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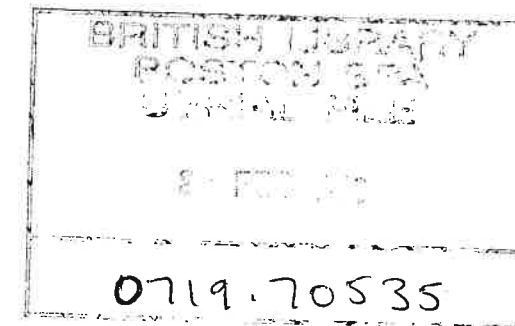
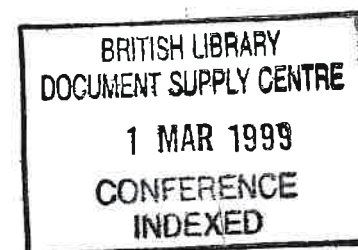
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THE AEGEAN AND THE ORIENT IN THE SECOND MILLENNIUM

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Edited by Eric H. CLINE and Diane HARRIS-CLINE



Université de Liège
Histoire de l'art et archéologie de la Grèce antique
University of Texas at Austin
Program in Aegean Scripts and Prehistory

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Discussion following L.V. Watrous' paper:

M. Sugerman: The kind of acculturation that you imply with the adoption of these administrative techniques and technologies would also imply a rather in-depth level of contact and of communication. I wonder if you have anything to support that?

L.V. Watrous: Well, the answer to your question is obviously "No." On the other hand, if you've dealt with archaeological material — one of the most interesting things about archaeological material is you get the same object, you get three archeologists, you come up with three different interpretations based on that. And you have — when you begin looking at archaeological material you have to assume at some point what this means in terms of what's missing. I tend to assume that what we see is basically the tip of the iceberg. Other people don't believe that.

J. Hruby: I'm wondering by what mechanism you see this level of transfer taking place? By what level? How does this happen?

L.V. Watrous: It's a very good question. Obviously — I mean we can ask this question also — how exactly do the Greeks learn their alphabet? And when you read, presumably shippers are going to the Near East and they're learning economic relations. And my guess is that it's probably in some sort of commercial context. You go to Egypt, of course a commercial contact is likely to mean a royal one because you'll be dealing with administrative people that are connected to the king. [For an answer to this question, see the revised version of my paper, above.]

AEGEAN LB I-II POTTERY IN THE EAST: 'WHO IS THE POTTER, PRAY, AND WHO THE POT?'

Introduction

This paper considers Aegean pottery from the coastal area between the mouth of the Orontes River and the border of Egypt, and up the Nile Valley to Nubia in the Eighteenth Dynasty of Egypt from Ahmose to the beginning of the reign of Amenhotep III. Where and by whom the pots were made are a small part of the evidence for international trade and relations in this period. Our understanding, however, of the wider scene is obscured through lack of agreement on the chronology of the Late Bronze Age in the south-eastern Mediterranean, and by the latest discoveries at Tell el-Dab^a in the Nile Delta.

Dating:

Much of the material on which Kantor's work was based came from contexts not amenable to firm dating in relative or absolute terms. This reservation also applies to most of the pottery found in the area since 1947. In recent years archaeological and scientific research have underlined the need to establish an accurate absolute time scale acceptable for the whole of the Mediterranean, Egypt and the Near East, in the Bronze Age. Professor Manfred Bietak's initiative for a project to achieve this comes at the right time.¹ Until a reliable absolute calendar is enshrined among the rules for presenting and discussing international relations in the Late Bronze Age (which must have a serious effect on dating the entire Bronze Age), relative chronology is at least manageable and intelligible. After all, what we need to know is whether specific people, places and events were contemporary, and if so, what can the connections between them tell us.²

Kantor's Conclusions:

Kantor's perceptive study led her to the logical conclusion that the earliest pottery of Aegean LB I and II found in the Levant and Egypt had come, not from Minoan Crete, but from

* This quotation is from E. FITZGERALD, *The Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam* (1859) stanza 60. It reminds us that pots do not tell us all that we want to know.

