

**Interconnections, exchanges and influences relating
to medicine, warfare and rulership between Egypt
and the Aegean during the Middle and Late Bronze
Age**

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ABSTRACT

This thesis studies interactions between Egypt and the Aegean during the Middle to Late Bronze Ages, focusing on reciprocal influences in the spheres of healing, warfare, and legitimation of power.

Chapter 1 provides an introduction, starting with an overview of previous research. The next two sections discuss a couple of issues of general significance, namely chronology and the Egyptian terminology for Aegean peoples and locations. The last two sections deal with issues of methodology and explain the aims of this work.

Chapter 2 is devoted to healing practices. Like the two chapters that follow, it begins with a cross-cultural comparison between the Egyptian and Aegean milieus. The basis for the discussion is provided by references to Crete in a couple of Egyptian medical texts. Other potential indications of an exchange of medical lore include containers that might have been used for medical preparations, amulets with healing properties, and possible similarities in practices and medical terminology.

Chapter 3 treats warfare, considering it in its broadest sense as a cultural phenomenon, besides looking for evidence suggesting military interaction or cooperation between Egypt and the Aegean. The material under scrutiny ranges from the decoration of weapons to the exchange of raw materials destined for the production of military equipment. Ideology and iconography also contribute to the discussion.

Chapter 4 explores the possibility of Egyptian influence in the development of the Aegean ideologies of power and the exploitation of foreign contacts as a source of legitimation. The main body of the chapter deals with the role of exotica in the pursuit of prestige. Some potential examples of the adoption of foreign customs and ideas are also discussed.

Chapter 5 summarises the conclusions of the previous chapters concisely and discusses how they may fit within the broader context of the study of Egyptian–Aegean relations. Finally, some possible lines of research for the future are suggested.

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1 – INTRODUCTION

1.1 PRELIMINARY REMARKS

The subject of the present research is the interaction between Egypt and the Bronze Age civilisations of the Aegean within three areas of cultural activity: healing, warfare, and what – for want of a better term – I call rulership. Apart from some works of a general character (e.g. Helck 1995 [1979]; Haider 1988), studies of contacts between Egypt and the Aegean during this period usually deal with evidence selected according to its geographical provenance (e.g. Cline 1991a; Phillips 2008) or typology (e.g. Kemp & Merrillees 1980; Strange 1980; Wachsmann 1987). A preference for typology-oriented works, perhaps more manifest on the “Egyptological” side, was pointed out by Jean Vercoutter (1956, 3). To concentrate on restricted bodies of material, he remarked, brings with it the risk of ignoring important pieces of the puzzle. I would add that perspectives based on a narrow selection of sources might paradoxically result in excessively daring conclusions: the existence of a foreign colony can be hypothesised on account of the presence of pottery alone, while a broader approach would readily reveal the absence of other features of material culture that we would expect to find in a truly “foreign” settlement (Sherratt 1992, 318-320). Since the available archaeological sources have increased considerably during the last decades (Phillips 2008 I, 19), a selection of some kind is nevertheless necessary.

Focusing on spheres of human behaviour instead of picking a specific body of material necessarily implies a multi-disciplinary framework and the use of a wide range of sources. My hope is that such an approach may contribute to improve our understanding of how the Egyptians and the peoples of the Prehistoric Aegean exchanged ideas, motifs and technologies with one another. Works dealing with areas of activity – instead of types of finds or sites – are not a complete novelty in the study of Aegean-Egyptian relations, trade probably being the most common subject of choice (Cline 2009, 4). However diverting the focus to some particular questions might generate a different kind of narrowing: when discussing their evidence, scholars may easily overlook important implications if the latter are of no consequence to the issues they are interested in. Even worse, the evidence can be forcibly brought to bear upon a wrong sphere of activity (below, 1.5).

The transmission of cultural elements between different milieus can be examined on more than one level. First, there are the events in whose context the exchanges take place. However, when far removed in time, even the most brutal form of interaction, namely warfare, can be almost invisible archaeologically (e.g. Thrane 2006, 211; Steuer 2006,

230-233); this is even truer for less impactful events such as the exchange of specialists or diplomatic missions. The role of the human actors, moreover, is often hard to assess, especially since so little explicit textual evidence relating to them survives. Although acknowledging the difficulty of studying the issue of Minoans and Mycenaeans abroad, Eric Cline (1995b, 266-267 and 281) has expressed hope that new evidence could shed some light on these elusive individuals. This, however, can be accomplished not only by expanding the record through new finds but also by approaching the available material through different perspectives.

This is why it could prove valuable to also explore a second level, that of the cultural environment in which foreign elements are introduced, since they never fill a complete blank. What are the reasons behind the import and assimilation of certain items instead of others? Why is a particular motif adopted, while others are discarded? The relevance of such questions has increased during the last two decades (below, 1.2.5), with the result that the treatment of Egyptian imports in the Aegean and vice-versa is often accompanied by a discussion of their compatibility with the receiving culture (e.g. Phillips 2008). Therefore, in order to better understand the role of the environment, I begin each chapter with a cross-cultural comparison aimed at highlighting similarities and differences between Egypt and the Aegean in relation to the subjects I have selected, before proceeding to examine the evidence for interaction. Such an approach, I believe, can be used to address many issues: to begin with, the study of how different civilisations exchanged their lore may reveal previously unknown or underrated aspects of them, such as an inclination towards certain ideas or practices. Moreover, such it might prove useful for understanding who the actors involved were: the possibility of Aegean physicians travelling to Egypt, for instance, could be better contextualised once we appreciate the Egyptian perception and appraisal of their skills (2.6).

Before setting out in more detail how this work is organised and explaining my methods (1.6), I review existing scholarship and discuss some particularly relevant or controversial issues, especially chronology.

1.2 PREVIOUS SCHOLARSHIP

1.2.1 OVERVIEW

According to one (in)famous “Murphy’s law”, whenever you set out to do something, something else must be done first. Writing this introduction has proven to be no exception,

as I found myself repeatedly stepping back along a sequence of preliminary considerations that came to seem necessary. Consequently, since this study is intended for both Egyptologists and Aegean prehistorians, I begin by devoting a few words to the nature and development of these two disciplines, especially in relation to cross-cultural studies, before summarising the history of research on the subject.

Egyptology is the study of ancient Egypt from its prehistory to the Roman period; its subjects include language, art, religion and all the other components of Egyptian civilisation. If earlier Egyptologists would ideally treat all aspects of ancient Egyptian culture, the beginning of the 20th century saw a growing specialisation, with experts focusing on progressively narrower subjects. More recently, this “hyper-specialisation” has been at least partly replaced by curricula that often include more general areas of study (such as art history or the social sciences). Moreover, there is an increasing cooperation between experts in different areas (e.g. R. Wilkinson 2008, 2), which also means that there are greater opportunities for researchers who engage in cross-cultural studies.

The study of Aegean Prehistory, which is about half a century younger than Egyptology, begins with the excavations of Heinrich Schliemann at Bronze Age sites, notably Hissarlik/Troy (1870) and Mycenae (1876). Bronze Age Aegean scholarship has gradually evolved into a multidisciplinary subject with ever richer contributions from science and technology. Notwithstanding all this progress, however, in the last couple of decades the issue of cultural interaction between the Aegean and Egypt and the Near East has often been treated with extreme caution in the specialised literature. Three main reasons have been suggested for this attitude (Bachvarova, Collins & Rutherford 2008, 3): increasing academic specialisation; suspicion towards what is often (and not always inappropriately) perceived as “speculation”; and the dominance of Processualist and Postprocessualist approaches, with their tendency to interpret cultures “on their own terms” instead of looking for external influences. This situation is remarkable if one considers the importance attached to foreign contacts – and particularly to those with Egypt – in the earlier days of Aegean archaeology (1.2.2, 1.2.3).

In order to summarise earlier scholarship on Egyptian-Aegean relations, I have adopted an approximately chronological framework (see Cline 2009, 3-4 for a division based instead on different subjects of interest). Ideas, however, do not change overnight, and it often takes some time even for the most important discoveries to exert an influence.

The first “watershed” resulted from Schliemann’s excavations in Turkey and Greece, which gave birth to a totally new approach to Greece’s Prehistoric past (e.g. Thomas

1993): from this moment onwards, Egypt's contacts with the Aegean would be linked to actual centres of Bronze Age civilisation such as Mycenae, instead of mythical kings such as Pelasgus and Menelaus. A second important turning point followed Evans' excavations at Knossos, by means of which the Aegean and its people could finally be recognised in both the Egyptian written and pictorial sources (below, 1.2.2). Jean Vercoutter's work, *L'Égypte et le monde égéen préhellénique* (1956), provided an important assessment of the Egyptian material, on which further studies came to rely; additional progress towards the understanding of this terminology was made possible in the 1960s, when a geographical list found in Amenhotep III's funerary temple at Kom el-Heitan revealed the names of several Aegean locations (Edel & Görg 2005, 161-213; below, 1.2.5). The most significant find in relation to the subject, however, would come at the turn of the 1980s, when the Austrian team directed by Manfred Bietak in Tell ed-Dab'a (the ancient Hyksos capital of Avaris) unearthed the remains of some Minoan style frescos.

1.2.2 FROM ANTIQUITY TO SCHLIEMANN

A text accompanying a wall painting in the tomb of Ramses VI (mid-20th Dynasty, ca. 1100 B.C.; Piankoff 1942, 23; Vercoutter 1956, 98-100) is the latest known New Kingdom document mentioning the "Land of Keftiu", generally understood to be Crete (below, 1.3.1). The term does reappear in the Ptolemaic period, but it seems to designate Phoenicia instead of an Aegean location (Vercoutter 1956, 100-106). This cessation of Egyptian written references to the Aegean towards the end of the New Kingdom corresponds to a sharp decline both in Aegean imports as preserved in the archaeological record, and of Egyptiaca in Greece (e.g. Phillips 2005a).

It would be tempting to trace interest in the contacts between Egypt and the Prehistoric Aegean back to ancient Greek historians such as Herodotus and Thucydides, who sought the origins of the relations between "East and West" in a mythical past rich in lustful gods and abducted women. However, such a choice would be rather unproductive: when treating events so distant from their age, Classical historians could not rely on original sources. The very memory of the Bronze Age Aegean scripts had disappeared, and oral traditions are no surrogate for history. While this should go without saying, there are at least two reasons to devote some space to the issue.

First, ancient authors have exerted enormous influence on modern reconstructions of Greek prehistory (Muhly 2010, 3-4). Since the 19th century, as archaeology, philology, and the other disciplines related to the study of antiquity progressed, the accounts of

Classical historians and mythographers increasingly gave way to evidence acquired through more reliable means, but this process was never straightforward. Notwithstanding the fundamental role played by Schliemann's and subsequent discoveries in establishing Aegean archaeology as a scientific discipline, their immediate result was to reinforce the idea that Homer and other ancient authors could be used as sources for understanding the Aegean Bronze Age (Nikolaidou & Kokkinidou 2007, 37-40). Such positions have never been totally relinquished, and I quote some examples below (1.2.6).

A second consideration is that ancient texts can occasionally provide some useful information, although this may be very different from what the authors intended to say. A good example is the mention of a personal name or toponym whose original meaning had been forgotten, and is therefore unlikely to be a later invention (a possible case, that of the Homeric hero Aigyptios, is discussed in 3.4.2). There are reasons to believe that geographical and personal names can survive in oral tradition for a very long time (e.g. Wiener 2007, 4): some anthropological studies show that Polynesian islanders could preserve the names they hold in common long after having split and settled into different islands (Westervelt 1910).

1.2.3 EARLY AEGEAN ARCHAEOLOGY (1870-1900)

The assumption that Egypt and the Aegean were in contact during the second millennium B.C. has been standard in archaeology since Schliemann and Tsountas first found Egyptian or Egyptanising objects at Mycenae (Cline 2009, 3). The importance of this connection with Egypt was understood mainly in relation to two issues: the creation of a satisfactory chronology for the Aegean (below, 1.2.2; 1.3), and the reconstruction of a pattern of cultural diffusion (normally from Egypt to the Aegean, but also the other way round).

The issue of "cultural irradiation" was a particularly debated one in the 19th century. Consistently with the fashion of the times, the rise of the Aegean civilisations was originally linked to contacts with and migration from the Near East, whose cultures were considered "superior" (e.g. Cohen & Glotz 1938, 26; Nikolaidou & Kokkinidou 2007, 38-39). The importance of the Pre-Greek civilisations of the Aegean was fully appreciated only after the excavations in Crete during the early 20th century; nevertheless, Evans himself remained a strong advocate of a significant Egyptian influence on Minoan Crete. Such currents of thought, however, are rarely, if ever, as generalised as modern summaries tend to present them; for example, the Egyptologist Flinders Petrie proposed an indigenous

origin for the Mycenaean civilisation, as well as positing a series of invasions of Egypt by Aegean peoples, with enduring effects on Egyptian culture (Petrie 1890).

Influences of specific intellectual trends and movements are often difficult to assess. “Romanticism” (whatever meaning scholars attach to the term) provides a useful example: while it is generally regarded as having a significant impact on 19th century scholarship, two antithetical effects have been attributed to it, and detractors have blamed “Romanticism” for bias towards both diffusionist and evolutionist positions. A widespread opinion is that early 19th Century Romanticism is responsible for the denial of any Eastern/Egyptian contribution to Greek culture, whose autonomous evolution would grant Europe a “pure” genealogy for its civilisation, devoid of Oriental connections (Nikolaidou & Kokkinidou 2007, 38-9). Yet, the exact opposite has also been suggested. In the introduction to his study on the Oriental influences on Greece, Santo Mazzarino (1947, 3-4) linked the interest in Greece’s connections with the East to Romanticism.

It is relevant here that until the end of the 19th century scholars interested in Egyptian-Aegean relations could rely exclusively on archaeological material and the Classical authors. Contemporary (Egyptian) pictorial and literary sources for contacts were not yet available. One could only speculate about the exotic-looking “tribute bearers” represented in some Theban tombs, described by the accompanying texts as coming from “the land of Keftiu” and the “Islands in the Middle of the Sea”: with their long hair and richly decorated kilts, these characters had no known parallel in the region. Heinrich Brugsch (1858, 86-88) was probably the first to suggest the identity of “Keftiu” (or “Kfã”, as it was then transliterated) and Crete. Max Müller, however, still favoured an identification with Cilicia as late as 1893 (331). The crucial step towards an informed study of Aegean-Egyptian relations during the Bronze Age could only be made after the remains of the Bronze Age civilisation of Crete were unearthed.

1.2.4 KEFTIU REDISCOVERED (1900-1950s)

Evans’ discoveries in Crete finally made it possible to associate the envoys depicted in the Theban tombs with his “Minoans”. Moreover, the land of origin of this people was also mentioned in sources lacking images, such as geographical lists and medical texts (Vercoutter 1956, 8), which could now be used together with the archaeological material and confronted with it. Nevertheless, although many sceptics finally accepted the identification of “Keftiu” with Minoan Crete (e.g. W. M. Müller 1904, 13-15), others continued to deny it on various grounds (e.g. Wainwright 1914; Furumark 1950, 243-244).

The study of visual and written documentation from Egypt culminated in Vercoutter's magnum opus. The latter, as already indicated, contributed to clarifying several problems concerning Egyptian geographical terminology related to the Aegean, as well as to assessing the written and pictorial references to its peoples. Moreover, systematic studies began to appear dealing with Egyptian objects from Aegean contexts. Sometime earlier, John Pendlebury (1930) published the first comprehensive catalogue of Egyptian artefacts from Aegean sites. Many of Pendlebury's supposed Egyptian imports have since been shown to be local products, and several of his conclusions have been invalidated by subsequent research (Phillipson 2008 I, 19). Nevertheless, his work provided a concise and usable model for the catalogues that followed and a valuable basis for discussing chronological matters. Finally, exchanges of artistic and cultural elements such as motifs, decorations, and architectural forms began to be critically discussed. Helene Kantor's (1947) article in the *American Journal of Archaeology* tried to link artistic innovations, such as spiral-shaped ornamentations and the "flying gallop" motif, with other kinds of evidence such as pottery and representations of foreigners. One of Kantor's merits is to have sought to identify exchanges in both directions, instead of trying to prove the cultural supremacy of Egypt or of the Aegean.

Even after the significance of the Aegean civilisations had been accepted, diffusionist theories continued to be predominant. Evans himself, always eager to emphasise Crete's cultural primacy over the mainland, was inclined to see an Egyptian influence whenever possible (e.g. 1925, esp. 226-228). Paradoxically, such an overestimation of the Egyptian influence may be linked to what Vercoutter (1956, 3-4) regarded as a shift towards an "Aegean-centric" focus in the choice of material, that he explained both by the lack of Egyptological knowledge among early Aegean archaeologists and by the inadequacy of the Egyptian material published; it is the same principle, already discussed in 1.1, according to which limited evidence can raise the wildest speculations. Vercoutter's goal was to shift the balance towards an Egyptological perspective, which in turn required an assessment of the written and pictorial material from Egypt. His work provided a basis for later studies of Egyptian-Aegean relations, and some of his conclusions were vindicated by the discovery of the Kom el-Heitan statue base.

1.2.5 THE ROAD TO AVARIS (1960s-1990s)

A few attempts to update Pendlebury's catalogue were made during the 1960s; Peter Warren's 1969 work on Minoan stone vases is valuable for its inclusion of both the

Egyptian artefacts in the Aegean and the local imitations, expanding the discussion from the imported material itself to associated cultural influences. A couple of extensive catalogues of Egyptian and Near Eastern imports to the Aegean were published more than two decades later, by Connie Lambrou-Phillipson (1991) and Eric Cline (1991a); in both cases, the focus of interest is on Aegean trade with the outside world. Minoan pottery from Egypt was discussed by Kemp and Merrillees (1980), with considerable attention devoted to the context and the concomitant presence of other types of imported material. The Egyptian sources treated by Vercoutter have been addressed again in two books published during the 1980s: John Strange's (1980) review of written mentions of Aegean peoples and places, and Shelley Wachsmann's (1987) published thesis, dealing with Egyptian representations of Aegean people and their goods in Theban tombs.

The same ten-year span (1979-1989) also saw the publication of two general works exploring wider issues through a rich variety of sources. Wolfgang Helck's *Die Beziehungen Ägyptens und Vorderasiens zur Ägäis bis ins 7. Jahrhundert v.Chr.* (1979), as the title implies, tries to assess interaction between the Aegean and the Eastern Mediterranean from the Early Bronze Age to the Iron Age; Peter Haider's *Griechenland - Nordafrika* (1988) attempts to enrich the picture by including a discussion of some Greek myths and a comprehensive treatment of the purported Egyptian/African elements in the "Miniature Frieze" from Akrotiri, Thera (here, 3.4.2).

In addition to the archaeological, textual and pictorial evidence, studies have also been devoted to artistic influences. Lyvia Morgan's (1988) published thesis acknowledges the importance of the local context in the choice of imported motifs. The concept was further explored in Judith Weingarten's (1991) study of the "Minoan genius", which suggests that some religious practices were shared by the two civilisations (here, 2.5.1).

The most significant discovery in the field of Egyptian-Aegean relations came at the end of the 1980s. Since the 1988-1989 season, an Austrian team led by Manfred Bietak at Tell ed-Dab'a/Avaris has found thousands of fragments of wall paintings. Judging from style, motifs and techniques, the paintings appear to be definitely Aegean (e.g. Marinatos 2010, 347). Among the Aegean elements that can be recognised are some of the most iconic ones, such as bull-leaping scenes and the labyrinth motif. Originally believed to date to the Hyksos period, these wall paintings are now dated to the period between Amenhotep I and Thutmose III (e.g. Bietak 2002, 38-42).

1.2.6 AFTER AVARIS

Notwithstanding the impressive discoveries described above – or perhaps because of them – current views on Aegean-Egyptian contacts still vary considerably, with positions ranging from an interaction very limited in time and scale (e.g. Manning & Hulin 2005, 282-286) to the Egyptian “colonisation” of the Aegean advocated by Martin Bernal and his followers. This is not in itself surprising, if one considers how theoretical approaches in archaeology have further diversified since the early 1990s (Trigger 2006, 484). Moreover, the enormous increase in the available material means that it is more difficult to handle it comprehensibly than it was in Kantor’s or Vercoutter’s times.

I have already mentioned a tendency to emphasise local developments while minimising the role of external influences (1.2); I deal with this subject in more detail in chapter 4, when I discuss state formation, which is the area where a strong cultural impact has been advocated more emphatically. The current tendency to downplay the scale of contacts in works that discuss specific kinds of imports, especially pottery, may be seen as a reaction to earlier unsubstantiated overestimations (as noted, e.g., by Manning & Hulin 2005, 284; above, 1.1)

Manfred Bietak’s discoveries in Avaris “initiated a veritable explosion of commentary on Egyptian and Minoan wall painting and “iconographic cross-influence” (Phillips 2008 I, 18). These studies often recognise strong reciprocal influences, perhaps building on Bietak’s own positions, but it is self-evident that it is easier to detect shared traits in the repertoire of artistic motifs than in ritual practices. Bietak himself (e.g. 1994; 1996) has argued for an alliance cemented by a dynastic marriage, the “Minoan decoration” being intended to solace a homesick bride from Crete.

Bernal’s *Black Athena* volumes (1987, 1991 and 2006) had a great influence in reviving the debate about the Bronze Age contacts between the Aegean and the “East” (e.g. Cline 2009, xvi), especially in relation to the possibility of using Greek myths as an acceptable source for reconstructing Bronze Age events. Bernal called his own assumption that the Aegean was heavily influenced – if not actually dominated – by Egypt in Prehistoric times a “revised Ancient Model”, believing “that there is a real basis to the stories of Egyptian and Phoenician colonization of Greece” (Bernal 1987, 2). I cannot help wondering whether there is a link between the caution of contemporary scholarship concerning the extent of inter-cultural contacts and the proliferation of far-fetched theories outside the specialised literature, perhaps filling some sort of gap in what people would like to see discussed.

Since Bernal's methods and his conclusions have been already challenged by others (e.g. Lefkowitz & MacLean Rogers 1996), I limit myself to some considerations about the presumed originality of his work, i.e. whether Bernal's positions really result from a new approach to Classical sources, or whether they developed from previous trends. As mentioned above, the temptation to use Classical writers when discussing Bronze Age issues has never completely waned. In his contribution to the Cambridge Ancient History, to quote just one example, Frank Stubbings (1973, 635-638) argued that the story of Danaus was "invented to personify an event of which there was an actual tradition", believing that such a working theory would "account for the observed archaeological facts of the beginnings of Mycenaean civilization".

If there really is a correlation between scepticism towards Classical Greek sources and a "Euro-centric" political or ideological agenda, such correlation ought have been stronger between 1850 and World War Two – that is, when the stress on the links between culture and ethnicity was more dominant. But, instead, diffusionist theories about the "Eastern" origins of the Aegean civilisations were stronger in Evans' (certainly more "Euro-centric") times than they are today.

This brings us to another claim, namely that the Egyptian (and Eastern) contribution to Greek culture has been neglected because of "racist biases". Here I only mention Jon-Christian Billigmeier's Ph.D. dissertation, *Kadmos and the possibility of a Semitic presence in Helladic Greece* (1976). Billigmeier argues that the Greeks (and the Romans) believed that "Semites" settled in Greece in earlier times. Before any of the Black Athena volumes had been published, Billigmeier already advocated both of Bernal's main claims: first, that Greek myths can be used as a source for the Bronze Age; second, that a revisionist (i.e. racist) school arose in the 19th century, which denied "any Phoenician influence on Greece before the Iron Age, and any presence of Semitic *blood* in the Greek population in any period" (1976, *vii*; emphasis on "blood" in the original). Among the most relevant features of such works is the claim to be pursuing a "race-free" view of culture, while at the same time assuming that modern categories such as "Semites" and "Blacks" were perceived in the same way in antiquity. Interest in race issues may have faded since the 1940s, but it is surely stronger today than it was in the Classical world. As Bruce Trigger remarks (2006, 484), "there is no evidence that in their interpretation of archaeological data archaeologists today are less influenced by the milieu in which they live than they were formerly". I believe it safe to describe Bernal's ideas as being part of a trend emerging between the 1960s and 1980s, but especially popular after the publication

of Edward Said's "Orientalism" (1979), which has led to a sort of "Saidist" archaeology that attempts to deconstruct concepts of ethnicity and culture as modern creations, while at the same point projecting certain modern attitudes into the past. Recent scholarship has progressively emphasised the "multi-layered, slippery, negotiable characteristics of ethnicity" (Stoddart & Cifani 2012, 1), but choice of what has to be discarded or retained as a productive working tool seems to be rather mercurial, and an author's agenda is likely to play a role in this cherry-picking process.

This résumé of previous and current scholarship is in no way intended to be exhaustive. My aim was simply to highlight a few general tendencies. Although some of the material selected plays an important role in shaping a scholar's conclusions, a wide variety of positions exists even among those dealing with the same type of sources, and the picture should not be simplified artificially.

1.3 CHRONOLOGY

Chronology is a fundamental issue for the study of Egyptian-Aegean contacts. The possible implications of the presence of Aegean pottery in Egypt were recognised by Petrie and Evans (1894, 326) even before the latter's excavations at Knossos. Synchronisation with Egypt has long been fundamental to attempt to establish an absolute chronology for the Eastern Mediterranean, because Egyptian written records have the advantage of often being contemporary with the events they mention (Muhly 2010, 7). However, Bietak's discoveries at Tell ed-Dab'a/Avaris and Spyridon Marinatos' excavation on Santorini/Thera made it necessary to reconsider the related chronologies of Egypt and the Aegean. Before discussing their synchronisation, a brief general description of Aegean and Egyptian chronologies is desirable.

The relative chronology of ancient Egypt is originally based on Manetho's *Aegyptiaka* (ca. 300 B.C.), a historical work in which the Egyptian kings are divided in thirty "dynasties". Manetho's dynasties did not correspond to bloodlines, but started and ended whenever the historian perceived some sort of discontinuity; their use by modern scholarship must be understood as being largely conventional. Within the dynasties, the lengths of many reigns are preserved in both Manetho and ancient king lists, but these dates are far from reliable. Dynasties have in turn been grouped by modern scholars into historical phases; after an initial stage known as "Early Dynastic" comprising the 1st and 2nd Dynasty, there are three major periods known respectively as Old, Middle and New Kingdom, separated by as many "intermediate periods" (First, Second and Third

Intermediate Period); Intermediate Periods are generally understood as phases of fragmentation of the state and a break in the functioning of its institutions. The Third Intermediate Period is succeeded by the Late Period, whose conclusion with the conquest by Alexander the Great is generally considered to mark the end of indigenous and autonomous ancient Egyptian history.

For the second half of the second millennium B.C., the Egyptian and Assyrian chronologies are generally regarded as the most reliable (Vera Müller 2006, 204), but for other periods their relative strengths are not so clear. For instance, the situation during the Second Intermediate Period (1700-1550 B.C.), is still controversial (e.g. Ryholt 1997, 184-204; Bourriau 2003, 172; Bennet 2005; Moeller & Marouard 2011, 108-109). During this period, Lower Egypt was ruled by foreign dynasties, the 14th and the 15th with their residence in Avaris (here, 3.2.2). These ethnically foreign rulers, known with their Hellenised name Hyksos (from *ḥkꜣw-ḥꜣswt*, “Princes of foreign land”), possibly had an Asiatic origin. Meanwhile, Upper Egypt was ruled by the indigenous 17th Dynasty. At the beginning of 18th Dynasty, Egypt was reunited under local rulers, an event which signals the beginning of the New Kingdom; this is usually regarded to have happened under king Ahmose (1550-1525 B.C.).

Absolute chronology, as opposed to relative chronology, is the attempt to date archaeological contexts and objects in relation to modern calendars. This objective is sought by means of two principal approaches: archaeological-historical and science-based dating (Manning 2010, 18). One opportunity is provided by occasional records of astronomical phenomena, whose occurrence can be dated accurately; nevertheless, this only works when the geographical location in which the observation was made is known. The possibilities of relying on more scientific methods first arose with the development of radiocarbon dating from the 1950s onwards. However, only with the beginning of the Late Period in 664 B.C. does Egyptian absolute chronology become reliable. Whenever earlier dates are mentioned, there is a margin of error of about 30 years (see the chart at the end of this chapter).

A few years after the excavations in Knossos began, a tripartite frame (with a total of 9 divisions) similar to the Egyptian one was adopted for Minoan prehistory (Evans 1906). The Neolithic period is followed by Early, Middle, and Late Bronze Age phases, which are differentiated in the mainland, in Crete and in the islands respectively as Helladic, Minoan and Cycladic. As in Egypt, this timeframe must be understood as being purely conventional, lest it generates the false impression of a perfectly parallel, unilinear

evolution among the different parts of the Aegean (Manning 2010, 12). All these phases are, however, characterised by sets of shared stylistic traits in the artefacts, especially pottery. These material remains have been ordered into a chronological sequence by stratigraphy, or by stylistic developments suggested by their similarities. A different classification, introduced by Nicholas Platon (1961), is based on the development of the Cretan palaces: around the beginning of MM IB, the phase conventionally known as Pre-Palatial terminates when Crete's early palaces appear at sites such as Phaistos and Malia. The destruction of these palaces in MM II, and the building of new ones in MM III and LM I, marks the Neo-Palatial period. On the mainland, meanwhile, the end of the Middle Helladic saw the appearance of the civilisation we now call Mycenaean, which the decipherment of Linear B has revealed to be linguistically Greek. A second wave of destruction in the island follows at the end of LM IB, but the palace of Knossos seems to have still been in use as late as LM II, when strong cultural features from the Mycenaean mainland, especially the use of the Greek Linear B writing, are present in the island (see 3.2.2 and 4.2).

I have mentioned that Egypt provided the first evidence for a plausible dating of Aegean cultural phases when Petrie used Aegean finds to locate Schliemann's Mycenaeans in the frame of the Egyptian dynasties (MacGillivray 2000, 79-80). Already in 1890 Petrie could write that the earlier (i.e. Pre-Homeric) stages of Greek history could only be dated through Aegean finds in Egypt (Flinders Petrie 1890, 260). Evans followed quickly with a correlation between Minoan (i.e. Cretan) and Egyptian cultural phases. Dateable links have increased as new material has been discovered, especially Aegean pottery in Egypt and Egyptian inscribed objects in Crete and mainland Greece. While correlations are complicated by several problems, such as mistakes in identifying the geographical provenance of artefacts (Phillips 2008, I, 31) and issues of stratigraphy, they can still be used productively (e.g. Höflmayer 2007). I discuss the topic of the archaeological context especially in chapter 4.

As dating techniques have become more accurate, the Aegean chronology has become progressively detached from Egyptian (and Eastern Mediterranean), which had mainly been built on written documents, and drew nearer to the chronologies developed for European contexts by means of C-14 and other science-based methods (e.g. Manning 2010, 20-24).

Until the late 1980s, the so-called Traditional Chronology for the Egyptian-Aegean synchronization was generally accepted. According to it, the LM IA/LH I stretched beyond

the Hyksos period and into the earlier part of the Egyptian 18th Dynasty (hence lasting between 1600 and 1500 B.C.). Betancourt (1990) and Manning (1991) subsequently proposed to push the beginning of the Late Bronze Age to the earlier part of the 17th century B.C., primarily because of the new dating of the eruption of Thera to 1628 B.C. According to this interpretation, LM IA would lie entirely within the Hyksos period (e.g. Hardy & Renfrew 1990). As long as the Tell ed-Dab‘a paintings were dated to the Second Intermediate Period, their apparent LM IA style was thought to confirm this “Revised Chronology” (Bietak 1992). Now that they have later been dated to the 15th century B.C., this is no longer the case, as they are clearly later than LM IA.

An important way to synchronise the different archaeological sites in the Eastern Mediterranean is by using the radiochemical technique of Neutron Activation Analysis (NAA) to reveal the specific provenance of volcanic material (Bichler et al. 2002). An international group of scholars has attempted the synchronisation of the different available materials (e.g. Bietak & Czerny 2004), giving birth to the project “Synchronization of Civilizations in the Eastern Mediterranean Region in the 2nd Millennium B.C.” NAA was used to analyse hundreds of pumice finds from archaeological sites with volcanic material in the Eastern Mediterranean; pumice “can act as a time mark, giving a *datum post quem* for the deposition of the pumice bearing strata” (Sterba et al. 2010, 293).

1.4 THE NAMES OF AEGEAN PEOPLES AND LOCATIONS

Although there are still some controversies about the names through which Aegean peoples and localities were known in Egypt, it is necessary to take a position about them before starting a study that uses the written evidence for contacts.

1.4.1 KEFTIU

Keftiu is the most common among the Egyptian names traditionally associated with the Aegean. This is not the place to examine all the alternative identifications that have been advanced; I agree with Vercoutter and those who follow him in recognising it as the Egyptian name for Crete. The earliest attestation of a term resembling Keftiu is in a 12th Dynasty stele (Cairo CG 20539) dated to the reign of Sesostri III (ca. 1850-1800 B.C.); this document mentions a “priest of Horus Kefti” (*hm ntr hr kfti*). Links between Egyptian gods and foreign places are known, but the lack of an appropriate determinative does not allow us to decide whether this is a geographical term or not (Vercoutter 1956, 37), so I leave it out from further discussion. A second early mention is in the text known as the

Admonitions of Ipuwer, probably composed in the late Middle Kingdom (Enmarch 2008, 18-24). The mention of “the Land of Keftiu” in one passage (discussed in chapter 4) might be a later addition. The attestations of the term are mostly concentrated during the 18th Dynasty, which corresponds to the peak level of contacts according to the archaeological evidence. After Amenhotep IV the use of “Keftiu” seems to lose consistency, to disappear during the 20th Dynasty (above, 1.2.2).

Notwithstanding the objections mentioned in 1.2.4, the identification with Crete during the 18th Dynasty is supported by several facts. First, there is the association with the “tribute bearers” in Thebes who so strongly resemble Evans’ Minoans. Besides having a “Minoan” aspect, these people are often depicted carrying items for which Minoan parallels are known (Wachsmann 1987, 49-77). Moreover, the word Keftiu seems to be a “heading” for the list of Aegean localities in the Kom el-Heitan statue base, together with Tanaya (1.4.3); if the latter indicates the Greek mainland, Keftiu can be believed to designate Crete.

1.4.2 TINAYA/TANAYA AND AḤḤIYĀWA

The name Tinaya (or Tanaya) features in a few Egyptian sources, most of which are geographical lists whose arrangement seems rather obscure (Haider 1988, 11). In the Kom el-Heitan list, this word appears as *tī-nʒ-ii-w* (= *tnj*; Edel & Görg 2005, 167) in the upper left corner of the front of statue base En, together with Keftiu. It is not unreasonable to interpret them both as “headings” for the other names in the list, which includes at least three places in continental Greece (Mycenae, Nafplio and Messenia), and possibly a fourth, if we accept that “*di-qa-ê-s*” can be identified with Thebes (Edel 1988, 30-35), as I am inclined to do. It is thus possible that “Tanaya” was a name for the Peloponnese, or at least for a portion of it (Haider 1988, 8). There is a clear similarity with the word Danaans (Δαναοί) one of the collective names that Homer uses for the Greeks alongside “Achaean” and “Argives”; the equivalence between Greek /d/ and /t/ in hieroglyphic transcriptions is also attested for other words (Haider 1988, 73). Another relevant mention is in the Annals of Thutmose III, in which the “princes of Tinaya” are said to have brought a vessel of “Cretan (Keftiu) workmanship” (here, 3.3.2); here both Keftiu and Tinaya are written with the determinative for “foreign country”. A further mention has been recently found on the fragment of a statue base from Amenhotep III’s mortuary complex in Thebes (Sourouzian & Stadelmann 2005); on the other side the name “Iuna” appears, perhaps the first recorded instance of the later “Ionia”.

It is impossible to decide whether the Egyptians regarded “Tinaya” as a political or geographical entity. In some sources it is described as an actor engaged in Egypt’s foreign policy (3.3.2), a fact that would support the first interpretation. It is also possible, however, that a political entity was named after a broader geographical area of which it was part, just like “America” today is commonly used as both the name of a country and of a continent.

A related issue is the land of “Aḥḥiyāwa” mentioned in some contemporary Hittite sources. This entity appears in a few documents, and is often assumed to be linked to Homer’s Achaeans (Ἀχαιοί); according to most interpretations, it possibly designates a major/hegemonic centre in the Peloponnese, maybe Mycenae itself (e.g. Helck 1995, 43). This would be consistent with the fact that term primarily appears during Amenhotep III’s reign (Cline 2009, 41). It is interesting that Homer uses “Danaans” and “Achaeans” interchangeably, and that some degree of overlapping between the Aḥḥiyāwa of the Hittites and the Tanaya of the Egyptians cannot be ruled out (Sourouzian & Stadelman 2005, 83). If so, both the Egyptians and the Hittites chose one among two roughly equivalent names designating the same land (perhaps not unlikely Thailand and Siam in the 20th century).

1.4.3 ISLES IN THE MIDDLE OF THE GREAT GREEN AND OTHER NAMES

The “Isles in the middle of the Great Green” (*iww ḥry(w)-ib nw w3d-wr*) are associated to the Aegean “tribute-bearers” in Rekhmirê’s tomb, along with “Keftiu”, and are mentioned by various sources well into the 19th Dynasty. The “Great Green” (*w3d-wr*) was originally a generic name for the sea. In Ramesside times the “Isles” are mentioned as one of the places of origin of the “Sea Peoples”. Although it seems clear that Cyprus is not included among the “isles”, since it is sometimes mentioned separately as Isy, there is no agreement on whether Crete is one of them (for the relation between Keftiu and Isy, see Quack 1996). It seems conceivable to me that this is a geographical expression, as opposed to “Keftiu”, which would be a political/cultural one, perhaps circumscribed within the former. It has also been proposed that the “Isles” are actually a part of the Delta, where an Aegean “colony” was established (Duhoux 2003). I find this view untenable, since there is no evidence for such colony.

There are a couple more names sometimes associated with Crete or other Aegean locations. A link between the land of Menus (*mnws*) and Crete, first proposed by William Albright (1934, 9-10), mostly relies on its similarity with the name of the mythical king Minos. It first appears in the Tale of Sinuhe, thus being earlier (12th Dynasty) than Keftiu

or Tanaya (Vercoutter 1956, 176). Since the evidence linking this word with the Aegean does not seem sufficient to draw any conclusions (e.g. Haider 1988, 30; Schneider 2000, 267-268), I leave it out of the present work.

Haunebu(t), attested since very early times, possibly designated different things according to the period (Vercoutter 1948). Erik's Iversen's (1987) suggestion that the expression could have an ethnic sense was violently attacked by Alessandra Nibbi (1988) who argued for a purely geographical meaning. In either case, the link with the Aegean remains speculative.

1.5 ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOURCES AND INVISIBLE MEDIA

Some considerations about the archaeological evidence are also necessary here. A number of the most important sources are discussed in later chapters in connection to specific issues. In the general conclusions they are reviewed concisely in order to see whether they can reveal something beyond the topics I treat the three main chapters. Here I confine myself to a couple of points.

First, a global perspective on the distribution of the Aegyptiaca in the Aegean already reveals something. For the LM/LH I-II period we have almost 70 Egyptian objects in Crete but just about a dozen on the mainland. Other facts, which I discuss in the text, seem to suggest that well into the 15th century B.C. contacts may have passed through Crete, which exerted a selection on what would proceed forward to the rest of the Aegean. Subsequently, Crete seems progressively to have lost its prominent position by LH/LM IIIB (Cline 2009, 41).

Second, there is the issue of modes of interaction which may have left no trace in the archaeological record (above, 1.1). It seems likely that there was a trade in raw materials, but very little survives (such as the ostrich eggs from some Aegean sites; e.g. Cline 2009 237). The possibility that perishable goods, both worked and unworked, were exchanged can be relevant not only for understanding trade but also for the circulation of motifs, ideas, technology, and other aspects of human behaviour. The spread of some motifs, for instance, may be linked to the circulation of textiles.

There is some evidence for a trade in textiles between Crete and Egypt in relation to the "Keftiu vessels" (3.4.1). Moreover, there are some indications of Aegean weavers working in Egypt. The earliest evidence dates from the Middle Kingdom. During his excavations at 12th Dynasty Kahun, Petrie found some waste of spun wool of different colours (Petrie, Griffith & Newberry 1890, 28), a material that seems not to have been

worked in Egypt at the time. In a modest grave at the nearby New Kingdom site of Gurob, Brunton and Engelbach found what Elizabeth Barber (1992, 315) describes as “a low-whorl spindle of European – presumably Aegean – form, but made of local Egyptian material”. A similar whorl was found in another tomb from the same site (Grave 600), together with Aegean-related pottery. Barber (1992, 315) considers the presence of weavers from abroad the most likely explanation for these finds, suggesting that, along with the imported foreign textiles, the work of such foreign women may “be the source of some of the Aegean designs we see in Egypt”. It is noteworthy that more evidence of “northern-style textile crafts” comes from another site where Aegean pottery has been found in remarkable quantities, namely Amarna. Here some more pieces of wool have been found (Pendlebury et al. 1951, 109), and I cannot help agreeing with Barber (1992, 352) when she says that representations from Amarna show an interest for a kind of textiles quite different from those traditionally seen in Egyptian art. Although I do not believe that there is evidence for Aegean “colonies” or even “neighbourhoods” in Amarna, there is circumstantial evidence to believe that some Aegean workers could have been living there. Like in many pre-modern societies, the manufacture of textiles in the Bronze Age Aegean was an activity practiced in most households (e.g. Papadopoulou 2012, 57-63), so that a large share of the population would be exposed to some of its stages.

Not only did production of fine textiles appear earlier than other forms of more durable art in several societies, but it was also possibly linked to oral forms of expression. The production of patterned textiles is a highly skilled technique that requires much practice and the ability to memorise a great deal of numerical and colour-related information. Modern ethnographic comparisons suggest that an early way to commit such a quantity of information to memory was through “memorized, rhythmic chants that allowed weavers to both remember patterns and to reproduce them as frequently as required” (Tuck 2006, 539).

In many societies, the salient form of artistic expression was verbal: in areas where Indo-European languages are known to have been spoken, there is a significant “discrepancy in sophistication between plastic and verbal art at the dawn of our documentation” (Watkins 1996, 179). Properly speaking, Egypt had no epic, but this does not mean that the Egyptians lacked all the features we traditionally attribute to this form (Baines 2007, 56). Literary motifs can manifest themselves in the figurative arts of peoples with different linguistic backgrounds. During the Sukhothai period of Thai art

(14th-15th century AD), poetic, non-canonical descriptions from Indian Pali texts were translated into sculpture, for instance when representing the Buddha's arms like "elephant trunks" (Celli 2010, 74). These influences were linked to the adoption of Theravāda Buddhism from India, but the diffusion of other clusters of ideas, for instance a military/heroic ideology linked to a particular kind of warfare (below, 3.7), may bring similar aesthetic products with it. The transmission from an oral to a visual form was not unknown in Egypt. For the New Kingdom (mainly the Ramesside period) we have a variety of papyri and ostraka in which animals are depicted to satirise the human world (Brunner-Traut 1968). These materials arguably originated from "an oral context of transmission, presentation, and interaction" (Baines 2007, 161). The subject of parallels between tales and motifs as attested in literature and the visual arts is extremely complicated. Watrous (2007), for instance, notes the analogies between some events depicted in the Miniature Frieze from Thera (here, 3.4.2) and those of the *Odyssey*. The "night raid" in the tenth book of the *Iliad* (Doloneia) and that in the tenth book of the Mahābhārata (Sauptikaparvan) have parallels in the Semitic world (Garbutt 2006), once again showing the possibilities of transmission between very diverse cultures. To attempt to disentangle the various possible contributions could prove to be a vain endeavour, but instances of borrowed motifs can be productively isolated and explored. By exploring the reasons behind their choices, together with their developments in a different cultural environment, we might be able to expand our discussion beyond the modes of interaction and disclose some previously neglected aspects of the cultures involved.

1.6 SOME GENERAL ASPECTS OF THE PRESENT WORK

This research is divided in three chapters, one for each of the main subjects I discuss: medicine, warfare, and rulership. Expressions like "medicine" inevitably implied our own categories, not those of the peoples under consideration. This is why, at the outset of each chapter, I define these categories and explain to what extent they can be considered appropriate for that particular context. One common risk, when dealing with specific types of evidence, is that of "monopolising" it, that is, subordinating it to a particular concern and regarding its other implications as secondary. Some may consider an imported vessel as a commodity for its own sake, while others may be more interested in the possibility of its being used for storing something and just look at it as a container. A "taxonomic" problem ensues when choosing where the discussion of a particular piece of evidence belongs: does the treatment of war wounds belong in the chapter on medicine or the

chapter on warfare? The decision that is taken is inevitably arbitrary, but it is important to keep in mind that the same material can relate to more than one problem.

The foreign derivation of an element that has been adapted to the local context can often be difficult to recognise. Even when the correspondences would seem sufficient to suggest a common origin, various explanations of its presence may also be possible. Given the right amount of wishful thinking, any feature developed independently by different cultures (analogy) can be mistaken for borrowing from another culture (homology). (I recall Colin Renfrew stating, during a lecture in Oxford, that “homology is in the eye of the beholder.”) It is impossible to establish a single rule for deciding whether we are dealing with a homology or an analogy; each case needs to be discussed separately. I have already explained (1.1) why each chapter of this work includes a cross-cultural comparison between the two areas involved, in order to better understand the mechanisms behind the adoption of foreign elements.

A methodological assumption underlying this work is that the transmission of an idea, motif, or other element should not be presumed to have taken place much earlier than when such element is first attested in both milieus, unless there are specific reasons to believe otherwise. So, an apparently Egyptian element first attested in the Aegean in Classical times will normally be treated as lying beyond chronological range of this study. Similarly, in accordance with “Occam’s razor”, the idea that the transmission took place via a third culture, geographically intermediate between Egypt and the Aegean, should only be favoured when there are specific reasons for doing so; for instance, if an element appearing in Egypt and the Aegean is attested in Syria only in a later period, there should be no reason to presume that it had been acquired through Syria, instead of being directly transmitted. On the other hand, the appearance of a motif might reveal whether it has been borrowed directly or not, like in Weingarten’s (1991) discussion on the “Minoan genius”.

Although my work is not strictly speaking source-based, that is, based on a catalogue of typologically or geographically connected artefacts, my choice of topics has been at least partly dictated by the existence of one or more promising pieces of evidence from which to begin my inquiries, such as the references to Crete in the Egyptian medical literature. By contrast, I do not start from any particular view on how human behaviour is organised. For instance, there is no link with the tripartite Indo-European functions advocated by Dumézil and his followers: even if such a division were definitely established for the linguistically Indo-European elites of the Mycenaean world, it surely does not apply to the other actors in this work.

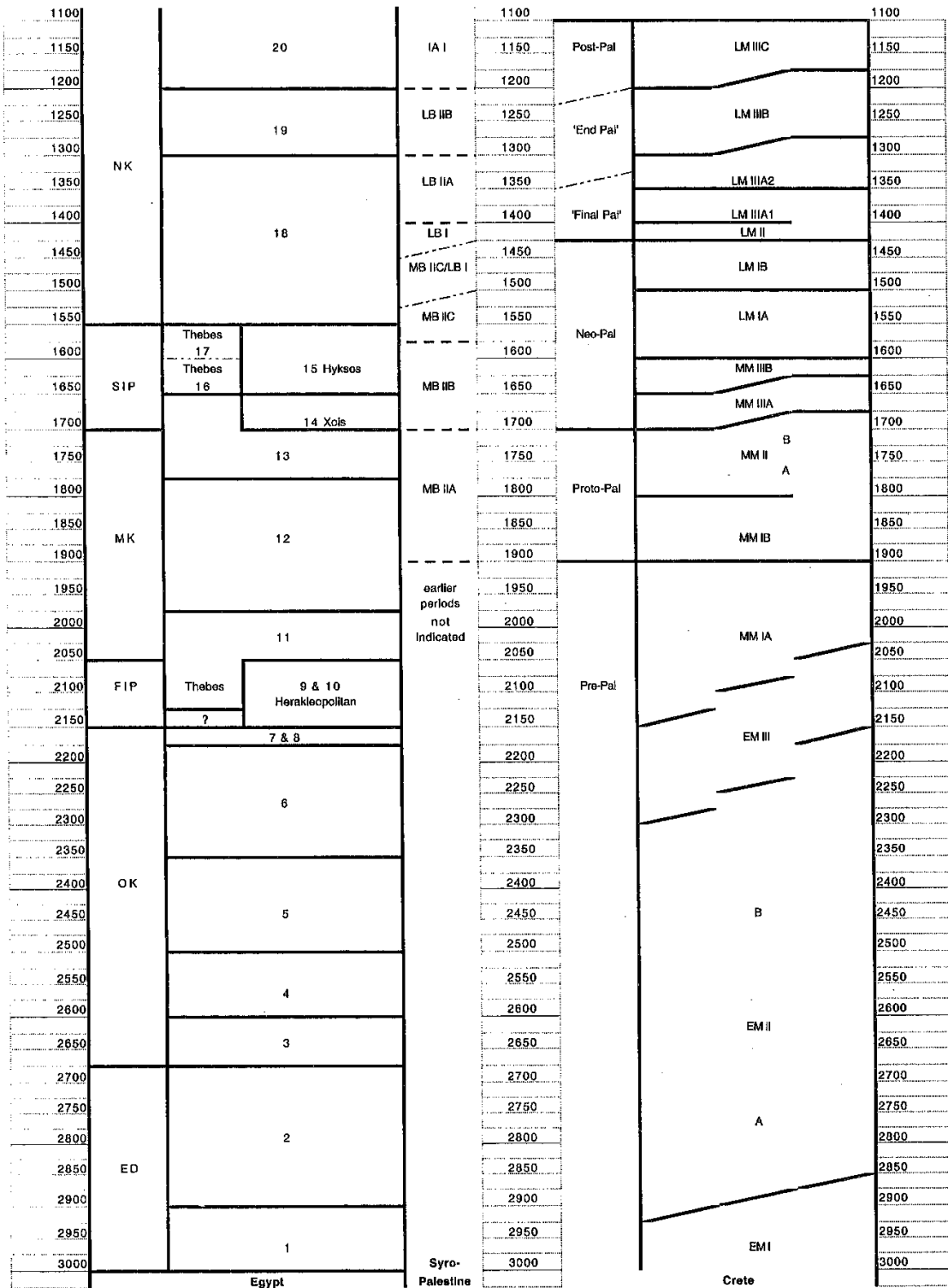


Fig. 1.1. Chronological chart of Egypt and Minoan Crete during the Bronze Age. After Phillips (2008 I, 23). Throughout the present work a high chronology is adopted.

2 – BLACK ASCLEPIUS, WHITE THOT

THE TRANSMISSION OF MEDICAL LORE BETWEEN EGYPT AND THE BRONZE AGE AEGEAN

2.1 INTRODUCTION

Since scholars first associated the Egyptian word “Keftiu” with Sir Arthur Evans’ “Minoans”, the presence of this term in a couple of New Kingdom medical papyri has generated speculation (e.g. Bossert 1931), and the literature mentioning or discussing this issue has considerably increased especially since the 1970s (Haider 2004, 411). Different explanations have been suggested for this Egyptian interest in Minoan healing, ranging from a remarkable psychological effectiveness of Minoan incantations (Arnott 1999a, 6), to a posited resistance displayed by Cretans to certain diseases (Vercoutter 1954, 88), or “a reputation for being masters in charming away illness” (Press 1990, 167). Although it seems believable that there was a reciprocal exchange of medical knowledge (Arnott 2002a, 15), trying to investigate Egyptian-Aegean relations on the basis of only a couple of mentions is problematic for several reasons. To begin with, no medical texts predating the Hippocratic corpus are known from the Aegean area, and this absence conceals from us one part of the picture. On the other hand, the Egyptian documents that survive to this day are undoubtedly just a fragment of those that existed in antiquity, and it is likely that many practices were never written down at all. We do not even know whether such texts were promoted by official institutions, or whether some at least were handbooks composed, kept, and consulted by individual practitioners (Westendorf 1999, 4). Hence, the limitations of our sources inevitably leave an enormous amount of practices related to medicine in the dark.

The definition of “medicine”, we should remember, is still a matter of debate when dealing with pre-modern cultures. This chapter deals with everything connected with the maintenance or enhancement of human health. Some mortuary practices are also mentioned here, since in Egypt the dead were believed to share to some extent the necessities of the living (e.g. Ritner 1993, 56).

One may ask whether the occurrence of the word Keftiu in the Egyptian medical literature is something exceptional, or whether, for a certain time at least, there was an interaction of some kind in the medical sphere between Egypt and the Aegean. The aim of the present chapter is to find out whether evidence of a different kind may add to the discussion.

In Classical times, the Greeks openly admired the medical skills of the Egyptians. The biographers of ancient Greek sages, including Hippocrates, often included in their narrations unlikely travels to Egypt, so that these wise men could benefit from Egyptian knowledge (Sauneron 1988, 119). Hippocratic medicine shows several parallels with earlier Egyptian texts; for instance, a potion that includes the milk of a woman who has borne a male child is prescribed to determine whether a woman will conceive both in the Berlin papyrus (3038) and in a Hippocratic text (Ghalioungui 1963, 126-7). Representatives of the three principal schools of medical thought at Cos, Cnidus, and Croton all enjoyed relations with Egyptian scholars (Halioua 2005, 184). The earliest Greek literary reference to Egyptian medicine is found in the *Odyssey* (iv, 219-232.; translation from Dawe 1993):

Then Helen, born of Zeus, thought of something else: she at once put into the wine from which they were drinking a drug against sorrow, against anger, one that brought oblivion of all ills. Whoever swallowed it down, once it had been dissolved in the mixing bowl, could not let fall a tear from his cheeks for a day, not even if his mother and father died, not even if people put to death his brother or his own son in front of him and he saw it with his own eyes. Such were the drugs for the mind which the daughter of Zeus had, excellent ones which Polydamna had presented her with, the wife of Thon, a woman of Egypt where the corn-giving earth bears very many drugs, many of them excellent compounds, and many of them harmful; each man is a doctor knowledgeable above all men, for they belong to the family of Paeon.

There are some noteworthy elements in these verses. The name of “Thon” (Θῶν), king of Egypt, differs from the other foreign names in the same book of the *Odyssey*, in that it is linked to Egypt also in other sources (RE VIA, 330). The name of Paeon, the Homeric healer of the gods, is already attested in the Linear B tablets as *pa-ja-wo-ne* (KN V 52.2; *DMic.* II, 69). A slightly different variant of this passage, with “each man is a doctor, for *Apollo* granted them the ability to cure”, seems to belong to a later redaction, since *Apollo* is not a healing deity elsewhere in the Homeric poems (Dawe 1993, 174). *Apollo* and Paeon become more or less merged in later times (Burkert 1985, 145). These verses may thus evoke a tradition that was already well established when the poem was written down in its current form. How old this reputation of Egyptian medicine among the Greeks actually was, however, remains an open question.

We know that Egyptian physicians enjoyed a high reputation in the Eastern Mediterranean during the Late Bronze Age. Foreign dignitaries often came to ask for their advice, and the Amarna letters reveal that they could be sent to foreign courts when

requested, especially in cases involving Hittite kings asking for the aid of Egyptian physicians (e.g. Zaccagnini 1983, 247-248 and 250-253). It is, of course, conceivable that the motif of the Egyptian healers was introduced in the Greek world during the so-called Orientalising period, along with a broad flow of Eastern influences (Burkert 1992). The possibility of a continuity since the Bronze Age cannot, however, be ruled out (Arnott 2002a, 15). Thus, it is legitimate to ask whether the Minoans and Mycenaeans shared their neighbours' and successors' esteem for Egyptian medicine.

As stated above, in order to assess the possibility of a transmission of medical knowledge beyond the couple of explicit references that survive, we should examine whether further evidence is available. There are diverse sources for investigating medical practice in the past: written documents, representations of healers and diseased people, human remains, medical instruments, possible containers for medical preparations, and also other materials that do not appear to be so closely related to the subject, such as amulets aiming to preserve or restore health.

Practices and beliefs borrowed from a foreign culture can be very difficult to detect; even when the correspondences would seem sufficient to suggest a common origin, various alternative explanations may also be possible, and medicine is no exception. As with any other form of knowledge, our understanding of a certain medical practice requires some knowledge of the processes which lead to its adoption. The same discovery may result from empirically acquired notions: the antiseptic properties of honey, for instance, have been noticed by cultures not in contact with each other, such as Egypt (e.g. Estes 1989, 101) and the native populations of the Amazon (e.g. da Silva Souza et al. 2004, 333). An analogy (i.e. a similar element independently developed by two different cultures) may also originate from similar background beliefs: phenomena such as "homeopathic magic" are attested worldwide and often lead to practices strongly resembling each other. George Frazer's (1926, 79-80) ethnographic record, for instance, includes cases of jaundice been treated by "transferring" the yellow colour to yellow things or creatures by magical means. Finally, the possibility that the same practice, or idea, originated by coincidence should not be excluded: Anaxagoras' theories about the cosmos were in many aspects strikingly similar to what we now believe to be the truth; although we do not know how he modelled them, we must presume that he followed methods different from those of astronomers who lived thousands of years later (McKeown 2002, 53).

The mechanisms behind the diffusion and adoption of a discovery are complex (Shortland 2002, 1). In order better to situate the discussion, the second section of this

chapter (2.2) is devoted to a concise comparison between the medical history of Egypt and the Aegean, highlighting where possible the similarities and the differences between the two areas. The third section (2.3) discusses the Egyptian medical texts which mention the Keftiu or otherwise suggest an Aegean connection. Section 2.4 deals with a peculiar type of Egyptian vessel, supposedly used for medical purposes, which was imported and apparently copied in Crete. In section 2.5 I look for additional hints of an exchange of medical practices and beliefs in relation to three contexts: drugs and herbs; magic/religious practices; and surgery (including orthopaedics).

Even when diffusion looks more likely as an explanation than an independent development, it is appropriate to consider whether it resulted from direct contact, or whether it was “mediated”. An Egyptian practice could have reached the Aegean through Asia and vice versa, without any interaction between physicians of the two areas. Thus, a divination text from the reign of Muršilis II (KUB V 6, II 57-60) reveals that the king, being ill, asked for gods (probably statues allegedly displaying healing powers; Huxley 1960, 5) from Mycenaean Greece (Aḥḥiyāwa) and Lazpaš (Lesbos? Sommer 1932, 290-291; Demir 2004) for. This is all the more remarkable since Mycenaean-Hittite contact was limited (Sherratt & Crouwel 1987; Cline 1991b), but it is also possible that the Aḥḥiyāwa statue followed another route instead of arriving directly from the Mycenaean mainland (Arnott 2002a, 17). It is, however, likely that at least some practices passed through the Levant in their way from Egypt to the Aegean and vice-versa, especially before the Late Bronze Age.

2.2 EGYPTIAN AND AEGEAN MEDICINE IN COMPARISON

In this section I present a background discussion of Egyptian and Aegean beliefs and practices related to medicine, in order to better understand the evidence treated in sections 2.3-2.5 and its context.

2.2.1 THE EVIDENCE

WRITTEN SOURCES

Available sources for Egyptian and Aegean medicine are very different in both quantity and quality. Egypt has provided a conspicuous number of documents: about ten medical papyri survive, as well as smaller fragments and some later Demotic texts. Although medical tradition has always included much more than what has been written down, it is

undeniable that the ability to store more complex information meant that more esoteric forms of knowledge could be transmitted, increasing the belief that some categories of individuals had access to special skills or supernatural forces which they could manipulate. The distinction between literary, technical-scientific, and religious sources is an artificial one in relation to the ancient world (Formisano 2006, 222). The abundance of Egyptian documents recording medical information is by itself significant: other “technical” writings seem to have been less common in Egypt. Clement of Alexandria clearly states that, at least during the Graeco-Roman period, medical documents were considered part of religious knowledge (Ghalioungui 1963, 47). If this reflects earlier attitudes, Egyptian medical texts may thus display some of the features normally associated with religious texts, such as the use of a more specialised and archaising language, and a crystallisation of content. The latter may have obstructed the recording of practices of later origin.

Problems of language, especially related to vocabulary, make the understanding of such texts particularly problematic (*Grundriss* I, 1-2); only about 30 out of 160 plant products mentioned in the papyri have been identified (Nunn 1996, 162). Further, even words well known from other contexts may display a specialised meaning when used in a medical document.

It is unlikely that medical knowledge was ever recorded in the Linear-B context, given the more restricted use of writing, but it cannot be said whether such texts existed in one of the earlier Cretan scripts. Nevertheless, although not directly dealing with medicine, the Linear B tablets can reveal some information on the medical practices of the LBA Aegean, such as the use of medicinal plants (Milani & Carruba 1986). It has also been suggested that certain personal names may derive from terms for pathologies. For instance, *ku-jo* (KN Df 5211) may be linked to γυιός, “lame” (Grmek 1983, 37).

The medical knowledge visible in the Homeric poems should probably be considered consistent with the period when they were composed: it is difficult to believe that the poet(s) could deliberately try to archaise in this regard (Körner 1929, 3-4), since that would imply that details of ancient medical practices had survived for centuries in oral tradition. Some passages, however, apparently match evidence from the Aegean Bronze Age or find parallels the Hittite world. This may imply a certain degree of continuity linking the medical practices of Iron Age Greece with that of Late Bronze Age Aegean and Anatolia. I come back to the possible implications of this in the conclusions.

PALAEOPATHOLOGICAL SOURCES

Many acquired disorders heal or kill the patient without leaving any trace on the bones, so that it is impossible to infer anything from the skeletal remains alone (Roberts & Manchester 2010, 13). Egypt, being rich in both natural and artificial mummies, has in some cases provided evidence for such disorders (e.g. David 2008). The same is not true for the Aegean, where there are just a few sites with sufficient and diverse enough material for study (e.g. Richards & Hedges 2008). Teeth, which survive particularly well, are an extremely valuable source for diet and living conditions, albeit not for bodily diseases (Roberts & Manchester 2010, 63-64).

PICTORIAL SOURCES

Every medical culture has a different way of interpreting symptoms and conditions. The beliefs and conventions of the Egyptians, the Minoans, and the Mycenaeans may have been nearly as different from each other as they are from our own. The information apparently provided by art may be as misleading or impenetrable as the obscure terminology of the Egyptian medical texts. The often bizarre explanations proposed for the strange appearance of king Akhenaten show how controversial this material can be (e.g. Aldred & Sandison 1962, 305; N. Reeves 2001, 149-152 for a general discussion of the issue). Art, however, can often tell us something about attitudes towards diseased people and illness: among the diseases more clearly recognisable in Egyptian art are dwarfism (Dasen 1993), blindness, polio (e.g. Strouhal 1993), and possibly rickets (although the latter is controversial; Filer 1995, 20). The affected individuals could be rather successful in society. Blind people are often represented as musicians, while dwarfs and hunchbacks were on occasions depicted manufacturing gold objects, or caring for animals (Dasen 1993, 157; Weeks 1970, 163-196). Such representations may be stereotyped, but stereotypes can be “translated” into reality (blind singers are a widespread theme in folklore but also a common phenomenon). Egypt also provides representations of physicians at work, whereas there are no recognisable instances in Aegean art (Arnott 2002a, 5).

Clay votive apotropaic offerings have been found in Cretan peak sanctuaries, which were often connected with healing cults (below, 2.5.1). Some of these offerings represent human beings or parts of their bodies, sometimes deformed in order to signify some pathological condition; bisected figurines, for instance, may symbolically embody an internal disease (Arnott 1999a, 4). They were probably brought to the deity in search for assistance or as a thank-offering for a cure, and thus tell us what conditions were the most

widespread, or at least most feared. Among the conditions that may be represented are arthritis and several deformities.

MEDICAL INSTRUMENTS

Medical instruments would be a precious source for understanding the healing practices of a culture, notwithstanding the many problems connected with their interpretation (Daglio 1998, 103). Unfortunately, only one (presumed!) set is known for the Bronze Age Aegean (Arnott 1999b, 503). No instruments of unequivocally surgical nature have been found in Egypt, and the only representation, from the temple reliefs in Kom Ombo, dates to Roman times (e.g. Draycott 2012, 29-30; Fig. 2.1).

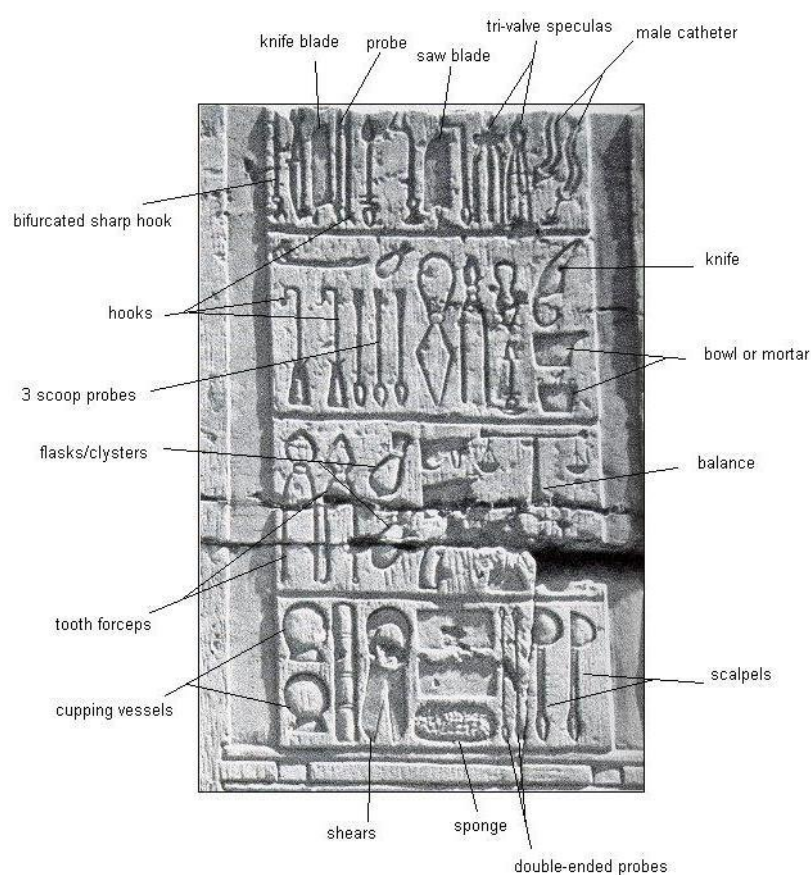


Fig. 2.1. Medical instruments. Relief in the Temple of Sobek and Horus at Kom Ombo, second century AD. After Rackow (2014).

2.2.2 ENVIRONMENT, LIFESTYLE, DISEASES

Historians long neglected disease as an influential factor in world history, but a new awareness has arisen about this subject during the last decades (Roberts 2002, 1). The diffusion of malaria, for instance, probably had dramatic repercussions on the societies of the Bronze Age Aegean (Arnott & Stuckey 2003; see below). Similar needs in different

societies may have stimulated the development of similar remedies, or prompted their adoption from abroad. Like their modern epigones, ancient travellers were probably subject to various difficulties and illnesses, when confronted by a new environment; perhaps they sought the advice of local peoples, or imitated habits which, if effective, they would later bring back home (Arnott 2002a, 14). We must first explore the ailments affecting the people we are studying if we want to understand their reactions to them.

The strength of the Egyptian sun provided vitamin D, preventing rickets; it is also likely that the people were well acclimatised and relatively immune to heatstroke and sunburn. Eye paint was sometimes worn to shield the eyes from the sun and the sand, but this was no protection against breathing the latter with the desert winds; this resulted in lung conditions, cough and headaches. Linen clothes permitted body transpiration, and wool was scarcely used (Nunn 1996, 21); women worked mainly indoors, and this may explain in part their paler complexion in Egyptian art (Filer 1995, 14), a trait shared in the Aegean. Egyptian dwellings, albeit well protected against the cold and the desert winds, were relatively small (Filer 1995, 17).

The Cretan climate was probably wetter and less seasonal than today. The change towards a “Mediterranean” climate seems to have developed gradually during the Bronze Age (Rackham & Moody 1994, 39), but it was well established by the LBA. Even today, winters are rainy and can be frosty, while strong winds mitigate the summer heat. A similar shift towards a warmer, dryer climate seems to have developed in mainland Greece as well (Bouzek 1969, 85-6). The palaces of Crete and Mainland Greece had relatively high standards of hygiene, but people belonging to the lower strata lived crowded without hygienic services (Arnott 2002a, 4).

Herodotus described the Egyptians as being, with the exception of the Libyans, “the healthiest of peoples” (*Her. II, 77*). Some studies indicate a life expectancy of around 29.5 years for those who had already survived to 15 (Samuel & Bagnall 1971). The estimated life expectancy in Minoan Crete progressively decreased from the Early Minoan (about 35 years) to the Late Minoan period: 31 years for men, 28 for women (McGeorge 1988, 48; 1987, 408). Women, who had to undergo the stress of childbirth, were exposed to great dangers; peak female mortality in pre-modern cultures always coincided with the peak period of reproductive activity (Roberts & Manchester 2010, 37-38).

The spread of infectious diseases seems to have accelerated after the Neolithic (Roy Porter 1997, 15-17). Domestication of animals was one of the foremost reasons behind the spread of contagious diseases: tuberculosis, smallpox, influenza, and a wide range of other

diseases adapted with great speed to their new human hosts. In the LBA, sheep, goats, pigs and cattle had all been present in Egypt and the Aegean for several millennia (Holl 1998, 85-6; T. Wilkinson 2003). Crowded environments and contact with animals concurred in making “civilised” life progressively unhealthier (McGeorge 1987, 407): before the nineteenth century, cities were great “consumers of people” (Mattingly 2006, 334), unable to maintain their population level without attracting migrants from the countryside. Small dwellings also favoured the spread of flies and other insects proliferating in rubbish. Compared to the Near East, however, both Egypt (Trigger 2003, 100-101 and 111) and the Aegean (Carothers & McDonald 1979; Bennet 2013, 241-246) had a lower population density, and this would have limited pollution.

Tuberculosis was a common threat. Infection could be passed to humans through bovine milk and meat (McGeorge 1988, 54), or by living in close contact with cattle. Milk and dairy products were frequently consumed in both the Aegean (Wendorf & Schild 1998, 101) and Egypt, a feature that is not culturally universal. The diffusion of tuberculosis is confirmed by human remains (Buikstra, Baker & Cook 1993, 27-30), although the Aegean evidence is restricted (Rackham & Moody 1996, 97-8). There are no explicit references to “plague” in the Egyptian medical texts (Nunn 1996, 75); the Hittites, though, blamed the Egyptians for the plague that devastated their empire in the 14th century B.C. Nothing can be said about epidemics in prehistoric times (Rackham & Moody 1996, 97-8).

