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CRETE

THE importance of the contacts between Egypt and Crete cannot be over-emphasized. For one thing, they give the only positive and absolute dates which can be assigned to the Minoan Periods. Although Egyptologists may still be quarrelling over the dates of the earlier dynasties, yet every year they are getting nearer to an agreement, and already by well-nigh universal consent the beginning of the XIIth Dynasty is dated to *c.* 2200 (Hall) or 2000 (Meyer) and with it the Middle Minoan II Period. The Old Kingdom chronology is still in dispute, but there is now little doubt that the Ist Dynasty is to be placed soon after the middle of the fourth millenium B.C.¹

The discoveries of the last few years have somewhat disturbed the easy old equation—IVth Dynasty = Early Minoan II, XIIth Dynasty = Middle Minoan II, XVIIIth Dynasty = Late Minoan II—but not seriously.

The connection of Egypt with Crete possibly begins in the days when King Menes² conquered the north of Egypt. Some of the inhabitants fled, crossed the sea and settled in the fertile Messarà Plain: hence the ivory figures, etc.³ It is they who may have started the Bronze Age in Southern Crete.⁴

Dr Frankfort⁵ holds that the east of Crete was in advance of the centre (i.e. Knossos) owing to the early advent of bronze from Anatolia. It is hardly possible to deny that the south was also in advance. Knossos was still in the Stone Age when early dynastic vessels appear.

Here perhaps is the place for a statement reiterated later. Egyptian stone vessels in Crete are much better evidence than those found on the mainland. That is to say, wherever they are found they may be used for dating.⁶ This was in all probability due to the fact that the Cretans were great workers in stone themselves. Steatite and porphyry, liparite and serpentine were easily obtainable, as well as marble and the curious variegated stones of Mokhlos. Therefore they were unlikely to treasure the Egyptian specimens as did the inhabitants of the mainland.

So much for the Stone Age and Early Minoan Period, though it may be remarked in passing that no Cretan work of this time has appeared in Egypt. The First Inter-

¹ Cf. however Scharff in *J.E.A.* xviii. p. 275, for arguments for a lower date and his references there.

² Dr Hall considers it to have been a much more gradual affair, for Menes is probably a composite figure including Narmer and Aha. He points out that the connections with the Delta, though considerable, are not sufficient to justify so convenient an assumption.

³ See below under Platanos. These figures, however, are considerably later in date than their prototypes.

⁴ See *P. of M.* II. i. chapter ii for whole period.

⁵ See Frankfort, *Asia, Europe and the Aegean, and their Earliest Interrelations*, p. 94.

⁶ See below under Knossos and Mycenae. They are however in any case very risky. A Middle Pre-dynastic bowl of the same shape as No. 22 was found at Tell el Amarna in 1929 in a pure late XVIIIth Dynasty deposit.

mediate Period is illustrated by rude scarabs at Marathokephalon and Platanos, Agia Triada and Gournes.

The equation of the Middle Minoan Period with the Middle Kingdom in Egypt is however doubly substantiated. Middle Minoan II polychrome pottery with the “racquet-and-ball” pattern—so-called Kamares ware—has been discovered at Lahun, Harageh and Abydos in undoubted XIIth Dynasty contexts.¹ In Crete the discovery of the XIIth Dynasty statue of User at Knossos, and of a Middle Kingdom scarab at Platanos, both in Middle Minoan deposits, put the matter beyond doubt. In addition is the curious fact that during the XIIth Dynasty, Amenemhat III—the Lamarin of the Greeks—built the so-called Labyrinth of Hawara, while it was during the Middle Minoan Period that the Labyrinths of Crete—the great Palaces of Knossos and Phaestos—were begun.²

The transition period was a troubled one in both countries. The Hyksos horde overran Egypt; Crete seems to have suffered from a severe earthquake which certainly destroyed much of the Palace of Knossos. Then comes the splendid dawn of the Empire in Egypt and the Late Minoan Period in Crete, an age, on both sides, of magnificence, not perhaps comparable with the simpler and more tasteful periods before, but nevertheless very imposing. During this time intercourse between the two countries was very close. We hear of the Keftians;³ they are seen bearing gifts to Thothmes III—tribute he called it. The alabaster vases, scarabs and beads of the XVIIIth Dynasty become common all over Crete. The name of Tiyi, wife of Amenhotep III, has found its way to Agia Triada; the great prince buried in the Royal Tomb at Isopata must needs have many Egyptian vases for his welfare after death.

There is only one real difficulty: How is it that no Late Minoan II pottery has been found in Egypt? Perhaps the answer is that Late Minoan II was only a local blaze at Knossos, and that no other part of Crete was affected.⁴ This will also explain why at Phaestos, at Agia Triada and at Gournia the Late Minoan III Period follows almost immediately on Late Minoan I.

Crete fell before the Achaeans.⁵ Perhaps the fine craftsmen fled to Egypt and found refuge at Akhenaten’s court, there to enliven the painters and potters.⁶ Perhaps they added that touch of informality which is the key-note of the reign.

In return we have nothing, until the Achaeans are overthrown in their turn and Crete is in the throes of the Geometric Age. Then the adventurers and the pirates

¹ See Petrie, *Illahun, Kahun and Gurob*; Engelbach and Gunn, *Harageh*.

² See below under Knossos, and H. R. Hall in *J.H.S.* xxv. p. 320 ff.

³ For an attack on the identification of the Keftians with Crete see Wainwright in *Liverpool Annals*, vi. p. 24. General opinion however is still in favour of the Keftians being at any rate mainly Cretans.

⁴ See *P. of M.* i. p. 29.

⁵ See above, p. xviii, note 4.

