axe continued into later centuries, such as a mid-17th century image of Clytemnestra on a playing card, armed with an axe and described as cruel ('cruelle'). The card is one from a series depicting famous queens, designed in 1644 by Jean Desmarets de Saint-Sorlin at the request of Cardinal Mazarin as an "educational tool" for the future King Louis XIV of France. The text on the card describes Clytemnestra as having killed her husband with a blow from an axe ('un coup de hache'. London, British Museum 1871,0513.524). A further example of Clytemnestra armed with a double axe can be seen in a watercolour by David Scott, 'Death of Agamemnon', painted in 1837 (London, British Museum 1995,0929.11). A variation on Ancient Greek depictions of Clytemnestra with a double axe is that Scott depicted her as a participant in her husband's murder, with Aegisthus handing the weapon to Clytemnestra, her arm raised to strike Agamemnon in his bath.

Pierre-Narcisse Guérin's painting 'Clytemnestre hésite avant de frapper Agamemnon endormi. Égisthe, son complice, la pousse' (Paris, Musée du Louvre INV 5185; L 3610), signed '1815', shows Clytemnestra being encouraged by Aegisthus. Guérin depicted Clytemnestra as the person holding the sword to deliver the fatal blow to the sleeping Agamemnon. In the case of the paintings by Scott and Guérin, the source material is almost certainly ancient literature, as mentioned earlier in this article.

Frederic Leighton's 1874 painting 'Clytemnestra From The Battlements of Argos Watches For The Beacon Fires Which Are To Announce The Return of Agamemnon' (around 1874. Leighton House Museum LH0372) is ominously full of tension, indicated by Clytemnestra's anxious handwringing, although the violence in this case is implicit rather than actual.

Although, in common with Leighton and his predecessors, Collier's familiarity with the literary background to the story of Clytemnestra is apparent, by the time Collier began his paintings, the discoveries of the two great societies of the Aegean Bronze Age – Mycenaean in the case of the 1882 painting and Minoan for the 1914 painting – were already widely known in the UK. Indeed, the distinctive feature of these paintings, compared to others featuring classical themes from this period, is the incorporation of objects and iconography from the material excavated only a few years before the paintings were executed.

Until the early 19th century, knowledge of the Greek Bronze Age had largely been confined to literary sources, such as the Homeric epics, the 'Iliad' and the

'Odyssey', which are usually considered to have become written works from the 8th century BC (Sherratt 1990, 820; Sherratt 2010, 3), and the accounts of travellers to Greece in antiquity – particularly the writer Pausanias, whose 'Guide to Greece' was written in the 2nd century AD. Early 19th-century travellers, including Sir William Gell, Edward Dodwell and Colonel William Leake, visited Mycenae and studied the standing remains (Fitton 1996, 75), although the earliest scholar to take account of pottery found on the site was Thomas Burgon. In a paper read to the Royal Society of Literature of the United Kingdom on 23rd May 1844, Burgon discussed not only the fragments of sculpture from the façade of the Treasury of Atreus (London, British Museum 1816,0610.177, 1816,0610.180), which he reported had been considered 'Byzantine', but also pieces of pottery which he believed dated to the "Heroic and Homeric Age" (Burgon 1847, 258-260). However, curiosity from the general public, as well as an increase in artistic interest in the Greek Bronze Age, was undoubtedly encouraged by the excavations of Heinrich Schliemann and subsequent publicity regarding his discoveries. Schliemann began his excavations in 1871 at Hisarlık in modern-day Turkey, considered to be the city known as Troy in the Homeric epic. His excavations continued at Bronze Age sites on the Greek mainland: Mycenae from 1874, Tiryns from 1876 and Orchomenos from 1880 (Demakopoulou 1988, 28).

Awareness of Heinrich Schliemann's discoveries at Hisarlık was popularised in Britain by an exhibition from 20 December 1877 to early January 1881 (Baker 2020, 30) of finds from his excavations at the South Kensington Museum, which became the Victoria and Albert Museum in 1899 and is now generally referred to as the 'V&A'. The first few weeks of the exhibition were reported in two editions of the 'Illustrated London News', including some very detailed illustrations of selected exhibits (Illustrated London News 1877a; Illustrated London News 1877b; Illustrated London News 1878). Furthermore, as part of his lecture tour of Europe in 1877, Schliemann lectured at venues in London, including the Royal Institute of British Architects, the Society of Antiquaries and the Royal Geographical Society, along with several archaeological institutions (Barrow 2007, 71).

As well as familiarity with the finds from Hisarlık, it is apparent that Collier showed extensive awareness of Schliemann's excavations at Mycenae on the Greek mainland. In particular, several details in Collier's earlier version of Clytemnestra indicate that he made use of Schliemann's book on his excavations at Mycenae, which had been published in English by John Murray in 1878. As

discussed further below, in many cases, the motifs that Collier used were based directly on illustrations of objects in Schliemann's publication, and in other cases, with minor adaptations.

Minoan Crete, the other great Bronze Age society of the prehistoric Aegean, was barely known in the late 19th century. In 1878, Minos Kalokairinos from Crete excavated in the western part of what is today known as the 'Palace of Minos' at Knossos, uncovering several large pithoi (storage jars), one of which was acquired by the British Museum in 1884 (Accession Number 1884,0807.1). It was not, however, until the early years of the 20th century that the general public became aware of the full extent of the material remains of Minoan Crete, through the archaeological work at Knossos and other sites on the island. Excavations at Knossos, led by Arthur Evans, commenced in 1900. Evans was clearly keen to promote his discoveries and organised his first exhibition of his work at Knossos in Oxford in 1902. However, as it was not yet legally possible to export Minoan antiquities from his excavations, the exhibits consisted of objects from his personal collection alongside drawings, photographs and plans from the excavations, together with plaster casts of some of the finds (Galanakis 2011, 20-21). In January of the following year, one room of the Royal Academy of Arts' Winter Exhibition was devoted to an expanded version of the exhibition in Oxford. The exhibition was widely reported in the press (newspaper reports summarised by Galanakis 2011, 33-35; also see Baker 2020, 189-195).

Each of Collier's paintings will be examined in detail, analysing the archaeological elements and relating them, where possible, to the objects he may have used as models.

