



'Rich beyond the Dreams of Avaris: Tell el-Dab'a and the Aegean World: A Guide for the Perplexed': A Response to Eric H. Cline

Author(s): Manfred Bietak

Source: *The Annual of the British School at Athens*, Vol. 95 (2000), pp. 185-205

Published by: British School at Athens

Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/30103431>

Accessed: 12/11/2009 07:09

Your use of the JSTOR archive indicates your acceptance of JSTOR's Terms and Conditions of Use, available at <http://www.jstor.org/page/info/about/policies/terms.jsp>. JSTOR's Terms and Conditions of Use provides, in part, that unless you have obtained prior permission, you may not download an entire issue of a journal or multiple copies of articles, and you may use content in the JSTOR archive only for your personal, non-commercial use.

Please contact the publisher regarding any further use of this work. Publisher contact information may be obtained at <http://www.jstor.org/action/showPublisher?publisherCode=bsa>.

Each copy of any part of a JSTOR transmission must contain the same copyright notice that appears on the screen or printed page of such transmission.

JSTOR is a not-for-profit service that helps scholars, researchers, and students discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content in a trusted digital archive. We use information technology and tools to increase productivity and facilitate new forms of scholarship. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.



British School at Athens is collaborating with JSTOR to digitize, preserve and extend access to *The Annual of the British School at Athens*.

<http://www.jstor.org>

‘RICH BEYOND THE DREAMS OF AVARIS: TELL EL-DAB^a AND THE AEGEAN WORLD—A GUIDE FOR THE PERPLEXED’: A RESPONSE TO ERIC H. CLINE¹

(COLOUR PLATES A–C)

THE author of the above-mentioned article comments on the more recent discoveries at the site of Tell el-Dab^a where palatial quarters of the late Hyksos Period and the early 18th Dynasty have been discovered.² For Aegean scholars the most spectacular finds of those excavations were numerous fragments of wall paintings which were identified as Minoan by experts working at the excavations and visiting colleagues. In a lengthy article with 178 footnotes, the main focus of criticism by Cline³ was the change of dating given to the paintings which were attributed by the excavators originally to the Hyksos period (1992) and afterwards

¹ For editing my English I am indebted to Adrian Melman, for reading and commenting on the manuscript I would like to thank Peter Warren. All mistakes remain, however, mine. The source for the illustrations and colour plates, when not stated otherwise, is the archive of the Austrian Archeological Institute Cairo.

Abbreviations:

Bietak, *Avaris* = M. Bietak, *Avaris, The Capital of the Hyksos—Recent Excavations at Tell el-Dab^a* (The First Raymond and Beverly Sackler Foundation Distinguished Lecture in Egyptology; London, 1996).

Davies and Schofield, *Interconnections* = W. V. Davies and L. Schofield (eds), *Egypt the Aegean and the Levant, Interconnections*, (London, 1996).

Bietak, *BSFE* 135 = M. Bietak, ‘Le debut de la XVIII^e Dynastie et les Minoens à Avaris’, *Bulletin de la Société Française d’Égyptologie*, 135 (1996), 11–44.

Bietak, *House and Palace* = M. Bietak (ed.), *House and Palace in Ancient Egypt. International Symposium in Cairo, April 8 to 11 1992* (UZK 14; Vienna, 1996).

Bietak, Hyksos Rule = M. Bietak, ‘The center of the Hyksos rule: Avaris (Tell el-Dab^a)’, in E. D. Oren (ed), *The Hyksos: New Historical and Archaeological Perspectives* (University Museum Symposium Series; Philadelphia, 1997).

Bietak, Une citadelle royale = M. Bietak, ‘Une citadelle royale à Avaris de la première moitié de la XVIII^e dynastie et ses liens avec le monde minoen’, in *L’Acrobate au taureau, les découvertes de Tell el-Dab^a (Égypte) et l’archéologie de la Méditerranée orientale (1800–1400 av. J.-C.)*, Actes du colloque, Musée du Louvre/1994 (Paris, 1999), 29–81.

Bietak, Hein, et al., Exhibition catalogue = M. Bietak, I. Hein, et al., *Pharaonen und Fremde, Dynastien im Dunkel* (Exhibition catalogue; Vienna, 1994).

E&L = *Egypt and the Levant, International Journal for Egyptian Archaeology and Related Disciplines* (Vienna, 1990).

UZK = M Bietak (ed), *Untersuchungen der Zweigstelle Kairo des Österreichischen Archäologischen Instituts* (Vienna, 1975).

CCEM = M. Bietak and H. Hunger (eds.), *Contributions to the Chronology of the Eastern Mediterranean* (Vienna, 2000).

Evans, *PM I–IV* = A. Evans, *The Palace of Minos*, 4 vols. (London, 1921–1935).

² Some more recent publications: Bietak, *Avaris*; id., ‘Dab^a, Tell ed-’, in E. M. Myers et al. (eds.), *The Oxford Encyclopedia of Archaeology in the Near East* vol. 2. (New York-Oxford, 1997 99–101; id., ‘The Late Cypriot White Slip I-Ware as an obstacle to the high Aegean chronology: an abstract’, in M. S. Balmuth and R. H. Tykot (eds.), *Sardinian and Aegean Chronology: Towards the Resolution of Relative and Absolute Dating in the Mediterranean, Proceedings of an International Colloquium, Sardinian Stratigraphy and Mediterranean Chronology, Tufts University, Medford, Massachusetts 17–19 March 1995* (Studies in Sardinian Archaeology, v; Oxford, 1998), 321–2; id., ‘Une citadelle royale’, M. Bietak and J. Dörner, ‘Ägypten’, ‘Tell el-Dab^a’, *ÖJh* 67 (1998) Beiheft, ‘Grabungen 1997’, 1–5; eid., ‘Ägypten’, ‘Ausgrabungen Tell el-Dab^a–Ezbet Helmi’, *ÖJh* 68 (1999), Beiheft, ‘Grabungen 1998’, 5–12; J. Dörner, ‘Zur Lage des Palastes und des Haupttempels der Ramsesstadt’, in Bietak, *House and Palace*, 69–71; id., ‘Die Topographie von Piramesse’, *E&L* 9 (1999), 77–83 (with two coloured topographical maps); P. Fuscaldo, ‘A preliminary report on the pottery from the Late Hyksos Period settlement at ‘Ezbet Helmi (Area H/III, Strata D/3 and D/2)’, *E&L* 7 (1998), 59–69; ead., *Tell el-Dab^a X, The Citadel of Avaris, Area H/III, The Pottery of the Hyksos Period, Part I: Locs 66* (Vienna, 2000), Part II: *The Offering and Execution Pits*, (UZK XVI; Vienna, c. 2001); I. Hein, ‘Ezbet Helmi–Tell el-Dab^a: chronological aspects of pottery’, in C. J. Eyre (ed.), *Proceedings of the Seventh International Congress of Egyptologists, Cambridge, 3–9 September 1995*, (Louvain, 1998), 547–54 (with rhyta shown on figs. 1 and 2); I. Hein and P. János, *Tell el-Dab^a XI Areal A/V, Siedlungsrückstände der späten Hyksoszeit* (UZK 17; Vienna, 2001).

³ See also W.-D. and B. Niemeier, ‘Minoan frescoes in the eastern Mediterranean’, in E. H. Cline and D. Harris-Cline (eds), *The Aegean and the Orient in the Second Millennium: Proceedings of the 50th Anniversary Symposium, University of Cincinnati, 18–20 April 1997* (Liège, 1998), 69–98. Niemeier

	EGYPT	TELL EL DABA	CYPRIOT IMPORTS
B.C.	RELATIVE CHRONOLOGY	GENERAL STRATIGRAPHY	
	Dyn.	C / 1	
1410	A II		
1440	T III	COMPOUND (I) PHASES 1-3	
1470	XVIII H T II T I	PALACE LATE PHASE	
1500	A I	C / 3 PALACE EARLY PHASE	
1530	AHMOSE	D / 1	
1560		D / 2	WP V PWS WP VI BI WS I RLWMW BR I
1590	XV HYKSOS	D / 3	
1620		E / 1	
1650		E / 2	
1680	KING-DOM OF AVARIS NEHESI	E / 3	
1710		F	
1740	XIII	G	
1770		G / 4	
1800	So A IV	H	
1830	A III	I	
1860	S III	K	
1890	XII S II A II	L	
1920	S I	M	
1950	A I	N / 1	
1980		N / 2-3	
2000	XI		
2050	X		

after M. Bietak (1999)

Fig. 1. General stratigraphy of Tell el-Dab'a/Ezbet Helmy with the appearances of Late Cypriot wares.

to the Early 18th Dynasty (1995) (FIG. 1). Doubts have also been expressed about the validity of the new date and on the identification of the paintings as Minoan or Aegean.

I shall try below to show: (i) the context of the paintings in the 18th Dynasty palace quarters in the light of recent research, (ii) why originally a dating to the Hyksos period was considered, (iii) why the paintings should be identified as Minoan, and (iv) that Cline failed to make himself knowledgeable enough about the archaeology of the site of Tell el-Dab^a to give a serious opinion on the excavations and material he has never seen.

I. THE PAINTINGS AT TELL EL-DAB^a IN THEIR STRATIGRAPHICAL CONTEXT

This subject will be treated in more detail elsewhere.⁴ A summary of the most important information according to the recent excavation results (September–October 1999) will be presented here.

STRATUM D/2:⁵ EVIDENCE FROM THE HYKSOS PERIOD (FIG. 2).

From the citadel of the Hyksos period a buttressed enclosure wall (A), remains of a garden consisting of tree-pits (B), a low platform construction (C) which may be a satellite building of a palace, a possible other building of that kind further to the west (D) and, between the two, a water supply system (locus 1157) buried *c.* 2 m deep under the surface of the late Hyksos period, have been unearthed so far. In area H/V a profane settlement (E) was found which was separated from the garden B by a substantial wall. All structural parts, except door-frames were of mudbrick.

Fragments of wall paintings were found only on mud coating within the debris. As far as visible, the motives were purely decorative. In one case hieroglyphs were recognizable. No paintings on lime plaster were found at all in any remains from the Hyksos period. Building C was covered, however, on the outside with crude lime plaster, but without any traces of painting.