1 A symposium, "The Synchronization of Civilizations in the Eastern Mediterranean during the Second Millennium BC," was held at Schloss Haindorf, Langenlois, Austria, 15-17 November 1996, under the auspices of the Austrian Academy. On 11 March 1997, Dr. J. Phillips read a paper on Egyptian chronology in the Eighteenth Dynasty at the Mycenaean Seminar of the Institute of Archaeology, University College London. Her paper was partly inspired by the statement of J. L. Davis in *AJA* 99 (1995) 733, that the date of 1628 BC for the eruption of Thera, determined through a combination of dendrochronology and radio carbon dating, was now almost universally accepted in the USA. She gave reasons for rejecting that date as incompatible with the sequence of events in Egypt, particularly at Tell el-Dab^a. The case for accepting 1628 BC as the date of the eruption is briefly stated in P. KUNIHOLM, B. KROMER, S.W. MANNING, M. NEWTON, C. E. LATINI, and M.J. BRUCE, "Anatolian Tree Rings and the Absolute Chronology of the Eastern Mediterranean, 2220-718 B.C.," *Nature* 381 (1996) 780-83; see also C. RENFREW, "Kings, Tree Rings and the Old World," *Nature* 381 (1996) 733-34.

2 P.M. WARREN and V. HANKEY, *Aegean Bronze Age Chronology* (1989) 2, 137-38; K.A. KITCHEN, "The Historical Chronology of Ancient Egypt, a Current Assessment," paper read to the Symposium at Schloss Haindorf (*supra* n. 1).

the Mycenaean mainland (presumably the Peloponnese).³ Consequently, Mycenaeans rather than the Minoans led the way in direct relations with the East. This conclusion has not been seriously challenged, but is amenable to modification, so that Aegean enterprise and relations with the east can be seen in less competitive terms than those proposed by our elders. Fifty years of excavation, research, and typological reassessment of Aegean LB I-II pottery have added perhaps twenty examples to the list of relevant finds, and on the whole these show that Minoans or their pots had at least some share in whatever activity the pottery represents. Our horizons have been widened and our expectations increased by advances in archaeological practice, and by the introduction of the scientist and the laboratory to the trenches, particularly in the treatment and analysis of pottery. A rejuvenated and critical interest in Egyptian foreign relations (and consequently in Egyptian chronology) has renewed cooperation between Egyptologists and archaeologists working in the Aegean and the Near East. We have also been made aware of Mycenaean and Minoan activity in the central Mediterranean, and of the importance of Cyprus in international relations during the Late Bronze Age.⁴ This represents progress. At Thera, however, and at Tell el-Dab^{ca} in the Nile Delta, we face facts which must radically change our view of the period, and these are discussed below.

MM IIIB and the Transition to LM IA

LH I is thought to have begun a little earlier than LM IA, at the end of the Second Intermediate Period, and before the beginning of the Eighteenth Dynasty. It is linked with the transitional MM IIIB to LM IA phase and with mature LM IA.⁵

Some Additions to, and Modifications of, Kantor's List:⁶

1. **Tel Haror**, southern Israel. A sherd of a large pithos in a coarse, non-local fabric is decorated with two incised signs and the protome of an animal that resembles a bull (although some have suggested an agrimi or Cretan wild goat). TH 20984 was found in a late MB II context. The fabric, signs and the animal represented may prove to be Cretan.⁷

2. **Tell el-Dab^{ca}**, Nile Delta. A sherd from the rim of an oval-mouthed jar, described as an "amphoriskos" but possibly from an oval-mouthed storage amphora, with trickle decoration typical of the transitional period MM III to LM IA has been identified by Stefan Hiller, presumably from Area H/I but not from a secure context.⁸

3. **Lisht**, Upper Egypt. A jug decorated with dolphins and birds in Tell el-Yahudiyeh style from T 879. The vessel belongs to the Syro-Palestinian-Gaza group of MB II and was an export from that area to Lisht. There is no connection between it and the very large storage jars of MM IIIB to LM IA from Pachyammos, Crete, and no influence in either direction

³ KANTOR, chapter 2.

⁴ G. CADOGAN, "Cyprus, Mycenaean Pottery, Trade and Colonization," in *Wace and Blegen*, 91-99.