Malaria was only one among many threats of parasitic origin, yet it is estimated that it took more victims than all the other illnesses in human history combined. Papyri tell us nothing about malaria, but protozoa and antigens of Plasmodium have been found on mummies dating back as far as the Predynastic. The selective pressure operated by malaria is evident in the spread of haematic afflictions such as β -thalassemia and S haemoglobin (Roberts & Manchester 2010, 219). Studies of the incidence of malaria in the Bronze Age Aegean, and its consequences are still far from being reliable, but the pressure seems to have decreased after the Middle Bronze Age (Arnott & Stuckey 2003).

The diet of sedentary peoples was less varied from that of hunter gatherers, with many consequences in vitamin and other deficiencies. The ease of transportation exploiting the Nile meant that several kinds of foodstuff could be brought everywhere in the country, and the Egyptians apparently enjoyed a more varied diet than most contemporary peoples (Filer 1995, 18-21). It is not easy, however to assess the differences between the various levels of society. The rich were exposed to the risk of arthritis and gout through overindulgence in wine drinking and meat consumption, but it is uncertain to what degree

the representation of obese individuals is influenced by stylistic conventions. The consumption of honey probably increased the incidence of diabetes. It is unclear whether there were, at least in certain contexts or periods, taboos against eating certain foods, such as fish (Brewer & Friedman 1989, 17-19) or pork (Miller 1990; Pérez Vásquez 2005, 137-138).

Malnutrition seems to have been common in Crete (Rackham & Moody 1996, 98), and among those buried at Armenoi the composition of the diet seems not to have differed widely between the higher strata of society and the poorer classes (Tzedakis, Martlew & Jones 2008, xix). Individuals belonging to the elite, however, are overrepresented in the burial record (e.g. Richards & Hedges 2008, 229). Crete always had a great variety of indigenous herbs and vegetables (Rackham & Moody 1994, 53), which were likely employed in cooking as well. The small distances between different habitats and the variety of the landscape meant that different products could be found nearby.

In Egypt, the condition of teeth seems to have been better among the lower classes, while the situation in the royal mummies of the New Kingdom is appalling (Filer 1995, 94-102). One of the reasons for this may have been the larger consumption of carbohydrates and foodstuffs containing sugars (such as honey), which promote a rapid growth of plaque (Roberts & Manchester 2010, 71-73). The large amount of contaminants in bread, especially sand and grit, may be responsible for an exceptional wearing down of teeth (attrition). It seems that the Minoan and Mycenaean elites had only slightly worn teeth (Sakellarakis & Sapouna-Sakellarakis 1997, 298-9), perhaps because there were fewer contaminants than in Egypt. Yet, together with life expectancy, dental health progressively deteriorated during the Minoan period, possibly because of increased consumption of carbohydrates, which could be stored more easily (McGeorge 1987, 410).

Snake and scorpion bites were a constant threat for the Egyptians. Diodorus (*Bibl. Hist.* I, 35; 87) says that ichneumons (mongooses) were venerated for their ability to catch snakes. The treatment of the bite of a venomous animal was normally considered beyond what “practical medicine” could achieve. Magical spells against snakes date back to the Pyramid Texts. In Crete, scorpions live under stones, and the *rogalidha* spider, similar to a black-widow, has been known since antiquity; both are attested in Minoan glyptic (e.g. CMS II.1 250b; CMS II.2 124a). Most of the venomous snakes of Europe belong to the viperinae subfamily. Snakes feature in Aegean art, and perhaps had apotropaic connotations (Astour 1965, 240).

Because of the nature of the documentation, almost everything we know about sport and physical exercise among the Egyptians is restricted to the elites (e.g. Decker 1992, 60). The question relevant here is how the relation between physical practice and health was perceived. Sports and related competitions are developments of a tradition going back to the Ancient Near East and, ultimately, to prehistoric times (Decker 1995, 15). Clearly, there were differences in the practices of the different peoples and the way in which it affected their lives. A comparison between the “ideal” human shape in Egyptian and Aegean art may provide some insights into the objectives they aimed to achieve with their body care, such as the ideal slenderness and pale complexion typical in the representations of young women. Nevertheless, standards in idealised representations may vary significantly according to age and status, especially when they are linked to inner qualities (below, 3.6.2).

2.2.3. IDEOLOGY

All human societies possess medical beliefs, but these vary widely among different cultures. The process leading to modern western medicine cannot be described as a linear evolution from “magic” to “science” through stages of progressively more empirical remedies. Titian, a Christian apologetic writer living centuries after the “Hippocratic revolution” wrote that ill people should rely exclusively on the supernatural; drugs being nothing but a trick invented by demons, their use would make man “the like of beasts” (Repici 2006, 88-9). In the case of medicine, there is a significant debate on how much human activity is ideologically or functionally determined. As mentioned in the introduction, similar superstitions and religious beliefs may explain the acquisition of new practices no less than actual needs and the real efficacy of a remedy.

Religious beliefs and superstitions, in a medical context, can lead to useless or even counterproductive practices, only partially compensated by placebo effects. Cow dung and urine are frequently employed in Ayurvedic medicine, since the beast is considered sacred (Porter 1997, 139).

In Egypt excrements were applied externally (or even ingested), though it is difficult to find a pharmacological explanation for this (Nunn 1996, 149). It has been argued that the Egyptian medical texts contain few remedies for dysentery and related illnesses not because these were rare, but rather because of particular Egyptian ideas about physiology. The Egyptians believed in the nefarious influence of the *ukhedu* (< *whd*, “to suffer”) entities living inside the human intestine. Such ideas perhaps had their origin in the

observation that decomposition of the body begins in the entrails. Among the many remedies against the *ukhedu* were amulets and, of course, laxatives, which recur very often in the medical papyri (Daglio 1998, 24; Fukagawa 2011, 32-33). The importance of the digestive system was widely acknowledged in the Hippocratic corpus, and may have been known since prehistoric times: several of the preparations known from Chrysokamino in Crete are related to digestive complaints (Arnott 2008, 115-116; below).

With the exception of physical traumas, such as those resulting from work accidents or combat, the patient's condition was normally explained with the intervention of supernatural entities. In Egypt, illness was considered a "pathogenic breath" coming from the outside (Bardinet 1995, 2); an idea that has sometimes been inappropriately considered a "forerunner" of our concept of virus. There is no way to know how the Minoans and Mycenaeans explained the aetiology of illnesses, though they would definitely have understood the intrusive origin of at least some of them (Arnott 2002a, 10).

If one turns to remedies, Egyptian texts show an amalgamation of magical/religious elements with pharmacological prescriptions and botanical knowledge, a mixture which may have coexisted since the dawn of Egyptian medicine (Daglio 1998, 42). The symbolic/magical implications of the ingredients are not always clear (Germer 2002; Leitz 2005). Even in a single culture, the boundaries between sacred and profane are not invariable through time; rather, their position and significance constantly changes (Assmann 1984, 1). One problem lies in the legitimacy of using our categories ("magic", "religion", "science"), when discussing thought systems so distant from our own. For the Egyptians, magic was a basic cosmic force, which however "used modes of causality and procedure that go beyond those which are understood as instrumental" (Baines, 2006, 2). We can say that the Egyptians *did* differentiate between causal relations that are instrumental, and others that go "beyond", but there was nothing illogical in their interplay: in pre-modern thought different causes could cooperate to reinforce the same result.

Egyptian medical texts progressively increase in their use of magical spells, consistently with the non-linear evolution often shown by the development of medical ideas and practice. Various explanations have been advanced for this pattern, such as a decreased confidence in humanity in general and the king in particular (Westendorf 1992, 19-20). Yet, we cannot talk of a reverse trend from scientific to magical healing, especially since we lack a full understanding of the mechanisms and ideas behind such changes.

Peter Warren (1988, 24-29) has examined Minoan iconography concerning the ritual use of plants. Many plants apparently had strong symbolic connotations (especially in

relation with fertility), which would explain their medical use (Arnott 1999a, 5). The idea of a more “rational” Mycenaean healing tradition, parallel but occasionally overlapping with that of the Minoans (Press 1990, 169), may create the false impression of a sharp geographical distinction (Arnott 2002a, 3). There is some evidence that the tripartite/trifunctional Indo-European conceptual system may also be reflected in the medicine (Mallory & Adams 1997, 376-377). According to Pindar (Third Pythian Ode, 40-55), Asklepios, the archetypal Greek healer, would heal spontaneous sores with incantations, wounds with external medications or incisions, and fevers with potions. There is no way, however, to determine whether there was a continuity from the Mycenaean age, or whether Pindar’s notions resulted from later influence, since such distinction seems to be absent in Homer and Hesiod.

The idea that illness and remedy have the same cause is another common feature of many systems. In Greek, the word φάρμακον means both “medicine” and “poison”. Apollo was the god of illnesses as much as of remedies. The same could be said about the Egyptian goddess Sekhmet, capable of healing as well as bringing a deadly wind from the desert, and who was therefore considered a patron deity of doctors. The importance of snakes in Minoan Crete has been explained in the same way (Astour 1965, above).

2.2.4 KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF HUMAN ANATOMY AND PHYSIOLOGY

Historians of medicine generally agree that an essential step towards modern medicine has been made possible by the dissection of human corpses, on a systematic scale, from the Renaissance onwards. It is evident that there is a strong connection between the knowledge of human and animal anatomy, as acquired through dissection practices, and the overall interpretation of human physiology (and medical practice in general). The means through which such knowledge has been gained may also mirror more general attitudes: many cultures display a superstitious terror of dismembering a human body. Human dissection was scarcely practiced among the Greeks and the Romans; Galen, however, often evokes human dissection as an ideal method, and he probably dissected the bodies of some exposed children (Garofalo 2002, 52-3). Nevertheless, most ancient anatomists preferred to examine animals and then to extend their conclusions to the human beings by analogy. It has been suggested that such method was shared in Egypt; Warren Dawson thus explained the fact that hieroglyphic signs representing the internal organs are “pictures of the organs of the mammals and not of the human beings” (W. Dawson 1929, 90). Such an idea, that

knowledge of animal anatomy precedes that of the human body is, however, difficult to prove.

A widespread albeit inaccurate assumption is that the mummification practices of the Egyptians endowed them with an understanding of human anatomy unparalleled among other ancient civilisations (e.g. Elliot Smith 1914, 90). The first systematic dissections we know about were indeed made in Alexandria, by Hero, during the 1st century AD; yet, they are the exception and not the rule. Mummification was something completely different from an anatomically interested dissection (Nunn 1996, 44): it was, above all, a religious practice. The particular treatment of some organs which were removed in the process allowed the embalmers to consider them as separate entities, whereas physicians did not recognise them as such, as in the case of the stomach and the intestines (Kolta & Schwarzmans-Schafhauser 2000, 85-6). Nevertheless, the overall anatomical knowledge of the embalmers was superficial. Physicians and embalmers shared the same opinion about the outstanding significance of the heart in regulating all bodily (and mental) functions (e.g. Assmann 2001, 36-39) and the lesser importance of the brain (for the living as well as the dead, whose brains were not preserved). In what way, and to what extent, embalmers passed knowledge to physicians is unclear. Egyptian anatomical and physiological knowledge probably originated from several sources (see for instance, Gordon & Schwabe 2004). Using analogy with animals as a source for anatomical knowledge would also imply a more limited understanding on how bones, nerves and flesh were positioned in relation to each other; Galen mistakenly believed that humans possessed the *rete mirabile*, a complex of arteries found in some other vertebrates (*De Hum.* VII, 12).

There are some instances in which the Minoans apparently displayed a good knowledge of human anatomy. For example, it has been suggested that the treatment of broken bones was developed empirically, possibly by shepherds used to dealing with injured animals (McGeorge 1987, 413). Yet, it is possible that healers had also other means to improve their anatomical knowledge. The Minoans may have benefited from the practice of dissecting dead bodies as part of their funerary rituals (Coulomb 1979; Warren 1981a). Such procedures might have been performed by individuals whose state of conscience was altered (by means of alcohol, psychoactive drugs or ecstatic practices) who simply did not stick to any consistent method. The Late Minoan “*kouros*” from Palaikastro, however, demonstrates a very good understanding of the musculature above and below the elbow, with several accurate anatomical details (Musgrave 1992, 17). A reasonable question to ask is whether artists witnessed (or performed) such “ritual dissections”, and,

more relevant in this context, whether healers did. Either way, some very precise understanding is shown: the outstanding treatment of some fractures does suggest a deep anatomical understanding, and some changes seem to have occurred on in Crete around the 14th Century B.C., when the reduction and immobilisation of bone fractures became more widely available (Arnott 1999b, 502; below, 2.5.2).

In the lack of texts dealing with the subject, hardly anything can be said for sure about the understanding of physiology in the Prehistoric Aegean.

2.2.5 PRACTITIONERS

In Egypt medicine was practiced by various groups of experts. Notwithstanding some alternative proposals, the generic term for doctor seems to have been *swnw* (Ghalioungui 1985, 1-3). The Egyptian vocabulary, however, is rich in titles (e.g. Nunn 1996, 116-118), showing the complex hierarchy developed within the medical establishment. Many doctors are presented as specialists in different parts of the body (Her. II, 84), yet it is unclear whether specialisation meant better skills in one particular field, or whether the “specialist” had not yet completed his overall training – which would eventually turn him into an “expert” in all the parts of the body. The latter hypothesis seems unlikely. Frequent titles like *swnw (n) nsw* (Middle Kingdom), and *swnw pr ʿ3* (New Kingdom), both meaning “Doctor of the King” reveal that doctors were often linked to the royal administration (Nunn 1996, 117-118). During the New Kingdom, on the other hand, we find several doctors who bear priestly titles, or are otherwise connected to the temple.

Skills were probably passed down from an older to a younger relative. Some (e.g. C. Reeves 1992, 22-23) have suggested that physicians could also study in a *pr-ḥ* (“House of Life”), a scribal school devoted to the preservation of written culture (Gardiner 1938). According to Diodorus (who nevertheless wrote in Classical times) the physician would be acquitted as long as he could prove that he had carefully followed the instructions in the papyri (*Bibl. Hist.* I, 82): as today, the doctor’s duty was to perform the therapy properly, not to produce fixed results – in contrast with some cultures, where the healer could be punished and even executed by the community in case of failure. Doctors probably prepared their remedies themselves, though there are indications that an autonomous category of pharmacists also existed (Nunn 1996, 132).

Another kind of doctor was the *wḥ* priest of the goddess Sekhmet, who mediated between the deity and the ill patient. He probably also performed many of the practices of the *swnw* physician (Von Känel 1984). It has been suggested that the priests of Sekhmet

were the only ones who could perform surgery; but Egyptian surgery, being not very specialised, was probably part of the curriculum of any physician (Nunn 1996, 163).

The *hrp* priests of Serqet, the scorpion goddess, knew spells and incantations against the bites of scorpions and snakes (Von Känel 1984, 296), as well as different pharmacological treatments. The connection between medicine and religion was particularly strong when venomous animals were connected (Nunn 1996, 100-101).

Making assumptions about the existence of different kind of healers in the Aegean is problematic. A single reference to a “doctor” has been found on a Linear B tablet, *i-ja-te* (PY Eq 146), equivalent to the later *ιατρίρ*. This interpretation is almost unanimously accepted (DMic. I, 273), notwithstanding Palmer’s (1963, 422) objection that it might be a proper name. This document may show that a category of possibly full-time physicians existed, and was paid by the palace administration in land tenure (Arnott 2002a, 5-6).

The skills of some Minoan and Mycenaean surgeons, as some healed bones reveal, points towards a “professional” class, which was probably linked to the palaces (Arnott 2002a, 4-5). The lack of written sources makes it unclear how herbal remedies were obtained. The possibility to resort to professional healers was probably restricted to the elite. Others may have resorted to herb-sellers with some notions about healing; in Classical Athens, for example, remedies could be bought in the markets from purge-sellers, incense-sellers, drug-sellers and so on (Repici 2006, 72-3).

It is equally difficult to say anything about “sacred” healers, especially in connection to the sanctuaries. According to Arnott (1999, 2), the community aspects of peak sanctuaries would indicate a direct relationship between the worshipper seeking aid and the divinity to whom he or she wanted to dedicate the offerings, without the mediation of priestly staff.

Different categories of medical practitioners are known to have existed in Western Asia. In Mesopotamia, there were two basic types of doctors: the one who relied upon medical substances to effect a cure (*asû*), and the one trusted in spiritual remedies (*ašipu/mašmaššu*; Geller 2010, 43-50); they could often cooperate or apply each other’s methods in addition to their own. Among the Hittites too, two contemporaneous sets of medical practitioners existed: the magical expert and the practical healer, who would be at the same time supplementary, competitive, and interactive (Arnott 2002b, 44). There is, however, no convincing evidence for specialised “sacred” healers, so that we may well presume that the physicians dealt with the supernatural aspect themselves, or were aided by a priest who normally performed other functions.

2.3 WRITTEN SOURCES FOR AN EXCHANGE OF MEDICAL LORE

This section is devoted to the Egyptian texts which may be used as evidence for the transmission of medical lore from the Aegean to Egypt. The documents under consideration are:

- Papyrus Ebers, which mentions the medical properties of a “Cretan bean”;
- the London Medical Papyrus, with two incantations said to be written “in the language of Keftiu”;
- the Harris Magical Papyrus, which possibly includes an incantation in the same language.

2.3.1. PAPYRUS EBERS

The earliest Egyptian medical text relevant for our discussion is the Ebers Medical Papyrus (P. Ebers, Fig. 2.2). Acquired by Edwin Smith in 1862, a first facsimile with glossary was published by Georg Ebers (1875); the first translation by Heinrich Joachim (1890) has been described as “nur noch für Wissenschaftshistoriker von Bedeutung” (Keil 2005, 12). A full hieroglyphic transliteration was published by Walter Wreszinski (1913), although the second volume with intended translation with comments never came out. After a new translation by Ebbell (1937), an edition with transcription, translation and commentary was made available by Hermann Grapow in his *Grundriss der Medizin der alten Ägypter*. The document mentions the pharaoh Ahmose, it is conventionally dated to the late 16th century B.C. (Möller 1920, 40-41; Nunn 1996, 31; Scholl 2010, 24). Parts of the material included in the papyrus may much older (e.g. Fukugawa 2011, 54): as is normal with this kind of text, different sections of its compilation probably originated over a prolonged period before being assembled and further edited (Weeks 1978; Westendorf 1999, 25). It has been argued that the vocabulary of the paragraph discussed in this section is characteristic of the Middle Kingdom (Vercoutter 1956, 40, n. 5), although the archaising nature sometimes displayed by medical texts makes it difficult to say for certain (above, 2.2.1).

Papyrus Ebers is the longest Egyptian medical composition discovered so far (Scholl 2010, 24). The loose organisation of the text indicates that it served a variety of purposes (e.g. Fukugawa 2011, 62-63). Besides a basic distribution according to anatomical as well as physiological principles, we find intersecting elements, notably in the accompanying spells at the beginning.

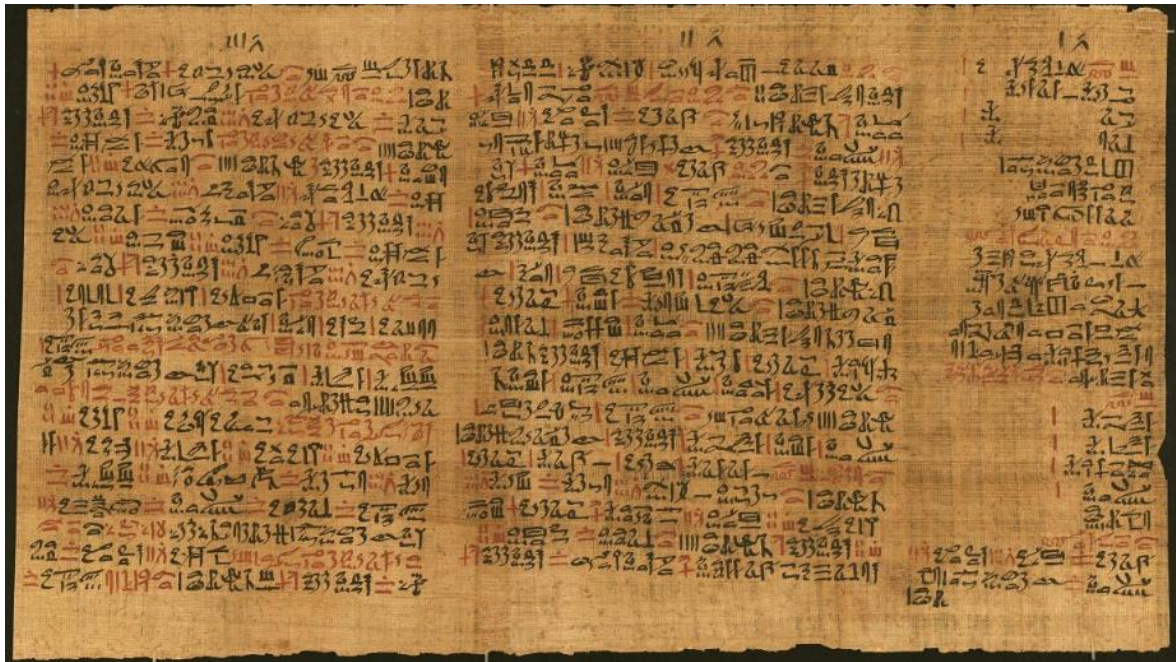


Fig. 2.2. Papyrus Ebers (fragment). 300 x 610 mm. After Scholl et al. (2003-2014).

The origin of the papyrus is unknown. There are reasons to believe, however, that it came from the same location as the Edwin Smith papyrus (the only Egyptian text exclusively dealing with surgery), since they were purchased together in 1873. It is likely that they come from a private grave in the Theban necropolis: dealing respectively with medicine and surgery, the two papyri would provide an ideal protection for the owner’s physical integrity in the afterlife. Moreover, being in perfect condition, they have not been used much, if at all, and may have been deliberately been made for burial purposes.

The prescription mentioning “the land of Keftiu” (Eb. 28) describes the medical properties of a plant, the *gengen* bean (Grundriss V, 212; Fig. 2.3; my translation):

Another (remedy), for causing defecation: *gngn.t* beans: 6 – it is similar to the bean of Keftiu; fruits of the *mnwh* plant named *šny-t3*. (It) should be finely pulverised, mixed with honey, and eaten by the [sick] man, swallowed with date wine: 5 *ro*.

Glosses were often included to clarify the technical vocabulary, which was evidently already difficult when text was copied. However, this is not necessarily the case in this passage: the *gengen* was well known in Egypt, and the comparison seems to refer to its pharmaceutical qualities alone (Vercoutter 1956, 40 n. 1). The “*menuh* plant”, by contrast, is a *hapax* in the Egyptian medical literature (Grundriss VI, 242; Charpentier 1981, 336 n. 525). If this was a recipe of foreign origin, the *gengen* beans may be included as a possible surrogate for an ingredient scarcely or not continuously available in Egypt.

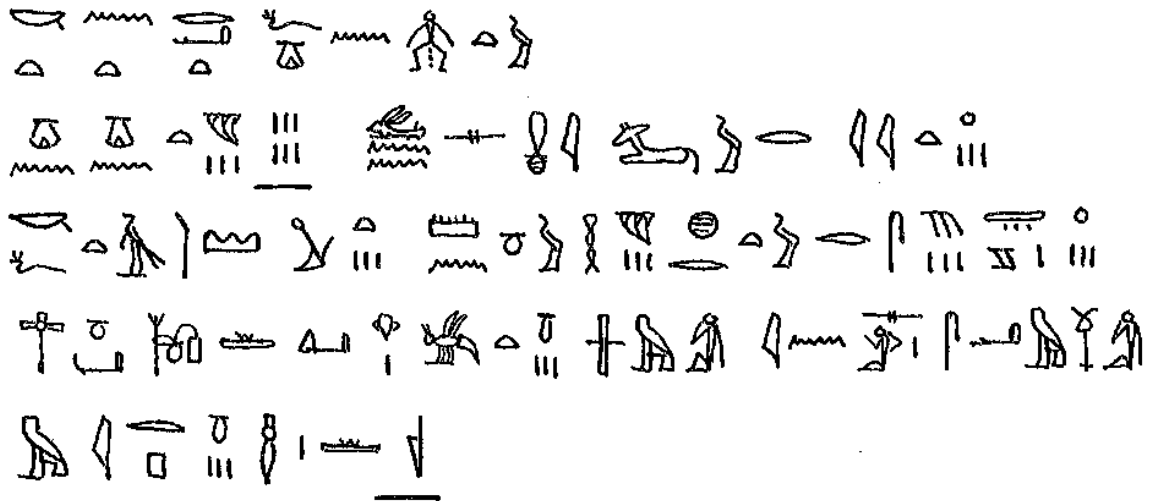


Fig. 2.3. Ebers 28. After *Grundriss* (V, 212).

2.3.2 LONDON MEDICAL PAPYRUS

The second reference to “the Land of Keftiu” appears in the London Medical Papyrus (P. BM EA 10059). This document is a palimpsest (Westendorff 1999, 38-9), roughly dated, on palaeographical grounds, to the late 18th Dynasty (Möller 1920, 42; Amenhotep III is mentioned three times). The prescriptions present a combination of practical recipes with incantations, consistent with what has been described as the progressive increase of magical spells in the Egyptian medical literature during the New Kingdom. Wreszinski (1912) has numbered the incantations according to their disposition into frames, instead of numbering the whole recto and then the whole verso; once the original order is restored, the text appears to be clearly divided into sections, corresponding to different ailments commonly found in the Egyptian medical literature: skin diseases, eye problems, haemorrhages (including miscarriages), and burns (Leitz 1999, 1-2). In this context, I quote the incantations with their original numbering by Wreszinski, since it is the one also adopted in the *Grundriss*; the actual sequencing number follows in brackets.

The spell to be recited “in the language of Keftiu” is not the only foreign incantation in this document, which also contains one passage in Northwestern Semitic (sections 27-30 (15-18); R. Steiner 1992, 191-200), and two in what might be “Nubian” (sections 14 (14) and 31 (19); Haider 2001, 479). Richard Steiner (1992, 196-197) believes incantation 31 (19) to be in a Semitic language too; below). The “Keftiu” incantation (32 (20)) comes immediately after the “Nubian” one. This passage has been largely neglected for decades (Haider 2004, 411), but starting with Helck (below) several transliterations and

interpretations have been proposed; I begin with the plain translation of the Egyptian part (*Grundriss* V, 440-441; Fig. 2.4; my translation).

Incantation of the Asiatic (illness) in the language of Keftiu:

snt kppwy iymntrk r

this utterance is to be said upon g3š-liquids from ^cwj.t, urine, and [...], then give.

The ingredients of the preparation are no less obscure than the incantation intended to accompany it. The “g3š liquid” is possibly fermented barm (Leitz 1999, 63), while the reading of the word that follows is uncertain (*Grundriss* VI, 612). The “Asiatic fever” was previously believed to be a plague (Goedicke 1984), but Bardinet (1988, 17-21) and others have rejected this view in favour of leprosy, which would be consistent with the inclusion of this spell in the section on skin diseases (Leitz 1999, 61). This was conceivably the same lepromatous leprosy mentioned in *Leviticus* 13 as *sara’ a*, which was rife in the Levant and which hit the Egyptian Delta sporadically (Halioua 2005, 183; Fischer-Elfert 2005, 38-46).

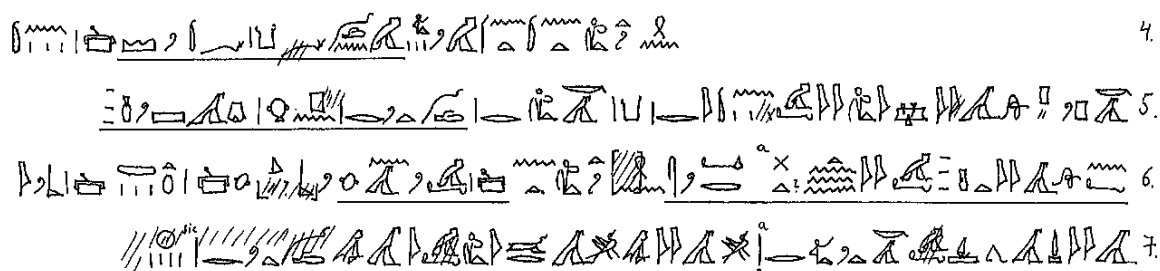


Fig. 2.4. London Medical papyrus 32 (20) and 33 (21). After Leitz (1999, pl 32).

In 1912, Wreszinski suggested that the following incantation (33 (21)) could also be “in the language of Keftiu”, as “there would be no reason to dismiss it as a senseless assemble of syllables” (Wreszinski 1912, XVIII). For the preceding incantations, apparently all in the same language, only for the first one is it stated explicitly that the spell is “in foreign speech” (previously translated as “language of the Bedouins” or “desert dwellers”; see R. Steiner 1992, 193 n. 4; Fig. 2.4; my translation):

Conjuration of the *semen*-disease:

wbk stsbī id ḥmkt rpy p3 wr imi

The *smn*-disease is the subject of a whole series of incantations (Massart 1954). The *ḥmkt*-disease, also mentioned in this incantation (and in Incantation 15), seems to be related to

the *smn* (at least for the Egyptians), since the two are attested in parallel (Leitz 1999, 63 n. 112). R. Steiner (1992, 198) believes them to be both personifications of demons who “attack the head of the victim”. The *smn* is “no doubt to be identified with one of the two strangling goddesses (*'iltm ḥnḳtm*) of Ugaritic”. It is possible that both *smn* and the “Asiatic” diseases were common to Crete and Egypt (Kyriakidis 2002, 213).

2.3.3 HARRIS MAGICAL PAPYRUS

An additional spell, in the Harris Magical Papyrus (P. BM EA 10042; Fig. 2.5) has been suggested to be “in the language of Keftiu”, but the nature of this text is far from clear. The main body of the papyrus consists of five fragments preserved in the British Museum, while parts of the final columns are in Heidelberg (Bommas 1998). The manuscript can be approximately dated to the 19th or 20th Dynasty (Leitz 1999, 1). Helck (1979, 85-86) includes this passage (XII, 1-5) only because of the presence of the group *sá-n-tá* or *sam-d(a)*, also included in the “first Keftiu incantation” (32 (20)) of the London papyrus.

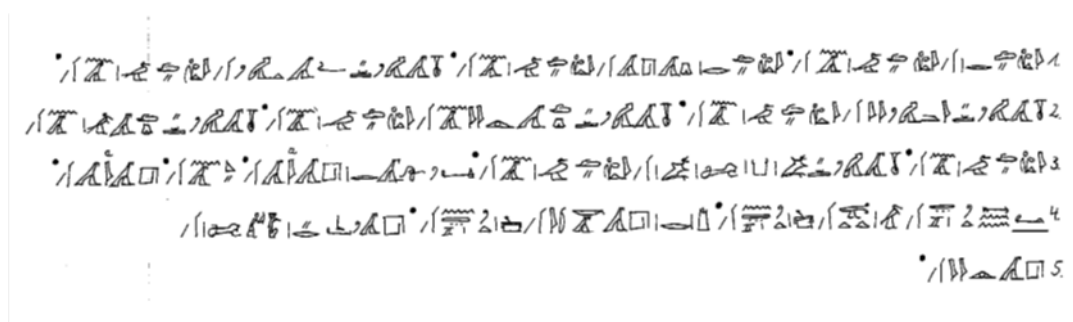


Fig. 2.5. “Foreign incantation” in the Harris Magical Papyrus. After Leitz (1999, pl. 23).

In this case, the division between words is clearer than in the previous text, since the sign for “foreign land” is used as a separator, and there are even signs marking the ends of verses. Yet the scribe decided to use, along with group writing, actual Egyptian words, probably in order to facilitate the reading. This might shed some light on the pronunciation – or at least the perception the person who wrote the spell down had of it – but the content remains unknown. Since the text uses real Egyptian words, I begin with the normal transliteration (Leitz 1999, 49-50):

idr idsn

idrgh idsn

sm mtm idsn

sm imy idsn

sm dgbn idsn
mwrhi
ḳn
hi
grḥ snnt bṯt snt
ilhkt snt
hb^cr r hiry

According to Helck (1995, 85-86), this could be vocalised as follows:

'á-di-ra 'á-di-sì-na
'á-di-ra-ga-ha 'á-di-sì-na
sam-má-t-mu 'á-di-sì-na
sam-amu-ja 'á-di-sì-na
sam-d(a)-ga-ar-ja-na 'á-di-sì-na
sam-d(a)-ga-bí-na 'á-di-sì-na
sam-ší-kú-rú-sí 'á-di-sì-na
dú-wa-ra-ha-śá qi-na ha- śá (or *mu-wa-ra-ha- śá*)
 (Sing): *san-tà bí-t śá-n-tà* (or ... *bí-ś...*)
'ul-la-ha-ka-tá śá-n-tà
hu-ba 'ala-rú ha-ar-ja (or *hu-ba 'al-lú...*)

2.3.4 POSSIBLE INTERPRETATIONS OF THE SPELLS

Some considerations are necessary before trying to discuss these “incantations” in more detail. It was important for the spell to be properly pronounced even when the performers did not understand the content, and thus the phonetic rendering of the foreign words needed to be as accurate as possible. Both the spells in the London papyrus are given in the special type of script generally called “group writing” or “syllabic orthography”. As remarked by Haider (2004, 412), the use of a principle of vocalised writing makes sense only when there is a deliberate stress on the importance of the pronunciation.

From the Old Kingdom onward the Egyptians started to develop a special kind of orthography to write foreign words, including toponyms and personal names. Especially during the New Kingdom, sequences of the “consonant + vowel” type were used not only for terms of external (mostly Semitic) origin, but also to render indigenous words (Hoch

1994, 5). Egyptian uni- or bi-consonantal graphemes displaying a sequence “strong consonant + weak consonant” (e.g. *p + w*) were combined in sign-groups with a restricted range of syllabic values, so that glides are partly employed as substitutes for vowels, in a system rather like the *matres lectionis* in the Northwestern Semitic context. The system has been described as combining three main principles (Loprieno 1988, 14, 16):

- The “*devanāgarī* principle” of Indian alphabets, in which the unmarked vocalic value of each basic sign is “consonant + [a]” within the word / “simple consonant” at the end of the word (e.g. the sign. š3 for /ša/ as well as for word-final /š/). A different vowel could be indicated by the addition of a glide.
- The “cuneiform principle”, according to which sign-groups are to be read with the vowel phoneme they have in the underlying Egyptian word from which the signs are borrowed (e.g. the “hare over the water” sign *wn* = hypothetically */wan/).
- The “consonantal principle” of the hieroglyphic system, in which the sign-group stands only as a graphic variant of the consonantal sign (ex. *bw* for /b/).

Nevertheless, group writing is still insufficient when it comes to conveying vowels that were absent in the original Egyptian phonetic system, such as [e] and [o]; intermediate sounds and combinations are thus rendered through the vowel which most closely approximates them in Egyptian (for instance, [a] for [e]). Problems also arise when consonants absent in the Egyptian script are involved, for instance when differentiating [t] (English “tea”) and [θ] (English “the”).

According to Helck (1995, 85), the “Keftiu” words in the first incantation (32 (20)) are to be read as follows:

śá-n-tá ka-pu-pi wa-ja 'a-ja-ma-n-tá ra-kú-ka-ra

According to Bardinet (1995, 487):

(O) *sentí*, (O) *kapoupi*, far from me, (O) *Yamentiro*, (O) *karo*

As for the second spell (Incantation 33 (21)) Helck (1995, 86) read it as follows:

w()-b(?) -qi(?) (“illness”) *śá-tì śábu- 'é ja-śá h.à-m-ka-tu ra-śí-ja* (“god”) *p3 wr 'á-ma- 'é* (“god”).

Helck's word division is based on the fact that in certain texts whole Egyptian words were used to render the last syllable of a foreign word, although such a practice was apparently in decline during the New Kingdom. Some, however, have actually questioned Helck's choices in this regards (Schneider 1989, 54-55).

According to Haider (2001, 480):

w-b(?)k-i(?) s3-t (det. t or "bread") s3-b-w-j-3-jj-d3-3 (det. "to go") hw-m-ꜥ-k3-3-t-w (det. "man") r-t3-jj ntr p3-3 wr ꜥ-m-ꜥ-j-3 ntr

Haider has also suggested a vocalisation (with a translation of the Egyptian words) for Incantation 33 (21):

Shenet net samuna-illness: webeqi/ubuqi(?)-illness sat sabujajadsha humekatu(-"man") razaja/razija netscher pa wer amēja/amija netscher
 Incantation of the illness Samuna: webeqi/ubuqi(?)-illness ast sabujajadsha humekatu R/Lazaja(R/Lazija), the great god, Ameja/Amija, god.

An *interpretatio Semitica* can be found in R. Steiner (1992, 198); he considers the sequence *id hmkt rpy* to mean "let the strangulation god go out, my healer". The many possible readings for the same sequence of signs can be exemplified by an *interpretatio Graeca* (with no translation) of the first spell, suggested shortly after the decipherment of the Linear B tablets and the discovery that they were written in Greek (Stolk-Coops 1958):

Sunthéi kèpewa amuntera kichori
Epeksetaze psauso haimakta lipei paur' smeche

According to this reading, the words do not form a "magical spell", but practical instructions ("collect antidote herbs and chicory" in the first line, with the second line more obscure). As far as I know, this rather strained proposal is not taken seriously in later literature. The difficulty is that it is almost impossible to prove or disprove hypotheses of this kind, since the text could be easily manipulated in order to obtain almost any interpretation. The preconceived idea that a document, especially an extremely short one like the two "Keftiu incantations", is written in a specific language may easily result in confirmation bias, as the example just quoted illustrates. Instead, it may be more useful to

start by considering whether the spells reveal any feature (phonology, word order etc.) that might narrow the range of possible interpretations. Then, we may search for parallels for specific words in the incantations; even if such parallels are found, however, they could not by themselves prove any hypotheses on the language of the incantations beyond doubt (just as the Greek word “hypothesis” used above does not prove that this text is in a form of Greek written with Latin characters).

As a starting point, I believe that the statement that the spells are in the (or, more precisely, *a*) “language of Keftiu” should be considered reliable unless the contrary is proven. However, the difficulties of tracing the spells back to a specific Aegean language are manifold. None of the Bronze Age scripts employed on Crete, bar Linear B, has been deciphered. Moreover, while the language(s) of the Linear A, Cretan hieroglyphics, or the Phaistos Disk are still unknown, additional languages could also have been spoken on the island without leaving any written trace. Nevertheless, it is still possible to make some remarks. The reading of some Linear A signs has been inferred from identical or similar symbols in the Linear B syllabaries, and some statistical analyses have followed. The vowel [o] is so rare that some scholars doubt whether it existed as a separate sound in the language of Linear A texts, or whether it was at least merged with the vowel [u] in a neutral sound in unstressed syllables (Bartoněk 2003, 24). Some scholars (e.g. Georgiev 1966; Bartoněk 2003) consider it plausible that this language differentiated between labial and palatal stops, but not between voiced and voiceless stops: the consonantal repertoire thus recreated supposedly included: [j, r, m, n, p, t, d, k, q] (formerly also [z] and [w]; Georgiev 1966, 86). A stop of interdental character may be the reason for the writing of *labyrinthos*, “labyrinth”, as *da-pu-ri-to*. Phonemes [r] and [l] seem not to have been differentiated.

There are several theories about the affiliation of the language of Linear A, ranging from Cyrus Gordon’s (1966) Semitic hypothesis to Vladimir Ivanovic Georgiev’s (1966, 81-85) identification with Greek and Margalit Finkelberg’s (2001) connection with an Anatolian language, but none of them has won a general consensus.

The different kind of writing adopted for the Harris Medical Papyrus does not allow a close comparison with the incantations in P. BM EA 10042. As just pointed out, the presence of the group *sá-n-tá/sam-d(a)* does not imply a common language; the similarity with the group of signs in Incantation 33 (21) may only be apparent. Moreover, a single word can occur in different languages. A possibility is that it may attest some shared religious/cultural elements, as is the case with the interjection *Amen* in the Christian

prayers, or the Arabic epithets referring to God and Muhammad among non-Arabic speaking Muslims. Thomas Schneider (1989), however, interprets the text as a Canaanite incantation against lions. He believes the group *sm mtm* to confirm his Semitic interpretation, and to correspond to Akkadian *santu*, “red” (female adjective), here an attribute of lionesses. Both Schneider’s interpretation and Helck’s Minoan connection are highly speculative. In my opinion, the Harris papyrus cannot be used for the present discussion unless further evidence is found that can throw light on the value of *sá-n-tá*.

Starting from the premises regarding the orthography employed in Egypt to render foreign words, Kyriakidis (2002) analyses the Keftiu spells in the London Medical Papyrus, together with other Egyptian documents possibly containing words in the same language (the toponym list from the mortuary temple of Amenhotep III at Kom el-Heitan and in the list of anthroponyms in the writing board BM EA5647). Since the latter two documents include words from several languages, I only summarise Kyriakidis’ conclusions concerning the two incantations:

- There are three unvoiced stops ([p], [t], [k]), and a medial [b], whose appearance in initial position is unlikely for early Indo-European languages (e.g. Szemerényi 1970, 153). In addition, there is an aspirate or fricative [h], two sibilants (or a sibilant and an affricate), two glides ([w], [j]), at least one liquid ([r]), and two nasals [m, n]; Kyriakidis 2002, 214).
- It is possible to spot the combination -nt-, which recalls the “pre-Greek” place names ending in -vθ- (e.g. Schachermeyr 1967, 16, fig. 3-6).
- The combination *wbq* (a tri-radical root with a weak consonant as first element) may suggest a Semitic etymology, but this is not enough to ascribe the language of the Keftiu incantations to a particular language group.

The three unvoiced stops of the Linear A script [p, t, k] are thus all present in the incantations, while a voiced dental stop [d] only appears in other texts supposedly containing “Aegean” words. The word-initial [b] may have the function of marking a following vowel as different, or to mark a complementary distribution not shared by the Egyptian language: native speakers would not feel that different phonemes are involved, but a foreigner may feel the need to mark the difference in writing, since in his or her language the distinction is contrastive (phonemic). The combination -nt- is another element consistent with a “pre-Greek” Aegean language.




When discussing word-order, it must be remembered that texts such as magical spells often display peculiar features. Egyptian spells, especially in a medical context, usually share a specific structure: after an introduction conveying some general information, there follows either an injunction for the illness to leave (or for a deity to remove it), or a “hymn” to the entity by whom the illness is to be removed. More instructions, often of a practical nature, may precede or follow the spell (e.g. Ritner 1993, 54-57). As already noted by Helck (1995, 86) the use of determinatives reveals that the second spell in the London Medical Papyrus contains two names of male deities, “Ra-śí-ja” and “A-ma-’ê”. The first name is followed by the Egyptian epithet “the great” (*p3 wr*). Hence, a deity named “Razaja/Razija” seems to be the more important in the text (Haider 2001). The word *hmkt* (Fig. 2.6), as seen above, refers to an illness. In Incantation 27 (15) it is accompanied by the illness determinative , Gardiner’s (1957) Aa2, possibly representing a pustule or gland. R. Steiner (1992, 198) believes that the use of kneeling man determinative  (Gardiner’s A1) in this context means that the illness is “personified as a demon” (above, 2.3.2). In this case, it is the first word (*wbḳ*) which carries the illness determinative. Others, however (e.g. Haider 2004, 417) prefer to read the determinative as , Gardiner’s A2 (seated man with hand to mouth).



Fig. 2.6. The word *hmkt* in Papyrus Harris. After Leitz (1999, pl. 42).

The word *hà-m-ka-tu* has also been paralleled to *hà-m-ka-tá* in P. Chester Beatty VII (BM EA 10687; Gardiner 1935, 55-65), verso, I 5, meaning “brook” (Helck 1995, 86), but I believe the equation with the *hmkt*-illness (in the same document, albeit with a different writing) to be more reasonable.

Kyriakidis suggests that the words in the second incantation should be recognised as follows: the first word (*wbḳ*), on the ground of its determinative, must be an illness, and thus probably the object of the sentence; the two deities would be the subject, and *hmkt* the verb. He therefore proposes a construction of the object – verb – subject type (OSV). However, I am not convinced by the argument that *hmḳ* here should be necessarily a verb,

only because of a different determinative. I think that it is possible instead that we are dealing with the same word, but as pronounced by foreigners: the possibility that this disease was common to both Crete and Egypt has already been mentioned; perhaps it had a different name that nevertheless had a common origin. Perhaps the scope of the hand-on-mouth determinative was to emphasise that the word was a foreign one, and not the similar sounding Egyptian one; there are, nevertheless, no parallels for this. If this is the case, it seems that the people of Keftiu only had one word for what the Egyptians considered to be two different diseases (*smn* and *ḥmkt*). The illness-determinative, on the other hand, can also accompany verbs such as “swelling” (*šfw*) and “suffering” (*wḥd*) – not to mention other verbs not directly related to medicine. This is all speculative, and further linguistic considerations are beyond the scope of the present work. Three potential conclusions may be relevant, however:

- 1) Within the narrow limits of what can be said about the phonology of the spells, the language behind Linear A seems a reasonable candidate, but one cannot be certain.
- 2) The second spell mentions an illness whose name is well attested in the Egyptian medical literature, albeit with a different spelling and possibly different connotations.
- 3) The name of an illness and the possible presence of two deities allow us to make some assumptions about the structure of the spells, which seem to conform to a pattern not unusual in this kind of utterance in Egyptian texts.

If we now turn to the words or sign-combinations in the “Keftiu spells”, some specific correspondences with Aegean texts have been suggested (Haider 2004, 413). Attempts to find Linear A words have also been made with the “Keftiu” names in the tablet BM EA 5647 (Helck 1995, 83-84), but in that case we are dealing with a list, and not a text with a full syntactic form. A name *a-me-ja/a-me-a*, similar to the second deity in incantation 33 (21), appears in the Linear B tablets from Knossos and Pylos (*DMic* I, 55).

If one leaves aside the recipe accompanying the first spell, it appears that great care was taken in writing down these incantations. It is likely that the scribe who first recorded them had a direct access to their source, that is, he was in contact with a native speaker of the language in which they were to be recited. In 2.1 I stress the importance of writing in relation to specific forms of knowledge. It is possible that the Minoans did write down some of their spells. This opens the possibility that the “Minoan incantations” arrived in Egypt through a written medium, perhaps some implement bearing inscriptions, such as the

Minoan “libation tables” (Owens 1996). Such an object could have been carried by any kind of individual, perhaps not even a Cretan who could read it, but even if this was the case it seems more reasonable to assume that a native speaker was available. This native reader would not necessarily be a priest or physician: as I have mentioned in relation to the Cretan Peak Sanctuaries (2.2.5), that some healing rituals seem to have been practiced by common people seeking a cure. Another question, discussed in the first section of this chapter, concerns the context in which Egyptian medical texts were composed and transmitted: a “private” practitioner would probably be more prone to accept suggestions from a foreigner with no specific skills, while an “official” institution would deal with some kind of specialist, possibly sent from a foreign court. It is not impossible that one or more Aegean physicians were sent to Egypt as part of a diplomatic exchange (below, 2.6), even though no references to such an event have survived. Private practitioners, on the other hand, may have gathered information from both skilled and unskilled foreigners (Eb. 422: “another remedy for the eyes revealed by an Asiatic from the city of Byblos...”; *Grundriss* V, 100), and part of this knowledge may have subsequently found its way into the written record. Before venturing into the idea of a Minoan healer sharing his medical knowledge with an Egyptian physician or scribe, we need to see whether there are any additional hints pointing towards the existence of such a cooperation. To sum up what can be inferred by the textual evidence alone:

- The prescription in the Ebers Papyrus may attest an exchange of medical knowledge, or even products, already sometime before the papyrus was written (possibly meaning as far back as MM II/First Intermediate Period; below, 2.6).
- The two spells in the London Medical Papyrus apparently follow a pattern and do not consist only of random foreign words added because of their exotic appeal; they are likely to be actual incantations. The addition of pharmacological prescriptions to the first one (32 (20)) and the presence of the medical term *ḥmkt* in the second one (33 (21)) reinforces the idea that it originally had a healing function, and that they were learned from someone with a good knowledge of the subject.
- Although a definitive conclusion cannot be drawn, nothing excludes the possibility that the “Keftiu incantations” are in the same language recorded by the Linear A script (or a related Cretan language), since the scribe himself felt the need to draw attention to the language: the expression “Keftiu Language” in Incantation 32 (20) is written with ink of a different colour.

- The mention of the “Keftiu bean” as a term of comparison in the Harris Magical Papyrus perhaps indicates that certain elements were shared in different medical traditions.

2.4 EGYPTIAN *GRAVIDENFLASCHEN* AND CRETAN PARTURIENT VESSELS

Some scholars have suggested a connection between a variety of objects coming from both Egypt and Crete, all with the form of squatting figures with round bellies. While there is much variation among the Cretan artefacts, the Egyptian examples all belong to a particular class of anthropomorphic vessels that were possibly used as containers for medical preparations. Since one of these Egyptian objects has been found in Crete, the possibility of a connection must be taken into account. The purpose of the present section is to assess the likely character of such connection, and to investigate whether it might be associated with a transmission of medical practices or beliefs.

The production of the Egyptian vessels discussed here seems to have been limited to the 18th Dynasty. The earliest example from a reasonably datable context was found at Abydos, in an undisturbed tomb deposit of the reign of Thutmose III (1479-1425 B.C.; Garstang 1909, pl. xvi; Brovarski et al. 1982, 293-294). There is no indication that these items were produced in earlier times, while the latest known specimens were probably made during the reign of Amenhotep III (1391-1356 B.C.; Phillips 2008 I, 214).

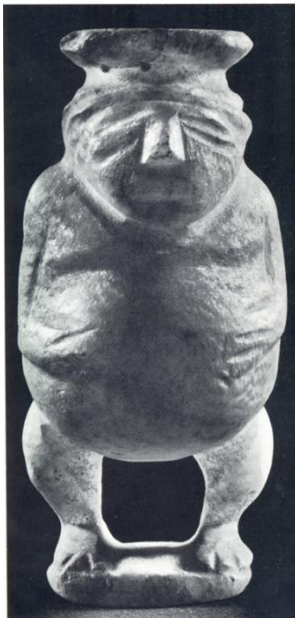


Fig. 2.7. Egyptian *Gravidenflasche*. Tübingen 967. Travertine, H. 85 mm., W. 40 mm. After Brunner-Traut (1970, pl. i).

The vessels are normally made of travertine, and their height varies between 8 and 20 cm. So far, no two identical specimens have been found. Their peculiar anthropomorphic shape has been described as a “grotesque figure”, “daemonic being”, “deity of undefined nature”, “foreigner” (Cretan, Canaanite etc.), “dwarf”, and “pregnant woman”. Emma Brunner-Traut (1970) argued convincingly that the last of these interpretations is the most reasonable, and she accordingly named these objects *Gravidenflaschen* (“pregnant vessels”; Fig. 2.7). Various features that she listed (see below) demonstrate that these figures are definitely female, and their rounded shape in all probability indicates pregnancy. In addition, nothing specific supports their interpretation as “dwarfs” or “foreigners”. Braids of hair similar to those on the vessels are not attested among the iconography of any of Egypt’s neighbours during this period. Even when the breasts are lacking, it is unlikely that these figures were intended to be male, since one of the specimens without breasts shows recognisable female genitalia (on the contrary, in Egypt breasts could also be associated with male figures; e.g. Baines 1985, 93-94). For simplicity’s sake, I use the expression *Gravidenflaschen* for the Egyptian vessels, to distinguish them from Cretan parturient vessels with a similar shape, to which I return shortly. A series of traits listed by Brunner-Traut (1970, 39) is shared by most of the *Gravidenflaschen*:

- The figure is fat, disproportionate, with a swollen abdomen
- The face could be described as feminine, although the traits are rather stylised
- The neck is almost completely lacking
- The breasts, when present, are flat and pendulous
- The figure has a kneeling or squatting pose
- The handle of the vessel supports, or consists of, the figure’s hair falling backwards, sometimes gathered in a braid
- Both hands lie symmetrically on the belly
- The figure is naked

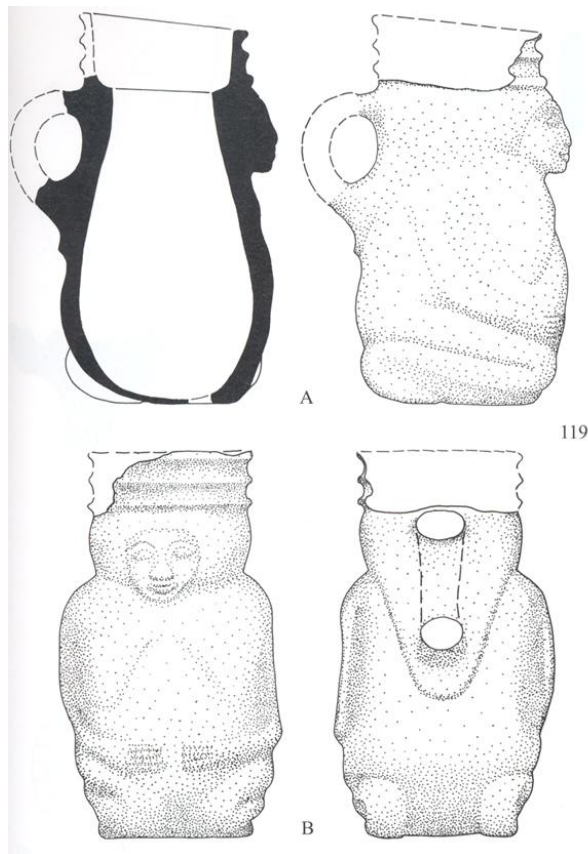


Fig. 2.8. Egyptian *Gravidenflasche*. HM Λ 2171. Travertine, H. 136 mm., W. 61 mm. Katsamba region, unknown context. After Phillips (2008 II, 315).

As mentioned above, at least one *Gravidenflasche* was exported to Crete (HM Λ 2171; figure 2.7). Nothing is known about its original context, although a provenance from the Katsamba region near Knossos seems plausible (Phillips 2008 II, 69). The vessel is 13.6 cm high, shaped (as are the other specimens) like a squatting pregnant woman. The handle (most of which is missing) corresponds to the figure’s long hair, while the rim, which is also damaged, corresponds to its headdress. There is no exact parallel among the known Egyptian specimens, but this is not strange, because the latter also all differ from one another. Slight differences among generally similar items are a recurrent feature in the Egyptian culture, also visible for instance in religious texts. This particular specimen was probably produced not earlier than the reign of Amenhotep II (1427-1400 B.C., LM II). Perhaps shortly after its arrival on the island, a local artisan converted it into a rhyton by drilling a hole in its bottom, between the knees (Phillips 2008 II, 69). Such a procedure was common in Crete, where Egyptian stone vessels were often reworked in order to fit local needs or tastes (see Chapter 4).

Since this “Cretan” *Gravidenflasche* was shown to Evans in 1922 (PoM II 1, 256-260), an Egyptian inspiration has often been assumed for some Minoan objects likely

shaped as crouching women with rounded bodies. Such objects can be divided into two main groups:

- a) A handful of miniature figurines, all dating to MM II or slightly later
- b) Three clay vessels (two of them rhyta), all dating to the Late Minoan Period



Fig. 2.9. Protome in the form of a crouching woman. HM II 18538. Clay, H. 32 mm., W. 32 mm. Phaistos, Early Minoan. After Phillips (2008 II, 358).

Notwithstanding the immediate support encountered by the idea of an Egyptian origin for this shape, the Cretan objects belonging to the first group are significantly earlier than the Egyptian *Gravidenflaschen*. Moreover, none of them is a container, so it would be misleading to speak of “Cretan imitations”. The similarities are nevertheless noteworthy. The best example is perhaps a protome from Phaistos (HM II 18538, Fig. 2.9), which was possibly set atop a handle or pedestal (Phillips 2008 II, 223-4): the figurine has a round body, pendulous breasts, displays a squatting position, has no neck, and the hair is collected and bent backwards. The hair-band around the head too has parallels in some of the Egyptian vessels. The hands, however, seem to rest on the knees rather than the belly. The face is damaged, so that very little can be said about it. A contemporary figurine, also from Phaistos, is even more damaged; in this case, like in the *Gravidenflaschen*, both hands lie symmetrically on the belly. A vessel appliqué from Malia looks very similar to these two Phaistos figurines; the excavators commented that such representations should be “doubtless connected to Egyptian prototypes” (Detournay et al. 1980, 118-119). A rock crystal pendant from Knossos may be slightly later (MM III, Neo-Palatial; Phillips 2008 II, 155-156).

Since these objects predate the *Gravidenflaschen* by more than two centuries, all belonging to MM I and II (before the 17th century B.C.), they cannot be assumed to be of Egyptian derivation only because they appear similar to the *Gravidenflaschen*. This does

not necessarily mean that there is no relation at all, nor can it be excluded that it was the Egyptians who borrowed the motif from Crete. Nonetheless, the time gap between the Middle Minoan figurines and the production of the earlier *Gravidenflaschen* in Egypt remains difficult to explain. It is also possible that for a time the motif had survived on different supports, perhaps made out of perishable materials, which have not been found. However, even if there is no relation between the Middle Minoan figurines, and the *Gravidenflaschen*, some connection between the latter and the later Cretan clay vessels seems likely.

Cretan “parturient vessels” were manufactured not long after the *Gravidenflaschen* disappear from the archaeological record in Egypt. Although made of a different material, the Cretan vessels share several features with the *Gravidenflaschen*. Since only three specimens have been found so far, it may be worthwhile to describe them in some detail (Herakleion Archaeological Museum; inventory numbers as in Koehl 2006):

- The earliest specimen (HM II 2841; Phillips 2008 II, 50-51 n. 78; Fig. 2.10), a clay rhyton, was found in Gournia in a LM IIIA2-B context. Several missing parts have been restored. The height is ca. 18 cm. There are holes at the crown of the head and the vulva. Painted decoration, facial details highlighted. This object, which Philip Betancourt (1985, 175) calls “unique”, comes from a room in area E 58/59, possibly reused as a tomb (a larnax burial; Hawes et al. 1908).



Fig. 2.10. Rhyton. HM II 2841. Clay, H. 181 mm. Gournia, LM IIIA2-B. After Phillips (2008 II, 305).

- Another specimen (no inventory number available; Phillips 2008 II, 71 n. 123; Fig. 2.11) comes from Kephala Chondrou. This is also a clay rhyton, possibly from a LM III B context. The dimensions are not stated; only the lower part is preserved, in several joining fragments; the limbs are outlined by black-painted decoration. Platon (1957, 144) believed that this and the other objects that he excavated at Kephala Chondrou had fallen from an upper-store domestic shrine.

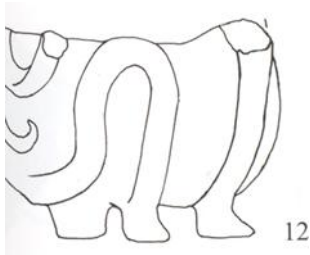


Fig. 2.11. Rhyton. Clay (catalogue number and dimensions not stated). Kephala Chondrou, LM III B. After Phillips (2008 II, 315).

- The last item (HM II 3243; Phillips 2008 II, 24 n. 35; Fig. 2.12), unlike the two earlier specimens, is not a rhyton but a clay vase from Aghia Triadha, restored from several fragments; some parts are missing. The original context is unknown, but believed to be LM III C. The height is ca. 27 cm. The body is wheel-made: limbs and other features were added subsequently. The vulva is incised, and the pubic hair is indicated by added clay. The figure carries a hydria on its head, holding it with the left hand. As remarked by Phillips (2008 II 25 n. 35), the hydria is un-Minoan and resembles a type of Egyptian amphora of the 18th and 19th Dynasty.



Fig. 2.12. Vessel. HM II 3243. Clay, H. 270 mm. (other dimensions not stated). Unknown context, LM III C. After Phillips (2008 II, 300).

It is not clear what the purpose of these items was. The real function of the Egyptian *Gravidenflaschen* has been an object of speculation for decades. One possibility is that they were containers for mothers' milk, perhaps to be given to infants. This seems unlikely, however, since the milk would deteriorate in a few hours. Human milk was a well-known ingredient in the Egyptian pharmacopeia (e.g. Nunn 1996, 148), and the medical papyri mention it being stored in vessels for a short period (e.g. Eb. 642). Contemporary vessels shaped like breast-feeding women (see below), however, seem a more likely candidate for such use. Brunner-Traut (1970, 48) nonetheless believed it possible that the *Gravidenflaschen* had a medical function, and this supposition has often been accepted (e.g. Brovarski et al. 1982, 293). The position of the hands on the belly could be a natural one with the simple function of stressing pregnancy as a state; nevertheless, it also recalls a motion of anointing or massaging; clothes, of course, should be removed before applying an unguent to the skin or giving birth, and this could explain why the figures are represented naked. It is possible that there was a practice of oiling the skin of the abdomen in the later stages of pregnancy, which happens not to be the subject of known prescriptions in the Egyptian medical papyri. It cannot be excluded that it was such routine that it would not be written down (John Baines, personal communication).

One of the figures holds a horn-shaped object in its hands. The use of horns as containers for various substances, not necessarily pharmaceutical, is well attested in the Eastern Mediterranean during the Bronze Age (Brovarski et al. 1982, 292). Brunner-Traut (1970, 48) suggested that the *Gravidenflaschen* were used to store an ingredient that was to be mixed with an oil contained inside the horns. Milk was commonly added to pharmacological remedies in order to facilitate their administration; such milk would remain usable for longer than that destined to be drunk. Alternatively, the vessels could have contained the oil itself (Kolta & Schwarzmann-Schafhauser 2005, 139 n. 10). The oil or the balm contained in the Egyptian parturient vessels may have been used by women during pregnancy or delivery, a fact that would explain the shape of these items.

Although appearing in a variety of materials in Crete, figures resembling the Egyptian *Gravidenflaschen* are quite rare (as, in fact, are their Egyptian counterparts), and there are long gaps between the known instances. The figurines from Phaistos and Malia are the only ones known for MM II. None of these figurines has a recognisable relationship to ointments or remedies, and the anointing position does not seem to be one of the elements they have in common with each other. A long period follows (between 200 and 400 years), without any recognisable examples, until the arrival of the Egyptian container,

possibly in LM II. Relatively shortly afterwards, we have the three Late Minoan clay parturient vessels (LM IIIA2-B, B, and C respectively).

The common features seem unlikely to be coincidental, but the paucity of attestations makes it difficult to understand whether, and how, the Middle Minoan figurines could be connected to the later Cretan parturient vessels. Phillips (2008, I, 217) suggests “some form of indigenous ideological development that is not exemplified by material remains in the intervening periods”. It is possible, as suggested above, that for a couple of centuries the motif was used only on perishable materials, or that later examples happen not to have been found in the record by sheer accident. It would be equally plausible, however, to suggest that the motif was more or less forgotten on Crete until a limited resurgence of this shape, on a new support, was prompted by the arrival of one or more *Gravidenflaschen* from Egypt. The resurgence of motifs and practices which had lain outside our view for even longer times is not an unknown phenomenon in the Aegean (see e.g. Burkert 1985, 52).

The ultimate origin of the motif is not essential for this discussion, but its earlier history could nevertheless be useful for understanding the symbolic implications of these figures in the two cultural contexts. Phillips (2008 I, 216) remarks that although an Egyptian derivation is unlikely the motif does not look particularly Minoan. There are some similarities with Proto-Palatial ape-shaped seals, many of which have been found around Phaistos and Malia, but the pose of these figures is clearly different. A Chalcolithic clay vessel from a temple room at Gilat, in Israel, has a similar shape, but Phillips correctly remarks that the temporal distance is too great to postulate a direct link with the Cretan or Egyptian examples (2008 II, 51 and n. 231). A Western Asiatic origin for the figure type could be a possibility, but there is no strong evidence to support it.

In Egypt, the distinctive, almost animal-like features of the *Gravidenflaschen* were possibly aimed at conveying a specific meaning, as often with the animal components of supernatural creatures (see e.g. Quirke 1992, 16). Brunner-Traut (1970, 48) suggested that their prototype must be sought in the Egyptian hippopotamus goddess Taweret/Toeris (below, 2.5), several of whose attributes (fat body, lack of neck, thick legs, flat breasts) are also present in the *Gravidenflaschen*. This connection would be remarkably relevant for the present discussion, since the Egyptian hippopotamus deity is generally recognised as the source of inspiration for the so-called Minoan Genius (Weingarten 1991; below, 2.5.1). The same assumptions about a connection with the *Gravidenflaschen*, however, can also be made in relation to other figures, such as the god Bes (Kolta & Schwarzmann-Schafhauser

2005, 139 n. 10). The hippopotamus was, for the Egyptians, an ambivalent symbol: females are devoted and protective mothers and give birth to their cubs with remarkable ease - whereas Egyptian women were subject to high rates of mortality during childbirth (Filer 1995, 25). Yet both males and females are also violent and dangerous beasts, embodying the Egyptian ideal of an archetypal enemy since Predynastic times (Behrmann 1996, 141-2). The aggressive aspects of the hippopotamus deities such as Taweret (below, 2.5) were ideally channelled towards more suitable targets, that is, forces that threatened mothers and children. None of these defensive/apotropaic connotations seems to be present in the *Gravidenflaschen*, neither in their pose nor in their other attributes. They were not, however, intrinsically incompatible with imagery of pregnancy and child-birth, as the decoration of a Middle Kingdom birth brick from Abydos demonstrates (Wegener 2009, 448). Moreover, a direct derivation from a hippopotamus goddess is not the only possibility: both the hippopotamus deities and the *Gravidenflaschen* may draw from the same stock of symbolic features, with the intention to display specific concepts such as pregnancy and motherhood. Motherhood is exemplified by another kind of Egyptian vessel, the so called “jar for mother’s milk” (*Muttermilchkrüglein*), representing lactating women (Brunner-Traut 1969); although clearly related to *Gravidenflaschen*, stylistically these vessels have nothing in common with any hippopotamus (or other animal) deity.

Similarly, Cretan parturient vessels do not share any of the features of the “Minoan genius”: even if the *Gravidenflaschen* were imported and imitated in Crete because of an association with the already familiar motif, the latter cannot be assumed to be Taweret or any other hippopotamus deity. Finally, the manufacturing of *Gravidenflaschen* in Egypt began some centuries later than the appearance of the “Minoan genius” in Crete; even if there is some connection between the Egyptian hippopotamus deity and the *Gravidenflaschen*, such connection does not automatically mean that there is a link between the “Minoan genius” and the Cretan parturient vessels.

The transformation of the *Gravidenflasche* specimen from Katsamba into a rhyton indicates that it was to be used for libation. Two out of three LM III clay vases in the form of parturient women are also rhyta. Rhyta shaped as women (type I figural in Koehl’s catalogue) pre-date the earliest attestation of the MM II “parturient” figurines; the first known such rhyton is an EM III specimen probably from Archanes (Koehl 2006, 18). It depicts a female carrying a jug and strongly resembles a group of Early Minoan vessels shaped as women. It may be significant that, if we exclude the converted *Gravidenflasche*, there is no known figural female rhyton between MM II (or III) and LM IIIA:2-III B: that

is, rhyta shaped like women are another element that disappears from the island in Middle Minoan times, only to reappear after LM IIIA.

The contexts in which the Cretan parturient vessels have been found are quite problematic, and consequently their function remains difficult to determine. Between LM IIIA2 late and LM IIIB no burials with rhyta have been found at Knossos, whereas rhyta continue to occur elsewhere in Crete (approximately in the same ratio per grave as in the immediately preceding phase). At Knossos, rhyta were usually made of stone, while the later Cretan parturient vessels are made of clay. This pattern supports the idea that the unprovenanced single Egyptian *Gravidenflasche* reused as a rhyton comes from Knossos. This imported Egyptian vessel may not be an isolated case: an 18th Dynasty travertine amphora was also found at Knossos, in the Room of the Stone Vases (in the West wing of the palace). Although it cannot be said for sure whether it was converted into a rhyton, because the bottom part is missing, it was certainly altered after the arrival on the island (Phillips 2008, II, 86-7 n.144; Egyptian stone vessels in Crete are discussed in 4.3).

A funerary context has been proposed for HM II 2841, the Gournia specimen (as noted above), while the rhyton from Kephala Chondrou may come from a domestic shrine. Rhyta are still found in domestic storerooms during this period: during LM IIIA2 Late-IIIB clay rhyta are widespread in both cemeteries and private houses. The lack of cult repositories may indicate that rhyta were no longer used in religious processions and other public rituals, in which they were superseded by the tripod of Mycenaean origin. They seem, however, still to have been used for libations and for pouring liquids into other containers. Their presence in tombs and their *dromoi* points to drinking and, perhaps, libations associated with funerary practices. The latest Cretan parturient vessel, from Aghia Triadha, was not a rhyton; it is possible that by this time (LM IIIC) the values attributed to this shape had undergone further change.

Perhaps one or more Egyptian *Gravidenflasche* was imported to Crete because of the substances they contained. The material of which they were made, together with their exotic provenience, would make them highly prized items (Bevan 2007, 189-90). This status, however, does not in itself explain the local “imitations”. Egyptian shapes might have been copied in Crete to satisfy a local demand for exotic items in limited supply (see Chapter 4). Whatever the function of the Cretan parturient vessels may have been, the miniature Egyptian-like *hydria* appearing on the top of the Aghia Triadha container appears not only to corroborate the hypothesis that these objects have a relation with Egypt, but also to suggest that this relation was deliberately emphasised. However, there

are some reasons why I believe this explanation to be unsatisfactory. To begin with, the *Gravidenflaschen* were quite unusual items in Egypt itself. In my opinion their appeal in Crete must have resulted at least partly from their resemblance to a shape familiar from in earlier times, as demonstrated by the Middle Minoan figurines. The resurgence of such shape in a new medium, however, needs further discussion, and could be linked to some deeper resonance.

