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# The Early Nilotic, Libyan and Egyptian Relations with Minoan Crete.

(THE HUXLEY MEMORIAL LECTURE FOR 1925.)

BY

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THE EARLY NILOTIC, LIBYAN AND EGYPTIAN RELATIONS WITH  
MINOAN CRETE.

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By SIR ARTHUR EVANS, D.Litt., F.R.S., Hon. V.P.S.A.

CRETE is before all things the middle island of the East Mediterranean basin. From Homer's time onwards its central position has struck all who have had to deal with it. It might, indeed, be described as a "half-way house" between three continents—Europe, Asia and Africa. This fortunate situation marked it as the point where the primitive culture of our own Continent was first affected by that of the older civilizations of Egypt and the East, and it was thus that Minoan Crete rose to life and light at a time when primeval darkness still brooded over the wide mainland region to North and West.

That the most ancient geographical relations of the island lay with Anatolia and the East is equally clear. This, indeed, is itself largely an inheritance from late geological times when, with the inrush of the Miocene Sea and the formation of the South Ægean basin, Crete became a South-Western horn of Asia Minor, and was separated by a deep channel from what is now the South-Eastern foreland of Greece. This result was brought into further relief by the still greater submergence of Pleistocene times, to which the North Ægean basin was due. Nor was this fundamental relationship affected by the subsequent submergence of part of the land-bridge to the East, which still left a chain of intermediate islands—Kasos, Carpathos and Rhodes—to act as stepping-stones of early intercourse.

There seems to be no reasonable doubt that Man entered Crete from the Anatolian side. He may even on his first appearance have found still living the dwarf hippopotamus<sup>1</sup> of the earlier and far wider land-bridge. But Palæolithic discoveries in the island are still wanting. Even from pure Neolithic deposits human remains are still to seek. The evidence, moreover, now forthcoming from the early Minoan "tholos" ossuaries of Southern Crete, that dolichocephaly was betimes prevalent in the island, is itself indecisive, both owing to the wide distribution of the "Mediterranean" type, and on account of special considerations, stated below, affecting this particular class of early monuments. That by the Middle Minoan Age a distinct brachycephalic admixture is perceptible may well be due to the intrusion of

<sup>1</sup> The remains of the pigmy hippopotamus (*H. pentlandi*), which ranges to Sicily and Malta, were found by Miss Dorothea Bate on the plateau of Katharò in Eastern Crete. Sir William Boyd Dawkins has now recognized bones of this hippopotamus amongst those associated with Galilean Man.

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Von Luschan's Armenoids from Asia Minor,<sup>1</sup> for which the portrait on a Middle Minoan II seal<sup>2</sup> supplies a cogent argument. But so far as the evidence goes, there is no reason for believing that this was the earliest insular type.

Apart from this as yet uncertain factor, all the evidence at our disposal—archæological, religious and linguistic—points to a root connection between Crete and Anatolia. A good instance of this is supplied by the primitive family of steatopygous female images from the Neolithic strata of Knossos, which, as I have shown elsewhere,<sup>3</sup> find remarkable parallels not only in Asia Minor but as far afield as the Euphrates and the Caspian shores. Other relics, such as the stone maces, show similar affinities with this Eastern province. The monochrome, hand-polished pottery, at times incised and inlaid, of Neolithic Crete recurs on the same side, while its character presents on the other hand an abrupt contrast to the polychrome pottery of wide East European range which the most recent discoveries have shown to have extended not only over a large part of Northern Greece but to the remotest glens of the Morea. The contrast here presented finds a curious parallel in a phenomenon, ultimately due to the same physical causes, that zoologists have noted on the respective sides of the strait that divides Crete from the Greek side of the old rift. The land-snails and running beetles of the little island of Cerigotto, geologically dependent on Crete, like those of Crete itself, show a general affinity to those of Asia Minor, while the types found on the opposite island of Cerigo, the ancient Cythera, beyond the narrow channel, correspond with those of mainland Greece.<sup>4</sup>

The most deep-lying traditions of the early Cretan population, as far as it has been able to recover them, also connect themselves with the mainland to the East. The indigenous pre-Hellenic language, mainly preserved in names of persons and places, belongs to the same family as that of the old Carians and their kin; and it is impossible to doubt that, where such nomenclature extends to mainland Greece, its diffusion was the result of the Minoan Conquest, to which the Mycenaean civilization on that side was due. The names both of Minos and Knossos, to take significant examples, recur in the Cilician coast region; Karnessos, the earlier appellation of Lythos, the model Dorian city of the later Greek colonists, has the same element as Halikarnassos. Throughout a large part of Anatolia, again, we recognize the cult of the same Great Mother with her male satellite—husband, lover or child, as the case may be—whose insular cult has been exposed in the Minoan shrines of Crete and whose memory survived in the Rhea and infant Zeus of Hellenic tradition. Of

<sup>1</sup> A summary of Dr. von Luschan's results is given in his "Huxley Lecture" for 1911.

<sup>2</sup> See my *Palace of Minos*, vol. i, p. 2, Fig. 2A.

<sup>3</sup> *Palace of Minos*, vol. i, p. 47 seq.

<sup>4</sup> This evidence is well summarized in R. F. Sharpe, *European Animals; their Geological history and Geographical distribution*, pp. 198, 199. The geographical conclusions resulting from the distribution of the snails was first pointed out by O. Böttger, "Die Binnenschnecken d. Griechischen Inseln Cerigo und Cerigotto" (*Nachrichtsblatt d. deutschen malakol. Gesellschaft*, vol. xxvi, 1894).

special importance, too, is the widespread recurrence on the Anatolian side of the worship of the sacred double axe or "labrys," from which, indeed, the name of "Labyrinth," as attached to the Palace of Minos, was almost certainly derived.

It has been necessary to bring into relief this fundamental connection of Crete itself and its earliest stock with Asia Minor in order to place in its proper perspective the Southern relations with which I propose to deal on this occasion. That by way of the island "stepping-stones" some kind of intercourse existed with the Anatolian havens from the earliest time of human occupation onwards must be reasonably inferred. It was probably owing to some early drift along the Southern littoral of Asia Minor that there occur in the later Neolithic deposits of Knossos objects made of *Tridacna* shell, the nearest habitat of which is the Red Sea.<sup>1</sup> Further West, indeed, other evidences of the same primitive current of intercourse may be seen in exotic shells found in the Neolithic deposits of Italy, including the "mother-of-pearl" shell (*Meleagrina margaritifera*),<sup>2</sup> which does not at present live nearer than the Persian Gulf and Indian Ocean.

*A priori* we should naturally look to the Continent to the East for the routes by which objects as well as ideas of oriental origin reached early Crete. There has even been a tendency, partly, it would seem, suggested by the analogy of later Phœnician commerce, to suppose that the Egyptian relics found in connection with Minoan and Mycenaean remains arrived by the Syrian and Anatolian route. This may have been partially the case in the latest age of the civilization, when colonial foundations existed in Cyprus and probably also on the Cilician Coast, but it is unsupported by any evidence so far as regards the earlier contact of Crete with the Nile Valley.

But, underlying this theory of intercourse with Egypt by the round-about coastal route along the sides of the Easternmost Mediterranean angle, there has undoubtedly been the assumption that primitive man shrank from voyages across the open sea. The assumption is wholly ungrounded. At a very early stage in man's evolution we are encountered by the problem of his first appearance on the Australian Continent, and already, by the time of the transitional phase of culture that heralds the birth of the true Neolithic, considerable advance in seafaring knowledge seems to have been attained. As Sir Arthur Keith has pointed out, the Maglemose settlers in the island of Oronsay, off the West Coast of Scotland, would have had to cross a considerable stretch of what is often a stormy sea.<sup>3</sup> It is clear

<sup>1</sup> I may instance a worn pebble-like object, another uncertain fragment showing traces of the kings and an idol of neolithic type illustrated in my *Palace of Minos*, vol. i, p. 48, Figs. 13, 20 (there erroneously described as "alabaster").

<sup>2</sup> Strobel, *Bull. di Palenologia*, vol. iii (1877), p. 56. For five specimens *Mitra oleacea* found in Ligurian Cave burials, see A. Issel, *ibid.*, vol. xiii (1887), p. 175.