⁵ WARREN and HANKEY (*supra* n. 3) 96-97, 118; P. WARREN, "A New Minoan Deposit from Knossos, c. 1600 B.C., and its Wider Relations," *BSA* 86 (1991) 319-41.

⁶ Many of Kantor's examples of pottery can be found in V. HANKEY, "Pottery as Evidence for Trade: (1) The Levant from the Mouth of the River Orontes to the Egyptian border, and (2) Egypt," in *Wace and Blegen*, 101-115. For comprehensive lists and assessment of Aegean LH I and II pottery in Syro-Palestine see A. LEONARD, Jr., *An Index to the Late Bronze Age Aegean Pottery from Syro-Palestine* (1994). B.J. KEMP and R.S. MERRILLEES, *Minoan Pottery in Second Millennium Egypt* (1980) 226-49 offer valuable new thoughts on LM IB/LH IIA pieces from Egypt. See also the map by V. HANKEY and A. LEONARD, Jr., *Ägypten und die Levante. Ägäische Importe des 2. Jahrtausends v. Chr.* (1992).

⁷ Information from Eliezer Oren is gratefully acknowledged. See E. OREN, J.P. OLIVIER, Y. GOREN, P.P. BETANCOURT, G.H. MYER, and J. YELLIN, "A Minoan Graffito from Tel Haror (Negev, Israel)," *Cretan Studies* 5 (1996) 91-117, and Margalit Finkelberg's paper to this conference.

⁸ The authors also wish to thank Phil Betancourt for discussions on the importance of this piece; cf. M. BIETAK, "Le début de la XVIII^e Dynastie et les Minoens à Avaris," *Bulletin de la Société française d'Égyptologie* 135 (Mars 1996) 5-29.

seems likely. The renderings of such a striking marine creature on the Lisht jug appear to be independent, and unconnected with Minoan ceramic style. It may show nothing more than a natural interest in marine creatures.⁹

4. **Kerma**, Nubia. A coarse ware sherd decorated with a running spiral was found on the surface of the Tomb of a Thousand Horns near the western Deffuffa. The sherd was analyzed using a petrographic thin slice, and found to be of Nile fabric, not imported. The similarity with Minoan spirals may be fortuitous.¹⁰

We should also note that a copy, in Egyptian calcite, of a late MB IIB Syro-Palestinian ring-handled ceramic jug was found in a LM IIB tomb near the Temple Tomb.¹¹ It is impossible to know how or when objects of this antiquarian character actually reached Crete.

LM IA/LH I

This period is considered to encompass the late Second Intermediate Period to about the beginning of the reign of Thutmose III in the Eighteenth Dynasty.¹² The earliest Aegean pottery that can be securely placed within Aegean LB I, and that has been found east and south-east of Rhodes, comes from the island of Cyprus.¹³

Some Additions to, and Modifications of, Kantor's List:

1. **Toumba tou Skourou**, on the bay of Morphou, Tomb I, Chamber I. Morphou is described as a typical seaside copper-working settlement in a prosperous area of NW Cyprus – a Minoan foundation in LC I subsequently shared with Mycenaeans and finally taken over by them. Ayia Irini, on the northern edge of the same bay, is seen as part of this development, with a history comparable to that of Trianda, Ialysos and Miletus.¹⁴ Pecorella took a slightly different view of Aegean activity at Ayia Irini on the bay of Morphou, and was uncertain whether the Aegean pottery from there was Mycenaean or Minoan.¹⁵ A chronological connection is inferred from the presence of Cypriot White Slip I sherds in the earliest levels of the XVIIIth Dynasty at Tell el-Dab^{ca}.¹⁶

2. **Tel Michal**, Israel. Sherds from a semiglobular cup FS 219, LM IA/LH I (not certain?).¹⁷

3. **Kom Rabi'a**, Memphis, Egypt. A sherd possibly from the neck and rim of a bridge-spouted jug. It was apparently sandwiched in between a level of the Second Intermediate Period and a level dated by a scarab of Thutmose I. No body sherds were found and therefore no secure assessment can be offered for its stylistic date.¹⁸

⁹ P. E. MCGOVERN, J. BOURRIAU, G. HARBOTTLE, and S.J. ALLEN, "The Archaeological Origin and Significance of the Dolphin Vase as Determined by Neutron Activation Analysis," *BASOR* 296 (1994) 31-43. This corrects WARREN and HANKEY (*supra* n. 2) 135-36, 140-41; KEMP and MERRILLEES (*supra* n. 5) 220-25. Note the discussion of this pot in the conference.