Whatever the nature of such a resonance, the various differences between the Cretan vessels and their Egyptian counterparts require consideration. I have already discussed the formers' use as rhyta; it is noteworthy in addition that none among the three Cretan specimens shares the massaging pose of the *Gravidenflaschen*. This difference could be linked to Cretan conventions, but perhaps it has something to do with the role of these objects. There is no way to determine to what extent the practices and beliefs associated with the *Gravidenflaschen* were shared in Crete. Their use in relation to pregnancy and delivery in Egypt can only be presumed, while we know still less about delivery practices in the Bronze Age Aegean (Arnott 2002a, 13). A possibility is an association with goddesses connected with delivery. Linear B texts already mention Eileithyia (*e-re-u-ti-ja*, later Greek Εἰλειθυία), a goddess of childbirth strongly linked to Crete and possibly of Minoan origin herself; in Chapter 4, I argue that the Greeks were able to associate her with one or more Egyptian goddesses with similar functions already in very early times.

The Egyptian *Gravidenflasche* found in Crete may suggest that Egyptian medical preparations, or substances with medical use, were imported to the island during the latter phases of the Late Bronze Age. A relation with Egypt was still meaningful even in a period (LM III) when contacts with Egypt seem to have been markedly reduced (Cline 2009, 10). Notwithstanding our limited data about their context, however, it seems clear that these objects had a different use than in Egypt: the differences between the Egyptian and the Cretan vessels suggest that the latter were something more than cheap copies of valuable exotic items: rather the motif was incorporated into the local culture. The use of a rather rare form in a new medium, of which the earliest example is an imported object, may be linked the development of new practices – or changes in existing ones – as has been suggested for the “Minoan Genius” (Weingarten 1991; below, 2.5.1). It is possible that, in Crete, a link between such practices and those associated with the *Gravidenflaschen* in Egypt was believed to exist.

A modern parallel that comes to my mind is the “Q-Link pendant”, a device advertised as “protecting the body from Electromagnetic field radiation” and other threats

apparently as dangerous as the Egyptian *ukhedu* entities (Tools for Wellness 2014). It looks like a digital memory card, with eight contact pads on the circuit board on the front, and a copper induction coil around the edge; according to the catalogue, this coil is supposed to “power” the pendant by picking up “micro currents” from the owner’s heart. On closer examination, however, the copper coil is not connected to the circuit board: the latter is just a decorative element, whose function is merely to provide the Q-Link with a high-tech appearance (Goldacre 2009, 175). The name of this item, moreover, is intended to feed on the fascination with the “arcane art” of quantum physics (as many pseudo-scientific practices currently do). So, there is a visual and a conceptual link between this product and a completely different context (that of cybernetics and quantum physics), intended to present it as more reliable by means of such “prestigious” associations.

The visual similarity between the *Gravidenflaschen* and the Cretan parturient vessels is evident; the conceptual one, however, can only be an object of speculation. Perhaps, some day one or more specimens will be found in a context that will shed more light on the matter. Moreover, it is possible that future examinations of these vessels with modern methods (below, 2.5.3) could inform us about their contents and thus provide more reliable pointers towards the relation between these two items.

2.5 FURTHER BORROWINGS AND INFLUENCES

Several sources indicate that there was a considerable circulation of physicians between the courts of Egypt and the Near East during the Late Bronze Age; Egyptian practitioners were particularly appreciated and in much demand, as shown by an exchange of letters between Ramses II and Hattušilis III (KUB 3 66, 67). Given the customary secrecy of sacred practices in Egypt, it is likely that these specialists were not eager to share all their knowledge in the new environment (Halioua 2005, 182). Nevertheless, the prolonged contacts with western Asia surely prompted the dissemination of some Egyptian healing practices and beliefs. The Egyptians too had many opportunities to enrich their knowledge by learning foreign remedies (Contenau 1938, 196-7). Textual evidence reveals that they had no difficulty in acknowledging such foreign contributions (Halioua 2005, 182): the “Keftiu incantation” discussed in 2.3 is a clear example of this.

The inability in many areas to differentiate between symptoms and causes would probably lead to confusion between different illnesses with similar effects, especially previously unknown ones first encountered when travelling abroad. Above (2.3) I have suggested that while the Egyptians distinguished between two similar illnesses (the *snt* and

a *hnkt* diseases), the Minoans may not have done so; although this is just a supposition, one may wonder whether, in some instances, a foreign illness was mistaken for a more familiar one with similar symptoms, so that the remedies for the former were adopted to treat the latter. In Medieval and Early Modern Europe it was believed that scrofula, a tubercular infection, could be healed by the touch of the monarch. Although it is unlikely that all of the people “touched” actually had scrofula (Roberts & Manchester 2010, 183), other diseases could be mistaken for it, such as syphilis (Startin 1885, 31); individuals with syphilis might thus have also sought relief in the “king’s touch”. These premises might therefore be valid not only for pharmacological treatments, but also for those involving magic and religion. I begin this section with the latter, and then move on to surgery and pharmacological treatments.

2.5.1 AMULETS AND INCANTATIONS

Although the use of amulets varied through time, during most stages of ancient Egyptian history they were used in order to enhance and preserve health. Some of these amulets, which Petrie (1914, 6) labelled “homopoeic”, portrayed living creatures whose features the bearer wished to assimilate; they represented parts of the human body, or animals with admirable qualities. Parallels for both types are attested in the Aegean. Other amulets (Petrie’s “phylactic”; 1914, 6) were protective, including those representing the god Bes and the Egyptian hippopotamus goddess. The latter, as we will see below, was introduced to Crete during the Middle Minoan period, perhaps retaining at least in part her original meaning and symbolism. Was this an isolated phenomenon?

Because of the dearth of written sources for the Aegean world, the only way to study “magical-religious” medicine is by examining “ritual” objects apparently connected to healing practices, such as statues, amulets and motifs. Caution is required, since “decorative motifs” may have deeper meanings that escape our attention; in order to identify them, it would be necessary to know the function of the objects on which they appear, and this is not always possible, as the previous section shows. Here I am using the word “amulet” in its broader sense, i.e. as an object which, “because of its shape, the material from which it is made, or even just its colour, is believed to endow its wearer by magical means with certain powers or capabilities” (Andrews 1994, 6). Technically, however, an amulet should be worn to be effective (contrarily to talismans; Germond 2005, 17).

THE “MINOAN GENIUS”

The origins of the so-called “Minoan genius” have been treated by Judith Weingarten (1991), who discusses this entity in relation to its alleged Egyptian prototype, the hippopotamus goddess known from the 18th Dynasty onwards as Taweret (*ḥwt wrt*, “the Great one”; Fig. 2.13), also Hellenised as Toeris. Weingarten convincingly suggests that the Minoans adopted this figure in their glyptic no later than 1700 B.C., without any Levantine or Anatolian involvement (Fig. 2.14). She examines its role in both milieus, remarking that its appearance in Crete seems to be simultaneous with some changes in ritual libation practices. This does not necessarily imply a causal relation between the appearance of the “Minoan genius” and major changes in religious practice, but it is reasonable to assume that this entity filled a gap of some kind, or that it replaced another element previously fulfilling a similar role. Above I have argued that the same may have been true, some centuries later, for the Cretan parturient vessels.

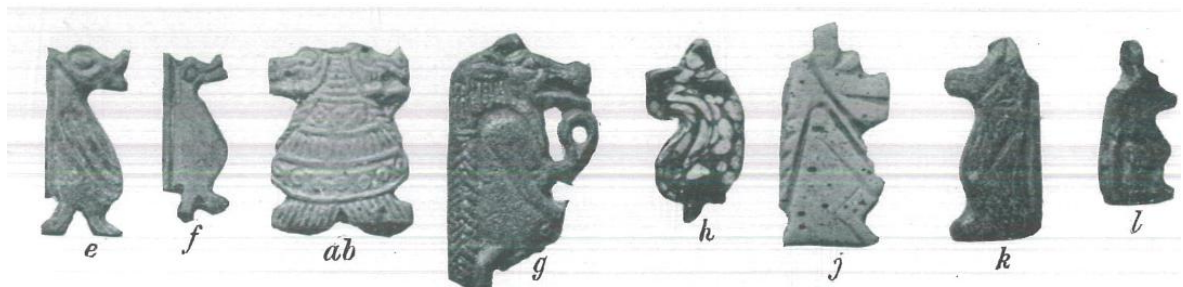


Fig. 2.13. Amulets shaped like Egyptian hippopotamus deities. Late Middle Kingdom. After Petrie (1914, pl. XL).



Fig. 2.14. Seal impression with the “Minoan Genius”. HM Σ-T 697; CMS II 5, n. 322. Clay, L. 17 mm, W. 13 mm. Phaistos, MM IIB (?). After Phillips (2008 II, 357).

Among her various features, the Egyptian hippopotamus goddess had apotropaic properties (Petrie listed her among his “phylactic” symbols). She is associated with the “maternal” aspects of the hippopotamus (discussed in 2.3): a great ease in giving birth to her cubs, and a fierce protective instinct toward them. Thus, the hippopotamus goddess is said to protect both mothers and their children (e.g. Steindorff 1946, 50; Andrews 1994, 40; Allen 2005, 32-33), especially the young sun god, whose enemies she fights off with knives or a sword (Altenmüller 1965, 150; 168). Phillips (2008 I, 165-166) argues that there is no definitive evidence that the entity that was adopted in Crete was a female one. Nevertheless, she acknowledges that the protective role can be associated with male hippopotamus deities as well, although to a more limited extent.

In Crete, the “Minoan genius” is not shown bearing weapons or involved in violent activity. However, in some representations it carries animals to be sacrificed (Fig. 2.15). At first sight, this would appear to be a Minoan innovation, since explicit links between Taweret and animal sacrifice are lacking in Egyptian iconography. However, Egyptian texts sometimes refer to sacrificial animals as “the enemy of the god” (*hfty ntr*; Goebis 2003, 32 and n. 28). I would not venture to argue that the “sacrificial” role of the “Minoan genius” results from a literal interpretation of an Egyptian expression, but the various features of the Egyptian hippopotamus deities were no doubt “translated” in a number of ways into the Minoan conceptual world; the lack of written evidence obscures many of these changes. The most significant conclusion reached by Weingarten is that not only were the Minoans, in all likelihood, aware of the hippopotamus deity’s functions within Egyptian ideology – that is, she was not borrowed simply as a decorative theme, but they also deliberately included it into their own set of beliefs and practices.

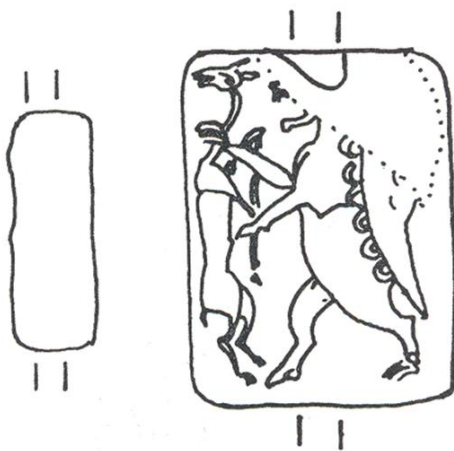


Fig. 2.15. Seal with the “Minoan Genius” holding a deer fawn. HM Σ-K 169; CMS II 3, 105. Carnelian, L. 18.2 mm, W, 13.9 mm. MM III. Kalyvia, Tomb 7. After Phillips (2008 II, 306).

Both the apotropaic (Nunn 1996, 110) and the lustral (Roy Porter 1997, 139) connotations of the hippopotamus deity (and the “Minoan Genius”) can be linked to health care in many belief systems. Deities with protective or belligerent connotations are often invoked to fend off nefarious spirits, such as those who threaten health (2.2.3): “so that you [Mars] keep away, push back and sweep away visible and invisible maladies” (Cato, *De Agri.*, 141). Libation formulas are among the few identifiable Linear A inscriptions (Owens 1996). It is possible that some Egyptian practices related to health were appealing for the Minoans, perhaps because they were able to relate them to their own belief system. If so, in the case of the “Minoan genius” there could have been shared ideas on the ways in which divine entities relate to human concerns.

MINIATURE BODY PARTS

An amulet or talisman representing a part of the human body, such as a limb or an internal organ, may work conceptually as a substitute for it; treatment applied to these replacements can be held to have a positive effect on the original. Alternatively, the disease could be transferred from the real organ to the amulet; the principle is the same as that of the heart image pricked with pins (Petrie 1914, 3).

In Egypt, amulets of this kind (Petrie’s “homopoeic”) were often connected with the dead, although their overrepresentation in burials can be explained by the fact that they had better chances of preservation there. Models of the different parts of the body were placed with the corpse (mummified or not) so that its various organs would be able to function in the afterlife (Müller-Winkler 1987, 197-8). However, the meaning of these amulets is not always straightforward. The Egyptian amulets of two human fingers, for instance, were related to the “opening of the mouth” ritual, which restored the senses for the afterlife (Roth 1993). Objects of this kind increase in the archaeological record starting with the First Intermediate Period (Dubiel 2008, 79), a time when burials underwent major changes, with a wider access to funerary practices formerly limited to a restricted elite (Seidlmayer 2001), and the use of “magic” largely increases (Assmann 2002, 89-90). Among the amulets in use before the New Kingdom were human faces, eyes, hearts, arms, open hands, and legs. Some of these replicate the corresponding hieroglyph; the only internal organ among the Egyptian amulets is the one representing the heart. Notwithstanding some Old Kingdom comparative material, phallic objects of various kind are well documented in Deir el-Bahri and other sites during the New Kingdom; although their exact function

cannot be determined with certainty, they might have been votive offerings aimed at ensuring fertility (Pinch 1993, 245).

The votive offerings found in Cretan peak sanctuaries (mentioned above in 2.2.1), consist of clay representations of human limbs, genitalia, detached heads, and whole human figures, often displaying some deformity or illness (Davaras 1976, 246-7). They were placed in rock crevices, while the human limbs may have been suspended inside the temenos, in front of an altar (Rutkowski 1986, 87). In some sanctuaries at least, they may have been thrown into a fire lit on the main terrace during festivals (Arnott 1999a, 3).

Although our understanding of these objects is limited, it is fairly clear that their use and meaning in Egypt and Crete was utterly different. The Egyptian preoccupation with the preservation of the body after death, for instance, was not shared by the Minoans (for their treatment of corpses see above, 2.2.4). In the case of Egypt, it is worth asking whether the decline of limb-amulets from the Middle Kingdom onwards could be due to improvements in mummification techniques, which made the originals “less likely to become detached or injured” (Andrews 1994, 69). Alternatively, the decline can be explained in terms of the increased access to a greater range of symbols with “protective” functions.

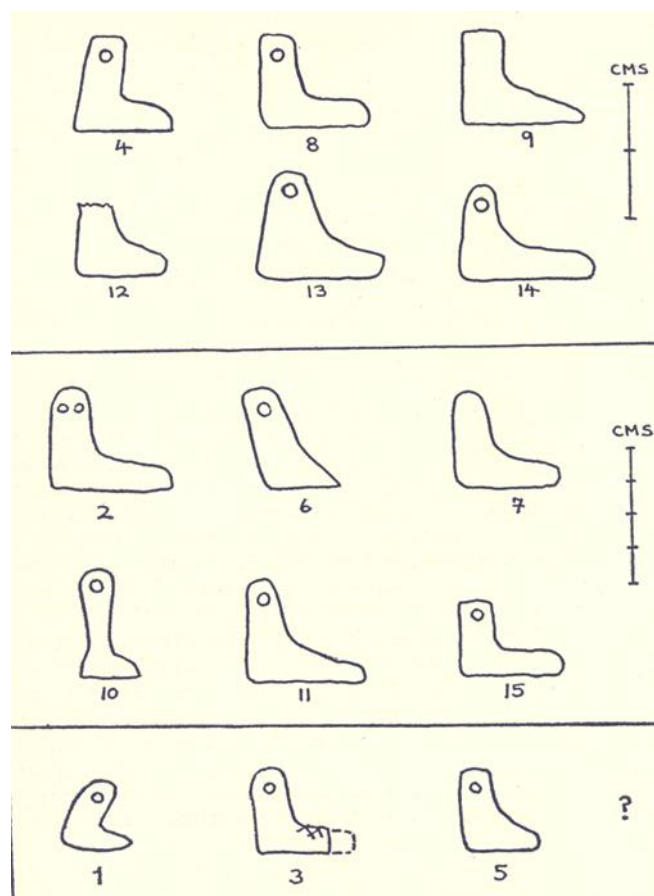


Fig. 2.16. Minoan foot amulets. After Branigan (1970, 8).

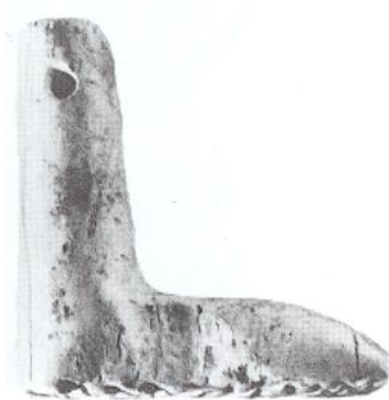


Fig. 2.17. Minoan foot amulet. CMS II 1, n. 212. Clay, H. 17 mm, W. 1.7 mm. After Aruz (1999, pl. I).

Apart from the Middle Minoan clay reproductions of human limbs from sanctuaries, Crete has produced a certain number of “foot amulets”, whose Egyptian derivation was already advocated by Evans (1928, 45; Figs. 2.16 and 2.17). Egyptian leg-amulets are flat, and they represent the whole leg (Fig. 2.19). Although the commonest material is carnelian, there are also specimens in ivory and bronze. They can be divided in two types: pierced from side to side, and least detailed; and pierced front-to-back, with a greater naturalism: for instance, individual toes are clearly recognisable (Andrews 1994, 72). Minoan foot amulets seem to be mainly a product of the Early Bronze Age “Mesara culture”. Their contexts are often unclear, but most of them were probably manufactured between EM II and III; the amulets are three-dimensional and, with one exception, only represent the foot and the ankle (Branigan 1970, 10-13).



Fig. 2.18. Minoan clay legs. After Peatfield (1990, 118).

Evans and Xanthoudides immediately assumed that the Minoan foot-amulets had the same use and meaning as the Egyptian ones (Xanthoudides 1924, 31). Branigan proposes an alternative hypothesis, that Cretan foot-amulets had a protective function against snakes. Bites from snakes and other venomous animals were indeed often recognised as being beyond the means of pharmacological remedies, so that their treatment had to rely on magic (2.2.2). However, as Branigan admits, in this case the connection between amulets and snakes relies almost exclusively on Pliny the Elder (*Nat. Hist.* XXXVI, 1; XXXVIII, 54), who was writing more than two thousand years after the amulets were produced.

It seems clear that, when representations of detached feet and whole legs reappear in Cretan sanctuaries, in Middle Minoan times, they have a different function than the earlier ones, as votive offerings (Fig. 2.18). Branigan explains the change as relating to an evolution in Minoan religion, in which the kind of protection formerly provided by amulets was now expected from a deity. Such “evolutionary” approaches to religion are always hazardous, and on the available evidence such changes can only be hypothesised. Besides, the only link between the two types of objects is a Minoan amulet representing a whole leg found in the Psychro Cave, which is probably no earlier than MM II (Branigan 1970, 10).

“Leg amulets” are attested in Egypt as early as the 5th Dynasty and disappear abruptly after the First Intermediate Period (Andrews 1994, 71; Fig. 2.19), when new forms become popular (Dubiel 2008, 77). Their use thus coincides roughly with the period during which the Mesara foot-amulets were produced. Both types have suspension holes which may, however, be purely symbolic). In the later stages of their use, the Egyptian foot-amulets overlap briefly in time with the Middle Minoan votive offerings, and share a similar assumed use as substitutes for real human limbs.



Fig. 2.19. Egyptian leg amulet. After Andrews (1994, fig. 69).

Since the Minoan and Egyptian amulets appear at approximately the same time but with significant differences in design, material, and probably use, Branigan concluded that there would be no reason to postulate a link between them, a conclusion that is shared by Phillips (2005b). A different source may be sought further north, since foot-shaped clay

stamping devices from Thessaly and Romania date back as far as the Early Neolithic, and are common in Early and Middle Bronze Age Anatolia. Joan Aruz (1999, 8) accepts the different hypothesis that the amuletic function of leg/foot-shaped objects was transmitted to the Aegean from the East. But this cannot be established so long as it is not known what the Minoan ones were used for.

Given the very weak link between the Mesara foot-amulets and the later Middle Minoan clay legs, it is not unreasonable to suggest that the latter's shape was influenced by some imports, as may also be the case with the parturient vessels. It can be argued that no Egyptian foot-amulets have been found in Crete. Yet, in such a case an absence of evidence is not necessarily evidence of absence: only one Egyptian parturient *vessel* has been found in Crete, notwithstanding the fact that travertine containers are far more likely to survive in the record than small carnelian amulets.

Branigan acknowledges the possibility of a Levantine connection for the foot amulets. A few foot/leg-amulets have been found in Byblos, and one of them is of "Egyptian type" and another of "Minoan type" – that is, it comprises only the foot and the ankle. They seem to belong to the late third or early second millennium B.C. (Branigan 1970, 13-14). Moreover, at least one Egyptian leg-amulet dated to the Middle Kingdom has been found in Palestine or Israel; the context is again unknown, but it was probably connected with the cult of the dead (Herrmann 2002, 119, 151).

If there was a shift in the use or meaning of small objects representing human limbs between Early and Middle Minoan period, such a change may have favoured the adoption of a new shape, perhaps not devoid of foreign influences. Once more, the latter interpretation is more plausible if the underlying belief was (at least apparently) similar to that of the giving culture(s). Perhaps this is another case of elements of Egyptian healing "magic" being incorporated into an otherwise entirely Minoan context.

2.5.2 SURGERY AND ORTHOPAEDICS

Already in antiquity, surgery was perceived as having more mundane and "mechanical" connotations than pharmacological preparations or healing incantations (Westendorff 1999, 237-8). This does not mean, however, that surgical practice was completely free from elements that we would now call "irrational". There are severe limitations to the possibility of making a sound comparison between Egyptian and Aegean surgery and treatment of fractured limbs. The Aegean lacks adequate anthropological material for

studying the surgery of soft tissues, and there are no Aegean treatises like the Egyptian Edwin Smith papyrus.

Herodotus relates the story Democedes of Croton, a physician, son of a priest of Asclepius, who according to Herodotus was able to cure king Darius' injured foot, whereas his Egyptian court physicians had been unsuccessful (*Her.* III, 129-131). Such anecdotes are obviously not valuable as historical sources. Nevertheless, this tale remains meaningful: we have seen (2.1) that the great amount Greek physicians owed to their Egyptian forerunners has always been acknowledged and even exaggerated (above, 2.1). It is well known that Herodotus often added unreliable information to his narrative in order to support some general statements; a famous example is in the passage (II, 35; e.g. Hartog 1988, 213) in which he tries to show that Egypt is a "land of contraries". There might be more than simple "national pride" in this tale, whose model is very common and is also found in the Biblical tale of Joseph. In fact, the great reputation of Egyptian medicine in Classical Greece does not seem to normally have been extended to surgical practices, and the situation was apparently not different among Egypt's neighbours during the Bronze Age (Rowling 1989, 318-9). In Egypt, surgery was basically devoted to curing wounds and traumas, whether they resulted from work accidents or warfare. Besides that, its scope was rather limited, being restricted to interventions like the swelling of tumours and, as one would expect, circumcision – although the latter is not strictly speaking a medical procedure. Although the Edwin Smith papyrus describes many treatments for traumas to the head, the evidence for trephination in Egypt is uncertain. It cannot be excluded that such "unorthodox" operations were performed by foreign physicians. With today's increased mobility, it is simpler for a patient to go abroad when seeking treatments considered "taboo" (i.e. illegal) in his or her own society (i.e. country), such as abortion, euthanasia etc. If this was ever the case for some surgical practices in Egypt, it could only be proven by meticulously comparing adequate palaeopathological material, which is largely unavailable.

Some hints of contacts may also be sought in the treatment of long bones, notably in the techniques used to join and immobilise a broken limb. The splints used in the Aegean were not very different from those used in Egypt (Arnott 1999b, 503), but it is not possible to say more.

2.5.3 MEDICAL PREPARATIONS

The difference between pharmacological medicine and “magic” in pre-modern societies, as we have seen, is often less neat than their separation from surgery. The absence of a healing system clearly detached from supernatural elements, is often considered a common feature of the whole of pre-Classical thought. Notwithstanding our limited knowledge of the Minoan and Mycenaean belief systems, it is unlikely that they were exceptional in this respect. My decision to separate the evidence for “pharmacological” and “magical” practices according to our definitions is thus somewhat arbitrary.

Although the physical properties of the substances used for a preparation clearly played a basic role, we should not delude ourselves into assuming that less straightforward factors did not intervene in their choice: ingredients of mineral, vegetable, and animal origin often possessed magical and symbolic aspects, and these may have overlapped with their real properties and have been no less significant in their selection and application. It would also be valuable to look at whether any of the symbolic elements with which they were associated in one milieu can be detected in the other.

Whereas similarities between Egyptian and Mesopotamian pharmacological preparations can be sought by comparing the textual material from the two cultures (e.g. Contenau 1938, 197), in the case of the Aegean it is necessary to find other forms of evidence. One possibility is provided by residue analysis on pottery. Several types of organic molecules leave traces on the vessels used to mix and store medical preparations; modern bio-molecular technologies can reveal to some extent not only what the containers were used for, but also some details about the processes through which they were prepared. The project *Archaeology Meets Science*, directed by Yannis Tzedakis, Holley Martlew and Martin Jones (2008), produced significant results from the EM III/MM IA (ca. 2000 B.C.) smelting workshop of Chrysokamino, East Crete, and the EH Cemetery site of Kalamaki (Peloponnese). The number of preparations whose components have been identified with reasonable confidence remains limited; in this section, I discuss them in order to find possible correspondences in the Egyptian papyri. The first step is to see if any combination of two or more ingredients identified in the Aegean also features in one or more preparations described in the Egyptian medical literature. If so, a series of additional elements could be taken into account in order to draw a parallel: the scope of the preparation (if the papyrus states it clearly); the medical properties of the ingredients, which may give some insight into its function (notwithstanding the remarks above); the availability of these ingredients in both contexts, which might strengthen (or weaken) the

possibility of a common origin for a particular remedy; finally, additional remarks in the text may provide some further hints.

Some of the vessels in Chrysokamino may have been used to prepare herbal remedies (Betancourt 2008, 245). It is uncertain whether the workers would have used such medications with the help of a healer, or by themselves. The smelters attached to the workshop were in all probability constantly subject to burns and other external injuries, and we have no indication of what treatments would have been used. The preparations identified so far were likely used to self-treat the symptoms resulting from continual exposure to arsenic poisoning during the copper smelting process (Arnott 2008, 115-16). Besides causing skin irritation and dermatitis, arsenic poisoning eventually leads to respiratory and chronic gastrointestinal problems. Exposure to carbon monoxide and metal fume fever was also a constant threat for people working in such conditions, leading, in its sub-acute form, to a situation similar to a serious infection with influenza. Several of the ingredients apparently employed were not native to Crete, and were perhaps imported for their medical properties.

So far, the results of the analyses on twelve clay vessels from Chrysokamino have been published (Betancourt 2008, 246-8). Among the ingredients which seem to occur more than once, the only ones that can possibly be recognised in the Egyptian texts are anise (*Pimpinella anisum* L.) and cumin (*Cuminum cyminum* L.), combined in the sherds EUM 527, 528 and 547. Arnott (2008, 115) believes that the preparations mixed in these vases were used against the internal symptoms of arsenic poisoning described above.

The Egyptian word *tpnn* has been identified with cumin (Germer 1985, 143-4). Originally it was not native to Egypt, but at the beginning of the New Kingdom it was already present in the Delta. It is not native to Crete either, yet it was probably cultivated in the island during the Bronze Age (Arnott 2008, 113). We know from Theophrastos that, in historical times at least, magical properties were attributed to cumin (Heilmeyer 2007, 44). Belief in such properties survived notwithstanding a shift in the supernatural entities with whom the plants were connected (Warren 1986, 26-7), and it may be very old. As to its actual medical properties, cumin is an efficient remedy to treat digestive problems, since its seeds are stimulant (laxative) and carminative (that is, they are a remedy for flatulence). In Egypt, it was used as a treatment for digestive and bladder disorders, as a mild analgesic, and to cure headache (Manniche 2006, 102-104).

The identification of the Egyptian *inst* with anise (Greek ἄνισον, ἄννισον or ἄννησον) has not been demonstrated with certainty, although the possibility is generally

mentioned in the literature (Charpentier 1981, 152; Germer 1985, 139; Hannig 1995, 79). Anise seeds are known to have a wide range of medical uses, being carminative, expectorant, digestive, diuretic, purgative and spasmolytic. If the identification is correct, anise and cumin appear together in Papyrus Ebers (n. 232, 631, 632), and in Papyrus Hearst no. 28, which is the same prescription as Eb. 632 (Bardinet 1995, 378).

As is to be expected, several problems are connected with the obscure vocabulary of the medical texts. Eb. 631 and 632 (*Grundriss* IV1, 102) record remedies for the vessels “in the left side of the stomach”, which are included in the “treatise on the *mtw* vessels”. Many of the ingredients in Eb. 631 have not been identified, so that this preparation cannot be used productively in the present discussion. The composition in Eb. 632, however, seems clearer (Bardinet 1995, 286):

Another (remedy): flour made out of the rhizome of *Cyperus esculentus*: 1/8; figs: 1/8; grapes: 1/8; *inst*-plant: 1/8; *pṛt-šny* fruit: 1/16; *Cyperus esculentus*: 1/32; cumin: 1/64; honey: 1/8; water: 10 *ro*

The recipe begins with the usual heading *kt (pḥrt)* “another (remedy)”, which tells us that its purpose is the same as the preceding entry: to drive away (*dr*) from the body a wide range of threats: evil spirits, hostile gods, the ubiquitous *ukhedu* (see above), and the evil ʕ liquid (Bardinet 1995, 286). The latter is a harmful substance introduced into the body by magical means – perhaps the semen of an incubus-like entity – which caused a variety of symptoms. We often find the ʕ liquid associated with the *ḥ3ty*-heart (Nunn 1996, 63). Eb. 232 is thus one of several recipes for curing diseases of “demonic origin” concerning the *ḥ3ty*. It is now accepted that *ḥ3ty* was the most commonly used term for the physical heart (i.e., not intended as the seat of emotions); however, it apparently also designated the whole mediastinum, that is, the central compartment of the chest, between the lateral compartments occupied by the lungs. In an even broader sense, the term included the anatomical conduits of the body (*mtw*), since the latter were considered an extension of the heart – to which they were subordinated (Walker 1996, 165-6).

Cyperus esculentus L. (edible cyperus) is the first element mentioned in Eb. 632. It is attested in Egypt throughout its history. It was a frequent ingredient in medical preparations (under the term *giw*; *Grundriss* VI, 534-537), and also was its rhizome, that is, the earth almond (*wḥ*), which was also a staple item of diet (Nunn 1996, 158-9). The seeds (*šny-t3*) were often used as laxatives, but they normally required a taste corrigent to be ingested (*Grundriss* VI, 497). *Cyperus esculentus* may appear also in the Linear B texts

(RYC/CYP + O or RYC + QA), along with *Cyperus rotundus* L. (*ku-pa-ro*), employed in perfumery (DMic I, 404).

The “*prt-šny* fruits” are possibly pine nuts (Germer, 1985, 9), perhaps from the umbrella pine of Byblos (Nunn 1996, 159), another extremely common ingredient in medical preparations.

Figs, which are present also in the preceding preparation (Eb. 631), were used for stomach problems (Germer 2005, 90). They are likely to correspond to the *su-za* of the Linear B tablets (DMic. II, 307), and are possibly also present in Linear A texts (above, 2.3.3).

Apart from a few unusual features, the doses and the structure of the preparation in Eb. 632 are typically Egyptian. In the same section the dose for the *inst*-plant is usually indicated as 1/8 (Eb. 226, 227, 232, 235), although in Eb. 228 it is 1/16. Cumin, on the other hand, does not appear anywhere else in this section.

Notwithstanding the severe limitations to how one may seek comparisons in the Chrysokamino preparations, I believe that Eb. 632 shows several interesting points. If we take Egyptian conceptions about human physiology into account, it is not surprising that ingredients effective for digestive diseases were used to “remove” some evil matter “from the heart” (or from the conduits supposedly connected to it). Two of these ingredients were often combined in the Aegean, apparently with the same purpose, whereas they rarely appear together in the Egyptian medical corpus. I have already described how, in several thought systems, the same phenomenon could be explained with a multiplicity of causes that were believed to be equally valid and able to reinforce the same effect (2.2.3). This is why a single preparation may include two or more ingredients with similar properties. The rarity of this combination in the Egyptian medical corpus as compared to its frequency in Chrysokamino is noteworthy.

The other components in Eb. 632, provided that their identification is correct, would all have all been available Egypt as well as in Crete during the Middle and Late Bronze Age. The Ebers papyrus also includes an explicit reference to Crete in one of its recipes (Eb. 28), together with other recipes that are stated to be of foreign origin, such as Eb. 422 (quoted in 2.3.4), where Byblos is mentioned.

If there were exchanges like those described in Eb. 422, further analyses of residues on the Aegean pottery may improve the chances of finding closer correspondences with the Egyptian prescriptions. More clues may also come from the internal study of the papyri: the identification of more ingredients, the statistical combinations of those that are already

known, and the “taxonomical” arrangement of the remedies. Regarding the latter, orthographical considerations suggest that the Ebers papyrus originates from a collection of about 25-30 shorter texts (Weeks 1978); it would be valuable to establish whether these texts, or at least part of them, were devoted to specific subjects, such as the different parts of the body, diseases linked to a single cause, or conceivably remedies of foreign origin.

2.5.4 VOCABULARY

It is generally agreed that Greek expressions relating to health and the human body almost invariably reveal a straightforward Indo-European etymology. Notwithstanding a few words of uncertain origin, there is apparently no pathology whose name can be indisputably traced back to Egypt or the Near East, or even to a pre-Indo-European substratum; the same is true for the names of the internal organs (Grmek 1983, 37). This is all the more remarkable, if one considers the great number of loanwords which can be found in other contexts. Some scholars, however, have occasionally advocated an Egyptian etymology for Greek expressions related to medicine, so that it is worth addressing the issue briefly.

Petr Viktorovich Ernštedt (1953) tried to identify some early Egyptian borrowings in the Greek language. Among the examples discussed is the Greek stem *ανθρακ-*. This stem is first attested in the *Iliad* (I, 213), where it features in the word *ανθρακινή* (“burning ember”, “charcoal”), formed by means of a collective suffix *-ιά/-ιή*. Ernštedt’s proposed Egyptian etymology involved an Egyptian *rkḥ* (“to burn”), while the Greek prefix *ανθ-* was explained either with an Egyptian participle *3mw.t* (< *3m*) “burnt”, or with the noun *3mw* “heat”, “fever”. The resulting **3mw.t rkḥ.t*, “burning (head)ache” would be at the origin of the various Greek derivatives of the stem *ανθρακ* (Ernštedt 1953, 21-24). The expression **3mw.t rkḥ.t*, however, is never found as such in Egyptian texts, and the phonetic similarities seem rather strained.

More recently Martin Bernal (2006) discussed several cases of what he believed to be Greek terms of Egyptian origin, including several related to medicine. Bernal’s examples include instances such as *ἰ3ῖ* “appearance of pustule or wound” as the source for *ἐρέθω*, “to excite, to inflame a wound”. There are several reasons why examples like this cannot be used in this discussion. The first problem is that Bernal is declaredly biased towards Egyptian etymologies: “if, in the absence of an Indo-European etymology, one should consider a loan, the obvious place to begin is with Egyptian” (Bernal 2006, 373). Self-corroborating statements of this kind permeate Bernal’s work. The idea of Egypt as an

“obvious place to begin” clashes with the well-established fact that most loanwords in Greek are of western Asiatic origin, especially Semitic (e.g. West 1997, 12-19). If one looks for an Egyptian etymology exclusively because of the apparent “absence of an Indo-European etymology”, it can be very easy to work backwards until an Egyptian parallel for the word at issue is found; it is the same kind of fallacy which I discussed in 2.3.4 in connection with the interpretation of the “Minoan” spells. The only case I include here is φάρμακον, which Bernal explained with *pḥr(t)* “prescription” + the preposition *m*, “with” + *ḥꜣ*, “to heal”. As Bernal himself conceded (2006, 373), the combination **pḥr(t) m ḥꜣ*, “prescription and healing” (?), cannot be not found anywhere in the Egyptian record, as is also the case with the abovementioned **ꜣmw.t rkḥ.t*. One may also object that there is hardly any reason why Greek speakers should join two different Egyptian words, apparently very close in meaning, in a way that is not attested in the language to which they belong. Moreover, the Egyptian word *pḥr.t* has been linked, albeit dubiously, to Semitic **pxr*, “to gather (herbs)” (Takács 2001, 505), so that a Semitic origin may still be a more plausible option.

A second problem is that most such words of proposed “Egyptian etymology” are only attested in alphabetic Greek. This means that we cannot prove that their borrowing took place until several centuries later than the period I am concerned with (as Bernal too was); even if these Egyptian etymologies were plausible, in the absence of additional elements it would be risky to assume that they had been borrowed before historical times.

The possibility of Greek words of Egyptian origin (and vice-versa) is indeed potentially promising, but it would require a separate study. Aside from the problems related to phonology and chronology just discussed, even when the appropriate criteria are applied, there is always the possibility that an Egyptian loanword came to Greek by way of a Cretan or Asiatic language, instead of being borrowed directly from Egyptian (West 1997, 13). Its meaning may be completely different from the original one, making it useless for a discussion of the transmission of a specific kind of knowledge. Things may be different in cases where the context allows us to narrow the possibilities; this may be the case, in the opposite direction, with the prescription just discussed (Eb. 28): the Ebers papyrus is a text explicitly dedicated to the subject of medicine, and it can be dated within a certain period. If the Egyptian word *inst* really corresponds to Greek ἄνισον, it is possible that this is an early borrowing. It would be even more significant if the contrary proved to be true, that is, if Egyptian *inst* was a word of Aegean origin. But, at the present stage, we cannot go beyond speculation.

2.6 CONCLUSIONS

Possible exchanges of medical knowledge can be explored through a great variety of means. In the present chapter I have discussed various possible sources which may add to the limited written material: while the Egyptian medical texts can provide a starting point, they require further elements to substantiate them. Yet, I have also tried to highlight the wide range of problems which limit the possibilities of using this material effectively.

When comparing the healing traditions of the two milieus (2.2), I repeatedly emphasised the discrepancy between Egyptian and Aegean sources, and the ways in which such an imbalance may affect our conclusions. In the third section, I discuss the many problems related to handling the prescriptions in the medical papyri: the surviving texts are only a fraction of the original medical corpus, which probably left many practices unrecorded. What we have has probably survived only by chance; remedies that appear in more than one text suggest that some practices enjoyed a broader reputation, although the texts may represent just a scholastic tradition with little resemblance to the actual practice. The fourth section, devoted to “parturient vessels”, exemplifies some of the problems of the archaeological record: stratigraphic uncertainties make it very difficult to contextualise the artefacts properly and to place them on a reliable timeline. Finally, the cases which I have gathered in the fifth section show how difficult it is to assert whether a homology, that is, a common origin, is comparatively more reasonable than other explanations.

Once all these limitations have been acknowledged, however, I believe that we can proceed to propose some conclusions. The suggestions I have advanced regarding the issues discussed in this chapter may be set in relation to one another, and be related to a hypothetical cultural and, where possible, chronological frame. Any conclusion is inevitably subject to the risk of being too speculative, but in any case it is not within the scope of the present inquiry to arrive at indisputable facts.

The earliest direct evidence for contacts is the mention of the “Keftiu bean” in the Ebers Medical Papyrus (Eb. 28). This is a purely pharmacological prescription, showing that some knowledge of Aegean (Minoan) healing practices was available in Egypt no later than the outset of the New Kingdom (roughly corresponding to LM IA), and maybe earlier. It is not possible to determine whether there was also a trade in medical ingredients or even preparations. I propose above that the mention of an alternative to a Cretan plant may indicate that the latter was currently unavailable in Egypt, or difficult to obtain. If this is the case, we can suggest that this prescription was formulated during a phase of reduced contacts, perhaps corresponding to the Proto-Palatial (MM IB-IIB, ca. 1900-1700 B.C.),

when there seems to be a discontinuity in Egyptian imports in Crete (below, 4.3.3). Moreover, some linguistic features in Eb. 28 appear to indicate a Middle Kingdom origin for this prescription (2.3.1). The assumption of an earlier knowledge of Minoan medicine is consistent with the idea that the remedy in Eb. 622 shows some shared pharmacological notions with the preparations from Chrysokamino; the latter, as I argue above (2.5.3), are more likely to have been acquired through contact than to be the result of concurrent developments in the two regions (2.1). The Chrysokamino site, dating to EM III/MM IA, may belong to a first phase of contacts, during which such notions were exchanged. Perhaps commodities with a medical function, such as the “Keftiu bean”, were traded. Because Aegean medical texts are lacking, it is impossible to assess whether any elements of Egyptian pharmacology were acquired in Crete; future studies on Aegean pottery may provide further clues here.

The prescription in which the “Keftiu bean” is mentioned (Ebers 28) is intended to be a laxative. This would fit with the Egyptian preoccupation for emptying the *metu* (channels) of the noxious matter believed to cause the illnesses. The remedy in Ebers 622 probably had a similar function. We cannot infer to what extent Minoan ideas about human physiology resembled the Egyptian ones, but a Minoan remedy would not have been adopted in Egypt if it was not compatible with local beliefs. Whatever these beliefs were, for the stage preceding the New Kingdom there is no indication for an interest in Egypt for Aegean healing incantations or other “magic”/“religious” practices.

Towards the end of the Proto-Palatial, an Egyptian motif with an apparent link to lustral and apotropaic functions, that is, the Hippopotamus deity, is adopted in Crete. Moreover, in Middle Minoan times a kind of object already known on the island, the foot amulet, underwent changes in both its appearance and, as far as can be established, in its function (2.5.1). The impression is that certain Egyptian shapes were felt appropriate for objects linked to new beliefs, for which however there is no need to presume an external origin: the link with Egypt, especially in the second case, is too weak a basis for positing a strong influence. It is more likely that indigenous developments in Minoan beliefs, including those relating to healing, paved the ground for the spread of some specific foreign motifs. Such motifs would have been felt to be related to similar objectives, but their use and context remain local. The prestige of Egypt may be involved, but it is difficult to assess whether it has anything to do with the reputation of Egyptian physicians or rather it was based upon a fascination with Egypt filtered through the Levant. An interest for Egyptian shapes and motifs seems to extend to other contexts (Chapter 4).

An increasing Egyptian interest in “magical” healing means has been repeatedly addressed throughout this chapter. In his later years, Amenhotep III experienced a declining health. It appears that he sought help wherever he could; in Egypt, he had several Sed festivals, that is, celebrations aimed at renewing the king’s powers (in his 30th, 34th and 37th year, e.g. Kozloff 2012, 182-196, 213-214; 225-228). We know that he asked the Mitannian king Tushratta (his father-in-law) for a statue of Ishtar that was believed to have healing powers (Hayes 1973, 346). During Amenhotep’s reign, contacts between Egypt and the Aegean seem to have been particularly intense (e.g. Cline 1987), possibly including some “embassies” (e.g. Cline 1995b). It seems legitimate to wonder whether Amenhotep asked for the assistance of one or more Aegean physicians. Perhaps a physician, a healing statue, or both (Cline 1995a, 276) were dispatched, but no record survives for that. King Muršili II, who received two healing statues from Ahḫiyāwa and Lazapaš (probably Mycenae and Lesbos; see above, 1.4.2 and 2.1), did not know the proper rites for the deities they represented (Huxley 1960, 5). This seems strange, since it would be reasonable to presume that such statues would be accompanied by a priest or healer familiar with the necessary rites, but it is possible that they were not compatible with the Hittite practices, or that they had to be changed because the deities in question were now “abroad”: neither Ahḫiyāwa nor Lazapaš are not part of the Hittite empire (Sommer 1932, 290). In the case of Egypt, the London Medical Papyrus shows that there was no objection to Minoan healing practices. It should be recalled that Amenhotep III is mentioned more than once in that document.

As discussed above, even after the diffusion of Linear B in Crete, Linear A formulas are still attested there, being used with religious purposes (e.g. Owens 1996, 192-193): a figurine from Poros (Dimopoulou, Nota, Olivier & Réthémiotakis 1993) belongs to a LM IIIA stratum, and is thus later than Amenhotep III (LM II). Notwithstanding the supposedly “practical” nature” of Mycenaean medicine (Press 1990, 169-70), it is possible that current trends in Egypt made Minoan “magic” more appealing to the Egyptians than before; while the use of spells and incantations was consistent with local conceptions, the exotic nature of Minoan religion, with its “shamanic” practices (Morris & Peatfield 2004), might have exerted some fascination. It has been suggested that the evocation of the gods of the islands of the Great Green (which may include Crete, see Introduction) in the Tale of Sinuhe (B 211) attests an Egyptian awareness of the “magic, the religion and perhaps also the illnesses existing in the foreign land” (Kyriakidis 2002, 213). However, being abroad, Sinuhe probably had to ingratiate himself with different deities, which inhabited the lands

beyond Egypt's control. Such care for foreign gods is a very common feature in polytheistic societies. The contemporary Tale of the Shipwrecked sailor deals with an encounter with such an alien entity (e.g. Parkinson 1997, 89-101).

From post-Minoan times, the Cretan parturient vessels show a phenomenon similar that one seen with the miniature feet: an Egyptian shape is adopted for objects fulfilling functions that were previously absent, perhaps because an affinity was perceived in their objectives. The original Egyptian *Gravidenflasche* found in Crete may suggest the import of preparations from Egypt; even so, the absence of cheaper Egyptian containers on the island during this phase would argue against this being a significant trade.

It is now time to come back to two issues that I raised in the first section of this chapter: did the interaction between Egypt and the Aegean go further than the couple of references from the medical papyri would imply and, if it is so, how much further? And does the Greek reverence for Egyptian medicine date back to pre-Classical times? Regarding the first question, my conclusion is that a circulation of medical practitioners, even on a limited scale, would have contributed to disseminate some knowledge, but we cannot say much about who these practitioners were. It is not unlikely that there were some healers among the Aegean specialists who travelled to Egypt between Middle Minoan times and the end of the Late Bronze Age, that is, from the Second Intermediate Period to the 20th Dynasty. The circumstances of their arrival may have varied over time, and even during the single phases. Full-time physicians, as noted above, were probably only available to the elites, but ships travelling around the Mediterranean surely included individuals with healing skills among their crews. They would have spent prolonged periods abroad, where they may have shared their knowledge with local practitioners; some might have settled there, earning their living as physicians. They would presumably have worked outside the "official" environment, but they would nevertheless have interacted with it on a more or less regular basis, like modern Ayurvedic practitioners who do not eschew resorting to Western remedies (Porter 1997, 146). Some elements of their knowledge would then have passed into "mainstream" Egyptian practice. For reasons discussed above (2.5.2), it is unlikely that Aegean "surgical" practices could have found their way into the Egyptian corpus, while the idea that some foreign specialists might have performed "taboo" operations, such as trephination, remains purely hypothetical. The development and spread of bone-healing techniques in the Aegean may have stimulated some practitioners who lacked palace support to try their luck abroad. It is impossible to assert whether there was also an exchange on a court level, but the same is true with any

other category of Aegean specialists whose presence in Egypt has been suggested (e.g. Cline 1995a). There is no reason to think that many physicians move. An appropriate question here would be: if Aegean physicians travelled to Egypt, and vice-versa, what kind of evidence should we expect for that? References to foreign physicians are mostly found in the Amarna letters or other similar documents, which notoriously never mention the Aegean. “Itinerant doctors” would leave no monumental wall-paintings (like artists did), no elaborate weapons (like craftsmen), not even waste of spun wool (like weavers). Egypt and the Aegean combined have only produced one possible set of medical instruments (2.2.1), so that it would be difficult to expect foreign sets to be found. The occasional reference in the medical texts, and some similarities between objects with healing functions, are therefore all we can expect. A Syrian doctor possibly appears in the decoration of the tomb of Nebamun (TT 17; Säve-Söderbergh 1957, pl. xxiii); given the abundance of contacts between Egypt and Syria as compared to the Aegean, however, it would not be surprising that no representations of Aegean doctors have survived.

My second question concerns the reputation of Egyptian physicians in the Aegean already during the Bronze Age. Above (2.1) I have referred to the possibility of an Aegean-Anatolian continuity in some healing practices between the Late Bronze Age and Classical Greece: this would explain the Homeric parallels with the Bronze Age evidence better than the assumption of a deliberate attempt to archaize. The passage of the *Odyssey* discussed in the first section seems consistent with this possibility, while the case of the Egyptian *Gravidenflaschen* and the Cretan “parturient vessels”, further strengthens the idea in relation to the final phase of the Late Bronze Age.

Notwithstanding the serious limitations of the evidence, it may perhaps perhaps be possible in the future to expand the range of material. I have mentioned that the Hippocratic corpus displays some shared elements with the Egyptian papyri. Such a continuity could have involved not only actual practices but also the reputation of Egypt as a source of medical wisdom. It is difficult to assess how ancient these elements might have been, but one starting point could be to investigate whether they are closer to the medical literature of the New Kingdom or that displayed in the later Demotic texts. Such a comparison could identify features that had disappeared from the Egyptian corpus but had survived abroad. Another issue that may be worth exploring is the impact of the shift towards a more “Mediterranean” climate in the Aegean from the Late Bronze Age onwards. It is possible that different habits were introduced during this phase, in order to

cope with the changes. The deterioration of dental health in Crete during the LBA (2.2.2), for instance, may be linked to a different kind of diet.

3 – HALF AN ITERU ONWARD!

AEGEAN-EGYPTIAN RELATIONS AND LATE BRONZE AGE WARFARE

3.1 INTRODUCTION

3.1.1 DEFINITIONS

The aim of this chapter is to discuss possible interactions between Egypt and the Aegean in the context of warfare. Some aspects are also discussed that, albeit not directly linked to military activity, still have some form of connection with it.

The possibility of a conflict or a military alliance between Egypt and the Bronze Age civilisations of the Aegean has sometimes been advocated in earlier scholarship. The wealth of the Shaft Graves in Mycenae, for instance, has been interpreted in the past as an indication that Mycenaean princes were rewarded with lavish amounts of gold after helping the Egyptians to drive off the Hyksos (Hooker 1976, 49-54). Others, looking at Greek mythology in search of historical truth, argued that the figure of Danaus represented the conquest of the Argolid by “by some of the displaced Hyksos leaders” (Stubbings 1973, 635-638; here, 1.2.6). However, such views are now largely discredited, since there is no archaeological or textual evidence to substantiate them. The gold from the Shaft Graves, for instance, is currently believed to come from a northern source instead of Egypt (E. M. Davis 1983; Laffineur 1990-1991, 253).

Before proceeding, it is necessary to review some basic concepts. Since antiquity, philosophers and historians have struggled to find a satisfactory definition of “war”. More recently, the issue has been addressed by anthropologists and archaeologists as well. It is generally agreed that war is a form of organised violence, but this is also true of execution and human sacrifice. What makes war different is the scale of the opponents involved. There is no complete agreement about what kind of entities can wage war (Otto 2007, 23). Keith Otterbein’s (1985, 3) definition of war as “planned and organised armed dispute between political units” enables us to bypass the problems which would arise if we assumed that states alone could wage war, leaving aside smaller-scale actors such as tribes or nomadic groups.

Once we accept that war needs a society capable to wage it, it is also possible to acknowledge and discuss the mutual relationship between these two elements. Society, moreover, is always the sum of several components, all of which are affected by organised violence (Gnirs 2008, 67; Molloy 2010), although not necessarily in the same ways.

Current approaches to the anthropology and archaeology of warfare argue that war can be analysed on the basis of its social and historical background (Vandkilde 2006, 67-8); the “structure-agency approach” considers the actors (i.e. warriors) and their acts (warfare) as engaged in a mutual relationship with the social structure of which they are part: “war and violent conflict are regarded as strategic actions situated within the continuities of social practices” (*ibid.*, 67). Thus, warfare should not be interpreted as an autonomous reality governed exclusively by its own laws, but must be placed inside the broader context in which it occurs (e.g. Driessen 1999, 20).

The earliest phases of the Late Bronze Age (LBA) are marked by major technological innovations and by significant changes in society and culture in the whole Eastern Mediterranean. In the first section of this chapter (3.1) I present a general background to warfare in the Near East during the LBA. I then compare the situation in Egypt and the Aegean (3.2). In the following section (3.3) I examine the Egyptian textual material. If one leaves aside the problem of the so-called Sea Peoples, there are no reliable references to armed conflicts between Egypt and Aegean peoples during the LBA, nor are there explicit records of a trade in weapons, or of an exchange of military personnel such as auxiliary troops or mercenaries. There is, however, a reference to “Keftiu ships” in relation to Thutmose III’s campaigns in the Levant. Moreover, the Egyptian texts mentioning “Aegean tributaries” may provide information about relations between the two areas from the political and strategic point of view. Then I examine the pictorial material (3.4). In the past, some representations have been used as direct evidence for events. For instance, the “Miniature Frieze” from the “Admiral’s House” in Akrotiri has been suggested to record Aegean military activity in Libya or Egypt. The next section (3.5) treats the archaeological material, such as some weapons with Aegean features which have been found in Egypt. I also discuss supposed influences in military technology, and the possible evidence for a trade in raw materials used to manufacture weapons, armours or other items of military equipment. Finally I deal with the possibility of mutual influences in the representations of war and related subjects, together with the associated symbolism (3.6), before presenting some general conclusions (3.7).

3.1.2 MILITARY INNOVATIONS OF THE LATE BRONZE AGE

The Late Bronze Age coincided, in the Near East, with a protracted phase during which the balance of power shifted between political formations of regional extent (Fig. 3.1).

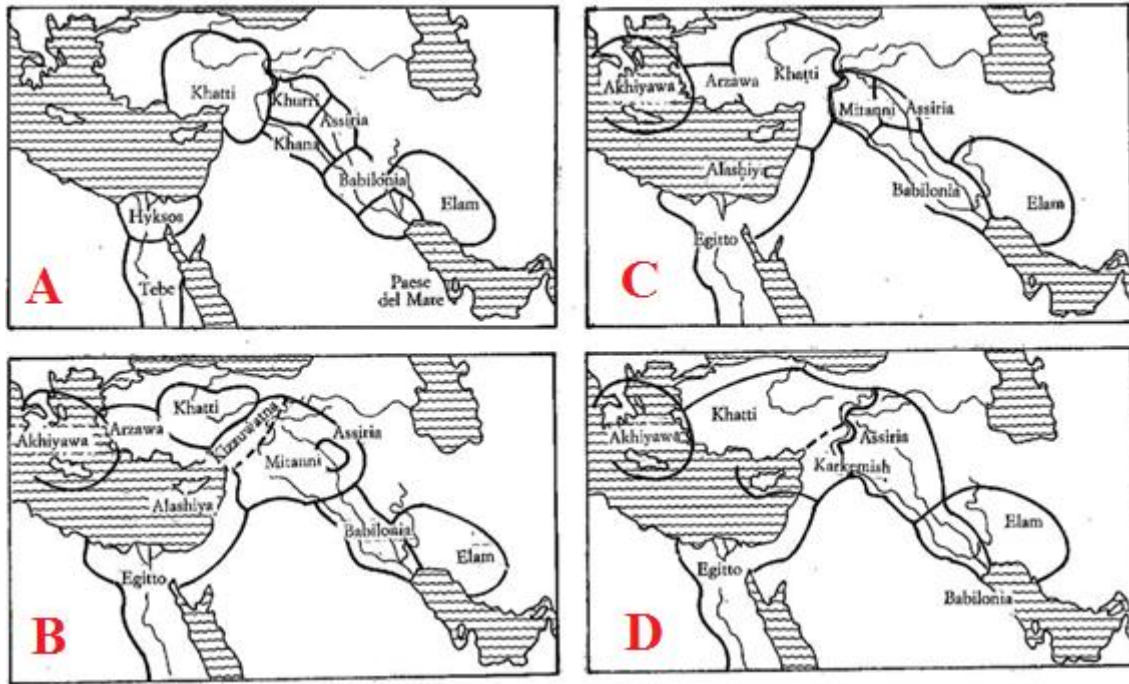


Fig. 3.1. Fluctuations in the Near-Eastern “regional system” during the LBA: the formative period (A; ca. 1600 B.C.); the Egyptian-Mitannian hegemony (B; ca. 1450 B.C.); the Egyptian-Hittite hegemony (C; ca. 1350 B.C.); the final stage (D; ca. 1220 B.C.). After Liverani (1988, 463).

A few major kingdoms, such as Egypt and the Hittite empire, covered most of the Near East, but none achieved the military, political and economic resources to impose an “imperial” unification on the entire area (Liverani, 1990, 14). It seems undeniable that the appearance of new weapons and military equipment sometime before 1600 B.C. (e.g. Hamblin 2006, 146-147) coincided with a paradigm shift in how war was waged on all levels: tactical, operational-strategic, and grand-strategic. This means that there were major changes in military technology and fighting techniques, in the ways armies were moved around and engaged in action during a campaign, and in the relations between different political entities (below).

The impact of such developments on other spheres of activity, such as economy and ideology was significant. Moreover, the Near East also experienced an unprecedented circulation of technical knowledge, artistic motifs, and ideological elements. This phenomenon can be linked with two key factors. First, courts were now in closer diplomatic contact than before. Second, major developments in the local cultural contexts provided a fertile soil for new elements coming from abroad, since a new environment also creates new necessities. Such changes can hardly be linked to a specific event – such as the arrival of a new ethnic element in the region – or a single technological innovation. Instead, I prefer to posit that the situation resulted from the complex interaction of several

factors, which we may describe as interlinked although not necessarily sharing a direct reciprocal causal relation.

The technical innovation which proved to be the most important and consequential was the introduction of a light chariot drawn by two horses (Fig. 3.2).

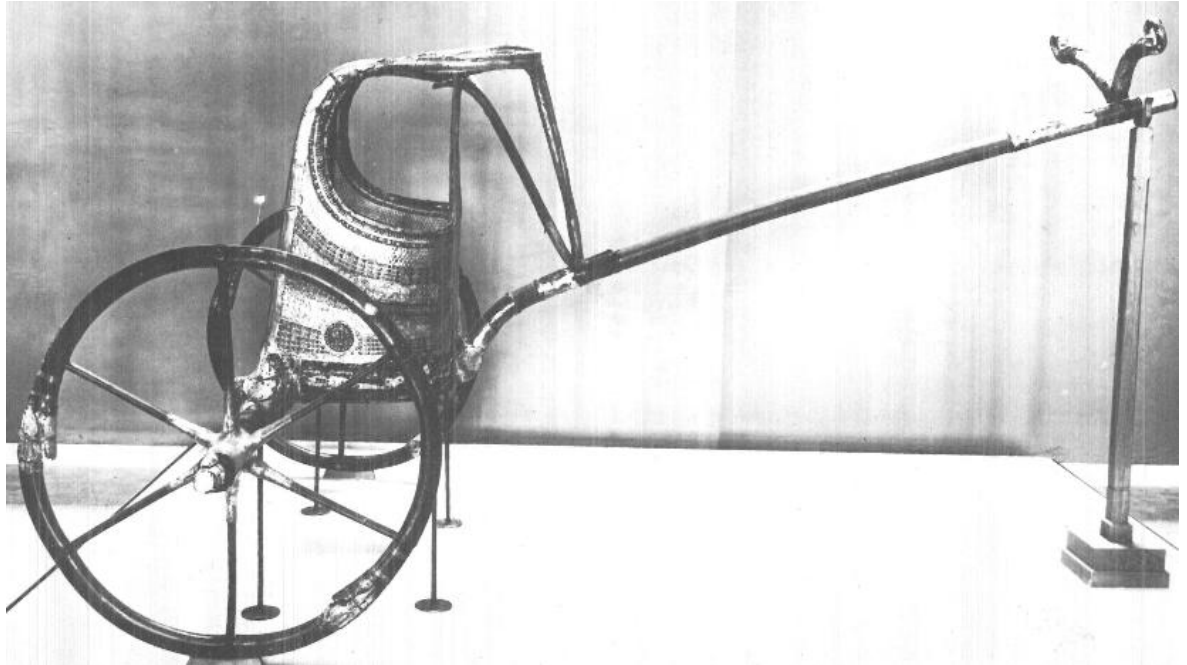


Fig. 3.2. Chariot A1 from the tomb of Tutankhamun. Obj. 122. After Littauer & Crowel (1985, pl. vii).

This invention was stimulated by the limited robustness of Bronze Age horses: even after being improved through selective breeding since around 2000 B.C. (e.g. Benecke & Von den Dreisch 2003), they were still not powerful enough to be attached to vehicles as heavy as the traditional carts with disk wheels, such as the Sumerian one drawn by four onagers. Hence spoked wheels were designed, about ten times lighter than disk wheels, greatly diminishing the burden. In John Keegan's words (2004, 155), "the adoption of the war chariot and the imposition of the power of war charioteers throughout the centres of Eurasian civilization in the space of some 300 years is one of the most extraordinary episodes in world history". Stuart Piggott (1983, 45-49) explained the swift diffusion of the light chariot with its technical advantages and the allure deriving from its speed (estimated as being an unprecedented 20 miles an hour), thus acknowledging an experiential aspect besides the practical ones.

There is no agreement on where the light chariot was invented. Some scholars link it to the non-literate communities who lived to the north of the more "civilised" peoples of the Near East (Piggott 1978); others, however, presume it to be "a local evolution which occurred in the Near East itself" (Littauer & Crowel 1979, 68-9). Even if we accept the

second hypothesis, it is still true that the appearance of the light chariot coincided with the diffusion of a cluster of elements previously unattested in the Near East, such as an Indo-Iranian onomastics and technical terminology. This may be similar to the way in which autonomous developments in the manufacturing of Samurai armour encouraged Japanese armourers to copy European breastplates during the 16th century (Bryant & McBride 1994, 30).

Mounted horses were not unknown during the LBA. They could be used for scouting, and chariot riders were supposed to be able to ride their horses if it was necessary to leave the battlefield urgently (Drews 2004, 52-3). It is possible, however, that there was some kind of “taboo” limiting the depiction of men riding animals – especially donkeys (John Baines, personal communication).

The second major innovation characterising LBA warfare is the diffusion of the composite bow (Fig. 3.3), manufactured by gluing and laminating together thin strips of wood, horn, and sinew.

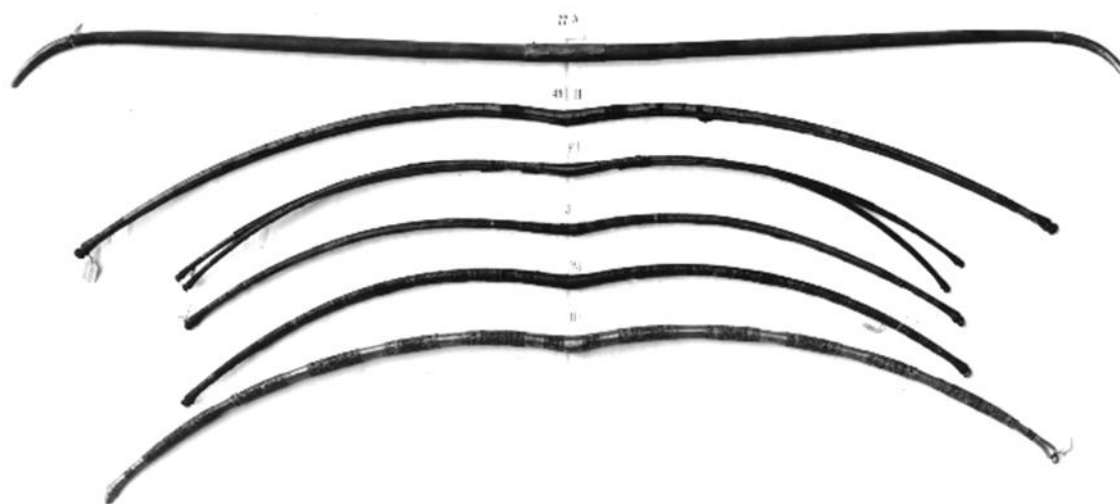


Fig. 3.3. Composite bows from the tomb of Tutankhamun. After McLeod (1970, pl. iii).

Producing these items required great skill and a long time (McLeod 1958, 400), but the reward was a greater range and stronger penetrating force compared to the earlier simple or self bow. Being relatively short, composite bows were well suited to chariot warfare. Their effectiveness, their cost and their association with chariotry enhanced their status as prestige items in their own right. One major problem for archers, on foot as well as on chariots, was that they needed both hands free and could not protect themselves with a shield. At the same time, the charioteers’ mobility on the battlefield and the range of their

bows meant an increased risk of being hit by enemy missiles. A first solution could be to add a shield bearer to the crew, as the Hittites did (e.g. Healy 1993, 27). However, a three-man crew would slow the chariot and create problems of mobility for those aboard, not to mention the additional burden for the horse and the increased stress on the chariot. Therefore a different kind of body protection was developed (Fig. 3.4)



Fig. 3.4. The Dendra panoply. After Åström (1977, pl. xv).

The use of metal scales made it both hard and flexible, and the progressively smaller size of scales resulted in a reduced weight (Yadin 1963, 84-85). Armour, however, was still heavy and stiff, so that its use by infantrymen is doubtful. Moreover, just like chariots and composite bows, armour was extremely costly. Lighter (and cheaper) forms of protection were also available, such as leather corselets.

3.1.3 A NEW KIND OF WARFARE

The real function of chariots in combat is still a subject of controversy. Many argue that it is unlikely that chariots were used to charge the enemy on the battlefield, since horses cannot be compelled to run into a compact line of soldiers (e.g. Crouwel 1978). The most common view is that chariots were used as “mobile platforms” for archers equipped with composite bows. Egyptian and Mesopotamian art often shows kings in the act of shooting arrows from chariots; although these representations are ideologically charged and cannot be considered wholly reliable (below, 3.6.1), they may indicate that chariot archery was common in Late Bronze Age clashes (Keegan 2004, 174-5). If the enemy fought in close formation, the effect of arrows among its ranks would be devastating (Partridge 2002, 40). Psychological elements should also be considered: the combined effect of enemy arrows and the sight of charging chariots could easily scare inexperienced men into breaking their ranks and running (Driessen 1999, 20), well before the horses were close enough instinctively to slow down, stop, or turn in another direction. For whatever reason, infantrymen often seem to have been of little or no use in pitched battles during the LBA (D. Dawson 2001, 153-157); at both Qadesh and Megiddo the day seems to have been decided by chariots.

Chariots could not be directly employed in siege warfare, but they could be used to reinforce a blockade (Kern 1999, 19). Moreover, it is possible that they also had other uses. New Kingdom Egypt provides representations of temporary military camps (Darnell & Manassa 2007, 87-88), that is, mobile fortifications made out of wagons joined together to encircle resting troops. The tableau accompanying Ramses II’s commemoration of the Battle of Qadesh depicts the royal encampment, with the army surrounding a large central tent belonging to the king (Darlen & Manassa 2007, 87); the entire camp is in turn surrounded by a palisade of shields. A scene in the tomb of Horemheb at Saqqara shows the inside of a camp, with two paths crossing at the central command area, dividing the enclosure into quadrants (Martin 1989 36-38, 43-44; Fig. 3.5). The layout of New Kingdom camps displays similarities with that of the Roman *castra*, and the same pattern is found in Vedic descriptions of how the Aryans laid out their villages. It is conceivable that this kind of encampment is to be linked with the development of chariot warfare; although useless in conventional sieges, chariots could be used to overrun the enemy encampment. In fact, it has been suggested that the goal of Muwatalli’s attack on Qadesh was the Egyptian camp (Spalinger 2005, 214-215): the Egyptian army, although being a more Clausewitzian objective, would certainly be also a more dangerous one.

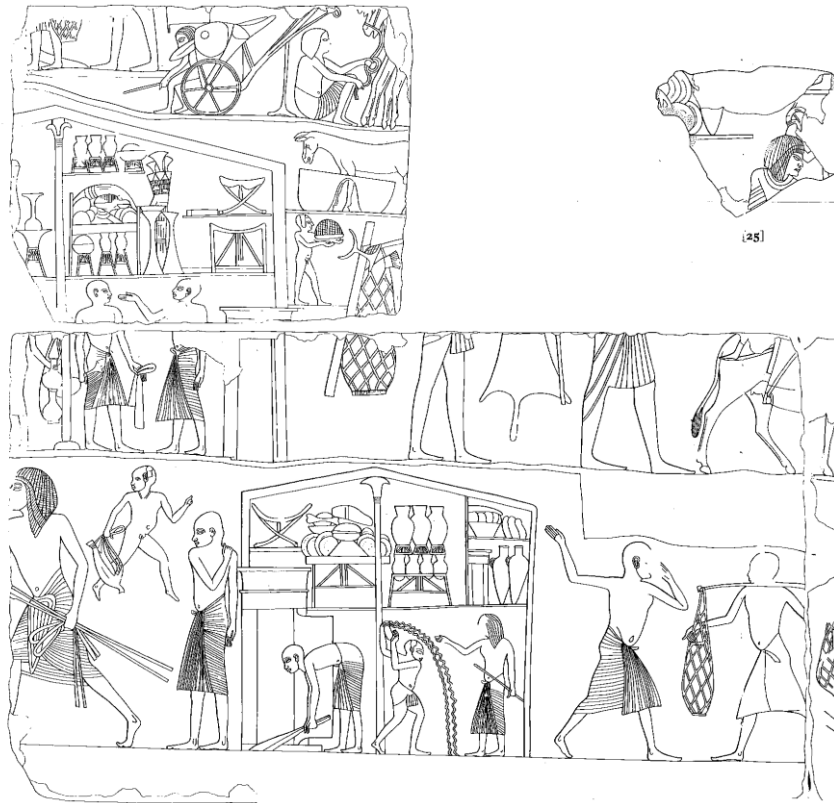


Fig. 3.5. Memphis, tomb of Horemheb. Inside of an Egyptian camp. After Martin (1989, pl. 28).

3.1.4 HISTORICAL CONSIDERATIONS ON THE BEGINNING OF THE LATE BRONZE AGE

One important issue is the long-held idea of a “dark age” preceding the beginning of the Late Bronze Age (e.g. Liverani 1988, 449). Such a “dark age” and the changes that marked its end have long been explained with the arrival of Indo-European peoples, such as the Hittites. Emerging from the Anatolian highlands, they would subjugate the former inhabitants of the region by means of a new military technology. This picture, however, is dubious for two reasons. First, Hittites did not appear abruptly on the scene: traces of their presence in the region, not only in the uplands but in the plains as well, date back to the 3rd millennium B.C. (e.g. G. Steiner 1990). Moreover, it would be misleading to reduce such heterogeneous populations under the umbrella term of “Indo-Europeans” only on linguistic grounds. It is important to acknowledge the continuity between the Middle and the Late Bronze Age, and to understand the internal developments.