<sup>3</sup> *The Antiquity of Man*, vol. i (1925 ed.), p. 112, "to reach the island even now a stretch of sea ten miles in width has to be crossed, but at the time the harpoon people settled on it . . . the sail must have been longer, for in Azilian times the island and the neighbouring mainland stood 30 feet deeper in the sea than at present."



that by the close of the Neolithic Age neither the North Sea nor the widest part of the English Channel nor the Bay of Biscay itself were bars to direct maritime intercourse between the British Isles and the Scandinavian and North German regions on the one side and the Iberic world on the other. What was successfully ventured at that early epoch in those open waters, exposed to the full fury of Atlantic and Arctic gales, must have been well within the capacity of the mariners of the Inland Sea. It is possible to go further than this and to affirm that the early Mediterranean seafarers preferred the open sea to the rounding of iron-bound headlands or coasting along surf-beaten shores. In Crete, indeed, there is distinct evidence that their maritime goals stood in relation to overland transit routes by which dangerous promontories were avoided.

It is in itself natural to suppose that in the East Mediterranean basin navigation began to flourish in the Ægean island world. Neither the Syrian nor the Libyan Coast was favourable to its rise, though on the other hand the Nile supplied materials

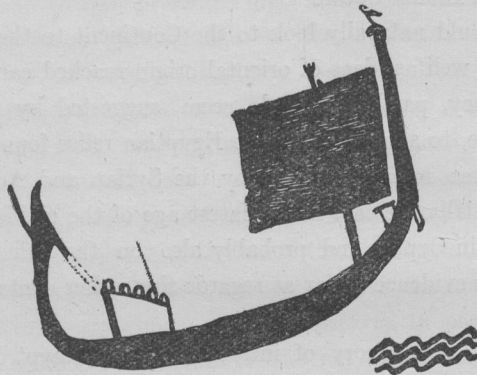


FIG. 1.—SAILING VESSEL ON ABYDOS POT.

for the growth of a simple form of river craft. The papyrus, however, of which the true Nilotic vessels were made, itself offered only limited scope for the construction of larger vessels and, owing to the absence of good timber on the banks of the river, the Egyptian ships of the early dynasties, though often otherwise of elaborate build, were literally built up of short planks<sup>1</sup> and, as may be seen from the monument of Sahuré of the Vth Dynasty (c. 2700 B.C.), still continued to be provided with ladder-like masts of two stems.

Recent researches have made it clear that in the last predynastic stage of Egyptian culture an exotic form of vessel began to intrude on the traditional Nilotic type, and there can be little doubt that by whatever channels this form reached the Nile, its original home was the Euphrates. Instead of the curving keels with two central cabins dividing the banks of oars and with prow and stern rising gradually from the water-level, such as we see, for instance, on the painted pots of Naqada

<sup>1</sup> See, for instance, A. Köster, *Das Antike Serwesen* (Berlin, 1923), p. 14, Fig. 1.



(see Fig. 2), and the well-known rock painting of Hierakonpolis, vessels now appear of quite a different character. These have level hulls with high, abruptly rising prows and recurved sterns, and show a single shelter somewhat behind their middle. On the ivory knife-handle of Gebel-el-'Arak, where unquestionable Sumerian elements are seen side by side with Nilotic, we actually witness a naval battle between ships of these two classes.<sup>1</sup> In connection with the new type of vessel that now enters on the scene we note indications of masts, and on a "decorated" pot from the Naqada Cemetery a broad square-cut sail (Fig. 1). The mast here, though short, is of a single piece. On a Ist Dynasty alabaster vase from Abydos we seem to trace a similar type of sailing-boat.<sup>2</sup>

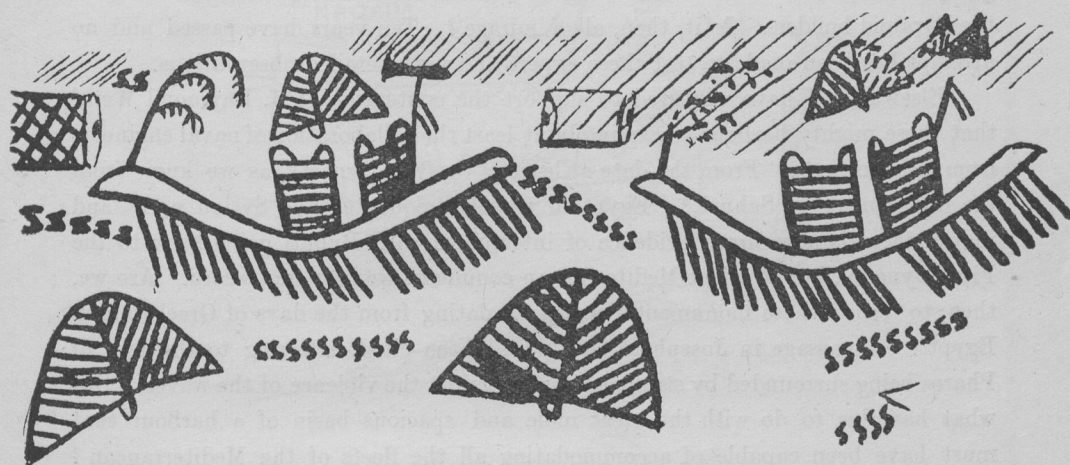


FIG. 2.—PREDYNASTIC ROWING GALLEYS ON DECORATED POT, NAQADA, SHOWING "FISH" AND "MOUNTAINS" ENSIGNS.

It is nevertheless clear that up to the close of the predynastic age—and, indeed, during the earlier historic phase of Egypt—sailing vessels had made very little way.

In the numerous representations of vessels on the "decorated" pots of late predynastic times from which Fig. 2<sup>3</sup> is taken, rowers in place of masts and sails are almost universal. At the same time the abundance of such galleys shows the great development of navigation on the Nile already before the days of Menes' conquest. Its ultimate goal, so far as the Nile itself was concerned, would have been A-ur,

<sup>1</sup> Bénédite, Fondation Piot, *Monuments et Mémoires*, xxii, Fasc. 1; Petrie, *Ancient Egypt*, 1917, p. 26 *seq.*, Figs. 1-4; H. Frankfort, *Studies in Ancient Pottery of the Near East*, p. 139 *seq.* (Roy. Anthr. Inst. Occasional Papers, No. 6, 1924), and Ch. Boreux, *Études de Nautique Égyptienne, I (Mémoires, etc., I, 1924)*. In the reliefs on this object Sumerian and early Nilotic elements meet, Gilgames is seen dompting two lions, and men appear wearing the "Libyan sheath."

<sup>2</sup> Petrie, *Abydos*, vol. ii, Pl. xii, 266.

<sup>3</sup> Petrie and Quibell, *Naqada and Ballas*, Pl. lxvi, 4.

“the Great Door” or “Port” near the Canopic mouth, to the early importance of which Professor Newberry has called attention.<sup>1</sup>

Was the sea transport already in Ægean hands? Was there, perhaps, already some less grandiose predecessor of the mighty harbour works, since submerged, that abutted on the Isle of Pharos? The mapping out of the immense constructions, still visible beneath the sea surface, by the French engineer, M. Gaston Jondet,<sup>2</sup> has never received either the notice or the investigation that it deserves. The break-water here, according to his measurements 2,000 metres in length, had supporting walls, formed of blocks, the upper surface of which was 8 to 12 metres wide, and the great basin, containing an area of about 150 acres, might “have sheltered 400 galleys or trirèmes of 30 metres length.” Such constructions vie with those of the Pyramid builders. Is it, then, all a mirage? Ten years have passed and no attempt has been made to test these expert and very detailed observations.

Elsewhere<sup>3</sup> I have ventured to support the contention of M. Raymond Weil,<sup>4</sup> that these mighty harbour works imply at least the collaboration of naval engineers from Minoan Crete. From the date at least of the Vth Dynasty, as we know from the monument of Sahurè,<sup>5</sup> Egyptian vessels frequented the Syrian ports, and indeed there is now direct evidence of intercourse with Byblos going back to the First Dynasty, but of wider Mediterranean commerce we have no record. Are we, then, to regard these monumental works as dating from the days of Greek rule in Egypt? A passage in Josephus<sup>6</sup> has indeed been cited, referring to the Isle of Pharos being surrounded by strong sea walls against the violence of the waves. But what has this to do with the great mole and spacious basin of a harbour that must have been capable of accommodating all the fleets of the Mediterranean? Are we really to believe that what would have been even for Alexander his most colossal work has been passed over in silence by ancient writers?

Of Cretan vessels probably the earliest representation is a clay model of a boat with two benches, a high prow, and a tail-like projection at the stern from an ossuary at Palaikastro belonging to the First Early Minoan Period.<sup>7</sup> (Fig. 3.) The latter feature recurs on a series of incised figures of ships engraved on Cycladic pottery of

<sup>1</sup> “The Petty Kingdom of the Harpoon and Egypt’s Earliest Mediterranean Port” (*Liv. Annals*, i, p. 17 *seq.*).

<sup>2</sup> *Les ports submergés de l’Ancienne Île de Pharos* (Mémoires présentés à l’Institut Egyptien, 1916).