¹⁰ Unpublished, the sample is stored at Southampton University; KEMP and MERRILLEES (*supra* n. 5) 244-45; WARREN and HANKEY (*supra* n. 2) 138, with references.

¹¹ P.M. WARREN, *Minoan Stone Vases* (1969) 113, with references.

¹² WARREN and HANKEY (*supra* n. 2) 118, 141. See also O. DICKINSON, *The Aegean Bronze Age* (1994) 16-18.

¹³ H.W. CATLING and V. KARAGEORGHIS, "Minoika in Cyprus," *BSA* 55 (1960) 112.

¹⁴ E.T. VERMEULE, "Excavations at Toumba tou Skourou, Morphou, 1971," in V. KARAGEORGHIS (ed.), *The Mycenaeans in the Eastern Mediterranean: Acts of the International Archaeological Symposium, Nicosia 27 March - 2 April 1972* (1973) 25-33; E.T. VERMEULE and F. WOLSKY, *Toumba tou Skourou: A Bronze Age Potters' Quarter on Morphou Bay in Cyprus* (1990) 219-20, 381-83. Note discussion at the conference on the context of this pottery (below).

¹⁵ P.E. PECORELLA, "Mycenaean Pottery from Ayia Irini," in V. KARAGEORGHIS (*supra* n. 14) 19-24.

¹⁶ L.C. MAGUIRE, "Tell el-Dab^{ca}: The Cypriot Connection," in *Egypt, the Aegean and the Levant*, 54-65.

¹⁷ LEONARD (*supra* n. 6) Index no. 1452, and LM no. 6.

¹⁸ WARREN and HANKEY (*supra* n. 2) 139; K. LARSSON's publication of this piece will appear in the forthcoming Memorial volume dedicated to Martha Bell.

None of the pottery found between the Orontes and the upper Nile Valley has been securely dated to LH I or LM IA. Therefore, at present, we do not know for certain that any Aegean pottery travelled further east than Cyprus in the phases clearly recognized as LH I or LM IA. Mycenae was perhaps too busy consolidating strength acquired during the last phase of MH, and venturing south to meet but not necessarily to understand the Minoans. The Minoan enterprise is still obscure in spite of the connection evident in the wall-paintings at Tell el-Dab'a in the Nile Delta, to be discussed below.

LH IIA/LM IB

LH IIA probably began a little before LM IB, and its early phase is contemporary with late LM IA. Late LH IIA is closely linked with LM I.¹⁹ The period is contemporary with the reign of Thutmose III, which includes the regency of Hatshepsut. The end of the period is marked by the destructions caused, as many accept, by the Mycenaean conquest of Crete. Knossos was saved from similar total disaster because the Mycenaeans saw it as the obvious centre for controlling a difficult island.²⁰

Some Additions to, and Modifications of, Kantor's List:

1. Tell Atchana (Alalakh), Turkey, Hatay. A squat alabastron, LM IB/LH IIA.²¹
2. Kamid el-Loz, Lebanon. Bridge-spouted jug, type as FS 103, LM IB.²²
3. Akko, Persian Garden cemetery. Sherds from an LM IB cup in alternating style.²³
4. Amman, Airport Temple. Sherds from a pithoid jar FS 24, LH IIA,²⁴ and a sherd from a semi-globular cup, FS 211/214, probably LH IIA.²⁵
5. Tell Ta'annek. Sherds from a tall bridge-spouted jar, LM IB.²⁶
6. Lachish, Level VII. Sherd from a tall alabastron decorated in the Marine style of LM IB.²⁷
7. Gaza, Tell el-Ajjul. Alabastron FS 81 or 82. LM IB/LH IIA.²⁸
8. Abydos. A rim sherd from a small bowl. Tomb 416. LM IB.²⁹

Recent excavation and study have slightly restored the balance between LH IIA and LM IB pottery found abroad, demonstrating that while pots (particularly alabastera) of LH IIA went from the mainland, grand pots made in the Minoan mode, and with reason labelled LM IB, also travelled in the same or similar circumstances.