However, I believe that an over-critical approach to the “Indo-European” problem risks “throwing the baby out with the bath water”. Indo-Iranian linguistic elements are present both in Hurrian onomastics and in the terminology relating to the new chariot warfare (Liverani 1988, 451-452). A Mitannian name often read as Šattiwaza possibly

reveals a “poetic” link between Mitanni and the Vedic Āryas: its constituent elements (*sāti*-, “winning”, and *vāja*-, “prize”) also appear in the Ṛg Veda, in the compound *vājasāti* (Watkins 2001, 159). Such examples do not prove an “invasion” of peoples speaking Indo-European languages, but they do suggest the possibility that a cluster of cultural, linguistic and technological elements was introduced during a relatively short time-span. The adoption of such elements, as I argue above (3.1.2), may have been facilitated by the ways in which they were linked to one another, even if they did not form a consistent set from the beginning. Certainly not all the new, apparently foreign elements that appeared during the LBA can be traced to a single process or a single source, but they eventually blended together. Similarly, the possible Indo-European elements found in the East Asian Heartland around the fourth century B.C. have often been explained as borrowings from the neighbouring Tocharians, but this interpretation has recently been challenged in favour of an approach which acknowledges an interaction with different peoples through several millennia (e.g. Sherratt 2006).

The new technology was expensive and difficult to exploit, so that its use was restricted to a limited number of “specialists”. Its emergence was accompanied by the rise of the *maryannu*, a new group of professionals in warfare who evolved into a warrior aristocracy, the only people who had access to the new technology and who were trained to use it. The word *maryannu*, usually interpreted as being of Indo-Arian origin (in Sanskrit *marya* means, among other things, “young man”; Liverani 1988, 451), was used to indicate the warriors who fought from a chariot. Ideologically, the institution of a corps of charioteers prompted the emergence of a “heroic” ideal. Battles were no longer won by the king or the local god guiding faceless masses: the king was now supported by a group of specialists who could master the new fighting techniques and exhibit courage as their main virtue. There was a shift towards pitched battles as the climactic moments of military campaigns. During the Middle Bronze Age, warfare had been based mainly on sieges, which did not require highly trained personnel or much advanced technology (Kern 1999, 13).

Robert Drews (1993, 117) suggests that the Homeric “misunderstanding” of chariots as means for moving warriors around the battlefield is due to a “northern”, infantry-centred cultural and “epic” tradition, probably different from the primary Mycenaean one. According to Calvert Watkins (2001, 151), during the second millennium there are hints of a shared poetic tradition in Anatolian Luwian and Greek. Watkins suggested that some Luwian linguistic elements were borrowed by Greek speakers and later occur in Homer

and other sources. One example of a thematic link is the traditional Homeric epithet for the city of Troy, the always verse-initial (F)Ἴλιος αἰπεινή, “steep Ilios”, which is semantically identical with Luwian *alati Wiluṣati*, “steep Wilusa” (e.g. 2001, 145-148). Luwian was possibly the language used in the region of Hissarlik, where the remains of “Troy” have been found (Watkins 1986); however, it is also possible that a different language was spoken in the area during the LBA (e.g. Yakubovich 2010, 117-129), from which both Greeks and Luwians borrowed elements. My point here is that different ways to wage war may have coexisted within the same geographical area and that these were in turn linked to different form of cultural expression such as literary and artistic motifs. At the time of the Egyptian 18th and 19th Dynasties, we witness a growing development of tales with warlike settings, also visible in the rest of the Near East (Gnirs & Loprieno 2008, 267-279). Some are presented in a “non-fictional” frame (for instance, the “Autobiography of Amenemheb”; *Urk.* IV 890, 6-897,17); others, such as the “Tale of the Doomed Prince”, are explicitly fictitious. Liverani (2004, 85-96) discusses the parallel between the “Tale of the Doomed Prince” and the inscription of Idrimi of Alalakh, highlighting similarities in both narrative and underlying meaning: apparently, a literary motif circulated within a shared ideological context and could be exploited for political legitimacy.

To summarise the considerations I have tried to stress in this opening section:

- The cultural environment exerts a strong influence on the way in which war is waged, but warfare in turn produces significant resonances in many aspects of society. An absolute primacy should not be attributed to either component.
- We are naturally inclined to see and describe the new kind of warfare which characterised the Late Bronze Age synchronically, as an indissoluble unity. Such a view would risk making us oblivious to the actual chronological depth and the possibility of multiple sources for the innovations.
- Such innovations are often entangled with other cultural elements.

3.2 EGYPTIAN AND AEGEAN WARFARE IN COMPARISON

3.2.1 SOURCES

For both Egypt and the Aegean, the most important archaeological sources are the surviving remains of military equipment and the representations of warriors, weapons and fighting. Paleopathological evidence for war wounds provides a picture of combat that is independent of the ideological and stylistic conventions of the time. Material culture, moreover, is always affected by conflict (e.g. D'Agata 1999; Seidlmayer 2008).



Fig. 3.6. The Narmer Palette. CG 14716. Siltstone, H. 64 cm., W. 42 cm. After Schäfer (1986, pl. 8).

Already at the dawn of the Egyptian civilisation the king is represented smiting his enemies (e.g. Fig. 3.6), with the victorious ruler or the vanquished enemy cities often recognisable (e.g. Gundlach 2008, 49-50). The complexity of texts and representations increased over the centuries, and literary sources for the military history of Egypt eventually came to include a wide variety of documents: texts accompanying scenes on the walls of temples and tombs, annals and celebratory texts, treaties with foreign nations, private and administrative correspondence, etc. As with medicine, much of the military activity of the Egyptians probably went unrecorded, and much of what was recorded is

now lost. Moreover, the conventions and biases of Egyptian art should be considered: Egyptian soldiers, for instance, were rarely shown in a dangerous situation, and the failure of the Egyptian troops at Qadesh in the earlier phase of the battle presented unprecedented problems (Assman 2002, 268).

On the Aegean side, no surviving written documents record military exploits in a “narrative” way, and there is no evidence that such texts ever existed. Several Linear B tablets, however, deal with the production and issue of military equipment, the deploying of troops, and the rations made available to them, as well as mentioning mercenaries and captives (Driessen 1999, 19). Even specific historical events may have left their mark: some texts appear to record the appropriation of temple wealth in order to face a military threat (below, 3.2.3). The imbalance between Egyptian and Aegean written sources is thus less remarkable than in the case of medicine, but it is still necessary to take it into account. Although comparatively rarer than in Egypt and the Near East, Minoan and Mycenaean representations of warriors and their activities can be found on a wide range of supports, such as wall paintings, seals, and vases (Driessen 1999, 18).

3.2.2 HISTORICAL OVERVIEW OF EGYPTIAN AND AEGEAN WARFARE

Evidence for warfare in Egypt can be traced from the Predynastic onwards. During the Old and Middle Kingdom, conscript armies composed of peasants and craftsmen were led by officers belonging to the civil bureaucracy (Hamblin 2006, 418-419). Probably the Egyptian army already comprised some professional soldiers during the Middle Kingdom (Berlev 1971), but the equipment did not require the same level of specialisation which we find in the Late Bronze Age (e.g. Herold 2008). During the Second Intermediate Period, Lower Egypt was controlled by the so-called Hyksos (see 1.3). There is no evidence that the arrival of the Hyksos coincided with an armed invasion, but this does not rule out a violent rise to power once they had settled in Egypt (e.g. Quirke 2007). They seem to have ruled according to Egyptian customs (e.g. Bourriau 2003, 182). Their own identity, however, remains recognisable in the military sphere, for example in the Asiatic leaf-shaped “type 2” blade, only found in Hyksos contexts (Maxwell-Hyslop 1946, 5-6). The Hyksos played an important role in spreading the new military technology in Egypt, where it would soon be exploited by local armies as well (Spalinger 2005, 1).

After a protracted phase of “cold war”, the later kings of the 17th Dynasty engaged in actual warfare with the invaders. As in other stages of Egyptian history, such military activity was initially centred on the Nile, which was exploited by the king’s flotilla to

transport troops to the enemy cities and strongholds (Spalinger 2005, 2-3). During the reign of Ahmose (1550-1525 B.C.), the first king of the 18th dynasty, the Hyksos capital Avaris, in the north-east Delta, was conquered by Egyptian forces. The Egyptians chased their enemies into Palestine, laying the foundations for an Egyptian military presence in Asia which would last for nearly five hundred years. While the nature of the Egyptian terrain only offered reduced opportunities for chariot-based warfare (Spalinger 2005, 22), Syria provided open spaces more suited to it. In later times, the rise of the Libyans in the West made it necessary to wage constant war on rough terrain (Dickinson 1999, 23). Egypt was not unique in this regard: the Hittites also needed to maintain a great number of troops capable of fighting in a wide range of situations (Healy 1993, 21). Different weapons, tactics and training were probably required for combat in regions with different terrains and political organisations.

Reconstructing the development of warfare in the Aegean is more problematic. On the mainland, evidence from the third millennium B.C. includes fortifications as well as weapons made of copper or bronze, especially daggers and spearheads. By contrast, Crete seems to have lacked fortifications during this period (Branigan 1999, 91), and most of the weapons which have been found are decorative objects (Branigan 1999, 89). Apparently the island faced few military threats from the sea (or from each other), while the Peloponnese and the Cycladic islands were more commonly subject to raids and conflict (Branigan 1999). The fact that Minoan Crete is so poor in iconographic evidence for warfare has been explained in various ways. The idea of a “Pax Minoica” (*PoM* II, 60-92) strongly influenced the picture of the Minoans as peaceful people, although Evans himself acknowledged the existence of defensive works. There is no evidence for warfare from the beginning of the Middle Minoan Period at least until the end of the Early Palace Period (MM II). Traces of violence in the record have been attributed to rivalry between palaces, or a natural catastrophe causing a collapse in the social and political system and resulting in internal warfare (e.g. Godart 1999, 42). Scenes with martial connotations become more widespread towards the end of the Middle Minoan period (e.g. Molloy 2012, 100). The production of weapons too seems to have remained constant until the end of LM I (1380 B.C.). Even if Crete was peaceful, fortifications on other islands suggest the possibility of Minoan military control over some overseas territories (Hood 1984). Military force would have been necessary to maintain hegemony over the southern Aegean (Hiller 1984, esp. 28). There has been much debate concerning the end of the second palaces at Knossos and the so-called Mycenaean takeover: some argue that Minoans themselves caused the LM IB

destructions, paving the way for a Mycenaean invasion from outside (Driessen & McDonald 1997), while others argue that attacks against ceremonial buildings and profanation of objects connected with the Minoan goddess would never have been committed by Minoans (Soles 1999, 58). It remains to be determined how the Mycenaean “conquered” Crete: there are several options, such as a single successful attack, or instead Mycenaean foreigners already present on the island, for example as mercenaries. The issue of the method of the takeover parallels in some respects that relating to the Hyksos.

The rise of the Mycenaean ruling class at the beginning of the Late Bronze Age has been linked by some to the introduction of new military technology, especially the chariot (e.g. Drews 1988), just as it has been assumed for the Near East. Others, however, reject this analysis (e.g. Dickinson 1999, 21). Even if the emergence of a new elite on the Greek mainland was not the direct result of new and more effective ways to wage war, the rapid changes in both society and warfare are significant. It has also been argued that the increase in the number of representations of warfare reveals the development of a more hierarchical political system, with aggravated tensions between social groups (Nikolaidou & Kokkinidou 1997). Nevertheless, a different view is also possible: during the latter part of the Mycenaean Palace Period, undecorated, functional weapons become more common in the archaeological record (Macdonald 1987, 294; Dickinson 1999, 24), providing evidence for larger military forces, which required cheaper weapons and less training – a sort of “democratisation” of warfare as witnessed in other contexts, such as the Napoleonic wars. “Prestige” weapons are probably overrepresented in the record (Dickinson 1994, 197; below, 3.5.2).

In relation to the “end” of the Mycenaean system, Drews (1993) suggests that “barbarians” who lived on the borderland on the north of the Near Eastern kingdoms eventually devised new tactics which enabled them to defeat their chariot-riding opponents in Anatolia, Syria and the Aegean. Dickinson (1999, 24) objects that, if archers and other missile-users were really so effective against chariots, this would have been discovered much earlier. It is true, however, that in Classical times hoplite armies often refused, for cultural and ideological reasons, to rely on missile-throwers notwithstanding their effectiveness in clashes such as the battle of Sphacteria (425 B.C.; Wheeler 2007). Although military developments may have been a contributory factor in ending the LBA, I do not believe that they would provide an entirely satisfactory explanation; in particular, at least according to the iconography weaponry does not seem to have changed after the “collapse” of the palace system (Papadopoulos 2009, 76). An extensive discussion on this

subject would be out of place here, although I return to the issue in the conclusions to this thesis (Chapter 5).

3.2.3 SIZE OF THE ARMIES

Population estimates vary, but Karl Butzer (1976, 6 and Chapter 7) suggested that between 1500 and 1300 B.C. that of Egypt increased from around 2 million to something between 2.5 and 3 million. Anthony Spalinger (2005, 150) hypothesises a ratio of one (professional) soldier for every 1000 civilians, excluding non-combatants involved with the army, such as scribes, builders etc. The vast majority of the army was probably composed of peasants who would be drafted for a limited time and would then return to their plots. The number of these conscripts would vary according to the circumstances. Estimates of Ramses II's troops at Qadesh, for instance, fluctuate between 5,000 and 25,000 men (Spalinger 2005, 150), but such discrepancies in estimations of numbers can be noted also for later battles.

The armies of the Aegean polities were smaller than those of Egypt or the Hittite empire. However, if we examine available records about chariots in Egypt and Mycenaean Greece, and compare them with population estimates, the approximate ratio between chariots and inhabitants seems to be five times higher in Messenia than in Egypt (Drews 1993, 109-110). This would mean that the population was more exposed to both military culture and the dangers of war. Linear B tablets also reveal that commoners were conscripted as soldiers (Sacconi 1999, 362). It has been argued that some documents from the Pylos archives demonstrate an emergency situation, in which temple goods were requisitioned for military purposes, such as the "temple bronze" (*ka-ko na-wi-jo*) reused for the production of spears and javelins (Jn 829; Carlier 1987, 272-3).

3.2.4 THE FIGHTERS

Before the New Kingdom, Egyptian soldiers seem to have been predominantly commoners without specialised skills, drafted into the army as a form of *corvée* (e.g. Hamblin 2006, 355-356). They fought with simple bows, clubs and spears. Archers would "soften" the enemy with their arrows (which had a range of only fifty to sixty metres), and then a melee would ensue when the opposing "phalanxes" came in contact (Stillman & Tallis 1984, 54). There is scant evidence of specialised weapons before the Second Intermediate Period, while a new class of warriors seems to have emerged during the early New Kingdom (Herold 2008, 200-214).

According to Alexander Uchitel (1988, 50), the Knossos Sc-Series presents the Mycenaean charioteers as “just another group of personnel supplied by the palace with their food [...] and all the military equipment”; it should be mentioned, though, that Chadwick (1976, 168) dismissed this series as a scribal exercise. The archaeological remains of weapons and the palaeopathological evidence show that during the 14th century B.C. broader sections of the population were involved in armed combat (Arnott 1999b, 500). Estimates, however, are highly speculative; for instance, the number of chariots inferred from the records may diverge greatly from the number of chariots actually in use at any given time (Uchitel 1988, 48). As stated above (3.2.3), maintaining charioteer forces was extremely expensive, but it was probably a heavier burden for smaller polities than for the great kingdoms, because in the latter the ratio of chariots compared to the general population was lower.

3.2.5 CHARIOTS

Chariots are attested in Egypt at least since the time of Kamose (ca. 1555-1550 B.C.; Habachi 1972, 26), and probably arrived from the Near East. The Egyptian expression for chariotry was *t3 nt-ḥtry* (Schulman 1963, 84), from *ḥtr* “yoke”. The design of chariots seems not to have changed during the first part of the 18th Dynasty (Yadin 1963, 86); these vehicles were built of soft and flexible wood strengthened by leather straps, and their wheels had four spokes. Subsequently, some modifications were introduced, such as the use of a six-spoked wheel, possibly also to support the weight of the second crew member (Hoffmeier 1974). The original Egyptian word for charioteer is *ktn*. The earliest reference to a use in combat is in the biography of Ahmose son of Ebana, during the reign of Ahmose (*Urk.* IV 1-11; Lichtheim 2006, II, 12-15). When chariots are first attested in battle scenes, in the time of Tutankhamun (Davies 1933, pl. i, iii), they are mounted by two warriors: the *ktn* and the *sny*, probably the driver and the archer respectively. At least according to the images, the main functions of chariots seem to have been protecting the army on the march and chasing the enemy after the latter had abandoned the battlefield. Besides battering opponents fighting in close formation, chariots are also likely to have been used to quickly reach and neutralise scattered enemies. Compared to their heavier Hittite counterparts, the design of Egyptian chariots privileged speed and manoeuvrability, which would have enabled the Egyptian charioteers to target their enemies while avoiding combat at close quarters, in which the three-man Hittite crews armed with long spears would enjoy a tactical advantage (Healy 1993, 39).

Mounted warriors did not appear in Egypt until later times. It seems that horsemen did not have a separate function during the New Kingdom but were used in situations where chariots could not be exploited because of the terrain; they might have been also employed as scouts, or *ḥꜣpityw* (Schulman 1957, 264), probably a loanword, or to transport the horses themselves for short distances.

The earliest evidence for a military use of chariots in Mycenaean Greece might be some grave stelae from Mycenae, from the second half of the 16th century B.C. (Crouwel 1981, 119-120). It is debated, however whether these early representations are to be interpreted as combat scenes or just processions involving armed men (e.g. Mylonas 1966, 94; below, 3.6.1). Although no physical remains have survived, the earlier models were of the “box” type (Crouwel 1981, 59-62), replaced around 1450 B.C. by the so-called dual chariot (e.g. Lorimer 1950, 314-316), with a similar shape but with curved side extensions on the rear. How chariots were used in the Aegean is still unclear. The “Homeric” idea discussed above, that they were employed as “battle taxis” in order to move the heavily armoured warriors around the battlefield, is still maintained by some scholars (e.g. Georganas 2010, 312). Besides being a mobile platform for archers (Drews 1993, 113-129), some assume that chariots were also used for throwing spears (Crouwel 1981, 123). Yet, most of the terrain in Greece is not suited for manoeuvring chariots, and it is difficult to decide what their real function may have been. Strong ideological/prestige features were probably a significant element in shaping their use.

3.2.6 NAVY

Egyptian naval history begins with river craft developed to travel along the Nile (Wachsmann 1998, 9). There is no agreement about the extent of Egyptian seafaring. The assumption that the Egyptians almost completely avoided high seafaring (e.g. Nibbi 1979) is now generally rejected; Wachsmann (1998, 9) embraces a moderate position, while recent discoveries in the Red Sea prove that long distance journeys were already possible during the Old Kingdom (e.g. Tallet & Marouard 2012).

The creation of a land-based army at the outset of the New Kingdom made it possible to establish secure Egyptian control in the Levant (Spalinger 2005, 6), but Egyptian warfare in Asia still depended significantly on ships. It has long been assumed that Thutmose III’s success in northern Syria was made possible by the amphibious strategy inaugurated during his sixth campaign in year 30 (ca. 1449 B.C.; Spalinger 2005, 52-58). The land route to Palestine presented disadvantages: an Egyptian army in transit would be

a burden to the local communities and might be subject to attacks; moreover, the long journey times meant that the effective campaigning seasons would be too reduced for effective operations in the north. Maritime transportation allowed kings to move troops, horses and supplies along the Levantine coast and to campaign in the Mitannian heartland (Gilbert 2008, 88-89). Yet, the Egyptian navy had to face various challenges, especially the shortage of wood for building and repairing its ships.

Even if one leaves aside Thucydides' accounts of Cretan sea power, there is little doubt that seafaring was an important element of Minoan civilisation. We know very little about Minoan ships, beyond what can be inferred from the pictorial evidence (Wedde 2000, 11). Most depictions are not detailed and are unreliable as a source. The most important piece of evidence is the Miniature Frieze from Akrotiri. The ships shown there may be engaged in warlike activities, and their decoration is comparable with that of contemporary Mycenaean weapons (Laffineur 1983, 113; 2012, 16-17).

Evidence for Mycenaean ships is similarly scarce. Iconography provides a good view of the general appearance of Mycenaean oarships, but many details are unknown (Wedde 2000, 155). The Linear B documents prove at least that the palaces of both Pylos and Knossos had military fleets (Palaima 1991).

3.2.7 FORTIFICATIONS AND SIEGES

Increasing intergroup competition may explain the tendency in late Predynastic Upper Egypt to concentrate in fortified centers (Hoffman 1991, 332; Seidlmayer 2008, 159). During the Early Dynastic the first fortresses appeared in strategically important positions such as Elephantine (e.g. Ziermann 1993). In New Kingdom times such defensive works were carried out also in Palestine (Fowles Morris 2005, 115-177) and, later, in the Western Delta (Vogel 2008, 181-185). Egyptian cities of the New Kingdom seem, however, to have been usually without walls; instead, complexes of buildings inside the town guaranteed security against external enemies and internal unrest by creating separate zones easier to control (Seidlmayer 2008, 159-160).

As mentioned above, during the 3rd millennium B.C. Crete lacked defensive works in comparison to the mainland (Branigan 1999, 91), and the LBA Minoan palaces do not seem to have been fortified (Molloy 2012, 96-98). In Mycenaean Greece, palaces were built at defensible points such as hilltops (Iakovidis 1999); these had often been in use since Neolithic times. Between 1350 and 1200 B.C., Mycenae was surrounded by its famous "Cyclopean" wall, a stone enclosure which carefully follows the cliff. Tiryns

shows several ingenious defensive devices, such as bastions, galleries, and a rampart which forced the assailants approaching the gates to show their flank (Demargne 1964, 205). The extensive fortification works of the late 13th century B.C. have been interpreted as an indicator of increased military threats.

3.2.8 MERCENARIES

Alongside career soldiers and conscripts, many Bronze Age armies had mercenaries in their ranks, recruited from peripheral regions. Nomads and uprooted people generally provided reliable troops: the latter, in particular, were widely employed throughout history since their only loyalty was supposed to be to their paymasters (Van De Mierop 2007, 50, 57). From the 18th Dynasty there are accounts of captured Asiatic *maryannu* troops brought back to Egypt, possibly in order to serve in the Egyptian army, and the Sherden sea raiders of the Eastern Mediterranean were also incorporated in the army during the 19th and 20th Dynasties (Spalinger 2005, 7-8). In Medinet Habu, they are depicted as fighting on both sides.

In Knossos some elements may indicate the presence of mercenaries. Evidence for “foreign” soldiers can be found in the tablets: Pylian tablets of the *o-ka* series list troops whose designations seem to have an ethnic origin, and some of these names also appear in Knossos. Jan Driessen and Colin McDonald (1984, 49-52) argue that these individuals could be mercenaries, possibly slaves but also volunteers rewarded in land for the military service rendered.

3.3 WRITTEN EVIDENCE FOR CONTACTS:

3.3.1 “KEFTIU-SHIPS” IN PHARAOH’S FLEET?

“Keftiu” ships are mentioned in two documents dated to the reigns of Thutmose III and, possibly, Amenhotep II. They are significant in that they may imply the adoption of Aegean naval technology in Egypt, or, as has been suggested, the possibility of Aegean crews serving in the Egyptian navy. At the least, they reveal a direct knowledge of a foreign class of ships.

The first reference is found in Thutmose III’s Annals (*Urk.* IV 707; Fig. 3.7, my translation), in the section relating the king’s 9th campaign (year 34, ca. 1445 B.C.; LM IB in Crete). During this expedition Thutmose received the submission of towns in Djahy and collected the tribute of Retenu (a location in Syria) and Cyprus. Egypt’s distance

from central Syria meant that the king constantly needed to reassert his authority in the region. The Mitannian heartland, unlike Egypt, was relatively near, and the local inhabitants were aware of it. The campaign of year 34 may be seen as the first in a series of rear-guard actions intended to prevent an expansion of Mitannian influence to the south (Redford 2006, 334).



Fig. 3.7. Passage from Thutmose III' Annals, year 34 (*Urk. IV 707*).

ist mniwt nb nt hm.f sspd m ht nbt nfrt nt šsp hm.f hr h3st d3hy m ʕš kftiw kpnwt skt 3tp m wh3w s3tw hnʕ htw ʕw n mdh ʕ n hm.f

All of His Majesty's harbours are supplied with all the excellent ʕš-wood (lit. "all the excellent things in aš-wood") which His Majesty received from the land of Djahy; Cretan [ships], Byblite [ships] [and] *seket* [ships] being loaded with columns, floor-boards, and a large piece of timber for His Majesty's extensive ship-building.

A few remarks on the translation must be made. The "land of Djahy" roughly corresponds to the southern part of the Syro-Palestinian region (Steindorff 1942, 47; Panagiotopoulos 2006, 373-374). "Aš-wood" has been believed to be cedar for a long time (Charpentier 1981, 268-9), but in later literature it has been reconsidered to be "pine", "fir" or "coniferous woods in general" (Ward 1991, 13); for simplicity's sake I refer to it as "cedar", since most works mentioning the above passages interpret it as such. "Kepen-ships" have been linked for over a century to *Kpn*, Byblos (Sethe 1908, 9), generally assuming that these were the ships normally used to travel to the northern Levant (see below). Thus, "Keftiu-ships" are not the only vessels named after a foreign land that appear in this document. As for the "*seket*-ships", there is no general agreement about their nature (see below).

A problem with this passage is that it may also be rendered: “all the harbours of His Majesty were supplied with every good thing of that which His Majesty received in Djahy, *consisting of* Keftyeu ships, Byblos ships, and Sektu ships of cedar, laden with columns” etc. (Breasted 1906, § 492, emphasis added). This interpretation implies that “*aš-wood*” was the material of which the ships were built (the list of ships being added in apposition), and that they were all part of a “tribute from Djahy”. But it would make more sense to presume that the cedar refers to the cargo in the following circumstantial sentence (Säve-Söderbergh 1946, 44), destined for ships to be built in Egypt.

The second text mentioning “Cretan ships” is P. BM EA 10056 (Glanville 1931, pl. 5; 8, 116, 121; Fig. 3.8, my translation; restorations as suggested by Vercoutter 1956, 54), the register of an arsenal or a naval yard. It was earlier dated to the reign of Thutmose III (Glanville 1931, 106, followed by Säve-Söderbergh 1946 and Vercoutter 1956); Redford (1965) has later dated it to Amenhotep II, but Stéphane Pasquali (2007) has more recently argued for Thutmose III again.

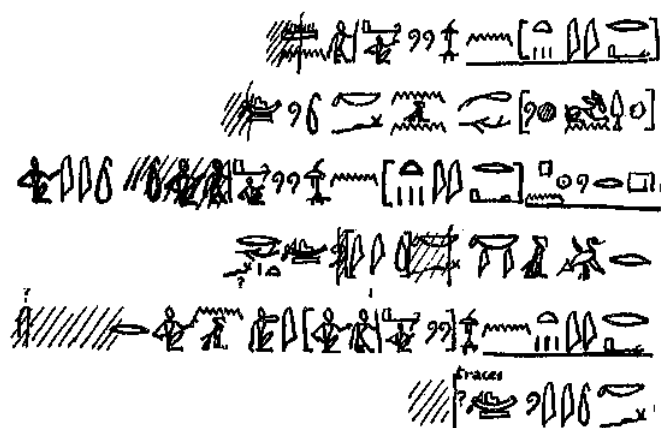


Fig. 3.8. Passage from the register of a 18th Dynasty dockyard. After Glanville (1931, pl. v; viii).

[rdyt] n hmww wr mn[...] [wnh n] n3 n kftiw [...]

[Given] to the chief-carpenter Men[...], [wenekh planks] for the Keftiu ships...

hrw pn [rdyt] n hmww wr tity r p3 ky kftiw r-ht.f[...]

Today [given to] the chief-carpenter Tity for another Keftiu ship in his charge...

rdyt n hmww wr in3 r [ky?] kftiw [... r-ht.f(?)]...

Given to the chief-carpenter Ina, for [another (?)] Keftiu ship [... in his charge (?)]...

Each of these three entries is followed by a list of the different materials to be used for the repairs. The text is severely damaged, so that it is impossible to ascertain whether

these ships were being built or – as it is more likely – simply repaired. This same document also mentions “*seket*-ships”, the same term that appears in the Annals, while there is no reference to “Byblos ships” in the surviving part of the papyrus.

The most immediate conclusion to draw from these two documents is that, whatever their nature, such “Keftiu ships” were familiar to the Egyptians in the 18th Dynasty (Vercoutter 1956, 54-5), since they were built, or at least repaired, in Egyptian docks (Strange 1980, 98). Säve-Söderbergh (1946, 49-50) commented that there is no reason to think that their presence in Egypt was confined to the reigns of Thutmose III (and Amenhotep II, if P. BM EA 10056 really dates to his reign). This may be correct; yet, given the complete lack of evidence for “Keftiu ships” before the reign of Thutmose III, one may suspect that the Egyptian use of such ships cannot be much older. “Byblos ships” appear as far back as the 6th Dynasty in the tomb of Pepynakht (*Urk.* I 134; Gilbert 2008, 77), and are still attested in Ptolemaic times. The “*seket* ships” possibly appear in an Old Kingdom text, and are mentioned also in later texts (Säve-Söderbergh 1946, 49-50). The “Keftiu ships”, on the contrary, are attested in the Egyptian record only twice, both during the 18th Dynasty.

Although the etymology of their names is clear, there is no agreement about what these “Cretan” and “Byblite” ships were. Säve-Soderberg (1946, 49-50) assumed that the “Keftiu ships” could be linked to Crete in the same way (whatever it was) that the Byblite ones are linked to Byblos, an opinion shared by Strange (1980, 75). This, however, is not necessarily the only option. To begin with, the relation to one or both places may be non-existent, and the name of these vessels could have a different origin. In Italian, for instance, berets are referred to as “Basques”, since they were initially worn by Basque peasants, while in several countries Panama hats, though of Ecuadorean origin, are associated with Panama because widely worn during the construction of the eponymous Canal. Moreover, considering the fact that “Byblite ships” were known at least since the 6th Dynasty, it is possible that their nature had changed over the centuries. A shift in meaning may be possible even for the “Keftiu ships”, if the latter reference really dates to the reign of Amenhotep II (see also below).

Four different explanations that have been advanced for the names of these ships should be considered:

- a) Ships from Crete and Byblos were part of the Egyptian navy during the 18th Dynasty, perhaps as the result of an alliance, or as war booty (e.g. Breasted 1906, § 454).
- b) The ships were Egyptian, built for long distance trade with the lands after which they were named (e.g. Säve-Söderbergh 1946, 47, who mentioned this possibility but did not consider it likely).
- c) The ships were Egyptian, and named after some feature that the Egyptians interpreted as being “foreign” (e.g. Barber 1998).
- d) The ships were Egyptian, but manned by foreign crews.

Albeit having parallels dating back to the Old Kingdom (e.g. Bietak 1988), the last possibility is quite speculative; since it does not exclude any of the others, I begin with a few remarks about it. Some finds in the Uluburun shipwreck may indicate that two Aegeans of high status were aboard the ship (e.g. Pulak 1988, 37), and the presence of weapons might suggest that they were mercenaries. The ship had most likely a mixed crew (Pulak 2005, 296). This was perhaps the rule and not the exception in that period. However, it is practically impossible to determine where the individuals manning these vessels were from. Moreover, a ship being built (or modified) in order to be manned by a specific kind of crew, perhaps with skills associated with a certain geographical provenance, must have had some feature setting it apart from the other vessels in the fleet.

The first possibility (foreign ships in the Egyptian navy) has some appeal. We have seen that the Egyptian navy played an important role in securing control in the Syro-Palestinian region. Although there is no evidence for naval battles, the development of the Lebanese ports during Thutmose III’s reign may have been motivated by their use for supplying troops and materials (Spalinger 2005, 56). The assumption that Egyptian naval operations in the Levant were only made possible by foreign (namely Syrian) ships was discussed by Säve-Soderbergh (1946, 43), who advanced serious counter-arguments. First, he examined the reasons why the Egyptians should resort to foreign ships: namely, the lack of Egyptian timber and the reputation of Syrians/Levantines as seafarers. However, the lack of local wood did not mean that the Egyptians were unaccustomed to seafaring, or that they could not build their own ships. As for the idea that Levantines were particularly good sailors, it is mainly attested from later (especially Phoenician) times. Finally, there is an argument from silence: the import of ships from Nubia is

explicitly recorded, for instance, in the Gebel Barkal stela (*Urk.* IV 1232; Reisner & Reisner 1933, 34), while no ships are mentioned among tribute from Syria (that is, unless one accepts Breasted's translation). We would expect that if such a particular form of "tribute" did occur, we would find more specific references to it.

The hypothesis that the Egyptian Mediterranean fleet had a "Syrian core" mainly relies on two passages in the Annals. The first of these has already been presented; the fact that Cretan ships are also mentioned greatly reduces its relevance in this regard, since nobody would use the same passage to suggest that the Egyptian fleet had a "Cretan core". The second passage (*Urk.* IV 686-687) mentions two ships "laden with everything", captured during Thutmose III's fifth campaign (in year 29, ca. 1450 B.C.). An incorrect plural reading *imw.w* ("ships") lies behind the misconception that these vessels were later used to return Thutmose's army to Egypt (e.g. Breasted 1906, § 454 and 460). According to Säve-Söderbergh (1946, 35), the two captured ships were mentioned in the Annals not because of their intrinsic importance, but because of the value of their cargo. This does not rule out the possibility of there being other Syrian ships in Egyptian possession that were not mentioned because they were not considered exceptional, but we are still far from finding Syrian sailors serving Egypt in the same way the Phoenicians served in the Achaemenid navy a millennium later (e.g. Farrokh 2007, 68). "Byblite" ships are attested throughout Egyptian history, but their use varied (for instance, they were employed for ceremonial functions).

Why, then does a passage in Thutmose's Annals mention "Keftiu" ships and "Byblite" ships? Perhaps the episode should not be interpreted too literally: naming different ships bringing raw materials to the pharaoh could be an example of an old topos, that of exotic goods "flowing" from the periphery to the core. Thutmose's annals were not just records. They were inscribed in the Karnak temple of Amun. Although they were possibly composed using official documents, such as the daybook of the king's estate, the author's main interest was to demonstrate how divine favour had helped the king to achieve his victories and to record the riches that the king had donated to the god in order to show his own gratitude; the text describing the first campaign was accompanied by a scene of presentation of offerings to Amun.

But what are the "*seket* ships" mentioned after the "Keftiu" and the "Byblos" ones? They would fit in this picture only if there really was a "land of Seket" occupying a place in what the Egyptians would perceive as an ideal geography. Glanville (1931, 114-115) suggested some possible geographical links, especially with the Syrian town of Shaqqa,

perhaps the Shigata of the Amarna tablets. Säve-Söderbergh's (1946, 50-51) main objection to this identification was that the "*seket* ships" seem to be already attested during the Old Kingdom, thus long before mention of Shigata. He linked instead the name of these ships with the Egyptian *skw*, "battle-line", "troops" etc., and was followed by Vercoutter (1956, 53), who simply translated the expression as "warships". Another objection to the interpretation of the ships as symbolically corresponding to different parts of the world arises from the fact that the previous and following passages in the Annals, dealing with tribute from Retenu and Isy (Cyprus) respectively, are very detailed. One possibility is that "*seket* ships" might be foreign merchantmen normally sailing along the Levantine coast, that were trading with Egypt or had to pay tolls to her; in this case, the passage can be explained by saying that cedar was shipped to Egypt both as a tribute from Asiatic vassals and as a product traded by foreign merchants. However, the mention of "*seket*-ships" in texts spanning such a long period rather suggests that they were Egyptian vessels of a particular kind.

As for the second possibility, that the "Keftiu ships" were a particular kind of ship for long-distance travels to Crete, it would imply that Egyptian vessels sailed to the Aegean on a rather regular basis, making it necessary to design vessels different from those destined to Byblos and the Levant in general. A ship intended to follow the whole route from Egypt to Crete and back would have to be suitable for a long journey along the Levantine and Anatolian coasts, and for high-sea faring during the return voyage from Crete to the African coast (e.g. Gilbert 2008, 241). The Egyptian text known as the Report of Wenamun, although written some centuries later (e.g. Egberts, 1991) and most likely fictional (e.g. Baines 1999a), tells the story of a ship which, during its return journey from Byblos to Egypt, was blown off course to Cyprus (Alasiya). Nothing in the text indicates that the ship was not suited for such a trip. The journey from Crete to Africa, on the other hand, was probably the only high-sea route the Egyptians knew about (land is often visible during the whole journey from Cyprus to the Syrian coast). Nevertheless, there is no indisputable evidence that the Egyptians ever travelled to Crete, and it is hard to believe that they did so often enough to need a special kind of ship solely for this purpose. "Cretan ships" could still be a generic term for vessels designed for particularly long journeys; but then the question arises why, for instance, there are no mentions of "Keftiu vessels" or "Punt vessels" in connection with Hatshepsut's expedition to Punt, just one generation earlier. Wachsmann (1987, 119-121) suggests that "Keftiu ships" were a class of originally Syrian ships built for long-distance travels to the

Aegean, whose model the Egyptians then copied. If there was no direct link with Crete, however, it is difficult to explain why these ships disappear from the record more or less at the same time as contacts with Crete decrease in both the archaeological and textual record.

I now come to the third hypothesis, namely that these ships, without being entirely foreign in design, had some features which the Egyptians associated with foreign lands. Egypt lacked timber for shipbuilding, which was often imported from abroad. The first written mention of this practice is an entry on the Palermo stone, recording the arrival of “forty ships filled with cedar logs” during the reign of Snefru (4th Dynasty, ca. 2613-2589 B.C.; *Urk.* I 236-237; Ben-Tor 1991, 4; T. Wilkinson 1999, 160). During the New Kingdom, timber could have been more regularly provided by Egypt’s Asiatic provinces (Säve-Söderbergh 1946, 43). So, “Keftite” and “Byblite” vessels may be named after the source of the timber used for their construction. But, if so, most Egyptian ships should bear such “exotic” names. During the Bronze Age Crete was probably more extensively tree-covered (Rackham & Moody 1996, 127), but it is still an unlikely source of timber for the Egyptians, given the greater proximity of the Asiatic forests.

Elizabeth Barber (1998) suggests another explanation, namely that the Minoans knew how to use wool for making wind-proof and (largely) water-proof curtains on their ships. The Egyptians, having learned this contrivance from the Minoans, would have referred to ships equipped with such curtains as “Keftiu” vessels. One example may be represented in the tomb of Kenamun (T 93; Fig. 3.9), where a ship is surmounted by a cabin decorated with a quadruple spiral pattern of apparent Cretan derivation (Kantor 1947, 23-25).

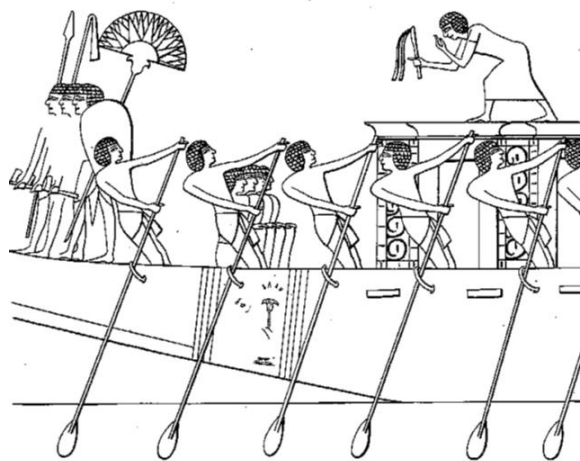


Fig. 3.9. Tomb of Kenamun (T 93). Detail of a ship. After Kantor (1947, pl. xi).

There are also other possibilities, such as a specific, “exotic” shape for the vessel: models of Minoan ships show a peculiar form, with a narrow beam/length ratio, and singularly crescent-like profiles which became the exception in Mycenaean times (Wachsmann 1998, 104-5). A horizontal bow projection appearing on a number of Mycenaean ship depictions may represent a ram (e.g. Kirk 1949, 126-7), but this is doubtful (Wedde 2000, 145-151).

In order to draw some conclusions, I return to the second document, P. BM EA 10056. If we accept Redford’s (1965, 110) dating of the document to the 10th or 20th year of Amenhotep II (1417 or 1407 B.C., LM II in Crete), almost 40 years had passed since the events recorded in Thutmose’s Annals, and the expression “Keftiu ships” could have undergone a change in meaning. I believe the three ships mentioned in the record were “Egyptian”, serving in the pharaoh’s fleet, not foreign ships harboured in an Egyptian dockyard; it is difficult to imagine that the Egyptian administration would itself take care of repairing foreign merchantmen. The “Keftiu ships” used in Thutmose’s 9th campaign, on the other hand, may really have been Cretan ships faring in the Levant and co-opted into the pharaoh’s fleet during that campaign – perhaps voluntarily, as a token of goodwill for further relations (3.3.2). The presence of Cretan seafarers in the Levant may be reflected by the fact that Kothar-wa-Khasis, the master-craftsman god of Ugarit, had his home in Caphtor (Crete/Aegean) – a possible “indication of a Minoan reputation for navigational skills” (Wachsmann 1998, 84). If P. 10056 dates to Thutmose’s reign, on the however, it seems more likely that the ships mentioned in the Annals were Egyptian, just like those in the dockyards.

In either case, the Egyptians could have found something interesting in a foreign model of vessel, and decided to borrow one of more elements for their own ships. At least three “Keftiu-ships” were being built or repaired together in Egypt during Thutmose III’s or Amenhotep II’s reign, which means that they were not exceptional during that time. What is significant is that they are mentioned during the years of peak contacts with the Aegean, while there are no later references to them. If the Egyptians were using a foreign model, there is no reason why they should abruptly have abandoned (or renamed) it – unless some of its components had to be imported. The latter could scarcely be timber. Barber’s waterproof curtains may be a more likely possibility. Perhaps more indications may come from the pictorial evidence (below, 3.4).

3.3.2 “TRIBUTE” FROM THE AEGEAN?

Among the most important sources for Aegean-Egyptian relations during the Late Bronze Age are scenes in some non-royal tombs at Thebes, showing foreign emissaries with whom the owner had to deal. Some of these individuals have been identified as “Aegeans”, mostly on the basis of their appearance, but not all scholars agree about the meaning of the ethnonyms describing them in the captions. As explained above (1.4), notwithstanding such uncertainties I accept that “Keftiu” designated Crete, Tinaya/Tanaya the Peloponnese or a part of continental Greece, and “The Islands in the Midst of the Sea” some other geographical entity in the Aegean. After the link between these geographical terms and the Aegean was established, mentions of “tribute” from the Aegean were identified also in texts lacking visual representations. Here I discuss all the Egyptian references to tribute, acts of submission, or any other form of interaction with the Aegean polities, and their possible historical accuracy (e.g. Panagiotopoulos 2001). My aim is to determine whether they can provide information on Egypt’s political interests in the Minoan and Mycenaean world, and the place of such interaction in relation to the “strategic” situation in the Eastern Mediterranean.

The earliest mention of Keftiu is not in a tomb, but in the so-called Poetical Stela of Thutmose III, from the temple of Amun in Karnak. In the first twelve lines, the god Amun-Re welcomes the king and recalls the latter’s victories (*Urk.* IV 616; Fig. 3.10, my translation).

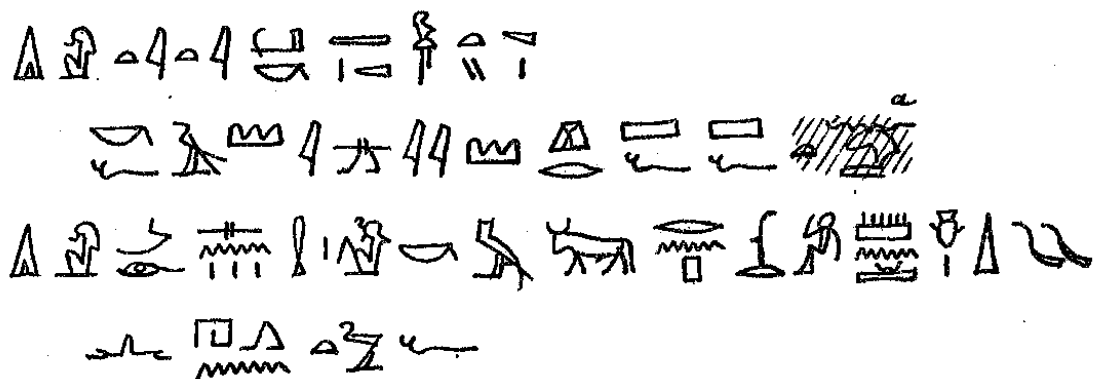


Fig. 3.10. Passage from the “Poetical Stela” of Thutmose III (*Urk.* IV 616).

di.i tīti.k t3 imnty kftiw isy hr šfš[t.k] di.i m33.sn hm.k m k3 rnp mn ib spd dby n hn.tw.f

I make you trample down the Western Land, Keftiu and Isy being under your charisma. I make them see your Majesty as a young bull (whose) heart is still (and whose) horns are sharp, (and that) cannot be stopped.

Vercoutter (1956, 51-2) remarked that the countries mentioned in the stele as being under Egyptian control are listed in no particular order and that mythical lands are included. It will suffice here to say that Crete's position among the countries of the "West" is not a contradiction: when travelling from Egypt to Crete, a ship would initially proceed northwards, along the Syro-Palestinian coast, but would then turn westwards. From the Syrian point of view, both Cyprus (Isy) and Crete lie directly to the West, rather than in the North and the North-West respectively. Quack (1996) argues for an early link between the two geographical terms, which he suggests were introduced to Egypt together sometime during the Middle Kingdom. In the tomb of Anen (TT 120, from the reign of Amenhotep III; N. de G. Davies 1929, 35-38) Keftiu is paired with Libya, perhaps as the farthest and the nearest country in the West respectively. The fact that high-sea faring Aegean ships would arrive from the west, along the Libyan coast, could also play a role in the position of Keftiu in the Egyptian ideal geography. The assumption that the king's association with the bull has anything to do with this animal's importance in Crete (e.g. Picard 1948, 83) is irrelevant, because this identification had been in use since the dawn of Egyptian history.

The mention of "Keftiu ships" in the Annals of Thutmose III (year 34), has been discussed above. In year 42, tribute from Tinay is recorded in the narrative of a campaign in the land of Djahy (the 16th Asiatic campaign; *Urk.* IV 733; Fig. 3.11, my translation).



Fig. 3.11. Passage from Thutmose III' Annals, year 42 (*Urk.* IV 733).

[*inw n wr*] *n tin3y hd ššw3bty m b3k n kftiw hn^c hnw n bi3 drt m hd 4*

"[Tribute of the great one] of Tinay: one silver *shawabty*-jug of Keftiu manufacture, together with four jugs of metal (iron?) with silver handles [...].

For the "*shawabty*-jugs" (Vercoutter 1956, 55-6) see below, 4.4

Immediately before the tribute from Tinay, the Annals recording the sixteenth Asian campaign include the tribute from a land the name of which has not been

preserved. Besides copper and a single block of lapis lazuli weighting 33 *kedets* (about 330 grams; *Urk.* IV 732), the tribute includes “heads of bulls”. Shelley Wachsmann (1987, 54-55) suggests that the latter may be theriomorphic rhyta, and that the land whose name is missing might be Keftiu/Crete. Another element in favour of this hypothesis is the proximity of the mention of Tinaya, whose association with Keftiu seems clear from the Kom el-Heitan list. The fact that the silver jug presented as a tribute from the Tinaya ruler is said to be “of Cretan manufacture” strengthens the idea of a connection. Keftiu is also given in Papyrus Chester Beatty IV (P. BM EA 10684, Gardiner 1935, 37-44; verso 7, 3-7), a student miscellany of the Ramesside period; the “land of Keftiu” is listed, among other places, as the source of a mineral, the word for which is lost (Strange 1980, 31-32).

We now turn to the scenes in the Theban tombs. The earliest reference to a “tribute from Keftiu” is in the tomb of Rekhmire (TT 100). The scene in which Rekhmire, vizier of Thutmose III and later Amenhotep II, receives tribute for the king, is probably the most complete and detailed of its kind. Individuals recognisable as Aegeans are shown on the second register. There are four registers, dedicated to the four lands said to have sent goods to the pharaoh. The registers seem to be arranged according to the geographical location of the peoples, the intent probably being to symbolise the “universality” of Egyptian rule. Keftiu corresponds to the west, Punt to the east, Retenu (Syria) to the north, and various “Nubian envoys” (*inw n h3styw rsy*) to the south (Vercoutter 1956, 56-57). The pattern confirms what has been said above about Syria and Keftiu respectively. It has been suggested that the first two registers, representing emissaries of Punt and the Aegean, were dedicated to people not subject to Egyptian rule (N. de G. Davies 1943 I, 17; *Urk.* IV 1094; Fig. 3.12, my translation).

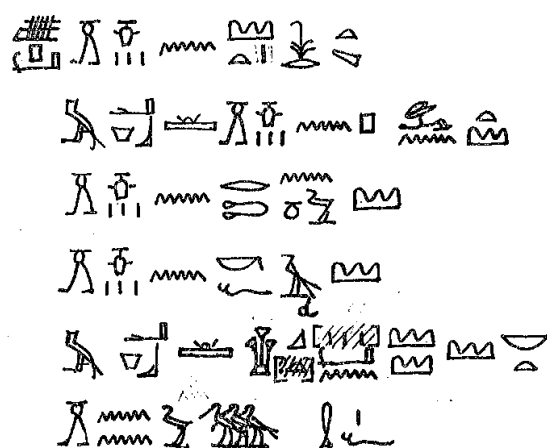


Fig. 3.12. Tomb of Rekhmire. First register (*Urk.* IV 1094).

šsp inw n ḥ3st rswt m-ḥb inw n pwnt inw n rtnw inw n kftiw m-ḥb ḥ3kt n ḥswt nbt innw b3w ḥm.f
 “Receiving the tribute of the Land of the South, together with the tribute of Punt, the tribute of Retenu, the tribute of Keftiu, together with the booty of all the lands which his Majesty brought.”

On the second register (*Urk. IV 1098*; Fig. 3.13, my translation), the one with the Keftiu tribute-bearers, we read:

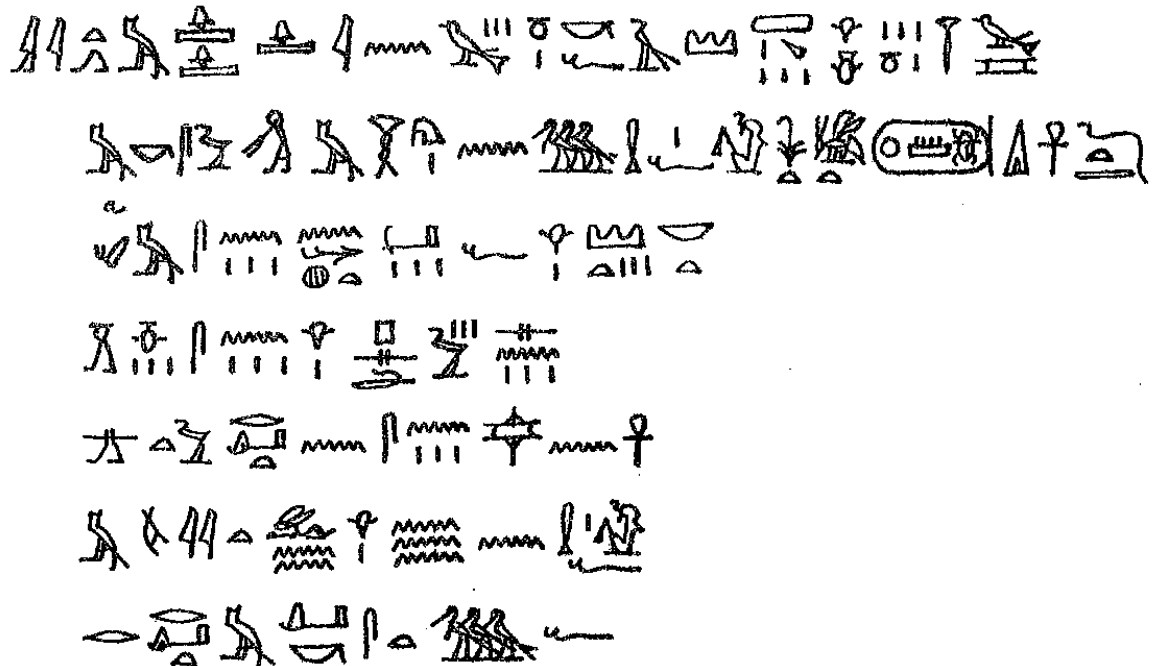


Fig. 3.13. Tomb of Rekhmire, second register (*Urk. IV 1098*).

iit m ḥtpw in wrw nw kftiw iww hryw-ib nw w3d-wr m ksw m w3ḥ-tp n b3w ḥm.f nsw-bit mn-ḥpr-rḥ di
ḥnh dt sdm.sn nḥtw.f ḥr ḥswt nbt inw.sn ḥr psdw.sn sb.tw rdit n.sn t3w n ḥnh m-mryt wnn ḥr mw n
ḥm.f r rdit mk st b3w.f

“Coming in peace by the great ones of Keftiu (and) the Islands in the Midst of the Sea bowing and lowering the head to the might of His Majesty, King of Upper and Lower Egypt Menkheperra – may he be given life eternally! – (when) they hear about his victories over all the foreign lands. Their tributes (are) on their backs, in seeking that the breath of life be given to them and in order to be over His Majesty’s water, so that his might may protect them.”

We cannot be sure whether the first sentence should be translated “the great ones of Keftiu *and* the Islands in the Midst of the Sea”, or “Keftiu *of* the Isles” etc. In the first case, we would be dealing with two separate geographical entities; in the second case, Keftiu would be part of the “Islands”. Here I agree with Vercoutter (1956, 57-59), who prefers the first interpretation; however, it is possible that the “Islands” also included Crete: in that case, the expression here would indicate the remaining Aegean lands apart

from Crete. Both the context and the tribute-bearers, all of which are represented in the same way, show that Keftiu and the Islands were closely connected from the Egyptian point of view. “Tribute” is recorded from Keftiu, the Islands and Tinaya alike during Thutmose III’s reign. We do not know how close the Egyptian terminology was to any one used by the peoples involved, and of course we cannot assume that their opinions on these lands necessarily correspond to what we believe today. Nevertheless, the Kom el-Heitan statue base seems to display a detailed, if not necessarily accurate, knowledge of Aegean geography.

Menkheperaseneb was an approximate contemporary of Rekhmire; his career reached its peak under Thutmose III, and his tomb was completed under Amenhotep II. Menkheperaseneb was High Priest of Amun, and was in charge of administering the treasury of the Karnak temple and the riches of the king (Lefebvre 1929, 82-89). The rows of tribute-bearers in his tomb are preceded by individuals described as “great ones” of Keftiu, Khatti, Tunip and Qadesh (Davies & Davies 1933, 4; for the supposedly “Syrian” looks of the “great one of Keftiu”, see below 3.4). The caption describes the scene as a whole, including both the tribute-bearers and the “great ones” preceding them (*Urk.* IV 929; Fig. 3.14, my translation).

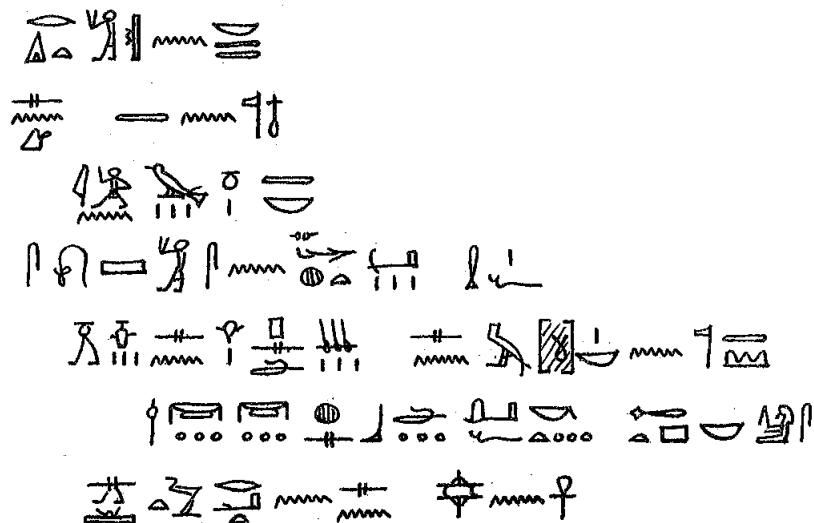


Fig. 3.14. Tomb of Menkheperaseneb. Text accompanying a tribute scene (*Urk.* IV 929).

rdit i3w n nb t3wy sn t3 n ntr nfr in wrw nw t3 nb sw3š.sn<n>hwt (sic) n hm.f inw.sn hr psdw.sn m[...] nb n t3 ntr hd nbw hsbd m fkt 3t nbt špst sbi.tw rdit n.sn Bw n ʿnh

“Giving praise to the lord of the Two Lands, smelling the ground to (i.e. prostrating in front of) the perfect god, by the great ones of all the countries, they celebrate the victories of His Majesty, their tribute [being] on their backs, consisting of [...] all the [products?] of God’s Land: silver, gold,

lapis lazuli, turquoise and all the precious stones, seeking that there be given to them the breath of life.”

This text seems to have stronger ideological connotations than the previous one, further reducing the possibility to use it as a source for geographical information. The main goal of the whole scene is apparently to show the extent and variety of the riches entrusted to Menkheperaseneb: generic products from “northern” lands are brought by local rulers (another scene in the tomb shows “tribute” from the south). Vercoutter (1956, 67) considered this composition to provide evidence that Egypt received raw materials from the Aegean during Thutmose III’s reign, and that these materials arrived from the north, through the same route as those from the Hittite realm. In order to better understand the context of this composition, it is necessary to turn to a few more documents, starting with an inscription in the tomb of Amenemheb (TT 85).

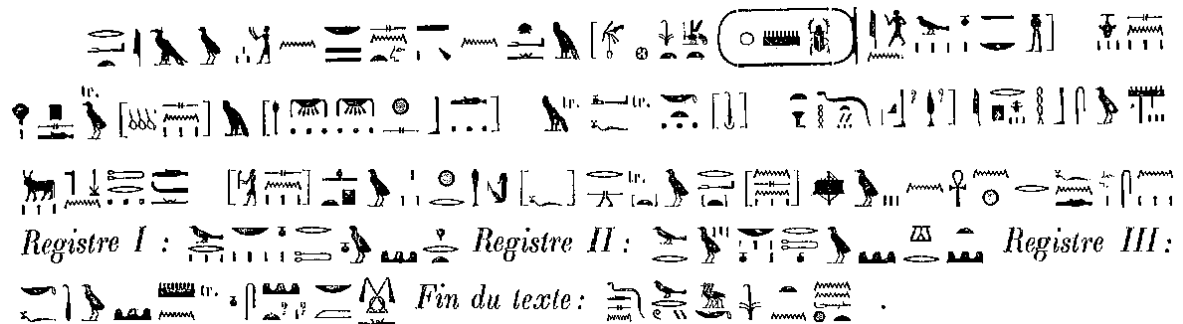


Fig. 3.15. Tomb of Amenemheb. Text accompanying a tribute scene. Significant restorations as compared to the original *Urk.* (IV 907-908) version. After Vercoutter (1956. 68-69).

Although Amenemheb was already active under Thutmose III, his tomb was decorated mainly under Amenhotep II’s reign (Vercoutter 1956, 69). A representation of tribute bearers is accompanied by an extensive biographical text describing his campaigning in Syria under Thutmose. A scene describes Amenemheb presenting to Thutmose the tribute (*inw*) received in northern Syria during the Retenu-Mitannian campaign of the king (year 33; Porter & Moss 1969, 170-175). During this expedition, Amenemheb served in the army (Gardiner 1947 I, 153-4). The figures of both King and soldier have virtually disappeared, but three rows of tributaries with their offerings are perfectly preserved together with the accompanying text (restorations after Davies 1934 and Vercoutter 1956, 68-69; *Urk.* IV 907-908; Fig. 3.15, my translation; since the original *Urk.* version has several gaps, I follow Vercoutter’s suggested restoration):

rdi.t t3w n nb t3wy snt t3 n h^c-m-[w3st nsw-bit mn-hpr-r^c in wrw n t3 nb in] w.sn hr psd.[sn] m [hd nbw hsb^d] mfk3t hsmn bk] irp hbsw k3w sntr dbh.[sn] htpw hr hm.[f] rdi[t n.sn] t3w n n^h r fnd.sn
 Worship the lord of the two lands, smell the ground (i.e. prostrate) before Kha-em-[weset, King of Upper and Lower Egypt Men-kheper-ra, from the great ones of all the lands, their tributes] (being) on [their] backs, (consisting) of [silver, gold, lapis-lazuli], turquoise, lead (?), oil (?), wine, clothes, cattle, incense. [They] beg for peace from His Majesty, so that the breath of life will be given to them in their nostrils.

Top register:

wrw nbw nw rtnw hrt
 All the great ones of Upper Retenu.

Middle register:

wrw nbw nw rtnw hrt
 “All the great ones of Lower Retenu.”

Bottom register:

kftiw mnws hst nb m dmd
 Keftiu, Menus, all foreign lands together.

End of the text:

dd.sn wr.wy b3w.k nsw nht
 They say: “How great is your might, oh victorious king!”

The tribute consists of the usual raw products from the north (silver, lapis lazuli, wine), together with finished ones (*hbsw* can mean “cloth”, but also “garments” or “clothes”). It should be stressed that the “geographical” provenance of these products as described in these texts does not coincide with their place of origin, but rather with the route by which they reached Egypt. The figures of “foreigners” in the scene seem to belong to a generic “Syrian” type, and this lack of precision might be linked to Amenemheb’s lower status, compared to that of Rekhmire and Menkheperaseneb (see 3.4.1 for further considerations). The inclusion of locations such as Keftiu may too be conventional: Vercoutter (1956, 71) believed that the designer simply wanted to include a sequence of peoples living north of Egypt and copied their names or one of the geographical lists

visible on the royal monuments of his age. The conjunction of Retenu, Keftiu and Menu also occurs in the roughly contemporary tomb of Kenamun, a fact which may be explained with an “imaginary travel from Syria towards the west” (Davies 1934, 190). I believe, however, that here Vercoutter oversimplified the issue. To begin with, it may be a mistake to assume that the designer could exclusively rely on “Egyptological” sources, i.e. those available to modern scholars: he probably had other sources, not necessarily limited to accessible tombs. If, for instance, there were texts of a more economic nature related to “tributes” of any kind of which no trace remains, their content would probably be easily available to the literate elite (Gordon 1983, 14).

Before treating the meaning of these records on the whole, I discuss what “tribute” was, as well as the historical value of this kind of document. On the latter point, we have seen that Egyptian “historical” texts contained biases, and those listing geographical locations often had universalist symbolic meanings. Nevertheless, the choice of a name or of a particular expression may reveal some useful information. The Egyptian terminology for tribute is often imprecise. The most common (and vague) word is *inw*, employed in the texts cited above. It is a nominalised passive participle, that is not specific for number and that can be roughly translated as “stuff being brought”. Gardiner (1940) suggested that, when coming from an independent state, the *inw* were “gifts”, implying a relation on equal terms. An idea that has gained a wide consensus is that there has been an evolution in the meaning of the word, mirroring that of the Egyptian state: during the Middle Kingdom, when Egypt had no “empire”, *inw* simply indicated “goods” or “products”; with the creation of an Egyptian “empire” during the New Kingdom, however, the term came to mean “tribute”. Finally, the terminology changes according to the genre of text: in annalistic documents *inw* is never used for acquired goods such as grain, while this happens regularly in economic documents. Usage seems to have soon crystallised in different ways according to its context (Gordon 1983, 388-90), but it was always intended to be part of a transaction between entities of unequal status (Bleiberg 1996, 117).

Some insights may come from comparing *inw* with other terms. Thus, for Nubia, there is a clear distinction with another term, *baku* (*b3kw*), a word originally designating worked products. In the Annals of Thutmose III it is said that Wawat (Lower Nubia) sent to Egypt *baku* (Bleiberg 1981), while Kush (Upper Nubia) sent *inu*. Since these accounts derive to some extent from administrative documents, the use of different words may reflect a difference in the Egyptian economic policy in the south. The use of *inw* seems thus to indicate some sort of indirect control, as opposed to the direct control exerted in

Lower Nubia (Spalinger 2005, 111). In Asia, *inw* is always connected with local rulers. Another word, *biat* (*bj3t*), literally “marvel”, indicated goods sent to Egypt in extraordinary circumstances and from lands not under Egyptian rule (Spalinger 2005, 111). Since there is no reason to believe that Crete or mainland Greece have ever been under Egyptian control, even of an indirect type, during the Bronze Age, one would expect to find the word *biat* for their products. *Inw*, however, is used for other lands that we know not to have been under Egyptian control, such as Punt. In the case of Punt there is evidence of an Egyptian expedition to this faraway land, and it is possible that a commercial exchange (or plunder) was disguised as an act of submission. The possibility of an exchange of a different kind presented as a “tribute” must be considered also for Keftiu and the “Isles”.

The caption in the tomb of Rekhmire is probably the most significant for this discussion. The text does not disguise that the reason for the Aegean tribute was not a real Egyptian military victory against the Cretans and the other peoples mentioned, but rather “news” about Egypt’s victories. The same is said, under Amenhotep II, about Mitannians, Babylonians, and Hittites (Vercoutter 1956, 10-11), who also had not suffered a defeat from that pharaoh but sent gifts after “hearing about his victories”. Vercoutter (1956, 51-52) sensibly rejected the idea that the Aegeans “submitted” to the pharaoh because they were afraid of a possible Egyptian invasion: such an undertaking would have been logistically impossible. It is true that people often fear invasions or attacks that could never happen, but other, more pragmatic, reasons for the Aegeans to seek the pharaoh’s friendship or protection are plausible.

The first possibility is that the Egyptian military successes in the Levant made it necessary for those who wished to trade or to travel freely along the Syrian and Palestinian shores to come to terms with the pharaoh. According to Strange (1980, 109-110), the fact that the governor of Syria was in charge of contacts with the “Islands in the Midst of the Sea” meant that Syria had a fundamental role in such contacts. But Western Asia is not the only setting for an Egyptian “triumph” the consequences of which would be of interest to the peoples in Crete and the Aegean.

“Cooperation between producer, supplier, transporter and consumer could be achieved by agreements or even treaties to provide free access to landing places, supply ports and places for exchange, as well as safety on the open sea” (Kilian-Dirlmeier 2000, 828). Operations in the Delta or on the shores of the Western Desert, even if less grandiose in scale than the great Asiatic campaigns from the Egyptian point of view,

could affect the situation of travellers and merchants from the north. Landing places and the water supplies could change hands, and the tribes with whom they were used to trade could be displaced. Libyans lived along the trade routes linking Sub-Saharan Africa to the Mediterranean (Richardson 1999), so that they could affect the flow of African goods to the coast and ultimately to the Aegean. However, from the Second Intermediate Period to the Amarna Period there are relatively few references to Libya and its tribes. An Aegean interest in the region echoed in later traditions (Ottone 1995) could explain a supposedly “Minoan” altar from Cyrene (Parisi Presicce 2002).

It is significant that contacts with the Aegean reached a peak under Thutmose III, when Egyptian military activity in Asia was particularly intense. Strange (1980, 109) believes the scarcity of references to Keftiu after the 18th Dynasty to be “due to political and cultural circumstances in Egypt rather than in Keftiu”. However, the idea of a “collapse” of the Egypt’s “Asiatic empire” during the reign of Akhenaten has been reappraised (e.g. Schulman 1979, 185; Liverani 1998, 30-32), and Egyptian activity in Asia was certainly intense during the 19th Dynasty. It is possible that it was the situation in Keftiu/Crete that caused the changes, although we cannot be sure how: perhaps contacts with Egypt were no longer as productive as they had previously used to be.

Eric Cline (1990-1991) has suggested an alliance between Egypt and Mycenae during the reign of Amenhotep III, aimed at containing the “Hittite threat” in Asia. Indeed references to Tinaya in Egypt mostly date to Amenhotep III’s reign; nevertheless, this hypothesis mostly relies on the objects inscribed with Amenhotep’s cartouche found in Mainland Greece. The problems connected with these items are discussed in Chapter 4; other sources, which I discuss in the following sections, might say something more about the possibility of such an alliance.

3.4 PICTORIAL EVIDENCE

3.4.1 EGYPTIAN PICTORIAL SOURCES

A proper evaluation of Egyptian representations of foreigners requires some knowledge of the conventions to which such images were subject. Moreover, it is also necessary to consider what kind of sources were available to the artist: had he seen the subjects of his compositions, or did he copy from earlier works? The latter could have been in turn copied from other sources, so that this “filiation process” could go back indefinitely. In his volume on the Aegean “tribute bearers” in Theban tombs, Wachsmann (1987, 4-26) lists three traits of Egyptian art that could affect the reliability of a representation.

First there is what Wachsmann calls “hybridism”: elements originally belonging to separate sources could be brought together into a single figure or composition. For instance, the decorations of different foreign vases may be united in a single representation (Davies 1930, 35). Wachsmann uses as an example a figure shown in the tomb of Mencheperaseneb who wears an Aegean kilt and has the usual reddish-brown flesh colour traditionally used in Egypt for Egyptians and Aegeans alike but seems to display a “Syrian” head. Wachsmann (1987, 7) concludes that there could be “no doubt that this foreigner is a clever orchestration of details from two separate scenes.” Hybridism is, however, not a simple matter: characters like the “Syrian-headed Aegean” can occasionally reflect reality. Individuals who spent months travelling around the Mediterranean, or who had been living far from their homeland for years, did not necessarily preserve their original mode of dress and appearance and could copy foreign fashions as a deliberate choice or out of necessity (Darnell & Manassa 2007, 202). Moreover, an artist could render features such as beards or hairstyles identically even when they belonged to different “ethnic” realities. Finally, the “Syrian” elements, visible for instance in the “Great one of Keftiu” genuflecting in Menkheperaseneb’s tomb, may really be Aegean (Murock Hussein 2007). It does not follow from this counterargument that hybridism was unknown to Egyptian art, but we cannot automatically use it to explain every case where we find a combination of features that we tend to associate with different sources. The “hybrid” described by Wachsmann may have resulted from the artist’s need to represent a mature, bearded Keftiu individual without having a model from which to copy.