Clytemnestra by John Collier, 1882
Oil on canvas, 239 x 174 cm
Guildhall Art Gallery, London, Accession Number 577
Presented by Mrs. Mary Harrison, 1893 (Pl. 1: 1)

Collier's earlier version, signed in the bottom left-hand corner 'John Collier 1882', was exhibited as No. 272 at the Royal Academy, London, in 1882 (Guildhall Art Gallery records) and sold for £100. Collier had three other paintings accepted for the Royal Academy's exhibition: portraits of Charles Darwin, Lord Selbourne and Sir George Campbell (Hon. John Collier's Sitters Book 1874-1934). Shortly after its acquisition, Collier noted three other exhibitions in the Sitters Book: Liverpool in 1882, Salon (presumably the Paris Salon) and Bir-

mingham in 1883. Collier additionally noted that the painting was 'bought by Harrison and is now in the permanent collection of the Guildhall'. The Guildhall Art Gallery's records include a note regarding a report to the Library Committee on 3rd June 1893 of the arrival and hanging in the Gallery of Clytemnestra "presented by Mr [sic] Harrison of Wolverhampton". The Guildhall Art Gallery's records also indicate that shortly after its acquisition, the painting was shown at the People's Palace in Mile End, east London, in 1897 and at the South London Art Gallery in Camberwell, south-east London, in 1899. The archives of Queen Mary University of London and the South London Gallery indicate that both venues had been founded to provide educational and recreational opportunities for working people and it is worth noting that the archives of the South London Art Gallery indicate that John Collier was a member of the gallery's council, with his father-in-law, Thomas Henry Huxley, being the first principal of the South London Working Men's College, the predecessor of the South London Art Gallery.

In the painting, Clytemnestra is shown alone, emerging from a room and holding back a patterned textile, presumably covering the door. Collier depicts her wearing a gold head-covering and a long robe made from a fine textile, secured by a gold clasp at her right shoulder. A second length of cloth is tied at the waist and is heavily blood-stained. Clytemnestra is portrayed holding a long-handled double axe, which she presumably used to kill Agamemnon, as indicated by the bloodstains on the blade of the axe and the trails of blood running down the steps.

A further feature of Collier's earlier version of Clytemnestra is whether he was influenced by the theatre. It is believed that the model for Clytemnestra was Frank Benson, the young man who played the queen in the first performance in Ancient Greek of Aeschylus' Agamemnon at Balliol College, Oxford, in 1880 and subsequently at Eton, Harrow and Winchester Schools, as well as at St. George's Hall in London (The Oxford Times 1880; Miller *et al.* 1989, 47). In addition, it is interesting to note that in Athens, Nea Skini's 1901 production of Euripides's Alcestis was set in a building with details derived from Mycenaean architecture (Georgiou 2011, 177; Momigliano 2020, 76, n. 206). It is apparent, however, that the background against which the figure of Clytemnestra is set was invented by Collier. This is suggested by an engraving after Harry Hamilton Johnston, which appeared in The Graphic, described on its masthead as 'An Illustrated Weekly Newspaper', on 26th June 1880, showing the final scene from

the performance of Agamemnon at Balliol College, where the performers are shown against a stage setting that is classical in appearance (Pl. 1: 3).

Analysis of the archaeological elements, 1882 version

Hair and head covering

The gold head-covering is very similar to the smaller of the two "diadems" from the "Treasure of Priam" (Schliemann 1880, 456-458, Nos. 685-687), both now in the Pushkin State Museum of Fine Arts, Moscow (Inv. Nos. Aar9 and Aar10). Although the band at the top end of the diadem is not visible, Collier has shown in some detail the pendants on the forehead and terminals of the side chains, described by Schliemann as "Trojan idols" (Schliemann 1880, 456). Close examination of Collier's painting reveals the model's brown hair visible under the diadem, suggesting the rather looser construction of the smaller head covering, as seen in Schliemann's illustrations (Schliemann 1880, 455-456, Nos. 685-686) compared to the simpler construction of the larger diadem from the "Treasure of Priam" (Schliemann 1880, 457, No. 687). Collier's inclusion of the diadem may have been motivated by his seeing Schliemann's illustration of the larger diadem "as it might have been worn by a Trojan lady" (Schliemann 1880, 458, No. 688). In addition, this diadem became renowned internationally as a result of illustrations of Schliemann's wife Sophia wearing a selection of the jewellery; an early example appeared in The Graphic on 20 January 1877 as one of a series of illustrations in a spread entitled 'Dr Schliemann's Discoveries at Mycenae'.

Although diadems dating to the mid-third millennium BC have subsequently been found at several sites in Anatolia, including Arslantepe and Alacahöyük, made not only from gold – but also from silver and copper/bronze (Klaunzer 2013, 89-90, Fig. 1), exact parallels with the examples found by Schliemann are difficult to trace. Schliemann found gold headdresses at Mycenae; however, these were in a different style and originated from the Late Bronze Age, the supposed time of the events portrayed in the painting, rather than the Early Bronze Age, several centuries later than the examples from Hisarlık.

Collier's Sitters Book indicates that he may have included one of the headdresses from Hisarlık in another work entitled 'Briseis. Head with Trojan headdress', painted in 1885, but with no further details. Unfortunately, I have not been able to trace the history or current location of this painting.

Jewellery

Collier has depicted Clytemnestra wearing a gold bracelet on the upper part of her left arm, although in this instance, he may have drawn his inspiration from Mycenae rather than Hisarlık. The bracelet features a series of running spirals, a motif popular in Mycenaean art and bears some similarities to a piece of jewellery from Schliemann's excavation of Shaft Grave III at Mycenae. The armlet is one of six made from gold wire, each with the same design of ten large spirals and a smaller spiral at each end (Schliemann 1878, 196, No. 300). The gold clasp, formed of four spirals, fastens Clytemnestra's dress at her right shoulder and also bears some similarities to the pieces of gold jewellery found in the same grave, which he illustrated alongside the armlet. The spiral jewellery, which Schliemann interpreted as elements of necklaces, is slightly different in design; two are composed of four spirals (Schliemann 1878, 196, Nos. 297 and 299), with a third being made from six spirals (Schliemann 1878, 196, No. 298).

Style of dress

Clytemnestra's dress is not what we would recognise today as typical of the Aegean Bronze Age, but it bears a superficial resemblance to Classical Greek female costume. It does not, however, replicate the peplos, chiton and himation, and is rather an approximation of ancient Greek dress. It is likely that Collier would have seen examples of artistic representations of female clothing of this type, such as the caryatid from the Erechtheion in the British Museum (1816,0610.128) or the statue of an Amazon in the Ashmolean Museum in Oxford (ANMichaelis 24), but he perhaps opted to depict the type of costume worn in the 1880 performances of Aeschylus' 'Agamemnon', mentioned previously.

Clytemnestra's right leg is advanced, with the front part of her foot visible beneath her dress. Collier has depicted her wearing sandals, although only the sole and a toe-post between her first and second toes are visible.