The pottery from this stratum is being studied by Perla Fuscaldo and Irmgard Hein.⁶ It shows exclusively forms from the late Hyksos period. Only on an open street, which was littered with broken pottery and probably exposed over a longer period, were there some few sherds which can be attributed to the early 18th Dynasty (locus 66).⁷ Epigraphical material

is unhappy about the late date of the Tell el-Dab^a paintings. He is a supporter of the high chronology. A dating of the paintings at the site of Kabri to the time before 1628 BC is, however, hard to support. The context is a palace at the end of the Middle Bronze Age and nobody, not even William Dever, dates this phase a hundred years earlier into the 17th c. BC. Among the datable finds of this phase is White Painted VI ware which appears in Egypt at the end of the Hyksos Period and lasts till the first part of the 18th Dynasty (after 1600, more probably *c.* 1550–1450 BC) and in Canaan till LB IA (FIG. 1). Also Chocolate-on-White Ware, a marker of the MB/LB transition, was found within this context. About the chronological position of Late Cypriot pottery within the stratigraphy of Tell el-Dab^a see M. Bietak and I. Hein, 'The context of White Slip wares in the stratigraphy of Tell el-Dab^a and some conclusions on Aegean chronology', in V. Karageorghis (ed), *White Slip*

Ware. Proceedings of an International Conference Organized by the A. G. Leventis Foundation, Nicosia, in Honour of M. Wiener, Nicosia 29th–30th October 1998 (CCEM II; Vienna, 2001). The new publication by S. W. Manning, *A Test of Time* (Oxford, 2000), which I consulted only on the internet, offers no convincing evidence for an occurrence of WS I ware 100 years earlier in northern Cyprus than in the south-east. Nowhere has WS I been found within a typical Middle Cypriot contexts, e.g. together with WP III–IV wares.

⁴ M. Bietak, J. Dorner, P. Janosi, 'Die Stratigraphie des Palastareals', *E&L* 11 (2001); M. Bietak, in M. Bietak, N. Marinatos, and C. Palyvou, *Taureador Scenes at Avaris and Knossos* (Vienna, *c.* 2001).

⁵ In area H/I this stratum was given the local designation V, in areas H/II–H/VI the designation *c*/2.

⁶ Above (n. 2).

⁷ Fuscaldo (n. 2).

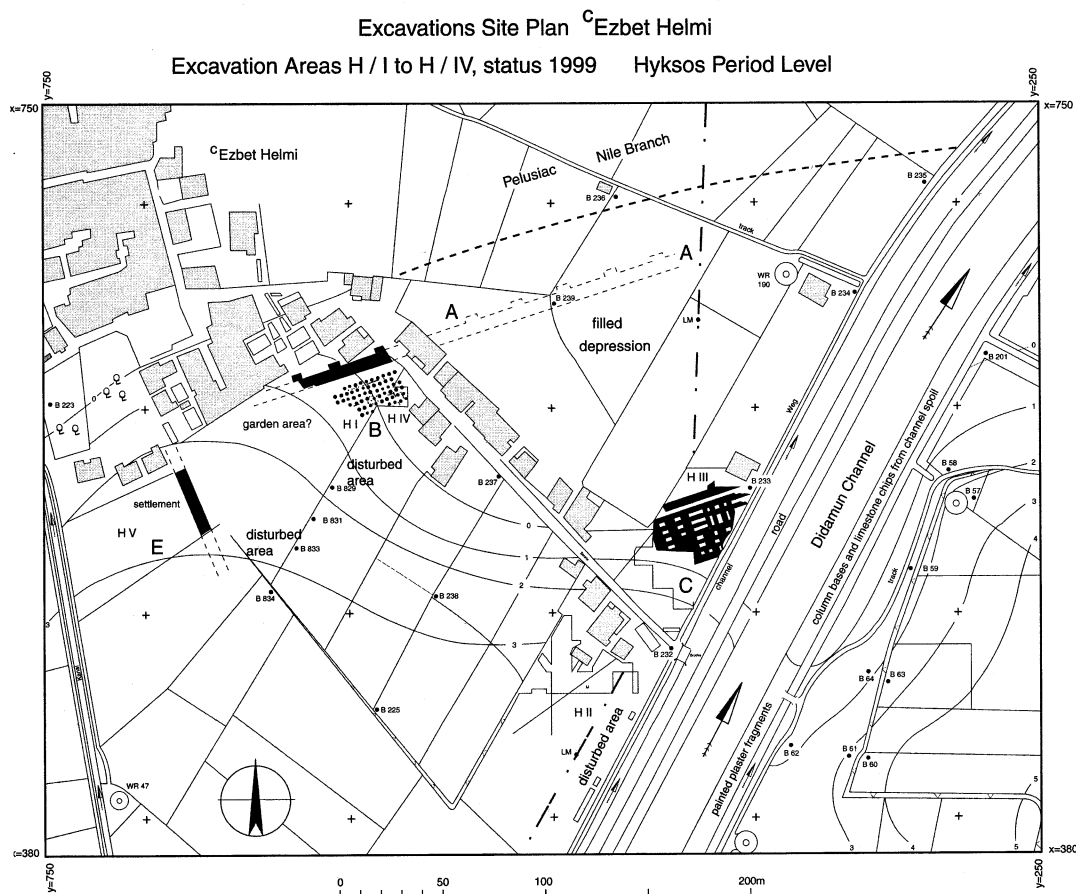


Fig. 2. The palatial district of the Late Hyksos Period Tell el-Dab'a/°Ezbet Helmi.

from this late Hyksos palatial compound consists of a stela of prince Yanassy (probably the Hyksos Iannas of the Manethonian list)⁸ and a small pseudo-naos of limestone with the names of Apophis and his sister Tany⁹ which were retrieved from dredging a canal in this area; finally a door jamb of Hyksos Seker-her (Sikkru Haddu),¹⁰ found as secondary building material in the palace of the early 18th Dynasty (str. C).

⁸ M. Bietak, 'Eine Stele des ältesten Königssohnes des Hyksos Chajan', *Fs Labib Habachi Mitt. Kairo* 37 (1981), 63–71; id., in Bietak, Hein, *et al.*, Exhibition catalogue, no. 133; id., *Avaris*, fig. 52; M. Görg, 'Nachtrag, zur Erklärung des Namens des Hyksosprinzen', *Mitt. Kairo*, 37 (1981), 71–3; id., *Biblische Notizen*, 70 (1993), 5–8; T. Schneider, *Lexikon der Pharaonen* (Zurich, 1994), 137; id., *Ausländer in Ägypten*, I (Ägypten und Altes Testament, 42; Wiesbaden 1998), 53–5; K. S. B. Ryholt, *The Political Situation in Egypt during the Second Intermediate Period c. 1800–1550 BC* (Carsten

Niebuhr Institute Publications, 20; Copenhagen 1997), 120–1, 128.

⁹ W. K. Simpson, 'The Hyksos princess Tany', *Chronique d'Égypte*, 34 (1959), 233–9; I. Hein and H. Satzinger, *Stelen des Mittleren Reiches*, II (CAA Vienna 7; Vienna 1993), 162–4; M. Bietak, in M. Bietak, I. Hein *et al.*, Exhibition catalogue, nos. 130, 131; idem, *Avaris*, fig. 53.

¹⁰ Bietak, in Bietak, Hein *et al.*, Exhibition catalogue, no. 126; id., *Avaris*, fig. 54; Schneider 1994 (n. 8), 274; id., 1998 (n. 8), 40–3; Ryholt, (n. 8), 127–8.

STRATUM D/1.2:¹¹ SILO COMPOUND

Two strata were found in some areas in between the citadel of the Hyksos Period and the palatial quarters of the early 18th Dynasty. The earlier one is a compound with scant remains of numerous circular silos. At least thirty such silos can be estimated in total. Their construction was only 1 brick thick and gives the impression of just a makeshift facility for storing big quantities of grain. The silos were encased on the south and the east by long rectangular magazines with mudbrick pavement. All of this was constructed on top of building remains from the Hyksos period and the impression is gained that the latter were quickly dismantled in order to get building material for the new project. Under the wall of the western magazine a foundation pit was found, consisting of model pottery, model sieves, a model piece of meat, made of pottery with an ink inscription which has not yet been deciphered.¹² Under one of the walls a pit with three male skulls and three right hands was found.

Not a single fragment of lime plaster with wall paintings was retrieved from this stratum.

STRATUM D/1.1:¹³ GRAVES

In areas H/I, H/III, and H/VI pit graves were found; they cut into the remains of the Hyksos Period and the silo complex. Only one of them contained any offerings. Most of the bodies were from males of 18 to 40 years of age. Single pit graves with burials on their back were found within a precinct enclosed by a mudbrick wall on top of the dismantled platform construction C of the Hyksos period. Most of the burials were lined up along this wall and cut into the remains of str. D/2. Also several pits with horse burials were found within this precinct. Outside the wall, shallow pits with multiple burials were found again and again. The bodies were thrown into the pit in a random fashion. Frequent were bodies placed on their stomachs. They were found among the multiple burials but also in single pits. Especially interesting were three pits at regular intervals. All the burials were placed on their stomachs.

There was a striking deep round pit with a diameter of c. 2 m. On the bottom lay two burials on their stomachs. Above them hundreds of broken pottery vessels and numerous stones were heaped. Some more burials were lined up outside the fortification wall A of the Hyksos period, where there were also, exceptionally, three female burials.

As the great majority of burials is male and some show injuries, it seems most likely that they were soldiers who were buried over time. As some of the bodies were incomplete, they may have been moved in an already decayed condition. Some of the burials show negroid features and originated in all likelihood from Nubia.¹⁴ It is well known that in the army of Kamose Medjai Nubians were already playing an important role which continued right into the time of the 18th Dynasty. He and Ahmose also campaigned in Lower Nubia and contact with the Kerma Culture is likely to have been forged at the time. In the following str. C, household ware and silex arrow tips of the Kerma Culture were found.¹⁵

The burials could originate from clearing-up operations after the Thebans took Avaris from the Hyksos. Such interment operations could have taken some time. It is also possible that

¹¹ In area H/III and H/VI, where this stratum alone was found, the local stratum designation is e/1.2.

¹² P. Fuscaldo, c. 2001 (n. 2).

¹³ In area H/III and H/VI the local stratum designation is e/1.1.

¹⁴ K. Groflschmidt, 'Anthropologische Untersuchungen am Skelettmaterial von Areal H/I-VI', *E&L* 11 (forthcoming).

