

Entanglements

Amenhotep III's Aegean Embassy

Biography of Object

- Deciphering the narrative(s) of the object:
 - Objects have a life history
 - Objects change through their existence & may acquire histories
 - We should not focus on just one point in their existence
 - We should consider their production, exchange, consumption, deposition & excavation



Cylinder seal, Ayia Paraskevi

Biography of Objects

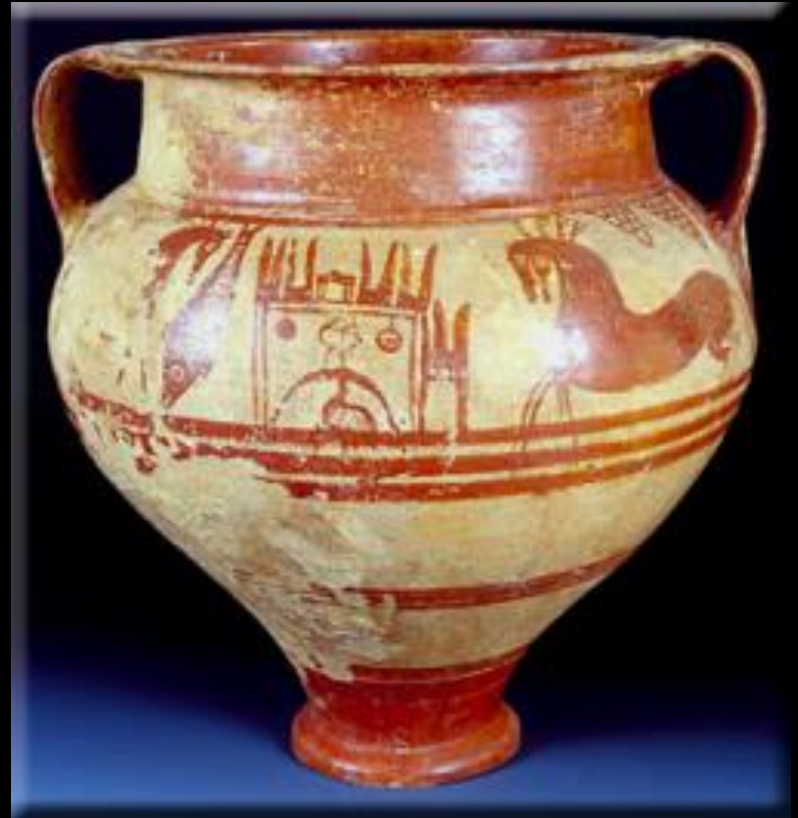
- Objects may derive significance from people & events to which they are connected
- Fame of objects & renown of people are mutual
 - Objects gain value through links to powerful people
 - An individual's prestige is enhanced through possession of well-known objects



Amenhotep III
commemorative scarab

Acquiring Histories

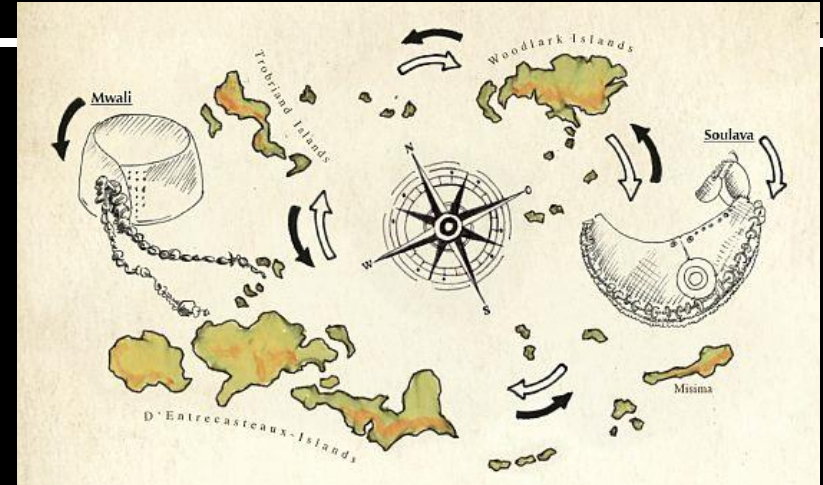
- Movement of objects between cultures:
- “what is significant about the adoption of alien objects ... is not the fact that they are adopted, but the way in which they are culturally redefined & put to use” (Kopytoff 1986, 67)
 - Acquiring new meanings, uses, values...