Weapon

Clytemnestra is depicted holding a double axe, a motif known from the Aegean Bronze Age, including examples from the Shaft Graves at Mycenae in the form of two gold bovine heads with a double axe between their horns from Shaft Grave IV (Schliemann 1878, 218, Nos. 329 and 330) and two small double axes from the same tomb (Schliemann 1878, 253, No. 368). In a rather gruesome detail, Collier has shown the axe with a notch in one of the blades (Pl. 2: 1),

presumably indicating it has been used, with heavy bloodstaining to the extent that fresh blood has dripped onto the steps leading from the room where Clytemnestra has just killed Agamemnon. However, the examples of Bronze Age double axes to which Collier had access do not have decorated blades as shown in the painting (Pl. 2: 2). Although the simple star motif shown on the blade may share some similarities with the designs on the roundels that decorate the door from which Clytemnestra is emerging, discussed in 'Architecture' below, any Bronze Age archaeological origins for the curvilinear designs are more difficult to trace.

The long, elaborately decorated handle shown by Collier takes the form of a series of bands of decoration, each featuring a different motif drawn from stone and ceramic finds from Hisarlık and Mycenae, from both the Bronze Age and Early Iron Age. Collier's depiction of the axe handle is notable for the detailed rendering of the grain of the wood, which would not have survived intact in the archaeological environment of Mycenaean Greece. Depictions of long-handled axes are absent from existing examples of Late Bronze Age wall paintings and Greek painted pottery. In contrast, the images of Clytemnestra discussed previously depict her with a short-handled weapon. However, it is noticeable that the motifs used by Collier for the bands of decoration on the axe handle can, in almost all cases, be identified in the illustrations from Schliemann's 1878 publication of his finds of pottery at Mycenae, covering both the Mycenaean period and Early Iron Age, with two examples from his excavations at Hisarlık. From the bottom of the axe handle upwards, parallels can be found for the motifs of a row of hooked chevrons, a dot in the hook giving them a resemblance to a stylised bird (Papazoglou-Manioudaki 1990, 337-338, No. 307), a lozenge with a central dot, a band of wavy lines and long-necked waterbirds.[1] It should be noted, however, that in the case of the latter, Collier has elongated the birds' necks and bodies, undoubtedly to make them look more elegant. The motifs used by Collier on the subsequent decorative bands have less precise parallels but bear some similarities to the designs on pottery sherds found by Schliemann at Mycenae. There are reasonable parallels for the two inverted triangles meeting at the tip, vertical columns of downward-sloping lines and interlinking lozenges.[2] A parallel for the inspiration for the two bands closest to the

[1] Chevrons: Schliemann 1878, 49, Plate VIII, No. 32; lozenge with a central dot: Schliemann 1878, 52, Plate XX, No. 197; band of wavy lines: Schliemann 1878, 52, Plate XX, No. 193; waterbirds: Schliemann 1878, 52, Plate XX, No. 195 and Schliemann 1878, 52, Plate XXI, No. 201.

[2] Inverted triangles: Schliemann 1878, 50, Plate XI, No. 71, sherd depicting a series of diamond-shaped lozenges; vertical columns: Schliemann 1878, 49, Plate XI, No. 54; interlinking lozenges:

handle can be found in the publications of Schliemann's discoveries at Hisarlık, specifically in the decoration of both sides of a cylinder seal, which Schliemann described as made of blue feldspar (Schliemann 1880, 416). The drawing of one side of the seal shows a somewhat abstract design, whereas the other features a motif resembling a petalled flower (Schliemann 1880, 436, Nos. 502 and 503). A less likely possibility is that the inspiration for the floral motif came from Mycenae (Schliemann 1878, 50, Plate XII, No. 57 and Schliemann 1878, 52, Plate XXI, No. 203). For the decoration of the entire length of the axe handle, Collier has made ample use of the thin black concentric bands typical of Early Iron Age pottery to separate the wider bands of decorative motifs.

However, the most striking and bold use by Collier of an object found by Schliemann at Mycenae is the decoration of the top of the axe, immediately below Clytemnestra's right hand. This is a very precise copy of the decoration of a gold cylinder-shaped object found by Schliemann in Shaft Grave IV. The elaborate decoration of the cylinder takes the form of four-petalled flowers that join at the tip, each one inlaid with rock-crystal (Schliemann 1878, 286-287, No. 451). Collier's depiction accurately reflects the original object.

Textile decoration

The birds that decorate the heavy textile on Clytemnestra's left are motifs characteristic of Mycenaean Pictorial Style pottery, and it is clear that Collier has referenced Schliemann's 1878 publication, where good parallels can again be found on two sherds of Mycenaean pottery (Schliemann 1878, 49, Plate X, Nos. 40 and 45). Although the heads of the birds are no longer present in both cases, the solid necks with the plumage represented by panels of curved lines bear a marked resemblance to the birds depicted by Collier. It is also likely that these sherds, which feature a border of triangles, inspired the textile's border of alternating red and white triangles. The spirals on a further two sherds (Schliemann 1878, 50, Plate XV, Nos. 73 and 75) resemble the spirals depicted in the corner of the textile.

Architecture

The outer walls of the room from which Clytemnestra is leaving have been depicted by Collier as covered in copper or bronze sheeting, seemingly held in place by roundels. In places, Collier has been meticulous in showing the details

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Schliemann 1878, 49, Plate IX, No. 39; Schliemann 1878, 50, Plate XII, No. 59 and Schliemann 1878, 50, Plate XIII, No. 66, lozenges with hatched interiors.

of construction. It is likely that Collier had read Schliemann's discussion of archaeological evidence for the use of 'brazen plates' to decorate the walls of the Mycenaean tombs known as the Treasury of Atreus at Mycenae and the Treasury of Minyas in Orchomenos, as well as referencing ancient literary sources for their use (Schliemann 1878, 44-46).