Was the brilliance of LH IIA/LM IB a joint Aegean reaction to events over which humans had no control? Did the eruption of Thera, in a late but not yet precisely defined phase of LM IA/LH I, bring about a short period of significant co-operation at home and abroad between Mycenaeans, Cycladics and Minoans? Events at Miletus, Trianda, Morphou,

19 WARREN and HANKEY (*supra* n. 2) 142.

20 W.D. NIEMEIER, "Knossos in the New Palace Period," in D. EVELY, H. HUGHES-BROCK, and N. MOMIGLIANO (eds.), *Knossos: A Labyrinth of History* (1994) 88, with references. Niemeier proposes that the destructions in Crete at the end of LM IB were due to "internecine conflicts between Knossos and the other palaces" and asks why, if a Mycenaean conquest was responsible for the LM IB destruction horizon, did the invaders spare the most important palace of the island?

21 LEONARD (*supra* n. 6) Index LM no. 21.

22 C. LILYQUIST, "Objects Attributable to Kamid el-Loz and Comments on the Date of Objects in the 'Schatzhaus,'" in W. ADLER, D.P. HANSEN and C. LILYQUIST, *Kamid el-Loz 11: Das Schatzhaus' im Palastbereich. Die Befunde des Königsgrabes* (1994) 207-208, Pl.16.

23 LEONARD (*supra* n. 6) Index LM no. 2.

24 *Ibid.* Index no. 2.

25 *Ibid.* Index no. 1448.

26 *Ibid.* Index LM no. 12.

27 P.M. MOUNTJOY, "The Marine Style Pottery of LM IB/LH IIA: Towards a Corpus," *BSA* 79 (1984) 217. This elegant study brings identification of Marine Style pottery up to date.

28 LEONARD (*supra* n. 6) Index LM no. 21a.

29 KEMP and MERRILLEES (*supra* n. 5) 232-33; WARREN and HANKEY (*supra* n. 2) 141-42.

and the visits to Egypt recorded in the Theban tombs point to this sort of scenario. The period was one of political and cultural evolution during which the demarcation lines of specific individuality (Mainland, Cycladic and Minoan) merged into an Aegean overall identity subtly differentiated by regional artistic dialects. Consequently it is often difficult, if not impossible, for the appraising eye to distinguish pots of LM IB from those of LH IIA. Clay analyses by the various processes available do not always convince. Take a pot which looks Minoan in shape, decoration and style, but has a clay body analyzed as Peloponnesian. Who is to say that it was not made by a Minoan potter working for a Mycenaean patron on the mainland? The fusion of many Minoan and Mycenaean features in LH IIA/LM IB pottery can present real problems of differentiation, even when clay analysis is adamant in claiming a specific origin for the clay of specific pieces.³⁰ So perhaps we sometimes tread on slippery ground (wet clay?) when we cite clay analysis to emphasize technical differences appearing at a time when the cultural barriers between two lively civilizations were being amicably removed in almost all aspects of society.

LH IIB/LM II

LH IIB is not easily defined from stratigraphy, but is contemporary with the late reign of Thutmose (co-regency with Amenhotep II) to early Amenhotep III.³¹ In LH IIB/LM II the fully developed mainland style with Minoan overtones became dominant, and is evident in the Aegean pottery exported to the East.

Some Additions to Kantor's List:

1. Amman, Airport Temple, Jordan. A pithoid jar, FS 16. LH IIB.³²
2. Sidon, Lebanon, Dakerman cemetery Tomb I. A squat jar with vertical handle, FS 87, probably LH IIB.³³
3. Hazor, Israel. Sherd from an alabastron, FS 83, LH IIB.³⁴

The end of this phase is disputed. Excavations at Knossos show a degradation of former elegance in the Unexplored Mansion.³⁵ Discontent culminating in an uprising against the Mycenaean military administration at Knossos would be a good reason for the shift of mainland interest away from the old center to Khania in the west and nearer the Mycenaean Peloponnese. The Minoan share in joint Aegean trading ventures in the south-eastern Mediterranean was soon taken over by Mycenaeans, particularly when they found themselves needing better supplies of copper for weaponry to protect their gains.