Mycenaean chariot krater,
Kalavassos

Things in Motion

- Itinerary of Object:
 - Explores movement as a fundamental capacity of things
- “Traces the strings of places where objects come to rest or are active., the routes through which they circulate, & the means by which they are moved” (Joyce & Gillespie 2015, 3)
- Spatial & temporal approach looking at the **flow of things**
 - Captures the **dynamics** of the excavated object, as it emerges from the earth & enters new social contexts



Aegean-Egyptian Relations

- Reign of Amenhotep III & Amarna period:
 - Final contact with Crete
 - Mycenaean Greece involved in international exchanges
- **Kom el-Hetan:** textual evidence for diplomatic envoy to Aegean
- Greece & Egypt: archaeological evidence for contacts



Amenhotep III & Queen Tiye

Kom el-Hetan

- Lists main Egyptian exchange & diplomatic partners
- Toponyms recorded in cartouches under captured individuals:
 - Egyptian claim for control over known world?
 - Represents Egyptian cosmological view of the world?
 - Or generic representations of foreigners (usually Asiatics)?



Aegean List

Kom el-Hetan

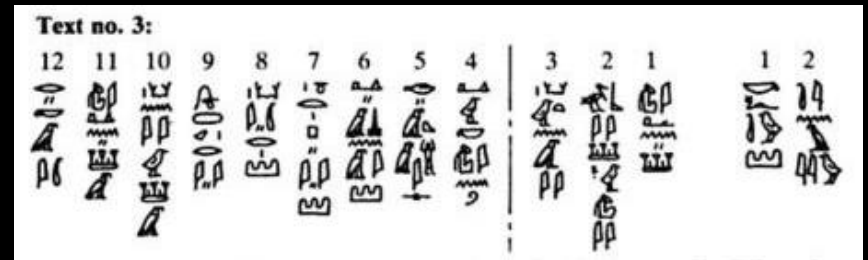
- Mortuary temple of Amenhotep III: 5 statue bases inscribed with lists of toponyms
 - A_N: major powers (Mitanni, Babylonia, Hatti) & North Syrian states (eg. Carchemish)
 - B_N: minor Syro-Palestinian states
 - C_N: damaged but also minor Syro-Palestinian states
 - D_N: Mesopotamia (Aramaeans, Ashur, Babylon)



Kom el-Hetan

Kom el-Hetan: the Aegean List

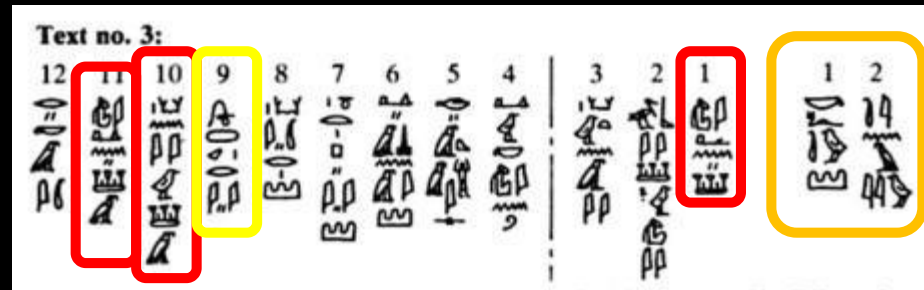
- E_N = the so-called Aegean List
- Different arrangement to other lists (only 15 toponyms survive):
 - 12/13 on left side
 - 2 on right side
- Damaged: problems with transliteration & interpretation