¹⁵ Bietak, Hein *et al.*, Exhibition catalogue, nos. 348, 349; I. Hein, in *Fs S. Wenig* (forthcoming).

here we have the victims of epidemics from an army camp of the early 18th Dynasty nearby. In none of the fillings of the numerous pits were there found fragments of lime plaster with paintings.

STRATUM C:¹⁶ THE PALATIAL DISTRICT AND THE TOWN OF THE EARLY 18TH DYNASTY (FIG. 3)

Into the above mentioned previous strata (D/2, D/1. 1–2) were cut remains of a palatial district which has been partly excavated since 1991; the rest of it was explored in May 1999 through a geophysical survey by Thomas Herbich (Polish Archaeological Institute Cairo) and Josef Dorner (Austrian Archaeological Institute Cairo). This survey was done to clarify the layout of the district beyond doubt. Excavations in areas H/I–VI produced repetitive stratigraphic evidence.

Two phases of the palatial district can be observed. The phases can also be related to the neighbouring structures. According to ceramic studies and scarab finds the second, later, phase dates back to the time approximately of Tuthmosis III (c. 1479–1425 BC). The latest evidence for this phase is a scarab of Amenophis II (1427–1401 BC). The earlier phase ends, on the evidence of a foundation deposit of the second phase, shortly before.¹⁷

So far it is still possible to place the original date of the construction of the palatial district in the early 18th Dynasty, some time after the conquest of Avaris (c. 1530 BC) and before Tuthmosis III (c. 1479 BC). Within the foundation ditches of palace G black rim-sherds have been obtained which in Lower Egypt are typical of the early 18th Dynasty but have a life-span till the time of Tuthmosis III. It is not clear how long the silo compound (str. D/1. 2) was in use and if this compound already dates into the time after the conquest of Avaris, which seems highly probable. It is also uncertain how long it took to inter the burials of str. D/1. 1. On the other hand, the two main parts of the palatial district, the buildings F and G, resemble in their layout and construction what are called the Southern and Northern Palace of Deir el-Ballas,¹⁸ which were used as the headquarters of King Ahmose before the conquest of Avaris,¹⁹ to such an extent that the palatial district at Tell el-Dab^a should be attributed to the same team of architects and the same ruler. Who else would have built a palatial district in Avaris than its conqueror Ahmose? As in this case the silo complex (str. D/1. 2), the burials (str. D/1. 1) and the construction of the palace (beginning of str. C) would fall into the reign of Ahmose, the date of the fall of Avaris should be lowered as much as possible before his 18th regnal year.²⁰ The possibility of the palatial district originating from Ahmose's successors, Amenophis I (c. 1515–1494 BC) or Tuthmosis I (c. 1494–1482 BC) cannot be ruled out. We have, however, no record so far that either had anything to do with Avaris.

¹⁶ In area H/I this stratum was given the local designation IV, in areas H/II–VI the designations c and d were given.

¹⁷ I. Hein, *E&L* 11 (in preparation)

¹⁸ Bietak, *Avaris*, 68–70; id., *BSFE* 135, 8–11; id., *Une citadelle royale*, 37–40.

¹⁹ P. Lacovara, 'State and Settlement: Deir el Ballas and the Development, Structure, and Function of the New Kingdom Royal City' (Ph.D. diss., Univ. Chicago, 1993), 27; id., *The New Kingdom Royal City* (Studies in Egyptology; London, 1997), 81.

²⁰ A date after the 18th year has been postulated because of

epigraphical reasons which are, however, not cogent: S. Hodjeh and O. Berlev, 'Objets royaux du Musée de Beaux-Arts Pouchkine à Moscou', *Chronique d'Égypte*, 52 (1977), 22–39; D. Franke, 'Zur Chronologie des Mittleren Reiches 12.–18. Dynastie, Teil II. Die sogenannte "Zweite Zwischenzeit Altägyptens"', *Orientalia*, NS 57 (1988), 264; C. Vandersleyen, *L'Égypte et la vallée du Nil II. De la fin de l'Ancien Empire à la fin du Nouvel Empire* (Paris, 1995), 216–17. See, however, D. B. Redford, *History and Chronology of the Eighteenth Dynasty of Egypt* (Toronto, 1967), 48–9, and Ryholt (n. 8), 186, who argues for dating the fall of Avaris at latest to the 17th year of Ahmose.

Excavations Site Plan and Survey at ^cEzbet Helmi
Areas H / I to H / IV, status 1999



Fig. 3. The palatial district of the early 18th Dynasty at Tell el-Dab^aa/^cEzbet Helmy including the results of the geomagnetic survey of T. Herbach and J. Dörner.

To the earlier phase of the district is assigned the construction of two palatial structures F and G which were used also in the later phase. The smaller one (F) in area H/I had been described in previous reports as a platform and was originally dated to the late Hyksos period.²¹ It cuts, however, together with its access ramp, into the fortification wall A of the Hyksos period, and rests on a sandbed which also covers A. Structure F also cuts into the tombs of str. D/1.1 as, again and again, human bones were found within the foundation ditches. No earlier tombs other than str. D/1.1 have been observed anywhere throughout the area of H/I–VI. Moreover, structure G clearly cuts into those tombs. The final proof of the contemporaneity of palace F with palace G was obtained from the results of the geophysical survey. Both palaces are part of one and the same system. They are separated by a huge courtyard 150 cubits (78.75 m) wide and are surrounded by a common enclosure wall (H) which crosses the fortification wall A of the Hyksos period. The latter must have been completely dismantled above ground in the time of str. C. Enclosure wall H of the palace shows to the north-east a pylon of an entrance which leads axially into the mid-space between the two palaces.

A channel belongs to the early phase of the palace along the south-eastern outer wall of Palace G. It was later filled in and, in the second phase of the palace, an open corridor or road lined by a new thin inner enclosure wall covered this channel. Palaces F and G continued to be used during the second phase, as can be seen by signs of repair and inserted secondary walls. To this second phase are also assigned workshops in the south and the north of palace G, a compound of houses (I) north-east of the ramp of palace F (platform construction H/I), which can be differentiated in three phases (1–3), (the ‘Workmen’s Houses’ of the earlier literature) and magazines K (area H/V) to the southwest of F.

The system of the palatial district of the early 18th Dynasty has a distinct orientation different to all the structural parts of the citadel of the Hyksos period. The survey also revealed a populous town (O) with Amarna-type houses to the south-west of the palatial district at the same angle, though we are not yet in a position to know whether this town started together with the earlier phase of the palace or developed during the later phase.

The wall paintings can be referred to the early phase of the palace. One major group was found, partly *in situ*, but mainly fallen off the wall of a doorway through the north-eastern enclosure wall H of the palatial district, north-east of structure G (area H/III) (FIG. 3). The other major group was found in dumps deposited north-east of the ramp of the smaller palace F (platform H/I). The form of the dumps (FIG. 4) suggests that they originate from building F. Both major collections included numerous fragments of the same type of painted façade, imitating ashlar masonry with wooden parts painted red. This also indicates that both collections, found at a distance of over 180 m from each other, are parts of one and the same construction period.

The paintings had fallen off the walls in the course of the early phase, as the earliest dumps were deposited before the domestic compound (I) of the second phase had been added to the north-east of the platform. Similar evidence was obtained in other areas. A few fragments of wall-plaster with paintings were gathered from the ditch filling south-east of palace G and

²¹ Bietak, *Egyptian Archaeology*, 2 (1992), 26–8; P. Janosi, ‘Tell el-Dab’a ‘Ezbet Helmi, Vorbericht über den Grabungsplatz H/I (1989–1992)’, *E&L* 4 (1994), 20–38; id., ‘Die stratigraphische Position und Verteilung der minoischen Wandfragmente in den

Grabungsplätzen H/I und H/IV von Tell el-Dab’a.’, *E&L* 5 (1995), 63–71; id., ‘Die Fundamentplattform eines Palastes (?) der späten Hyksoszeit in ‘Ezbet Helmi (Tell el-Dab’a)’, in Bietak, *House and Palace*, 93–106.

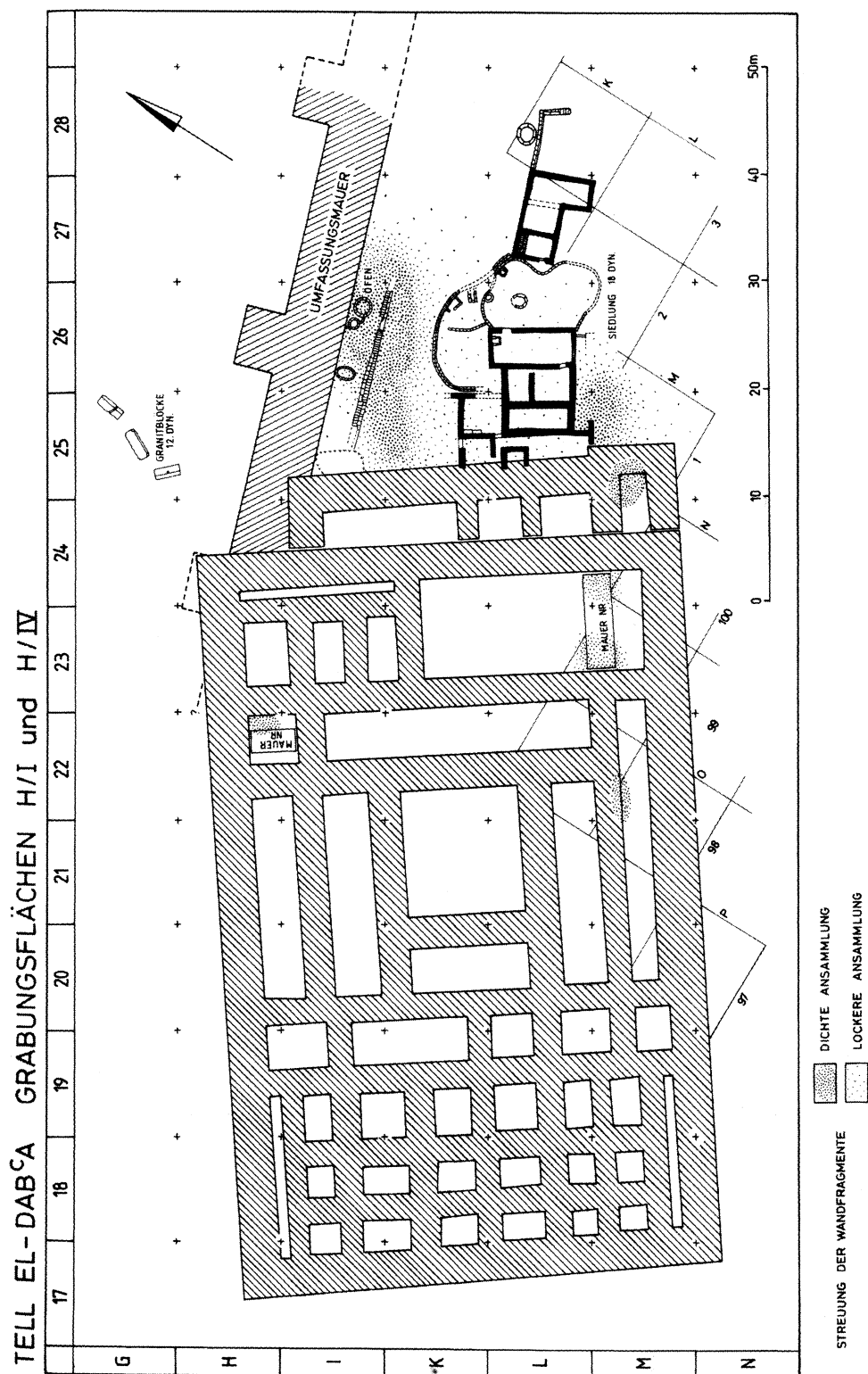


Fig. 4. The substructure of building F (platform H/I) of the early 18th Dynasty (after P. Jánosi, *E&L* 5, fig. 1)