⁶ For their influence see Frankfort in *Mural Paintings of El 'Amarneh*, chapter i.

may have brought back the scarabs and faience found in the tombs of their chieftains at Arkades, Kavousi and Vrokastro.

In conclusion, the Predynastic peoples may have entered the Messarà and brought their culture to the south. The Old Kingdom reaches the Messarà, Knossos and Mokhlos. The Middle Kingdom finds the route from the Messarà *via* Pyrgos to Knossos and to the sacred Dictaeon Cave. It leaves its mark on Gournes. The New Empire can be traced at Agia Triada, Kalyvia near Phaestos, and at the tombs of Knossos, and a statuette of the period is dedicated long after in the Dictaeon Cave; while Egypt of the decadence from the XXth to the XXVIth Dynasty was plundered for the objects of Arkades, Kavousi and Vrokastro.

I. AGIOS ONOUPHRIOS

A large heap of human bones and skulls, the débris of a series of interments, was discovered at Agios Onouphrios on the south slope of a hill about a quarter of a mile north of Phaestos. The burials seem to date from the late Early Minoan Period, but continue into Middle Minoan.

AGIOS ONOUPHRIOS

- *1. *Scarab.* Amethyst. Three circles, probably to be covered with gold leaf. (Plate I.) *XIIth DYNASTY*
- *2. *Scarab.* White steatite. Six circles. (Cf. Petrie, *Gizeh and Rifeh*, Pl. XXIII. No. 15.) (Plate I.) *XIIth DYNASTY*
- *3. *Scarab.* White steatite. Spiral decoration within a border. (Plate I.) *XIIth DYNASTY*
- *4. *Scarab.* Paste. Inscription—Amen-Ra Neb Pet (?) (Amen-Ra, Lord of the Sky). Bad and careless writing. (Cf. Petrie, *Illahun, Kahun and Gurob*, Pl. XXIII. No. 73.) (Plate I.) *XVIIIth DYNASTY*
- *5. *Scarab.* Onyx. Lotus (?) (Cf. Brunton, *Qau and Badari*, I. Pl. XXXIII. No. 191.) (Plate I.)
Context: seal-stones, marble figures of Amorgos type, bronze daggers, bronze lamps covered with gold leaf, gold rings, E.M. pottery.
(Candia Museum. Middle case 58, Nos. 45, 44, 46, 48, 47. Evans, *Cretan Pictographs* (Supplement), p. 105 ff.) *XIIth DYNASTY*

II. AGIA TRIADA

The site of a Palace and adjoining houses dating chiefly from the Late Minoan I Period. From the Palace itself only one object has come, though the excavators claim two stone bowls found with it as Egyptian in spite of the fact that the material of which they are made is not Egyptian.

In a large domed tomb about five minutes east of the Palace two scarabs and an amulet have come to light, and in a chamber-tomb situated inside an older house was discovered the most important object of all, the scarab of Queen Tiye, wife of Amenhotep III of the XVIIIth Dynasty, 1412–1376 B.C.

The tholos of course belongs to the series discovered in the Messarà Plain and dating from Early Minoan times; the finds in the Palace and the chamber-tomb only confirm our knowledge of the Late Minoan I–II Period.

AGIA TRIADA

LARGE THOLOS

*6. *Scarab.*

White paste. Insect (?) engraved. (Cf. Platanos, No. 55, and Brunton, *Qau and Badari*, I. Pl. XXXIV. No. 199.) (Plate I.)

FIRST INTERMEDIATE PERIOD

*7. *Circular Seal.*

White paste. Lotus design. (Cf. Petrie and Quibell, *Naqada and Ballas*, Pl. LXXX. No. 71.) (Plate I.)

EARLY XIIth DYNASTY

8. *Ape Amulet.*

Lapis lazuli. Squatting. 2.5 cms. high. (Cf. Engelbach and Gunn, *Harageh*, Pl. L. κ.)

Context: vessels and implements of clay and stone, stone seals, ivory figures, gold leaf, beads, E.M. II–III pottery.

(Candia Museum. Middle case 36, Nos. 1024, 1020 and unnumbered. *Memorie del Reale Istituto Lombardo*, XXI. pp. 248–251, Pls. VII–XI.)

XIIth DYNASTY

PALACE

9. *Vase.*

Baggy vase of banded alabaster 20.0 cms. high. (Cf. below, Isopata, Nos. 35, 36.)

Context: two stone bowls of Egyptian shape but Cretan material. L.M. I pottery.

(*Ibid.* Middle case 39, No. 343. *Mon. Ant.* XIII. p. 62.)

XVIIIth DYNASTY

CHAMBER-TOMB

*10. *Circular Seal.*

White steatite (found in chamber-tomb 5 in old house south-east of Palace). Tiyi, wife of Amenhotep III, 1412–1376 B.C. “Royal Wife Tiyi.” (Plate I.)

Context: bronze daggers, gold necklet, bull’s head pendant, Bucchero vase, L.M. I–II pottery.

(*Ibid.* Middle case 39, No. 340. *Mon. Ant.* XIV. p. 735.)

AMENHOTEP III, XVIIIth DYNASTY

III. ARKADES (APHRATI)

Arkades is the site of the ancient Arcadia and lies about thirty miles to the south-east of Candia in the Lasithi Mountains. Here the Italians discovered a very interesting settlement dating from apparently the tenth century B.C. On the western terrace were discovered several tholoi, constructed of large, carefully squared stones and built in Achaean times, though subsequently cleared and used by the late comers.

The settlement is particularly interesting as being one of the few discovered in Crete which shed any light on the civilization of the island in very early Hellenic times.

The objects in question all come from the largest tholos on the western terrace.

I am indebted to Professor Halbherr for permission to make use of these objects.