The second phenomenon discussed by Wachsmann is that of “transference”, by which a stock scene may include objects, figures, or sub-scenes belonging to another

stock scene unrelated to it. For instance, a foreigner depicted elsewhere may be copied in the representation of a row of people from the same land, perhaps because another figure was needed to complete the composition. It is possible that by making a transference the artist could create something historically accurate: Syrian tribute-bearers may be shown bringing Aegean vessels because such items were often traded by Syrians (Wachsmann 1987, 11-12). A possible way to identify genuine cases of hybridism or transference would be to single out the sources of each element of the composition (Wachsmann 1987, 5), but even in that case the possibility that the artist was representing something he considered “real” cannot be ruled out.

The third issue, the posited existence of pattern books, is beyond the scope of the present work. The existence of different representations sharing several elements may point to a single source, but there is no way to determine whether Egyptian artists had “manuals” from which they could copy, since no such manuals has survived. I believe, however, that in this context it would suffice to accept that at least in some occasions the artists could have copied from earlier works, without having seen their subjects in real life (e.g. Smith & Steward 1984).

Only one representation of Aegeans from Egypt appears to involve military activity, and I discuss it first. I then examine figurative sources whose subject is not strictly related to warfare but may still reveal some information about this subject, such as the weapons being brought by the Aegean “tribute bearers” in Theban tombs.

PAPYRUS BM EA 74100

In 1936, a number of papyrus fragments were found at el-Amarna, in a building (R 43.2) on the eastern edge of the official zone in the central city. This structure was perhaps a small chapel intended to host a statue of king Akhenaten (Pendlebury 1951, 150-1). The fragments were subsequently dispersed, to be reunited only in the 1990s. An Aegean vase, one of two only complete specimens so far found at Amarna, comes from the same building.

P. BM EA 74100 is the best preserved among the papyri from R 43.2, but it is very fragmentary and the reconstruction remains hypothetical. This document is unusual for more than one reason. Few papyrus fragments have been recovered from Amarna, and it is impossible to determine whether 74100 was produced there. Moreover, to judge from the surviving fragments, it seems that this is a rare instance of a purely pictorial papyrus. If House R.43.2 really was a chapel dedicated to the king, the subject matter of this

document could be somehow linked with the royal cult. M. W. Fairman thought that the scene(s) on the papyrus represented a naval battle but refrained from publishing it because he did not feel sure enough his reconstruction (Parkinson & Schofield 1994, 160 and n. 29; 1995, 125). Another possible interpretation (Parkinson & Schofield 1994; 1995) distinguishes two main scenes, while an additional, less clear group of fragments may belong to a third scene:

- Libyan archers (recognisable by their paler skins, long cloaks, exposed genitalia, and tattoos) attack a fallen Egyptian, whose throat they are apparently about to cut (Fig. 3.16). The setting seems to be a rocky landscape. The subject of this scene is another strikingly uncommon element: Egyptians normally abhorred representing their own soldiers as dying, or even in danger. Although the relative position of the scenes cannot be determined with certainty, this fragment (ca. 11 x 6.5 cm) may have belonged to the right part of the papyrus.
- Armed warriors charge, while a bowman shoots an arrow. The reconstruction of this scene (ca. 10,3 x 10,47 cm), in the middle of the papyrus, is quite problematic because the fragments are extremely small (Fig. 3.17).
- More foot-soldiers running. Very little of this scene remains.

It is possible that the papyrus bore a single extensive scene, in which the charging warriors were rushing to rescue the ill-fated Egyptian soldier in the first group of fragments. Yet, it may also be part of a larger roll, including additional scenes now completely lost.

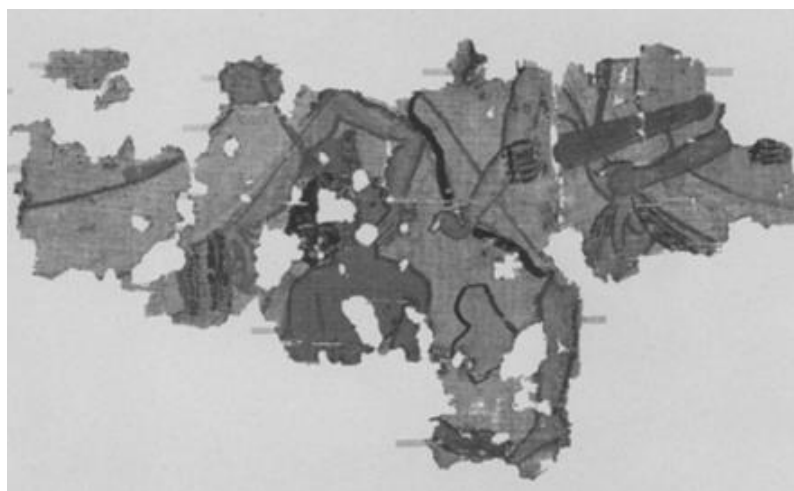


Fig. 3.16. “Libyan” warriors attacking and Egyptian soldier. Papyrus BM EA 74100 (fragment). H. 65 mm., W. 110 mm. After Parkinson & Schofield (1994, pl. 21).



Fig. 3.17. “Aegean” warriors charging. Papyrus BM EA 74100 (fragment). H. 105 mm, W. 103 mm. After Parkinson & Schofield (1994, frontispiece).



Fig. 3.18. Boar tusk helmet helmet from Dendra. After Åström (1977, pl. xv).

The charging soldiers in the second group of fragments wear helmets of an unusual shape, at least for Egypt. It has been suggested that these were boar’s tusk helmets, several representations of which have been found in the Aegean (Fig. 3.18); some complete specimens have survive in funerary contexts, and there is even a detailed

description of one such item in the *Iliad* (X, 261-265). Boar's tusk helmets are attested from MH II to LH IIIC (Vermeule & Karageorghis 1982). An alternative interpretation could be that the warriors are wearing Asian *gurpisu* metal helmets, but Parkinson and Schofield (1995, 165-166) argue that the yellowish colour is consistent with their being made out of tusks. A carved boar's tusk has been found in a context dated to Ramses II (Pusch 1985, 254) and may have been part of an helmet. The warriors are also wearing what seem to be ox-hide tunics, which are otherwise unattested in Egyptian art; ox-hide was, however, used for other types of clothing, such as kilts. Pictorial evidence in the Aegean suggests that ox-hide (*wrīnos* in the tablets; *DMic.* II, 434) was used for shields. It is also possible that the dotted tunics depicted on some vases are intended as being made of this material (Fig. 3.19). The Sd chariot records from the Arsenal at Knossos (Killen & Olivier 1989, 301-304) provide evidence for ox-hide being used to make harnesses for horses attached to chariots; certainly there are many ways in which leather could be used in the military context (Killen 2008, 440-441). In the papyrus there are green strips around the edges of these tunics, which may represent metal reinforcements, or perhaps decorative features.



Fig. 3.19. Krater in the British Museum (detail). Figure dressed in dotted material, possibly a stylised representation of ox hide. CVA BM I, 10.8. After Parkinson & Schofield (1994, pl. 22).

If we accept that the warriors in P. BM EA 74100 exhibit at least some Mycenaean elements, it remains to be discussed whether it is more likely that they are Mycenaean troopers fighting for the pharaoh, or Egyptian soldiers equipped in the Aegean way.

Loprieno (1988) suggests that Egyptian representations of foreigners can be linked to two modes of expression: *topos* (ideologically charged representations) and *mimesis* (depictions of more “realistic” and daily situations). To *topos*, for instance, belong representations of foreigners smitten or trampled by the king; foreigners fighting in the Egyptian army belong to *mimesis* (Poo 2005, 59-60). The wounded Egyptian, although unusual in any type of Egyptian scene, is definitely incompatible with *topos*.

The Libyans depicted in P. BM EA 74100 are recognisable, among other things, because of their paler skins. In the case of Aegeans, in art their flesh colour does not normally differ from that of Egyptians (e.g. Bietak 2000). The two hypotheses, that Aegean soldiers fought in the pharaoh’s army and that the Egyptians adopted Aegean weapons and perhaps tactics, are not mutually exclusive.

I now discuss this scene in relation to Wachsmann’s notions of hybridism and transference. As we have seen, such phenomena can be proven only if their source can be identified. Here, the “Aegean” elements lack any known parallel in Egyptian art. Even if some warriors were really equipped in a partly Aegean fashion, we cannot say for sure whether the “non-Aegean” elements were added by the artist, who was unfamiliar with Aegean equipment, or whether they were adopted in reality, perhaps by men fighting in particular conditions such as those of the Western Delta. The equipment seems to include boar’s tusk helmets and ox-hide tunics reinforced or decorated with metal. There is also no basis to talk about transference: the papyrus is too fragmentary and unusual for it to be possible to say whether some elements (such as the “Libyan” warriors) were taken over from another source, or perhaps belonged to a “stock scene”. One possibility is that the artist was copying from a foreign model, so that he may have mistaken the nature of some unfamiliar elements. Because the papyrus is so fragmentary, it is impossible to know whether it displayed a single narrative sequence or whether it contained different, unrelated scenes. I come back below (3.4.2) to Maria Shaw’s (2000) suggestion that Egypt borrowed narrative sequences from Aegean art.

Finally, it may be useful to spend a few words on the site of Tell El-Amarna. So far, Akhenaten’s capital has produced more than 1500 sherds recognisable as being of Mycenaean origin; the distribution of these sherds suggests that Aegean ware was not a luxury product limited to the elites but was also easily available to the “middle strata” of the population (Hassler 2008, 134-5). The relative chronology of this pottery is still a subject of debate, but it seems to belong to LH IIIA2/IIIB. There have been several explanations for such a large amount of Aegean pottery (recently Kelder 2009). A link

between foreign pottery and the presence of mercenaries at some Egyptian sites has been inferred for the Late Period (e.g. Williams & Villing 2006), but I believe that stronger evidence would be needed for this to be worth considering in a Bronze Age context.

To conclude, even if it is impossible to determine whether the warriors represented in P. BM EA 74100 are Aegeans or Egyptians bearing some foreign weapons, the fragments may show that Aegean styles of warfare were employed by soldiers fighting in Egypt, so that an Egyptian artist was required to represent this kind of equipment. It is possible that in order to do so he had to resort to foreign depictions. During LH III, new tactics and equipment might have been adopted, conceived for pirate warfare or for fighting in specific environments such as Libya or western Anatolia (Darnell & Manassa 2007, 197, 203-4). From the late 18th Dynasty onwards Libyans start featuring in the Egyptian army, and there is some evidence for conflict on the western border of Egypt; Amenhotep III seems to have built a fortress to combat the Libyans (*Urk.* IV 1656, 15-17). I now move back in time a little to discuss the Theban “tribute scenes” and whether pieces of Aegean equipment are represented in them.

WEAPONS AS “TRIBUTE” IN THE THEBAN TOMBS

Weapons and pieces of armoury are common goods in the “tribute scenes” in New Kingdom Theban tombs. Swords, daggers, bows, quivers, helmets, and similar items abound, and even whole chariots, or parts of them, feature among the gifts. Some of the tribute bearers carry more than one weapon at the same time. Pictorial evidence for Aegean weapons being brought to Egypt is, however, rather scarce. The earliest known example is an Aegean porter in the tomb of Senmut (TT 71; Dorman 1991), who carries a large sword (Fig. 3.20); two additional swords are shown in the tombs of Mencheperraseneb (TT 86) and Rekhmire (TT 100). The scene in Senmut’s tomb is very badly damaged; today only three of the original six gift-bearers remain; the three on the left (including the one with the sword) are known only from an 1837 watercolour by Robert Hay (reproduced and discussed in Wachsmann 1987, 27-28, pl. xxiii). Even in Hay’s time however, the individual had almost completely disappeared; the shape of the sword was apparently still recognisable, but Hay’s copy should be considered with caution.



Fig. 3.20. Aegean “tribute bearers”. Tomb of Senmut. After Hall (1909-1910, pl. xiv).

The sword in Hay’s watercolour has a very long blade. All the other items carried in this scene are of over-life-size. This feature can be seen in other similar representations, and it has been explained in different ways. It is possible, for instance, that the artist was copying from a model (such as the hypothesised pattern books mentioned above) and did not know the real dimensions of these objects (Hall 1909-10, 255). Vercoutter (1956, 160; 190) suggested that the proportions were deliberately exaggerated in order to emphasise the role of Senmut, who, as a treasurer, would be in charge of these objects. A more narrowly aesthetic reason might have been an artist’s desire “to reach a favourable balance in the scene’s composition” (Dothan, quoted in Wachsmann 1987, 28). I find Vercoutter’s explanation to be the most convincing for several reasons. To begin with, it is hard to believe, like Hall did, that those who designed the decoration of Senmut’s tomb never had access to any of the objects they depicted. An artist working for one of the most prominent officers in the land would have probably had access to reliable information about the way they looked, and perhaps he would have had first-hand knowledge of at least some of them. The objects in these tombs are, however, consistently over-sized. Moreover, it is reasonable to assume that the owner would have had overall control over what was represented, and he definitely knew what the objects he

had been in charge of would look like. One further element supporting Vercoutter's interpretation emerges from a comparison with the tombs of Useramun and Rekhmire; as viziers, these men were concerned with both the tributes and the envoys carrying them, so that they would be both be represented as accurately as possible.

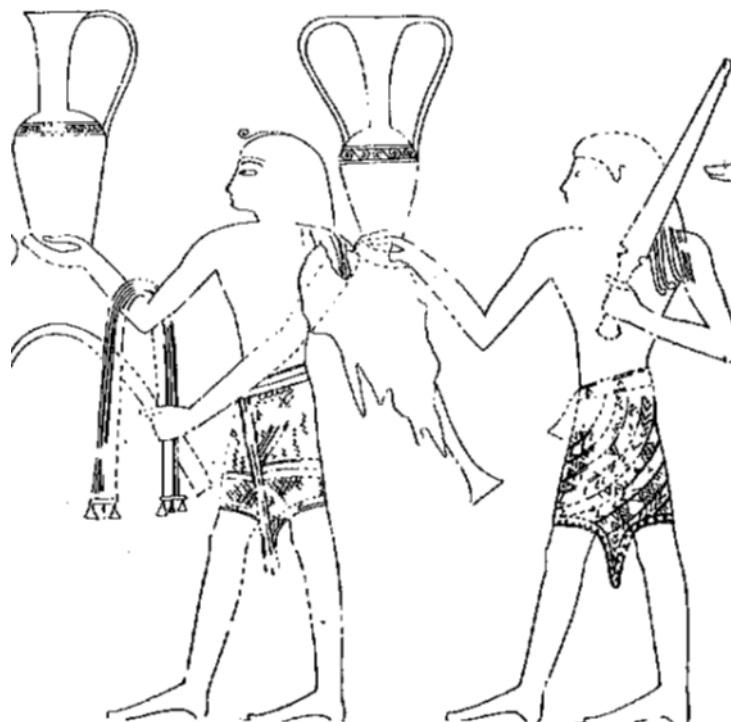


Fig. 3.21. Aegean “tribute bearers”. Tomb of Menkheperreseneb. After Davies & Davies (1933, pl. xxxvi).

A second Aegean carrying a sword appears in the tomb of Menkheperreseneb (Fig. 3.21). We have seen above (3.3.2) that both Senmut and Menkheperreseneb had been in charge of the treasury, and the same emphasis on the objects can be noticed in the tribute scenes in the latter's tomb. Vercoutter described this weapon as a “long sword”; the very pale yellow colour may indicate that it was made of copper or bronze. In this case it is possible that the blade was decorated. The shape seems similar to that of the blade in Senmut's tomb, so that Vercoutter suggested that the artist had simply copied the latter (1956, 359). Of course, other possible sources of inspiration available to the artists may now be lost.

The presence of swords in the earliest surviving depiction of Aegeans from Egypt would suggest a specific association with such items (Wachsmann 1987, 71). The shape of the blades in the tombs of Senmut and Rekhmire, however, does not correspond to any of the known Aegean swords of such length. The closest Aegean shape I have found is the Type Fii sword, which is much shorter (350-450 mm; Fig. 3.22). Even if one assumes

that all the objects in Senmut's and Menkheperaseneb's "tribute scenes" are bigger than they were in real life, Type Fii swords are first attested only in LM IIIA2 (ca. 1350-1300 B.C.; Kilian-Dirlmeier 1993, no. 195), about a century after Senmut's tomb was completed.



Fig. 3.22. Aegean Type Fii sword (replica). After Molloy (2010, 420).

Among the longer swords, the Aegean weapon which mostly resembles the ones discussed here is Type Di, whose blade measured up to 650 mm (Fig. 3.23). It is conceivable that the slight differences between the sword in Senmut's tomb and that in the tomb of Menkheperaseneb are due to an inaccuracy in drawing on Hall's part. Type D swords, of which type Di is a variant, were in use during LH/LM II-III, and are characterised by lower-profile knobs replacing the backswept cross guard of contemporary Type C swords. In terms of chronology, shape, and length this would be the most likely candidate, yet the less acute pointing angle, visible in both Egyptian representations, is a later development.

In Asia the closest parallels seem to be Maxwell-Hyslop's (1947) Types 31 or 36. Type 36 is only attested after 1200 B.C. (Maxwell-Hyslop 1946, 46-47), and thus it can be safely excluded that it was represented in 18th Dynasty tombs. Type 31 is a more promising possibility (Fig. 3.24); it is a class of swords and daggers characterised by "flanged hilts", usually cast in one piece with the blade. A crescent-shaped pommel is visible on the Syrian and Palestinian specimens, but it is not visible in either of the

Egyptian scenes. A widening of the blade at the juncture between the hilt and blade formed a “guard” for the hand consisting of two protuberances, a feature which has been described as “undoubtedly Aegean in origin” (Maxwell-Hyslop 1946, 33-34 and 34 n. 1). A connection with the Aegean Fii type seems likely.



Fig. 3.23. Aegean Type Di sword (replica).
After Molloy (2010, 418)



Fig. 3.24 Asiatic Type 31 sword. After
Maxwell-Hyslop 1946 (pl. iv).

If we accept that Vercoutter was right about the emphasis placed on the objects in Senmut and Menkheperaseneb’s tomb and the greater accuracy of the images, I think that we can then assume that these items were traded by Aegeans who travelled to Egypt. It is possible that the artists were simply told to represent a Keftiu carrying a sword but, having no “Keftite sword” (or reliable representations of it) that could be used as a model, resorted to a more familiar shape. Given the wide circulation of the Asiatic Type 31 swords, however, and their connections with the Aegean, it is also possible that the artist was trying to be accurate.



Fig. 3.25. Aegean “tribute bearers”. Tomb of Rekhmire. After Davies (1943 II, pl. xlii).

The latest large sword carried by an Aegean “tribute bearer” appears in Rekhmire’s tomb (Fig. 3.25). Wachsmann (1987, 71) describes it as a long sword, rejecting Vercoutter’s (1956, 359) interpretation as a “short dagger”; Vercoutter’s “misunderstanding” would be due to the fact that the point is hidden by the bowl brought by another individual. The shape is, however, patently different from that of the previous two weapons. In view of its distinctly triangular shape, I do not believe it could have been much longer, even including the part which is not shown. The pommel is round, as on one of the knives sported by some of the Aegean tribute-bearers (below). The band at the centre was possibly decorated (Vercoutter 1956, 60), like the ones in the daggers discussed in 3.5.

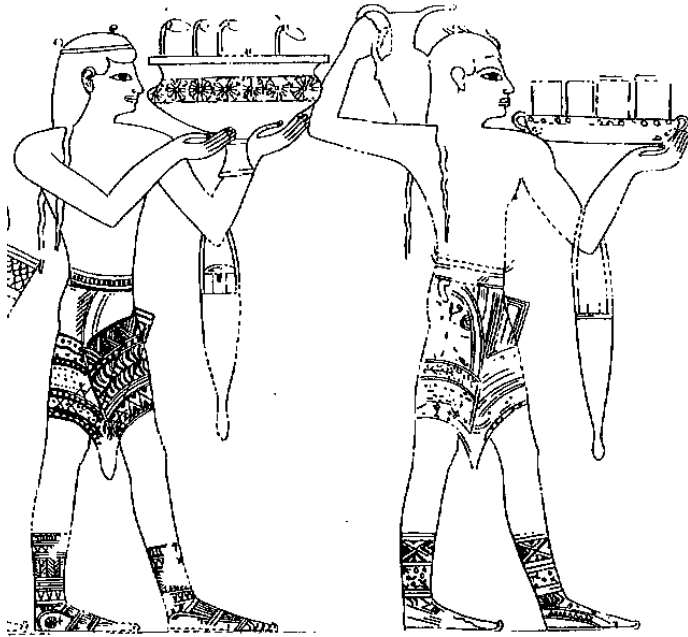


Fig. 3.26. Aegean “tribute bearers”. Tomb of Rekhmire. After Davies (1943 II, pl. xix).

Three Aegean “tribute bearers” from the tomb of Rekhmire carry knives or short swords, sheathed in scabbards of a type always attached to the waist (Davies 1943, pl. xxii; Fig. 3.26). Wachsmann (1987, 71-72) believes that these items were borrowed from a scene of Syrian tribute, where they are a common feature. As I have tried to show, borrowing is not the only explanation, and similarities in depictions might also relate to similarities in reality.

The first blade is sheathed in a dark-grey holster, possibly indicating metal, while the other two sheaths are reddish-brown, which would suggest leather (Vercoutter 1956, 360). The shape of the pommel of the first weapon is attested in the Aegean. All this would suggest a degree of precision on the part of the artist in the rendering of the weapons. Likely there was a certain interest on behalf of those commissioning the image.

Interestingly, a couple of items are associated with chariotry. The first one is a whip for chariot riders, brought by the twelfth porter in Useramun’s tomb. The handle and the strap are red and greyish (wood or wood covered with leather?), and the pommel, of spherical shape, is white (silver?). This type of whip was apparently not unknown in the Aegean, since a relatively similar item appears in a sealing from Knossos (Wachsmann 1987, 77). In Egypt this kind of whip appears during the 18th Dynasty and is called *isbr/ispr* (Hannig 1995, 104). Wachsmann remarks that normal Egyptian whips lack such pommels, but a similar specimen is brought by a Syrian in the same tomb, and another appears in the tomb of Kenamun.

3.4.2 AEGEAN PICTORIAL SOURCES

The use of Aegean pictorial sources is made problematic by several factors, of which I mention three:

- First, since the early days of Minoan archaeology, scholars have tried to explain the absence of war-related scenes in Minoan art. Suggesting that the reason is that Minoans were “peaceful, flower-loving people”, as has been done, would be simply incorrect (Weingarten 1999, 347; Hiller 1999), since weapons were produced on the island long before the Mycenaean “takeover” (Peatfield 1999). The reasons why warfare and combat seem to be such an elusive subject in Minoan art can be different. Moreover, it is possible that violence is shown but we are unable to identify it: acts of violence may be symbolically disguised in art for conventional reasons (e.g. Molloy 2012, 98-99). The artistic symbolism related to war may be a good field in which to look for mutual influences between different artistic traditions (3.6).
- Second, recognising foreigners in Aegean art may be difficult, and ethnicity is always a thorny subject. Minoan art lacked consistent conventions for the representation of different groups, such as specific facial features or a particular hairstyle. In Mycenaean art such traits, while present, are only rarely visible (e.g. Blakolmer 2002, 92-94).
- The survival of material, especially paintings, is extremely poor. During the Bronze Age, wall paintings in Egypt and the Near East were mostly limited to palaces, temples, and tombs. In the Aegean, by contrast, the richer private houses were often decorated with paintings. Yet in most cases very few fragments have survived and they are difficult to understand. The wall plaster on which the frescoes are painted fell off in patches and was subsequently buried by rubble when buildings collapsed. Thus, usually less than 10% of the original paintings is normally found, scattered in tiny fragments (the only exception being Santorini/Thera, because of its peculiar circumstances, where about 50% of the original paintings has survived). The inevitable result is that the appearance of the restored paintings is strongly influenced by the vision of the restorer (e.g. Morgan 2005, 23).

I start searching for Egyptian or otherwise African warriors in Aegean art from Knossos, where the most famous example is found.

KNOSSOS: THE “CAPTAIN OF THE BLACKS”

Fragments of this composition were found in an upper stratum of the “House of Frescoes” at Knossos (*PoM* II, 755-757). Both subject and style date it to the Late Minoan period, probably LM IIIA1 (Hawke Smith 1976, 74). It represents a row of running soldiers. Among the fragments it seems to be possible to recognise one or more individuals who display a greyish-black flesh colour, which has often been accepted as an indicator of an “African” origin (Fig. 3.27).

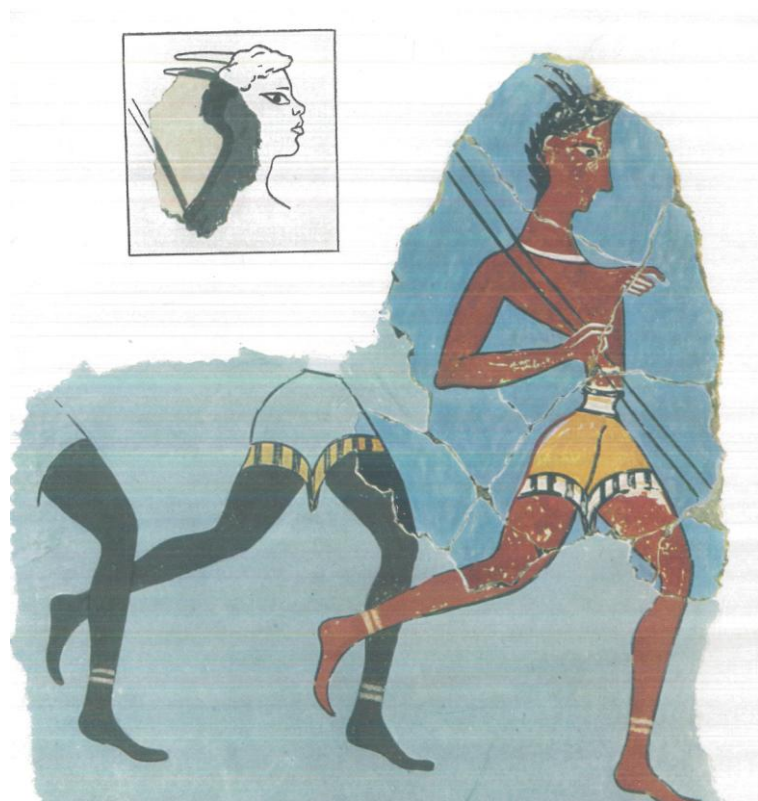


Fig. 3.27. Restoration of the “Captain of the Blacks” fresco from Knossos. After Evans (1928, pl. xiii).

The dress and weapons of the running soldiers are typically Aegean. The first one (the eponymous “captain”), has the usual reddish flesh colour. It is unclear whether his head is covered with a “black goat’s-skin cap with the horns attached” (*PoM* II, 756), whether his hair is arranged in a particular style, or whether it is decorated with a pair of feathers used as a head-ornament. A restoration (*PoM* IV 2, 886; Fig. 3.27) attributed “African” traits to one of the dark-skinned runners, but these have no parallels in earlier Aegean art, so that this could not be considered a reliable indicator for ethnic origin (Blakolmer 2002, 86).

The flesh colour may be due to some artistic convention instead of purposes of realism. In Egyptian art, a darker skin-colour does not necessarily indicate ethnicity but can also provide an alternative to the traditional reddish taint. Blakolmer (2002, 86-90) starts from these premises to suggest that Aegean art may have used the Egyptian technique of alternating darker and paler figures (Fig. 3.28).

If so, the restoration in which a red-skinned figure is followed by two dark ones, would be wrong. In Egypt, an alternation between different shades of the same colour may be due to purely aesthetic considerations, without any distinction between the depicted subjects (Fig. 3.29; e.g. Baines 2007, 246). In the Knossos painting, however, the complexions of the characters are not in shades of the same colour, but are clearly distinct.

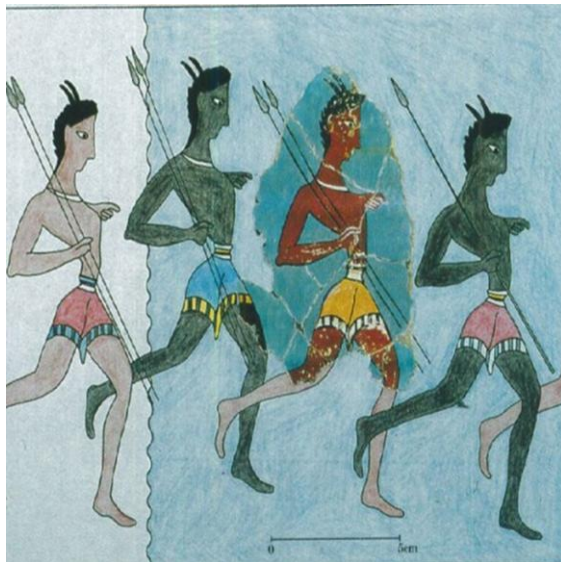


Fig. 3.28. “Captain of the Blacks” fresco, alternative restoration. After Blakolmer (2002, 91).

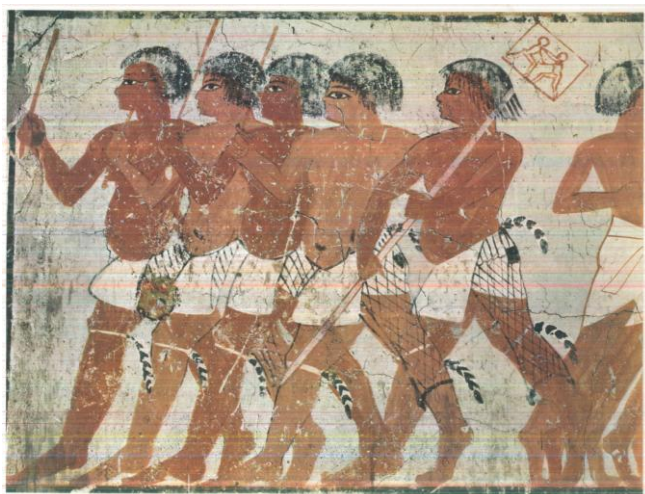


Fig. 3.29. Nubian stick fighters. Tomb of Thanuny. After Mekhitarian (1954, 97).

If Blakolmer is right about the aesthetic motivations behind the colouring of the warriors in the fresco, this could be evidence for the adoption of Egyptian artistic conventions in a scene related to warfare. Moreover, even if the warriors were arranged in order to alternate the “red” ones with the darker ones, the latter could still be intended to be Black Africans: a sequence can create a sense of alternation by sequencing the same subject rendered in different ways, or different subjects rendered in a similar way. In the latter case, we should probably not look too closely at the details. As I show below, there are instances in Aegean art in which a darker skin colour was more likely associated with an African origin. However, differentiating the “conventional” elements from the “realistic” ones is often quite problematic: “white” and “black” soldiers may be dressed in the same way in order to create an effect of parallelism and repetition, with the artist deliberately disregarding differences in equipment or attire.

It is also difficult to assess what we might make of a representation of African warriors in the Aegean. The presence of exotic looking soldiers can be explained in a variety of ways. Evans (1928, 756) interpreted the fragments as evidence for “the employment of negro auxiliaries by Minoan commanders”, something that he regarded as “a symptom of conquest and colonial expansion on the African side”. He supposed that “these black mercenaries” might “well have served as Palace Guards”, and went further to suggest a “Minoan imitation” of the Egyptian practice of using Black mercenaries placed side by side with the Egyptian soldiers (whose attire and weapons they shared). Webster (1958, 65-66) suggested that the “Captain” could be an Aegean (Minoan) mercenary who had fought in Egypt, bringing back foreign ideas (and, apparently, local warriors). Another option is that prisoners taken during war or raids were later used as soldiers (Driessen & McDonald 1984, 50). Such a practice was not unfamiliar in the Eastern Mediterranean; captured Asian *maryannu* are known to have been recruited into the Egyptian army (Spalinger 2005, 7).

Outside representational art, there is very little to substantiate the idea that Africans were involved in Aegean warfare during the Late Bronze Age. The Linear B archives possibly record the use of mercenaries in Pylos and Knossos (above, 3.2.8), but there are no references to their being from Egypt or Africa. So far, only three personal names found in the tablets seem to indicate a connection with Egypt or Africa. The first, *a₃-ku-pi-ti-jo* (KN Db 1105) corresponds to the classical Αἴγυπτιος and simply means “Egyptian”; the text states that this person is in charge of a flock of eighty sheep. Another name meaning “Egyptian” is *mi-sa-ra-jo* (KN F 841); in this case the root seems to be

mšr, found in several Semitic languages: *mīšru* (Akkadian), مصري (*mīšrī*, Arabic). Finally, a tablet from Pylos (PY Eb 156.2; 846.A / Ep 301.2 / En 74.11 / Eo 247.1) mentions an “Ethiopian”, (*a3-ti-o-qo*) an expression used in Classical times for Black Africans, but literally meaning “burnt-faced peoples” (Snowden 1996, 113). Who were these individuals? Palaima (1991, 280) has suggested that personal names linked to foreign places indicate contacts with those places some time earlier than these names were recorded. The second Book of the *Odyssey* mentions a man whose name is Αιγύπτιος; (ii, 15-22, translation from Dawe 1993, 91-92):

Then the hero Aigyptios began to speak to them, who was bent with age, and knew immense amounts. Indeed his dear son had gone with the godlike Odysseus to Ilion of the fine horses in the hollow ships, Antophos, the spearman [...]. He had three others; one of them associated with the suitors, Euronymos, and two were always at their father’s farm [...].

Perhaps Aigyptios’ name had somehow been preserved in the epic tradition since Mycenaean times, until the poem was finally written down; but it is unlikely that Mycenaean personal names were inspired by epics (Shelmerdine 1996, 471). Maybe the name had remained in common use until, for some reason, it was inserted in the version of the poem which has survived (Anna Sacconi, personal communication). Perhaps it evoked some resonance in the audience – such as traditions about an age when warriors from Egypt were rewarded with elite positions after serving local rulers. The suggestion that foreigners could be rewarded with land (or, today, citizenship) for military service (Driessen & McDonald 1984, 52) finds several parallels in many cultures.

PYLOS: THE “GIFT BEARERS”

A mural painting from Pylos shows a procession of approximately life-size gift-bearers. Although no trace of the items they were carrying has been preserved, the fragments include “at least one Black, wearing the early form of Minoan kilt” (Immerwahr 1990, 118); according to others, the “Blacks” are two or more (Blakolmer 2007, 216). Other individuals in the same group of fragments are represented with the usual reddish skin colour; they wear (or carry) the skins of felines, and sport what may be snood like caps (that is, some sort of net keeping the hair together; Fig. 3.30). In Blakolmer’s (2007, 58) opinion, the presence of one dark skinned individual, together with the unusual headgear, suggests that the fresco is “most probably depicting exotic people coming from Egypt”.



Fig. 3.30. A “gift bearer”. Pylos. After Lang (1969, pl. 129).

Representations of exotic clothing are not unknown in Aegean art: at least one other example can be mentioned, a sherd from a Late Mycenaean crater from Miletus depicting a tiara of possible Hittite type (Niemeier 2002, fig.7). The animal-skin in which some of the “gift bearers” from Pylos are robed finds a parallel in the attire of some Egyptian dignitaries, especially *sem*-priests (e.g.Sapouna-Sakellaraki 1973, 300-1; Lorton 1999, 158-161). *Sem*-priests, however, were not the only Egyptians who wore the skins of large felines: kilts made out of panther skin, for instance, are also sported by Nubian archers (Fig. 3.31). The headgear is also problematic. As with the Captain of the Blacks, the fragmentary state of the fresco does not allow us to rule out the possibility that they simply sport an unusual hairstyle (Hiller 1996, 90-91).



Fig. 3.31. Nubian archer. After Healy (1993, 35).

Although the “Black African” in this procession has the same headgear (or hairstyle) as the other figures, he is not clothed with an animal skin. Instead, he wears what seems to be an Aegean kilt (Lang 1969, 61; Fig. 3.32). Art in mainland Greece appears to depict foreign features more than its Minoan counterpart (Blakolmer 2002, 92). In other compositions, Mycenaean attire is shown in contrast to “barbarian” clothing, marking a common cultural identity (Davis & Bennet 1999; Kontorli-Papadopoulou 1999, 332). We have seen that in Egyptian art Aegean men were portrayed as having the same reddish skin colour as the Egyptians; if the individuals portrayed in the Pylos fresco are “Egyptians”, it seems that Aegean art too represented the two peoples as having the same skin colour. The “red-skinned” Egyptians could be dressed in a peculiar way in order to emphasise their foreign origin, while for the Black African a darker flesh-colour was a sufficient mark of “exoticism”. Perhaps, in the lack of what Classical Greeks would have called *schema* (σχῆμα), “frame”, for visually conveying a specific geographical origin (Catoni 2008, 96-97), the limited available indicators could be distributed among the different characters of a composition for the sake of variety. It is possible that foreigners are present also in other Aegean artworks but we are unable to recognise them because their physical features and dress appear to be “Aegean” to us.

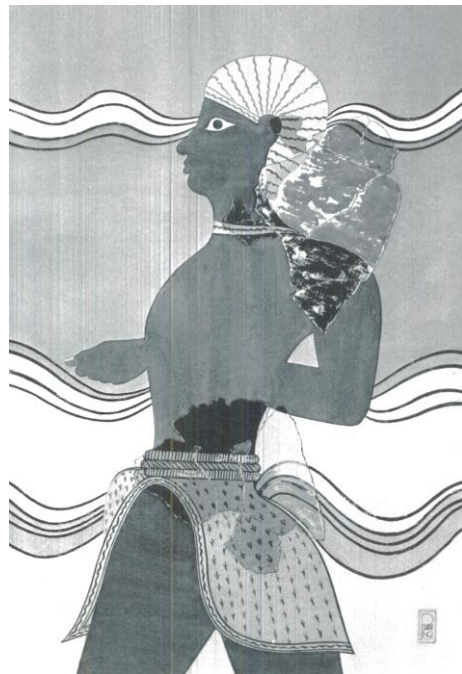


Fig. 3.32. Black African (?). Pylos. After Lang (1969, pl.129).

If the figures in the fresco are really envoys from Egypt, what was the possibility that there were soldiers among them? Although some elements, as the skin of big cats and the headgear, have parallels in Egyptian representations of soldiers, there is no way to

determine whether such features here indicate that the procession includes some Egyptian military officers. A delegation from Egypt would most likely include military personnel, just like the crew in the Uluburun shipwreck apparently included two “Mycenaean” warriors. Again, one cannot tell whether the artist was trying to represent something he had personally witnessed, or whether he was in part copying from a foreign artwork, whose details he could not fully understand.

AKROTIRI: THE “MINIATURE FRIEZE”

The Miniature Frieze from Akrotiri (also termed “Miniature Fresco” in the literature) is relevant to this chapter for two reasons: it has been assumed that it represents military activity; and some of the scenes depicted may have a North African or even Egyptian setting. Nevertheless, both these possibilities have been questioned.

The West House, also known as “the House of the Admiral” is located in the “Triangular Square” in Akrotiri (Santorini/Thera; Morgan 1988, 1-3; Televantou 1994), and was excavated in the 1971 and 1972 seasons. In spite of the relatively small size of this building, remains of a large number of wall paintings were found in it. The fragments attributed to the Miniature Frieze come from Room 5, where the fresco ran between the ceiling and the window. If the original painting covered all four walls, its total length would have been around 16 m (of which about 6-7 m have been recovered), but it is also possible that only three sides were covered, and this would mean that an exceptional (by Aegean standards) 50% of the original scene has been restored. The scenes in the surviving fragments are relatively clear (S. Marinatos 1973, 59), but the gaps make the development of the action rather difficult to grasp (Morris 2000, 270; below); the nature of the events represented has been a subject of debate since the paintings were discovered.

The surviving scenes include what seems to be the journey of a fleet between two settlements. The settlement from which the fleet is leaving lies near a coast, between the distributaries of a river, with a mountain landscape in the background (Fig. 3.33). The second settlement is on a steep and rocky coast; it is surrounded by a wall, and the inhabitants seem to be waiting for the fleet to return. Since the frieze is incomplete, it is possible that the arrival at the first land was shown in a missing area, and that a single course of action was represented (Haider 1988, 86).



Fig. 3.33. “Miniature Frieze” (detail). Urban settlement surrounded by a river. Akrotiri (Thera), West House, LM IA. After Doumas (1992, 71-72).

Since the discovery of the Frieze there have been some attempts to read it as an “historical” document. Because of the presence of floating corpses and (possibly) of wrecks, the scene was interpreted as a naval battle. According to the discoverer, Spyridon Marinatos (1973, 60), the landscape surrounding the first settlement “could only be Libyan”, so that the fresco would provide evidence for Theran colonies and raids on the Libyan coast during the earlier part of the Late Bronze Age. Furthermore, some of the warriors on the ships were identified as Mycenaeans, suggesting that mercenaries from the Greek mainland took part in such expeditions (S. Marinatos 1973, 58-60). The Fresco would thus provide evidence for Minoan and Mycenaean armed enterprises to North Africa, and possibly Egypt. Similar events are described in the fourteenth chapter of the *Odyssey*, when Odysseus recalls his (fictional) raid into Egypt (xiv, 257-287); it cannot be said, however, whether such raids from the Aegean were a contemporary reality in the period when the epic coalesced, or whether they were only remembered in oral tradition (Austin 1970). Menelaus’s trip to Egypt, on the other hand, is not described, and his “Egyptian adventure” (iv, 351-586) is focused on the episode of Proteus, the “old man of the sea” (Dawe 1993, 184); perhaps here too we may differentiate between a plausible, “*mimesis*-like” narrative, in the case of Odysseus, and a fantastic one in the case of Menelaus and Proteus.



Fig. 3.34. “Miniature Frieze” (detail). “Mycenaean” infantry. Akrotiri (Thera), West House, LM IA. After Dumas (1992, 61).

These considerations notwithstanding, both the African setting and the presence of “Mycenaeans” in the frieze have been challenged. To start with the second issue, that of the “Mycenaean mercenaries”, an initial consideration is that an ethnic identity has been assumed for them on the basis of their equipment (Fig. 3.34): the warriors are armed with boar’s tusk helmets, spears, swords, and rectangular shields. Nevertheless, such items were not unknown in the Minoan world and therefore provide no reliable indicator of the provenance of these characters; that they were mercenaries from continental Greece is just speculation (Haider 1988, 91-92).

The “Libyan setting”, too, was questioned almost immediately. Spyridon Marinatos (1973, 60) assumed that some of the individuals in the Frieze were Libyan or “Aegeo-Libyans”. Peter Haider, however, has shown such a conjecture to be largely unsubstantiated (Haider 1988, 94-95). The “Libyan” nature of the helmet of one of the warriors, for instance, is not corroborated by any evidence, and the idea seems to derive in a circular way from Marinatos’ own prior conclusion that the pictorial narrative is set in North Africa. Some figures who are wearing very long cloaks were identified with Libyans only on the basis of a couple of passages in Herodotus, who described peoples

living in Libya more than one thousand years later (IV, 189 and VII, 71). Finally, the “Libyan hairstyle” sported by some individuals is also attested elsewhere in the eastern Mediterranean, including Crete itself (Haider 1988, 92-102). Further possible indicators of an African setting are features of the fauna and flora such as palms and papyrus, big felines, and the “maned and hairy chested sheep of African type”, but all these elements can still be found in Crete or Thera (Warren 1979, 121-122). According to this reasoning, although an African setting is not disproven, it may be a less likely interpretation, on account of the greater proximity of other locations. Another possibility which cannot be ruled out is a “location-neutral” setting. Morgan (1988, 1), for example, concludes that the West House paintings have an unified theme “of aquatic activity and its celebration, set firmly within the Aegean, held within a particular season and of direct relevance to the Bronze Age people of the island of Thera”.

Finally, there are problems with the narrative nature of the Frieze, and especially the idea of a naval battle. Minoan wall paintings had a tendency to cover three or four walls in order to enclose the observer in a specific environment. In the case of “narrative” friezes, these are most likely to have evoked “times, places and situations of significance” (Morgan 2005, 24-26). Other miniature wall paintings, although less well preserved than the Akrotiri frieze, have been found at various Aegean sites; the scenes are all set in the open, and all of them seem to represent cultic activity (Morgan 1990, 253-258). Lyvia Morgan (2005, 36), for example, has suggested that the Miniature Fresco too represents some kind of festival, but many interpretations of the scene context have been offered: among other possibilities, it has been interpreted as a “microcosm of Aegean life” (Morgan 2005, 34), that is, an *imago mundi* such as we find in the description of Achilles’ shield in the *Iliad* (XVIII, 478-608); as the visual equivalent of a myth (Sali 2000); as an “epic” inspired by actual events (Morris 2000).

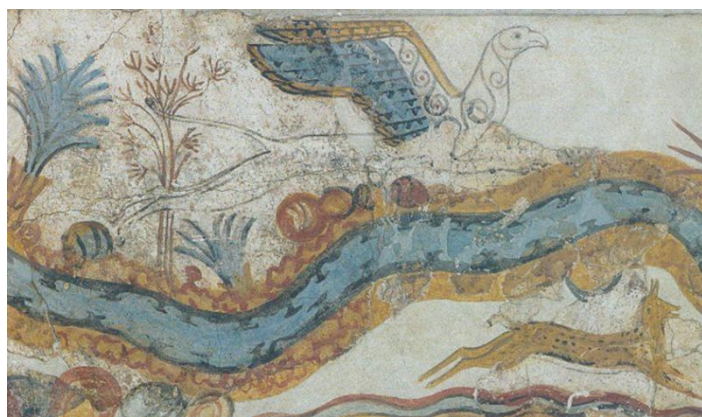


Fig. 3.35. “Miniature Frieze” (detail). Riverine landscape with palms, papyrus plants and a griffin. Akrotiri (Thera), West House, LM IA. After Doumas (1992, 65).

In my opinion, instead of focusing on the single elements in the composition, it would be more productive to reflect on how they are brought together. While it is possible, if not easy, to find local Aegean parallels for any single plant or animal in the frieze, it is the overall picture that must be considered. Here I agree at least partially with M. Shaw (2000, 271), who suggests that with the “winding river, palm trees, papyri, animals, birds and fictitious creatures, the landscape probably evoked the idea of some enchanting land of the kind seamen might encounter in their long and distant voyages” (Fig. 3.35). In Aegean art, papyrus was linked to a certain type of scene, usually in riverine contexts with numerous animals; representations of palms, however, are rarer (Morgan 1988, 24). The presence of a large river undoubtedly opens up another possibility: Egypt would certainly be both “distant” and “enchanting” in the mind of an Aegean audience, as the role of Egyptian exotica shows (below, 4.3). We should not expect too much precision: even if the Frieze was meant to represent an African landscape, those who executed it might never have been to Africa, so that they had to “translate” other peoples’ accounts or representations into elements that were more familiar, while nevertheless conveying the idea of an exotic location (Bietak 2000, 228). Even if they copied elements from a foreign piece of art, the result remains typically local. Homer’s verses describing Odysseus’s arrival in Egypt may convey an impression not dissimilar to that imparted by his predecessors hundreds of years earlier and experienced by the audiences listening to their stories. We have already seen (above, 3.1.4) that during the Late Bronze Age tales about heroic deeds in exotic settings were greatly appreciated among the elites of the Eastern Mediterranean world.

To sum up, neither the content nor the function of the Frieze can provide reliable “historical” evidence of Aegean military activity in Africa, but it may disclose an “idea” of Egypt which featured in warlike narratives involving both visual and oral art forms. The presence of certain motifs might be an indicator of the nature of the poetry from which the scenes originate (Bennet 2007, 15-16). “Today, there is scholarly consensus that Early Greek poetry, and mainly epos, present vestiges of the pictorial universe of the Late Bronze Age. Mythos, logos and eikon, therefore, have presumably met much earlier in the Aegean than the era of Early Greek poetry” (Vlachopoulos 2007, 108). There are, moreover, further reasons why the Frieze can be relevant for the present discussion. In particular, it may reveal some influences in symbolism.

Minoan art, we have seen, may disguise violent activities symbolically. Bietak suggests that the landscape with a mountain in profile view, and its connection with battle

scenes, may have been brought to Egypt from the Aegean; the same may be said about the use of landscapes in “map scheme”, together with the use of wild animals to fill empty spaces (Bietak 2000, 233). From an ideological point of view, however, these animals may have a deeper meaning than that simply being fillers. The hunting lion in the background, for instance, is an image that also appears in the Avaris wall paintings and commonly features on weapons in the Near East, including Egypt, and in the Aegean. I return to the lion motif when discussing chariot imagery (3.6.1) and decorated weapons (3.5); here I focus only to some considerations on its use in a possibly narrative scene. In the Miniature Frieze, different levels of action seem to be placed in a “hierarchy”: military action is sited on the “lower register”, while the “upper register” shows a background countryside, in which people and animals are engaged in their ordinary life (M. Shaw 2000, 278). A lion, however, could also be a metaphor for the warrior and his deeds: the lion chasing deer in the background may relate to the violent activities going on in the lower register, and may have had the same function in the Tell ed-Dab‘a friezes (Marinatos 2010, 347). In the Narmer Palette, almost two thousand years earlier than the Akrotiri frieze, a similar parallel, although with a different animal, can be spotted: the king dominates the action within the ordered world, while in the area outside it he is represented as a bull battering an enemy enclosure (Baines 2007, 288). The Frieze may thus provide a link between representations of warfare and one of its symbolic counterparts. The lion attacking a goat in a subtropical landscape with palms trees and rocks is a common theme in contemporary miniature art; one can just wonder whether the Amarna papyrus, which also represents a rocky landscape, included similar scenes in its missing parts.

Another symbol with several meanings that features in the Frieze is the griffin (Fig. 3.35), which is known in both Egypt and the Near East. It was a protective emblem for warriors, but in Egypt it appears to occur in less varied and complex contexts, as the defender of the king from enemies, or as a manifestation of the king himself as conqueror (Morgan 1988, 53), as in the Abu Ghurob causeway, where he is represented trampling his enemies (Ćwiek 2003, 205-208). An “underlying association between the hunting griffin and warfare”, similar to that with lions, exists both in Egypt and the Aegean (Morgan 2010, 317), as well as the association with rulers (Bennet 2007, 17); on an Aegean pyxis lid from Saqqara, dated to LH II-III A, they both appear hunting preys.



Fig. 3.36. “Miniature Frieze” (detail). The “admiral’s ship”. Akrotiri (Thera), West House, LM IA. After Doulas (1992, 75-76).

A further point of interest is given by the ships and their decoration (Fig. 3.36). The cabins are visible in the southern section of the Frieze, and appear also on a larger scale with more detail in the frescos of the adjacent Room 4. The two rooms were connected by a door in the south-east corner of Room 5 (Morgan 1988, 1). The original number of cabins shown in Room 4 was possibly 9 (Televantou 1994, 191-3). They have approximately the same shape and size but are differentiated by their wall-screens, posts-heads, and the garlands hanging between the posts. The ornaments of the ships’ cabins may reflect a hierarchy among the ships. In the Frieze, the majority of the cabins had central vertical posts carrying helmets, but the “admiral’s ship” has posts ending in papyrus-like ornaments; this ship also displayed a double garland consisting of “round bead-like elements and flower-like pendants” (Hiller 2000, 335; figs. 3a, 3b). It can only be speculated whether the “Keftiu” ships in the Egyptian sources were decorated under the supervision of Minoan craftsmen, or at least with their help, at the same time the palace of Avaris was; the necessity of specialists from Crete would account for the short attestation period of both Minoan wall-painting and of “Keftiu” ships in Egypt. But this is of course just one among a number of possibilities.

The ships in Room 4 exhibit two different types of post-heads, both linked to Evans’ “waz-lily symbol”, in a simple and “double” form. Four different types of garlands unite the post-heads, creating eight possible combinations, seven of which are visible; their meaning eludes us. Stefan Hiller (2000, 335-338) discusses a possible Egyptian background for these garlands; the elements suggesting it are the motifs of

likely Egyptian origin: the *wadj*-lily symbol (*w3d*), the presence of rosettes (a common motif in both Egypt and the Aegean), and the beads. Hiller points out that necklaces similar to the garlands in the ships also appear as ornaments for high-status individuals of both sexes (e.g. Marinatos 1973, 61). He then proceeds to discuss a further possible Egyptian element in the “admiral’s ship”, that is the tripartite pendants hanging from the garland, which may represent a stylized bee-like insect or “a later, possibly degenerate version of such an insect, the specific meaning of which is no longer understood” (Hiller 2000, 340; Fig. 3.36). Aegean pendants in the form of insects were well known (Fig. 3.37); in Egypt, similar items were presented as rewards for bravery (Fig. 3.38).



Fig. 3.37. Aegean “bee pendant”. British Museum, no catalogue number or dimensions given. Gold sheet. Crete, unknown context. After Higgins (1979, 61).



Fig. 3.38. Egyptian “bee pendant”. British Museum, Dept. of Western Asiatic Antiquities, Inv. Nr. 130.775. Gold, H. 11 mm, W. 11 mm. Tell el-Ajjul, 2nd Intermediate Period. After Museen der Stadt Wien (1994, 239).

Finally, there is the possibility of “narrative” representations of warfare being “translated” in order to fit in local conventions. M. Shaw (2000) has compared the seafaring themes in the West House of Thera with those in Hatshepsut’s funerary temple in Deir el-Bahri, concluding that the narrative continuity in the Punt relief was likely to result from Aegean influence. Such influence could, however, also have worked the other way round, especially considering the magnitude of the Egyptian pictorial tradition. I come back to this issue in the conclusions.

3.5 WEAPONS AND INNOVATIONS IN WARFARE

3.5.1 TRADE IN WEAPONS AND THE DIFFUSION OF MILITARY TECHNOLOGY

Trade in finished weapons and in the materials used to produce them is difficult to detect archaeologically. The distinction between “prestige” and “functional” items is often

blurred, and it is almost impossible to determine whether the specimens carried by the “tribute bearers” in the Theban tombs were supposed to be real military equipment, socially charged objects, or both. As we shall see, the few weapons with foreign elements which have been found so far seem unfit for real combat. One text from Mari mentions such a weapon coming from the Aegean: “Eine kretische Waffe, ihr Griff und ihre Basis mit Gold belegt, der Griff mit Lapislazuli eingelegt” (Helck 1995, 49). Determining whether the weapons with foreign elements found in Egypt and the Aegean were valuable gifts exchanged between courts might improve our understanding of the relations between the two worlds, but I argue below that the “foreignness” of these items has often been overestimated.

Raw materials, too, can elusive in the record. The Egyptian visual and written sources provide occasional instances of exchange in such goods with the Aegean, such as the copper ox-hide ingots represented in Thebes. Moreover, some of the exchanged raw materials may have been preserved archaeologically. This section begins with a discussion on the exchange of military technology, in order to assess the meaning of the proposed weapons of foreign production. Then I examine goat horns, a material that might have been traded to Egypt and used in Egyptian workshops for producing composite bows, thus proving the existence of commercial exchanges related to the manufacture of weapons.

Egyptian military equipment did not differ much from that of the neighbouring lands, a fact that has been explained in the past by positing wandering smiths “trained in the same school of metallurgy” (Maxwell-Hyslop 1946, 5-6). Weapons were traded between the countries of the ancient Near East, and during the New Kingdom rulers exchanged horses and chariots, which were also collected as booty after successful battles; at Megiddo, we are told, Thutmose III’s army gathered a total of no less than 924 chariots after the enemy had left the battlefield (Spalinger 2005, 36). Other pieces of equipment, such as armour and composite bows, also appear in lists of captured goods; they were probably more than trophies, and could be reused.

Helck (1995, 46) originally rejected Maxwell-Hyslop’s suggestion of “wandering” blacksmiths and arms-producers, on the ground that there is no textual evidence supporting it; moreover, weapon production in Egypt was confined to state-controlled workshops with local craftsmanship. Later on, however, Helck conceded that it could be plausible that, at least during Hatshepsut’s and Thutmose III’s reign, “the Minoans exported arms, as well as smiths who could manufacture them” to Egypt (discussion after

Wiener 1987, 267); such specialists traded on state-level would be different than “wandering smiths”; they have parallels in the healers exchanged between courts (above, 2.2), and would be a more likely feature in the centralised societies of the Eastern Mediterranean, where luxury goods were mostly monopolised by courts. Cline (1995, 273) acknowledges that there is no evidence for Aegean arms-makers in the Eastern Mediterranean, but believes nevertheless that the possibility of their existence would be suggested by Aegean type weapons found in some Balkan locations (e.g. Sandars 1963, 128) or Anatolia (Ünal, Ertekin & Ediz 1991). Moreover, some workshops might have been attached to the same temples involved in external trade and the reception of “tribute”, on see 3.5.4.

3.5.2 EGYPTIAN WEAPONS WITH AEGEAN ELEMENTS

A few weapons dating to the early 18th Dynasty display features apparently linking them to the Aegean. All these objects probably had purely decorative/ceremonial functions, and were not designed for use in battle.

THE “DAGGER OF APOPHIS”

This object was found in Saqqara in 1898 (Daressy 1906, 115-16; Helck 1995, 47-48; Figs. 3.39, 3.40). It bears an inscription recording that it was presented by the Hyksos king Apophis (or Apep, first part of the 16th century B.C.) to an officer named Nehemeni (*nḥm.ni*). The blade is sharp on both sides and about 24 cm long; it is cast together with the 11.4 cm long hilt. The bronze frame is covered by electrum foil on both sides.



Fig. 3.39. The “Apophis dagger”, handle, recto. Cairo CG 52768. Gilded bronze, L. 114 mm, W. 47 mm. After Daressy (1906, fig. 2).



Fig. 3.40. The “Apophis dagger”, handle, verso. Cairo CG 52768. Gilded bronze, L. 114 mm, W. 47 mm. After Daressy (1906, fig. 1).

The inscription reads (my translation):

Recto:

šmsw nb.f nḥmni

The follower of his [own] lord, Nahman

Verso:

ntr nfr nb t3wy nb-ḥpš-R^c s3 R^c ipp di ʿnh

Perfect god, lord of the Two Lands, Nebkhepesra, son of Ra, Apophis, given life

Helck (1995, 49) argued for a “Mycenaean prototype” (“*ein Vorbild mykenischer Herkunft*”). This view was based mainly on the mushroom-shaped hilt, to which the decoration is confined. The latter consists on the verso of the hieroglyphs alone, but on the recto, beneath the inscription, there is a hunting scene with some Aegean parallels, such as the motif of a lion attacking a gazelle. Such themes are, however, also well known in the Near East. The peculiar arrangement of the figures, one above the other, as well as the twisted position of the hunter, can be explained by reference to the need to squeeze these figures onto the narrow hilt. Notwithstanding the hunter’s awkward position, the way in which he walks with a leg bent backwards, as well as the way he holds his spear both have Aegean parallels. The oddly bent object which he carries with

his stretched arm has been suggested to be a “boomerang” (Daressy 1906, 117), an item which is not known from the Aegean; more likely, it might be the edge of a “figure-eight-shaped shield” (“der Rand eines Achterschildes”; Helck 1995, 49).

This weapon of “foreign” appearance might thus be either the output of a foreign craftsman working in an Egyptian environment, but also of an Egyptian craftsman who decided to include some exotic elements, perhaps after a specific request from his customer. In the latter case, the involvement of West Asian artisans in the transmission of such elements could also be a possibility: as in regards to the appreciation of Minoan style frescos during the mid 18th Dynasty (below, 3.7), a taste for Aegean motifs on weapons might also have had earlier precedents in the Levant.

DAGGER CAIRO CG 52658

This is one of three weapons (together with Cairo CG 52600 and 52666) coming from the tomb of queen Ahhotep in Thebes (Fig. 3.41), but it bears the name of king Ahmose (ca. 1550-1525 B.C.), who is generally considered to have been her son; the relation between the two is complicated by her possible identification with another queen with the same name whose coffin was found in Deir el-Bahri (Schmitz 1978, 207-215; Ryholt 1997, 275-277; Eaton-Krauss 1990), which has however been questioned (Roth 1999; Dodson & Hilton 2004, 124-125).

This dagger displays several elements perfectly consistent with Egyptian traditions, such as the pommel shaped as a reversed ram’s head (Helck 1995, 47). The blade is adorned with hieroglyphic inscriptions on both sides.



Fig. 3.41. Dagger (detail of blade). Cairo CG 52658. Gold, electrum, copper alloy, semiprecious stones, W. 34 mm, L. 285 mm. After Aruz et al. (2008, 121).

The first one reads (my translation):

ntr nfr nb t3wy Nb-phiti-R^c, di nḥ dt mi r^c

Perfect god, Lord of the Two Lands, Nebpehtira, given life like Ra eternally.

And, on the verso:

s3 R^c n ḥt.f i^ch-ms nḥt di nḥ mi R^c dt

Son of Ra of his body, Ahmosis, the strong one, given life like Ra eternally.

Helck (1979, 56) was convinced that, because the “ugliness” of the hieroglyphs had no parallels in the Egyptian epigraphic tradition of that time, the artisan had been unfamiliar with even the rudiments of hieroglyphic writing. Moreover, the epithet *nḥt*, “the strong one”, included in the king’s cartouche, was associated with Kamose rather than Ahmose. He went further to exclude the possibility that the object was an Egyptian product, assuming that it had to have been purpose made in a foreign land, which he suggested being in the Aegean, as a diplomatic gift to Egypt.

The decoration of the blade actually includes elements of possible Aegean origin. Towards the point we can see a lion chasing a calf. Ahmose’s reign can be considered more or less contemporary with LH I on mainland Greece; during this period, Mycenaean power-related images of lions come exclusively from the Shaft Graves, while lions are mostly associated with hunting, including examples represented on weapons (N. Thomas 1999, 300-301). The cats featured on weapon blades can be seen galloping towards its tip, “as ready to attack as the weapon itself” (Morgan 2010, 317). The motif of calves and lions is well known in both Mycenaean and Near Eastern art, where the lion displays a clear symbolic relationship with war and power. Helck (1995, 56) thought that the “cloud-shaped” (“*wolkengestaltig*”) landscape to be “typically Creto-Mycenaean” (e.g. Morgan 1988, 33-34).

Helck could find no parallel for the four grasshoppers opposite the hunting scene. On the upper side, where it joins to the blade, the handle terminates with four female heads. We find a similar arrangement, albeit with a different subject, in a sword from Mycenae, where four leonine heads occupy the positions of the feminine ones on the Cairo dagger. On the reverse of the latter’s blade there is a flower motif which also has an Aegean parallel in the tripartite pendant discussed above in connection to the Miniature Frieze from Akrotiri (3.4.2).

In Egypt, as in many societies, the struggle against the outside was equated with hunting, since both activities were seen as efforts to protect the world order; hunted and beasts were given the role of the enemies of the god (Schoske 1982; Gundlach 2008, 49; here, 2.5.1). In Ahmose's stele of year 18, queen Ahhotep is stated to have been the *de facto* ruler of Egypt, perhaps while the king was too young to govern himself (e.g. Bryan 2003, 218). She is credited with defending Upper Egypt from external threats and expelling rebels; if this claim has historical substance, the scene on the blade would suit her well. Perhaps the sword was a diplomatic gift destined for her son, whose name it bears, but it was decided to honour her by including it among her burial goods.

It would be significant if there were any links between the inscriptions and scenes represented on this weapon and on the Apophis one, but this does not seem to be the case. If Ahhotep's dagger is of foreign provenance, as Helck suggested, it is possible that non-Egyptian craftsmen unable to read hieroglyphs may have used a couple of stock phrases, while conveying more specific meanings through visual means that would have been understood in both societies.

AHHOTEP'S AXE

A ceremonial axe now in Cairo (CG 52645; Fig. 3.42), made in wood, gold, electrum and precious stones, must be mentioned for more than one reason. First, like the previous object it comes from Ahhotep's tomb. Moreover, the blade terminates on both sides with a griffin and a sphinx, whose pose follows the curved line of the cutting edge (Morgan 2010, 318) and thus conforms to the association between the animals and the offensive extremity of the weapon just discussed in relation to the dagger. Finally, Helck (1995, 48) drew a parallel between the pose of the king striking the enemy and a gold ring from Mycenae (Buchholz & Karageorghis 1971, no. 1383; Fig. 3.43). Nevertheless, the overall result is definitely Egyptian, and most likely symbolises Egypt's reunification by Ahmose (Saleh & Sourouzian 1987, no. 121): Helck's "un-Egyptian" sphinx is depicted under the Two Ladies of Upper and Lower Egypt, while the griffin on the other side is accompanied by the hieroglyphic inscription "beloved of Montu". The griffin too presents an Aegean pose reminiscent of Aegean examples such as the one in the Miniature Frieze (below, Fig. 3.35).



Fig. 3.42. “Ahhotep’s axe” (detail). Cairo CG 52645. Gold, electrum, copper alloy, semiprecious stones, wood, H. 475 mm., W. 67 mm. After Aruz et al. (2008, 120).



Fig. 3.43. “Battle of the glave” ring. Inv. Nr. 241; CMS I, no. 16. Gold, H. 21 mm, W. 35 mm. Mycenae, Shaft Grave IV. After CMS (I, 27).

3.5.3 AEGEAN WEAPONS WITH EGYPTIAN ELEMENTS

Several Aegean daggers display elements that can be hypothetically traced back to Egypt, such as cats hunting birds among papyrus plants.

A great quantity of weapons has been found at Mycenae, especially in Shaft Grave Circle A. Most of them are functional items, such as spearheads and slashing knives, but

there are also swords and daggers made with precious metals and valuable stones, crafted to be prestige items. The daggers in particular can display very rich decoration. Unlike swords, short daggers did not require a midrib to strengthen their blade, so that the space between the cutting edges was often used as a flat surface available for decoration.



Fig. 3.44. Dagger decorated with a “Nilotic” landscape (Detail). Athens, Inv. Nr. 765. Bronze, L. 160 mm, W. 47 mm. Mycenae, LH/LM I. After Xenaki-Sakellariou & Chatziliou (1989, pl. iv).

One of the finest examples comes from Shaft Grave V, and while relatively short it is technically very remarkable (Fig. 3.44). The blade is decorated on both sides with a “Nilotic” landscape (Hood 1994, 178), featuring stylised papyrus plants growing along a river full of fish. The scenes set in this environment involve cats (or cat-like creatures) chasing water-fowl. Hood (1994, 177-180) argues for a Minoan provenance, which Phillips (2008 I, 205 and n. 1225) rejects on account of the niello workmanship, unknown in Minoan Crete, but she does not exclude the possibility that this was the work of an expatriate Minoan artisan. However, I believe it is simpler to assume that the piece was made by locals who had already developed a taste for scenes of this kind. The “Nilotic landscape” in the Miniature Frieze from Akrotiri provides a good parallel for the decoration of the dagger. As an exotic setting, such a landscape was probably associated with the elite’s taste for adventures in foreign locations.

Another specimen is a dagger from Routsí (Tholos 2; fig. 3.45). Both sides of this dagger, which is 32 cm long, are decorated with felines in a bushy landscape; all the figures are made with gold sheet, which also covers the handle; the landscape is rendered with undulated silver bands (Xenaki-Sakellariou & Chatziliou 1989, 27-28).



Fig. 3.45. Dagger. Athens National Museum 8340. Bronze, L. 320 mm, W. 45 mm. Routsis, LH I. After Xenaki-Sakellariou & Chatziliou (1989, pl. v2).

Phillips (2008 I, 205) correctly points out that the dagger from Shaft Grave V predates the New Kingdom tomb scenes with cats chasing birds, and rejects the Egyptian origin of the motif as unnecessary. I believe, however, that it is over-cautious to deny any connection with Egypt. What seems to be genuinely Aegean is the association of a “Nilotic” landscape with warfare, whereas in Egypt it was often linked to the afterlife or to leisure activities. Perhaps it is more plausible that some Egyptian elements were used in a different way in the Aegean. These items, though distinctively Aegean, carry Egyptian or egyptianising motifs.

3.5.4 GOAT HORNS FOR COMPOSITE BOWS

The goods brought by Aegean “tribute bearers” in the tomb of Menkheperaseneb include some items with an unusual shape (Fig. 3.46). The same objects can be seen in workshop scenes where composite bows are produced, one of which is also in the tomb of Menkheperaseneb. Some craftsmen are shown working on long rods displaying varying curvatures on one of their extremities. The nature of these items has generated some interest. N. de G. Davies (1923, 70) was the first one to propose that they could be animal horns, an idea discussed later discussed by Mekhitarian (1954, 47), and expanded by Wachsmann (1987, 79-80). Wachsmann concludes that horns are the most likely possibility, after dismissing other options (such as wood or elephant tusks; e.g. Vercoutter 1956, 366). According to Wachsmann, these horns could belong to ibex and/or wild goat males, the variations in curvature resulting from the different ages of the animals. The Cretan wild goat (*Aegagrus cretica*) is a different species from the Nubian Ibex (*Capra nubiana*) found in the Middle East and Egypt. The presence of such items in bowyers’ workshops would not be surprising: being extremely flexible and resistant, horns

provided an ideal element for the innermost part of composite bows (e.g. Lorimer 1950, 277).

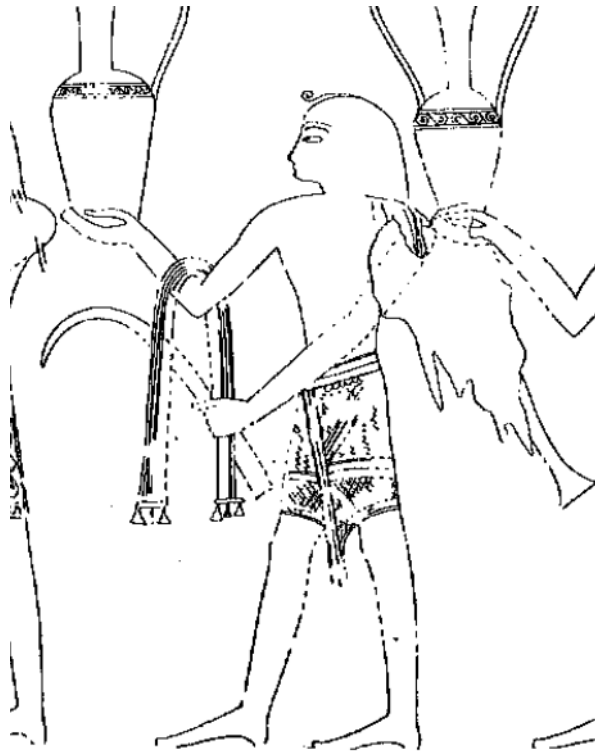


Fig. 3.46. Aegean “tribute bearer” carrying an elephant tusk (?). After Davies & Davies (1933, pl. v).