under the magazines K (area H/V). In area H/VI several big rectangular lumps of wall plaster of lime without paintings, fallen off the north-western face of palace G, were found on top of the outer surface of this phase. They covered the area of the foundation-ditch of this building, but were cut by the added-on inner enclosure wall of palace G, which belongs to the second phase (see above). The regular rectangular pieces represent plaster patches as applied to the wall.

The evidence shows that the hard plaster, with or without paintings, must have fallen from the walls soon after it had been applied. Indeed, hard wall plaster of lime, as used in the Aegean, is suitable for stone walls but not for walls of soft building material, such as mud brick. In my own experience with the construction of an excavation house of mud brick, it takes 10 to 15 years till the compaction of such walls settles down and hard plaster can be applied, before which the walls shrink and the inelastic hard plaster comes down quickly. This is exactly what seems to have happened with the plaster on which the frescoes had been painted. Although we have evidence of lime plaster as an unpainted façade cover on one building of the Hyksos citadel, the evidence of the palatial district of the early 18th Dynasty shows either lack of experience with hard plaster or that the paintings were meant to be short-lived only.

To sum up, there cannot now be any doubt that the paintings date to the early phase of the palace of the early 18th Dynasty and that they had fallen off the walls before the period of Tuthmosis III. This result is a conclusive one. What is also interesting is that the numerous fragments of pumice gathered in the palatial district in the workshops of palace G, in palace G itself, and in the domestic compound (I) all date from the later phase of the palace, i.e. from the Tuthmoside period. The bulk of the lumps originates from the eruption of the volcano of Thera. Few are from Nisyros.²²

II. WHY WERE THE PAINTINGS ORIGINALLY DATED TO THE LATE HYKSOS PERIOD? (FIG. 4)

The smaller palatial structure F (platform construction area H/I) was the first unit excavated of the palatial district of the early 18th Dynasty. Abutting the eroded northeastern side of the access ramp of this building was found a domestic compound—the workmen's houses of the earlier literature. Scarabs with the names of Ahmose, Amenhotep I, Tuthmosis I, Tuthmosis II and Tuthmosis III as well as Amenophis II were found within its three phases (see above), and were originally thought to represent the time-span. As some fragments of paintings were found in contexts older than the compound, it seemed logical that the paintings should be dated before the time of the 18th Dynasty, especially as the scarabs of Ahmose and Amenophis I can be attributed to the earliest phase 1, scarabs of Ahmose Nofetari and Tuthmosis III appeared in connection with phase 2, and a scarab of Amenophis II can be associated with phase 3.²³

²² Investigations were made independently by M. Bichler (Atominstitut der Österreichischen Universitäten) with NAA and petrography and by P. Fischer (Chalmers University of Technology, Göteborg) with SIMS. C. Peltz, P. Schmidt, M. Bichler, 'INAA of Aegean pumices for the classification of archaeological findings', *Journal of Radioanalytical and Nuclear*

Chemistry, 242/2 (1999), 361–77; C. Peltz, P. Schmidt, M. Bichler, V.M.F. Hammer, E. Halwax, T. Ntaflos, and P. Nagl, 'Separation and analysis of Thera volcanic glass by INAA, XRF and EPMA' (forthcoming).

²³ I should like to thank Péter Jánosi for his assessment of the stratigraphy of this compound.

In this situation a date for the frescoes in the Hyksos period looked logical—except that the platform (palatial structure F) cuts into the Hyksos-period enclosure wall A (see above). I wondered why none among our critical readers—who were very quick to develop ideas of their own—latched on to this evidence to challenge the date of the Hyksos period. It was on this evidence and the *in situ* finds of more frescoes at the north-eastern gate to palace G that made us cautious and indicate that probably all paintings should be dated to the 18th Dynasty.²⁴

Scarabs, until we have reliable ideas about their time-spans, are a tricky matter. It only turned out later—after Irmgard Hein's evaluation of the pottery—that all three phases of this domestic compound should be approximately dated into the Tuthmoside period and not to the beginning of the 18th Dynasty.²⁵ This would leave some time (between c. 1530 and 1480 BC) for the silos and the graves of str. D/1 and the earlier phase of the whole palatial district (see above).

III. HOW MINOAN ARE THE PAINTINGS?

In his review (pp. 209–10) Cline casts doubts on the validity of the term 'Minoan' for the paintings from Tell el-Dab^aa. He relies in this respect primarily on colleagues who have never seen the originals, nor have ever evaluated and published original Aegean paintings. A statement as 'Knapp in Cline and Harris-Cline (n. 28), 206 pleads for an abandonment of the term "Minoan" in connection with these paintings at Avaris' (Cline, n. 109), is not good enough to characterize the paintings at Tell el-Dab^aa.²⁶ At the same time, consultation with specialists in this field (N. Marinatos, L. Morgan, F. Blakolmer, E. Davis, S. Hiller, P. Warren) who have worked with or at least have studied the originals of those frescoes is neglected. One should also mention two experienced restorers, Yakovos Michaelidis and Aris Gerondas, who have worked with such paintings at Knossos and Thera for over 25 years and who have joined the Tell el-Dab^aa team. Their verdict based on their technical knowledge and experience was unanimous in favour of an identification as Minoan (see also the findings of Philip Betancourt²⁷ and W.-D. Niemeier²⁸).

Even if Maria Shaw, an expert on Minoan paintings, whom Cline cites, stated that the Tell el-Dab^aa artists were not Minoans, if not Egyptianized Minoans,²⁹ she gave this opinion before she had the opportunity to study the originals. The Tell el-Dab^aa paintings certainly do not display more Egyptian features than the paintings in Crete and Thera.

It is not possible to present the Minoan case of the Tell el-Dab^aa paintings within a short response article. This has already been outlined and will be developed elsewhere.³⁰ Let us

²⁴ M. Bietak and N. Marinatos, 'The Minoan wall paintings from Avaris', *E&L* 5 (1995), 62 post scriptum.

²⁵ I. Hein, *Keramik der frühen 18. Dynastie aus Tell el-Dab^aa* (Habil thesis, Univ. Vienna in preparation). For preliminary reports see I. Hein, 'Die Keramik aus 'Ezbet Helmi—erste Eindrücke', *E&L* 4 (1994), 39–43; ead., (n. 2); and ead., in *E&L* 11 (in preparation).

²⁶ B. Knapp himself states, however, in connection with Keftiu and Aegean traders, that the evidence of the Tell el-Dab^aa frescoes indicates that 'contacts between Egypt and the Aegean went beyond the purely commercial', in Myers (n. 2), *The Oxford Encyclopedia of Archaeology in the Near East*, 1. 21.

²⁷ P. Betancourt, 'Relations between the Aegean and the Hyksos at the end of the Middle Bronze Age', in *Hyksos*,

Oren, *Hyksos* 429–32; id., 'Crete', in Myers (n. 2), ii. 71.

²⁸ W.-D. Niemeier, 'Minoan artisans travelling overseas', in R. Laffineur and L. Basch (eds.), *Thalassa: L'Égée préhistorique et la mer* (Liège, 1991), 189–210; id., 'Tel Kabri: Aegean fresco paintings in a Canaanite palace', in S. Gitin (ed.), *Recent Excavations in Israel: A View to the West* (Dubuque, Iowa, 1995), 1–15; W.-D. and B. Niemeier, (n. 3).

²⁹ M. Shaw, 'Bull-leaping frescoes at Knossos and their influence on the Tell el Dab^aa murals', *E&L* 5 (1995), 110.

³⁰ N. Marinatos, 'The Tell el-Dab^aa paintings: a study in pictorial tradition', *E&L* 8 (1998), 83–99; L. Morgan, 'Bull sports and the labyrinth', in Davies and Schofield, *Interconnections*, 29–53; Bietak, Marinatos, Palyvou, (n. 4).