The ornate carved pillar to the right of the doorway recalls that from the Treasury of Atreus. Although some fragments of the columns flanking the entrance to the Treasury of Atreus (1905, 1105.1-3) were in the collection of the British Museum in London from 1843 and may well have been seen by Collier, the majority of the elements now on display were not acquired by the British Museum until 1905, donated by Henry Ulick Browne, 5th Marquess of Sligo (Gere 2007, 53-55; Loughlin 2021, 48). Accordingly, Collier may have consulted the 1803 sketchbook of drawings by the architect Sebastiano Ittar, commissioned by Thomas Bruce, 7th Earl of Elgin, which contains a pen and ink drawing with watercolour of the restored façade of the tomb, including the elaborate columns that flanked the entrance, with a further drawing highlighting details (British Museum, London, Accession Numbers 2012,5004.2.18 and 19). Although his generally faithful reproduction of Ittar's drawing suggests familiarity with the Elgin Drawings, Collier has embellished some of the decorative details of the cushion-shaped architectural feature known as the echinus. Furthermore, Collier, following Ittar's drawing, interpreted the echinus as part of the base of the column, whereas in Mycenaean architecture this feature would have been at the top of the column, as seen, for example, in the sculpture decorating the Lion Gate at Mycenae. However, the roundels that decorate both the doorway and walls are not a feature of surviving Mycenaean architecture, although the use of rosettes as doorway decorations is found on Classical Greek buildings, such as on the stone surround of the door of the north porch of the Erechtheion on the Acropolis in Athens. Collier may have been able to study a plaster cast of this feature, made in the late 18th or early 19th century, which is in the collections of the Royal Academy in London (RA 10/1253).

Rather than a detail of architecture, decorated roundels made of gold were used as elements of Mycenaean funerary display, many of which have close parallels to the motifs used by Collier. Evidence from Collier's painting suggests that he was able to study Schliemann's publication on his excavations at Mycenae, published in English in 1878, particularly gold objects included as offerings in the Shaft Graves. Motifs found in Schliemann's 'Mycenae' and adapted by Collier for his 1882 painting include a butterfly (Schliemann 1878, 168, No. 243) at the

lower left of the door and a cuttlefish (Schliemann 1878, 166, No. 240) on the central row of roundels. The original objects are the round gold discs, with an average dimension of 6.5 cm, featuring repoussé decoration from Shaft Grave III at Mycenae, of which 701 were retrieved by Schliemann (1878, 165). The non-figural ornamental designs were overwhelmingly derived from objects which Schliemann named 'buttons' from Shaft Graves I and IV. Although Collier has shown all the architectural roundels as the same size, three main types were discovered (Schliemann 1878, 264-265). The smallest, of which 118 were found, had a diameter of 2.2 cm; a further 130 had a diameter of 3 cm, with a few much larger roundels, 4.5 cm in diameter, of which only 8 were found. Indeed, it is among Schliemann's illustrations of the objects he called "buttons" that Collier was able to find inspiration for the embellishments of the door. An example can be found on the lowest section of the door, where, in addition to the butterfly mentioned above, Collier used the non-figural designs of five 'buttons', slightly simplified (from left to right: Schliemann 1878, 264-265, Nos. 410, 405, 417, 403 and 421). The reuse of the 'button' motifs is replicated throughout Collier's depiction of the door. In addition, two of the designs featured on the door originate in an elaborate gold headdress from Shaft Grave III, with repoussé decoration in the form of a realistic petalled flower and what may be a stylised flower of the same type, but with its petals rendered by circles, both repeated several times (Schliemann 1878, 185, No. 281).

The inside of the room beyond the doorway is barely visible, although the viewer can glimpse what appears to be a bed, perhaps even the corpse of Agamemnon lying on the bed, with the room illuminated by a single lamp. The floor and steps of the palace are undecorated and are represented by what seems to be finely dressed stone masonry, possibly marble or gypsum.

Clytemnestra by John Collier, around 1914
Oil on canvas, 238 x 147.8 cm
Worcester City Art Gallery & Museum, Accession Number FAO3 (Pl. 1: 2)
Provenance: 'A gift from Kay Kilbourne, 1939' (information from Art UK website); Collier recorded 'Kilbourne Kay family' in his Sitters Book.

The second painting of Clytemnestra by Collier is somewhat later, painted around 1914, and recorded in Collier's Sitters Book as the first entry of that year. Although the artist signed 'John Collier' in the bottom left-hand corner, he did not include a date. The painting had, however, been completed to be ready for submission to the Royal Academy of Arts in London by 20th March 1914. This

is made clear by Collier's letter to the art historian William T. Whitley (Royal Academy of Arts Archive 1901-1914), which mentions his submission of three paintings to the Royal Academy, including Clytemnestra. All three paintings mentioned by Collier were accepted by the Royal Academy for inclusion in their 146th exhibition. Clytemnestra was shown in Gallery III as Number 387 in the catalogue, with his portrait of the Duke of Bedford (No. 370) in the same gallery, while his portrait of 'The Viscount Morley' (No. 510) was hung in Gallery V (Royal Academy of Arts 1914, 16- 17, 20).

Although some of the architectural details of the doorway against which Clytemnestra is depicted recall Collier's earlier painting, other aspects are markedly different. As with the earlier painting, Clytemnestra wears a headdress similar to that in the 1882 work; however, in this later version, her clothing differs in that she is shown bare-breasted and wearing a skirt decorated with crocus motifs. As in the previous version of the painting, Collier has made it clear that Clytemnestra has just killed Agamemnon; however, this time she uses a sword rather than a double axe, the act signalled not only by blood dripping from her sword, but also by a trail of blood extending from the doorway of the room from which she is emerging.

It is possible that Collier wished to obtain an impression of how this revised figure of Clytemnestra would appear. Collier produced a much smaller version, measuring 30 cm in height and 18.5 cm in width, painted on board rather than canvas, and signed by Collier in the lower left-hand corner but not dated. Not only is the general layout of the composition, including architectural elements, similar, but the details of the figure of Clytemnestra, namely her clothing, weapon and pose, are almost identical to those in the larger version.

This small painting was sold at auction on two occasions in the 1970s. The first sale took place at Sotheby's in Belgravia, London, on Tuesday, 21 May 1974, as Lot 180 in a sale of Victorian paintings, drawings and watercolours (Sotheby's Belgravia 1974, 50-51). The painting is listed in the catalogue as 'The Property of Lady Greenwood', and it is recorded that the price achieved was £70 (Nahum 1976; Collier: Clytemnestra). The work was re-sold by the same auction house a little less than three years later, as Lot 157 in a similar sale of Victorian paintings, drawings and watercolours on 4 April 1977 (Sotheby's Belgravia 1977, 190-191), with the catalogue indicating that the price of £120 was achieved. The renown of Collier and the high quality of his work can perhaps be gauged from the decision of Sotheby's Belgravia to illustrate the painting, albeit in monochrome, in both auction catalogues.

Analysis of the archaeological elements, 1914 version

Hair and head covering

As with the earlier painting, Clytemnestra wears a headdress similar to the example from Hisarlık in the 1882 work. However, unlike the earlier painting, Clytemnestra's hair is depicted as extending down her back and worn loose in a style reminiscent of both Minoan and Mycenaean wall paintings.