<sup>3</sup> *Palace of Minos*, vol. i, p. 292 *seq.*

<sup>4</sup> “Les ports antéhelléniques de la Côte à Alexandrie et l’Empire Crétois” (Extrait du *Bulletin de l’Institut Français d’Archéologie orientale*, t. xvi).

<sup>5</sup> Borchhardt, *Grabdenkmal des Könige Sahurè* (Leipzig, 1913), with E. Assmann’s Commentary.

<sup>6</sup> *De Bello Judaico*, iv, 614, 80.

<sup>7</sup> R. C. Bosanquet and R. M. Dawkins, *The Unpublished Objects from the Palaikastro Excavations*, part i (1923), p. 7, Fig. 4 (Suppl. Paper of the British School at Athens).

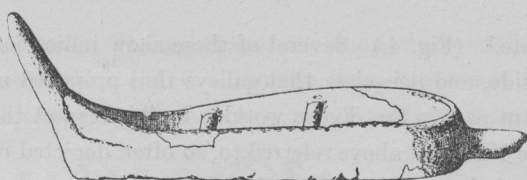


FIG. 3.—CRETAN VESSEL (EARLY MINOAN I), PALAIKASTRO.

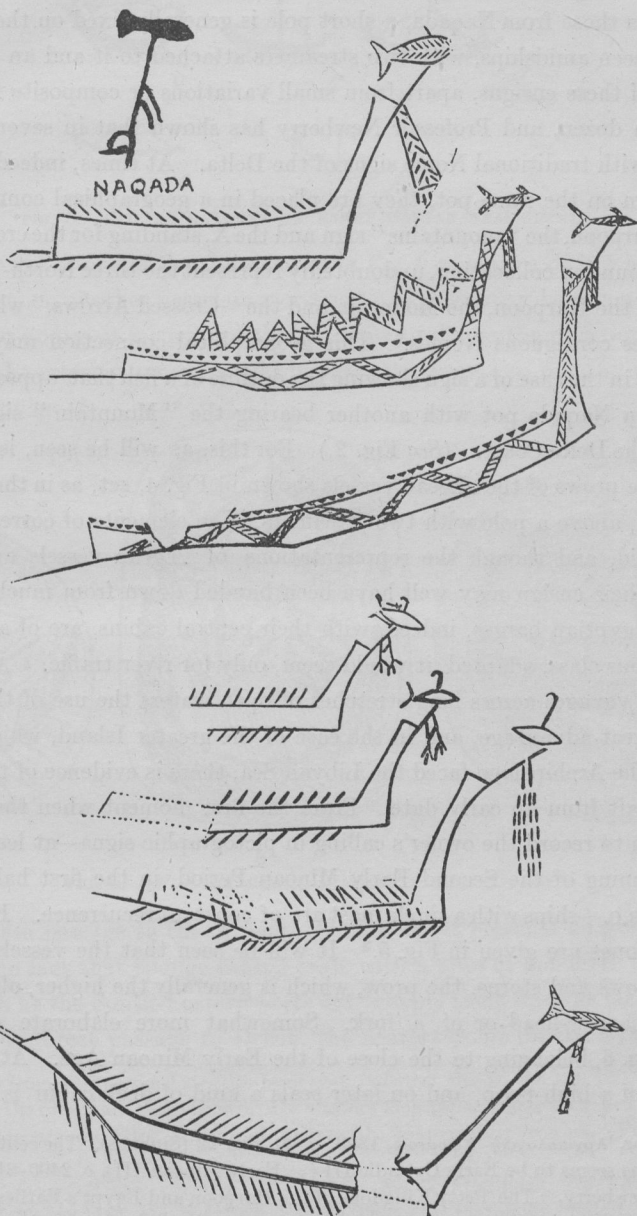


FIG. 4.—REPRESENTATIONS OF EARLY CYCLADIC ROWING GALLEYS.

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somewhat later date.<sup>1</sup> (Fig. 4.) Several of these show indications of oars, in one case 28 on either side, and it is clear that galleys thus propelled must have always played an important part in the Ægean world. In this respect these vessels may be compared with the Nile craft above referred to, so often depicted on late predynastic pots of the decorated class, where the oars are sometimes even more numerous. But there is a further point of comparison of a more distinctive kind. Upon the Egyptian pots, such as those from Naqada, a short pole is generally fixed on the hinder of the two cabins seen amidships, with two streamers attached to it and an ensign at top. The types of these ensigns, apart from small variations or composite forms, hardly amount to a dozen, and Professor Newberry has shown that in several cases these correspond with traditional Nome signs of the Delta. At times, indeed, in groups of vessels shown on the same pot, they are placed in a geographical connection. Thus the double harpoon, the "mountains" sign and the X, standing for the crossed arrows of Neith, thus found in collocation, undoubtedly represent the three North-Western petty kingdoms of the Harpoon, the Mountain and the "Crossed Arrows," which formed in historic times contiguous Nomes.<sup>2</sup> This geographical connection may have a particular value in the case of a sign showing the outline of a fish that appears on a vessel grouped on a Naqada pot with another bearing the "Mountain" sign of a region that lay on the Delta Coast. (See Fig. 2.) For this, as will be seen, is the recurring ensign on the prows of the Ægean vessels shown in Fig. 4, set, as in the case of Early Nilotic craft, above a pole with two streamers. The elements of correspondence are here threefold, and though the representations of Ægean vessels are actually of later date, their ensign may well have been handed down from much earlier days. The proto-Egyptian barges, indeed, with their central cabins, are of a different and more luxurious class, adapted, it would seem, only for river traffic.

But for voyages across long stretches of open waters the use of the sail was, of course, of great advantage, and in the case of the greater Island, which on the side away from the Archipelago faced the Libyan Sea, there is evidence of the general use of sailing craft from an early date. From the first moment when the Cretan seal-stones began to record the owner's calling in pictographic signs—at least as far back as the beginning of the Second Early Minoan Period, in the first half of the third millennium B.C.—ships with a single mast are of constant recurrence. Early examples from seal-stones are given in Fig. 5.<sup>3</sup> It will be seen that the vessels on these seals have high bows and sterns, the prow, which is generally the higher, often taking the form of an arrow-head or of a fork. Somewhat more elaborate specimens are shown in Fig. 6, belonging to the close of the Early Minoan Age. At times we find indications of a high poop, and on later seals a kind of deck cabin is clearly shown

<sup>1</sup> Tsountas, *Ἀρχαιολογικὴ Ἐφημερίς*, 1899, p. 90, Fig. 22 (Siphnos). The centre point of these representations seems to be Early Cycladic III (= Early Minoan III), c. 2400–2100 B.C.

<sup>2</sup> P. E. Newberry, "The Petty Kingdom of the Harpoon and Egypt's Earliest Mediterranean Port" (*Liv. Annals*, vol. i, p. 18).

<sup>3</sup> Reproduced from *Scripta Minoa*, vol. i, p. 209, No. 57.

near the stern of the vessel. The tail or spur noted in the case of the Cycladic vessels is visible in some cases, and in Fig. 6, *a*, the two steering oars are clearly discernible. The four-pronged object by the fish on Fig. 6, *c*, is possibly some kind of fishing spear.

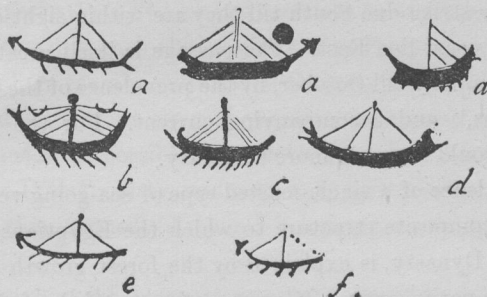


FIG. 5.—SAILING GALLEYS ON EARLY CRETAN SEAL-STONES.

Over the prow of one of the ships shown in Fig. 5 appears a disk, while on either side of the mast, on another vessel, is a crescent. If these may be taken for symbols of the heavenly bodies, it seems probable that they refer to the duration of voyages undertaken; the crescent moons would in this case mean two months and the disk a still longer voyage.