Aegean List

The Aegean List

- E_N : right hand names are head names for list
- Identify this as Aegean:
 - Keftiu
 - Tanaju (Danaia)
(Argolid/Peloponnese?)
- Left side identified with important LH/LM III Aegean centres:
 - Amnisa = Amnisos
 - Kunusa = Knossos
 - Wiri (Wili): possibly = Ilios/Troy?
Now thought to be Eleia (Crete)



Aegean List

The Aegean List

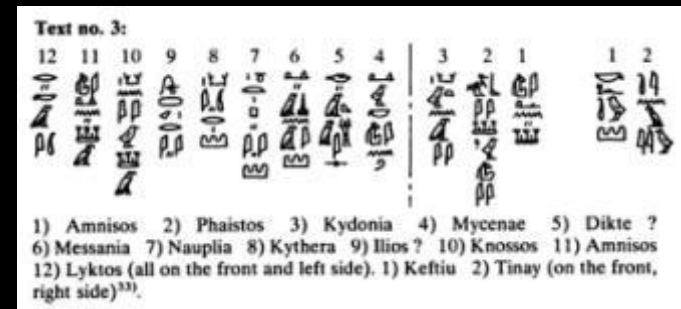
- Possibly reflects Egyptian (perceived) dominance over the **known** world?
- Is this a political/economic reality of the mid 18th dynasty?
- ...or aggrandising propaganda?
- ...or an anachronistic copying of earlier source?
- Tanaju: first recorded in Annals of Thutmose III:
 - Messengers from *tnj* brought pharaoh *jnw* of metal vessels
- But no earlier reference to **places** in the Aegean
- Or is this an historical account?
 - A record of an Egyptian diplomatic embassy to the Aegean

An Aegean Embassy?

- Toponyms arranged accurately in 2 geographic groups (Crete & Peloponnese)
- Possibly records a voyage around the Aegean:
 - **1:** *Jmnš* (Amnisos), *Byšt* (Phaistos), *Ktny* (Chania)
 - **2:** *Mki(n)* (Mycenae), *Dkis* (?), *Mdnj* (Messenia), *Npry* (Nauplion)
 - **3:** *Ktr* (Kythera)
 - **4:** *Wiri* (Eleia), *Knš* (Knossos), *Jmnš* (Amnisos), *Rkt* (Lyktos), (& Siteia?)



The Aegean



Amenhotep III in the Aegean

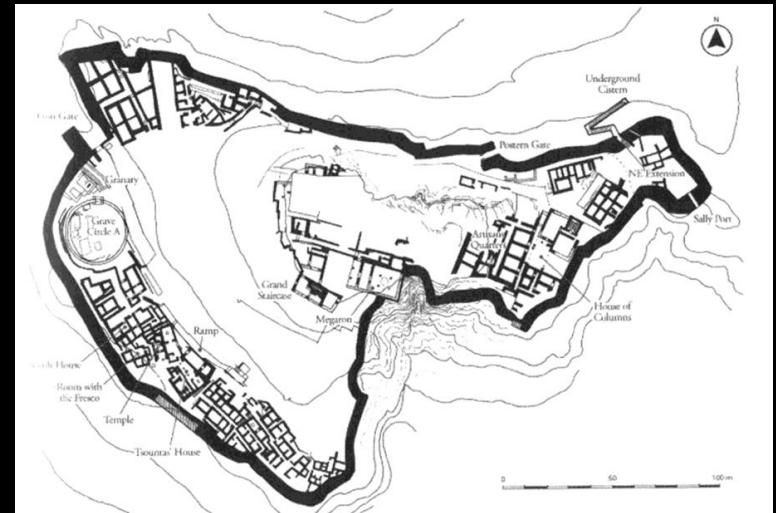
- Correlation of Aegean List with Egyptian named royal objects in the Aegean:
 - Mycenae: Amenhotep III faience plaques
 - Mycenae & Crete (Knossos, Khania & Phaistos): Amenhotep III & Queen Tiye scarabs & stamp seals



Faience plaques, Mycenae

Amenhotep III in the Aegean

- Objects found in LH IIIA-B contexts within royal space:
 - Arrived in Aegean in LH IIIA:1?
- Presented by posited Egyptian embassy to Mycenaean *wanax*?