The Significance of Pottery Exports in Aegean LB I to the end of LB II:

Overall, from LH IA/LM IB to the end of LH IIB/LM II, Aegean pottery found in the east provides evidence for contact, but was it trade in a commercial sense? Nearly all the pieces of this period have an individual character incompatible with the general uniformity of Mycenaean pottery exported later (LH IIIA/LM IIIA) in an identifiable trading system, and was probably peripheral to the trade in other goods.³⁶

30 WARREN and HANKEY (*supra* n. 2) 142; LEONARD (*supra* n. 6) Index LM no. 12. NA Analysis of a sherd from this pot at Manchester University found it to be Peloponnesian in origin. Richard Jones of the Fitch Laboratory at the British School at Athens, however, maintains (letter to V. Hankey) that it is not possible to distinguish between clay from the south Peloponnese and central Crete.

31 WARREN and HANKEY (*supra* n. 2) 118, 215 (postscript) where "LH II B late" should read "LH II B early."

32 LEONARD (*supra* n. 6) Index no. 1.

33 *Ibid.* Index no. 382.

34 *Ibid.* Index no. 363.

35 M. POPHAM and L.H. SACKETT (eds.), *The Minoan Unexplored Mansion at Knossos* (1984).

36 SWDS, chapter 4, on trade goods which entered the Aegean.

Who Carried the Trade?

The exports themselves reveal little about their journey from the potter's shop to their final resting-place. On the other hand, the contemporary domestic Cypriot pottery was copiously exported in LC I (= early XVIIIth Dynasty), continuing a regular trade that began with Syria-Palestine in MB, and with the Nile Delta in the Hyksos period, and which appears to have been organised by Cypriots.³⁷ Moreover, although extremely little LC I pottery has been found in the Aegean, a few Cypriots may also have journeyed there during this period. Their share in the cultural common market of ideas and activity of the Aegean LBA is at last being recognized.³⁸

Recent Archaeological Events:

Even taking into account these additions to Kantor's 1947 list, and research into the origin and contents of these vessels, most of the above remarks could have been made at any time in 1947. Seen from fifty years on, the disagreement so admirably described by Kantor takes on the character of a sporting contest in which Mycenae and Knossos were finalists, with odds on in favour of Mycenae. But now discussion is overshadowed by two events which create their own difficult questions for present and future students of the Late Bronze Age.

1. Thera:

The discoveries on Thera were not totally unexpected.³⁹ At the beginning of the Late Bronze Age Akrotiri was a successful Cycladic town where people from the islands, from Crete, and from the mainland met and exchanged ideas, goods, technology, and probably intermarried. Mycenaeans, it seems, were established in Thera at the time of the Shaft Graves.⁴⁰ The violent eruption of Thera has left little physical trace in the Aegean northwards of the island, and it appears that its effect on Crete was far less than at first supposed.⁴¹ One wonders, if the eruption had not taken place would we need to invent it in order to explain the Mycenaean rise to dominance of Crete and the Aegean? Probably not.

2. Discoveries at Tell el-Dab^a (Avaris) in the Nile Delta:

Excavations at Tell el-Dab^a in the Nile Delta (identified as Avaris) have been in progress for more than twenty-five years, but the discovery of the wall-paintings is barely six years old. Preliminary assessment dated the large building they once decorated to a late phase of Hyksos rule, estimated at 108 years.⁴² Bietak's latest and revised conclusion is that the fragments came from two palatial buildings constructed in the first years of the reign of Ahmose, and

³⁷ MAGUIRE (*supra* n. 16).