In total six horns appear in the workshop scene in the tomb of Menkheperaseneb (Fig. 3.47). Some are being worked by the craftsmen, and others appear on the surface above the figures. In tribute scenes in the same tomb, two similar horns are carried by Aegean “tribute bearers”, and one more by what Wachsmann (1987, 90) describes as an “Aegean/Syrian hybrid” figure. Wachsmann accepts the notion that composite bows were “foreign to the Greeks” (i.e. the Mycenaeans), mainly on the ground of Homeric references (e.g. IV, 106-126; see Lorimer 1950, 289-299). The same, he continues, must have been true for the Minoans (as also suggested by Lorimer 1950, 278-279 and Snodgrass 1967, 23-24). He concludes that the Cretan wild goat horns recorded in the Mc-Series tablets from Knossos (see further below), were collected exclusively to be traded abroad (Wachsmann 1987, 90). Although Egypt had a local population of wild ibexes, females and youngsters did not have suitable horns, while males old enough to provide suitable material made up only a fraction of the population; this shortage would have been a valid stimulus for importing horns from abroad (Wachsmann 1987, 84, 89-92).



Fig. 3.47. Egyptian workshop where composite bows are being produced. After Wreszinski (1923-1935 I, 80).

Although I accept that there is reasonable circumstantial evidence that goat horns from Crete were traded to Egypt, I believe that the scenario proposed by Wachsmann, i.e. that they were exported because the locals did not know how to use them, needs further discussion. The most obvious problem is that the Homeric poems provide no reliable evidence for a supposed “foreignness” of, or familiarity with, composite bows in Mycenaean times. The diffusion of these weapons in the prehistoric Aegean can only be approached through contemporary Bronze Age sources. Even if we do not have physical remains of bows, the large number of arrowheads found in every part of the Aegean suggests that bows were integral to Minoan and Mycenaean warfare (Georganas 2010, 308). Large numbers of arrowheads are recorded by Linear B tablets (e.g. Snodgrass 1967, 23). Some of the flint and obsidian arrowheads from the Shaft Graves have barbed heads, which would have made extraction more difficult: this suggests that they were crafted for military purposes and not for hunting (Everson 2004, 32).

Besides the simple bow made of a single stave of wood and sinew-reinforced variants, there is some evidence that the Mycenaean also had composite bows combining layers of horns, wood and sinew. An exceptionally rare Aegean representation of a charioteer armed with a bow, on a 16th century gold signet ring from Mycenae, may be a borrowed motif (Feldman & Sauvage 2010, 133, 139). However, other objects from the same tomb (Shaft Grave IV), such as the so-called Siege Rhyton, show infantrymen using bows in battle (Hiller 1999, 323), and these apparently of the composite type. A further example might be an archer on a fresco fragment from Pylos (Brecoulaki 2008). A lack of exact parallels in Western Asia or in Egypt would confirm that these scenes relate to local traditions and do not show borrowed motifs. If the Mycenaean were crafting composite bows already during the 16th century B.C., the Greek mainland would have

provided a closer market for Cretan goat horns. Egypt would still have been a convenient place to trade these items: to mention just two possibilities, a more limited Mycenaean demand might have been satisfied by the fauna available on the mainland, or the Egyptians could have afforded to give more in return. The seemingly small interest in composite bows in Aegean art may be explained with the impossibility of resorting to “Asian” chariot warfare on Greek soil (above, 3.2.5). Yet, composite bows could have been useful to skirmishers fighting on foot (Grguric 2005, 22). Moreover, although Greece was unsuitable for chariot warfare, chariots are attested in large numbers in the Linear B texts (Driessen 1996), perhaps because of their role as prestige items. Composite bows too were status markers, at least in the Near East. It remains difficult, however, to account for their rarity in Aegean iconography, especially in connection with chariots (below, 3.6.1).

Warren (1995, 7) who follows Wachsmann’s reasoning, remarks that the vase with a goat’s head protome depicted in Rekhmire’s tomb (Fig. 3.48) has analogies in LM I pottery, as is shown by a rhyton from Palaikastro (Sackett & Popham 1970, 217). This may imply that the animal was known in Egypt at least through foreign representations, but I do not think that this could provide any indication of a special Egyptian interest in Cretan agrimis, or in the materials obtained from them.

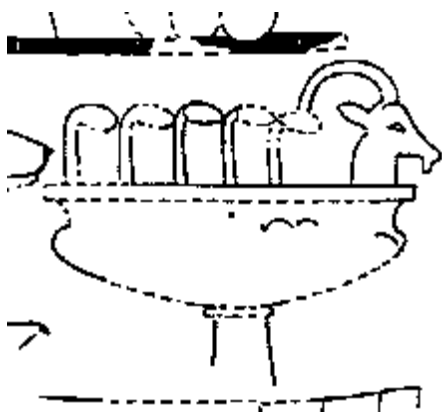


Fig. 3.48. Tomb of Rekhmire. Vase with goat’s head protome. After Davies (1943, pl. xviii).

Another issue is the date of the Knossian Mc-Series tablets, which lists some commodities derived from goats, including hundreds of horns. Although Evans could not read the tablets, he was able to correctly recognise the ideographic sign for the horns, which he presumed were collected for the manufacture of “the Asiatic type of bow then in vogue” (*PoM* IV 2, 834). Wachsmann (1987, 90-91) argues that the series proves that Crete was still exporting horns around the end of the 15th century B.C., a couple of

decades after Menkheperaseneb's tomb was decorated (around the third quarter of the same century). I, however, find it more practical to assume that the horns listed in the Mc-Series were gathered by the Knossos palace for internal use; moreover, these documents were found in the Arsenal, which has provided several texts whose content is related to martial issues (e.g. Driessen 1996, 485).

A potentially significant question is whether the Aegeans acquired some knowledge about how to use horns for manufacturing bows while in Egypt. Egyptian workshops producing military technology seem to have been often attached to temples. Drenkhahn (1976) has remarked that in all the six tombs with chariot production scenes dated between the reigns of Hatshepsut and Thutmose IV, such activity is shown taking place in the workshops of the temple of Amun at Karnak. Moreover, we know that four of these tombs belonged to individuals employed by the temple. We should bear in mind that Puiemre was bestowed the rank of Second Prophet of Amun during Thutmose III's reign (Vercoutter 1956, 205); Menkheperaseneb held the same position before ascending to the rank of First Prophet of Amun, which he occupied between the latest years of Thutmose II and the early reign of Amenhotep II (Lefebvre 1929, 85 n. 2). This link between military technology and temples may be due to the temples' role as recipients of war booty and "tribute", including the necessary raw materials, such as some types of foreign woods which had to be imported from outside Egypt. In addition, temples were also endowed with prisoners of war (Drenkhahn 1976), some of them perhaps capable of crafting war chariots and other pieces of military technology not already produced locally, or enhancing the local production by assisting the Egyptian workers. Temples would thus be crossroads for knowledge from abroad, where specialists from other lands could trade their knowledge with the Egyptians and the foreigners employed by them.

Parallel to the raw horns imported in Egypt, the flint arrowheads from Mycenae, Vaphio and other sites have been suggested to be an import from Egypt to the Aegean (Wace 1932, 223). Flint remained in use alongside bronze even after the latter became widespread (scrap flint was found, for instance, in a workshop in the Northeastern Building at Mycenaean Pylos; Bendall 2003, 184). However, there would hardly be any need to import flint from Egypt, and there is no indication of any link with an import of technological knowledge.

3.6 ARTISTIC INFLUENCES IN SUBJECT MATTER RELATED TO WARFARE

I have already mentioned that some features in the proposed representations of “foreign mercenaries” in both Egypt and the Aegean may have been borrowed from foreign depictions, rather than being the result of a direct observation of the subjects. The overall impression is that during an earlier phase (16th century B.C.), reciprocal influences did not extend to military technology, but did affect how warfare was depicted or represented symbolically. Now I expand the discussion examining the representations of chariots and warrior identity in art.

3.6.1 REPRESENTATIONS OF CHARIOTS

Examination of the available written, figurative, and archaeological evidence shows that the ideological and representational aspects of chariots are not homogenous in all the geographical and cultural contexts involved; on the contrary, they reveal “clear regional patterns in each culture’s rhetorical deployment of the vehicle”, patterns that have often been neglected (Feldman & Sauvage 2010, 67). Here I discuss similarities and differences in the Egyptian and Aegean imagery of war chariots, paying attention both to the local traditions and the broader context of the contemporary Eastern Mediterranean and Near East. I then consider whether reciprocal influences can be found in relation to the symbolic value, the social implications, and, ultimately, the use and function of war chariots in the two milieus.

The light chariot was probably introduced into the Aegean from the Near East sometime during the 16th century B.C. (Crouwel 1981). The topography of Greece and its islands, we have seen, precluded the exploitation of chariots according to the “Asian” model, especially as mobile platforms for archers, leaving us with the question of how they may have been used instead. Before continuing, however, it is necessary to make a couple of preliminary remarks on the links between chariot imagery and the ways the vehicles were actually used.

First, expressions such as “ceremonial” use, as opposed to “real” use, can be deceptive, especially in a context where warfare, like many other activities, was probably ritualised to a considerable extent. Scenes of actual fighting and those representing its ritual re-enactment may be undistinguishable in art: should a scene inspired by a mock fight staged during a festival be treated as a representation of the ceremony or as showing the real fight as it was imagined by the spectators? A good example is provided by the ritual combat scenes in Ramses III’s mortuary temple, beneath the Window of

Appearances, where Egyptian soldiers engage foreigners: are they represented as the foreign auxiliaries they were, or as the “foreigners” they were meant to symbolise in the mock fights? (Decker 1992, 102; Darnell & Manassa 2007, 208-209). An on-going debate surrounds the three best preserved stelae from Mycenae, all found above Shaft Grave V (S 1-3; Younger 1997, 235-236): they show chariots mounted by single drivers apparently involved in military activity. It has been argued that these are not representations of real fighting, but “ritual races... perhaps held in honour of the dead” (Mylonas 1966, 94). The presence of a single charioteer would argue against these being reliable representations of battle scenes: for a chariot to be used effectively in combat, at least one crew member must have both hands free for fighting (3.1.2); yet, there are several Egyptian and Near Eastern scenes in which single charioteers engage in combat, sometimes with the reins tied around their waists: the driver is probably omitted in order to emphasise the role of the fighter, especially if the latter is a king. If the stelae represent real fighting scenes, they do it in an ideologically charged way. If they are ritual scenes, on the other hand, they are staged to evoke real combat.

Ritual fights are intended to evoke reality, but the contrary can also be true, with battles and whole campaigns being shaped by ritual actions. Medieval warfare, with its relationship with tournaments and jousts (Barber & Barker 2000), provides a good parallel. If chariots were really of little practical use in Mycenaean warfare, their frequency in art and their abundance in the Linear B texts would show that they bore a particularly significant ideological charge. Chariots themselves being of foreign origin, such ideological implications cannot be presumed to be completely local, and their iconography may help to infer possible external influences.

When examining Egyptian and Aegean representations of chariots, some general shared elements can be easily spotted. In highlighting these common traits I am not, at the outset, implying any direct connection.

A first remarkable, albeit generic, analogy between the two milieus is the abundance of chariot imagery in comparison with other Eastern Mediterranean contexts (Feldman & Sauvage 2010). Although chariot imagery is more widespread in Egypt than anywhere else, the Aegean material displays more different modes of representation. Perhaps the Egyptian repertoire was limited by some restraining elements, while the richness of the Aegean one may be explained by several, possibly interlinked factors. For instance, the lack of scenes with chariots involved in rapid motion or engagements after the period of the Shaft Graves could be due to the development of local pictorial

traditions that ignored such foreign, unfamiliar situations and instead matched more familiar uses of chariots. Notwithstanding the importance of chariots as symbols of status, their role in warfare and society in the Aegean may have been less clearly defined than in Egypt, leaving more opportunities for experimentation and hence providing a fertile environment for different sources of inspiration, both local and external. The technology on which chariots were based is generally accepted as being Western Asian in origin, but their depictions in art may have had more than one geographical source. Feldman and Sauvage (2010, 163) argue for an Asiatic source, while according to Hiller (1999, 326) there is “some slight indication that it [was] Egyptian pictures which were followed by Aegean artists”. Perhaps neither interpretation is wrong, and Aegean artists were open to more influences from more than one direction.

Apart from the frequent occurrence of chariots in the art of both cultures, Egypt and the Aegean share the inclusion of chariots in great narrative scenes. In Egypt, chariots appear since the 18th Dynasty in representations of hunting, warfare and transportation. The Ahmose and Tetisheri Project (e.g. Harvey 2008) has recovered thousands of limestone relief fragments at the pyramid temple of Ahmose; although the scenes cannot be reconstructed with certainty, they included horses and chariots (Harvey 2004, 4). A seal from the reign of Thutmose I shows the Egyptian king, alone on his chariot, shooting arrows against an enemy (Desroches-Noblecourt 1950, 43; Fig. 3.51). Most of these scenes, however, belong to the later 18th and especially the 19th Dynasty. In Mycenae, small battle narratives were already known in the Shaft Grave period, as shown by the so-called Silver Siege Rhyton (Vermeule 1964, 100-105); chariots do not appear in any of the surviving fragments of this rhyton, but they feature on other objects from the same tomb (Shaft Grave IV), as well as other burials from the two grave circles. To find chariots and large narratives linked together one must wait for a later phase. The Megaron Frieze from Mycenae (LH III A2/B), for instance, included at least two-horse drawn chariots (Kontorli-Papadopoulou 1999, 332). Fresco fragments featuring chariots have been found at several LBA Aegean sites (Fig. 3.49). Notwithstanding their possible background in earlier Minoan miniature paintings, “the full exploitation of themes of warfare and hunting seems to have been a specifically mainland phenomenon whose roots can be traced back into the Shaft Grave era” (Immerwahr 1990, 122). There might be a connection behind such Egyptian and Mycenaean taste for chariots in large scenes. The fact that they are absent from earlier Mycenaean narratives might imply that it took

some time to adapt chariot imagery to such contexts; when the time was ripe, the Egyptian scenes might have provided some form of inspiration.

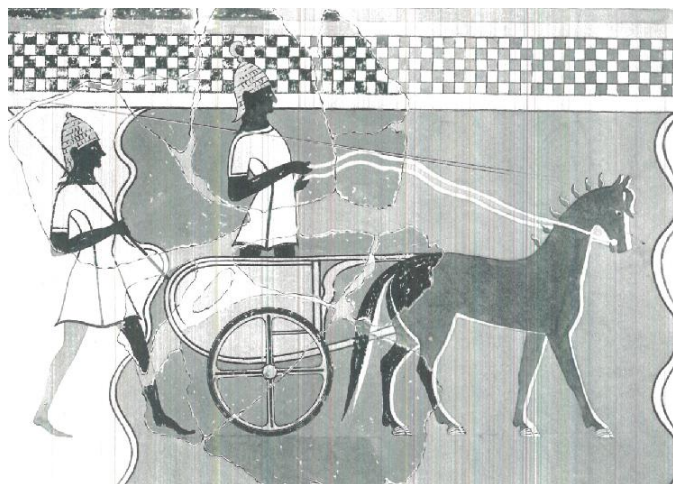


Fig. 3.49. Pylos. Detail of a fresco. After Lang (1969, pl. 123).

Hiller suggests an Egyptian origin for two motifs already visible in the Shaft Grave period. The first is the “figure in front of the chariots which is rendered on several Shaft Grave stelai” (Fig. 3.50), resembling one appearing in the same position and with a similar pose on a scarab of Thutmose I (Fig. 3.51, already mentioned above; Hiller 1999, 326). The second motif, which consists of a warrior overrun by a chariot, appears on both Stele I from Shaft Grave V (Fig. 3.52) and on an Egyptian scarab found in an LBA context at Poros (Fig. 3.53). Three examples of scarabs with a body beneath the horse have been found in the Levant, one of them probably a local imitation and not an Egyptian original (Feldman & Sauvage 2010, 148-149). In Ugarit, this motif appears on some cylinder seals, but these are later than the Mycenaean and Egyptian examples (Amiet 1992, 131), so that there is no reason to assume a Levantine involvement in their transmission.

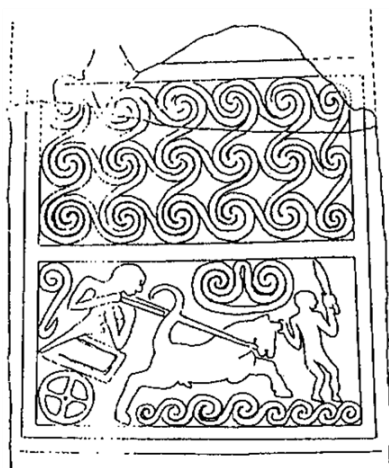


Fig. 3.50. Grave Stele V. Mycenae, LH I. After Younger (1997, pl. xci a).



Fig. 3.51. Seal. BM 17774. Green Jasper, W. 15 mm. 18th Dynasty. After W. Smith (1965, fig. 34a).



3.52. Stele I from Shaft Grave V. A chariot tramples a defeated warrior, while a lion chases a deer. Mycenae, LH I. After Younger (1997, pl. xc a).



Fig. 3.53. Egyptian scarab. HM 2347. Carnelian, L. 21 mm, W. 10 mm. Poros, MM IIIB-LM IA. After Hiller (1999, pl. lxxi).

Besides Hiller's examples, I would like to add a third motif, also present on Stele I from Shaft Grave V: that of the lion running beside the chariot. As in the Miniature Frieze, the actions of this animal may symbolise violent activity beyond the limits of the "human" world (Marinatos 1990, 143-144; 2010, 349); it is reasonable to assume that the motif could have been introduced in Mainland Greece, which does not seem to have been in direct contact with Egypt in the 16th century B.C., from Crete or Thera. A possible example from Megiddo, for which Egyptian parallels have also been suggested (Feldman 2010, 145), belongs to a hoard dated to the latter phase of the LBA (e.g. Feldman 2009); here too, chronological considerations make the assumption of a Levantine transmission unnecessary. I have mentioned the connection of lions with war or power (3.4.2, 3.5.1). Marinatos (2010, 349) believes the trampled soldier to result from a wrong restoration, but I see no reason why the stele could not include both motifs. The stele "simile" from Shaft Grave V presents victory in two different guises: man versus man and lion versus prey (Marinatos 1990, 143-144). The human part of the composition, in which a chariot tramples a fallen warrior with a "Figure 8 shield" (Crouwel 1981, 478), is the same one that Hiller associated with an Egyptian scarab. Feldman and Sauvage (2010, 133) accept the parallel between conquest/victory with hunting activity. The association between lions and warfare seems to disappear in the Aegean after the Shaft Grave period. Although Nancy Thomas (1999, 304-305) has proposed to see a lion in the Megaron Fresco in Mycenae, I do not think that this can be asserted with confidence. What is shown may equally well be a chariot (as restored in Rodenwaldt 1921, pl. ii) or even a change in landscape (N. Thomas 1999, 311). If it is a chariot, the fallen warrior beneath it would be another example of the motif treated above. Nanno Marinatos (1990, 144) also discusses the scene on a stele from Grave Circle B, in which two lions attack a bull while a man approaches with a spear. Her interpretation is that the man is a superior hunter dominating the hierarchy of the "hunting chain", differentiating between a lion as parallel to the human activity and a lion as subordinate. In Egypt, the lion can be either identified with the king, or be slain by him as a proof of virility (e.g. Carrington 1972, 74). The diffusion of all these motifs must probably be linked to a variety of media, whose existence is in some cases confirmed by surviving specimens (e.g. scarabs), while others may have left no trace. Marinatos (2010, 345-346) advances convincing arguments for a Minoan transmission to the Greek mainland, such as earlier instances of lions hunting from Zakros.

Broader reciprocal influences have also been suggested. Hiller (1999, 326) argues for an Egyptian role in the shift towards ceremonial instead of warlike representations of chariots in LH III A2/B, which is visible at least on the chariot craters. Comparable developments can be noticed in the more or less contemporary Amarna art. Chariots appear more and more often in the decoration of private tombs, often in funeral processions or in scenes where the owner is rewarded by the king; on the contrary, hunting scenes and reviews of foreign tribute virtually disappear (Feldman & Sauvage 2010, 128-230).

A further suggestion of Egyptian influence relates to the type of chariot which replaces the earlier model in the Aegean after the 14th century B.C., whose open framework would match the Egyptian counterparts more closely than Near Eastern ones (Catling 1968, 42; Feldman & Sauvage 2010, 133). The lack of physical remains of chariots from the Aegean makes it difficult to decide whether such a shift involved the technology of chariots themselves, or only their iconography. It is tempting to link such changes to the contact with the Egyptian temple workshops mentioned earlier (3.5.4).

My preliminary conclusion is that the analogies apparent in Egyptian and Aegean art should be linked to factors other than a direct influence in the construction of chariots or their deployment in battle. As I have said, the general consensus is that the technology related to the production of chariots in the Aegean was imported from Western Asia and not Egypt, while the use of chariots in the Aegean cannot have been the same as that known in either Egypt or the Near East. However, there does seem to have been an exchange of artistic motifs, which might be linked with ideological and social aspects, which I discuss next.

3.6.2 THE BEAUTY OF A WARRIOR

In the social context of the LBA, being a warrior was not only a trade, but had also significant implications in shaping an individual's identity. In his 1995 article on the warrior ideology in LBA Europe, Paul Treherne argues that "central to both life and death was a certain form of masculine *beauty* unique to the warrior" (Treherne 1995, 106).

In this section I discuss the ways in which such a warrior identity was conveyed in art. In Egypt, the depiction of an idealised body form was an important focus for conveying several important concepts. However, identifying the ideological implications of certain physical features is not always an easy task: traits associated with youth, strength and health are often part of the set of conventions used when representing

warriors, but not all the individuals displaying such traits are necessarily intended to be fighters: statues of Senwosret III and his successor Amenemhet III have muscular, youthful bodies, but their worn faces are probably meant to emphasise the burdens and responsibility of kingship (Baines 2007, 25, 321-322).

Weingarten (1995) has examined the possibility of a Minoan “canon of proportion” in a few Minoan works of art that have been linked to warrior ideals: the Palaikastro kouros, the Boxer Rhyton, and the Chieftain Cup. The Palaikastro Kouros has already been discussed in relation to the level of anatomical knowledge it reveals (2.2.4). Weingarten (1995, 249-250) acknowledges the indigenous nature of this piece. The muscles can be associated with a warrior’s ideal physical form, but the subject is not depicted in a warlike pose: as a bull-leaper, his strength is aimed at a physical activity that we would now describe as sport. According to Molloy (2012, 110), the Boxer Rhyton from Agia Triada shows “a more explicit vision of the male body as the product of training regimes”.

Representations of sport are widespread in Minoan art, and can be found in all stages of Egyptian history as well: from *sed* festival runs to wrestling and acrobatics (Decker 1992, 71-74; Kyle 2007, 30). Running was probably more common than appears in the pictorial sources, since we know of soldiers who were awarded the title of “swift runner” (Decker 1992, 61). A stele of the reign of Taharqa (690-664 B.C.) records that the king committed a selection of troops to daily training runs; in this case the link between the ability to run and fitness for combat is explicitly stated (Altenmüller & Moussa 1981; Decker 1984). There is also some evidence for jumping (Decker 1992, 66-70) and archery. Minoan (and Minoanising) art shows several instances of boxing and, notoriously, bull-leaping, the latter being a display of acrobatic skills (e.g. N. Marinatos 1989). Such agonistic activities are often associated with training for military activity (Morris 1990, 150; Molloy 2012, 89). The presence of bull-leaping in the Tell ed-Dab‘a frescos suggest that, at least during the 18th Dynasty, there was a shared appreciation for such scenes: “foreign painters must represent the ideology of the ruler who employs them otherwise the message of the ruler is not effectively communicated” (Marinatos 2010, 353). Although the bull-leaping scenes seem to display youth and strength instead of martial connotations, the presence at Tell ed-Dab‘a of additional elements associated with violent activity, such as lions and a griffin, would suggest something more than a blind reception of foreign motifs.

P. BM EA 74100 provides another area to explore. Quite apart from the distinctive equipment of the Aegean “mercenaries”, there is a strong emphasis on foreign features of the Libyan warriors (above, 3.4.1); another 18th Dynasty example would be the Punt scenes from Deir el-Bahari (e.g. Herzog 1968, 22-24). Such emphasis on an “ethnic” identity in warlike scenes is also clearly visible in the fresco from the Palace of Nestor. Notwithstanding the lack of individual features, the narrative details make it possible to recognise individual duels and protagonists (Blakolmer 2007, 223).

When focusing on a group instead of single figures, martial connotations can be expressed by uniform equipment carried or synchronised activities. The “Captain of the Blacks” Fresco in Knossos (3.3.2) purportedly represents a row of soldiers in alternating colours, for which an Egyptian parallel with the Nubian wrestlers in Tjanuni’s tomb (TT 74, 18th Dynasty) has already been remarked. Blakolmer (2007, 214) stresses that the characters in the Aegean fighting scenes lacked personal traits, and so do the Aegean ones in his reconstruction. Unlike in Egypt and Mesopotamia, in the Aegean there is no “perspective of importance”, that is, instances of rulers or other important figures being represented as larger than their subjects. In dynamic scenes, as seen above in connection to the Amarna papyrus, individual figures could be singled out through their actions.

The similarities between funeral rites described in the Hittite texts and the Games for Patroclus’ mourning may possibly show that practices still being performed during the Archaic age had been in use since the Late Bronze Age, while pictorial sources suggest that running in the Mycenaean world generally intended took the form of a one-to-one challenge (Puhvel 1988). In the *Iliad* one-on-one competition is not confined to fighting, but it is extended to almost any activity (Lendon 2005, 24). Here too there may be some ideological continuity with earlier times: representations of single combat, for instance, can be found in LH I glyptic; these are hand-to-hand clashes, that probably followed an earlier exchange of projectiles between the opposing armies (Hiller 1999, 323). The New Kingdom ritual fights described above also consist of several individual combats, in which Egyptians are represented as defeating Egypt’s traditional enemies. Decker (1992, 81) suggests the possibility that such games were also staged during the burial rites for deceased kings or (more likely) as a periodic ceremony to honour his memory. Games for Thutmose III, who had already been dead for one hundred years, are represented in the tomb of Amenmose (TT 19; Decker 1992, 82; it must be borne in mind, however, that Thutmose’s name endured for a millennium and that he was an exceptional case). The earliest Aegean example is a Mycenaean *larnax* of the 13th century

B.C. (Immerwahr 1995, 116). It is difficult to assess whether there were reciprocal influences in this regard; focus on single combats within a larger battle narrative or its ritual re-enactment, may have emerged as a feature of the shared warrior ideology of the Eastern Mediterranean during Late Bronze Age. It is interesting, however, to remark the interconnection between fighting, physical prowess, “exercise” and one-to-one challenge. The latter is by no means a universal feature: other possibilities include melees, or the leader (king) alone driving away the enemies.

My preliminary conclusion is that in both societies sport was used as a way to display strength and other qualities related to warfare, and it is in this context that the emphasis on one-to-one challenge can receive more emphasis. Here the warrior identity is conveyed through activities rather than appearance, and similarities that have developed independently may have influenced the consumption of foreign artistic motifs, such as the Tell ed-Dab‘a bull-leapers. Shared practices in representing major clashes may be seen in the emphasis on uniformity among the troops and in the quasi-ethnographic stress on the diversity of the enemies.

3.7 CONCLUSIONS

It is now time to sum up the evidence and arguments treated in the previous sections. As we have seen, nothing in contemporary sources suggests a conflict between Egypt and the Aegean for the period discussed here (16th-13th centuries B.C.); the possibility of occasional raids on the Egyptian coasts, such as the one described by Homer, cannot be rejected; however, there are no mentions in the Egyptian sources, and any such episode seems to have been of little consequence. The presence of Aegean looking “tribute-bearers” in the Theban tombs, as explained above (3.3.2), does not imply Egyptian suzerainty over any part of the Aegean.

Neither the “Black soldiers” in the Aegean frescos, nor the “Aegean foot soldiers” from Amarna can by themselves prove that there was an alliance or a significant dispatching of troops between the courts. Nevertheless, it is possible that some military professionals did travel from the Aegean to Egypt, perhaps as a private initiative, and they would surely have brought their equipment and fighting style with them, together with other, more or less closely associated cultural elements. It is possible, moreover, that there were some instances of cooperation, such as Aegean ships assisting the Egyptians during their Asiatic campaigns (3.3.1); perhaps there was a mutual interest in guaranteeing safe access to certain routes. Evidence for such collaboration is mostly

concentrated during Thutmose III's reign, and is likely to be linked to this pharaoh's activities in Asia. There could have been other circumstances in which Egypt sought an entente with Aegean polities, such as a common endeavour to secure the landing places west of the Delta, or the "anti-Hittite agreement" suggested by Cline (1990-1991; above, 3.3.2). According to the latter scenario, Egypt supplied the Aegeans with material goods in order to assist them against a common enemy (the Hittites), just as the Soviets and the United States did in their "proxy wars" in Vietnam and in Afghanistan during the Cold War. I believe, however, that a more likely parallel would be with the agreements between Byzantium and the Italian maritime republics during the last centuries of the empire's history, such as the Treaty of Nymphaeum of 1261 (e.g. Ostrogorsky 1969, 449); more specifically, Egypt would grant access to certain routes or trading ports in exchange for Aegean military cooperation. Although this hypothesis cannot be dismissed, no written references support it, so that caution is mandatory. Perhaps occasional agreements were motivated by particular circumstances related to commerce and the general situation in the areas of interest, but we have no texts to confirm it. Bietak's (1996, 80-81) suggestion of an alliance cemented by a dynastic marriage is intriguing, but it cannot be proven (e.g. Panagiotopoulos, in press).

The exchange of military technology, and the trade in "functional" weapons, and/or raw materials for their manufacture, seem to have been on a modest scale, although this impression too may be due to the lack of adequate sources. The presence of Aegean mercenaries or, at least, Aegean equipment, during the 14th century B.C. indicates that Aegean styles of warfare could be exploited in Egypt, perhaps when operating on terrains that were unfamiliar to the Egyptian troops. The "Aegeans" in the Amarna papyrus and the "Egyptian envoys" in Pylos (3.4.2) make one thing clear: whether these figures were drawn from direct observation or by copying foreign models, there were specific reasons for including them in some scenes. Additional circumstantial evidence may indicate that there was some influence in the manufacture of composite bows (3.5.3), and after the 15th century B.C. in war chariots (3.6.1). The apparent similarity of the weapons carried by some "tribute bearers" in the Theban tombs with items used in Egypt and the Eastern Mediterranean is not sufficient evidence to show that specific shapes were directly imported from Crete or other Aegean localities.

It is in this context of fluctuating diplomatic contacts and elusive circulation of combat specialists, that is, "mercenaries", that one must discuss mutual influences in the decoration of weapons and in representations of war narrative. Aegean weapons with

Egyptian elements, or of apparent Egyptian manufacture, are rather exceptional, and the same is true for the Aegean or “Aegeanising” weapons in Egypt. During the 16th and the early 15th centuries B.C., the evidence seems confined to an elite level, being mostly restricted to prestige weapons and the decoration of luxury objects. Moreover, as I have already suggested, in this initial phase contacts with the Greek mainland were probably mediated by Crete or Thera (1.5).

The issue of the models on which the foreign-looking warriors discussed in 3.4 were based raises the question of how such models circulated (Cline 1995a, 270). Were the motifs and the symbolism related to warfare linked to specific media, or were they transmitted through a variety of means? Were they adopted separately, or were they incorporated as a coherent system? And what can be said about media that have left no trace in the archaeological record? It would be deceptive to present the matter as if our evidence exhausted the reality; it would be more productive to consider which possibilities would explain the material we have most fully. Additional evidence may be recovered in the future, and being able to test previous hypotheses against new material could help to assess the methodology used so far.

Looking at the motifs apparently shared among various media can provide some insights. The taste for adventures with “exotic” settings was widespread in the Late Bronze Age, in Egypt as well as in the rest of the Near East (3.1.3); the presence of such settings in later Greek epic tradition has been likened to the Oriental details that were making their way into Greek art (Morris 1993, 84). The “Nilotic” landscapes in the Miniature Frieze from Thera and that on the dagger from Mycenae suggest that the Aegean region was not an exception in this regard, and that a conception of Egypt was important here too. Even if all the elements present in these scenes can be found in the Aegean, an image of exoticness may result from their combination. The first question is whether such an image was devised ad hoc, or whether it was inspired by a real foreign location; and if the latter case is true, the second question is whether such a landscape was known from representations on foreign objects (*contra* Phillips 2008 I, 205), from oral descriptions, or from first-hand knowledge.

During this same period (16th century B.C.), there is also an apparent exchange of some motifs related to the representations of war chariots: the chariot trampling a fallen warrior, the charioteer killing a single opponent (on foot), and the association between the violent activity of the charioteer and that of the lion. As suggested above, the lack of strong artistic conventions related to war chariots in the aftermath of their introduction

may have led to a tendency to “experiment” by borrowing from several sources. Although the material is limited and very fragmentary, the earliest phase of the Late Bronze Age is the richest in both variety and quantity of representations (Hiller 1999, 319), and some degree of “standardization” may have followed later, in a diversification-and-decimation model. Since exchanges with Egypt during the Early Mycenaean Period (LH I) seem to have passed through the “Minoan” world, it is remarkable that we find these chariot-related motifs in Mycenae and not in Crete. Perhaps this is due to chance, but it is also possible that they appeared on the island only in an “ephemeral” form (such as very rare or perishable media), without being retained in more durable media because they did not arouse interest; the presence of images of lions in Knossos strengthens this idea. This would confirm the importance of the local contexts in determining the use of such motifs (Feldman & Sauvage 2010).

The representations of narratives, especially large-scale ones, present several challenges that cannot be discussed here. Although the taste for such kind of scenes seems to have arisen in the Aegean independently from the early Egyptian tradition, there are some facts suggesting reciprocal influences, which may be found in representations of groups of soldiers (3.6.2) or in the ways in which the animal world mirrors the fighting shown in the human part of the scenes. In this case, direct observation of foreign works may have provided initial inspiration. The “Miniature fresco” from Kabri in the Levant is significantly earlier than those in Tell ed-Dab‘a and possibly contemporary with Akrotiri (Cline and Yasur-Landau 2007). Perhaps the Egyptians had the opportunity to see similar works of art during their Syrian campaigns, or even in the Aegean itself, before deciding to have them replicated in Avaris. One can only speculate about the contexts which have not survived. Understanding the development of the action in Aegean representations is often very problematic, so that we cannot decide whether there were any influences in shaping the narrative forms that were employed.

In the introduction (1.5) I have mentioned the evidence for Aegean textiles in Egypt, both imported and locally produced by expatriates, and their link to oral forms of art. Aegean mercenaries fighting in Egypt might have brought along their wives, who belonged to the same cultural background and may have contributed to spread some of the motifs discussed here. Moreover, the peoples from the Aegean polities being more exposed to warlike activity than those of the larger Eastern states (above, 3.2.3), we can presume that even non-combatants were familiar with military culture.

Motifs and subjects in figural arts were no doubt influenced by military developments (Hiller 1999, 326). Such developments, however, cannot be expected to be immediately absorbed at once into an artistic repertory. Parallel to the decorative motifs found on luxury items, such as the “Aegeanising” griffin’s wings on Ahmose’s axe, there must have been influences which originally spread through less “prestigious” media.

4 – SOME IMPORTANT CONNECTIONS

RULERSHIP, IDEOLOGY OF POWER, AND LEGITIMATION OF ELITES

4.1. INTRODUCTION

The subject of the present chapter is both the richest in terms of potential material and the most problematic to approach. Terminology presents a problem on its own; while “rulership” is a nebulous term, more specific expressions such as “kingship” or “ideology of power” can be misleading: for Minoan Crete, we have no clear evidence for kings, and whereas we do have “kings” in Mycenaean Greece, their true nature remains controversial (below, 4.2.2). In addition, focusing only on the “ideological” aspects of power and treating them as a self-standing system unrelated to practical considerations would be not only inaccurate, but limiting as well: as I have tried to show in the previous two chapters, ideological and functional elements are strongly interconnected, especially in societies less complex than our own. To attempt to separate such elements artificially would be tantamount to imposing our own categories on culturally alien contexts.

For the reasons just stated, it is convenient to define at the outset a few basic concepts which recur in this chapter. In archaeology, the word “state” is used to describe “complex, centralised institutions with administrative and social hierarchies that regulate access to resources and monopolise legitimate force within substantial territories” (Nakassis, Galaty & Parkinson 2010, 239). Most of the ancient states we know about were ruled by kings (Trigger 2003, 71-73), that is, individuals who symbolically embodied the supreme authority (Kamenka 1989, 7), holding this position for life and normally transmitting it to an heir (Trigger 2003, 75). Kings were usually members of an elite, that is, a broader group which would enjoy a privileged position within society and try to preserve its own prerogatives by means both of control of public institutions and surplus production and of monopoly over some status symbols. Further groups could try to gain access to the same material and ideological sources of legitimation in order to improve their condition, or seek new means (e.g. Burns 2010a, 32). It can thus be useful to differentiate between a more restricted “inner elite” and a larger “sub-elite”, while keeping in mind that there is much room for regional and cultural variation. Since these groups had to rely on having many people working for them, they were less insulated than some of today’s elites.

The first broad issue I discuss in this chapter is whether, and to what extent, contacts between Egypt and the Aegean were manipulated by the ruling groups to legitimise their

own power. I then consider whether there were reciprocal influences affecting the ideology, display, and practice of power in these different milieus.

Elite culture across the Eastern Mediterranean displays several common elements in its material manifestations during the Late Bronze Age, a fact that is to be related to the unprecedented scale of contacts between courts (Van De Mieroop 2007, 3-4). Luxury objects exhibiting strong similarities in both crafting techniques and artistic motifs have been explained by reference to an “International Style” (W. S. Smith 1965), or an “international artistic *koinè*” (Feldman 2006) – as opposed to a random sum of geographically specific characteristics. Scholarly opinions often waver between these two alternatives; one of the aims of this chapter is to establish whether this issue can be approached without falling into circular arguments: to infer a specific Egyptian influence on the ground of Egypt’s “standing” abroad would be as simplistic as ascribing certain features to an international, “hybrid” style only because it is difficult to track them back to a particular source. Moreover, since art is always linked to the culture(s) which produce and consume it, exotica can be important in more than one way: such objects may attest not only an appreciation for foreign goods but also a shared range of tastes (3.6, 3.7) and, possibly, beliefs. Notwithstanding its uniqueness – or perhaps on account of it – the Egyptian monarchy often provided inspiration to foreign rulers. For instance, it has been suggested that the anthropoid coffins found in southern Levantine burials, together with other Egyptianising prestige items such as ivories “may have served Canaanite rulers or dignitaries steeped in Egyptian culture” (Dothan 1979, 104). While this case is likely linked to Egypt’s geographical proximity and protracted domination over the region, examples from more distant and autonomous locations such as Byblos are also known, so that other explanations are possible. Foreign rulers who settled in Egypt, on the other hand, almost inevitably adopted an Egyptian image. The Hyksos kings, although preserving some of their own customs (e.g. Redford 1995, 158-159), emulated their Egyptian predecessors in many ambits, from royal titularies to the issuing of scarabs (Bourriau 1996, 160; Ryholt 1997, 123-125). Rulers of foreign origin would need to advertise their position before their subjects, and by doing so they may have acquired a taste for local ways (Quirke 2007, 136-137). The Pharaonic display of power would certainly leave an impression on foreign visitors and envoys, who would report about it back in their homelands.

As in the previous two chapters, the second section here (4.2) is devoted to the context, with a description of rulership in the Egyptian and Aegean ambits. The discussion

ranges across the underlying ideological premises (as far as we can understand them), the development of the state, its organisation, and the legitimation and promotion of power among the various levels of society. In the sections that follow I examine how links with the outside world could be used to reinforce the idea of the special status of the monarch, the elite, and other emerging groups. This can be achieved in several ways (e.g. Helms 1988, 264). The most straightforward one consists in exploiting contacts and trade with exotic lands, especially by monopolising some rare commodities. There are, moreover, less “materialistic” ways in which the external world can provide a source of legitimation: elites belonging to different polities can share a common culture, with the implication that members of the ruling groups consider themselves closer to their peers abroad than to the lower classes in their own kingdom; a possible example is the “International Style” mentioned above. Besides, the elite could promote its position by emphasising important foreign connections, such as a dynastic link with a powerful or prestigious polity, or some kind of acknowledgement from it. These two forms of display of power could be aimed at different audiences, possibly with variations in their form and emphasis: to the elite itself, to the subject population, and to the outside world.

Sections 4.3, 4.4, and 4.5 discuss the use of certain imported goods both as status symbols and as assets in the pursuit of prestige and legitimation. The main question I address is whether the distribution of these commodities, together with the archaeological contexts and any local imitations, may provide clues for a particular role of Egypt in Aegean ideologies of power, and vice-versa. The reasons behind some choices are probably understood better by focusing on their context in the receiving society (Burns 2010a, 2-3; 9), but a consideration of the value and significance of these motifs and artefacts in the lands from which they originate may also be valuable. Inevitably, I have had to select one specific commodity for each one of the areas/periods discussed: Egyptian stone vessels for Neo-Palatial Crete; Egyptian luxury items in Mycenae; and Aegean and Aegeanising pottery in Egypt.

Less tangible modes of exploitation of links with other polities are discussed in 4.6, together with the possibility of deeper influences on the ideology and practice of power. Finally (4.7), as I have done in the previous chapters, I attempt to draw some general conclusions and to present a diachronic picture. The ways in which the political entities in question changed through time are as meaningful as their regional diversification, but to build an historical narrative with the available material seems beyond what can currently

be achieved. My aim is to single out some possible patterns of interaction and to relate them to local circumstances and to the general situation of the relevant periods.

4.2. RULERSHIP IN EGYPT AND THE AEGEAN

4.2.1. EGYPT

The Egyptian monarchy provides the logical starting point for discussion on account of its greater antiquity and continuity as compared with the Aegean ruling systems. The relative abundance of written sources, moreover, means that we know more about the Egyptian rulers than about their Minoan and Mycenaean counterparts; finally, Egypt exerted a significant influence both on the Bronze Age polities of the Near East (above, 4.1), and in historical Greece (below, 4.6). As in the chapter devoted to medicine (2) the task is to understand whether such influence extended beyond the geographical borders of the former, and the chronological limits of the latter.

The civilisation of ancient Egypt was “primary” or “pristine” “in the sense that its institutions do not appear to have been shaped by “substantial dependence upon or control by other, more complex societies” (Trigger 2003, 29). In principle there could only be one king (*nswt*) at a time (e.g. Baines 1999b, 17), ideally entitled to rule over the whole world; different expressions were used when referring to foreign leaders. The king was also described as “Perfect God” (*ntr nfr*), and “Lord of the Two Lands” (*nb t3wy*), indicating respectively his divine role and his political power (which, however, were not neatly separated; see below). Although the first continuous texts about kingship only appear at a later stage, there is evidence for continuity since the late Fourth millennium B.C. (Baines 1995, 6; Redford 1995, 181). This does not mean that the Egyptian monarchy did not undergo significant changes throughout its three thousand year history (e.g. Silverman 1991, 58-87).

Political power was not originally separated from the sacred sphere, and many of the state’s resources, through the king’s actions, were directed towards religious activity. The king had the duty to preserve both social and cosmic order (*m3ʿt*; e.g. Baines & Yoffee 1998, 206). Since the king incarnated the well-being of Egypt and the whole cosmos, he was never depicted as old or weak (3.6.2); pharaohs lucky enough to live into their thirtieth year of reign started to periodically perform the Sed, a ritual aimed at the renewal of their own energies (Gohary 1992, 1-3; Assmann 2002, 57). Renewal was also an element of the Opet festival, which included a symbolic renewed accession of the king. The latter would

receive the “breath of life” from the gods, and then proceed to pass to his subjects (Baines 1999b, 22-23).

Female rulers (Troy 1986) were considered an exception, and scholars often tend to associate them with periods of instability, since kingship was supposed to be an eternal institution passed from father to son – although, due to phases of dynastic turmoil, the idea of direct filiation was not to be interpreted literally (Redford 1995, 158-159). Kingship, like the sun, was assumed to renew itself in an endless sequence of cycles. The king was endowed with a special divine power, but only inasmuch as the divinity descended into his body – as it did with cult statues in the temples (Hornung 1967): before his enthronement, the king was a mere mortal. Accounts of the divine birth of the king have been explained as an attempt to reconcile the king’s alleged divine nature with the fact that his physical birth did not differ from that of any other human being (below, 4.6.3). He was also a military commander, and an ill or old king was generally replaced by his heir apparent during a campaign. The burial rites for a king’s predecessor were a necessary step in legitimation: the transmission of power across generations ideally mirrored the renewal experienced during a king’s Sed festival. The new king was associated with Horus and the deceased one was associated with Osiris (e.g. Assmann 2001, 502), thus perpetuating a line believed to date back to mythical times, and upon which cosmic order depended.

In territorial states, as opposed to city-states, a larger region is ruled “through a multileveled hierarchy of provincial and local administrators in a corresponding hierarchy of administrative centres” (Trigger 2003, 92). The unification of the Egyptian state was probably preceded by the emergence of an elite characterised by both a common cultural identity (Baines 2007, 117) and an awareness of its own role. High officials were all members of a same group and were often expected to serve in different administrative districts (nomes) in the course of their career. At least in theory, posts were granted according to personal merit instead of being hereditary; prominent individuals might claim to have emerged from a lowly position only by means of their own skills, but they were still part of a very restricted group, within which literacy was confined (Baines 2007, 52). While originally priesthood, bureaucracy and the military lacked specialised officers, the New Kingdom saw the appearance of professional priests and soldiers. A telling indicator of the elite’s ideological subordination to the king is provided by the “cautiousness” of its members in the so-called “royal tales” (*Königsnovelle*): the only mover of the action is the king with his daring decisions (e.g. Loprieno 1996). The elite’s exploitation of high culture can be considered a general feature of all civilisations (Baines 2007, 28). Although the

Egyptian monarchy as an institution needed no justification, individual holders would need to appear worthy of their position.

4.2.2 THE AEGEAN: PRELIMINARY CONSIDERATIONS: THE LIMITS OF THE SOURCES AND THE PROBLEM OF “DIFFUSIONISM”

The nature of the governing systems of the prehistoric Aegean is largely unknown. In Minoan Crete we have to rely on the archaeological evidence alone, while the information provided by the Linear B archives is also affected by many limitations (e.g. Halstead 1992, 62; Bendall 2007, 268). Scholars have often tried to compensate for these difficulties by looking at later sources such as the Homeric poems, but the latter describe a reality of its own that results from the combination of a range of influences, so that it would be better to leave them outside a discussion on Late Bronze Age society (*contra* Shear 2004). Since, as I describe below, state-formation in the Aegean has often been linked to an influence from Egypt and the other civilisations of the Near East, the emergence of the Minoan and Mycenaean polities deserves some special attention in the present discussion.

The first significant difference between Egypt and the Minoan-Mycenaean world is that the states of the prehistoric Aegean are conventionally described as “secondary”: when the first major polities appeared, the region had already been in contact with “pristine” civilisations with more complex political institutions (Fried 1967, 240-242). Secondary civilisations “frequently display combinations of features that would not have been present at the same time had these civilisations not developed under the influence or tutelage of more advanced neighbours” (Trigger 2003, 29). This distinction, however, may not do justice to the diversity of the social and environmental contexts in which the early Aegean states appeared (Schoep & Tomkins 2012, 5). Moreover, in the case of Crete there is a significant debate on how far the emergence of the Minoan palaces should be interpreted as a “secondary” phenomenon. During the first half of the 20th century it was assumed that Egypt and the Near East exerted a powerful influence that contributed to shape the Cretan palatial states in terms of ideology, institutions, and administration (e.g. *PoM* I, 19), an approach that has never been totally abandoned (e.g. Watrous 1994, esp. 749-753). Later works, however, tend to emphasise a more “indigenous” perspective for the rise of the Minoan palaces (Renfrew 1972; Bennet & Galaty 1997, 84-87). According to Keith Branigan (1988, 247), the creation of the palatial civilisation in Crete “owed little to foreign influence and nothing to foreign migrants”, since there is “sufficient evidence of social and economic development through the Early Bronze Age to seek the origin of the

palatial system in Crete itself". Similar positions may be due at least in part due to general trends in archaeological interpretation in Aegean archaeology (as discussed in 1.2.1), as a consequence of which external factors are commonly downplayed.

More recently, attempts have been made to find a compromise between these two positions (e.g. Schoep 2006). In particular, it has been suggested that the development of Minoan and Aegean political entities was strongly affected both by the structure of the local social systems preceding state-formation, and by on-going contacts with larger polities that had attained a greater degree of complexity centuries or millennia earlier, and had also changed significantly since their initial formation. Like many compromises, such "intermediate" perspectives may spiral into non-sequiturs, since they could be used to keep both possibilities open without adding much to the discussion. Nevertheless, I believe that if treated cautiously they may help us to understand the impact of foreign contacts on early Aegean societies without failing to appreciate the latter's originality. I would like to stress once more that, even when external influences can be recognised, they had to fit into an existing (and constantly changing) local context. Gaps in knowledge should not mislead us into assuming that the "foreign" elements simply filled a vacuum.

The first states in the Aegean appeared in Crete in the Middle Bronze Age, during the cultural phase conventionally defined Proto-palatial (MM IB-MM II, ca. 1900-1700 B.C.). Complex polities in the mainland followed a few centuries later, between the late MH III and the LH I periods (ca. 1700-1600 B.C.). In order to understand both local innovations and those that are thought to have come from abroad, it is useful to stress some elements of internal continuity since the earlier times. For a long time, the Aegean Neolithic was seen as a period of continuity and stagnation. On a closer scrutiny, however, it emerges that several relevant features began to develop during this phase (Tomkins 2004, 55-56): craft specialisation (e.g. Branigan 1983, 23; Tomkins 2004, 52); competitive pursuit of status (e.g. Halstead 1999, 90); and contacts on an interregional level (e.g. Day & Tomkins 2001, 259). It is important to emphasise the early appearance of these traits, all of which are relevant to the issues discussed here. However, other aspects such as urbanism and core-periphery relationships were still to come (Tomkins 2010, 34-35).

Another major difference from Egypt (and several other major Bronze Age kingdoms) is the smaller size of the Aegean polities and the political fragmentation of the territory (e.g. Koehl 1995, 28). Moreover, the "redistributive" model of Near-Eastern economies probably did not apply to the Aegean as closely as has been previously assumed (Schoep 2010, 114; Steele 2008, esp. 34 and 46; below, 4.2.4) the resources controlled by

Minoan and Mycenaean palaces, for instance, were deliberately selected: an example could be the preference for wild olive instead of the domesticated variety in Knossos, the former being more suitable for industrial use (Melena 1983). Notwithstanding these common traits, however, there was also a great degree of variation within the Aegean.

4.2.3 CRETE

Traditionally, the rise of a distinctively “Minoan” culture has been dated to the transition between the Neolithic and the Early Minoan period (Betancourt 1999, 36-38). The Early Minoan, on the other hand, has often been regarded as a period of simplicity “both in organisation and technology” (Cherry 1983, 33), with a settlement pattern of “straightforward farming villages with no systematic variation in size between them” (Renfrew 1972, 52). The emergence of Palatial society is generally explained in two ways: either with slow developments starting in EM II (i.e. *before* 2,200 B.C.; e.g. Branigan 1988, 247-249), or with a sudden increase in complexity in MM IB (e.g. Watrous 2001, 175).

The first states on the island mark the beginning of the Proto-Palatial. They coincide with the development of a centralised organisation, focused around a palace with several functions (Cherry 1986, 27). Minoan palaces are often believed to mark the transition between “egalitarian” societies and more complex, hierarchical and state-like entities (Schoep 2010, 114). Nevertheless, our limited understanding of the earlier phases could trick us into overemphasising the breadth and speed of such changes. It appears that in the Neolithic settlement of Phaistos some buildings were arranged in order to form large open spaces, possibly intended for hosting communal activities such as ceremonies involving ritualised commensality (Todaro & Di Tonto 2008, 187-188). It has also been suggested that the non-hierarchical nature of Prepalatial Cretan society contributed to a “corporate” organisation of the Minoan palaces (Galaty & Parkinson 2007, 118-119) and a more “corporate” social identity (Tomkiss 2012, 72). In corporate political strategies power “is shared across different groups and sectors of society in such a way as to inhibit exclusionary strategies”, and ideological and behavioural restrictions preclude the ruler or ruling group from monopolising the sources of power (Blanton et al. 1996, 2). Yet, one cannot help wondering whether such an “egalitarian” picture of Minoan society is due – as is often the case with allegedly “ruler-less” societies – to the lack of written and iconographic sources: hierarchy can be detected archaeologically, but the full complexity of the picture can easily elude us. Perhaps the study of how external elements were

selected, introduced and modified may also provide a different perspective on the evolution of the local society and institutions.

The use of the word “palace”, so meaningful for the cultural periodisation of prehistoric Crete, is itself a matter of convention (Driessen 2002, 1). Minoan palaces were arranged around a large central court flanked by storage facilities, residential quarters, and a variety of cult rooms. Such courts were the most important feature of Minoan palaces, probably reflecting the local ideology of power, and perhaps also cosmological beliefs (Driessen 2004, 75). The activities which took place in them are likely to have served to reinforce the sense of a common identity among those who had access to them – as we have seen, some social institutions might date back to the Neolithic. The later palace of Knossos displays a more elaborate planning compared to earlier complexes (Demargne 1964, 117), and its structure may reflect a greater emphasis on hierarchy.

Large tombs with multiple inhumations are attested for Pre-palatial times, of both the tholos and the house type. The development of these practices may result from an increasing degree of social competition (Soles 1988), and maybe also from an emerging political importance of lineages. Settlement patterns and other features, however, show little to substantiate the idea of an increasing hierarchy between sites, or of political and economical centralisation (Haggis 1999, 64-65). During the Neo-Palatial palaces grow in size, complexity, and decoration, suggesting that more resources were flowing to the palace as the result of a more centralised authority (Dabney & Wright 1990, 46-47).

The lack of clearly recognisable iconography related to rulers in Crete has puzzled scholars for a long time, and is possibly linked to the character of Minoan society (e.g. E. N. Davis 1995, 19). Evans’ concept of a “priest-king” was probably influenced by earlier studies of other Near Eastern societies (E. N. Davis 1995, 11) and largely depended upon his reconstruction of the relief fresco known as the “Prince of the lilies” (*PoM* II, 775-794). This restoration, however, has been proved to be wrong (e.g. Niemeier 1987), so that it is impossible to decide in either sense. A compromise between the “priest-king” concept and the posited (relatively) “egalitarian” nature of Minoan society has also been proposed (Koehl 1995, 34-35), perhaps with the Minoan ruler (male or female) as a “god impersonator”; Nanno Marinatos (1995, 46-48) has suggested that the “divine lineage” of the kings was passed through the goddess/queen, but the lack of written sources confines such hypotheses to the realm of speculation.

To summarise what can be said so far, recent scholarship tends to emphasise the long timespan during which the features associated with Cretan palatial society were developed,

since the end of the Neolithic to MM I (ca. 3000-1850 B.C.). The introduction of foreign elements thus took place in an environment that was subject to changes across time; such new elements, however, could in turn affect the speed, nature and scale of these changes.

4.2.4 THE MAINLAND

Although it is generally acknowledged that Neo-Palatial Crete had a major influence on the emerging Mycenaean states, there was also a strong cultural continuity within the mainland (Shelton 2010, 141; see Wright 2004, 116-118 for chronological phases). It was not until MH III, however, that major permanent changes took place (Dickinson 1989, 133). The relatively small-scale communities populating the Greek mainland underwent deep transformations, leading to the development of a stronger social stratification. The Shaft Graves in Mycenae epitomise the main features of the period: greater resources were invested in mortuary practices, “international” trade intensified, and a new emphasis may have been placed on kinship groups (Cavanagh & Mee 1998, 34). The two shaft grave circles, albeit dating to the end of the MH, clearly marked the start of a new era (Mee 2010, 284).

The most distinctive aspect of these palaces is that they present a highly hierarchical structure, being organised around a central complex consisting of a megaron, that is, a large square hall with a hearth flanked by four columns, with its antechamber and a porch (Hitchcock 2010, 203). This “nucleus” is surrounded by smaller courts, residential and administrative quarters, and storerooms. It is easy to detect differences from the “agglutinative” structure of the earlier Minoan palaces. It is generally accepted that the megaron provided a throne room for a male ruler, and several bases for such thrones have been found. Thrones in the Minoan palaces, by contrast, have generally been seen as a later (Mycenaean) addition (e.g. Rehak 1995, 99-100).

We know that the ruler in Mycenaean societies was called *wa-na-ka*, *wanax* (later Greek ἄναξ; Carlier 1984 44-98), a word used with the meaning of “king” in the Homeric poems; in Classical times it was only employed in relation to a god (Palaima 1995, 123). Linear B tablets mentioning a *wanax* (always in the singular) mostly come from Pylos, where eleven such documents (plus one sealing) have been found; one further instance comes from Thebes, and one from Knossos (Palaima 1995, 131). The importance of the *wanax* is suggested by the fact that, according to a tablet, his land tenure (*temenos*) is three times bigger than that of the *lawagetes* (PY Er 312), usually considered the second highest rank in Mycenaean society (e.g. Carlier 1984, 107). One problem concerns the mentions of

Aegean rulers in the Egyptian texts, such as the “Great ones of Keftiu” (3.3.2): how are we to relate them with the titles used in the archives?

The actual role and prerogatives of the *wanax* are quite obscure. The Mycenaean palatial system might result from the emergence of a single, more powerful figure over local chieftains (*qa-si-re-u*, *basileus*; Carlier 1984, 108-116). It has been suggested that Mycenaean kingship conformed to a supposed Indo-European model (C. G. Thomas 1976), but this assumption may be tautological: the presence of “Indo-European” elements can be – and has often been – inferred without supporting evidence other than the a priori belief in an Indo-European origin of Mycenaean kingship (Palaima 1995, 121). Moreover, Mycenaean kingship as it is known from the texts may have developed after the Shaft Grave Period, since the archives are a few centuries later (Rehak 1995, 115-116; Palaima 1995, 125). Only once does a tablet state that the king appoints an officer (PY Ta 711; Carlier 1984, 98-99); we know, however, that he controlled the palatial industry (Shelmerdine 2008, 92). The archives also mention the involvement of the palace in judicial affairs (e.g. PY Ep 704; Shelmerdine 2008, 92-93). Also unclear are relations between the ruler and the sacred (Palaima 1995, 121). The iconographic evidence is even more elusive than the Linear B sources. This may be due in part to the absence of representations of rulers in Minoan and Mycenaean art (E. N. Davis 1995, 18), or to our inability to recognise them.

Mycenaean elites were involved in several activities aimed at promoting their own power, such as the organisation of feasts (e.g. Hamilakis 2008, 12; Collard 2008 61-62) and control of the acquisition and distribution of exotic goods, including raw materials. The upper echelons of Mycenaean society were associated with the palaces, and there is almost no evidence for what we would now call a “middle class”. Palace economies were largely based on a redistribution of specific resources through a palace-level mobilisation (Halstead 1992, 108-109; 2007). Such palace-controlled resources were strictly selected but included all luxury craft production (although lack of information in the Linear B record cannot be automatically taken as evidence for lack of palatial involvement; Killen 1985, 243; Bendall 2007, 276-277). The economic role of religious institutions is another debated subject (e.g. Lupack 2007; Bendall 2007).

The Early Mycenaean period also features the emergence of wealthy groups. Archaeologically, their prosperity is manifested in the rich burial gifts, often including weapons and imported objects. Tholos tombs, which originated in Messenia at the end of the MH (Voutsaki 1998), were designed to be reopened for new burials of related

individuals. Chamber tombs have a similar layout, but in LH III became much more common and were likely used by a wider cross-section of society (Cavanagh & Mee 1998, 65-79).

4.3 EGYPTIAN STONE VESSELS IN CRETE: KNOSSOS AND BEYOND

4.3.1 TRADE AND IDEOLOGY

I now move away from generic considerations of kingship, and focus on some case studies aiming to clarify the role of foreign connections and possible external influences in the local ideologies of power. This section and the following two are devoted to specific exotic commodities and explore their role in the competition for prestige among local elites. My main goal is to assess whether the typology and distribution of the Egyptian exotica in the Aegean can reveal something about the status of Egypt in the local ideologies of power, and whether something similar can be said about Aegean artefacts from Egypt.

The structure of commercial exchanges can be heavily influenced by political and ideological dynamics (Burns 2010b, 291), and the pre-classical Mediterranean seems to have been no exception in this regard (Bevan 2007, 21). Archaeologically recovered remains of exchange may therefore provide evidence relating to both ideology and politics (e.g. Renfrew 1975, 4). The split between modern (“rational”) and pre-modern (“ideologically driven”) economies, however, should be treated with caution (Bloch & Parry 1989, 7-8): by overestimating the “rationality” of our system, we risk overemphasising the “irrational” (i.e. ideological) aspects of those systems which do not conform to our own standards.

The ability to acquire foreign goods and to regulate their distribution was an important instrument in defining the position of a ruling group (Helms 1988, 264; 1993; Burns 2010a, 2). However, evaluating the distribution of imported objects in their ports of entry and beyond raises several problems. A first relevant question is when these exotic items were originally imported: valuable objects may have been acquired across an extended period, provided that the appreciation for them did not wane through time. It is possible that, after arriving in the Aegean, some Egyptian artefacts continued to be traded or exchanged for several generations, in a scenario reminiscent of the precious gifts that Homeric heroes gave to each other as tokens of friendship and hospitality (Finley 1977, 120-123). Otherwise, these exotica may have been stored as heirlooms for an indefinite period. Perhaps some of them were kept among other valuable items listed in Linear B

documents, such as banqueting paraphernalia (e.g. Killen 1998; Bendall 2007, 74). Despite these complications, some preliminary assumptions can be made: when exotica clearly dated to a particular period – such as objects inscribed with the name of a specific Egyptian monarch – are particularly abundant in a foreign location, it may be safe to presume that they were imported during a relatively short time span, and not long after they were crafted (Burns 2010a, 20; I come back below (4.5) to the issue of whether such inscribed imports had a particular significance in their new environment).

A second problem concerns the identity of the traders: we know of both state- and temple-sponsored trade in Egypt, but there are reasons to believe that there was also foreign trade on a private scale (e.g. Merrillees 1973); and this is likely to be the case for Egyptian goods which were already ancient at the time, supposedly obtained from burials (Phillips 2008 I, 43-44). It is unclear whether overseas trade in the Aegean was at least partly controlled by the local palaces, as has been proposed for some Near Eastern polities (e.g. Alexiou 1987, 251). For the Mycenaean period, the lack of Linear B documents related to external trade has been explained by positing that this activity only ran on a sub-palatial level (Killen 1985, 266-267). This view, however, has been questioned, since Linear B texts lack references to commodities and activities which we know were part of the Mycenaean palatial life (above, 4.2.4): the texts therefore do not cover the full range of what was done (Bendall 2007, 274-290). Another possibility is that records dealing with trade simply did not survive by sheer accident (Shelmerdine 1985, 139). Whatever the explanation for the lack of written references, it is probably more appropriate to think that Mycenaean trade, and Late Bronze Age trade in general, could function on several levels (e.g. Wiener 1987, 263-264). The acquisition of foreign goods in the great Mycenaean centres might have been regulated by privileged groups, but whether, and in what ways, such activity was supervised by palatial authority is difficult to assess.

Moreover, the possibility of an independent commerce on a smaller scale should not be rejected either (Renfrew 1975, 48-51). Cline (1995a, 149) suggests ethnographic comparisons for crews trading with commoners while their captains were dealing with the local chiefs. The contexts in which the objects were found may help to understand such dynamics. Exotica found mainly in palatial contexts, or concentrated in a few major centres, might have been subject to some kind of palatial monopoly and even if this was not the case, palaces and their elites would simply be a magnet for certain commodities because they could afford to pay better. The presence of some of these objects outside palatial centres can also be explained in several ways. A surplus could be sent elsewhere as

a gift, or exchanged with something else. Besides, merchants who had no direct connection with the palaces may have been able to trade certain items more lucratively in different locations. While palaces would provide a privileged market for luxury exotica on account of their wealth, they are also likely to have had a “negative” role: they would have regulated the circulation of exotica not only by acquiring and trading specific goods, but also by rejecting other types of imports that would consequently have been marketed in other, presumably less wealthy contexts. The distribution of the imports could then be indicative both of the elites’ likes and of its dislikes, besides revealing a distinct pattern of centralisation and control over foreign commodities.

As I try to make clear in the introduction (1.7), the same artefact or assemblage of artefacts can be used to explore specific issues, without denying its potential relevance in relation to other questions. In the present section I focus on the geographical and, to a lesser extent, topographic distribution of the Egyptian stone vessels in Knossos and other Aegean sites. An item appreciated for its exotic provenance is not necessarily devoid of practical functions, which need not be the same as it would have had in its land of origin. A functional approach, however, might provide a problematic starting point. Chronological uncertainties mentioned above mean that we cannot exclude a shift in use through time, which is especially likely for containers. Local reworking is our only clear indicator that these items were to be used differently than in Egypt; such alterations are a typically Minoan feature, affecting a high percentage of the imported vessels (Phillips 2008 I, 80).

Objects of foreign origin are attested in large numbers only in a handful of Aegean sites, notably Knossos, Mycenae and Tiryns. The most likely explanation for this pattern is that overseas trade was limited to just a few specific points of entry (or gathering), from which just a fraction of the exotica would proceed to further destinations (T. R. Smith 1987, 63). Differences in provenance and distribution are significant among the exotica found in these major centres (Cline 2009, 86-87). Tiryns and its surroundings are rich in Cypriot material but have few Egyptian objects (Hirschfeld 1990), while a remarkable quantity of west Asiatic seals has been found in Thebes (Porada 1981; Cline 2009, 25-26). Various reasons can be put forward to explain such variation, including the obvious fact that some kinds of imports are unlikely to leave traces in the archaeological record. This invisibility may account for the apparent disproportion between the Mycenaean pottery found in Cyprus and the comparatively modest Cypriote imports in mainland Greece; the latter probably consisting largely of raw or perishable materials that have not survived (Cline 2009, 60-63). Among the other scenarios that can be proposed are complex patterns

of trading networks, which would make it more convenient to keep some goods on the market while storing others. Moreover, interest in products with certain recognisable geographical origins could have been lacking. This option is particularly relevant for assessing the ideological value of the imported Aegyptiaca.

Notwithstanding the many uncertainties about the use of the items I discuss, I begin with some remarks on their significance in their lands of origin, with a special focus on the material out of which they were made. If vessels carved in a particular stone could only be obtained from Egypt, for instance, it is difficult to prove that the interest in their geographical provenance outweighed appreciation of the material itself. In turn, the demand for a material exclusively available from one land or polity could also be linked to the prestige and importance attributed to the latter: was anorthosite gneiss (below) appreciated because it was unique, because it was Egyptian, or because it was uniquely Egyptian? Once more, there is a strong risk of falling into circular arguments.

After discussing the original context of specific exotica, the next step is to see whether there are examples of similar imports before the period under consideration (in this section, Neo-Palatial Knossos); this could help to recognise any continuity with the trading patterns of the previous centuries, as well as features resulting from particular circumstances, for example an increased importance of Egypt following its military achievements in the Levant at the outset of the 18th Dynasty.

After contextualising the issue from a diachronic point of view, I compare the presence of the selected exotica with that of other imported items during the same period, finally addressing the main issue: what was the proportion between these exotica in the major centres vis-à-vis their distribution in the rest of the region? Is there any difference in shape and material between the specimens which were kept in their port of entry and those which proceeded to farther destinations? And if so, do these differences also affect any known local imitations? Were these objects forwarded to minor centres as a part of a strategy of trade and exchange, or did they reach them because in the main centres there was no interest for them? A comparison with the distribution of the same exotica in other lands may also help to recognise their ideological role and the strategic use of local trade as a source of prestige.

4.3.2 STONE VESSELS IN EGYPT AND CRETE

The abundance of Egyptian stone vessels in Knossos would suggest that many (probably most) of the specimens found in other sites passed through there before being traded to

further Aegean locations or being sent there as gifts. In describing the production, circulation, consumption and meaning of Egyptian and Cretan stone vessels, my aim is to gain an understanding of whether, besides a generic “exotic allure”, there may have been other reasons why these objects should be imported to Crete, and in certain cases imitated locally. A discussion of stone vessels both in Egypt and the Aegean, for instance, may provide some evidence for shared practices in displaying elite status that would explain a preference for certain shapes. More manifest sources of value are the materials from which these objects were made: hard stones were in themselves charged with worth and prestige, as they required advanced skills and a specialised technology only accessible to a few workshops. The possibility to acquire particular stones (as well as other raw goods) was often a source of status (Bevan 2007, 53). A short résumé of the history of stone vessel carving in Egypt and Crete is therefore valuable for a better understanding of trade and diffusion of this class of objects.