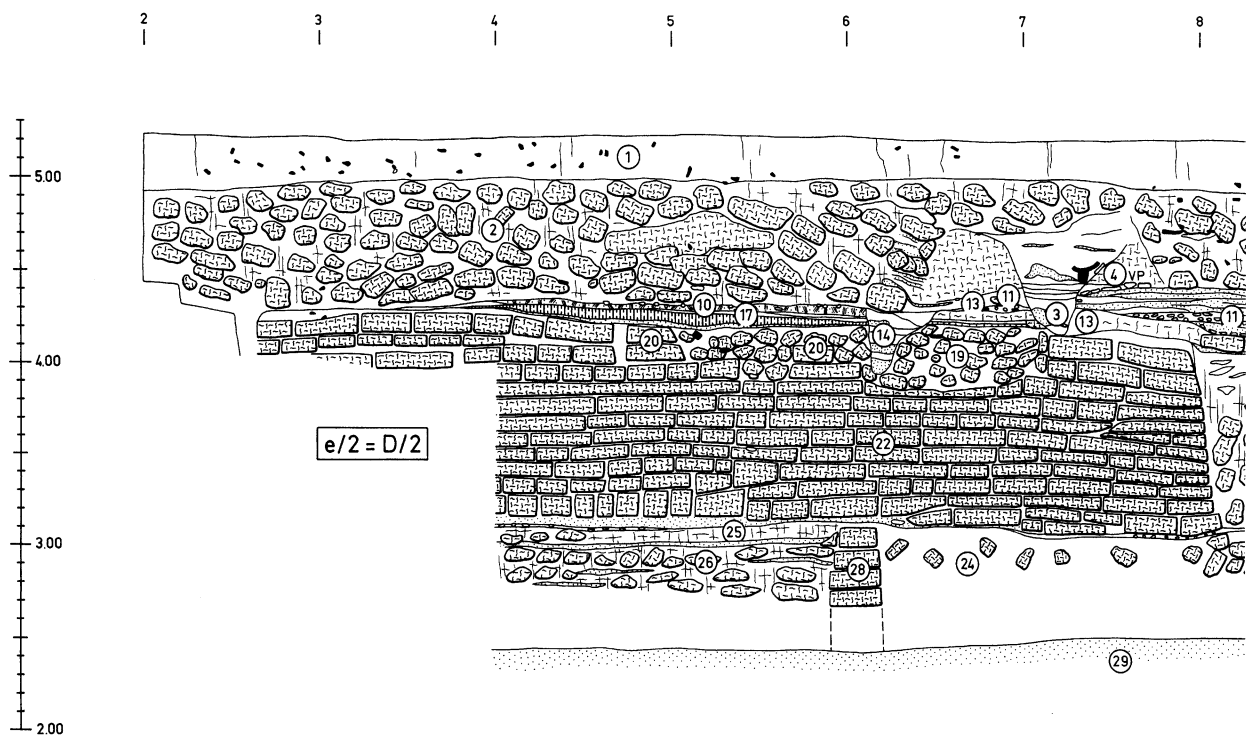


Fig. 5. Section through gate of enclosure wall of the palace of the 18th Dynasty, northeast of palace G (H/III-s/18–19, North section) with plaster and paintings *in situ* (no. 5). See the position of the palatial structure of the Hyksos period below.

consider here only briefly some of the main characteristic features of the newly discovered mural art.

The *technique* using lime plaster in two layers with a highly stone polished surface, string impressions into the wet surface for planning borders and ornaments, painting the first colours on the still wet surface (fresco) in combination with secco—all this is certainly not Egyptian and not Near Eastern. These are techniques first known from Minoan paintings.

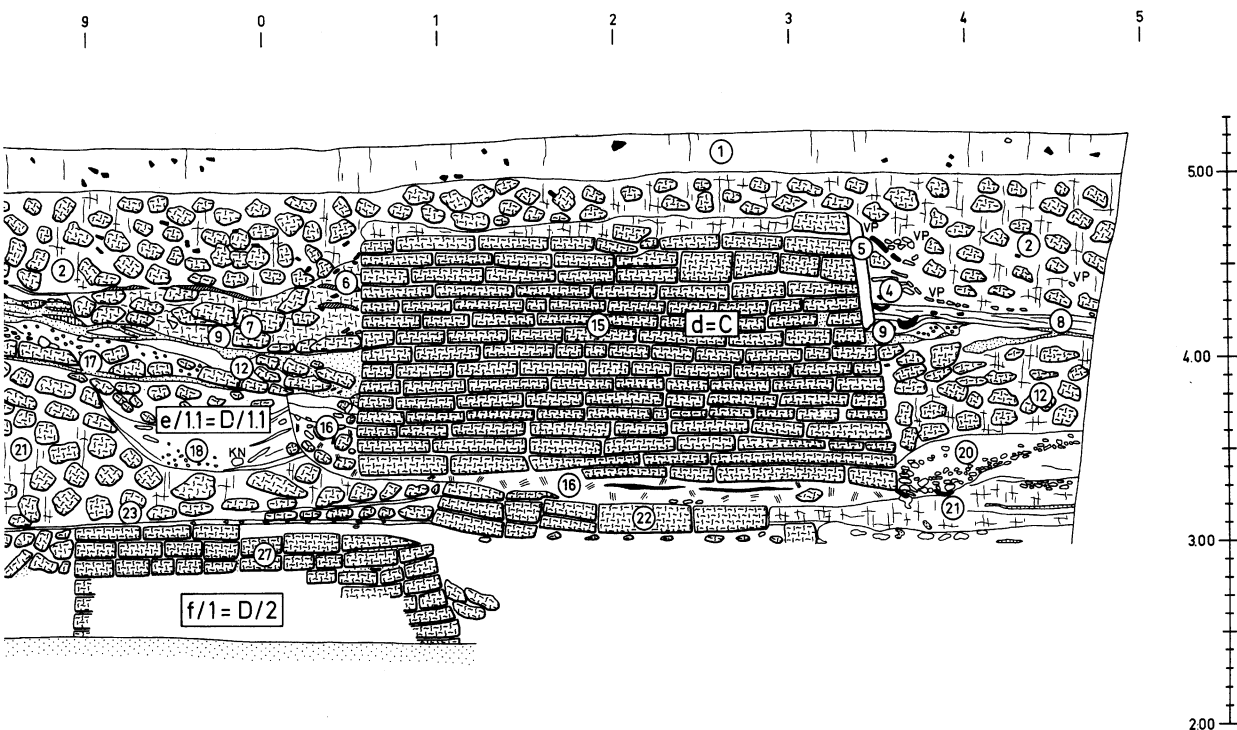
The *colours* used at Tell el-Dab^a are known in the Egyptian and Minoan world.³¹ This also applies to Egyptian blue. But the convention for using, for instance, blue instead of grey is not Egyptian but is Minoan.³² It shows up on rocks or on blue speckled bulls and, blue is also used for representing shaven scalps of youths³³ and sideburns, the former in Tell el-Dab^a and Thera, the latter again at Tell el-Dab^a and at Knossos. This colour convention is known in Egypt only from the Amarna Age onwards and should be seen as an Aegean influence. In the Aegean blue is also used instead of green for plants. It is remarkable that this, with some

³¹ R. Seeber, in Bietak, Marinatos, Palyvou (n. 4), black: carbon, iron oxide; blue: Egyptian blue; white: lime; yellow:

³² C. Doumas, 'Conventions artistiques à Thera et dans la Méditerranée à l'époque préhistorique', in P. Darque et J.-C. Poursat (eds.), *L'iconographie minoenne, actes de la table ronde*

d'Athènes (21–22 Avril 1983) (BCH, Suppl. XI; Athens and Paris 1985), 29–34.

³³ For the shaven scalp, painted blue as a sign of youth see E. Davis, 'Youth and age in the Thera frescoes', *AJA* 90 (1986), 399–406.



exceptions, holds true at Tell el-Dab^a, where the Egyptian colour technology was at the artists' disposal.³⁴ Moreover the use of red to fill the background space, particularly in scenes with landscape, is a feature we look for in vain in Egypt. It is typical of Minoan paintings, particularly the early phase of the late palatial period.

The only anomaly about colour conventions seems to be the yellow skin of the bull-leapers in the Bull and Maze Frieze.³⁵ This colour code seems untypical for the Aegean, while supporters of the theory of female bull-leapers may see here Egyptian influence as yellow skin in Egypt is usually the colour code for females. However, it is unconvincing to base an assumption of Egyptian influence on the yellow skin colour alone while needing the other assumption of female bull-leapers, which met strong criticism.³⁶ In the Aegean, yellow is not

³⁴ Exception: Bietak, *E&L* 4 (1994), pl. 19 b, where green is created by a yellow ground colour, covered by a thinned transparent blue, see, however, *ibid.*, pls. 14 a, 17 b, 19 a, 20 b, 21 a.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 54, pl. 15 b, and Marinatos, (n. 30), figs. 24, 26.

³⁶ The theory of female leapers, which originated with Sir Arthur Evans, is not unproblematic. Contrary to males we have no evidence that gymnastics and hard physical training for girls were part of Minoan ideals and tradition nor do we have such evidence anywhere in the Mediterranean. Anatomical details as well as the phallus sheath of the white acrobats of the Toreador frescoes are unambiguously male. The female breast of one of those acrobats turned out to be

an over-reconstruction (see the new study of the originals by Marinatos and Palyvou, in Bietak, Marinatos, Palyvou (n. 4). See too S. Damiani-Indelicato, 'Were Cretan girls playing at bull-leaping?', *Cretan Studies*, 1 (1988), 39–47; N. Marinatos, 'The bull as an adversary: some observations on bull-hunting and bull-leaping', in: *Αφιέρωμα στο Στυλιανό Αλεξίου, Ariadne*, 5 (Rethymnon, 1989), 23–32; ead., *Minoan Religion: Ritual, Image, and Symbol* (Columbia (NC), 1993), 219–20). Last detailed discussion of the Aegean skin-colour code in favour of female bull-leapers with the relevant bibliography: F. Blakolmer, 'Überlegungen zur Inkarnatsfarbe in der frühgriechischen Malerei', *Ojh* 62 (1993), 5–18.

used only on females but is found on one of the boys at Xeste 3.³⁷ As we have only very little comparative material for the early phase of the New Palace period in Knossos itself, we are better advised not to use this colour as an argument against the Minoan origin of the paintings.

Egyptian *emblems* or hieroglyphs are entirely missing among the thousands of fragments of wall paintings we collected. This is one of the most puzzling observations. If the wall programme had been commissioned for an Egyptian ruler—or even for a high official—even migrant artists would be expected to have been charged with the task of applying emblems of Egyptian kingship. Instead, we find Minoan emblems of royal status such as the half-rosette frieze³⁸—a symbol of the Minoan palace³⁹—the maze pattern⁴⁰ and large representations of griffins⁴¹ as in the throne-room of Knossos. Griffins are also an Egyptian royal status symbol from the time of the late Old Kingdom onwards, but in Tell el-Dab‘a the animal portrayed is the Minoan Griffin (see below Iconography).