Jewellery

The finger-ring with a pale bluish-green stone, resembling aquamarine, peridot, tourmaline or chrysoberyl, worn by Clytemnestra on her right hand, is not characteristic of either Minoan or Mycenaean jewellery. Indeed, the ring's setting is reminiscent of the coronet mount, which was popular in the 19th century. Examples can be found among the group of over 150 gemstones, mounted as rings between 1800 and 1869, formerly owned by the Reverend Chauncy Hare Townshend and bequeathed to the South Kensington Museum (now the V&A) in 1869. Similar examples to the ring depicted by Collier include aquamarine, peridot, blue-green tourmaline, green tourmaline and light green chrysoberyl.[3]

Style of dres

By the time he painted his second version of Clytemnestra, Collier would have been able to consult reconstructions on paper of wall paintings of female Mycenaean dress from the palace of Tiryns (Rodenwaldt 1912, Taf. VIII and XII). However, Collier decided to depict the queen in a costume that the viewer can identify as Minoan.

Although not a direct copy, the style of Clytemnestra's dress is undoubtedly based on the discoveries made by Arthur Evans at the Minoan 'Palace of Minos' at Knossos on Crete from 1900 onwards, accompanied by reports in 'The Annual of the British School at Athens' and regular accounts in newspapers and magazines, both in the UK and elsewhere (Sherratt 2009).

The motifs depicted by Collier on the upper part of Clytemnestra's skirt, which falls into a horseshoe shape, were based on the decoration of a bridge-spouted jar found in the North-West Building at Knossos. Collier has, however, chosen to simplify the design somewhat, omitting the smaller details painted in red in favour of plain black while retaining the yellow details corresponding

[3] Aquamarine (V&A 1288-1869; 1289-1869), peridot (V&A 1303-1869), blue-green tourmaline (V&A 1321-1869), green tourmaline (V&A 1323-1869) and light green chrysoberyl (V&A 1297-1869).

to the key in Evans's illustration (Evans 1902-1903, 120, Fig. 75).[4] It is interesting to note that Léon Bakst, best known for his designs for the Ballets Russes (Craine and Mackrell 2010), incorporated versions of two of the motifs from the same jar in his design for the costume of Electra in the 1912 ballet 'Hélène de Sparte' (Momigliano 2017, 87, Figs. 51a and 51b).

The distinctive pattern on the lower part of Clytemnestra's skirt recalls the lower part of two plaques in the shape of a dress, made from faience, found by Evans in 1903 along with other faience objects in the 'Temple Repositories', an area off the central courtyard of the palace at Knossos (Evans 1902-1903, 62-87). Evans' illustration shows that the larger of the two faience plaques has a border of crocuses, and the skirts of both faience dresses feature a central design of a clump of crocus flowers (Evans 1902-1903, 83, Fig. 58).

In his depiction of Clytemnestra, Collier may additionally have been influenced by the "snake goddesses" from the Temple Repositories. These figurines, also made from faience, are shown wearing a short-sleeved jacket that exposes the breasts (Evans 1902-1903, 77, Figs. 54a and 54b; 56a and 56b).

The garments depicted on the figurines and plaques from the Temple Repositories feature wide belts or girdles, although none bear any resemblance to the gold belt worn by Clytemnestra in Collier's painting, which has no parallel in Aegean art.

It is worth observing that Collier's depiction of Clytemnestra with bare breasts did not go unnoticed by the satirical commentators of the day. The 'Charivaria' section of the British humorous magazine 'Punch' observed in May 1914: "While there would seem to be no 'Picture of the Year', the canvas which appears to attract anyhow most feminine attention is the Hon. John Collier's 'Clytemnestra', with its guess at the fashion of tomorrow – the low-neck blouse carried a little bit further" (Punch 1914).

Unlike Collier's 1882 version, Clytemnestra is shown barefoot in this later painting.

Weapon

Clytemnestra is armed with a sword featuring elaborate inlaid decoration, albeit lacking the precision of other elements of Collier's painting. However, the sword bears similarities to examples found in the Shaft Graves IV and V at Mycenae during Schliemann's excavations (Athens, National Archaeological Museum 402, 404, 417, 727, 736, 747, 748, 751). It is noteworthy that Collier would not

[4] Note that the colour is described as 'orange' in the text on the following page of the article.

have been able to obtain detailed information about the decoration from Schliemann's publication of his discoveries at Mycenae, as this was written before the objects were cleaned and conserved, and the condition of the objects at the time of excavation did not permit a detailed description. For example, Schliemann notes that a sword was found in Shaft Grave IV whose blade had a "vertical line of intaglio work" (Schliemann 1878, 282, No. 449), with a further two examples from Shaft Grave V, both of which had decorated blades and pommels (Schliemann 1878, 302-303).

Architecture

Although many elements of the doorway recall those of the earlier painting, the pillar to the right of the doorway is markedly different and has no ancient parallels, having apparently been created by Collier. The lower part of the column echoes that of Collier's earlier version of Clytemnestra, based on the decoration of the façade of the Treasury of Atreus at Mycenae. The style of the upper part of the column is much later in date, resembling a column in the Doric order of Ancient Greek architecture, first attested in the late 7th century BC. Although Collier has not included the capital of the column in the painting, the Doric order is identifiable by the sharply pointed arris between the column flutes. The two very different styles of column are visually separated by a band decorated with Mycenaean-style running spirals.

The decorated roundels, which are a distinctive feature of the earlier painting, are also prominent in Collier's later version. Again, Collier has utilised Schliemann's 1878 publication of his discoveries at Mycenae, incorporating motifs that appear on larger gold roundels from Shaft Grave III from the outer band of decoration and smaller 'buttons' from Shaft Grave IV on the inner band. Particularly prominent on the outer band are two cuttlefish, a composition of several spirals, a non-figural design of waving bands and a leaf design, while particularly interesting motifs from the inner band include a design of concentric circles and a triskeles.[5]

As in the earlier version of the subject, the interior of the room is barely visible. However, despite an absence of illumination, there is a suggestion of a flight of steps, possibly leading to the sunken feature characteristic of Minoan palatial architecture, identified as a "bath" by Evans at an early stage of his excavations

[5] Cuttlefish: Schliemann 1878, 166, No. 240; spirals: Schliemann 1878, 169, No. 246; waving bands: Schliemann 1878, 166, No. 239; leaf: Schliemann 1878, 171, No. 249; concentric circles: Schliemann 1878, 264, No. 404; triskeles: Schliemann 1878, 264, No. 409.

of the Palace of Minos. For example, in his description of the 'Northern Bath', he states that it is a "small room... led down by a double flight of steps to the... bath" (Evans 1902, 60). However, by the time of the publication of his four-volume series 'The Palace of Minos at Knossos', Evans referred to this feature as a "lustral basin" (Evans 1935, 233). It is perhaps plausible that this was added by Collier as a reference to the murder of Agamemnon in his bath (Aesch. *Ag.* 1540).