Egypt provides more information about Bronze Age stone vessel production than any other Mediterranean civilisation. By the Late Predynastic, the simple shapes of the earliest Egyptian specimens had been replaced by more complex ones, thanks to the development of increasingly effective suites of tools specialised for softer or harder stones (Bevan 2007, 54-55). By the 1st Dynasty, stone vessels become part of a strategy of elite display that is archaeologically visible in the mortuary realm (Bevan 2007, 64). Hard stones from the Eastern desert were used in royal and elite workshops, while a “less prestigious” alternative was provided by travertine and vessels made from several joining pieces (Bevan 2007 64-65). The importance of these containers as status markers seems to have decreased during the Old Kingdom, perhaps also as a result of the diffusion of metal vessels (Bevan 2007, 74; see, however, Baines 2007, 264). In elite graves, the original objects are often replaced by ritual sets and smaller cosmetic containers (Bevan 2007, 64-67; 74). Pottery too was used as a sub-elite substitute for metal vases (below, 4.5); it is not surprising that less favoured groups would seek alternatives for luxury products of limited availability, but it could be interesting to see whether there were some shared trends in different geographical areas. Stone vessels, however, continued to be used in the royal funerary context (e.g. Jéquier 1934). There is no indication of a loss of technical skills among Middle Kingdom artisans, and the social roles established for these objects do not seem to wane: their function as containers, however, increases to the detriment of that as tableware. Travertine remains the most common material, but Andrew Bevan (2007, 54-55; 100-101) remarks that sizes and shapes are much more varied than before. A problem inevitably

arises when trying to understand whether vases used during the Second Intermediate Period were produced according to conservative tastes, or whether older specimens were reused. The first stone vessels in the Aegean appear in the Cyclades, where they were produced using marble or sandstone already during the Final Neolithic; however, they do not appear in Crete before EM IIA (Warren 1965). Cretan artisans were originally able to work only with soft stones, mainly chlorite (Warren 1969, 182); the consistency of known examples suggests that the number of workshops was limited, and they may have been located in the Mesara-Asterousia region (Bevan 2007, 85). More advanced techniques appeared in later Pre-palatial times (Renfrew 1972, 326-332), making it possible to work harder stones as well. Although it is difficult to understand how the internal trade in such artefacts functioned, some patterns have been proposed, and these seem to have continued into the 2nd millennium (Bevan 2007, 90-91). Proto-Palatial vessels were rather uniform in shape and material (mostly serpentinite), but the artisans' increased familiarity with different techniques provided the basis for some innovations (Phillips 2008 I, 41). An important question is whether there was a link between these vessels and Minoan funerary and mortuary rituals, but it is difficult to draw specific conclusions about such practices. Significantly, such artefacts are attested in settlements of very different social levels, from palace centres to smaller centres (Bevan 2007, 115-116). During the Neo-Palatial, stone vessel manufacture spreads to secondary sites. Serpentinite vessels are still the most common variety, apparently passed down the generations as heirlooms. The funerary record, however, is very limited. More elaborate vessels are concentrated in the larger towns, particularly in the palaces or among what seem to have been the higher levels of society. Some vessels exhibit remarkably elaborate features (Warren 1969, 161-163), and there is an increasing use of exotic materials. Apparently, vessels of superior quality, which feature only in a few contexts such as palaces, were particularly appreciated in the north and in the east of Crete. They appear prominently in iconography, and although their symbolism escapes us, these objects may have been used in religious rituals (Bevan 2007, 120-124). Their production began to decline in LM II. Final- and Post-Palatial developments need not concern us here.

4.3.3 EARLIER IMPORTS OF EGYPTIAN STONE VESSELS IN CRETE, AND LOCAL IMITATIONS (EM IIA – MM IA)

Bevan (2003, 57) has described the exchange and consumption of Egyptian goods in the Aegean as being structured by “period-specific priorities and parameters”. This means that, although considering earlier exchanges may help to highlight possible patterns, it is important to avoid the temptation of a “chronological flattening” between the different epochs.

Several of the supposedly Egyptian stone vessels from Pre-Palatial Crete come from archaeologically doubtful contexts (Phillips 2008 I, 40). An obsidian rim from a secure EM IIA stratum is generally considered the earliest datable example (Warren 1981b, 633-635), but, there are doubts on whether it really is of Egyptian origin, since obsidian was rarely used for vessels during the Old Kingdom (Bevan 2003, 58). More examples appear in the later phases of the Pre-Palatial, with some possible local imitations; the only imported specimen from outside Knossos is a pyxis from Aghia Triadha (Phillips 2008 II, 22), but it too may be local (Lilyquist 1995, 13 no. 85). The material in which these earlier Egyptian vessels in Crete were carved was certainly an important feature: artefacts in hard stones are particularly likely to have been highly appreciated, since local items were only made of softer stones. By MM IA (ca.2100-1900 B.C.), it becomes possible to detect a manifest Egyptian influence on Cretan stone vessels (Bevan 2007, 94). The most relevant example of Pre-palatial imitation of Egyptian models is provided by a group of at least six “cylinder jars” from a pair of tombs in the Mesara, neither of which is later than MM I. The jars’ shape was apparently inspired by prototypes of the First Intermediate Period to Middle Kingdom (Bevan 2003, 59). They may have been used as containers for oil destined for the dead or may have been employed during funerary rites, but our ignorance of the Pre-Palatial burial customs prevents any conclusions in this direction (Phillips 2008 I, 41). Moreover, there was possibly an increasingly competitive display of status in the funerary context, as was the case in Egypt (although most clearly in much earlier periods). I agree with those who believe that, until MM I at least, contacts between Crete and Egypt were mainly by way of Byblos or other Levantine ports; trade in stone vessels would be no exception in this regard (Sparks 2003, 52). It would be valuable to consider how closely the consumption of these items in Byblos resembled that on Crete, in order to acknowledge an inspiration by Egypt’s Asiatic neighbours. This could improve our understanding of how Minoan and Mycenaean perceptions of and attitudes towards Egypt developed autonomously or were influenced by those in the Levant (4.3.6). The character of the

relationship between Egypt and the Aegean possibly fluctuated over time, and phases of mediated contacts would surely differ from those of direct trade and exchange.

Whatever the importance of Egyptian vessels in Pre-Palatial times, it seems that there was no great continuity with the later Proto-Palatial. Evidence that these objects were still being imported during this period is scarce and often unclear (Bevan 2003, 65-66), and no specimens have been found in minor settlements (Phillips 2008 I, 41). Nevertheless, evidence of other kinds suggests that trade between Crete and Egypt still existed (e.g. Warren 1995, 2-5), so that scenarios other than an interruption of contacts should be considered. First, Egyptian stone vessels could have continued to be imported, but they have been found in later contexts (or contexts which have been wrongly dated to a later period). This is what Phillips (2008 I, 41-42) suggests about the anorthosite gneiss bowls discussed below (4.3.5) and possibly some other vessels from Knossos. Another possibility is that they had ceased to be a valuable trading item in Crete, due to “an apparent Cretan dislike for the most popular contemporary Egyptian shape” (Bevan 2007, 119). A loss of interest in Egyptian vessels need not have been motivated by aesthetic features, and there are several possible explanations for it, such as a waning in the prestige attributed to their land of origin while the latter was in a period of turmoil. A more pragmatic explanation might be that it was more profitable to trade them elsewhere: if we compare the diffusion of Egyptian stone vessels in Crete and the Levant, we note that, while they are rare in Crete during the Proto-Palatial (MM IB-II, ca. 1900-1700 B.C.), they increase significantly in the apparently roughly contemporary Middle Bronze IIA Levant (together with other Egyptian imports). If the demand in the Levant was not saturated, there might have been no reason to trade these objects to more distant locations.

4.3.4 OVERSEAS IMPORTS IN NEO-PALATIAL KNOSSOS: AN OVERVIEW

In the previous section I mentioned that, notwithstanding the scarcity of vessels of indisputably Egyptian origin in Proto-Palatial Crete, there is no shortage of imported exotica, proving that contacts with Egypt continued. Before discussing the Egyptian stone vessels in MM III-LM I Knossos, it is useful to put them in context by describing two other kinds of imports found in Knossian Neo-Palatial contexts: Egyptian imports other than stone-vessels; and exotica of non-Egyptian origin. This may help us to determine if the Egyptian stone vessels enjoyed a particular popularity during this phase. In discussing these artefacts, I rely largely on Cline’s (2009) and Phillips’ (2008) catalogues.

A male statuette (HM Λ 95; Fig. 4.1) found in the North-West central court (probably MM III or later, see Phillips 2008 II, 92-94 92-94) deserves some attention on account of its material, Egyptian anorthosite gneiss. This stone came from a single source in the Western Desert, and its extraction seems to have been a prerogative of royal expeditions (I. Shaw 1999). In Egypt this material was appreciated for its hardness: during the Old Kingdom, for instance, its use in statuary was largely confined to those of deities and royalty (Baines 2007, 272), and later examples may be due to the material being reused. Cretan artisans were aware of the importance of the hard stones used by their Egyptian colleagues: when imitating Egyptian originals, they often resorted to the hardest stones available to them, such as quartzite (Bevan 2003, 63; 68).

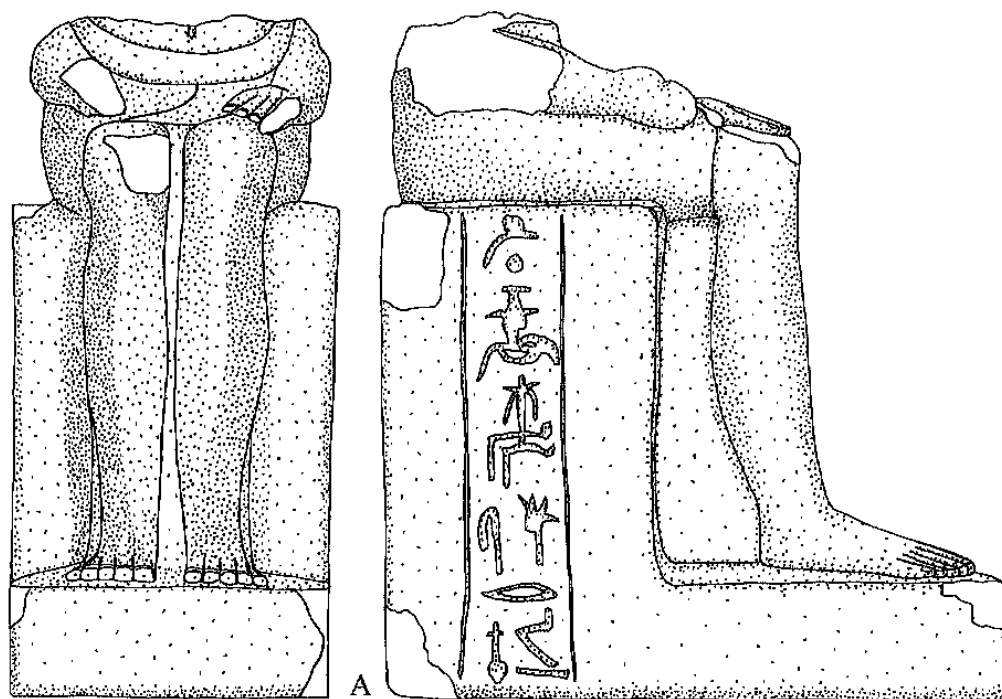


Fig. 4.1. Egyptian statuette. HM Λ 95. Anorthosite gneiss, H. 158 mm., W. 73 mm., D. 144 mm. Knossos, MM III-LM IIIA. After Phillips (2008 II, 320, fig. 158).

The most relevant set of non-stone Aegyptiaca found in Knossos are probably the fragments of several faience and Egyptian blue vessels from the LM IB workshop (or shrine) deposit on the north side of the Royal Road buildings; five of them are generally recognised as being of Egyptian manufacture (KSM RR/60/319 (182); KSM RR/60/136(a) (183); KSM RR/60/136(b) (184); KSM RR/60/302 (185); KSM RR/59?417 + RR /61/142 (193)), while seven more are only possibly Egyptian. Phillips (2008 I, 89) remarks that these two materials should not be discussed separately from glass; overall, for Neo-Palatial times imported faience and Egyptian blue vessels have only been found in Knossos, a

possible indication of limited accessibility (Phillips 2008 I, 96). It seems thus that, albeit not made of stone, such vessels were also “monopolised” by a limited group. Even if faience and Egyptian blue were both worked in Crete (e.g. Foster 1979), Egyptian shapes were not imitated on the island – contrary to what happened with some stone shapes. The fact that Cretan artisans made no attempt to copy Egyptian models may be accounted for in two opposite ways. On the one hand, it could be argued that the material alone was considered important, while the link with Egypt was not significant in itself: otherwise, we would expect there to be some local imitations. This, however, does not explain the presence of the Egyptian specimens in Crete, since it would be cheaper to produce these items in Crete than acquiring them from abroad – especially considering their fragility – unless the execution was outstandingly better. On the other hand, it is possible that the value of these objects was linked to their geographical origin, with no particular appreciation for their shape. Perhaps their more limited durability had something to do with the choice.

Almost all of the Egyptian vessels from MM III-LM IB context (ca. 1700-1460 B.C.) have been found in Knossos and its surroundings, where they are by far the most common kind of foreign imports (Phillips 2001, 73-74). During the Neo-Palatial period the only known “rival centres” are Phaistos and, to a lesser extent, Kato Zakro (Phillips 2008 I, 42, but see however n. 104; Cline 2009, xvii). According to Cline, out of 88 imports in LM I-II Crete, 67 are of Egyptian origin; 33 of the latter are from Knossos and 16 from the nearby “Royal Tomb” in Isopata (Cline 2009, tables 2; 3; 29). Of course, this may be due to chance, and it is not impossible that new discoveries could significantly alter this picture. Nevertheless, such a discrepancy in quantities between the Knossian specimens and those from other sites leaves little doubt as to the former’s role in the import of foreign objects during Neo-Palatial and early “Final-palatial” times (Phillips 2001, 88). What is particularly striking is that these exotica have seldom been found in nearby centres, an indication that, even those that had perhaps been imported in much earlier times, were jealously kept within the city.

A few additional remarks are required before discussing the vessels themselves. It has often been suggested that some of these objects (in particular, those with a closed shape) may have been originally used as containers for oils, perfumes, and other liquids, and that they were imported because of an interest in such contents (e.g. Phillips 2008 I, 79). Although I tend to discuss stone vessels as objects valuable for their own sake, my aim is not to argue that their content was necessarily without importance. If, however, these

vessels were only acquired because of the products they carried, they would not have been kept around as heirlooms or hoarded goods for decades or even for centuries. The same is true for antique Egyptian vessels imported centuries after their manufacture: why resort to such old artefacts for containers (Phillips 2001, 81)? Had they been discarded after their contents were consumed, we would expect them to be roughly contemporary with their archaeological context; as also happens today, a valuable product package could be kept and reused, being appreciated for its own sake or for an enduring association with a specific product.

4.3.5 THE VESSELS

The disproportion in Crete between the imported stone vessels from Egypt and those from other lands is striking. In Knossos, Egyptian stone vessels outnumber stone vessels from other locations with more or less the same ratio as they outnumber Aegyptiaca of different types. Only a handful of Levantine, Cypriote or Anatolian provenance have been found in the whole Aegean area (Bevan 2007, 124 and n. 18; Cline 2009, 49). Unless we assume that trade ran through a direct two-way open sea route from Crete to North Africa, completely bypassing Western Asia, the most logical explanation seems to be that the Neo-Palatial ruling classes had a clear preference for Egyptian products.

Any discussion involving the stratigraphy of Neo-Palatial Knossos needs to take several problems into account. Sequencing archaeological strata is often extremely difficult, and determining an absolute chronology may be impossible. Many of these artefacts were excavated in the early 20th century, so that available reports tend to be unreliable by today's standards (e.g. Palmer 1969, 71-73). A possible way to proceed could be to include only vessels that have been assigned to a specific context with a reasonable degree of certitude, but such a hyper-cautious approach would be inappropriate for the present work. My aim here is to discuss the concentration of these artefacts in a few geographical locations or specific areas within them. It would also be valuable to see whether specimens from secure contexts match in their distribution those whose date of deposition is uncertain.

I mention above the fact that a set of objects whose manufacture can be dated within a relatively short period are likely to have been imported not long after they were made. It is, however, possible to imagine that a kind of commodity, previously fashionable in its land of origin, could be suddenly "discovered" abroad in later times and imported in

significant quantities; the flow of Classical Greek sculptures in late-Republican Rome, in the wake of the Roman conquests in the East, is just one among several possible parallels.

Finally something must be said about a few deposits in which several specimens have been found. Warren (1969, 84) believed the vessels in the Room of the Stone Vases (in Evans' "Treasury") to have been acquired in MM III-LM I, while the deposits near the North-West corner of the Palace may be MM III or later (Warren 1969, 74). Yet, as Phillips (2008 II, 99) points out, since the material from these deposits has not been published, the context cannot be dated reliably. The "Royal Tomb" in Isopata near Knossos, which includes the largest group of Egyptian artefacts from a single Cretan context (Phillips 2008 II, 129), was built in LM IA (Hood & Smyth 1981, 11), but it was certainly reused in later times.

The vessels are listed in Appendix 1; details can be checked there. Here I give an overview, highlighting some facts I discuss below (4.3.6). I have divided the Egyptian vessels from Knossos into four groups. Two additional groups include the vessels from other sites, respectively inside and outside Crete.

The first two groups include specimens with a distinctively Egyptian origin, whose Neo-Palatial context is relatively secure (Group A), or whose import in Neo-Palatial times seems likely on account of other reasons (Group B). For instance, 18th Dynasty specimen cannot have been deposited before the beginning of the Neo-Palatial; similarly, an Egyptian vessel with signs of alterations in Neo-Palatial times would be included even if it was found in a Proto-Geometric context.

A preference for a few shapes seems evident. "Alabastron" is a definition that includes several forms (mainly without handle or base), in different sizes, presumably designed originally as containers for oils or other commodities (Phillips 2008 I, 47); they are divided into Type A ("globular flasks"; Fig. 4.2), Type B ("drop-vases"; Fig. 4.3), and Type C ("baggy"; Fig. 4.4).

Egyptian alabastra are most often made of travertine; it should be stressed that all vessels made of travertine found in Crete are to be treated as either Egyptian imports or local products made with Egyptian raw material (Hankey 1974, 16 – where it is called "calcite" as was usual before the 1990s). In Egypt, travertine was the most important "second-order" stone, remaining in use for most of the Dynastic period (Bevan 2007, 65). Notwithstanding some doubtful items (two fragments, for instance, might belong to the same vessel; Cline 2009, 166), there are a total of sixteen alabastra among the forty-four specimens in Group A) and B). This prevalence indicates that they were particularly

appreciated, especially those described as Type C (with the “baggy” shape; depending on whether fragment KSM SEX/79/444(b) (Phillips 2008 II, 123-124) belongs to Type B or C, the ratio between the three Types would be 2-4-2 or 2-3-3 respectively). Their date of manufacture is often unclear, ranging from the 12th Dynasty to the Second Intermediate Period, but they seem to be overall much less distant in time from their archaeological context, as compared to other shapes. Apart from alabaster, there are about a dozen travertine items, of many different varieties. Among them are four lids, including one bearing the name of the Hyksos king Khyan’s, and a couple of bowls.

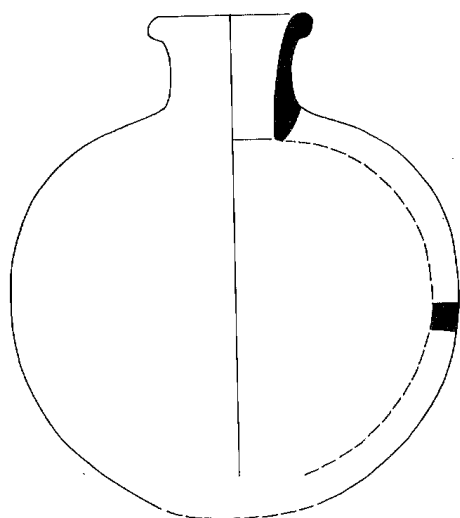


Fig. 4.2. Alabastron Type A (“globular flask”). HM Λ 48. Travertine, H. 178 mm, D. 180 mm. Knossos, LM II/III A1. After Phillips (2008 II, 318).

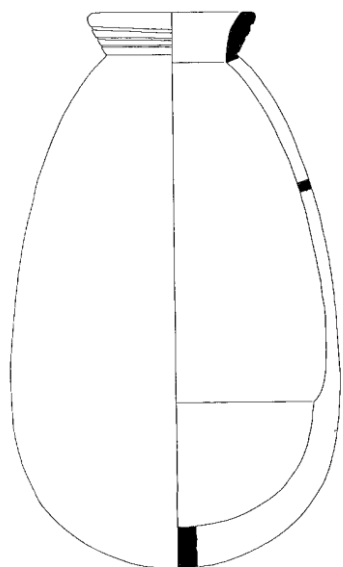


Fig. 4.3. Alabastron Type B (“drop vase”). HM Λ 175. Travertine, H. 466 mm., D. 266 mm. Kalivya, LM IIIA (?). After Phillips (2008 II, 307).

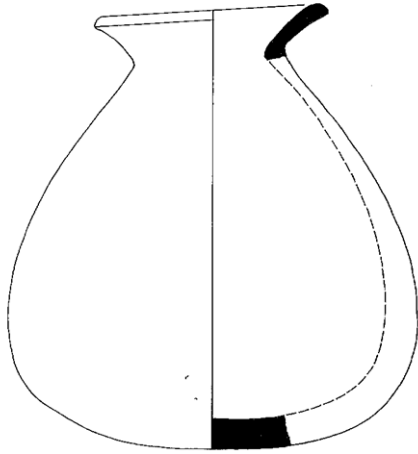


Fig. 4.4. Alabastron Type C (“baggy”). HM Λ 601. Travertine, H. 182 mm., D. 160 mm. Nossos, LM II-III A1. After Phillips (2008 II, 307, fig. 90; 332, fig. 249).

Bowls provide a second recurring shape. Deep open bowls are a characteristic Egyptian form in all periods; they are found in a variety of hard stones (Phillips 2008 I, 62-63). Most of the bowls in Group A and B are made with valuable stones – anorthosite gneiss, diorite, porphyrite – and they apparently date back to the Early Dynastic period or the Old Kingdom. The exceptions are the two travertine bowls mentioned above; these seem to be 18th Dynasty products, and both come from the Royal Tomb in Isopata (as does one of the porphyrite bowls).

Spheroid jars are another recurring item made with valuable materials: diorite, “porphyritic” rock, porphyrite, and “syenite”; they also date back to the third millennium. Next (Group C) are the vessels whose context is unknown. I have opted not to merge them with the previous group because the only reason to discuss them here is their (presumed) date of original manufacture. Although it cannot be ruled out that they were imported to Crete in much later times, it is more cautious to posit that their production does not significantly predate their arrival: while we have clear evidence for Early-Dynastic Egyptian vessels from Palatial contexts, there is no basis for assuming that New Kingdom vessels were imported in the Iron Age or later. It may prove useful to compare their typologies with those in Group A. We have fourteen Egyptian originals (fifteen, if we include KSM Box O + E4, but this is probably Levantine; Phillips 2008 II, 152). Of these, only four are later than the First Intermediate Period, and they differ from one another in shape or material. Five out of six of the earlier specimens, by contrast, are bowls, and are all made of anorthosite gneiss. These bowls, all dating back to the Old Kingdom or earlier, were found by Evans (Phillips 2008 II, 149).

The last group of vessels from Knossos (Group D) includes specimens whose Egyptian origin is debatable. One important question is: if we have doubts as to where these vessels were made, would those who acquired them have been able to determine it with more confidence? Is it appropriate to talk of an “Egyptian-Levantine style”, if the consumers themselves would find such an expression meaningless? Most of the methods which enable us to identify the origin of a vessel were not available in ancient times, and it could be deceptive to rely on them when trying to determine the significance of these objects for those who acquired and consumed them. Instead, it is worth attempting to establish whether the distribution of the more evident “imitations” within Knossos matches that of the original vases. Such an exercise may also reveal something about the ability (and interest) of the Minoans in differentiating between Egyptian and egyptianising. As in Group A, alabaster seem to be prominent (although, with the exception of a couple of Type Cs, the fragments are too small to demonstrate their shape). In addition, one amphora, four closed vessels, one lid, and one kernos can be identified. Most of these items are possibly made of travertine, which would be a clear indication that we are dealing with Egyptian originals, or with Egyptian raw materials being imported for local manufacture; however, the descriptions are often controversial, especially in relation to the material. A closed vessel from the Room of the Stone Vases (HM Λ 49), for instance, has been described as either Egyptian travertine or Cretan banded tufa. (Phillips 2008 II, 87-88).

I have omitted some of the most controversial specimens, because arguments for their Egyptian provenance appear to be extremely weak. Even though we cannot exclude that the ancient consumers might have been unable to recognise the origin of objects that we ourselves cannot confidently attribute, in some instances the poor nature of the imitation must have been patent. Significantly, among the possible “travertines” in Group C we find no bowls: the bowl specimens that have been found can all be confidently described as Egyptian, and there is no evidence for local imitations. One might speculate that it was their provenance that mattered the most, as seems to be the case with the Egyptian blue fragments (4.3.3), or/and the material was what counted.

Finally, there are the Egyptian stone vessels from sites other than Knossos, both in Crete (Group E) and on the Mainland (Group F). Some of the latter show evidence of Minoan reworking (below), so that there are good reasons to assume that they arrived in the Mainland via Crete.

Looking at vessels from other Cretan sites, one should consider the similarities and differences in comparison with Knossos first in quantitative terms, and then analyse more

closely shapes, materials, and contexts (funerary, palatial etc.). Overall, I have counted 21 vessels (as compared to 59 from Knossos, not including the controversial specimens in Group D): slightly above one quarter of the total. Once more, there is an abundance of alabastra (especially Type C); bowls, on the other hand, are only to be found in Knossos. Just seven specimens are made with more valuable stones, and none of them in anorthosite gneiss. It must be added for the sake of precision that the comparatively limited amount of specimens from Kato Zakro may be due to the incomplete publication (Phillips 2008 I, 42 n. 104).

With the exception of a travertine jar from Akrotiri, all of the specimens found outside Crete (Group F) come from Mycenae. Four of them are travertine alabastra, all belonging to Type C and all bearing signs of having been modified, most likely in Crete; all come from funerary contexts, as does one jar (or bowl) in granodiorite or possibly gabbro. The last specimen, a diorite jar from the House of Sphinxes, is the only specimen from a non-funerary context. Most items have been found in contexts later than LH II (ca. 1625-1430 B.C.), but I have included only those with indications of Minoan reworking.

4.3.6 CONCLUSIONS

Overall, it seems evident that both in Knossos and in Crete as a whole there was a strong appreciation of Egyptian stone vessels. Less straightforward is whether such appreciation was linked to the geographical provenance of the vessels, to the materials they were made of or, as I believe, a combination of the two (above, 4.3.1).

Phillips (2008 I, 45) notes that the selection of Egyptian shapes in Crete is quite limited, with a total of only 18 forms attested, out of a range of more than 200 (as listed in Aston 1994). She suggests, with some caution, that this pattern may be due to specific choices on behalf of the local consumers. Of course, another explanation might be that the supply of vessels of any given shape was limited and had to cover also markets closer to Egypt and perhaps more profitable: what I have said about the role of the Knossian elites in determining what might reach other Aegean polities, could equally apply to Levantine locations regarding what would reach Crete. Some indications in this regard might come by comparing the shapes attested in Crete with those exported to Western Asia during the same time-span, but this may be difficult. A match with Levantine tastes might suggest some sort of influence; potential differences, on the other hand, can be equally explained with the most prized products being absorbed by Western Asian markets, or with an autonomously developed attraction for different products in Crete.

Although a good proportion of the Knossian specimens come from a burial context, the latter consists solely of the “Royal Tomb” of Isopata. The fact that these objects were ignored by tomb-robbers may suggest that, by the time the tomb was violated, they had lost much of their appeal. Perhaps they were no longer seen as noteworthy status markers.



Fig. 4.5. Egyptian bowl reworked in Crete. HM 2695. Porphyry, H. 164 mm., D. 233 mm. Kato Zakro, LM IB. After Cline (2009, 321).

Only some shapes went beyond Knossos, and they are normally the more common ones; the pattern supports the impression that Knossos had a centralising and redistributive role. Although, as remarked by Phillips (2001, 87-88), the vessels from Knossos have usually been found outside the palace area, they are rarely far from its immediate surroundings (Phillips 2008 I, 42). The fact that some of these objects were reworked and/or re-exported suggests that the palatial elite had a role in their import, storage, and circulation, even if such role was not necessarily institutional. The two porphyry jars from the Palace Treasury in Kato Zakro (LM IB; one in Fig. 4.5), both bearing signs of local modifications, may indicate that occasionally Egyptian vessels were traded or presented as gifts outside Knossos. Some unusual items, moreover, may have simply been traded elsewhere because there was no interest for them in Knossos. This could be the case for the Egyptian *Gravidenflasche* from Katsamba, although the later clay imitations suggest that more was at stake (2.6). Another unusual item is a white marble jar, also from Katsamba; the only other marble vessels in the lists are two vessels of possibly non-Egyptian origin. Only two specimens have been recovered from tombs outside Knossos, and there is no reason to assume that their funerary use was common anywhere in Neo-Palatial Crete.

However, the vessels found in burial sites, including those outside the tomb proper, may have been used in funerary rites or in practices connected with the cult of the dead. If they were really taken from earlier Egyptian tombs, as suggested by Phillips (1992), there could be some form of connection, but I would be cautious in pushing this association too far.

The specimens from Mycenae reveal a preference for Type C alabastra, consistent with what we see in Knossos. The fact that local reworking is a completely Cretan phenomenon in the Aegean (Phillips 1008 I, 80) is also of capital importance. Aegyptiaca found in contexts much later than their manufacture and alterations could have been obtained in a variety of ways. For instance, they might have remained in Crete for several generations before being brought to the mainland as the fruit of trade or raids. However, in the case of the alabastra from Mycenae we are dealing with a group of four objects sharing not only shape and material but also the funerary context and the Cretan reworking. The latter obviously rules out the possibility that these vessels were imported to Mycenae because of their contents. Unaltered Egyptian vessel forms, on the other hand, were possibly still exported from Crete to mainland Greece in LM IB/LH IIA; most of those known were found in Mycenae and Vapheio. “Although the parties involved in the actual transport of an object might know its origin, it is the perception of an object as foreign that was essential to its operation as an import” (Burns 2010a, 29).

Another question is whether Minoan imitations of Egyptian stone vessels more closely resemble the shapes preferred in Knossos or the specimens found elsewhere. Here, patterns of shapes offer evidence on whether the choice of imports reflected different tastes from those in Knossos, or whether it was dictated by the need to replace shapes that were unavailable outside of Knossos. Both in Knossos and beyond, local imitations of Egyptian shapes were common for alabastra and spheroid jars alone (Phillips 2008 I, 42). The Neo-Palatial was a period when palace workshops experimented with elaborate techniques and exotic materials, and the resulting objects were thus charged with different levels of value and significance, no doubt linked at least in part to their role in a competitive quest for status. The reason why only the most common Egyptian shapes were imitated by local craftsmen may be that the “Egyptianness” of the rarer shapes would not so easily be recognised, especially if a different kind of material had to be used as a substitute for the original, “exotic” one. Perhaps there was a hierarchy among materials, and only forms traditionally associated with certain stones could be copied. The greater variation in travertine shapes would suggest that this was the case.

I have mentioned above (4.2.3) that three pivotal features were already quite well developed at the outset of the Palatial period: craft specialisation, external trade, and competition for status. Vessels of higher workmanship or made of precious materials had been available only in palatial contexts already in the Proto-Palatial (4.3.4). There is therefore no reason for arguing that Egypt played a qualitatively unique role in shaping the role of exotica in Crete. Yet, the scale of diffusion of Egyptian stone vessels in Crete is impressive. A slow development in competition may have been increased by peculiar circumstances such as the sudden availability of a new commodity that for unknown reasons became the object of a particular attention. After being exposed to products of Egyptian high culture, perhaps originally reaching Crete through indirect channels, the Neo-Palatial elite of Knossos settled on a specific product which conferred prestige on account of its geographical provenance and its technical features. Moreover, its value as status marker and instrument in the quest for prestige was also acknowledged in other Cretan palaces. The fact that Crete was divided in smaller polities than those of the Near East meant that there were also more opportunities to come in contact with those who had access to some resources (e.g. Trigger 2003, 146). The (apparent) lack of a rigid hierarchy (4.2.2) does not signify lack of competition. Prestige items may thus provide some insights into hierarchical elements that have not been preserved in iconography or writing. Maybe the presence of particularly precious items, such as those in anorthosite gneiss, could point at a “core elite” who would try to secure access to them; however, in order to assess that possibility a parallel with local luxury goods would be required, and this would be beyond the range of the present work.

Finally, something should be said about the circumstances leading to the arrival of these items into the island. Phillips (2008 I, 43-44) suggests a link with Egypt’s instability during the Second Intermediate Period, with an increase of tomb robberies and a resulting flood of Egyptian antiques. Such a scenario cannot be automatically rejected, and might account for a first batch of Egyptian vessels, probably those manufactured before the Middle Kingdom. Nevertheless, the imports seem to have gone on well into the 18th Dynasty, when Egypt was not only at the peak of its power but also enjoyed an unprecedented reputation abroad. The many 18th Dynasty specimens, especially those in travertine, may represent a continuation of such an appreciation during a time when obtaining antiquities had become more difficult.

Inasmuch as we would like to see the vessels as ideologically charged items, however, there can be little doubt that, so long as they preserved their prestige, they could

be converted into material assets. It remains to be seen what happened to these items once they arrived on the mainland, a question to which I return I return below (4.5).

4.4 MINOAN POTTERY FROM EGYPT: A “SUB-ELITE” SUBSTITUTE COMMODITY?

Egypt provides several instances of Aegean products and motifs apparently exploited as markers of status. In this section I discuss the possibility that Minoan or minoanising decorated pottery was at times used as a substitute for more precious metalware, either among the upper echelons of Egyptian society or among “sub-elite” groups looking for more accessible status markers.

In contrast to Levantine ceramic exports, most of which were containers, the Middle Minoan fragments of Kamares type found in Egypt belong to cups or bridge-spouted-jars (Fig. 4.6). These were not storage items with a functional purpose, but rather luxury commodities which would fill “the need for a set of exotic, lower or subelite tableware” (Bevan 2007, 34-35). Kamares ware is well attested in Middle Kingdom contexts, and specimens have been recovered since Petrie’s excavations at Kahun in the 1880s, when substantial numbers of sherds were found (Kemp & Merrillees 1980, 57-77). Reginald Engelbach (1923, 10) recorded that, during the 1913/14 campaign in el-Haraga, “about 20 pieces of Cretan Kamares ware” were gathered (but see Kemp & Merrillees 1980, 6-8). The contexts of these sherds range from the reign of Sesostriis II (ca. 1897-1878 B.C.) to the end of the 13th Dynasty (Warren & Hankey 1989, 134).

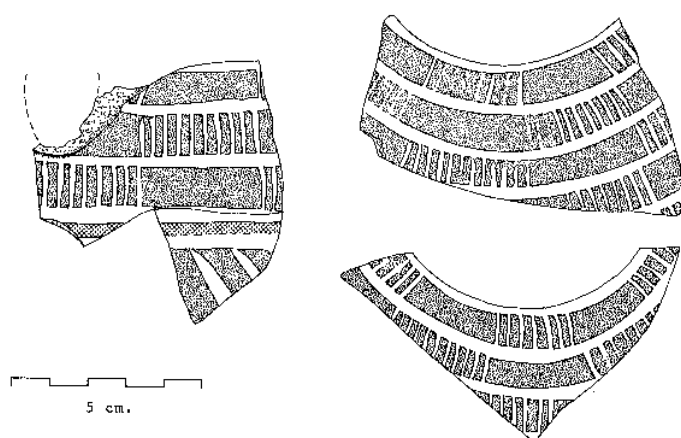


Fig. 4.6. Kamares vase. BM A5481. Scale of fragments in picture. Kahun, XII Dynasty. After Kemp & Merrillees (1980, 58).

There are also examples of local imitations (Kemp & Merrillees 1980, 70-75), a further indication that Minoan ware was appreciated for its own sake and not on account of its content, and that imports could not fulfil the local demand, either on account of their scarcity or of their cost. A possible instance is a polychrome vase from Tomb 88 at Qubbet el-Hawa. The tomb itself dates to the 6th Dynasty (Edel 1980, 176), but this object was probably buried together with Egyptian artefacts when the tomb was reused during the 12th Dynasty (Kemp & Merrillees 1980, 215-219). Some scholars, however, believe this vessel to be genuinely Minoan and not an Egyptian imitation (Warren & Hankey 1989, 130).

Warren and Hankey (1989, 132) have also suggested that Kamares pottery, with its distinctive features, was deliberately made to look like Minoan silver vessels. Among features supporting this view are the thin walls, the metallic-black colour, the imitation rivets and the thin handles. Although thin walls can be a general indicator of fine workmanship and therefore of luxury, thin strap handles are a more reliable element, as is shown by a comparison between a Kamares S-profile cup (Fig. 4.7) and one of the specimens from Tôd (Fig. 4.8). This raises the question of whether Minoan silverware too featured among the imported Minoan commodities in Middle Kingdom Egypt. If it did, Kamares pottery may have provided an alternative to a more prestigious exotic metal ware, which would be only available to the more affluent members of the elite. Pottery was not only cheaper than metalware, and therefore likely to be produced in greater quantities, but had also had far better chances to survive archaeologically. The distribution of Minoan sherds in Kahun indeed confirms that pottery was a “minor” luxury available to a larger group than silverware would have been (Kemp & Merrillees 1980, 85).



Fig. 4.7. S-profile cup. P 872. Silver, dimensions not stated. Knossos, MM II. After Warren & Hankey (1989, pl. 5).



Fig. 4.8. Cup. Cairo CG 70583. Silver. Et-Tôd. After Warren & Hankey (1989, pl. 5).

The Tôd treasure, discovered in 1936 in the eponymous location near Luxor, consisted of four copper chests containing objects of possible foreign manufacture, buried in the stone foundations of a temple (Bisson de la Roque et al. 1953). The main body of the hoard consists of 153 silver vessels (together with a single gold specimen), for which a Minoan origin has been suggested. The stylistic and technical homogeneity of the vessels suggests a common manufacture (Watrous 1994, 749). Doubts have, however, been cast on the Minoan origin of these finds (e.g. E.N. Davis 1977, 73-75), since 90% of the vessel shapes featuring in it can be found also in the Anatolian MB I ceramic repertoire. Yet, the material includes two unique shapes belonging to a standard Minoan type (Watrous 1994, 749 and n. 451). In favour of Minoan production, or at least Minoan influence, Warren and Hankey (1989, 132-133) list several parallels between MM IB-II ceramic pieces from Knossos and the et-Tôd vases, such as S-profile cups (above) and rosette bases. A Greek mainland origin from the Shaft Grave period has also been proposed (Maran 1987), but there are several objections to this (Warren & Hankey 1989, 132-133). Since the source of silver was Anatolia (e.g. Liverani 1988, 437; Lambert 1997, 205-206), this might be where these forms originated, being subsequently adopted in the Aegean and maybe copied in Egypt.

The dating of the treasure is a controversial subject: while two of the chests are inscribed with the name of the 12th Dynasty king Amenemhat II (ca. 1911-1877 B.C.), the date of the find context has been questioned. Kemp and Merrillees (1980, 290-296) concluded that the hoard could have been buried anytime between the reign of Thutmose III and the Ptolemaic period, while Hankey and Warren (1989, 131-132) have advanced some arguments for dating the hoard to the reign of Amenemhet II himself.

It seems that some Minoan artefact types were considered high-status commodities already in Middle Kingdom Egypt and less prominent groups tried to acquire for themselves cheaper products as replacements. I would argue that in this context the vessels do not need always to be actual Cretan products: they could have been made, as suggested by Hankey and Warren (1989, 132), “in awareness of Minoan work”. Perhaps Anatolian workshops exploited a particular situation, such as a demand for Minoan-looking objects during a period when they were unavailable or too scarce. The rarity of surviving silver specimens means that it is extremely difficult to make any comparisons to determine, for instance, whether there was a diversified Anatolian production of silver vessels, with more “Minoanising” specimens produced expressly for export to Egypt.

It may be appropriate to briefly discuss here an often quoted passage from an Egyptian papyrus – which incidentally may be the earliest Egyptian literary reference to Crete. The text known as “The Admonitions of Ipuwer” (P. Leiden I, 344, recto) has been an object of debate for more than a century now, starting even before its pioneering edition by Gardiner (1909). The protagonist laments a collapse of the established order, where everything is reversed. There are many issues related to the text, most of which lie beyond the scope of the present discussion. Something must be said, however, on the dating of the composition. Gardiner (1909) viewed it as a product of the 12th Dynasty, portraying, with some degree of accuracy and realism, the calamities of the First Intermediate Period. Miriam Lichtheim (2006 I, 149-150), on the other hand, considered the Admonitions to be a product of the later Middle Kingdom of purely literary inspiration, and this is the majority position today. The manuscript itself dates to the Ramessid Period (Enmarch 2005, 10), but the sage named as protagonist is listed among other “classical” literary figures on a block from a Ramesside tomb from Saqqara, so that he must have been part of the canon of Egyptian literature (e.g. Assmann 1988, 307).

One passage (III, 8-9) apparently mentions a break in the contacts with Crete (Gardiner 1909, 32; Fig. 4.9; translation after Enmarch 2008, 87):

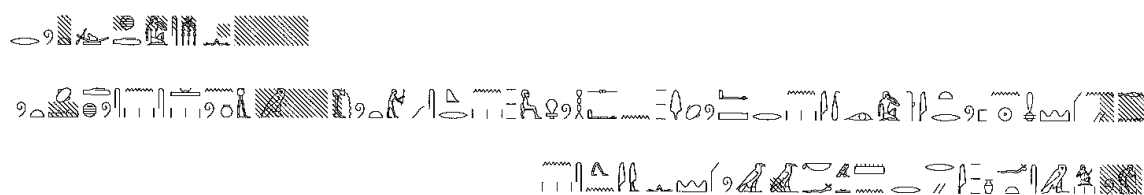


Fig. 4.9. Passage from “The Admonitions of Ipuwer”. After Enmarch (2005, 27).

*n ms ḥd.tw r [kp]n min ptr irt.n r šw n sḥw.n krs.tw w^cb[.w m] inw.sn sdwh.tw sft iry r mn
m kftyw*

No one has travelled north to [Byb]los today. What may we do about pines for our mummies [with] whose products priests are buried, (and) with the oil whereof are embalmed? From as far as Crete (?) they do not come!

Among several examples of a “collapsing” authority that the text laments, there is a disruption of direct commerce with the north. If we accept the mention of Crete to be genuine, and not a later inclusion added to “modernise” the text, we can take this document as a piece of literary evidence for periods of reduced or interrupted trade with the Aegean. Several scholars interpret this text as pure topos (e.g. Junge 1977); if this is the case, the breaking of contacts with the Aegean was something that could have happened repeatedly, and was associated with periods of crisis in Egypt. The wording, in any case, may also suggest an indirect contact through Byblos (John Baines, personal communication).

From the New Kingdom, we have both written and pictorial evidence for the import of Aegean luxury ware in Egypt. In the previous chapter (3.3.2) I discuss a passage in Thutmose III’s annals mentioning a tribute from the “Land of Tinay”, consisting of a “silver vase of the work of Keftiu”, together with four metal (iron?) vessels with silver handles. In the tribute scenes in the Theban necropolis, several Aegean figures are shown carrying vessels with distinctive shapes. The most common examples of undisputable Aegean character are theriomorphic rhyta (Kantor 1947, 46). A bull-headed rhyton in the tomb of Useramun is painted white, implying that it was cast in silver (Helck 1995, 58). One issue which this object raises, however, is that, as Vercoutter remarked (1956, 321), all the bull-headed rhyta in Egyptian tombs are depicted in the Aegean manner: both the head and the horns are seen in profile, while the Egyptians usually portrayed bovids with the head in profile and the horns represented frontally (Vercoutter 1956, 321). According to Wachsmann (1987, 57), this could only mean that the Egyptian artist was copying from an Aegean representation, not from the original object. However, above (3.4.1) I make the point that the fact that an artist had to rely on foreign representations can only be used to argue that the originals were not available to him, but the same is not necessarily true for his patrons. An inverted example is that of the downward curving horns of the ram-headed Amun: in the past a Kushite influence was invoked, since such horns are found among the Sudanese species of sheep; yet, this detail may have something to do instead with the

translation of two-dimensional model into three-dimensional art (Haeny 1997, 105). The reversal may be true here.

Jackal-headed rhyta shown in the tombs of Useramun and Rekhmire may also be made of silver. The similarity with Egyptian representations of Anubis might cast similar doubts on the Aegean origin of these objects (Davies 1943, 21), but does not by itself invalidate the possibility that objects were previously imported, that would recall Anubis to an Egyptian eye. The same process in reversal can be seen in “westernised” representations of Egyptian antiquities thousands of years later (e.g. Curran 2007, 215 fig. 89). Silver jars can be seen in the tombs of Useramun, Rekhmire and Menkheperaseneb, but Wachsmann (1987, 67) considers these objects to be all “skilful hybrids”. The question, time and again, is not whether the Egyptian artists had personally seen “Aegean envoys” carrying silver vessels, but why they decided to represent them doing so. It is possible that the artists had neither original specimens, nor Egyptian representations available for these particular Aegean objects, so that they copied from Aegean sources such as painted textiles or boxes. Or perhaps they used Egyptian objects which they associated with them for some reason, occasionally altering them to make them look more “exotic”. In addition, there are also instances of Aegean-looking objects not associated with Aegean individuals. Wachsmann (1987, 49) considers them to result from transference and hybridisation unless the contrary can be proven. As I argued above (3.4), however, I would be cautious in labelling an apparently odd association as “hybridism”.

There are few cases of LM I vases and Egyptian imitations from secure Egyptian contexts (Kemp & Merrillees 1980, 226). Aegean sherds dated to LM/LH I-II have been found at nine different sites. Problems, however, arise from the difficulty of differentiating Minoan and Mycenaean pottery (Hankey 1973, 107). In conclusion, I believe that the representations of Aegeans carrying silver vessels, together with the passage in Thutmose III’s Annals, provide evidence for Egyptian knowledge and appreciation of this kind of Minoan artefact during the earlier New Kingdom. These objects were deemed worthy of being offered to the pharaoh and mentioned or represented in his Annals and in the tombs of his highest dignitaries. In this they did not differ from many other types of goods recorded in official texts and “tribute” scenes. What we lack is any indication that Minoan Neo-Palatial metalware (and pottery) still had a role as status markers in Egypt, since, notwithstanding their rarity, there were no attempts to replace them with cheaper substitutes.

A possibility exists that such exotic commodities were sought because of additional implications. New Kingdom officials would boast the fact that by serving the king they had access to the luxury goods brought by foreign envoys. An important feature, linked to the Egyptian worldview, is a possible “inversion” of the standard association between foreign commodities and prestige. As the text quoted above says clearly, trade with the outside world was associated with firm and secure rulership over the land. In the previous chapter (3.3.2) I describe the cases of some Egyptian dignitaries’ pride for their role as recipients of foreign “tribute” to the king (e.g. Panagiotopoulos 2001, 273-274). It is therefore plausible that, in an Egyptian setting, foreign commodities were appreciated and desired on account of their association with the king and his prerogatives.

4.5 EGYPTIAN EXOTICA ON THE GREEK MAINLAND

The Shaft Graves mark not only the transition from the Middle to the Late Helladic and the beginning of the Mycenaean period, but also the first instance of an elite group in the Greek mainland exploiting exotic products in a competitive pursuit for prestige (Burns 2010a, 2). Although this unprecedented display of foreign luxury goods is first manifest in burials, the latter probably reflect a generalised attitude towards exotica and a shared understanding as their potential as status markers. Above (4.3.5 and 4.3.6) I discuss a handful of Egyptian stone vessels from Mycenae which had presumably been imported from Crete. Crete had certainly played an important role in shaping the local perception of Egypt in Late Helladic Greece; there are, however, some important differences in the contexts and distribution of Egyptian exotica.

The acquisition of exotic goods can be approached in terms of ports of entry and specific local patterns and trends, but the Late Helladic mainland seems to have lacked a “gravitational centre” whose continuity could match that of Knossos in Crete. Looking at the fluctuations between different periods, as I have done when discussing the material from Crete (4.3), reveals an abrupt increase of exotica in the record starting with the beginning of LH III (ca. 1420 B.C.). Just fifteen Egyptian objects have been recovered from LH I and II contexts, that is, less than 25% of those found in Crete during the same period. Of course, any consideration on this subject must take into account the possible distance in time between the arrival of the import and the moment it joined its context. Only one of the vessels discussed in 4.3 comes from a LH I context, but the evidence for LM I reworking suggests that some imports could predate their context by several decades or centuries. Nevertheless, a parallel increase in Syro-Palestinian imports during LH III

(Cline 2009, 49) suggests that by this stage the mainland had taken over trade with the Eastern Mediterranean. In other words, Mycenaean Greece was in direct contact with the sources from which the exotica were acquired, and did not have to obtain them from Crete or another geographical entity acting as an intermediary. Quite apart from the circumstances of the imports themselves and their possible links to diplomatic interaction (e.g. Hankey 1981; Cline 1987), it is important to consider the implications of their local fortunes. In Appendix 2 I list the Egyptian objects found in Late Helladic contexts, which I discuss here.

The criterion I adopt in selecting the objects is that they were still in circulation in LH III, irrespective of the date when they were imported from abroad. Burns (2010a, 20) remarks that scholarly emphasis “should not only be placed on the means of the objects’ transport to Mycenae, but also on the fact that they remained at Mycenae and, to a large extent, were retained by the citadel’s elite population”. Most of the artefacts come from LH III A/B contexts (ca. 1420-1200 B.C.); only one alabastron from the citadel has been found in a possibly later context (Mycenae Exc. 764-774; Warren 1969, 108).

About twenty aegyptiaca have been found in non-burial or unspecified LH III contexts in Mycenae. Their distribution in domestic and cultic contexts suggests that they were used by “a variety of Mycenaean citizens” (Burns 2010a, 140), and were not monopolised by the palace. Alabaster, with seven specimens, are the most common kind of artefact. Besides, there are two glass vases and three more vessels in faience, diorite (or gabbro; above, 4.3.5), and an unspecified stone. An ivory pyxis may or may not be an actual Egyptian product (Krzyszowska 1988, 233-234). Finally, there is a group of seven objects featuring hieroglyphic inscriptions (discussed below).

A dozen more objects have been found in burials. Most of them are vessels: three alabaster, one alabaster amphora, one diorite jar, two glass vessels, and one vase in Egyptian blue. One porphyrite bowl and one alabaster jar may have been interred earlier. In addition there are two scarabs, both from the same burial (Tomb 526). In general, objects from burials do not seem to differ much in type from those recovered in other contexts, except for the lack of inscribed items in the funerary context (apart from the scarabs).

It is safe to assume that Mycenae enjoyed a privileged channel for the acquisition of Egyptian exotica. It is now time to see whether there are any parallels in other polities. The most striking site in this regards is Perati (Attica), where more than twenty artefacts have been found. Almost all of them are scarabs or other inscribed objects and date to LH IIIC,

a period when aegyptiaca seem to have vanished from Mycenae. Apart from Perati, the only two sites with five or more Egyptian exotica are Ialysos, in Rhodes, and Langada (Kos). There too most of the imports are scarabs, the only exception being a couple of glass artefacts. In both cases, a privileged maritime position may have made a significant amount of exotic goods accessible to the local population.

Alabastra (and stone vessels in general) are attested in a very few sites apart from Mycenae. For LH II, one has been found in Argos and two in Vapheio (in a single burial, together with an alabaster amphora). Two alabastra have been found in LH III Dendra, and two more in Chalkis and Nauplion. Finally, two porphyrite bowls have been found in Asine and Pylos respectively.

The overall impression is that, during LH III, Mycenae attracted Egyptian goods on a completely different scale than any other centre. The handful of stone vessels found in LH III contexts in different sites might well have passed through Mycenae. If they were “diplomatic gifts”, they seem to have been bestowed quite rarely by the Mycenaean elites. Perhaps there was some form of control over these items, while a lower level trade in other exotic commodities, such as scarabs, was tolerated or ignored. Remarkably, objects decorated with inscriptions seem to belong to this second group: in a couple of minor centres (Langada and Ialysos) they are more abundant even than in Mycenae itself. Extreme cases such as Perati suggest that the choice of what exotica to import could be subject to circumstance, but also to specific local preferences. It is possible that, while stone vessels were a rare commodity mostly monopolised by the Mycenaean elite, minor centres and lesser groups would have to make do with less prestigious surrogates. Although no foreign objects have been found in the central area of the palace megaron, this may be due to the disturbances following the destruction of the LH IIIB palace (Burns 2010a, 139). However, the inscribed artefacts from Mycenae still deserve a discussion.

The items from Mycenae which bear Amenhotep III’s name, or that of his wife Tiye, have been the objects of special attention. For the reasons I have mentioned above, it is likely that they were imported during Amenhotep’s reign or not much later, a period roughly corresponding to LH IIIA1 (e.g. Warren & Hankey 1974, 147). The most important among these objects are a group of faience plaques from Mycenae, found on three different locations within the Citadel. Although fragmentary, the plaques seem to bear the same inscription on both sides, apparently reading (Cline 1987, 9; Fig. 4.10):

ntr nfr nb-m3^ct-r^c s3 r^c imn-htp hk3 w3st di ʿnh

Perfect god Nibmaatra, Son of Re, Amenhotep, Ruler of Thebes, given life.

The inscriptions thus include four elements: the king’s *nswt-bity* name (“Dual King”); his Son of Ra name (i.e. his birth name); the title “Perfect God”; and the title “Ruler of Thebes”. The two titles refer respectively to divine and political power (above, 4.2.1). The plaques are of the type intended for foundation deposits (Hankey 1981, 44; Serpico 2011). Helck’s suggestion that they might have been part of the decoration of an “Egyptian room” in Mycenae (1978, 97) seems unlikely, since this would not explain why they are inscribed on both sides (Cline 1987, 10).

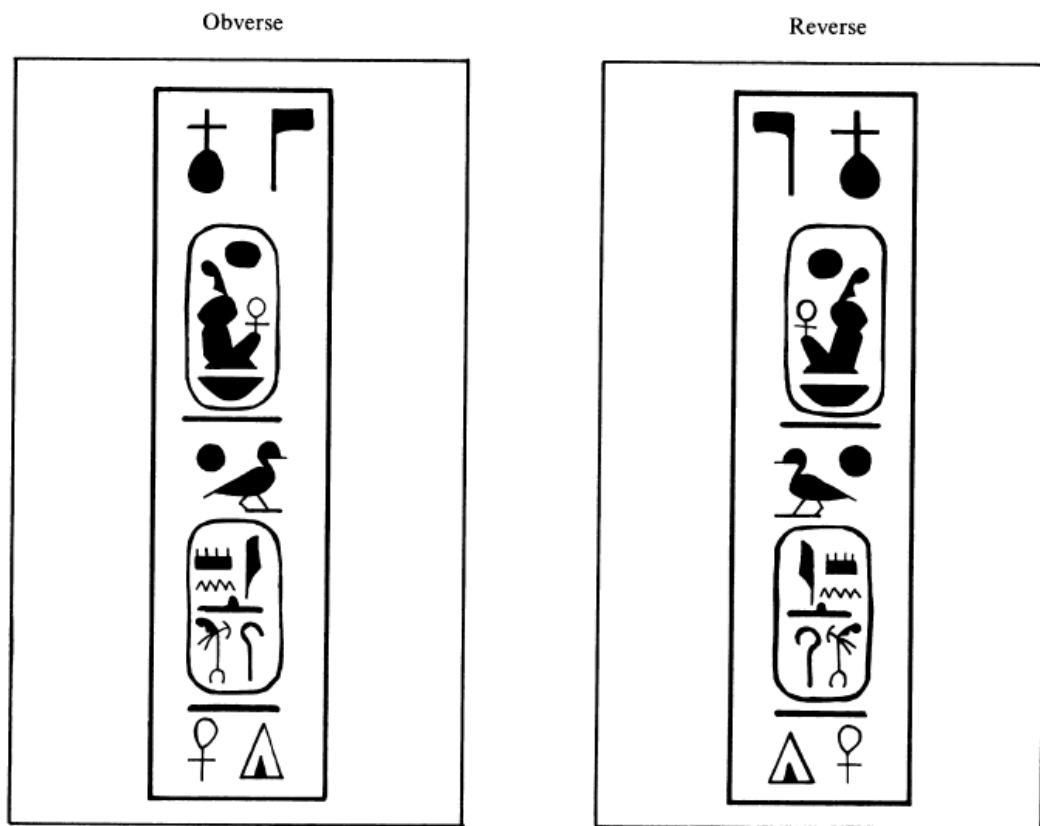


Fig. 4.10. Suggested reconstruction of the faience plaques of Amenemhet III. After Cline (1990, 208).

There are some possibilities that the plaques may have been produced locally (Cline 1990, 209; Burns 2010a, 24-25). Above (3.5.2) I describe a dagger (Cairo CG 52658) which, although adorned with some hieroglyphs, might have been crafted outside Egypt. Plaques such as those with Amenhotep III’s name, with their wide range of titles, would provide an ideal model for Mycenaean artisans wanting to decorate their products with a hieroglyphic inscription. The inscription on the plaques and those on the dagger share the

title *ntr nfr* (“perfect god”), the king’s son of Ra name, and the expression “give life”. Although the dagger dates to Ahmose’s reign, more than a century earlier than Amenhotep III, it would be valuable to establish whether the hieroglyphs on the plaques and those on the dagger share any idiosyncrasies.

A scarab with the name of queen Tiye was found among ceramic idols and snakes in the “House of the Idols”; one of the plaques comes from the same building and was also found in a votive or cultic context (Taylour 1969, 92-96). Another scarab bearing Tiye’s name comes from the Tsountas House (Cline 1987, 10 n. 41). Apart from Amenhotep III, the only Egyptian monarch whose name has been found in Mycenae is Amenhotep II, whose cartouche is carved on an Egyptian blue monkey (Pendlebury 1930b, 86; Cline 2009, 132). The only two inscribed objects found in Mycenaean burials are the scarabs in Tomb 526; although both bear inscriptions, neither of them mentions royal personages. If there was a Mycenaean interest in Egyptian hieroglyphs, it does not seem to have lasted long.

4.6 THE OUTSIDE WORLD: ROLE MODELS AND “IMPORTANT” CONNECTIONS

In the previous three sections I have discussed the import, accumulation, and redistribution of exotica in order to understand how the latter can be used to promote and legitimise status among both the ruling circle and lesser, “sub-elite” groups. In this section I present an overview of some other possible ways in which the external world can affect local strategies of power, in each case with an illustrative example. First, I review the development of a shared elite culture crossing geographical boundaries; second, deliberate imitation of a specific foreign model; third, advertisement of prestigious “foreign connections”; and, finally, the translation of foreign symbolic instruments of legitimation into a new milieu. For reasons I explained above (4.1), the first two possibilities are discussed together (4.6.1).

4.6.1 “ELITE CULTURE”: GEOGRAPHICALLY SPECIFIC INFLUENCES OR “INTERNATIONAL STYLE”?

In the introduction to this chapter I mentioned some ways in which a shared elite culture can serve the purpose of stressing and reinforcing the differences between those who hold the power and the majority of the population. Approaches to this subject have fluctuated between the quest for specific influences from different geographical or cultural sources, and attempts to identify a broader “shared” culture, the original sources of whose features

can no longer be recognised. In the first case, people adopt and display types of artefacts, motifs, or traditions from another polity that is perceived, for whatever reason, to provide an effective model or source of inspiration. In the second case, several different polities may partake to some extent in a common elite culture which manifests itself in art, ideology, technology, and so on. The resulting international high culture would create a link between the members of the ruling classes in different milieus, increasing their remoteness from their subjects. For the Late Bronze Age, this possibility relates to the diplomatic exchanges between the palaces, and the question of the “International Style” (W. S. Smith 1965).

The second model has already been mentioned in relation to general trends in the eastern Mediterranean of the Late Bronze Age (e.g. 3.1). Since it involves the links between the Aegean and Western Asia as much as Egypt, its implications go beyond the scope of the present work. A few remarks must therefore suffice. The Aegean certainly partook in the Near-Eastern visual and symbolic repertoire related to power, as can be seen in the association between the ruler and animal imagery, as well as the importance of war chariots as status markers. Nevertheless, it was not part of William Moran’s “Cuneiform culture” (Feldman 2006, 9), and recent scholarship tends to emphasise its connections not only with the East but also with other Bronze Age European cultures. Instead of discussing features common to the whole Near East, I address the issue of whether Egyptian elements were deliberately imitated on account of Egypt’s reputation. I explained above (4.1) that it can prove difficult to decide whether Egyptian elements were adopted in a conscious attempt to imitate what was perceived as an illustrious model or whether they simply happened to fit well within the new environment.

The section above on the Egyptian stone vessels has already provided some answers: Cretan artisans did copy Egyptian shapes, and I have tried to show that this was not only on account of their technical features but also because of the prestige attached to their geographical origin. It remains to be seen whether, in the elusive issue of Minoan and Mycenaean display of power, any specifically Egyptian elements were adopted by the local rulers and elites. When comparing the Egyptian and Aegean system of rule, however (4.2), it becomes evident that the scale of the differences between these worlds is such that, even when there was a genuine intention to emulate aspects of the Egyptian monarchy, much would be “lost in translation”.

One intriguing possibility is that, as in the case of the Levantine anthropoid coffins, elements of the Egyptian mortuary practices for a deceased ruler could have been adopted

in the Aegean. Although none of the proposed instances could be considered convincing in itself, their combined weight deserves some consideration.



Fig. 4.11. The Aghia Triadha sarcophagus. After Martino (2005, 67).

In Crete, the most convincing evidence for an Egyptian influence is provided by the Aghia Triadha sarcophagus (Paribeni 1908; Fig. 4.11), a painted limestone larnax discovered in 1903. It is dated to LM IIIA2 (ca. 1370-1320 B.C.); its surface is decorated with narrative scenes related to funerary rituals which have been the object of much speculation (e.g. Long 1974; Watrous 1991). An Egyptian inspiration is suggested by some technical features, such as the carved relief for the decorative rosette border, and the use of tempera instead of more traditionally Aegean true fresco (Martino 2005, 52-53). Coming to the scene, the offering bearers represented on Side A strongly resemble the Keftiu “tribute bearers” from Thebes (e.g. Immerwahr 1990, 53). Moreover, the armless, almost “mummiform” figure standing in front of a building, possibly representing the deceased, has no parallels in Aegean art. Some of the proposed Egyptian elements, however, are less convincing: for instance, the link between the boat carried and the importance of boats in the Egyptian funerary ritual (Martino 2005, 58-59) seems too far-fetched to me. Long (1974) has shown that most of the iconographic features on the sarcophagus have local parallels, especially in the glyptic. I agree with Hiller (1999, 361) that a simple list of elements on the sarcophagus with Egyptian equivalent would “hardly prove very helpful”. As with the “Egyptian” connections of the Miniature Frieze, it could be more useful to consider the resulting combination, instead of the sum of the parts. Several scholars have suggested an Egyptian influence in the development of Minoan narrative scenes with funerary themes (e.g. Immerwahr 1990, 53). My conclusion would be that the decoration of the Aghia Triadha sarcophagus may display some Egyptian influences, but it is unclear how much the latter extend beyond the purely formal level. The inclusion of Egyptian(ising)

features might be explained by an awareness, or even a personal link with Egypt on behalf of the patron, just like the Pyramid of Cestius in Rome (Curl 2005, 39-40) may be linked with Cestius' possible military involvement in Meroe. I agree with Hiller (1999, 368) that the Minoan character of the scenes is “not to be questioned”. For instance, libation rituals such as those represented on both long sides of the sarcophagus seem to have been a standard part of funerary practices in Mycenaean times, both on Crete and on the Mainland (Gallou 2005, 62-63), to which I now turn my attention.

The idea that Egyptian burial practices provided the inspiration for some of the features of the Mycenaean Shaft Graves dates back to the 19th century (Burns 2010a, 73-75). Already in 1878, William Gladstone (1878, xxv) could speculate about a pair of gold scales found in Mycenae, linking them to those used to weigh the soul in the Egyptian Book of the Dead. Georges Perrot and Charles Chipiez (1894, 327-328) noted the analogy between the gold masks, such as the one attributed to Agamemnon, and the masks covering the heads of the Egyptian mummies. Valerios Staïs (1907) suggested that the golden ornaments found in the burials may have been part of anthropoid coffins such as those found in Egypt (Fig. 4.12); the idea of wooden *larnakes* has been mentioned again by Stefan Hiller (1994-5, 13). Finally, there is the mummified body allegedly found by Schliemann in Shaft Grave V, described by the excavator as “wonderfully preserved” (Schliemann 1878, 296-297; Hood 2012, 74-76).

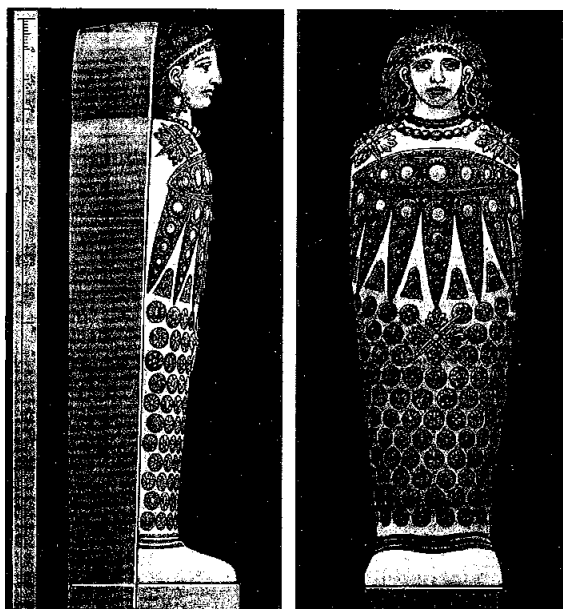


Fig. 4.12. Suggested reconstruction of an Egyptian-like sarcophagus based on the gold ornaments from Shaft Grave III. After Meurer (1912, pl. 12).

The passage from Ipuwer quoted above states explicitly that cedar oil was used for embalming in both Egypt and Crete (Keftiu). Vercoutter (1956, 44 n. 1) remarked that one single mummified body, perhaps resulting from natural circumstances, cannot be used as evidence to substantiate the Ipuwer passage: in order to do so we would need to know that the body underwent one or more of the steps in the Egyptian embalming process, such as removal of the brain and the entrails, immersion in natron, and bandaging (e.g. David 2008). Some practices reminiscent of Egyptian embalming are described in the *Iliad*, when Patroclus' body is prepared for the funeral: the body is washed in a great cauldron, anointed, wrapped up in linen bandages and finally covered with a shroud (*Il.* XVIII, 350-353). It is true that the body was eventually to be cremated, but cremation is a practice contemporary with Homer. Perhaps, in describing the preparation of Patroclus, the author decided to merge it with some earlier practices which had survived to his time.

Nevertheless, even if we accept that the Homeric passage describes ancient burial customs that were still in use, or whose memory had been preserved since the Late Bronze Age, there are several other problems. Scales could have been included in the burial for any variety of purposes; masks made of precious materials feature in burials belonging to cultures as far away as the Andes; and, finally, golden ornaments do not by themselves prove the existence of "anthropoid coffins".

When discussing the inscribed items from Mycenae (4.5) I mention that some of them had apparently been used as votive offerings; in fact, the most precious exotica from Mycenae seem to be concentrated in cult rooms (Burns 2010a, 145-147). Their presence in burials may also be related to cultic use. If the tombs were really reopened in order to perform ancestral rites (e.g. Gallou 2005), precious exotica may have reinforced the group's own self-representation and identification during the ceremonies (Burns 2010a, 189-190). This is, however, something completely different from adopting Egyptian customs; it is part of a local strategy exploiting imported symbols and objects in a purely local way. The lands associated with the exotica and foreign motifs can contribute, through the ways in which they were perceived locally, to the evocation of a "divine sphere". The use of Egyptian exotica in Late Helladic burials may also have a specific meaning linked to Egypt's geographical distance and its "otherness" (already discussed in 3.4.3 and 3.7). Although this perception was undoubtedly influenced by Crete, the scarcity of Egyptian exotica in Late-Palatial burials suggests that their funerary use in Mycenaean Greece was primarily shaped by local ideas and beliefs.

4.6.2 FOREIGN CONNECTIONS AS A SOURCE OF STATUS

Monarchs and ruling elites have very often exploited a personal connection with a foreign land, polity, or dynasty in order to justify their position. Places distant from the heartland, together with the people who inhabit them, have often been seen as extremely different and with peculiar or opposite characteristics; they could be associated with barbarism, evil and harm, or with civilisation, good and beneficial powers. The latter approach may mean that local leaders legitimise their role by associating themselves with these “wise strangers”, or by presenting themselves as the descendants of founding ancestors or cultural heroes from far away (e.g. Helms 1988, 262-265).

An example which is geographically, but not chronologically closer to our area is provided by the ancient kingdom of Macedon and its ruling dynasty. Until Alexander IV's death in 311 B.C., all the Macedonian kings belonged to the Temenid family, whose members claimed to be descendants of Heracles through their eponymous mythical ancestor Temenus, great-great grandson of the hero himself (Her. V.20, 22; Thuc. II.99.3 and V.80.2). Temenus was also king of Argos in the Peloponnese, and thus the dominant Macedonian clan of the Argeads was named after this link with the South. In some accounts of the foundation of Greek mythical dynasties Egypt plays a significant role. Although, as Eric Cline put it (2009, xviii), “such tales have not yet been substantiated by scientific evidence”, some scholars have looked at them in search of evidence for contacts in Egypt during the Bronze Age (1.2.2). I have already addressed the unreliability of Classical Greek sources for understanding the historical events of the Aegean Prehistory, even in very broad terms. The question I would like to address is whether there are any indications that the idea of a link with Egypt as a source of dynastic prestige only emerged in historical times, or whether it had precedents during the Bronze Age. I start by briefly addressing the best known cases of mythical kings for whom an Egyptian origin was claimed, namely Danaus and Kadmos, and then I discuss whether we can work our way further backward.

Danaus is the eponymous forefather of the Danaoi, a tribal name seemingly describing the Homeric Greeks; this is particularly significant because “Danaoi” are apparently related to the land of “Tinaya” mentioned in Egyptian sources (1.4.2). As an ancestor of Danae and her son Perseus, the founder of Mycenae, the arrival of Danaus embodies the beginning of the Heroic Age in the Argolid (Stubbings 1973, 636). In classical traditions, Danaus was remembered as a leader who left Egypt to move to the Argolid, where he became king. Although this was the most popular version, it was neither

the only one, nor the most ancient. The “Egyptianisation” of the hero’s genealogy may be no earlier than the 7th century B.C., during the reign of Psammetichus I (Hall 1996, 338), when the identification of the cow-maiden Io with the horned goddess Isis would have been natural for Greeks living in Egypt (Lloyd 1975, 125).