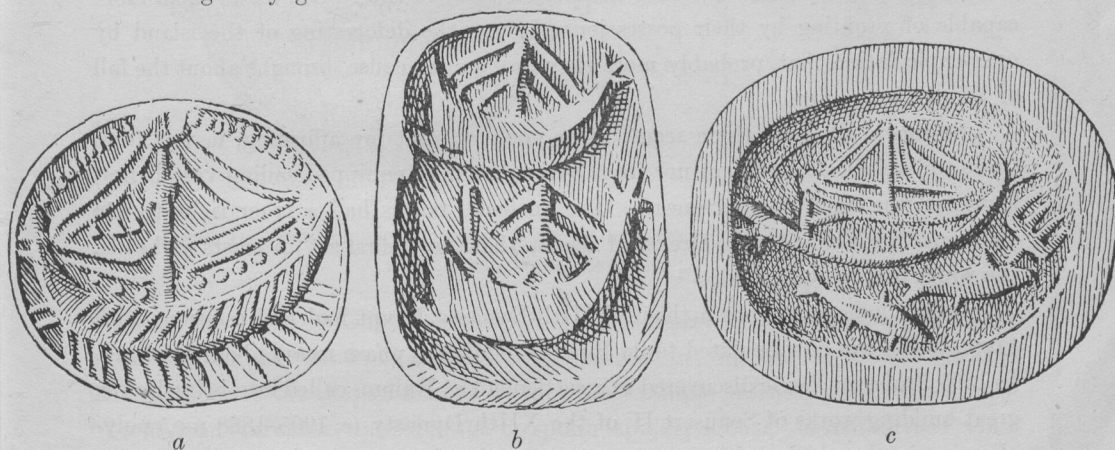


FIG. 6.—SHIPS ON EARLY MINOAN III SEAL-STONES.<sup>1</sup>

That the sea passage to the opposite African coast presents no great difficulty is shown by the fact that sponge-fishing craft with a crew of not more than a dozen men that touch at the South-Eastern ports of Crete ply their trade as far as Benghazi in Tripoli. The direct passage to Derna, the nearest point on the Cyrenaic coast,

<sup>1</sup> Fig. 6, *b*, is from a three-sided steatite-bead seal, *Palace of Minos*, vol. i, p. 120, Fig. 89B. Two ships, one above the other, are those shown. On another face appear three crouched human figures of a kind that recurs on later seals and apparently representing rowers. Probably Early Minoan III.

For *c*, see *Palace of Minos*, vol. i, p. 18, Fig. 7. See Xanthudides, *The Vaulted Tombs of Messara* (Droop's Transl.), Pl. xiv, No. 1079. From Tholos B, Platanos. This tomb may have been built at the end of Middle Minoan III, but its main period was Middle Minoan I.

is not more than 180 miles from the Southernmost horn of Crete,<sup>1</sup> where, as we shall see, was the great Minoan haven. To Pharos, off the mouth of the Nile, it is 320 miles from the South-Eastern ports of Crete. Small sailing vessels from Crete bound for Alexandria generally strike due South till they are within sight of the African shore, and then follow the coast-line East. The passage is itself greatly aided during the summer months, from May till October, by the prevalence of the Etesian North-West winds, or "Meltems," and accompanying current. For the return journey the equipment of oars would be much more necessary.

The early prevalence of a single-masted type of sea-going vessels in Crete, which contrasts with the composite structure to which the Egyptians had recourse down at least to the Vth Dynasty, is explained by the forest growth of the island. The mighty beams of the native cypress (*Cupressus horizontalis*), of which the carbonized remains come to light in the Palace of Knossos, were obtained from the same source, and the straggling remains of old cypress growth are still to be seen on some of the glens and mountain sides, especially in South-Eastern Crete. The island was probably in former times as well provided with timber as the North Syrian coast, and the material here was in the hands of a race whose early training in navigation, due to their geographical connection with the island world to the North, made them more capable of profiting by their possession. It was the deforesting of the island by over-exploitation that, probably more than any human cause, brought about the fall of Minoan sea-power.

So much, at least, there seems to be good warrant for affirming, it was from Crete and neither from Egypt nor from Syria that fully equipped sailing vessels first traversed the open Mediterranean. The ancient Cretans had a truer right to the claim, put forth later for the Greeks of Ægina, that they "first set up masts and sails, the wings of a sea-going ship."<sup>2</sup>

It had long been known that XVIIIth-Dynasty Egypt had had relations with Crète, which can now be dated to its First Late Minoan phase round about 1500 B.C. In 1890 Professor Petrie discovered in a settlement at Kahun, called into being by the great building works of Senusert II, of the XIIth Dynasty (c. 1905-1888 B.C.) polychrome sherds which, with prescient instinct, he described as "Ægean." Four years later Professor John Myres, in examining the painted pottery from the Kamáres Cave, which opens on the steeps of Mount Ida above Phæstos, recognized that it belonged to the same fabric as the sherds of Kahun, now classified as Middle Minoan II. Since then these comparisons have been amplified by a variety of finds, notably a polychrome vase found in a tomb at Abydos by Professor Garstang, accompanied by cylinders bearing the names of Senusert (Sesostris) III and Amenemhat III—the

<sup>1</sup> See my "Sketch map of the East Mediterranean Basin showing the Central position of Crete," facing p. 1 of *Palace of Minos*, vol. i.

<sup>2</sup> Hesiod, Catal. Figm. 96: οἱ δὲ τοὶ πρῶτοι ξεῦξαν νῆα ἀμφιελίσσας, πρῶτοι δ' ἰστία θέντο νεῶς πτέρηρα ποντοπόροιο.

latter of whom, according to Meyer's chronological system, reigned from about 1849 to 1800 B.C.

In 1895, when examining a remarkable series of relics from a deposit at St. Onuphrios in Southern Crete,<sup>1</sup> which had certainly belonged to a primitive bee-hive ossuary, I was able to carry back the relations with Egypt to a much earlier date. Not only were there here scarabs with XIIth-Dynasty motives, but associated stone vases, which, coupled with others often of variegated materials obtained by me from other Cretan sites, made it possible for me to extend the comparison to similar Egyptian vases of the IVth Dynasty, and even to suggest a connection with primitive Nilotic pots, which I then termed "Libyan," belonging, as we now know, to the late predynastic stage.

From the beginning of the excavations on the site of Knossos these early comparisons received remarkable confirmation. Fragments have come to light of several carinated bowls of fine translucent diorite indistinguishable from an exquisite example



FIG. 7.—PREDYNASTIC EGYPTIAN BOWL OF SYENITE FROM NEAR THE SOUTH PROPYLEUM, KNOSSOS.

found in the grave of King Sneferu of the IVth Dynasty (c. 2840–2820 B.C.).<sup>2</sup> Part of the rim was also found of a similar vessel, executed in "liparite," a form of volcanic glass peculiar to the Æolian Islands, so that this example probably represents a copy by a Minoan craftsman trained in the Egyptian lapidary school. A derivative Cretan type is also known in porphyry. Of still earlier date is an imported syenite bowl found by the South Propylæum, within what was known in the early days of the excavations at Knossos as the "Central Clay Area" in a layer immediately above the Neolithic (Fig. 7). More recently a large part of another bowl, made of porphyry, came to light in an unstratified deposit North-West of the Palace (Fig. 8).<sup>3</sup> In this case the flat collar, typical of this kind of vessel, is finely under-cut, and the roll handle is perforated. In the same deposit occurred part of a similar bowl in the same

<sup>1</sup> "The Sepulchral Deposit of Hagios Onuphrios, etc." (Supplement to *Cretan Pictographs, etc.*, Quaritch, 1895). See especially pp. 116–119.

<sup>2</sup> See *Palace of Minos*, vol. i, pp. 85–87, and Figs. 54, 55.

<sup>3</sup> See the forthcoming second volume of *Palace of Minos*, p. 30.

material, with a slightly raised base, and a piece of a vessel of brilliantly polished black porphyry with quartzite crystals—a kind of stone that also recurs among the prehistoric vases of Naqada and Hierakonpolis. A bowl of hornblende porphyry, a good deal rolled, with a less definite collar and apparently without ledge handles,<sup>1</sup> may be slightly later in date, but its variegated material forbids us to bring it down later than the II<sup>nd</sup> Egyptian Dynasty, when such materials went out of use in Egypt itself.

Probably somewhat later in date is a fragment of another vessel of diorite, showing one of what had been originally five ear-like interior projections, recently found West of the Palace. This proves to form part of a very interesting kind of cup, of which an almost perfect specimen in alabaster from a IV<sup>th</sup>-Dynasty tomb



FIG. 8.—PRE-DYNASTIC EGYPTIAN BOWL OF PORPHYRY, KNOSSOS.

at El Kab is in the Ashmolean collection.<sup>2</sup> This cup, otherwise almost unknown in Egypt itself,<sup>3</sup> and possibly of sacral character, was probably devised for drinking some beverage with floating objects. Had mustaches been known in ancient Egypt it might have been called a "Mustache Cup." The type is itself so foreign to lapidary work that we may infer that it originated in a metal form of cup

<sup>1</sup> *Palace of Minos*, vol. i, pp. 65 and 67, Fig. 32.

<sup>2</sup> The Knossian cup restored is set beside that from El Kab for comparison in *Palace of Minos*, vol. ii, p. 58, Fig. 27.