The *composition* in combination with the colour conventions of the Tell el-Dab‘a murals is entirely in accordance with Minoan composition, as Nanno Marinatos has shown in her recent paper.⁴² This applies particularly to the landscape scenes and bull-leaping scenes, while landscape in Egypt at that time was rendered only in linear fashion with some scanty annotation about the kind of terrain.⁴³ The example of the bull-leaping frieze with the half-rosette frieze at the base, the background ending in undulation, above it, the red space and remains of an inverted landscape finds parallels only in Aegean art. In this connection attention also has to be drawn to the formulas of feature combinations expressed by N. Marinos, as pebbles + reed, lions + reed, lions + rocks, which can be found in Aegean glyptic art. Also typical are soil types rendered as multi-coloured surfaces with combinations of striated soil + dots + oval rocks, not to forget what are called ‘Easter Eggs’, the striated rendering of river pebbles.⁴⁴

The *motifs* fit perfectly into the Aegean world, such as the above-mentioned landscapes, particularly the craggy Cretan mountains,⁴⁵ the bull-leaping scenes,⁴⁶ floor acrobatics performed beside palm trees,⁴⁷ the felines chasing ungulates,⁴⁸ hunting scenes,⁴⁹ the representation of architectural façades with wooden parts,⁵⁰ as do the *details of motifs*, such as

³⁷ C. Doumas, *The Wall Paintings of Thera* (Athens, 1992), pl. 109, 112. The difference can be seen on the original more distinctly than in the publication.

³⁸ Bietak, *E&L* 4 (1994), pl. 18 b; id., *Une citadelle royale*, 30.

³⁹ e.g. Evans, *PM* II, 590–606, figs. 377–97. Catalogue in S. Immerwahr, *Aegean Painting in the Bronze Age* (Philadelphia, 1990), 193, 199, 204; L. Press, *Architektura w Ikonografii Przegreckiej* (Warsaw, 1967), 101, fig. 44; 103, fig. 45, 214, fig. 92. See also the later representations at Pylos: M. Lang, *The Palace of Nestor at Pylos II* (Princeton, 1969), pl. 139.

⁴⁰ Bietak, *E&L* 4 (1994), pl. 15 b; id., ‘Une citadelle royale’, 30. Bietak and Marinatos, *E&L* 5 (1995), fig. 4; Shaw, (n. 29), 105–13, pls. 1, 10.

⁴¹ Bietak, *E&L* 4 (1994), 32–3, pl. 21; id., in Davies and Schofield, *Interconnections*, 24, pl. 4/3,4; id., ‘Hyksos Rule’ (Philadelphia, 1997), fig. 4.31; see C. Palyvou, in *Proceedings of the 8th Cretological Congress, Heraklion 1996* (in press).

⁴² Above, (n. 30); L. Morgan, ‘Minoan paintings and Egypt, the case of Tell el-Dab‘a’, in Davies and Schofield, *Interconnections*, 33–4.

⁴³ M. Bietak, ‘The mode of representation in Egyptian art in comparison to Aegean Bronze Age Art’, in S. Sherrat (ed.), *Proceedings of the First International Symposium The Wall Paintings of Thera, Thera Hellas, 30th August - 4th September 1997*, vol. 1 (Athens, 2000), 227–33.

⁴⁴ Marinatos (n. 28), 86.

⁴⁵ Ibid., 96, fig. 22.

⁴⁶ Bietak, *E&L* 4 (1994), pls 15, 16; id., in Davies and Schofield, *Interconnections*, col. pl. 1–2, Marinatos (n. 30), fig. 24, Bietak, ‘Une citadelle royale’, 30, 59; Bietak, Marinatos, Palyvou (n. 4).

⁴⁷ Bietak, *E&L* 4 (1994), 50, fig. 17, pl. 17 b; id., in Davies and Schofield, *Interconnections*, col. pl. 3/1; L. Morgan, in Davies and Schofield, *Interconnections*, 39.

⁴⁸ Ibid., figs. 1, 2, 5, 6, 8, 9, 11, M. Bietak, in Davies and Schofield, *Interconnections*, col. pl. 4/1, 2.

⁴⁹ Ibid., col. pl. 4.1; M. Bietak and N. Marinatos, *E&L* 5 (1995), 55.

⁵⁰ Bietak, in Bietak, Hein *et al.*, *Exhibition Catalogue*, cat. no. 227, colour plate.

waz lilies,⁵¹ ivy,⁵² myrtle,⁵³ or the above mentioned 'Easter Egg' pebbles (see below, the cushion-shaped seal).

On *style*, reservations were made by P. Rehak about the proportions of the bulls at Tell el-Dab^a as not being in keeping with the Knossian bulls.⁵⁴ But he based his judgement on the first hand-drawn reconstructions,⁵⁵ not on the original fragments. Secondly the proportions of the Knossian bulls were also merely reconstructed. Since then, the proportions of the bulls have been evaluated on computer by assembling all fragments with bulls into one ideal bull, creating a template, and comparing it with the proportions of a bull on a seal of the early New Palace period.⁵⁶ This worked out very satisfactorily. Moreover, the Knossian bulls have been reconstructed anew with the same methods by N. Marinatos and C. Palyvou, resulting in corrections of the bull proportions to a more compact shape.⁵⁷

The rendering of the animals and their movement in flying gallop⁵⁸ is entirely Minoan. Even the unnatural right angle of the hind legs of the leaping felines (COLOUR PLATE A *a-b*), a very characteristic detail indeed, can be seen, as with lions on the Shaft Grave daggers,⁵⁹ roughly contemporary with our paintings. The subtle shading of the body, the white belly of lions and leopards, the white inner parts of the thighs and even the rendering of the hair of the lion's fur in red⁶⁰, are all not Egyptian, and also show that artists of great skill were at work at Tell el-Dab^a.

The different hairstyles, as displayed in the paintings of Tell el-Dab^a are, as N. Marinatos has shown, Minoan.⁶¹ This also applies to the movement of the hair with the man in fast motion.⁶² Also the dresses, such as the flounced skirt with the double anklets (COLOUR PLATE B *a*), and the acrobats and hunters in kilts and boots, can be only identified as Minoan, not Near Eastern. Rehak's statement about the 'subtle misinterpretations of the costumes and the poses of the bull-leapers' at Tell el-Dab^a⁶³ does not hold close scrutiny. The kilts of the acrobats at Tell el-Dab^a are not in keeping with Rehak's model of the 'breech cloth' which, in his view, is a piece of cloth drawn between the legs and hanging with a front- and a back flap over the belt. This model, which would require a completely open side of the kilt up to the belt, is at odds with several representations of Aegean kilts,⁶⁴ like those of the Chieftain Cup, as was recognized by Rehak himself.⁶⁵ It is true that the relatively long kilts in Tell el-Dab^a, which seem to represent a soft cloth, differ from those of the Knossos bull-leapers. It should not be forgotten, however, that the Tell el-Dab^a representations are earlier and it is perhaps wiser to

⁵¹ Bietak and Marinatos, *E&L* 5 (1995), 58–9, figs. 12, 14.

⁵² *Ibid.*, fig. 13.

⁵³ Bietak, *E&L* 4 (1994), pl. 14 *a*; identification: Morgan, in Davies and Schofield, *Interconnections*, 34.

⁵⁴ P. Rehak, 'Interconnections between the Aegean and the Orient in the Second Millennium BC', *AJA* 101 (1997), 399–402.

⁵⁵ Bietak, *Avaris*, pl. iv–v.

⁵⁶ Bietak, Marinatos, Palyvou (n. 4); *eid.*, 'The maze tableau from Tell el-Dab^a', in *International Symposium*. See meanwhile M. Bietak, 'Tell el-Dab^a/Avaris', in M. Kandler (ed.), *100 Jahre Österreichisches Archäologisches Institut 1898–1998*, (Vienna, 1998), 201–15, col. pl. 25; Bietak, *Une citadelle royale*, 30.

⁵⁷ See Marinatos and Palyvou in Bietak, Marinatos and Palyvou (n. 4).

⁵⁸ Bietak, *E&L* 4 (1994), pl. 19 *b*; *id.*, in Davies and

Schofield (eds.), *Interconnections*, col. pl. 4/2; Marinatos, *E&L* 8 (1998), figs. 1, 6.

⁵⁹ S. Marinatos and M. Hirmer, *Kreta, Thera und das mykenische Hellas*³ (Munich, 1976), pl. 49, 51.

⁶⁰ Bietak, *E&L* 4 (1994), pl. 19 *b*; *id.*, in Davies and Schofield, *Interconnections*, col. pl. 4/2; Marinatos (n. 8) figs. 1, 6.

⁶¹ Marinatos (n. 58), 88, 98–9, figs. 24–33.

⁶² *Ibid.*, fig. 24.

⁶³ Rehak (n. 54), 401.

⁶⁴ Dourmas (n. 37), no. 27 (above left without phallus sheath visible); Evans, *PM* II, fig. 516; see also the clearly curved, cut on terracotta reliefs (*ibid.*, fig. 487).

⁶⁵ P. Rehak, 'Aegean breechcloths, kilts, and the Keftiu paintings', *AJA* 100 (1996), 40, n. 63. However, Rehak did not draw the consequences from this difference, but suggested that the manufacture of the Chieftain Cup was unfinished.

explain the peculiarities of the paintings in Avaris by the time difference with the Knossian paintings, where the bull-leaper representations date already to LM II or IIIA. At any rate, the relatively long kilts in Tell el-Dab^a which lack phallus sheaths are in keeping with representations of bronze votive figurines from Tylissos that are nearer in date to or even contemporary with our paintings.⁶⁶

Finally we cite a few examples of details and *iconography* which show how closely connected the artists in Tell el-Dab^a had been with the Minoan and Aegean world: going back to the yellow bull leaper of the Maze-frieze (COLOUR PLATE C *a-b*), I should like to call attention, not only to the blue armlet on his upper arm with a yellow decoration of running spirals, but also to the representation of his cushion-shaped seal on a leather string at his wrist. When worn for some time, such seals would have indentations at both ends owing to the wear and tear of the leather string. Though our fragment is not well preserved, it shows those indentations quite clearly. Only people living in the Minoan world would be familiar with such details and would represent them in paintings.