³⁸ KEMP and MERRILLEES (*supra* n. 5) 268-86; E. HALLAGER, "Aspects of Aegean Long-distance Trade in the Second Millennium B.C.," in E. ACQUARO, L. GODART, F. MAZZA, D. MUZZI (eds.), *Momenti precoloniali nel Mediterraneo antico*, Atti del Convegno Internazionale, 14-15 Marzo, Roma, 1985 (1988) 93; L. V. WATROUS, *Kommos III: The Late Bronze Age Pottery* (1992) 169-73; DICKINSON (*supra* n. 12) 244-50; V. KARAGEORGHIS, "Some aspects of the Maritime Trade of Cyprus during the Late Bronze Age," in V. KARAGEORGHIS and D. MICHAELIDES (eds.), *The Development of the Cypriot Economy from the Prehistoric Period to the Present Day* (1996) 61-70.

³⁹ *Interconnections*, 70; C. DOUMAS (ed.), *Thera: Pompeii of the Ancient Aegean* (1984, reprint of 1983) 1-21.

⁴⁰ C. DOUMAS, *The Wall Paintings of Thera* (1992) 28-31 with references.

⁴¹ G. CADOGAN and R.K. HARRISON, "Evidence of Tephra in Soil Samples from Pyrgos, Crete," in C. DOUMAS (ed.), *Thera and the Ancient World I*. Papers presented at the Second International Congress, Santorini, Greece, August 1976 (1978) 235-55.

⁴² PHARAONEN. M. BIETAK, "Connections between Egypt and the Minoan World: New Results from Tell el-Dab^a / Avaris," in *Egypt, the Aegean and the Levant*, 19-28; see also the compelling study by L. MORGAN, "Minoan Painting and Egypt: The Case of Tell el-Dab^a," in *Ibid.*, 29-35.

demolished soon after.⁴³ Before their discovery no-one would have postulated the existence at Avaris of such profuse and vivid evidence for shared cultural attitudes in motifs and styles and technical methods in the stage immediately *after* the recovery of the Two Lands by Ahmose, the first Pharaoh of the Eighteenth Dynasty. To understand this, we have to seek (not necessarily to find) answers to questions concerning history, religion and artistic and social organisation.

Bietak has suggested the way (or a way) ahead. The **Thebans**, and not the Hyksos, were in contact with Knossos, where it is possible (but not proven) that a woman, the Mistress of Animals, occupied the throne of Minos. He suggests that Aahotep, the Egyptian born wife of Sekenenre Tao, and mother of Kamose and Ahmose, may hold the key to the Minoan wall-paintings at Avaris. Her superlative titles on the victory stele of Ahmose set up at Karnak may represent a dynastic link between the Thebans and Knossos.⁴⁴ If this suggestion proves correct, a Minoan presence in Egypt during the later Hyksos period can be added to the sparse evidence for Minoan activity at that time in the south-eastern Mediterranean and the Nile Valley,⁴⁵ and a prelude to the arrival of Aegean envoys and bearers depicted in the Theban tombs during the reigns of Hatshepsut and Thutmose III. Indeed, fact at Avaris may prove to be stranger than fiction – a remarkable woman came from Crete with Minoan forces. She or her daughter became accepted as an Egyptian, married a Theban hero, and was celebrated at Avaris for her part in the salvation of the Two Lands.

Questions to be Answered:

If Minoans were living at Tell el-Dab^a as designers or craftsmen in charge of decorating huge wall spaces with Minoan and Cycladic cultural themes, one would expect by 1997 to have found more than one apparently stray Minoan sherd stylistically datable to the transition of MM IIIB to LM IA.⁴⁶ The group of small conical rhyta, in poor Nile clay from Tell el-Dab^a, certainly appear to imitate the bulgy conical rhyta of LM IA. A few rhyta of this shape in faience found in Egypt do at least show that this distinctive LM IA ceramic shape was known in the Nile valley above the Delta.⁴⁷

If, as suggested by Marinatos, Minoan ships ferried Mycenaean forces to Egypt to fight on the Theban side against the Hyksos, why is there no evidence so far of a mainland presence at Tell el-Dab^a? Is it possible that Hyksos refugees went to the Aegean mainland, taking with them some of the oriental treasures found in the Shaft Graves, and the technique of working in niello? If so, did they travel via the Cyclades? Is Schachermeyr's theory valid, namely, that Aegean artists had been influenced by contact with the Hyksos?⁴⁸

Conclusions

It is still not possible to prove that any pottery of the transition from MM IIIB to LM IA or of LH I/LM IA reached the Levantine coast, but the single sherd from Tell el-Dab^a shows that some did reach Egypt. The small amount of high-class pottery of LH IIA and/or LM IB suggests a combined, tentative enterprise aimed at the highest levels of society, rather than

⁴³ BIETAK (*supra* n. 8) 5-29.