<sup>3</sup> A later survival of this form exists in faience. A fragmentary cup, now in the British Museum, was found in the Temple of Hathor at Deir-el-Bahari (XI<sup>th</sup> Dynasty). Dr. H. R. Hall called my attention to this.



presumably copper, with ear-shaped projections of the rim folded inwards. Its origin may therefore go back to a still higher antiquity.

In some ways even more important, archæologically, than the occurrence of remains of imported stone vases of late prehistoric and protodynastic Egyptian stone vessels, is the appearance of a native Cretan class of vessels in softer stones, such as steatite and serpentine, showing forms clearly derived from such exotic types. The records thus supplied, moreover, are more extensive, since they are scattered over a large number of sites; while, so far as Crete is concerned, Knossos itself—overwhelmingly the chief civic and administrative centre of the island—has been hitherto the sole source. Such derivative shapes include not only the broad-collared bowls with roll handles above described (Fig. 9), but higher vessels of the same general character such as are common at Naqada and Hierakonpolis (Fig. 10).<sup>1</sup> In the latter case the prototype was evidently somewhat distant; but certain banded limestone pots, the material of which was chosen to imitate diorite, show a very close resemblance to a VIth-Dynasty type of ointment pot<sup>2</sup> (c. 2600 B.C.).



FIG. 9.—SERPENTINE IMITATION OF PRE-DYNASTIC BOWL, ELUNDA, CRETE.

That imported Egyptian vessels, being made of hard and, at the same time, decorative materials, often became heirlooms was only to be expected, and specimens have been found at Mycenæ and Asinê in Late Minoan tombs. But to suppose that such vessels, fragmentary specimens of a whole series of which have been found, as we have seen, on the site of Knossos, and which were indeed already imitated by Early Minoan lapidaries, were imported at a time long posterior to that in which they were in vogue in the Nile Valley itself, can only be described as an ingenious evasion wholly at variance with archæological science.

<sup>1</sup> See *Palace of Minos*, vol. i, pp. 66 and 67, Fig. 35. A specimen (Fig. 36) from an Early Minoan II tomb excavated by Mr. R. B. Seager at Mochlos is thus compared with it.

<sup>2</sup> *Idem*, p. 92 and Figs. 60 and 61, where a marbled limestone pot from Mochlos (Seager, *Mochlos*, p. 80, M 3, and Pl. II) is placed beside Egyptian specimens of VIth Dynasty date. *Cf.*, too, a pot of black-veined limestone found by Dr. Xanthudides in a bee-hive ossuary at Platanos (*Vaulted Tomb, &c.*, Pl. XI, No. 1904).

At Knossos, indeed, where so many remains, generally fragmentary, of these early imported vessels have occurred in unstratified deposits on the outskirts of the site, and in one or two cases embodied in the rubble material of the Palace walls, stratigraphical data, so far at least as regards their upper limit, were still wanting. Nor is the reason of this far to seek. At the very beginning of the Middle Minoan Age the builders of the first great Palace, of which considerable traces have now come out beneath the later structures, with a view to obtaining a more spacious site, had levelled away the top of the original "Tell" that had been formed by successive settlements on this spot. The whole Early Minoan stratum down to its very beginning had thus been removed, and it was from the debris of this, representing probably the remains of earlier residential buildings on the site, that the imported stone vase fragments such as those described above must have been derived.



FIG. 10.

*a.* PREDYNASTIC EGYPTIAN STONE VESSEL, HIERAKONPOLIS ;  
*b.* IMITATIVE TYPE (E.M. II), MOCHLOS.

The original Palace of Knossos, like the sister foundation now being excavated by the French School at Mallia, 20 miles to the East, belonged to the opening phase of the Middle Minoan Age (Middle Minoan Ia). In the centre of the hill the early Palace structures are directly superimposed on the Upper Neolithic, the whole of the Early Minoan strata having been levelled away. Immediately beneath the level of the Central Court, where the paving had been removed, a succession of winters' rains had brought out wall foundations which were the object of investigations carried out in 1923 and 1924. The ground plan of two contiguous houses was thus recovered which, as their contents showed, belonged to the latest transitional phase of true Neolithic. The pottery, much of which shows the incipient use of the potter's oven,

approximated in many respects to that of the First Early Minoan Period.<sup>1</sup> The plans of the two houses uncovered were rectangular, apparently of the "but-and-ben" class, surrounded by an agglomeration of small cells containing large pots for stores and other relics. In contrast to all Minoan buildings, but in conformity with the mainland usage traditional in Asia Minor, there were here fixed hearths. A series of stone implements came to light of the usual Cretan shapes, and remains of clay female images, one of them identical with a known squatting type from the Neolithic of Knossos. There was, however, one exception to the pure Stone Age tradition

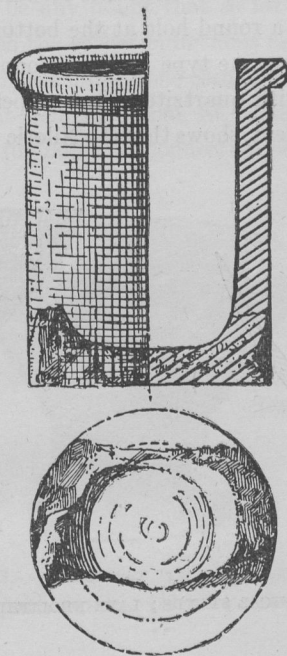


FIG. 11.—GALLIPOT OF MOTTLED LIMESTONE (RESTORED) AND BASE SHOWING TUBULAR DRILL MARKS; LATE NEOLITHIC HOUSE, KNOSSOS.

among the implements in the shape of a small flat celt of copper found in one of the store cells. Otherwise the contents were too uniform not to be described as pure Neolithic, and the copper axe must be regarded as an importation, not improbably from the Nile Valley. This phase of culture cannot fairly be described as "Chalcolithic." If a term is to be found for such a Neolithic phase in which there is no trace of indigenous copper working, though intrusive copper objects may yet be found, the word "Oligochalcic" might perhaps be suggested on geological analogy.

<sup>1</sup> There were traces of an earlier and later arrangement, but the objects found represented throughout approximately the same cultural stage. For a detailed account of these discoveries see *Palace of Minos*, vol. ii.

Of special interest in their bearing in the Early Nilotic connections were two finds made here in the area occupied by House A. In a small compartment (No. 15), on the original floor level, occurred the base of a small cylindrical vessel of mottled limestone, with clear traces within of turning by a tubular drill, the "gallipot" shape of which, as restored in Fig. 11, closely resembles, on a smaller scale than usual, a typical class of late predynastic and protodynastic vessels. In the upper stratum, and standing in relation to a slightly later structure, came to light two fragments of vases in hard stones of variegated textures, one probably belonging to a small bowl of the collared class described above, the other forming part of a large basin 3 feet 10½ inches in diameter, with a round hole at the bottom like the basin of a modern wash-stand. Nothing of the same type has been found in Egypt or elsewhere, but the material—a dark rock with quartzite veins—appears to be exotic; and in any case this, like the other fragment, shows that the Nilotic usage of stone vessels wrought

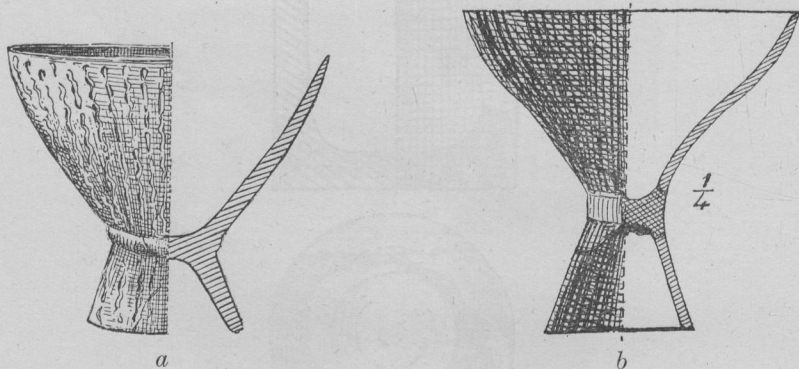


FIG. 12 *a, b*.—CLAY CUPS WITH CONICAL STANDS; LATE NEOLITHIC HOUSE, KNOSSOS. (*a*, c. ½ scale.)

in decorative materials had already taken root on the site of Knossos by the transitional Late Neolithic phase.

Among the ceramic forms here found, a class of cups with truncated conical stands have a special chronological value (Fig. 12, *a, b*). They are the immediate predecessors of the higher and more elegant class of pedestalled chalices, well represented in the ossuary cave of Pyrgos,<sup>1</sup> a little to the East of Knossos, where the earliest examples belong to the First Early Minoan Period. Several of the fragmentary specimens found in the Late Neolithic house show a raised band round the narrow part of the vessel between the stand and recipient, which by analogy with other Cretan ceramic forms suggests an original in metal work. And in this case the original must surely be found in a similar type of copper cup (Fig. 13), of which specimens were found by Professor Petrie at Abydos in the tomb of King

<sup>1</sup> See *Palace of Minos*, vol. i.