Another important instance, already published, is fragments of griffins, from large-scale emblematic griffins against aquatic plants in the background and also fragments of a small-scale griffin (COLOUR PLATE B *b*).⁶⁷ Both of them show the typical hanging continuous spirals of the Minoan griffins as a stylized rendering of the plumage. Both paintings even show the feather-hairs in detail and both have the spirals in black lines accompanied by blue lines with the spaces in between filled in with red triangles and red dots in the centres of the spirals. It is a much more detailed pattern than we see on the large emblematic griffins at Knossos, but it is so perfectly the same pattern as the griffin behind the goddess of Xeste 3 at Thera that it is possible to place the fragments from Tell el-Dab^a on top of reproductions of the Thera griffin, matching them perfectly in style, including the indication of feather hairs.⁶⁸ That does not mean that our artists came from Thera, but shows that they were completely in command of the Aegean iconography of their time. No Levantine apprentices left on their own would have executed such detail so perfectly in the same way. If the examples shown are not sufficient to indicate the Minoan origin of the artists, I should like to know from our critics what is Minoan.

IV. SOME REMARKS ON THE STYLE AND QUALITY OF CRITICISM

It is in the nature of a scholarly enterprise—such as an excavation—that the initial interpretation of evidence may change the moment more material comes to light. It is for that reason we have preliminary reports which of course give preliminary opinions. There is always some risk in using such reports, especially the initial ones. Of course, the blame may be put on the excavators, but it was not with a light heart that we changed the date of the frescoes. We did so after close scrutiny and awareness of the heavy responsibility the excavator owes his colleagues. We could have avoided criticism in the past by sticking to the original dating. Everybody would have been happy with the results, particularly the advocates of the high Aegean chronology.⁶⁹ However the truth cannot be avoided. If anyone feels justified in

⁶⁶ Evans, *PM* III, fig. 313; *ibid.*, suppl. pl. XXXIX.

⁶⁷ See n. 41.

⁶⁸ Doumas (n. 37), figs 122, 128.

⁶⁹ However, even a date of the paintings to the late Hyksos

period (c. 1550 BC) would not support a high chronology which would put the Theran paintings, with the close iconographic relationship of some of their typical features to the Tell el-Dab^a paintings, before 1628 BC.

criticizing us for not having seen the truth at the very beginning, it should be done in fairness and good style. Greater scholars than the present writer have changed their opinions on important issues several times. If you make no error you cannot recognize the truth. This is what scholarship is all about.

There is another problem. It seems as if some colleagues are perhaps overhasty in commenting on the results without carefully reading preliminary reports, basing some of their conclusions on some photographs which were published only in secondary literature and without consulting us on details or new developments. Such direct contacts also give us far more chance of good suggestions and intelligent feedback. The best commentaries were the ones we received from colleagues who were so keenly interested in the results at Tell el-Dab^a that they bothered coming to the excavations to study and comment on the material. Others invited us to special seminars or conferences to discuss the new finds with different experts and provide unpublished information. Such activities surely are suitable to advance scholarship for both sides.

The author of the above-mentioned article was the co-organizer of the Cincinnati conference 'The Aegean and the Orient in the Second Millennium'.⁷⁰ Tell el-Dab^a was—as expected—high on the agenda in the discussions, but neither the excavators nor those who are responsible for the study of its paintings received any notice to join the conference, to provide first-hand information, and to respond to the questions arising in the ongoing discussion. This surely would have improved the quality of debate and of the resulting publications.

Eric Cline has to the best of my knowledge never tried to visit Tell el-Dab^a, nor has he studied its topography, stratigraphy and materials, i.e. pottery, the wall paintings, and other items. All this would have been the precondition for making an informed assessment of a complex site and casting justified doubt on the conclusions of an excavator, who naturally must have a much profounder knowledge of the archaeology of the place than any outsider, especially before final publication. Of course no critic is obliged to face a personal post mortem but, in such a case, he naturally risks making mistakes in varying degrees and making wrong assumptions, as happened indeed in Cline's article. So I would like to give some examples as they appear in the text.

The very first page (199) sets the wrong tone: 'The vengeful Egyptians, bent on erasing all memory of the despised Asiatics, apparently destroyed much of the city and razed most of the buildings in Avaris, . . .' citing W. C. Hayes, D. B. Redford, and M. Bernal (n. 4). One wonders on what basis such a conclusion can be drawn. The record of the excavations is different:⁷¹ 'The latest stratum of the Middle Bronze Age settlement at Tell el-Dab^a suggests that the town was abandoned. We have a little evidence of a conflagration in excavation area H/I but this may be a very localized affair. For the most part the settlement appears to have simply ceased.'

The account at p. 201 is also incorrect: 'Bietak suggests [1986, 82] that the newly refurbished settlement, apparently no longer called Avaris, may have been renamed Perunefer ('happy journey') at this time [1987, 125].' The suggestion was not mine but Labib Habachi's: I quoted it but added 'We are lacking, however, the epigraphic and archaeological evidence to prove this identification, . . .'⁷² and: 'Although the new evidence in Tell el-Dab^a renders this assumption possible, it has not yet provided proof.'⁷³

⁷⁰ Cline and Harris-Cline (n. 3).

⁷¹ Bietak, *Avaris*, 67.

⁷² Ibid., 82.

⁷³ Bietak, *Hyksos Rule*, 125.

Holding himself out as a guide through the antiquities of Avaris for the perplexed readers, the author relies in his assessment of the topography, not on the original topographical maps published by the Tell el-Dab^a expedition, which show the position of ancient Nile branches, but on the subjective interpretation of our maps by David O'Connor.⁷⁴ Cline writes (p. 200 n. 6): 'David O'Connor has recently published a user-friendly map and concise accompanying description of the remains visible and/or excavated by Bietak at the site: Tell el-Dab^a and its environs actually consists of three tells or occupation mounds. The northeastern (and possible outliers in the northwestern quadrant of the general region) is New Kingdom in date,' [by this O'Connor and Cline mean Qantir, the core of Piramesse, an important explanation that they omit] . . . 'a centrally located mound represents a substantial Twelfth Dynasty town, which expanded in size in the Thirteenth and Fifteenth Dynasties'; the word 'substantial' is not correct, better would be 'small'. There follows a facile description of the topographic features of the three mounds. The information is drawn from my preliminary reports, but not everything has been correctly understood by O'Connor and Cline.

One wonders why it is necessary to present a simplified map which omits important topographical details—the historical Nile branch and backwater channels—and also gives in the accompanying text a distorted and partly wrong secondary version of the original presentation of those who worked for decades in this region. An archaeological reader is perfectly capable of understanding the more detailed map of the historical landscape produced by the Tell el-Dab^a expedition. The map drawn by O'Connor (who probably never saw the site) gives a wrong impression. There are not three tells. Only the remains of one mound is visible in the area. The excavators' map also shows besides the historical waterways, the turtle-backs which provided the ideal settlement sites in antiquity. Nor are there only three but several more turtle-backs, some of them with a complicated shape forged by river action. All of this is no longer visible from the surface at all, but covered for centuries by agriculture, as are the remains of the historical watercourses. The historical landscape was assessed by my colleague Josef Dorner with over 800 boreholes and by myself from sedimentation ridges.⁷⁵ The same ancient water lines have since been verified wherever covered by geophysical surveying.⁷⁶

The quality of Cline's assessment of the archaeology of Tell el-Dab^a can be further highlighted when he writes (p. 205) about the discovered Bull and Maze Frieze: 'The scene also recalls/foreshadows the myth of 'Theseus and the Minotaur' and may indicate that the story could be nearly 1,000 years older than previously thought', citing Bietak 1996, 73 who says the opposite: 'While it may be tempting to view the combination of the bull-leaping ritual and the maze/labyrinth pattern here as an early representation of the famous myth of the Minotaur and the Labyrinth, it should be remembered that this myth is a much later tradition and there is no evidence that it goes back beyond the seventh century BC. The maze pattern may be interpreted as a rendering of the bull-leaping ground, . . . '

Most confusing for the reader is the statement of Cline about the lack of Minoan imports in Tell el-Dab^a when he writes (p. 207): 'Bietak's hypothesis of Minoans residing at Hyksos

⁷⁴ D. O'Connor, 'The Hyksos Period in Egypt', in Oren, *Hyksos*, 45, 53, fig. 2.6, 56.

⁷⁵ M. Bietak, *Tell el-Dab'a II, Der Fundort im Rahmen einer archäologisch-geographischen Untersuchung über das ägyptische Ostdelta*, (UZK I; Vienna, 1975).

⁷⁶ E. B. Pusch, H. Becker, and J. Fassbender, 'Wohnen und Leben, oder: weitere Schritte zu einem Stadtplan in der Ramsesstadt', *E&L* 9 (1999), 155–70, figs. 1–2 (lower right section), figs. 3–4 (lower left section), and new areas not yet published.

Avaris'. He must have meant the lack of Minoan pottery in the Hyksos and early 18th Dynasty citadel. He does not return to this subject until one and a half pages later, in the meantime going on to deal with the Minoan/Aegean remains from a very different excavation area and period, the late Middle Kingdom and Second Intermediate period before the Hyksos. This makes no sense in relation to a supposed Minoan presence in the Hyksos and early 18th Dynasty citadel. It is, however, because of the lack of Minoan pottery that I have tried to argue consistently in several publications that the paintings cannot be explained by the presence of a Minoan colony, but as a once-only installation, probably in connection with a political marriage.⁷⁷ So Cline again presents just the opposite of what I have said.⁷⁸

It is certainly possible to go on page by page listing mistakes by Cline in order to show that he has not made himself knowledgeable enough to review the excavations at Tell el-Dab^a. Space is, however, limited, and my presentations of the stratigraphy and the art of the paintings at Tell el-Dab^a above certainly answer the questions raised by him.

Just a few final remarks on the style Eric Cline uses in his assessment which, at times, seems to lose its hold on objectivity and fairness.

If it is supposed to be good taste to use quotations from Moses Maimonides' magnum opus 'The Guide for the Perplexed' out of context to add a cynical note to one's exposé, I should like to leave it to those readers who are familiar with this great Jewish religious philosopher who was a man of noble nature and the highest ethical standards.

One may also ask why it is necessary to exaggerate and distort the proportions of opinion we have put forward. For example the fact that the dates of the paintings were changed from the late Hyksos Period to the early 18th Dynasty is presented as if we had changed our minds several times (pp. 203-9): first opinion dating to the Hyksos Period only; second opinion Hyksos Period and Early 18th Dynasty; third opinion the 18th Dynasty only. This misrepresentation is repeated by Cline within his article no less than five times! This is certainly a gross distortion. In actual fact we have changed our opinion only once, and that is the end of it. First, the paintings appeared in a limited excavation in a context which seemed to date at the time to the Hyksos Period. Second, paintings appeared *in situ* in an early 18th Dynasty context at another excavation area (H/III); this is additional evidence, not a change of opinion. Third, the continuation of the excavation and the new evidence just mentioned led to a re-evaluation and change of the date of the context in H/I. The frescoes in area H/III were never redated (so Cline wrongly, p. 206, last two lines).