Turning to the outer decoration of the walls of the room from which Clytemnestra is emerging, the uppermost section is adorned with a painted frieze of running spirals. Although the running spiral motif was found in paintings from Knossos, Evans described the colour scheme of the 'Spiral Fresco' as "blue and black on a white ground" (1902, 87-90), with no reference to the use of red, as seen in Collier's painting. It is, however, possible that Collier's inspiration for this architectural detail came from Rodenwaldt's 1912 publication, which featured a colour plate of a reconstruction of the 'Great S-Spiral Frieze' from the Mycenaean palace at Tiryns (Pl. 2: 3). Around 250 fragments of the 'Great S-Spiral Frieze' were discovered west of the Great Forecourt of the palace, sufficient to enable a section of the frieze to be reconstructed on paper (Immerwahr 1990, 203, Ti. No. 11). This very striking reconstruction shows the frieze painted in blue, yellow, white and black with applied white dots against a red background (Rodenwaldt 1912, Taf. VII).

Lower down, the walls resemble ashlar slabs of yellowish marble. However, there are no indications of joins between the slabs, suggesting a surface painted to resemble finely cut stone. Collier's inspiration may have been the gypsum facing found at the Palace of Minos at Knossos, including the 'Northern Bath', previously discussed (Evans 1902, 60-61). The paving of the floor, however, resembles finely cut white slabs of gypsum.

Collier has added two masons' marks to the wall, one star-shaped, the other a double axe, both attested at the Palace of Minos at Knossos, as listed by Evans (1902, 22 n. 9 and 120).

A feature not found in Collier's earlier Clytemnestra is the floor decoration of running spirals, rendered in red, blue and white, which, although bearing a close resemblance to the 'Great S-Spiral Frieze', is somewhat simpler in form. Another new element in the composition is the painted floor, part of which is shown on the left of the painting and which acts as the threshold to the room from which Clytemnestra is depicted leaving. The octopus included by Collier bears a marked resemblance to the octopus that was an element of the painted floor of the megaron at the Mycenaean palace of Tiryns, illustrated by Roden-

waldt, a hall that contained a throne and, accordingly, an appropriate motif for the decoration of one of the floors of the palace of Agamemnon. In particular, the manner in which the tentacles of the octopus are depicted is indeed very similar to the painted floor at Tiryns (Rodenwaldt 1912, Taf. XXI). Furthermore, Rodenwaldt's drawing reconstructing the painted floors of the megaron (Rodenwaldt 1912, Taf. XIX) may have provided Collier with the inspiration for the geometric surround to his version of the octopus panel.

Discussion

Although the major elements of the composition of Collier's two paintings remained unchanged, it is apparent that there are marked differences in detail between the two, particularly in Clytemnestra's clothing. This can plausibly be explained by Collier's awareness of Evans's discoveries at the 'Palace of Minos' at Knossos in the early years of the 20th century.

The question of whether ancient literary sources referred to Clytemnestra's weapon as a double axe or sword has been debated by several scholars, and no consensus has been reached (Davies 1987, 65-75; Prag 1991, 242-246). Indeed, Collier changed this detail, with the double axe shown in the 1882 painting replaced by a sword in the 1914 version. It is perhaps strange that Collier did not choose to depict Clytemnestra armed with a Minoan-style double axe in his second version of the subject, particularly as he included a mason's mark in the shape of a double axe on the wall of the palace. The change of weapon may have been for purely aesthetic reasons, given that the long-handled double axe depicted in Collier's first version of Clytemnestra appears somewhat unwieldy and impractical. Alternatively, Collier's motivation for depicting Clytemnestra with a double axe may have been influenced by his study of ancient literary sources, including the two versions of 'Elektra' by Sophocles (196, 485) and Euripides (160), as well as perhaps later representations of Clytemnestra following this tradition. It is plausible that Collier was aware of the examples of miniature double axes made of gold discovered by Schliemann in Shaft Grave IV at Mycenae, although these are clearly impractical in terms of size and material. Furthermore, the numerous discoveries of the double axe on Crete did not occur until excavations of the Minoan sites began on a large scale from 1900 onwards and, accordingly, after Collier had painted his first version of Clytemnestra in 1882.

Collier's approach to the depiction of subjects from the past can be ascertained from his treatise 'A Manual of Oil Painting', published in 1886. He initially appeared to be unaffected by any need for historical accuracy, indicated by his comment, "… if we wish to paint beautiful people, untrammelled by any considerations of historical accuracy, we can revel in the whole field of Greek and Roman mythology." However, later in the same paragraph, Collier added, "But whatever period we choose… we should spare no trouble to make our picture consistent with the best attainable knowledge on the subject." Furthermore, in the following paragraph, while criticising painters who do not take advantage of this information, Collier was firm in his opinion: "… there can be no excuse for carelessness in this respect." (Collier 1886, 41).

Collier's goal in his paintings was made clear when he added "… the highest imagination is that which can assimilate all kinds of knowledge and make use of it as a vantage ground from which to soar to higher things" (Collier 1886, 41-42).

Both of Collier's paintings of Clytemnestra demonstrate considerable research into what were at the time the latest discoveries at Hisarlık, Mycenae and Knossos, which were extensively reported and generated much interest in the United Kingdom. Nonetheless, in Collier's two differing versions, both of which depict the moment when Clytemnestra has just killed her husband Agamemnon, it is striking that neither painting truly reflects the material culture of the Greek mainland in the Late Bronze Age, the supposed time of the legend of Agamemnon and Clytemnestra. Collier wrote in 1914 that the setting of his new version was "entirely Mycenaean" (Royal Academy of Arts Archive 1901-1914), which is only correct up to a point. In particular, as discussed earlier, Clytemnestra's costume in the 1914 version is both Minoan in terms of style and the motifs used for its decoration, and Collier has retained the headdress from Hisarlık, seen in the earlier painting. It is certainly the case, however, that Collier included several Mycenaean features, such as the column partly derived from the Treasury of Atreus, the decorative motifs taken from gold roundels from the Shaft Graves and the use of elements of wall painting from the Mycenaean palace at Tiryns. It is worth noting, however, that the column and decorative roundels were also depicted in his 1882 painting of Clytemnestra. Furthermore, given the strong evidence of his awareness of Evans' excavations at Knossos, it is notable that Collier did not use the term 'Minoan' in his correspondence, possibly a consequence of the legend being set in Mycenae. Although the adjective 'Minoan' was popularised by Evans and used by him from 1894, the term had already been recorded in English as early as 1830 (Karadimas and Momigliano 2004, 245, 250).