Khasekhemui,<sup>1</sup> identified by him with the last king of the IIInd Dynasty.<sup>2</sup> It is possible that this simple form of copper cup may have been in use at a considerably earlier date, though this close comparison, taken by itself, might be regarded as an indication that at Knossos the transitional Neolithic phase may have overlapped the beginning of the Egyptian dynasties.

But for intimate comparisons between early Crete and Nile Valley, as well as the opposite Libyan coasts, a group of monuments specially characteristic of the Messarà plain and its borders in the Southernmost district of the Island, supply our best materials, nor can there be any doubt that so far as Egypt is concerned they largely connect themselves with the earlier indigenous element.

The monuments in question are large stone ossuaries built in the bee-hive manner and to which the significant remains from St. Onuphrios already referred to undoubtedly belonged. The fundamental connection of these structures themselves

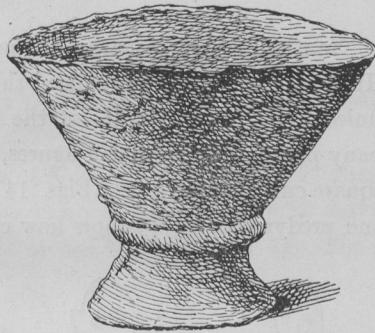


FIG. 13.—COPPER CUP, PROTODYNASTIC:  
ABYDOS, EGYPT. (About  $\frac{1}{2}$  scale.)

has, as I hope to show, a very important bearing on our present subject. Their methodical exploration, first begun by Professor Federigo Halbherr at Hagia Triada, near Phæstos, has been followed up by the indefatigable researches of the Cretan Ephor of Antiquities, Dr. Stephanos Xanthudides, the results of which have been admirably put before English readers in Professor Droop's translation entitled *The Vaulted Tombs of Messarà*. Owing to the results of successive journeys through the South of the Island I have myself been able to inspect almost all the known examples of these primitive ossuaries, and, in the course of some explorations undertaken this summer in the ranges that overlook the Mallia district on the Northern coast of

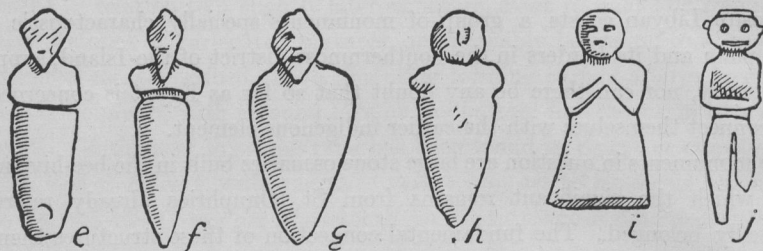
<sup>1</sup> *Royal Tombs*, vol. ii, Pl. IXA. Two examples were found about 8 cm. high. The Knossian cup, Fig. 12, a, is about the same height; Fig. 12, b, is 17.5 cm.

<sup>2</sup> *History of Egypt from the Earliest Times to the XVIth Dynasty*. Tenth Edition (1922), pp. 36-39. He is there identified with the "Kheneres" of Manetho. Eduard Meyer prefers to identify him with "Necherophes," the first king of the IIIrd Dynasty (*Aeg. Chronologie*, p. 138, seq.). He dates his accession c. 2895.

b

Central Crete, was able to establish the fact that at least one sporadic monument of the kind exists on that side.<sup>1</sup>

Among the objects found by Professor Halbherr in one of these sepulchral *tholoi* at Hagia Triada, about the relations of which there could from the first be no doubt, were a series of stone idols curiously recalling those of Naqada (Fig. 14). Similar



[FIG. 14.—STONE \*IDOLS OF PROTO-LIBYAN TYPES. OSSUARY THOLOS OF HAGIA TRIADA.

figures were found by Dr. Xanthudides in ossuaries of the same kind at Platanos, Kumasa and elsewhere. In some cases these reproduced the high head and pointed chin—apparently accompanied by a short beard—of the indigenous Nilotic race. Often, as in the case of many predynastic Egyptian figures, they are pointed below, but sometimes, as these, square cut. The Tables (Figs. 14 and 15) giving parallel types from Hagia Triada and predynastic Egypt show how close the resemblance is;

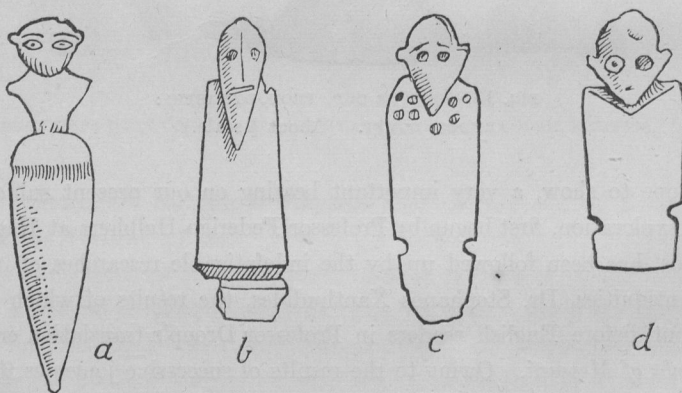


FIG. 15.—PREDYNASTIC EGYPTIAN FIGURINES, NAQADA.

but the Cretan specimens, many of which date from the middle of the Early Minoan Age (Early Minoan II), or later, point to a survival of these types in Southern Crete at a time when they seem to have been uprooted by the historic Egyptians in the Nile Valley. Or, alternatively, their continuity may have been maintained in some Libyan area to the West of the Delta, whence they were passed on to Crete.

<sup>1</sup> Near the upland village of Krási.

The outline of some of these figures may be recognized in a more artistic shape among the predynastic ivories, and here and there we have traces of the old Nilotic garb. A limestone example of this class, for instance, obtained by me, before the

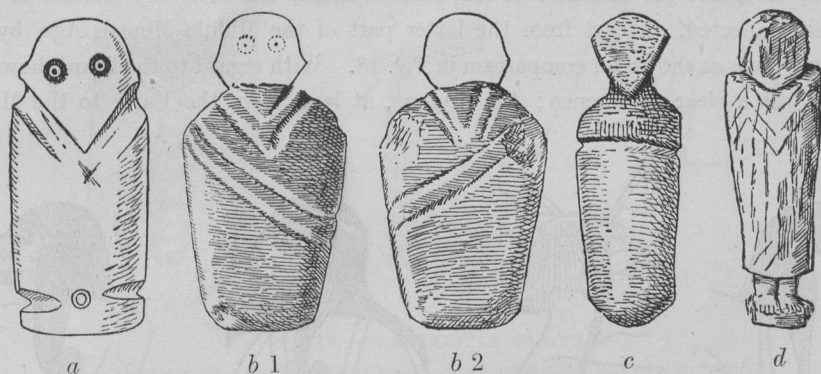


FIG. 16.—COMPARATIVE EXAMPLES OF FIGURES IN IVORY AND STONE.  
*a*. NAQADA; *b 1*, *b 2*. KNOSSOS; *c*. MESSARÀ; *d*. HIERAKONPOLIS (IVORY).

excavations, from the site of Knossos (Fig. 16, *b 1*, *b 2*), suggests the folds of a mantle such as recurs on the Hierakonpolis figurines of both sexes. The women's costume, as seen towards the close of the Early Minoan Age (Fig. 17, *b*, *c*, *d*), shows a cloak

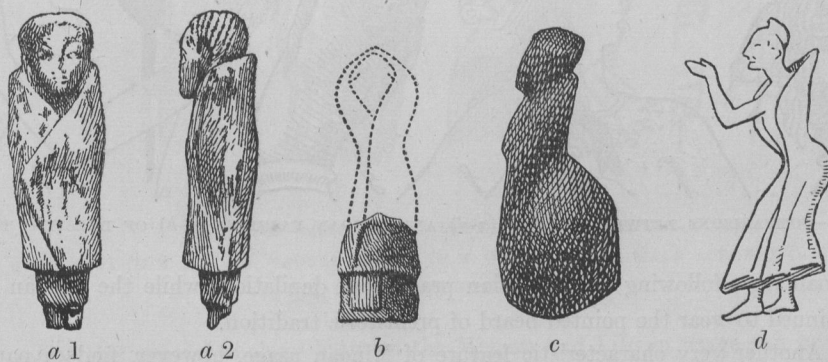


FIG. 17.—COMPARATIVE EXAMPLES OF FEMALE FIGURES.  
*a 1*, *a 2*. PREDYNASTIC IVORY, HIERAKONPOLIS; *b*. PETSOFÀ; *c*. MESSARÀ THOLOS.  
 FROM SEAL-STONE (E.M. III).

rising above the neck in a cape-like manner which recalls fashions illustrated by predynastic female figures such as Fig. 17, *a 1*, *a 2*.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> These and other early Nilotic comparisons will be found illustrated in fuller detail in a section of my forthcoming second volume of the *Palace of Minos*.