Another target of Cline's exaggerated glossing is my suggestion that the paintings could perhaps be explained by a political marriage. He harps on about this suggestion throughout his article (pp. 202, 209, 210, 211, 217) without explaining why and without presenting even a single counter-argument. There is also no reason for criticizing something presented with

⁷⁷ Bietak, *E&L* 4 (1994), 57-8.; id., *Avaris*, 70. I speak in connection with the pottery unmistakably of 'mercantile connections'.

⁷⁸ Only in the very first announcement about the paintings does the editor of my article in *Egyptian Archaeology*, 2 (1992), 26, mention in an abstract the suggestion about a Minoan community in the Delta. I may expect Cline to have also read later preliminary reports. In his n. 7 Cline complains that the results of Tell el-Dab^a appear in several publications simultaneously (what Cline himself and many

colleagues do themselves). I would personally prefer to publish once only but one is asked again and again to contribute written versions of lectures given at seminars and congresses in many different countries. Liza Giddy, Vivian Davies, Eliezer Oren, and others can certainly testify that I produce such manuscripts only very reluctantly and under much pressure. Certainly there is justification in providing information in different versions and languages, especially to colleagues who have difficulties with the German language.

utmost caution as a working hypothesis: 'Mit äußerster Vorsicht möchte ich in Form einer Arbeitshypothese auf die Möglichkeit einer dynastischen Heirat zwischen einem Hyksos und einer minoischen Prinzessin hinweisen. Diese Deutung ist jedoch—dies sei mit aller Deutlichkeit gesagt—einstweilen durch nichts bewiesen',⁷⁹ 'I have proposed very cautiously, as a working hypothesis, the possibility of interdynastic marriage'⁸⁰ and 'Forming a working hypothesis, I have cautiously suggested a dynastic marriage, which might explain the presence of motifs (such as griffins on the same scale as those in the throne room at Knossos) what seem to relate to queenship in Minoan Crete'.⁸¹

The working hypothesis as an explanation for the frescoes in Egypt is not as far-fetched and odd as Cline would have us believe. This option is such a strong contender that Vronwy Hankey independently puts forward the same hypothesis, and wonders why nobody has come up with this suggestion.⁸² Lyvia Morgan suggests that 'the idea that we are dealing with a dynastic marriage has the advantage of being the only plausible suggestion to date'.⁸³

There are indeed several arguments in favour of this hypothesis:

1. Not a single fragment from the wall paintings shows an Egyptian emblem (see above). The suggestion of migrant artists working for an Egyptian court is therefore not convincing as it is inconceivable that an Egyptian king would not demand to have his royal emblems included in the wall programme.

2. We have, however, the typical Minoan royal emblems, such as the half-rosette frieze in combination with the maze pattern, and the large emblematic griffins. They are known from the throne room of Knossos and later from the throne rooms of Mycenaean palaces. As griffins are depicted in painting and in small arts as companions of a goddess or queen who is to be considered as mistress of animals, Helga Reusch, Nanno Marinatos, and W.-D. Niemeier have suggested with good reason that the Knossian throne room is for a queen, not for a king.⁸⁴ This proposition would go to back up the feasibility of such a throne room and for such a queen in Tell el-Dab'a.

3. Dynastic marriages are well-attested throughout the ancient Near East from times from which we have more written records. Anybody who deals with Near Eastern history is aware, that whenever we have direct insight into Egyptian foreign politics—as in the Amarna correspondence dealing with Tuthmosis IV, Amenophis III, and Akhenaten, or the Boghazköy correspondence with Ramses II—political marriages between the pharaoh and foreign princesses of many regions of the Near East are an expedient of paramount

⁷⁹ Bietak, *E&L* 4 (1994), 58.

⁸⁰ Id., 'Connections between Egypt and the Minoan world. New results from Tell el-Dab'a-Avaris', in Davies and Schofield (eds), *Interconnections*, 26.

⁸¹ Bietak, *Hyksos Rule*, 124.

⁸² V. Hankey, 'A Theban "battle axe"', *Minerva*, 4/3 (1993), 13. See E. Meyer, *Geschichte des Altertums*, II (Berlin and Stuttgart, 1928), 54–5, who also suggested a dynastic connection, however of a different kind and going certainly too far. His reasons are: (i) the Aegean motives on weaponry of king Ahmose; (ii) the strange title of the mother of this king, queen 'Ahhotep, as *nbt idbw H3w-nbw* 'Mistress of the shores of Hau-nebut' a region considered at that time in general as the Aegean. As opposed to this identification, which was accepted by many Egyptologists (e.g. A. H.

Gardiner, *Ancient Egyptian Onomastica* I (London, 1948), 206–8) see C. Vandersleyen, *Les Guerres d'Amosis* (Brussels, 1971), 167–74; J. Vercoutter, 'Les haou-nebout', *Bulletin de l'Institut française d'archéologie orientale*, 46 (1946), 125–58; id., *Bulletin de l'Institut française d'archéologie orientale*, 48 (1948), 107–209.

⁸³ Morgan (n. 42), 44.

⁸⁴ H. Reusch, 'Zum Wandschmuck des Thronsaales in Knossos', in E. Grumach (ed.), *Minoica: Festschrift zum 80. Geburtstag von Johannes Sundwall* (Berlin, 1958), 334–58; W.-D. Niemeier, 'Zur Deutung des Thronraumes im Palast von Knossos', *Ath. Mitt.* 101 (1986), 63–6; N. Marinatos, *Minoan Religion, Ritual, Image and Symbol* (Columbia, 1993), 151–5, figs. 122, 128–31, 134; ead., 'Divine kingship/queenship in Minoan Crete', in P. Rehak (ed.), *The Role of the Ruler in the Prehistoric Aegean* (Aegeum 11; Liège, 1995), 37–48.

importance.⁸⁵ Of course neither romance⁸⁶ nor lovely images (Cline, p. 211) had any role to play in this kind of business.

The only serious argument against the working hypothesis of a political marriage is that the motifs displayed as bull-leaping and grappling, hunting and acrobatics are considered to be distinctly male,⁸⁷ an observation not offered by E. Cline. It remains to be seen if this is a serious obstacle or if those features could be linked perhaps to activities to be associated with a female goddess as already proposed elsewhere. It should be remembered in this context that a safe full-scale female representation with flounced skirt and double anklets is the only figure so far at the entrance to palace G (COLOUR PLATE B a). There are also other possible representations of full-scale female representations from area H/I still awaiting restoration and evaluation.

Summing up, the article under review does not add anything new or innovative to the debate about the site of Avaris/Tell el-Dab^ca nor about the relationship between Egypt and the Aegean. What is missing are analytical sharpness and any attempt to prove or disprove anything. One wonders finally what is the point of 21 pages and 179 footnotes, except perhaps to cause even more confusion than necessary about a justified change in dating the paintings of Avaris.

*Austrian Archaeological Institute in Cairo and Institute of Egyptology,
University of Vienna*

MANFRED BIETAK

⁸⁵ Summary and Egyptological literature in W. Seipel, 'Heiratspolitik', *Lexikon der Ägyptologie* II (Wiesbaden, 1977), 1104–7; A. R. Schulman, 'Diplomatic marriage in the Egyptian New Kingdom', *JNES* 38 (1979), 177–93. We also have evidence that already Tuthmosis III had several foreign wives from Syria (H. E. Winlock, *The Treasure of Three Egyptian Princesses* (New York, 1948); K. Sethe, 'Urkunden der 18. Dynastie IV/9–10', in G. Steindorff (ed.), *Urkunden des Ägyptischen Altertums*, iv (Leipzig, 1907), 669.1). We have also some evidence that from the dawn of Egyptian history

marriage was used as a political instrument in the unification process. For the ancient Near East see: M. Liverani, 'Three Amarna essays', in *Monographs on the Ancient Near East* 1/5 (Malibu, 1979), 21–33; F. Pintore, *Lo scambio dei doni nel Vicino Oriente durante i Secoli XV–XIII* (Rome, 1973), 12–32; C. Zaccagnini, 'On Late Bronze Age marriages', in S. F. Bondi, S. Pernigotti *et al.* (eds.), *Studi in onore di Edda Bresciani*, (Pisa, 1985), 593–605.

⁸⁶ So Rehak (n. 54), 402.

⁸⁷ Marinatos (n. 30), 99.



(a)



(b)

BIETAK
TELL EL-DAB^CA AND THE AEGEAN WORLD

(a) Hind quarters of a leopard from area H/I (b) Inlay representation of a lion on a Shaft Grave dagger (after Marinatos and Hirmer, *Kreta, Thera und das mykenische Hellas* (Munich, 1986), courtesy Hirmer archive, Munich.



(a)

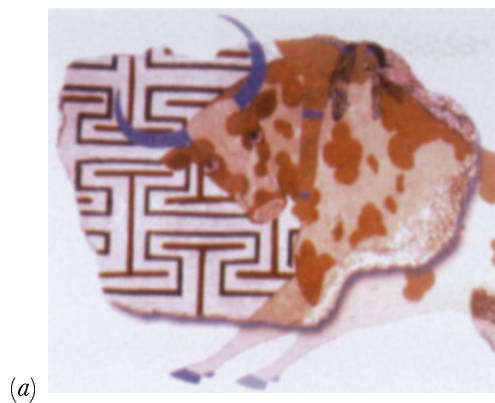


(b)

BIETAK

TELL EL-DAB^{CA} AND THE AEGEAN WORLD

- (a) Lower part of a flounced skirt with the legs of a lady with double anklets from area H/III (b) Fragments of a representation of a small scale griffin from Tell el-Dab^{CA}/Ezbet Helmy, area H/I in comparison to the griffin in Xeste III in Thera (after C. Doumas, *The Wall Paintings of Thera*, nos. 122 and 128 (courtesy The Thera Foundation))



(a)



(b)



(c)

BIETAK

TELL EL-DAB^a AND THE AEGEAN WORLD

(a–c) A yellow taureador from Tell el-Dab^a/Ezbet Helmy (area H/I) with a cushion shaped seal on a leather string at the wrist. See the indentations at the sides of the seal (reconstruction (a) after Bietak, Marinatos, Palyvou 1997)