Collier's decision to present Clytemnestra in what he described as an "un-Greek" (Royal Academy of Arts Archive 1901-1914) setting in his later work acknowledges the "Greek" elements in the 1882 version. Clytemnestra's dress, apart from her Trojan-style headdress, is, as noted above, an approximation of ancient Greek dress, reminiscent of clothing depicted in Greek art of the 5th century BC, the time of the play 'Agamemnon', part of the 'Oresteia' trilogy of tragedies by Aeschylus, which includes the story of Clytemnestra's murder of Agamemnon. Despite the absence of an exact parallel for Clytemnestra's costume, in his book 'A Manual of Oil Painting', published in 1886, Collier suggests his source of information in his comment: "I have found myself that questions of Greek and Roman costumes are very satisfactorily dealt with in Rich's 'Dictionary of Antiquities'…" (Collier 1886, 44). By contrast, other aspects of the painting, such as the gold head-dress and double axe, place the scene firmly within the third and second millennia BC, the time of the Greek Bronze Age, which Collier considered to be "un-Greek". It is noticeable, however, that on close examination of the decoration of the handle of the double axe, Collier has combined motifs drawn from painted pottery from both Mycenaean Greece and the Greek Early Iron Age, with two examples from the Early Bronze Age at Hisarlık.

Collier's characteristic inclusion of archaeological detail in his two versions of Clytemnestra may well have been inspired by his association with the painter Sir Lawrence Alma-Tadema, who had been introduced to Collier by his father during the early stages of his career (Springall 2023). It is apparent from Collier's Sitters Book that he remained in close contact with Alma-Tadema, painting a portrait of Alma-Tadema's wife in 1881 and later of the artist himself in 1884 and 1900. Alma-Tadema's paintings set in the ancient Roman world can be seen to have influenced Collier's depictions of scenes of historical and legendary subjects. Alma-Tadema drew on the current knowledge of the ancient Roman world, often depicting generic elements of architecture as backdrops to his subjects, such as 'Confidences', painted in 1869 (National Museums Liverpool [Walker Art Gallery] WAG9098). In other cases, Alma-Tadema included a recognisable statue, such as in 'Audience with Agrippa', painted in 1876 (Kilmarnock, The Dick Institute FA/A3), which features the Prima Porta statue of the emperor Augustus (Vatican Museums 2290), or where architecture can be matched to standing remains. An example of the latter is 'An Exedra', painted in 1869/1870 (Vassar College, USA, 1939.4.1), which is a recognisable representation of the Tomb of Mamia, constructed at Pompeii between AD14 and AD25, and which Alma-Tadema would have seen during a visit to Pompeii in 1863

(Barrow 2011). Alma-Tadema also turned to Roman Britain for inspiration, as shown in his 1884 painting 'Hadrianus op bezoek in een Romeins-Britse pottenbakkerij' (Hadrian Visiting a Romano-British Pottery).[6] On the right of the emperor, there is a wall decorated with a mosaic showing a peacock. This section of the painting is a faithful copy of part of a mosaic floor from the Roman villa at Bignor in West Sussex, UK, which is part of a panel in Room R.3 of the villa depicting the goddess Venus (Neal and Cosh 2009, 489-497, Mosaic 396.1). The villa was discovered in 1811, with Room R.3 being found two years later. It was opened to the public in 1814, so it is plausible that Alma-Tadema may have seen the actual mosaic or reproductions of it published by Samuel Lysons in 1817 in the third volume of 'Reliquiae Britannico-Romanae' (Neal and Cosh 2009, 489-492). Irrespective of how Alma-Tadema became aware of the very attractive design, he opted to place it in a prominent position in the painting, albeit on a wall rather than in its original context as a floor, giving greater emphasis to its aesthetic qualities rather than observing archaeological accuracy.

Ernest Normand's painting 'Pygmalion and Galatea', now in the collections of the Atkinson Art Gallery, Southport (Accession Number SOPAG:61) was painted in 1881, only a year before Collier's first version of Clytemnestra, and demonstrates Normand's awareness of Schliemann's discoveries at Hisarlık.

Pygmalion and Galatea is notable for its depiction of antiquities from several eras and geographical areas within a single composition. Normand filled the background of the painting with a range of objects, the majority of which are drawn from Ancient Greece and Rome. However, perhaps the most interesting background details are two ceramic vessels. The shape of both vessels is characteristic of pottery made during the third millennium BC (Early Bronze Age), found by Schliemann at Hisarlık, and among those exhibited in London at the South Kensington Museum, mentioned above. Although Normand may have visited the museum and seen the objects himself, it is equally possible that he saw the report of the exhibition in the Illustrated London News, which includes the illustration of two ceramic vessels that bear remarkable similarities to those depicted by Normand (Illustrated London News 1878, 13, Images 22 and 24).

In common with both Alma-Tadema and Normand's works discussed above, Collier's two paintings of Clytemnestra include accurate representations of individual archaeological objects. On occasion, however, the objects are depicted in an anachronistic way in that the settings are not in keeping with the period in

[6] Amsterdam, Stedelijk Museum A2332. Two other fragments in The Hague, Netherlands Royal Collection SC-1369 and Paris, Musée d'Orsay (RF 1977 17, JdeP 146, LUX 708).

which they were made or are shown in a setting for which the objects or motifs were not designed. A characteristic of both Collier's paintings is the inclusion of details from the Aegean Bronze Age of the 15th to the 12th centuries BC alongside later periods of Greek archaeology. This anachronism can be seen, for example, in the earlier version of Clytemnestra, where the handle of the queen's axe incorporates a series of motifs borrowed from both the Aegean Bronze Age and the Early Iron Age. In the second version of Clytemnestra, Collier portrayed the pillar to the right of the doorway from which the queen is emerging as his own creation, the lower part based on the façade of the Treasury of Atreus at Mycenae, with the upper part resembling a column in the Doric order of Ancient Greek architecture, first attested in the late 7th century BC.

Conclusion

The two paintings produced by Collier over thirty years apart demonstrate his familiarity with the new discoveries of the Aegean Bronze Age emerging from excavations on the Greek mainland and Crete, at Mycenae and Knossos respectively. These discoveries, alongside their extensive publicity in London, enabled Collier to incorporate novel artistic elements that had not previously been seen in British art of the late 19th and early 20th centuries.