A distinctive feature among the Libyans, already exemplified among the prehistoric ivory figures from Hierakonpolis<sup>1</sup> and of constant illustration on Egyptian monuments from the protodynastic period,<sup>2</sup> is the appearance of a long side-lock either before or behind the ear and falling down over the breast. It seems difficult not to recognize the influence of this fashion in the characteristic manner of hair-dressing affected, at least from the latter part of the Middle Minoan Age, by the Minoan men, as shown for comparison in Fig. 18. With regard to the beard, however, there was a clear divergence; the Cretans, at least from the Early to the Middle



FIG. 18.—COMPARISONS BETWEEN LIBYAN (a-d) AND MINOAN FASHIONS (e-h) OF DRESSING THE HAIR.

Minoan Age, following the Egyptian practice of depilation, while the Libyan men continued to wear the pointed beard of prehistoric tradition.

Another very characteristic feature of Minoan usage, however, finds a parallel both among the historic Libyans and the Early Nilotic population. This is the

<sup>1</sup> Among the ivory figures from Hierakonpolis this type of hairdressing is exceptional, and has not been hitherto recognized, but a clear example exists in the Ashmolean Collection (E. 176) of a head with long hair behind and a lock falling over the right ear on to the beard (*Palace of Minos*, vol. ii, Suppl., Pl. i). The traces of the belt show that the figure is that of a man. Another example is more uncertain. Of the men on the Gebel-el-'Arak knife-handle, one group shows the side-lock.

<sup>2</sup> The earliest examples cited by Oric Bates (*Eastern Libyans*, p. 134) are from monuments of the Vth Dynasty.



so-called "Libyan sheath," or penistasche, the envelope in this case being suspended from the front of the girdle,<sup>1</sup> while in the Minoan attire it is contained in a band or ligature drawn upwards to the girdle from between the thighs. (See comparative examples, Figs. 19, 20.) Here, it may be remarked, the Libyan arrangement seems

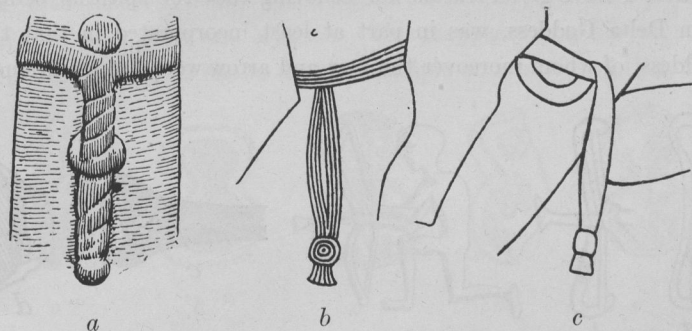


FIG. 19.—THE "LIBYAN SHEATH."

a. PREDYNASTIC (HIERAKONPOLIS); b, c. DYNASTIC EGYPTIAN PERIOD.

to be a distinctly African feature, since—not to speak of some general parallels from the South of the Continent—a very similar sheath is still in use in Togoland West of the Niger.<sup>2</sup>

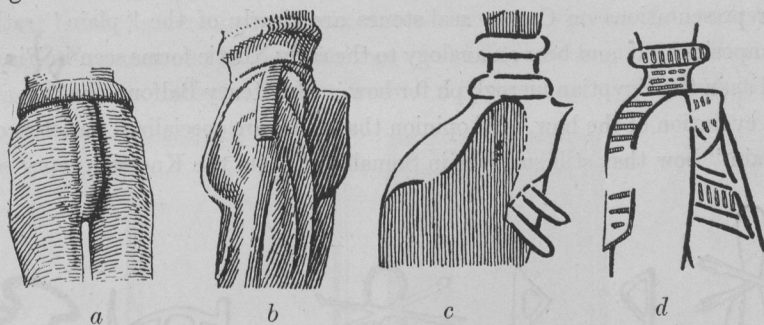


FIG. 20.—MINOAN LOIN CLOTHING AND LIGATURE.

a. PETSOFÀ (M.M. Ia); b. BRONZE FIGURE (M.M. III—L.M. I); c. MALE ACROBAT (L.M. II);  
d. FEMALE ACROBAT (L.M. II).

But this general analogy between the Minoan and Libyan usage can be carried a step further. There is evidence that, as a sign of dignity, Libyan chieftains' wives were clad in men's costume, including this distinctive article of male attire.<sup>3</sup> But a literal parallel to this is supplied by the female performers seen in representations

<sup>1</sup> See Bates, *op. cit.*

<sup>2</sup> F. von Luschan, *Globus LXXIX*, p. 197 *seq.* The specimen there shown (Fig. 3) is from Moba in North Togo, the sheaths there being of soft leather or woollen.

<sup>3</sup> See especially Oric Bates, *Eastern Libyans*, pp. 113, 114, and compare P. E. Newberry, *Ancient Egypt*, 1915, Pt. III, Fig. 4, and pp. 101, 102.

of the Minoan bull-grappling sports who, like the Libyan ladies, wear the same loin clothing as the men, including the indication of the male sheath (Fig. 20, *d*). The girl acrobats who thus performed feats in honour of the Minoan Goddess seem themselves to have taken a high place among her devotees.

Elsewhere I have given reasons for believing that the spiritual being of Neith, the Libyan Delta Goddess, was in part at least incorporated in that the Minoan Virgin-Goddess, of whom moreover the bow and arrow were also traditional symbols.

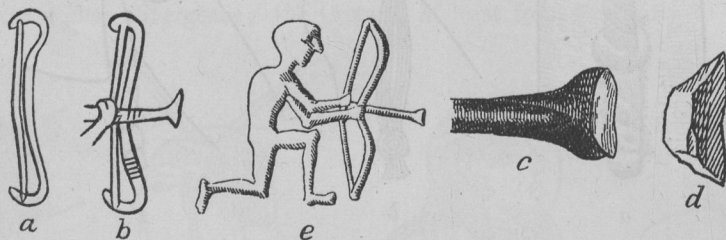


FIG. 21.—BOWS AND ARROWS.

*a, b.* PREDYNASTIC; *e.* CRETAN (M.M. III*a*); *c.* EGYPTIAN CHISEL-EDGED ARROW-HEAD; *d.* DITTO, SAHARA.

The character of the arms with which she was associated itself, moreover, curiously corresponds with those traditional in Minoan Crete. The earliest bows of which we have representations on Cretan seal-stones are clearly of the "plain" rather than the composite kind, and bear an analogy to the early Nilotic forms seen in Fig. 21, *a, b*, as well as in the Egyptian hieroglyph for bow. Mr. Henry Balfour, the first authority on the evolution of the bow, is of opinion that these are specialized varieties of a type of "plain" bow that still survives in Somaliland. On the Knossian ivory seal from

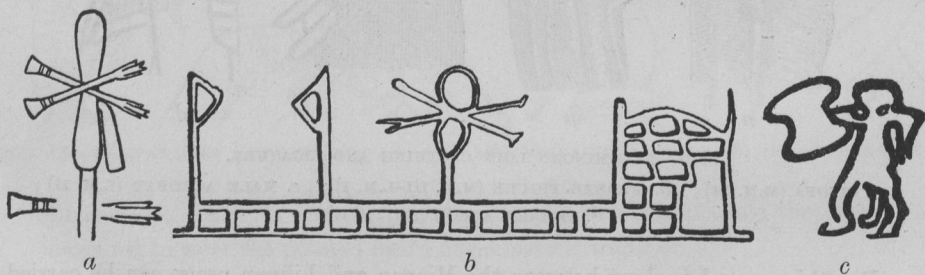


FIG. 22.—SHIELD AND ARROWS OF NEITH (*a, b.* PROTODYNASTIC; *c.* LIBYAN ROCK-CARVING).

which Fig. 21, *e*, is taken we see moreover this type of bow associated with an arrow of the same chisel-edged type as the traditional arrows of Neith (Fig. 22). This chisel-edged form also appears in a Minoan hieroglyph. Arrow heads of the same broad-edged type occur in Egyptian tombs, and are abundant in the Neolithic settlements of the Sahara region. They recur in the shell mounds of Mugem, in Portugal, and though they are sporadically well represented throughout a wide European

region, they seem to have had a specially abiding connection with this Southern zone. They might, perhaps, be described as an "Epipalæolithic element."