Mycenae

Faience Plaques

- 9-11 fragmentary plaques found at Mycenae
- Inscribed both sides with nomen & prenomen of Amenhotep III & standard epithets:
 - *nṯr nfr (Nb-m3' t-R') s3 R' (jmn-htp h3 w3st) dj 'nh*
 - The Good God (Neb-maat-Ra) Son of Ra (Amenhotep ruler of Thebes) Given Life



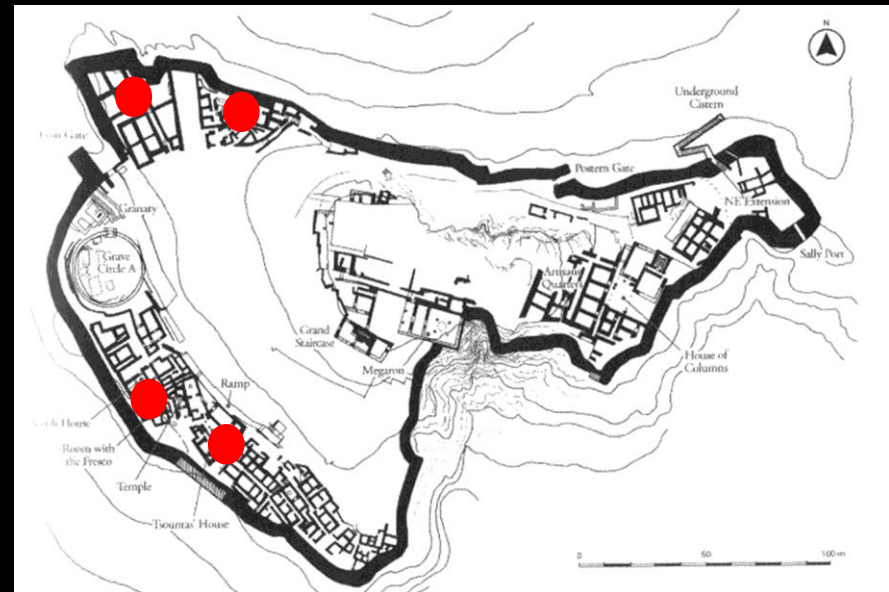
Reconstructed plaque

Faience Plaques

- Broken & scattered throughout citadel:
- Cult centre: also found Queen Tiye scarab
- LH IIIB find context – carefully curated?
- Egypt: votive function
- Mycenae: found in votive deposits, associated with figurines & idols



Plaque fragments



Egyptian Royal Named Objects

- Significance of royal named objects from Egypt?
- Very potent gift: proof of pharaoh's authority in diplomatic/economic transactions?
- Amenhotep III & Queen Tiye: royal ownership
 - Scarabs (etc) & Egyptian king were **partible**: scarabs conceptualised as part of the king & have considerable agency over long distances (& time)
 - **Inalienable possessions & biographical objects**: enhance prestige & status of their owners
 - Greeting gifts: *šulmanu*

Malkata: Amenhotep III's Sed Palace

- Palace: fragments of painted plaster
- Technically & iconographically Egyptian:
 - *Tempera* technique on gypsum plaster
- Aegeanising iconography:
 - Tributaries from Keftiu (archaising image)
 - Background of rosettes & bucrania



Malkata painted plaster

Malkata: Amenhotep III's Sed Palace

- Inspired by monumental wall-painting of the Aegean palaces?
- Influence of crafted objects:
 - Textiles
 - Plate metal
- International style