The methodology used in this article has been to systematically identify the specific archaeological objects that Collier incorporated into his two versions of Clytemnestra. The extent to which the accurate depiction of archaeological discoveries meets Collier's objective to "spare no trouble to make our picture consistent with the best attainable knowledge on the subject", as stated in his 'A Manual of Oil Painting' (Collier 1886, 41), is tested. This article argues that in his aim Collier has been only partially successful in incorporating "the best attainable knowledge" in that he has depicted archaeological objects and motifs in an accurate manner, although not invariably in a manner that reflects the time in which they were created or in the context for which they were designed.

Although, as outlined above, Collier was by no means the only artist active in the late 19th century to incorporate archaeological discoveries into their work, he was unusual in producing two paintings of the same event. While the basic elements of composition, in terms of the placement of the figure of Clytemnestra and the architectural background, remained essentially unchanged, it is clear that in his later painting, Collier took advantage of the new archaeological dis-

coveries of Minoan society on the island of Crete to devise a new costume and hairstyle for Clytemnestra.

In his two versions of Clytemnestra, Collier succeeded in producing two images which, although anachronistic from a strictly archaeological perspective, are nevertheless artistically pleasing depictions of the legendary queen.

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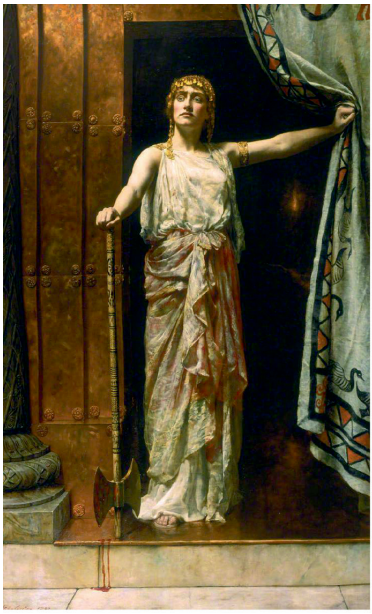
PLATE 1



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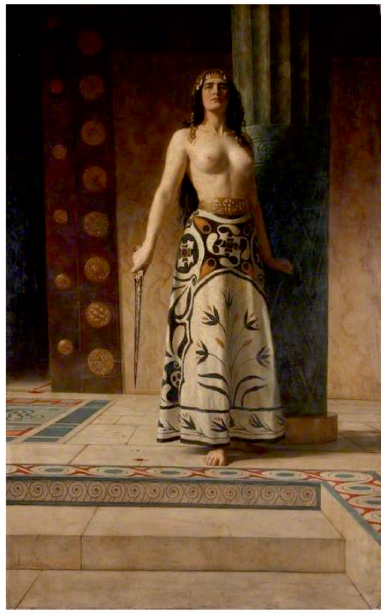

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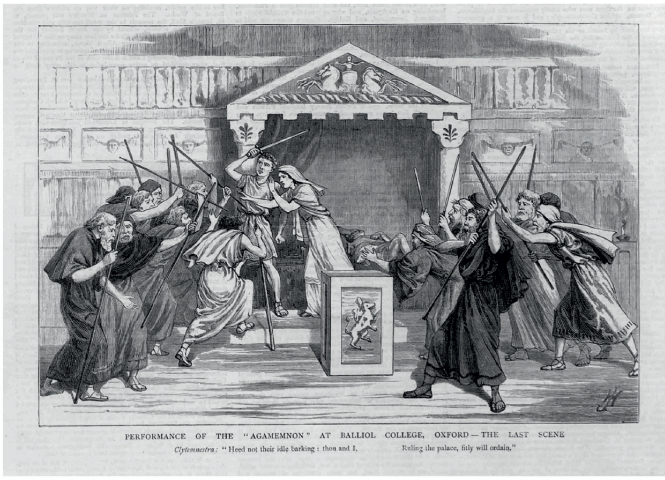


3

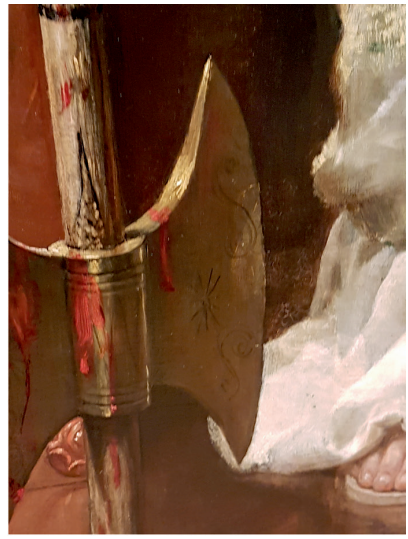
Pl. 1: 1 – *Clytemnestra* by John Collier (1850-1934). 1882, oil on canvas, 239 x 174 cm. Guildhall Art Gallery, London, Accession Number 577. Photo credit: Guildhall Art Gallery, London (CC BY-NC)

Pl. 1: 2 – *Clytemnestra* by John Collier (1850-1834). Around 1914, oil on canvas, 238 x 147.8 cm. Worcester City Art Gallery & Museum, Accession Number FAO3. Photo credit: Worcester City Art Gallery and Museum (Museums Worcestershire) (CC BY-NC-SA)

Pl. 1: 3 – Engraving showing the final scene from the performance of *Agamemnon* at Balliol College, Oxford, after Harry Hamilton Johnston. *The Graphic* 1880, 30/552, 653

PLATE 2

1



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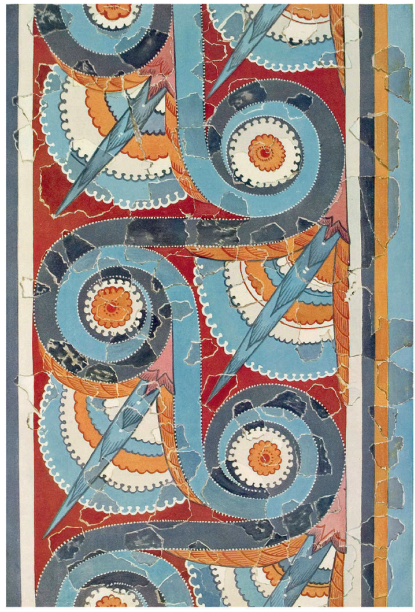

3

Pl. 2: 1 – Detail of Fig. 1, showing the notch in one of the blades of the axe.

Pl. 2: 2 – Detail of Fig. 1, showing the decorated axe blade.

Pl. 2: 3 – Illustration of the 'Great S-Spiral Frieze', Mycenaean palace at Tiryns (Rodenwaldt 1912, Plate VII)