⁴⁴ P. JÁNOSI, "The Queens Aahotep I and II and Egypt's Foreign Relations," *Journal of the Ancient Chronological Forum* 5 (1992) 99-105. He discusses whether Aahotep I and II were the same person; see also V. HANKEY, "Queen Aahotep and the Minoans," *Minerva* 4 (1993) 313-14; BIETAK (*supra* n. 8).

⁴⁵ W-D. NIEMEIER, "Minoan artisans travelling overseas: the Alalakh Frescoes and the Painted Plaster Floor at Tel Kabri (Western Galilee)," in *Thalassa*, 189-200. Wall paintings at Alalakh (southern Turkey) and at Tel Kabri are comparable with those at Tell el-Dab^a.

⁴⁶ BIETAK (*supra* n. 8) 12-13.

⁴⁷ BIETAK, HEIN *et al.* (*supra* n. 42) 245. A decorated faience rhyton in the bulgy LM IA form, provenance unknown, in the Museum at Aswan was no longer on display in 1992.

⁴⁸ F. SCHACHERMEYR, *Ägäis und Orient: Die überseeischen Kulturbeziehungen von Kreta und Mykenai mit Ägypten, der Levante und Kleinasien unter besonderer Berücksichtigung des Jahrtausends v. Chr.* (1967) 43-49; MORGAN (*supra* n. 42) 44.

general trade. In LH IIB/LM II the few exported pieces are Mainland rather than Minoan in origin, perhaps because the Mycenaeans were preoccupied with consolidating conquest and take-over. The exports are significant as the practical prelude to the trading enterprise of LH/LM IIIA1, which reached a climax of success and influence in LH/LM IIIA2 and early IIB.

In conclusion, it is imperative that the attention of archaeologists and historians be focused on the discussions and uncertainties concerning the absolute date of the eruption of Thera, and on finding an acceptable interpretation of the Minoan wall-paintings at Tell el-Dab^a.

Vronwy HANKEY and Albert LEONARD, Jr.

Discussion following V. Hankey and A. Leonard's paper:

O. Negbi: I would like to comment on the context of Tomb I at Toumba tou Skourou. Based on the recent publication of Toumba tou Skourou, it seems likely that the synchronism of LM IA and LC IA is inconclusive.

A. Leonard: This is Chamber I of the tomb?

O. Negbi: It is actually this very chamber. It is not the best synchronism.

A. Leonard: Exactly. I agree with you 100%.

A.B. Knapp: Do you think it might help discussion in this, over these next three days, if we stopped calling these paintings "Minoan paintings" and just call them "wall paintings"? And try and work out what they are?

A. Leonard: It would ruin my prejudice of the case, but — good point.

M.J. Mellink: I didn't quite hear in detail what you said about the Lisht jug, but I think you came up with a conclusion that there was no Minoan influence at all. One could clearly accept this for the manufacture and for the shape of the jar. Would you exclude that the artist who designed the illustrations had seen Minoan dolphin images? All it would mean is one visual impression that stuck with him and that he reproduced; the rest is quite different. But we can't exclude that — wherever and however it happened.

A. Leonard: I would agree that perhaps the artist that made that vase had seen this kind of thing because it is rather specific, but there's no tangible element...

M.J. Mellink: So, there the tangible clue can't help us. You can just confirm a visual affinity but emphasize that this has nothing to do with Minoan pottery manufacture. Thank you.

E. Cline: I am wondering how it is going to affect your paper when you take into account that Bietak in his new *Avaris* book (1996) says that the wall paintings [at Dab^a] are not in Hyksos contexts at all, but are actually in early 18th dynasty [contexts] and there's no connection with the Hyksos.

A. Leonard: I would have to see — I really can't answer that yet. [Eds.: Adjustment made in final version of paper above.]