The case of Kadmos, even more than Danaus, reveals the complications arising from the existence of several versions of the same myth. In most accounts, Kadmos was said to have had a Phoenician origin, an idea that is problematic for linguistic reasons (e.g. Edwards 1979, 65-87). In some sources, however, it was stated that he came from Egypt; the most important one is Diodorus (*Bibl. Hist.* XL, 1.3.12), whose account is based on Hecataeus of Abdera’s *Aigyptiaka* (e.g. RE VII, 2758), a work composed in Ptolemy I’s Egypt. It is not difficult to understand why an author writing in Ptolemaic times would try to link Kadmos to Egypt. Diodorus does not provide a genealogy for Kadmos, but Pherekydes records that his mother was Argiope, daughter of Neilos, that is, the Nile (*Schol. Apoll. Rhod.* III 1186).

It seems thus that the attitude towards Egypt present in these tales is a relatively late phenomenon, post-dating the resumption of contacts with Egypt during the Archaic Age. The only, feeble hint that the Aegean elite could have displayed a personal link with Egypt as a source of personal prestige, as mentioned above (4.6.1), is the Aghia Triadha sarcophagus, but this line of thought cannot take us any further.

4.6.3 RULERS AS DIVINE OFFSPRING

The Egyptian monarch, being completely removed in ideology from even the highest elite among his subjects, was entitled to qualitatively unique burial practices. Mycenaean rulers, by contrast, were apparently not so detached from the rest of the elite; the Shaft Graves in Mycenae indicate the existence of a dominating group, with differences in wealth within it (e.g. Shear 2004, 6-7). In other words, he might have been involved in a competitive display of wealth with the upper echelons of the society to which he belonged. The idea of a divine kingship was stronger in large territorial states, where separation between the king and the majority of the population was more pronounced (Trigger 2003, 79-80). This is just one among several differences that need to be taken into account before discussing what seems, to me, the most plausible vestigial trace in later Greek literature of an Egyptian influence in the sphere of rulership during the Bronze Age.

That similarities exist between accounts of the birth of Heracles and those of the divine origin of the pharaohs has been acknowledged by several scholars (e.g. Marinatos

1951; Walcot 1967). A first evident, albeit generic theme they have in common is that a mortal woman is pregnant with the offspring of the most prominent god, her child is destined to exceptional deeds, and the delivery is accompanied by supernatural events. Such motifs are found in many cultures (including the Christian West), but in my opinion some formal correspondences appear too close to be dismissed as simple, “random” analogies. After summarising the surviving accounts and what we know about their background and transmission, I try to highlight what are the possible shared elements. If all of these elements can all be found in a specific Egyptian and Greek version, a direct link between the two might be inferred.

EGYPT: KING CHEOPS AND THE MAGICIANS

In Egypt, the earliest instance of the divine birth motif is preserved in the Westcar Papyrus (P. Berlin 3033; Maspero 1915, 21-23; Blackman 1988; Parkinson 1997, 106-127 for a modern translation; Lepper 2008). The manuscript, whose beginning is missing, has been dated to the Second Intermediate Period or to the beginning of the New Kingdom; the text content, however, may have been composed during the XII Dynasty (Parkinson 2002, 295-296). The papyrus contains a collection of short stories, whose framing premise has sometimes been compared to that of the Arabian Nights (Bresciani 1990, 182).

In one of the tales, king Cheops receives an old man named Djedi, capable of incredible deeds, such as reattaching a severed head to a corpse. Cheops, eager to watch the sage perform his miracles, orders a prisoner to be brought and beheaded. Djedi, however, reacts in horror at the request, for such deed “is not commanded upon the august cattle” (i.e. mankind). The passage has been used to corroborate the image of Cheops as a cruel tyrant already among the ancient Egyptians, instead of being a later Greek invention (Loprieno 1996, 285; Assmann 2004, 84 and n. 87).

Djedi delivers a prophecy intended to exalt the upcoming 5th Dynasty by describing its miraculous origins. Cheops is informed that three children are in the womb of Reddedet, the wife of a priest. The account of the birth of the three kings follows, with no further preambles (9.21-27; translation from Parkinson 1997, 116):

One of those days, Ruddjedet was suffering; her giving birth was painful. And the Majesty of Re Lord of Sakhbu said to Isis, Nephtys, Meskhenet, Heqet, and Khnum, ‘O may you go forth and make Ruddjedet give birth to the three children who are in her womb, who will perform the worthy office in his entire land, for they will build your

temples, provision your altars, make your libation-vessels flourish, and increase your divine offerings!

The four goddesses disguise themselves as musicians, with Khnum accompanying them as a porter. They appear at the home of Rewosre (Reddedet's hitherto unnamed husband) and proceed to help his wife with her labour. All the three babies, Woseref (from *wsr* "to be strong"; 10, 9), Sahre (from *sah* "to kick"; 10, 17), and Keku, (Neferikara-Kakai, from *kkw* "to be dark"; 10, 24), slip from their mother's womb into the goddesses' hands. They are said to have "limbs covered in gold and headdresses of real lapis lazuli", attributes of divinity. For all of them, Meskhenet repeats the same prophecy: "A king who shall exercise the kingship in this entire land!", and then Khnum (moulder of men) "causes their limbs to be healthy" (10, 13-14; 21-22).

The tale goes on to narrate some exceptional events that took place after the birth of the three boys, before ending abruptly (Lichtheim 2006, 215). This tale draws its religious background from the solar cult. During the Old Kingdom, the cult of Ra based in Heliopolis came to prominence. The "Son of Ra (*s3 r*) name" (Baines 1999b, 9), corresponding to the name the king had before his accession to the throne, is added to the titularity of the king and refers to his divine filiation from the sun god. The king's position is thus reformulated in a way that makes explicit his subordination to a god whose cult has achieved a prominent status. Like the "Dual King" name, it was also written inside a cartouche (Baines 2007, 18). The very notion of Redjedet's "divine pregnancy", it must be added, would not be complete without some kind of prequel concerning her "divine nuptials", possibly just implied, but perhaps part of another story (see below).

Thus, what originated as a relative decrease of the king's status was presented as a ground for his legitimation, and it apparently retained this function when the text was composed, several centuries later. The motif of the divine birth reappears in a completely different narrative, which Jan Assmann (e.g. 2004, 59-98) calls "The Engendering of the Child". I treat this composition next.

EGYPT: THE ENGENDERING OF THE CHILD

A later narrative appears as a mixture of images and text carved on temple walls. In this variant Amun sires the future king by having intercourse with the reigning pharaoh's wife. Parts of the cycle are often missing, so it is not always possible to compare the versions in order to spot the differences between them.

Although there are fragments dating back to the Middle Kingdom (see below), the earliest well preserved version is carved in the mortuary temple of Hatshepsut at Deir el-Bahri. The version in the mortuary temple of Amenhotep III shares many elements, although there are also some important differences (e.g. Campbell 1912, 18-49; Brunner 1964). Very little survives of the version in the Ramesseum, whose stones were quarried during the Ptolemaic Period (Gaballa 1967).

Hatshepsut's mortuary temple, her largest surviving monument, is located on the western bank of the Nile and was dedicated to Amun Ra. The presence of the temple of Montuhotep II, together with a local Hathor, linked the place both to the Middle Kingdom tradition and to the funerary cult (Donadoni 1993, 286). The reliefs inside the temple represent several stories; the birth cycle of Hatshepsut is located in the middle colonnade. The story is displayed in a long horizontal row, which makes the order of events unmistakable (and has therefore been used to better understand the sequence in Luxor). It begins with Amun addressing twelve other gods who are depicted standing in front of his throne (*Urk.* IV 216, 1-6; my translation):

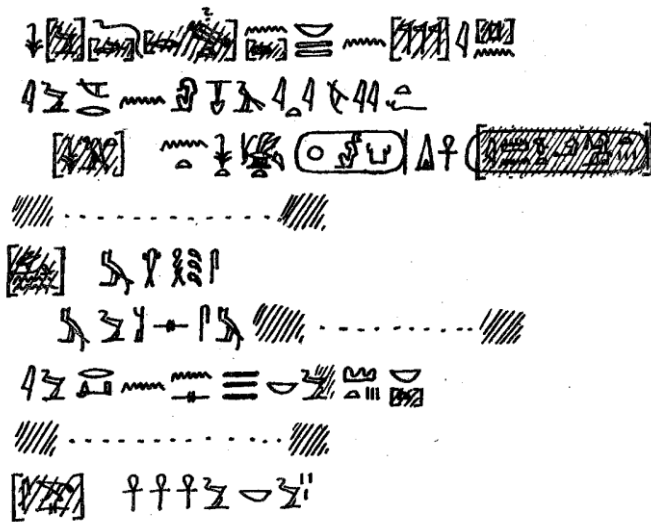


Fig. 4.13. Amun's address to the other gods. *Urk.* (IV 216, 1-6).

*s[w] dd [r ?] n[t] nb t3wy n ntrw i[pn]: iw mr.n.i sm3yt mryt.f [nsw mwt] nsw bity m3t-k3-r^c di
'nh [i^ch-ms...] wnn m s3 h^cw.s m tsi.s m [...] iw rdi n.s t3w nbw dsrwt nbwt sšms 'nhw nbw*

He spoke [to these gods about the ...?] of the lord of the Two Lands: "I have grown fond of the companion, beloved of his, the [royal mother] of the king of Upper and Lower Egypt Maatkara (i.e. Hatshepsut), may he be given life!, [Ahmes... I am] a protection for her body, when she arises as [...]. I have given her all the lands and all the foreign countries and she will lead the living.

Amun intends to beget a child who will hold the kingship. Such an initial prophecy is lacking in the Amenhotep version. This “prelude in heaven”, it seems, reappears in the Ramesseum: among the fragments from the latter is a block showing Amun-Ra addressing what might be the Great Ennead (Gaballa 1967, 304).

One of the Ramesseum blocks shows the divine nuptials of Amun Re and the queen, but part of the scene is missing. After Amun is done with his *droit de seigneur*, the queen (presumably satisfied) declares (*Urk. IV 220, 1-6*):

My lord, how great in truth is your power! How majestic (*šps*) is seeing your forehead (*h3t*)!
Your majesty joined (*hnm*) me in your splendour, and your dew is in all my limbs!

Amun, quoting her words, replies (*Urk. IV 221, 6-15*):

hnm.t imn h3.t šps.wt; this will be the name of this daughter I have engendered in your womb, gathering the words that came out of your mouth. She will lead a perfect sovereignty upon all this land, and my *ba* will be hers, my power will be hers, my authority will be hers, my crown will be hers. She will be a queen who rules the Two Lands, and will lead all the living...

A similar explanation is given for Amenhotep’s name. Afterwards, Amun takes council with Khnum, who states that he has created the girl with “life, strength, and health”, and the scene in Luxor is almost identical.

Khnum then proceeds to mould her and her *ka* on his potter’s wheel, while his partner Heqet (Hathor in the Luxor version) pours life into both. Again, the child is promised “all the foreign lands and all mankind” (*rhyt*, a term referring to the king’s subjects). “[...] I grant to you that you’ll lead the *k3w* of all the living, when you rise ad King of Upper and Lower Egypt [...]” (*Urk. IV 223, 6-12*).

Finally, the queen is brought to the delivering place, before Amun and Meskhenet (Amun and several other deities in the Luxor version), and Amun once again promises to the new-born child health and perfection.

Although both versions are certainly older than the surviving examples discussed here, it is impossible to say how far back in time they go; nevertheless, some kind of connection between P. Westcar and the “Engendering of the Child” cycle is unquestionable (e.g. Silverman 1999, 71). The motif reappears in later times, although with some significant differences (see below).

The conception of the child, and the subsequent events preceding the child's birth, are only alluded to in the P. Westcar, whereas they form the central topic in the "Engendering of the Child" cycle. The delivery, on the contrary, is rather uneventful, perhaps because the legitimacy and safety of the reigning king (who commissioned the reliefs) is not to be questioned.

One should not overemphasise the peculiarity of Hatshepsut's reign when discussing issues related to it. There was undoubtedly something exceptional about a female pharaoh (above, 4.2.1), but several features of her rule can be understood in terms of general New Kingdom developments. This seems to be true for the relief with her conception as well, since the cycle was later reused by male rulers without radical changes (Troy 2006, 130). Recent excavations at what remains of Senwoseret III's (ca. 1879-1839 B.C.) causeway at Dahshur have uncovered several relief fragments. Although very fragmentary, the decoration seems to have included scenes related to the divine conception of the king, his birth, his adolescence and his affirmation (Oppenheim 2011). This would prove that at least some parts of the cycle date back to the Middle Kingdom, so that there would be no reasons left to assume any relationship with Hatshepsut's status.

The core is the same as in P. Papyrus: a major deity mates with a mortal woman, who later delivers one or more children destined to be king. Other gods are involved, as heralds, obstetricians, or simply witnesses. Prophecies are made about the birth, and the children are named after the events surrounding their birth or conception. Supernatural signs (divine odours, atmospheric phenomena, and so forth) accompany the events.

If both tales really date back to the Middle Kingdom, a default preference should not be accorded to either when discussing their connections with similar stories among other cultures.

GREECE

Heracles' conception and birth is related in the works of two mythographers, Apollodorus and Hyginus, both writing in Imperial times. They do not diverge significantly, although Apollodorus provides a fuller background: while Amphitryon, the son of the king of Tiryns, is on his way back from war, Zeus adopts his appearance and precedes him in his wife's bed. Heracles was the result of this union.

The most ancient references of this story are found, however, in the Hesiodic *Aspis*, and in the *Iliad*. The *Aspis* (or "the Shield of Heracles") seems to date back to the decades between the 7th and the 6th century B.C., but the part concerning the birth of Heracles might

be some decades older (Guillon 1963, 13-25). In the *Aspis*, Zeus' plan to create a new protection for humanity is clearly mentioned. Although the detail of his disguise is not stated, its nature can be inferred by the fact that Alcmena seems unaware of what had really happened. Plutarch (*Numa*, 62b) remarks that for the Egyptians physical intercourse between a mortal man and a female deity was inconceivable, mirroring the claim of Egyptian kings to marry foreign women while denying their kinswomen to foreign suitors. Ideologically, a god as a father would be a more important tool in a context in which kingship was considered to be a form of divine inheritance.

The *Iliad* as we know it can be probably dated around the 8th century B.C. (Janko 1982). Heracles and his deeds are often referred to in the Homeric poems and, whether or not the *Iliad* incorporated material from a lost poem wholly dedicated to this hero, it seems likely that his story was familiar to an audience living in the Archaic Age.

The *Iliad*, being the earliest known form of this myth in the Greek language, is also chronologically closest to the Egyptian tales described above. The birth of Heracles is narrated by Agamemnon in Book XIX. The tale begins with Zeus delivering a speech to the other gods, announcing that a man will be born on that day, who will rule over all mortals. In the *Iliad*, as in the *Aspis*, the birth of the world's greatest hero was no accidental consequence of Zeus' lusts, but rather the result of a deliberate design by the king of the gods – an idea that is missing in later versions. I now ask what other elements are shared between Egypt and Greece.

COMPARISON

a) The core

As noted above, both the Egyptian and the Greek tales discussed here contain elements that are common to many cultures. It would be interesting, however, to focus on whether there are elements that are shared by a specific Egyptian and Greek variant of the story, while not being present in all of them. Dan Sperber (1996, 71) argues that, when dealing with myths, trying to abstract a set of common properties in order to identify them as the “canonical version” would be a mistake. The “canonical version” does not exist in reality, but as a working tool it could help in recognising variants of the same myth (Distin 2004, 55).

The idea of humans and gods “interbreeding” is a very common theme, but we can proceed one step further and examine the behaviour of the “divine parent”. Zeus, in

Spyridon Marinatos' words (1951, 133), "does not visit women of any social standing, but, in absolute preference, only the daughters of kings and princes". Amun displays the same preference in the various versions of the "Engendering of the Child" story, but not in P. Westcar, where the divine parent is enough to ensure the legitimacy of the offspring. It is difficult to establish to whether the matrilineal transmission of power, common in Greek mythology, also plays a role in the "Engendering of the Child" tales; that is, whether the child's mother being a queen is a reason for Amun choosing her.

The mixture of human and divine descent in Greece normally produced demigods, as in the case of Theseus. It may be that Heracles is completely divine, while the mortal component is responsible for his brother Iphicles' entirely human nature. I do not think it necessary, as it has been proposed (Walcot 1967), to explain this with a connection with the separation of the pharaoh and his *ka*. However, in all the Egyptian versions the conception of the hero is guided by the deliberate will of a god, as it is in the *Aspis* and in the *Iliad*; the paternity here is completely divine.

Besides, Zeus often resorts to the device of adopting another form, such as a bird or golden rain, when he desires a mortal woman. Such transformations are most likely linked to fundamental ideas about the god's epiphany. Yet, in the case of Heracles, Zeus, for some reason, decides to disguise himself as the husband of the woman whom he desires, which seems to be a rather unusual stratagem.

b) Specific elements

Many apparent similarities may be coincidental or not significant for the present discussion. This possibility should be borne in mind especially when these elements are associated in other tales from Greece or Egypt, or even in other cultures.

The name(s) of the child(ren). Both in P. Westcar, in the "Engendering of the Child" cycle, and in the tale of Heracles the children are named after the events surrounding their birth or conception. For the Egyptians, there was a fundamental relationship between the name and the named thing (e.g. Assmann 1984, 84-84). The Greeks, at least from the Achaic Age onwards, enjoyed playing with words. Heracles is one of the few, among Greek gods and heroes, to have a name with an apparently Greek etymology: "Glory of (to) Hera". Hera played indeed a significant role in Heracles' birth: it was her plot that prevented the hero from obtaining the kingship that Zeus himself meant to grant him. Both the poet, while singing the story, and his audience, while listening to him, probably felt the irony implied

in the situation (Burkert 1985, 210). Irony here plays a significant role: never do we find Heracles' name explicitly clarified in these terms. While it is possible that the association with Hera is just a false etymology, Heracles is not the only mythical hero whose name related to the circumstances of his birth – Oedipus being another example.

The prophecy. The tale as preserved in P. Westcar begins with a prophecy, coming from a human being, albeit an exceptional one. In the Deir el-Bahri account, it is Amun who speaks about his intentions regarding the child. In the *Aspis* Zeus expresses his intentions before visiting Alcmena, and in the *Iliad* he declares his will before an assembly of the other Olympians. Zeus' will was the deciding factor when the Greek gods came together; although he would occasionally listen to their advice, “as a good leader should” (Shear 2004, 76), he mostly gathered them when he intended to communicate his decrees.

Birth oracles are widespread in the ancient Near East, including Ugaritic literature and the Bible (Walcot 1967, 61-62). However, the structural similarity between Amun's and Zeus' speeches is remarkable. It starts with an address to the other gods, followed by a declaration of intent and a prophecy concerning the infant, who shall rule his neighbours and lead mankind:

“I have given her all the lands and all the foreign countries [...]. She will lead all the living ones”
(*Urk.* IV 217, 5-6).

- 101) Hearken unto me, all ye gods and goddesses,
- 102) I may speak what the heart in my breast biddeth me.
- 103) That This day shall Eileithyia, the goddess of childbirth,
- 104) Bring to the light a man that shall be the lord of all them that dwell round about,
- 105) Of the race of men who are of my blood. (*Il.* XIX, 101-105)

Goddesses and delivery. A goddess of labour, Eileithyia, is to assist Alcmena. Zeus' words can of course just be interpreted as a more poetic way to say “today a child will be born”, but the description of her actions later on (in verses 118-119) do not fit with such a metaphorical interpretation. In all the Egyptian versions, such goddesses take an active role in the delivery. Attempts to link Hera to Hathor are probably speculative, but the issue can still be considered. In Chapter 2 I discuss the link between the Egyptian hippopotamus deities and the “Minoan Genius”, and the issue of Egyptian and Cretan parturient vessels.

The latter in my opinion can be an indicator of a knowledge of Egyptian deities related to delivery in the Prehistoric Aegean.

A group of elements that we find in the Egyptian version may have been, at some point, incorporated in the Heracles myth because they seemed somehow “compatible” with it. Since nothing can be said for sure about the transition, hypotheses could be deceptive: it should not be forgotten that five centuries separate the reliefs in the Ramesseum (the latest Egyptian account before the Late Period) from the *Iliad*. I would like to argue that the later Greek propensity to recognise their Olympians and heroes in other religions and mythologies could also have been present in the Bronze Age Aegean, as in so many different cultures around the world. One of the possible links triggering the interest for the cycle in the Aegean, therefore, could have been the elements of predestinations characterising the Egyptian monarch – already permeating Middle Kingdom ideology, and which underlies Hatshepsut’s iconography - and Heracles’ nature both as diverter of evil (*alexikakòs*) and legitimate ruler (Burkert 1985, 211).

An understanding on how these tales circulated is a necessary prerequisite for discussing the cross-cultural transmission of some of its elements. P. Westcar, we have seen, could be presenting the motif in the form of a folk tale – though it should never be forgotten that it was a literate elite who produced it – and may be linked to a longer and more complex aetiological myth. The elaboration of the monumental version in temples is a problematic topic. Several hypotheses have been made about their purpose. It would be valuable to know whether the story could have been diffused on a more “popular” level, i.e. whether copies on papyrus were made to be sent around Egypt (Quirke 1996, 265), but there is no hard evidence for such an idea.

Nevertheless, if the “Engendering of the Child” cycles were not confined to the monumental scale, it is possible that foreign envoys who had come to Egypt for an official visit came in contact with it. If so, when could such an event have occurred?

Since the co-regency between Hatshepsut and Thutmose III has been reconsidered, the same shall be true for the former’s *damnatio memoriae* – which does not seem to have begun until late in Thutmose’s reign, and may be linked to dynastic problems rather than to a personal craving for revenge by an enraged king long deprived of his rights (O’Connor 2006, 32-34). We can hence say that it is possible that a narrative about Hatshepsut’s divine origins may have been still circulating during the first part of the reign of Thutmose III. I have already discussed the evidence for diplomatic contacts between Thutmose III

and mainland Greece (3.4), which seem not to be attested during Hatshepsut's reign. Moreover, the Aegean emissaries seem to disappear from Egyptian iconography after the reign of Thutmose III (Panagiotopoulos 2006, 392); *argumenta e silentio*, however, are always difficult to handle, and Amenhotep III too was in contact with the Aegean (above, 4.5). Besides, an appropriate question would be why it is the "Deir el-Bahri" version of the cycle, with the preliminary speech of Amun to the other gods and his prophecy, instead of the one of Amenhotep – in which such scene is missing – that is paralleled in the *Iliad*. Perhaps this is because the decoration of the Amenhotep's temple had not been completed yet (the construction of the temple begun early in Amenhotep's reign, and was protracted until his fourth and last decade), and a specific version of the cycle had not yet been elaborated for it. As for the Ramesseum version, the existence of official connections between the Aegean and Ramesside Egypt is debatable; the lack of evidence for diplomatic contacts may be due to coincidence, yet it is also possible that the situation didn't facilitate political interaction. In Egypt the story is last recorded during the 21st Dynasty, not to reappear until the reign of Nectanebo I (380-362 B.C., much after the Homeric poems were fixed). The walls of Nectanebo's Birth House in the Temple of Hathor at Dendera are decorated with scenes from a version of the "Engendering of the Child" story (e.g. Daumas 1959). Nevertheless, there are significant differences: here, for instance, it is Hathor who gives birth to Amun's offspring, namely the king himself.

Although many of the same elements can be found in other ancient literatures of the Near East, inferring an "intermediate" lost Western Asian version would go against laws of succinctness (1.1). Since the Egyptian version whose elements we find in the *Iliad* is a product of elite culture, it is unlikely to have been transmitted by merchants, sailors or other low-ranking individuals still involved in trade between the two areas. The existence of forms of oral poetry already in Mycenaean times can be inferred on various grounds (e.g. Laffineur 2007; Bennet 2007, 14-15; above, 3.6 and 3.7). Several studies have demonstrated how fast the content of the poems could change, until it becomes completely unrecognizable (e.g. Parry 1971, e.g. 451; Reece 2005). However, I would like to add that, when there are religious implications, the likeliness of an accurate transmission increases considerably. The possibility that what we label as "epic poetry" had different functions among different societies has long been acknowledged (the use as a mnemonic device mentioned in 1.6 being just one example); perhaps material from diverse contexts converged into a particular medium at some point. Given the differences between the Egyptian society and those of the Aegean, it would be extremely difficult to understand

how the motif of the divine birth was originally perceived in the Aegean. Its form and significance would most likely be very different from the one which have come to be familiar to us through Greek mythology, but the elements that have survived can shed some light on what caught the interest of those who first came in contact with it.

4.7 CONCLUSIONS

At the end of Chapters 2 and 3, I have tried to discuss possible trends and diachronic developments in the ways Egypt and the Aegean influenced and perceived each other. In the context of the present chapter, however, I do not believe that such an approach could be adopted. As I have remarked above (4.1), the differences between the societies involved were too significant for an exchange of practices, ideas and motifs to take place, albeit on a very idiosyncratic basis; contingent circumstances, such as a personal relation with Egypt (4.6.1), or the presence of a cluster of stimulating features within an Egyptian tale (4.6.3), could lead to the adoption or imitation of specific Egyptian elements in a Minoan or Mycenaean context. Nevertheless, nothing suggests that Egypt contributed to the emergence and evolution of the Aegean state systems, or to the ideologies supporting them. This is probably why Aegean art shares the Egyptian taste for large-scale chariot scenes and physical activity as a demonstration of strength and prowess, but not the “perspective of importance” (above, 3.6.1; 3.6.2). It is true, however, that our failure to detect Egyptian influences may be at least partly due to our limited understanding of the Mycenaean, and especially Minoan forms of rulership (4.2.2); the diffusion in the Aegean of the Egyptian motif of the falcon, and its derivative griffins (Barta 1973-1974; Ray Porter 2011), may provide a starting point for further research, and perhaps even reveal some new aspects about the local ideologies of power.

There is certainly ground to believe that Egypt did, at some times, play an indirect role in the competition for status and prestige in the Aegean. The Egyptian stone vessels from Knossos (4.3.6), as I have argued, might have been charged by their provenance with a particular significance; how such significance came into being, however, is a different matter. It is possible that it originated from other features, such as their generic exoticness or the materials they were made of, and that the “Egyptianness” only gradually became their most important trait. But to speculate that, at any point, they were acquired with the conscious purpose of imitating the Egyptian elites would be going too far; more elements would be required to make such an assumption, beginning with a good understanding of how these objects were used and displayed.

The evidence from LH III Mycenae suggests a specific local interest for Egyptian exotica. Perhaps there is some continuity with the rhyta reworked in Crete imported in LH I times; however, a situation of on-going trade and political contacts with Egypt, as it was the case during Amenhotep III's reign, might have created the circumstances for a wider circulation of aegyptiaca and a greater appreciation for them. Such circumstances, however, seem to have waned shortly afterwards (Phillips 2005a).

Kamare ware, discussed above, might have been imported in Middle Kingdom Egypt as a semi-luxurious commodity (4.4), perhaps replacing more expensive or utterly unavailable items. If so, its role could only be understood in relation to the metal ware it was supposed to resemble, which is absent in the archaeological record. The appreciation of Aegean commodities in Egypt, however, seems to have been mostly driven by other factors, such as aesthetic tastes or, as the New Kingdom representations suggest, their association with the king's favour. In a similar way, no matter how one wishes to interpret the Avaris frescos, there is no real evidence for the adoption of an Aegean iconography of power in Egypt.

In the sphere of medicine, local developments seem to have stimulated the adoption of specific practices from outside. In the context of warfare, Egypt and the Aegean were both part of a broader Eastern Mediterranean setting which favoured the exchange of technical and ideological features. Regarding power and the state, however, neither the local developments nor the historical circumstances provided a fertile ground for the transmission of ideas, and the few potential issues should be discussed and understood independently.

5 – CONCLUSIONS

When I set out to study the contacts and reciprocal influences between Egypt and the Aegean, my aim was to understand better some of the mechanisms by which a culture adopts elements from the outside. Among the factors that drive the choice of what to import, the most important are 1) the local cultural context, 2) the status of the “giving” culture, and 3) the contingent historical circumstances surrounding the exchanges. After the detailed analysis of the preceding chapters I would now like to discuss whether we can move beyond the topics under scrutiny and learn something about these factors.

Throughout this work, the importance of the first factor, that is, the local context, has been stressed consistently, a whole section being devoted to it in each chapter. In some circumstances, it may be impossible to ascertain whether the presence of a foreign element, such as the hippopotamus goddess in Crete or the Minoan incantations in Egypt, is to be explained in terms of its compatibility with local developments, or whether it may suggest that a whole set of practices and beliefs was adopted from abroad. Nevertheless, I am inclined to adopt a cautious approach: unless there is hard evidence for thinking otherwise, the apparently foreign elements should be discussed for their own sake, instead of being posited to be the only surviving traces of imported cults, thought systems, or the like. This means, for instance, that the Egyptian partiality to medical spells during the New Kingdom probably provided an ideal ground for the inclusion of Minoan incantations in the London Medical Papyrus; we cannot presume that such a partiality is itself due to Minoan influence.

The same goes for most of the material reviewed in this thesis. It is true that some features, such as a taste for warlike scenes and exotic landscapes, were widespread in the Eastern Mediterranean during the Late Bronze Age and that they are likely to have arisen together. This is, however, a generalised tendency probably linked to the diffusion of new military technology and ideology throughout the Near East, in which both Egypt and the Aegean partook, not a taste they acquired from each other. Nevertheless, even within these trends, it is possible that some idiosyncratic elements not shared by other Mediterranean cultures, such as the large-scale scenes with chariots, might be due to a direct inspiration.

The second factor, the status of the “giving” culture, is sometimes highlighted by deliberate, explicit references. One possible instance is the “Egyptian-looking” hydria above the Cretan parturient rhyton discussed in 2.4; one cannot help wondering if such a feature was intended to be a form of non-verbal guarantee of this object’s efficacy because

of its “Egyptianness”. If so, we would have an indicator of the prestige of Egyptian medicine in the Aegean as early as the Late Bronze Age. I have already suggested the possibility, in the opposite direction, that Minoan healing practices, with their ecstatic components, might have had an exotic appeal in Egypt (2.3; 2.7).

More significant here is the status of Egyptian monarchy in the Aegean, and of Egyptian connections as a source of status and legitimacy. The accumulation of Egyptian stone vessels in Neo-Palatial Knossos, their limited circulation within the island, and the comparative scarcity of other types of exotic ware all suggest that these objects were highly regarded commodities in the pursuit of prestige among the local elite, and that the Egyptian nature of these artefacts was integral to the importance attached to them. The presence of Egyptian objects inscribed with royal cartouches in Mycenae, not to mention the possible local imitations, may hint that their link with Egypt and her monarchy charged these artefacts with a special meaning, but not much more can be said about this point.

The issue of how the Egyptians viewed the Aegeans is even less straightforward. The import of Kamares ware to Egypt (4.4), and the Minoanising frescos from Avaris definitely attest to an appreciation for Minoan culture (e.g. Panagiotopoulos, in preparation). I do not, however, entirely share the confidence of Diamantis Panagiotopoulos’ (2006, 394) that the artistic treatment of the Aegean “tribute bearers” sets them apart from other peoples with whom the Egyptians were in contact, granting them a “privileged status”.

A few words should now be spent on the third point, the historical circumstances surrounding the contacts. I have repeatedly addressed the fact that contacts between the Greek mainland and Egypt originally passed through Crete. Moreover, Crete’s first encounter with Egypt probably also passed through the Levant, a fact that certainly had repercussions for Minoan (and later Mycenaean) attitudes towards Egypt (below). Subsequently, during the New Kingdom, Egyptian expansion in the Levant, and possibly to the West beyond the Nile Delta, could have made it convenient to establish direct diplomatic links, and perhaps some form of cooperation, between the Aegean and Egypt (3.3; 3.4). Such links, however, were most likely short-lived and dictated by contingent circumstances such as the military situation in the Levant or the presence of a stronger, “hegemonic” power on the Greek mainland.

As already argued in 3.2.2, the “collapse” of the Late Bronze Age system provides a chronological limit to the present work, but I have deliberately left the issue itself outside

the discussion. It certainly affected contacts between the two areas, but such contacts had already declined significantly by the time the first signs of disruption can be observed.

Finally, I mention briefly some potential perspectives for further research. First and foremost, there are the paths that new discoveries, as well as improvements in the available tools, are opening up. I have already mentioned several of them, such as the possibility of analysing Aegean pottery for residues, so that the results can be compared with the preparations in the Egyptian medical papyri. The discovery of Aegean pottery in possible landing sites on the North African coast would tell us more about seafaring routes from the north: a sherd of possible Aegean origin was discovered in 2008, when I was taking part in the Western Marmarica Coastal Survey project under the supervision of Dr Linda Hulin; the artefact was out of context, but there is potential for more.

Moreover, I believe that topics I have discussed can be expanded by relating them to additional sets of evidence. In Chapter 2 I suggested that, by carefully comparing the Hippocratic corpus, the New Kingdom medical papyri, and the Demotic medical literature we could find out eventual Egyptian influences on Greek medicine predating the 6th century B.C. More broadly, a comparative study of Egyptian and Aegean narrative pictorial compositions, of Egyptian literature, and of later Greek epic poetry may improve our appreciation of how motifs, and perhaps poetry and tales, circulated between the two milieus, as well as more widely in the Eastern Mediterranean. The existence of similar attitudes towards Egypt, such as an appreciation for certain types of Egyptian ware (4.3) shared by both Crete and Syria-Palestine, especially during the Middle Bronze Age, may help to clarify how much perceptions of Egypt and attitudes towards it in the Aegean were shaped by Levantine influences, even after direct links were established (e.g. Bevan 2004).

The limitations in our evidence, especially on the Aegean side, should not be uniquely understood as a challenge, but also as an opportunity to explore new perspectives and to develop new tools; any conclusions are inevitably going to be only temporary steps, but testing them against new materials or future discoveries can tell us whether we are proceeding in the right direction.

APPENDIX 1 – STONE VESSELS FROM CRETE AND MYCENAE

Group A) Egyptian stone vessels from (relatively) secure contexts

Catalogue nr.	Type and date	Material	Context	Location an remarks
KSM RR/61/22	Spheroid Jar (fragments); Naqada II – 3 rd Dynasty	Andesite porphyry	LM IA	Royal Road (North); vessel sawn apart locally
KSM UM/68/249 + UM 68/277 (NP4)	Alabastron (Type A) / Rhyton; Late MK - SIP	Banded travertine	LM IA-II	“Unexplored Mansion”; reworked in MM III – LM I
KSM SEX/78/145 + SEX/80/1131 (L /19\ 37 + G/L /57\ 3036	Alabastron (Type B) (fragments); 12 th – early 18 th Dynasty	Banded travertine	LM IB	Stratigraphical Museum Area, North House
KSM SEX/80/1804 (F/G /43\ 3005)	Lid (fragment); OK – 18 th Dynasty	Banded travertine	MM IIIB – LM IA	Stratigraphical Museum Area
KSM SEX /82/1710 (D /17\ 5288)	Bowl? (fragment); OK	Anorthosite Gneiss	LM I - II	Stratigraphical Museum Area
KSM SEX/82/1653 (D /11\5243	Alabastron (Type B) (fragment); 12 th Dynasty - SIP	Banded travertine	LM I - II	Stratigraphical Museum Area
KSM SEX /79/444(a) (H/17\1278)	Alabastron (Type C) (fragment); SIP – 18 th Dynasty	Banded travertine	LM I - II	Stratigraphical Museum Area
KSM SEX/79/444(b) (H/ 17\1278)	Alabastron (Type B-C) (fragment); 12 th Dynasty - SIP	Banded travertine	LM I-II	Stratigraphical Museum Area
KSM SEX/79/372 (P/Q/11\1518)	Lid (fragment); OK – 18 th Dynasty	Banded travertine	LM I	Stratigraphical Museum Area
KSM HH/56/30	Alabastron (Type B) (fragment); 12 th – 18 th Dynasty	Banded travertine	MM IIIB	“Hogarth’s Houses Area”
HM A 611	Bowl (joining fragments); ED	Andesite porphyry	LM II – IIIA1	Isopata “Royal Tomb” (near entrance); MM III – LM I reworking
HM A 608	Bowl / Closed Vessel? (fragments); 18 th Dynasty	Banded travertine	LM II – IIIA1	Isopata, “Royal Tomb” (near entrance); LM I reworking
HM A 609	Bowl (restored intact); 18 th Dynasty	Banded Travertine	LM II – IIIA1	Isopata, “Royal Tomb” (near entrance); LM I reworking
KSM Box 1671 T I i + HM 1583	Alabastron (Type C) (restored from fragments); SIP – early 18 th Dynasty	Banded travertine	MM III – LM I	Isopata Deposit; probably not earlier than LM IA
HM 1584 + KSM Box 1671, T I i	Alabastron (Type A?) (fragment); late MK	Banded travertine	MM III – LM I	Isopata Deposit

Group B) Egyptian stone vessels from less secure contexts

CATALOGUE	TYPE AND DATE	MATERIAL	CONTEXT	LOCATION AND REMARKS
KSM Box H.I.2 794	Cylinder jar (fragment); Early Dynastic – MK	Travertine	EM II – MM III	Early Houses near “South Corridor”; probably EM II
HM A 56	Spheroid jar; 3 rd – 4 th Dynasty	“Syenite”	LM I –IIIB	South Propylaeum
HM A 47	Bottle / vessel, 18 th Dynasty – TIP	Banded travertine	LM II / IIIA1	Room of the Stone Vases; alterations and additions in LM I
HM A 48	Alabastron (type A); late Middle Kingdom	Lightly banded travertine	LM II / IIIA1	Room of the stone vases; possibly converted into a rhyton
AM AE 1181 (a)	Alabastron (Type C) / rhyton (?); 12 th Dynasty – SIP	Banded travertine	LM II / IIIA1	Room of the stone vases; possibly converted into a rhyton
AM AE 1181 (b)	Closed vessel (amphora?), AM AE 1181 (b)	Banded travertine; 18 th Dynasty	LM II / IIIA1	Room of the stone vases; fragments mixed with AM AE 1181 (a) and others
HM A 263	Lid; SIP (reign of Khyan)	Travertine	Neolithic – LM IIIA1	Initiatory Area; probably not imported before the NK. Inscribed with the king’s cartouche
AM 1910.201	Spheroid jar; probably 4 th Dynasty	Diorite	Uncertain; MM III?	North of the Palace
HM A 2092	Spheroid jar (fragment); 1 st – 2 nd Dynasty	Andesite porphyry	Uncertain; MM III?	North of the Palace
AM 1938.408	Bowl fragment; 1 st – 4 th Dynasty	Diorite	Uncertain; MM III?	North of the Palace
AM AE 2303	Bowl fragment; Early Dynastic	Andesite porphyry	Uncertain; MM III?	
HM A 2170	Cup or bowl fragments; 3 rd – 4 th Dynasty	Anorthosite gneiss	Uncertain	West of the Palace
KSM –	Shape and date not stated	Not stated	EM III or MM III	North of the Palace front; possible rare instance of large scale vessel
HM A 590	Bowl fragment; 6 th Dynasty	Anorthosite gneiss	MM II or III	Magazine of the False- Spouted Pithoi
KSM (1957- 1961) RR/59/55	Alabastron (type B) (two fragments); 12 th – early 18 th Dynasty	Lightly banded travertine	LM IB-III A	Royal Road Buildings, South Site
KSM (unnumbered)	Jar (fragment); 1 st – 4 th Dynasty?	Anorthosite gneiss	None	The Little Palace, no find context
KSM SEX/79/543 (T/37\1112)	Lid (fragment); OK – 18 th Dynasty	Banded travertine	LM II	Stratigraphical Museum Area
KSM SEX/79/427	Closed vessel (fragment); probably	Diorite	Classical or Hellenistic	Stratigraphical Museum Area

(H/29\1264)	1 st – 4 th Dynasty			
KSM SEX/80/1057 (Y/3\3507)	Spheroid jar (fragment); 1 st – 4 th Dynasties	Porphyritic rock	Modern	Stratigraphical Museum Area
HM unnumbered	Jar (fragments); 3 rd – 4 th Dynasty	Diorite	LM II – III A1	Isopata, “Royal Tomb” (near entrance)
HM unnumbered	Jar (fragments); III – IV Dynasty	Diorite	LM II – III A1	Isopata, “Royal Tomb” (near entrance)
HM A 600	Jug (restored from fragments); late SIP – 18 th Dynasty	Coarse travertine (or limestone?)	LM II – III A1	Isopata, “Royal Tomb” (Main Chamber)
HM A 601	Alabastron (Type C) (restored from fragments); SIP – early 18 th Dynasty	Banded travertine	LM II – III A1	Isopata, “Royal Tomb” (Main Chamber)
HM A 602	Alabastron (Type C) (two fragments); SIP – early 18 th Dynasty	Banded travertine	LM II – III A1	Isopata, “Royal Tomb” (Main Chamber)
HM A 603	Alabastron (Type C) (fragments); SIP – early 18 th Dynasty	Banded travertine	LM II – III A1	Isopata, “Royal Tomb” (Main Chamber)
HM A 604	Alabastron (Type C variant) (fragments); 12 th Dynasty - SIP	Banded travertine	LM II – III A1	Isopata, “Royal Tomb” (Main Chamber)
HM A 605	Pot (intact in four fragments); 18 th Dynasty	Banded travertine	LM II – III A1	Isopata, “Royal Tomb” (Main Chamber); Amenhotep III (contemporary to deposition)
HM A 606	Alabastron (or pot?) (intact in four fragments); SIP – 18 th Dynasty	Banded travertine	LM II – II A1	Isopata, “Royal Tomb” (Main Chamber)
HM A 607	Krateriskos (intact); SIP – 18 th Dynasty (no later than Thutmose III)	Banded travertine	LM II – III A1	Isopata, “Royal Tomb” (Main Chamber)

Group C) Vessels from unknown contexts (included on the ground of the presumed dating)

CATALOGUE	TYPE AND DATE	MATERIAL	CONTEXT	LOCATION AND REMARKS
KSM Box 1891	Alabastron (Type C) (one fragment); 12 th – early 18 th Dynasty	Travertine		Unspecified (found by Evans)
KSM Box 1893	Alabastron (Type C) (one fragment); 12 th Dynasty - SIP	Banded travertine		Unspecified (found by Evans)
KSM Boxes O + E4	Alabastron (Type B) (four joining fragments); 12 th – 18 th Dynasty	Banded travertine		Unspecified (found by Evans)
KSM Box 1900	Amphora? (one fragment); SIP – 18 th Dynasty	Banded travertine		Unspecified (found by Evans)
AM 1941.1254 + KSM Box 1891 + 1893	Bowl (various fragments); 3 rd – 6 th Dynasty	Diorite gneiss		Unspecified (found by Evans); possible Minoan reworking
AM 1938:409b	Bowl (fragment); Naqada III - OK	Anorthosite gneiss		Unspecified (found by Evans)
AM 1910:283	Bowl (fragment); 4 th – 5 th Dynasty	Anorthosite gneiss		Unspecified (found by Evans)
AM 1938.409a	Bowl (fragment); 4 th – 6 th Dynasty	Anorthosite gneiss		Unspecified (found by Evans)
AM AE 2310	Bowl (fragment); 4 th – 6 th Dynasty	Anorthosite gneiss		Unspecified (found by Evans)
AM 1938.583	Bowl (fragment); 4 th – 6 th Dynasty	Anorthosite gneiss		Unspecified (found by Evans)
KSM Box O + E 8	Jar (fragment); Naqada II – 5 th Dynasty	Gabbro?		Unspecified (found by Evans)
AM AE 2302	Jar(?) (fragment); Late Predynastic – 2 nd Dynasty	Diorite		Unspecified (found by Evans)
HM A 128	Jar (two joining fragments); 5 th Dynasty - FIP	Travertine		North west of the palace site (found by Hogarth)
KSM (1957 – 1961) unnumbered	Alabastron (Type C) (fragment); 12 th Dynasty - SIP	Travertine		Unspecified (found by Hood)

Group D) Stone vessels of disputed Egyptian origin

CATALOGUE	TYPE AND DATE	MATERIAL	CONTEXT	REMARKS
HM A 46	Amphora or rhyton; mid 18 th Dynasty / LB IIA	Travertine	LM II / IIIA1	Room of the Stone Vases; LM II (?) reworking. Possibly Levantine.
HM A 49	Closed vessel; mid New Kingdom / MM III – LM I	Egyptian travertine (or Cretan banded tufa?)	LM II / IIIA1	Room of the Stone Vases; probably Minoan
KSM Box 786	Closed vessel fragment; 18 th Dynasty?	Limestone?	Mixed; found with LM I – III material	South of the “South House”; possibly Levantine
KSM Box 786	Alabastron (type C); 12 th – 18 th Dynasty	White marble or limestone	mixed	South of the “South House”; possibly local
KSM (1957-1961) RR/60/53	Alabastron (fragment); 12 th – 18 th Dynasty	Travertine (presumably)	LM IB	Royal Road North excavations
KSM (1957-1961) RR/60/404	Alabastron (fragment)	Travertine (presumably)	LM III B/C	Royal Road North excavations; an antique in its context
KSM (1957-1961)	Alabastron (fragment); 12 th – early 18 th Dynasty	Banded travertine	Proto-Geometric (with some LM I – III scraps)	Royal Road Buildings, South Side
KSM (1957-1961) RR/59/589	Alabastron? (fragment); 12 th – 18 th Dynasty	Travertine?	LM II - IIIB	Royal Road North/South, no find context
KSM (1957-1961) RR/59/373	Alabastron? (fragment); 12 th – 18 th Dynasty	Travertine?	LM IB	Royal Road North/South, no find context
KSM RRS/72/652	Alabastron? (fragment); 12 th -18 th Dynasty	Travertine?	LM I – II (IIIA?)	Royal Road, South Side (West End)
KSM RRS/71/203	Alabastron? (fragment); 12 th – 18 th Dynasty	Travertine?	LM IA	Royal Road, South Side (West End)
KSM RRS/72/456	Lid (fragments); MK – 18 th Dynasty	Travertine	EM II – LM III	Royal Road, South Side (West End); probably LM III deposition
KSM [M]UM/72/147	Lid (fragment); 3 rd – 4 th Dynasty	Anorthosite gneiss	LM IA – LM IIIB	“Unexplored Mansion”, unknown context
KSM SEX/81/1322 (F/80\ 4505)	Closed vessel fragment; 18 th Dynasty, possibly earlier	Banded travertine	LM II (disturbed)	Stratigraphical Museum Area, North House; probably broken for scrap, maybe in Egypt
KSM	Closed vessel	Banded	LM I - III	Stratigraphical Museum

SEX/80/1184 (Y/33\3550)	(fragment); 18 th Dynasty	travertine		Area; possibly Minoan
HM A 2142	Alabastron (Type C) (intact); SIP – 18 th Dynasty	Alabaster (or marble?)	MM III – LM IIIC	Mavro Spelio, Tomb VII
HM A 2276	Kernos (large fragments missing); Predynastic?	Serpentine or chlorite?	MM IIIB – LM IIIA	“Temple Tomb”, “pillar Crypt”; possibly local

Group E) Specimens found in Cretan locations other than Knossos

CATALOGUE	TYPE AND DATE	MATERIAL	CONTEXT	LOCATION AND REMARKS
HM A 343	Alabastron (Type C) (restored from fragments); SIP – early 18 th Dynasty	Banded travertine	LM IB	Aghia Triadha, “Villa Reale”
HM – or MA – (unstated)	Alabastron (fragments); 12 th – 18 th Dynasty(?)	Unstated	LM IB	Archanes, Palatial Building, (workshop?); Only possibly Egyptian. Considered raw material?
HM A 3050	Jar (intact); 1 st – 3 ^d Dynasty	Diorite	LM II(?)	Archanes, Burial Building 3; heirloom (?)
HM A 175	Alabastron (Type B) (restored from fragments); 12 th – early 17 th Dynasty	Banded travertine	LM IIIA	Kalyvia, tombs in cemetery. Probably an old heirloom
HM A 176	Alabastron (Type A) (restored from fragments); 12 th – early 18 th Dynasty	Banded travertine	LM IIIA	Kalyvia, tombs in cemetery. Probably an old heirloom
HM 2736	Alabastron (Type C / rhyton) (restored from fragments); 12 th – 18 th Dynasty	Banded travertine	LM IB	Kato Zakro, Palace; probably reworked in LM IB
SM 3151	Alabastron (Type B) (fragments); 12 th – early 18 th Dynasty	Banded travertine	LM IB	Kato Zakro, Palace (exact spot unstated)
SM 2813	Alabastron (Type C) (restored from fragments); SIP – early 18 th Dynasty	Banded travertine	LM IB	Kato Zakro, Palace (exact spot unstated)
HM A 2695	Jar (restored from fragments); 1 st Dynasty	Andesite porphyry	LM IB	Kato Zakro, Palace, Treasury; probably reworked in LM I
HM A 2714	Jar (restored from fragments)	Andesite porphyry	LM IB	Kato Zakro, Palace, Treasury; probably reworked in LM I
HM 2883	Jar (no handles); 1 st Dynasty - OK	Granodiorite(?)	LM II - IIIA	Katsamba, Final Palatial Cemetery, Tomb A; probably an antique
HM A 2409	Amphora (intact); 18 th Dynasty (Thutmose)	Banded travertine	LM II - IIIA	Katsamba, Final Palatial Cemetery, Tomb B; inscription of Thutmose III, but possibly Levantine
HM A 2411	Container (restored from fragments); 18 th Dynasty	Banded travertine	LM II – IIIA1	Katsamba, Final Palatial Cemetery, Tomb B
HM A 2410	Jar (intact); 2 nd – 4 th Dynasty	Diorite	LM II – IIIA1	Katsamba, Final Palatial Cemetery, Tomb B; probably an antique
HM A 2171	<i>Gravidenflasche</i> /	Travertine	LM IB -	Katsamba, Anemomylia

	rhyton ; mid 18 th Dynasty		IIIA	area; alterations between the end of LM IB - IIIA
HM unnumbered	Jar (intact); 3 rd – 4 th Dynasty	White marble	MM IIIB – LM IA	Katsamba, Votive Deposit
HM A 2393	Alabastron (Type B) / Amphora (restored from fragments); MB IIC – LB I or 12 th – early 18 th Dynasty	Banded travertine, separate calcite parts	MM IIIB – LM IB	Malia, Quartier Zita, House Z-α; possibly Levantine, Minoan alterations
KSM MP/70/84	Jar (fragment); Naqada II – 3 rd Dynasty	Andesite porphyry	LM IB	Myrtos Pyrgos
HM unnumbered	Alabastron (Type C) (“incomplete”); 12 th – 18 th Dynasty	Travertine(?)	LM I (possibly later)	Palaikastro, Block O (LM IB)
HM A 911	Jar (mostly intact); 1 st – 4 th Dynasty	Black basalt	LM I	Palaikastro, Block X, House 51-66
HM A 4756	Lid; MB – LB II or MK - NK	Travertine	MM IIB – LM I (mostly)	Poros, tomb; possibly Levantine

Group F) Specimens from outside Crete

CATALOGUE	TYPE AND DATE	MATERIAL	CONTEXT	LOCATION AND REMARKS
NMA 829	Alabastron (Type C) / bridge-spouted jar (large parts of the body lost); SIP	Banded travertine, bronze and gold	LH IB	Mycenae, Grave Circle A, Shaft Grave V; reworking in LM IA, roughly contemporary to tomb deposition
NMA 3080	Alabastron (Type C) / ewer (restored from fragments); SIP – 18 th Dynasty	Banded travertine	LH II - IIIA	Mycenae, Tsountas' Chamber Tombs, Tomb 55; alterations MM IIIA – LM IIIA1
NMA Λ 2919	Jar / (abortive) rhyton (intact); Naqada I – 1 st Dynasty	Granodiorite	LH IIB - III	Mycenae, Tsountas' Chamber Tombs, Tomb 55; alterations LM I – LM IIIA1
NMA 4926	Alabastron (Type C) / closed vessel (restored from fragments); probably early 18 th Dynasty	Banded travertine	LH IIA - IIIC	Mycenae, Tsountas' Chamber Tombs, Tomb 102; MM IIIB – LM IIIA1 reworking
NMA 3252	Alabastron (Type C) / vase (restored from fragments); 12 th – 18 th Dynasty	Banded travertine	None (possibly LH IIIA – B)	Tsountas' Chamber Tombs; reworked in MM III – LM I
BEMM 8484 = MM 1507 (ex-NM 11505; Mycenae Exc. 55-51)	Jar (two fragments); 1 st – 4 th Dynasty	Diorite	LH IIIB	Mycenae, "House of Sphinxes"; MM III – LM I reworking
NMA 3336	Alabastron (Type C) (two fragments); 18 th Dynasty	Travertine	LH II	Argive Heraion, Royal Tholos Tomb
NMA 1851 (probably)	Alabastron (Type C) (fragment); 18 th Dynasty	Travertine	LH II A	Vapheio, Tholos tomb
NMA 1890	Alabastron (Type C); 18 th Dynasty	Travertine	LH IIA	Vapheio, Tholos tomb
Akrotiri Exc. #3835	Jar / (abortive) rhyton (fragment); 5 th – early 17 th Dynasty	Travertine or "limestone"	LM IA	Akrotiri, Sector Δ, Room 17; LM IA reworking

APPENDIX 2 – AEGYPTIACA FROM OUTSIDE CRETE AND THERA

GREECE (EXCEPT MYCENAE)

LOCATION	DATE	CATALOGUE AND DETAILS
ARGIVE HERAION, Royal Tholos Tomb	LH II	Alabastron, alabaster. 18 th Dynasty. (NMA 3336). Bowl, faience. 18 th Dynasty. (NMA 3335).
ASINE, Chamber Tomb I:1	LH II-III	Amulet of crescent with disc, carnelian. 18 th Dynasty. (No catalogue number given).
ASINE, Chamber Tomb I:2	LH II-III A	Bowl, porphyrite. Pre-Dynastic – 4 th Dynasty. (Nauplion Mus. 1307). Pyxis, ivory. Fragment in the shape of a head of duck. Possibly Syrian. (Nauplion Mus. 10553).
AYOS ELIAS, Chamber Tomb	LH IIB-III A2	Scarab, faience. Inscription nb mAat Ra. 18 th Dynasty. (Patras Mus (Agrinion 213).
AYOS ELIAS, Tholos tomb at Seremati	LH IIB-III C	Amulet (?) in the shape of a seated monkey, glazed substance. 18 th -19 th Dynasty. (No catalogue number given).
CALAURIA, Inner hall of Old Temple	LH	Scaraboid, carnelian. Pharaoh charging in his chariot. 18 th Dynasty (early). (No catalogue number given).
CHALKIS (Euboea), Late Mycenaean tomb (?)	LH III (?)	Alabastron, alabaster. 18 th Dynasty. (NMA 13645).
DENDRA, Chamber Tomb 10	LH III A or B	Silver spoon, heart shaped ornament with inward-rolled petals. 18 th Dynasty (but possibly Cypriot). (No catalogue number given).
DENDRA, Chamber Tomb 6	LH III (B?)	Vase, alabaster. Middle Kingdom – 18 th Dynasty. (No catalogue number given).
DENDRA, Chamber Tomb 2	LH III B	40.000 beads, faience. 18 th Dynasty. (No catalogue number given). Alabastron, alabaster. 18 th

		Dynasty. (No catalogue number given).
FARRES (Rhodes), tomb	LH III	Krateriskos, glass. Late 18 th -early 19 th Dynasty. (Louvre Museum E 17436).
IALYSOS (Rhodes), Tomb 9	LH III	Scarab, faience. Two scorpions and a latus-fish. 18 th - Dynasty (Thutmose III?). (British Museum). Scarab, faience. Rearing snake on either side. 18 th -early 19 th Dynasty. (British Museum). Scarab, faience. Inscription Nb mAat Ra. Egypt, 18 th Dynasty (Amenhotep). (BM 70-10-8.130)
IALYSOS (Rhodes), Old Tomb no. 35	LH IIIC	Flask, glass. Late 18 th -early 19 th Dynasty. (BM 1872.3-1.5.100/1). Jug, glass. Late 18 th – early 19 th Dynasty. (BM 1872.3-15.100/2).
IALYSOS (Rhodes), New Tomb no. 61	LH IIIC1	Scarab, carnelian. Osiris seated on throne with Isis behind, inscription “Osiris <i>wn-nfr</i> , king of the Land of the Dead”, and “King of eternity”. 18 th Dynasty (?). (Ialysos Exc. 12.608).
IALYSOS (Rhodes), New Tomb no. 71	LH IIIC1	Scarab, ivory. Pillar of Osiris flanked by worshipping creatures. New Kingdom (Ialysos Exc. 12.861).
LANGADA (Kos), Tomb 12	LH III	Scarab, Ivory. Inscription nsw-bit Imn-Ra. 18 th -21 st Dynasty. (Kos Museum).
LANGADA (Kos), Tomb 42	LH IIIA-C	Scarab, faience. Unreadable inscription. New Kingdom (?). (Kos Museum).
LANGADA (Kos), Tomb 35.	LH IIIB	Scarab, ivory or bone. Inscription Imn-ra; figure of Ra with falcon head before a crouching animal, <i>ankh</i> -symbol. 18 th -20 th Dynasty. (Kos Museum).
LANGADA (Kos), Tomb 50	LH IIIC	Scarab, ivory or bone. Scene with victorious pharaoh subduing his enemies, hieroglyphs <i>nfr</i> and <i>wsr</i> behind

		his back. 18 th -19 th Dynasty. (No context given).
LANGADA (Kos), no context		Scarab, ivory. Horse surmounted by inscription: <i>ntr nfr</i> , before the horse <i>nsw</i> signs. 18 th -19 th Dynasty. (Kos Museum).
LIVADITI (Pylos), Tholos Tomb 1	LH I-II	Scarab, faience. Triple papyrus of Lower Egypt, surmounting a <i>hssy</i> -vase standing between spirals. 15 th Dynasty (Hyksos). (Pylos Museum 33).
KAKAVATOS, Tholos B	LH IIA	Bowl, glass. Possibly Aegean. (No catalogue number given).
KAMEIROS (Rhodes), Mycenaean tomb	LH IIIA2	Scarab, faience. Scene with lion, nude man, bird and scorpion. 18 th Dynasty (late). (BM 64-10-7-910). Scarab, faience. Scene with a man, a horseman, a springing lion and four goats. 18 th Dynasty (late). (BM 60.4-4.93). Scarab, faience. Scene with lion, nude man, bird and scorpion. 18 th Dynasty (late). (BM 64-10-7-910).
KATTAVIA (Rhodes), Mycenaean tomb	LH IIIA2	Scarab, composite paste. 18 th Dynasty (probably). (Copenhagen Mus. 7703)
NAUPLION, unknown findspot	LH (?)	Krateriskos, glass. 18 th Dynasty (?). (NMA 3539).
NAUPLION, Tomb	LH III	Alabastron, alabaster. 18 th Dynasty. (NMA 3523).
NAUPLION (possibly), tomb (?)	LH IIIA-B	Bowl, alabaster. 18 th Dynasty. (NMA 3524).
PERATI, Tomb 1	LH IIIB/C transition	Cartouche of Ramses II, faience. 19 th Dynasty. 19 th Dynasty. (NMA 8087, Perati δ 11).
PERATI, Tomb 90	LH IIIB/C transition	Scarab, faience. Inscription ptH nb mA't. 18 th Dynasty (Mid-Late). (NMA 8428, Perati δ 132).
PERATI, Tomb 108	LH IIIB/C transition	Cartouche of Ramses II, faience. (NMA no 8732, Perati δ 140).

PERATI, Tomb 147	LH IIIB/C transition	Scarab, faience. Inscription <i>imn di t3w.w ʕnh n mry sw</i> . Late 18 th -19 th Dynasty. (NMA 9008, Perati δ 196).
PERATI, Tomb 13	LH IIIC1A-B	Scarab, faience. 18 th -19 th Dynasty (probably). NMA 8164 (Perati δ 36). Scarab, faience. 18 th -19 th Dynasty (probably). NMA 8164 (Perati δ 37). Scarab, faience. Inscription <i>imn-rʕ nb</i> . 18 th -19 th Dynasty (probably). NMA 8164 (Perati δ 38). Scarab, faience. Hawk between two snakes. 18 th -19 th Dynasty (probably). NMA 8164 (Perati δ 39). Scarab, faience. 18 th -19 th Dynasty (probably). NMA 8164 (Perati δ 59).
PERATI, Tomb 75	LH IIIC1A-B	Scarab, faience. A sphinx wearing a disc upon the head, nb sign and I feather. 18 th -19 th Dynasty (probably). NMA 8296 (Perati δ 128). Scarab, faience. Stylised flower in the shape of a cross. 18 th -19 th Dynasty (probably). NMA 8297 (Perati δ 129).
PERATI, Tomb 145	LH IIIC1A-B	Scarab, faience. 18 th -19 th Dynasty (probably). (NMA 8998, Perati δ194).
PERATI, Tomb 30	LH IIIC1	Figurine of Bes, faience. 18 th -19 th Dynasty (NMA 8199, Perati δ 69). Figurine of Bes, faience. 18 th -19 th Dynasty (NMA 8199, Perati δ 74). Five fragmentary figurines of Bes, faience. 18 th -19 th Dynasty (NMA 8199, Perati δ 75). Figurine of Toeris, faience. 18 th -19 th Dynasty (NMA 8199, Perati δ70).

		Figurine of a crocodile, faience. 18 th -19 th Dynasty. (NMA 8200, Perati δ 71)
		Figurine of a crocodile, faience. 18 th -19 th Dynasty. (NMA 8200, Perati δ 72).
		Figurine of a crocodile, faience; fragment. 18 th -19 th Dynasty. (NMA 8200, Perati δ 74).
PERATI, Tomb 31	LH IIIC1	Vase, glass. New Kingdom. (NMA no 8214; Perati δ 88).
PHYLAKOPI, Sanctuary	LH IIIC	Fragmentary animal pendant, pink stone. 18 th Dynasty. (Phylakopi Exc. SF 2008).
PHYLAKOPI, Nle Space c layer 46	LH IIIC	Scarab, faience. Unreadable inscription, possibly made outside Egypt. Mid 18 th -19 th Dynasty. (Phylakopi Exc. SF766).
PROSYMNA, Tomb III	LH III	Figurine of an hippopotamus, Carnelian. 18 th Dynasty. (NMA 6427).
PROSYMNA, Tomb XIV	LH III	Scarab, faience. Inscription <i>ntr nfr imn</i> or <i>imn ntr hs(wt)</i> . 18 th Dynasty. (NMA 8450).
PYLOS, Osmanaga, Mycenaean tholos tomb	LH I or II	Pyxis, faience. New kingdom? (No catalogue number given).
PYLOS, Portico of the Megaron, Palace	LH IIIB	Bowl, porphyrite. Early Dynastic – 18 th Dynasty. (ex-NMA 7795).
SPARTA, Sanctuary of Artemis Orthia	Geometric Context (probably)	Scarab of Sesostris. 12 th Dynasty. (No catalogue number given).
THEBES, chamber tomb on Gerokomeion Hill, site 191	LH III	Vase, glass. 18 th Dynasty. (No catalogue number given).
TIRYNS, East of Building III	LH IIIA	Figurine of monkey with infant, Egyptian blue; cartouche of Amenhotep II. 18 th Dynasty (Tiryns Ec. Co. LXI 36/88 a.12.46).
VAPHEIO, Tholos tomb, within stone cist grave	LH IIA	Silver spoon. 18 th -19 th Dynasty. NMA 1876.
		Alabastron, alabaster. 18 th

		Dynasty. (NMA 1851)
		Alabastron, alabaster. 18 th Dynasty. (NMA 1890).
		Amphora, alabaster. 18 th Dynasty. (NMA 1889).

MYCENAE

MYCENAE, Shaft Grave II	LH I	Vase, faience. 18 th Dynasty. (NA 223).
MYCENAE, Shaft Grave III	LH I	Jug, faience. 18 th Dynasty (possibly local). (NMA 123 and 124).
MYCENAE, Shaft Grave V	LH I	Jar, alabaster. MM III-LM I reworking. 18 th Dynasty. (NMA 829).
MYCENAE, Acropolis	LH I-III	Bowl, diorite or gabbro. Probable Minoan alterations. Predynastic – Early Dynastic Period. (NMA 2778) Vase, alabaster. Old Kingdom. (NMA 2657 and 2650).
MYCENAE, Tomb 515 (Pendlebury) or 518 (Warren)	LH I-III A	Bowl, porphyrite. 1 st -4 th Dynasty. (No catalogue number given).
MYCENAE, area beyond NW side of Grave Rho	LH IIA	Scarab, lapis lazuli. Possibly not actually Egyptian. New Kingdom? (NMA?).
MYCENAE, Tomb 102	LH II	Jug, stone. 18 th Dynasty. (NMA 4923).
MYCENAE, Chamber Tomb 68	LH II-III	Jug, alabaster. MM III-LM I reworking. 18 th Dynasty. (NMA 3080).
MYCENAE, Tomb 81 (probably)	LH III	Alabastron, alabaster. MMIII-LM I reworking. Second Intermediate Period – 18 th Dynasty. (NMA 3252).
MYCENAE, Tomb 526	LH III	Scarab, faience. Inscription <i>ḥr hr</i> . 18 th Dynasty. (NMA 6495.1) Scarab, faience. Inscription <i>m3^ct s3t r^c</i> . 18 th Dynasty. (NMA 6495.2)
MYCENAE, Acropolis	LH III (probably)	Vase, glass. New Kingdom (NMA 4530).
MYCENAE, unrecorded tomb	LH IIIA	Alabastron, alabaster. 18 th Dynasty. (No catalogue number given).
MYCENAE, Tomb 11	LH IIIA	Vessel, glass. 18 th Dynasty

		(possibly local). (NMA 2387.8).
MYCENAE, Chamber tomb 49	LH IIIA	Vase, Egyptian blue. Inscription [<i>imn</i>] <i>hṭp ḥkꜣ wꜣst</i> ; design of lotus leaves in light and dark blue. 18 th Dynasty. (NMA 2491).
MYCENAE, tomb	LH IIIA	Vessel, glass. 18 th Dynasty (possibly local). (No catalogue number given).
MYCENAE, Treasury of Atreus	LH IIIA1	Alabastron, alabaster. 18 th Dynasty. (NMA 95).
MYCENAE, Tomb 88	LH IIIA1	Pyxis, ivory. Egypt or Syro-Palestine, LB. (Nauplion Mus. 1090).
MYCENAE, Chamber Tomb 55	LH IIIA-III B	Jar, diorite. Predynastic. (NMA 2919).
MYCENAE, House of Sphinxes, Room 10	LH III B (mid)	Jar/bowl, diorite or gabbro. 1 st -5 th Dynasty. (Mycenae Exc. 55-51).
MYCENAE, Tomb of Clytemnaestra	LH IIIA2-III B1	Alabastron, alabaster. 18 th Dynasty. (No catalogue number given).
MYCENAE, Cult Centre, Room 31	LH III B	Plaque of Amenhotep III, faience; two fragments. 18 th Dynasty. (Myc. Exc. 68-1000, 69-126).
MYCENAE, Cult Centre, Room 19	LH III B (mid)	Scarab, faience. Inscription <i>ḥmt nswt &y</i> . 18 th Dynasty. (Mycenae Exc. 68-1521).
MYCENAE, House of Shields (various locations)	LH III B (mid)	Alabastron, alabaster. 18 th Dynasty. (Mycenae Exc. 54-565). Alabastron, alabaster. 18 th Dynasty. (Nauplion Mus. 12356, Mycenae Exc. 53-787). Alabastron, alabaster. 18 th Dynasty. (Nauplion Mus. 12359, Mycenae Exc. 53-162).
MYCENAE, Tsountas House, Room Gamma of the shrine area	LH III B (mid)	Scarab, faience. 18 th Dynasty. (NMA 2530).
MYCENAE, Area within Citadel (probably between Buildings M and N)	LH III B (probably)	Plaque of Amenhotep III, faience; seven fragments. 18 th Dynasty. (NMA 2566.1-5, 2718, 12582).
MYCENAE, Citadel House Area	LH III B (probably)	Alabastron, alabaster. 18 th Dynasty. (Nauplion Mus. 14690, Mycenae Exc. 59-230)
MYCENAE, House of Shields	LH III B (mid)	Kylix, faience. Flower pattern on body. 18 th Dynasty. (NMA 7515, Mycenae Exc. 55-216).
MYCENAE, Acropolis, in the	LH III B2	Figurine of a squatting

vicinity of Milonas' "House of the High Priest"		monkey, Egyptian blue; cartouche of Amenhotep II. 18 th Dynasty (NMA 4573).
MYCENAE, Building M, Room M3	LH IIIB2	Plaque of Amenhotep III, faience; two fragments. 18 th Dynasty. (Nauplion Mus. 13-887, 13-888).
MYCENAE, Citadel House area	LH IIIC (middle) or Post-Mycenaean	Alabastron, alabaster. 18 th Dynasty. (Mycenae Exc. 64-774).
MYCENAE, chamber tomb	LH	Amphora, alabaster. 18 th Dynasty. (NMA 3225).
MYCENAE, unknown contexts		Alabastron, alabaster. 18 th Dynasty. (NMA 6251) Jug, stone. 18 th Dynasty. (NMA 6252). Vase, diorite. 4 th -5 th Dynasty. (NMA 9739). Vessel, glass. 18 th Dynasty. (NNMA 2984).

Bibliography

List of abbreviations:

Bibl. Hist. = Diodorus Siculus, *Bibliotheca Historica*.

De Hum. = Vesalius, Andreas (1543). *De humani corpori fabrica*.

DMic. = Aura Jorro, Francisco & Adrados, Francisco Rodríguez (1985-1992). *Diccionario micénico*, 2 vols. (Madrid: Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, Instituto de Filología).

Grundriss = Grapow, Hermann (1954-1973). *Grundriss der Medizin der Alten Ägypter*, 7 vols. (Berlin: Akademie-Verlag).

Her. = Herodotus, *The histories*.

Il. = *Iliad*.

PoM = Evans, Arthur (1921-1936). *The palace of Minos at Knossos*, 4 vols. (London: Macmillan).

RE = Pauly, August Friedrich Von & Wissowa, Georg Otto (1894-1980). *Paulys Real-Encyclopädie der classischen Alterthumswissenschaft. Neue Bearb.*, 83 vols. (Stuttgart: J. B. Metzler).

Schol. Apoll. Rhod. = Wendel, Carl (1958). *Scholia in Apollonium Rodium vetera* (Berlin: Weidmann).

Urk. = Sethe, Kurt & Helck, Wolfgang (1905-1961). *Urkunden der 18. Dynastie*, 7 vols., (Leipzig: J. C. Hinrichs).

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