Enkomi silver bowl

Amarna Papyrus

- Amarna House R43.4:
 - Chapel for the divine king
- Fragmentary scene of fight between Egyptians & Libyans
- Individuals apparently wearing boars' tusk helmet (but Egyptian kilt):
 - Mycenaean mercenaries?
- Fragments of boars tusk helmet found at Qantir (Pi-Ramesse)



Amarna papyrus fragment

Mycenaeans and Amarna

- Largest corpus of Mycenaean pottery in Egypt:
 - Some 2000 sherds & c.600 vessels
- Mostly in rubbish dumps associated with Record Office (of royal scribes)
 - Closely associated with court display
- Primarily flasks & stirrup jars: containers of perfumed oils



Mycenaean pilgrim flask, Amarna
Brooklyn Museum

Mycenaeans and Amarna

- Impact on Egyptian culture?
 - Imitations in faience
 - Calcite (Gurob)
 - Wood (Tomb of Yuya & Thuya, Valley of the Kings)
- Amarna: one recorded in the Chapel of King's Statue
- Clear indication of the appeal of stirrup jars & their contents



Egyptian faience stirrup jar

Olives & Olive Oil

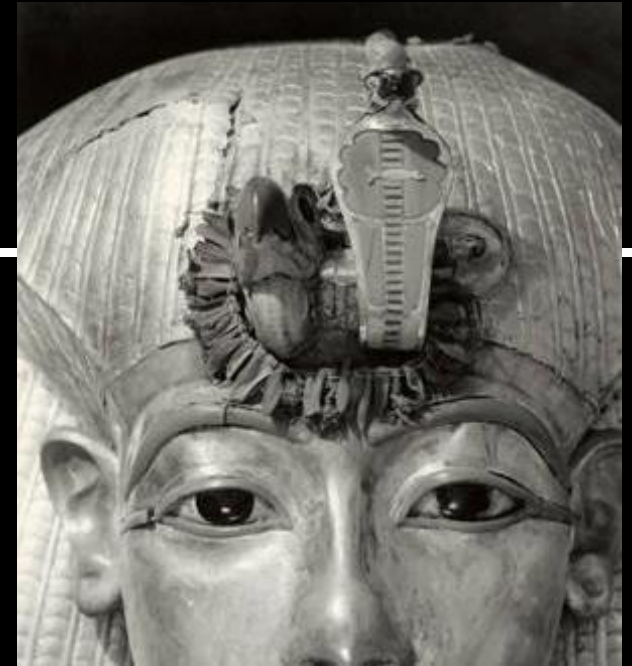
- Introduction of olive to Egypt from the Aegean
 - Presented as a gift to the ruler
- Omnipresent throughout Amarna
- Continued close ties between Egyptian & Mycenaean rulers?
- Aegean olive oil (& unguents highly prized:
 - Previously Egyptian source of oil: castor-oil plant, sesame seeds & moringa tree



Olive branch relief, Amarna
Great Aten Temple

Olives & Olive Oil

- Garland of olive leaves found in Tutankhamen's outer coffin
 - Olive leaves on his shroud & in wrappings of protective ritual statues
 - Also usekh/broad collar
- Similar wreath found at Amarna
- Clear indication of the prestige/ value of the newly imported tree
- Mycenaean-Amarna contacts: establishment of first olive groves



Tutankhamun's olive garland and [usekh collar](#)



Summary

- Height of Aegean-Egyptian relations dates to 14th century BC:
 - Reign of Amenhotep III & Amarna period
 - Mycenaeans superseding Minoans in exchanges
- Amenhotep III active in pursuing ambassadorial relations with surrounding states & with new exchange partners including Cyprus?
- Textual & archaeological evidence suggests Greece incorporated within Near Eastern/Egyptian diplomacy
 - Mycenaeans source of perfumed oils