It is further observable that in protodynastic representations of the emblems of the Libyan Goddess (Fig. 22, *a, b*) the crossed arrows of Neith are associated with an oval shield with incurved sides which agrees with the well-known eight-shaped body-shield of Minoan Crete and Mycenæ. This reappears in a Libyan rock-carving (Fig. 22, *c*). In Crete, as is shown by the example on a bead seal (Fig. 22 *bis, a, b*),

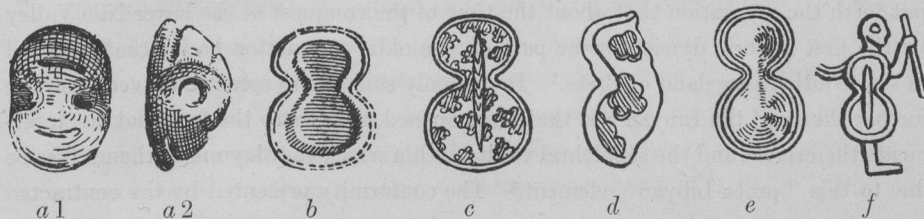


FIG. 22 *bis*.—REPRESENTATIONS OF MINOAN (8-SHAPED) SHIELDS.  
*a, b*. E.M. III; *c-e*. LATE MINOAN; *f*. PALLADIUM ON MYCENÆ SIGNET.

this form of shield can be traced back at least to the closing phase of the Early Minoan Age.<sup>1</sup> Where, as in the case of the painted tablet from Mycenæ, and the great signet ring (Fig. 22 *bis, f*), we see a divinity, in the former case certainly a Goddess, protected by a shield of this kind, anticipating the Palladium, we may recall the fact that Neith, as worshipped by the Ausean Libyans, was identified with Athena.

Among the relics found in the primitive "bee-hive" ossuaries of Southern Crete two classes of objects are specially significant. The rectangular stone palettes used,

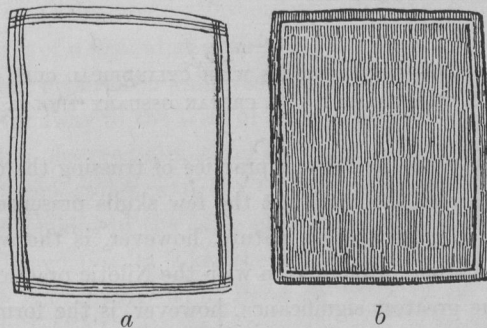


FIG. 23.—STONE PALETTES.  
*a*. PREDYNASTIC; *b*. FROM MESSARÀ THOLOS.

together with others of more varied outlines, by the predynastic population for malachite and antimony to adorn the person (Fig. 23) are of frequent occurrence in these interments, doubtless for similar toilet use (Fig. 23, *b*). A heavy form of vessel consisting of a stone block with cups cylindrically bored and with diagonal perforations on the upper edge, which occurs among the prehistoric vessels of

<sup>1</sup> The Hittite and Dipylon types are of somewhat different character, though there are some indications that they may go back to a parallel Anatolian class.



Hierakonpolis (Fig. 24, *a, b*) is the progenitor of a whole series of later and somewhat more decorative forms but presenting the same essential characteristics, contained within these Cretan *tholoi*. (See Fig. 24, *c, d*.)

How, then, are we to explain these striking correspondences in forms and usage? So numerous, in fact, are the points of comparison presented by the contents of these early Cretan interments with those of predynastic Egypt that, far-fetched as the conclusion might appear at first sight, I was already some years since constrained to put forth the suggestion that about the time of the conquest of the lower Nile Valley by the first historic dynasty some part of the older population had actually settled in this Southern foreland of Crete.<sup>1</sup> It was only some more recent discoveries on the further shores of the Libyan Sea that have opened my eyes to the fact that the interments themselves and the sepulchral vaults within which they lay might themselves be due to this "proto-Libyan" element.<sup>2</sup> The conformity presented by the contracted

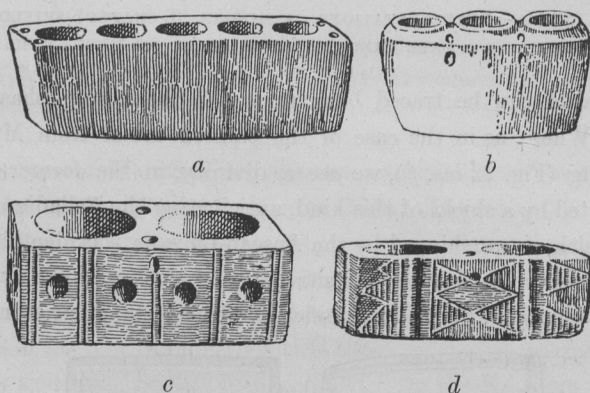


FIG. 24.—STONE VESSELS WITH CYLINDRICAL CUPS.  
*a, b.* PREDYNASTIC; *c, d.* CRETAN OSSUARY THOLOI.

position of the bodies<sup>3</sup> with the Libyan practice of trussing the dead is itself of too general a nature, as is also the fact that the few skulls preserved were almost all dolichocephalic.<sup>4</sup> Of a more specific nature, however, is the appearance of small foot-shaped amulets of stone, which fits in with the Nilotic practice of attaching such to the ankles. Of the greatest significance, however, is the form of the sepulchral vaults themselves.

The true bee-hive structure of these great ossuaries is shown not only by the inward slope of the walls, but from the discovery in the smaller tholos at Platanos

<sup>1</sup> e.g., *Palace of Minos*, vol. i, p. 17.

<sup>2</sup> I first put forth this suggestion in my preface to Dr. Xanthudides' *Vaulted Tombs of Messarà* (Professor Droop's translation, 1924, pp. xi-xiii).

<sup>3</sup> See my observations, *op. cit.*, p. xii, note 2.

<sup>4</sup> Professor Sergi, who examined skulls from the Hagia Triada tholos, includes them in his "Mediterranean" class. (Cited by Halbherr, *Memorie dell' Ist. Lombardo*, xxi, p. 252.) (For other observations of skulls from the Messarà ossuaries, see Xanthudides, *op. cit.*, pp. 126, 127.)

of the fallen coping slabs from the summit of the vault. The mass of fallen stones found here within the remains of the circular lower wall amounted to 23 cubic metres, and, assuming that as in the case of later domed chambers of the same kind like those of Mycenæ the interior height and diameter were about equal, the vaults in this case would have been 10 metres high. The larger structure beside it would have had a height of over 13 metres, only slightly less than that of the "Tomb of Clytemnestra."

These buildings differed, indeed, from the Mycenæan examples in their entrance system. In place of the entrance passage or dromos we find in the case of these primitive Cretan *tholoi* a small rectangular vestibule in front of the door-way. (See plan, Fig. 25, *d*.) This rectangular enclosure, which seems to have also served a ritual purpose, represents, in fact, the pit-like approach of a well-known class of primitive bee-hive dwelling, the floor circumference of which, as in the case of these Messarà vaults, was below the ground level.

A good example of the plan of such a bee-hive vault, at Kumasa on the Southern border of the Messarà plain, is shown in Fig. 25, *d* 1, *d* 2, *d* 3. It will be seen from the comparisons given in this Figure that it represents in a primitive stage a sepulchral type that seems to have had a wide diffusion in the old Libyan regions of North Africa, though in those about which the evidence is attainable the entrance pit has already taken a secondary character. Thus, in the monument (Fig. 25, *a*) which enclosed a central grave cist, the original pit survives as kind of exterior "chapel" of mud bricks. This example occurs in the cemeteries of the Middle Nubians, or "C Group," dating from the VIth to the XVIIIth Dynasty and recognized as Libyan by Oric Bates, with whom has passed away the greatest authority on all things connected with the Eastern Libyans.<sup>1</sup> The base of a somewhat analogous structure, with a kind of offering niche recessed in its outer, orthostatic wall, was found in the Desert East of Hierakonpolis (Fig. 25, *b*); and far away to the West of Sahara, in the Sud Oranais, Messrs. Randall, Maciver and Wilkin observed sepulchral circles presenting essentially the same plan, with flat, upright ring-stones, and the entrance reduced to a rudimentary niche.<sup>2</sup> Other interesting remains of the same class showing the lower part of what seems to have been domed vaults like the Cretan, containing numerous cists with contracted burials, were discovered by Bates on "Seal Island" in the Gulf of Bombah (Fig. 25, *c*, *c* 2, *c* 3), a locality of great importance, since it lies immediately opposite the Southernmost promontory of Crete. Under its older name, Plataea, indeed, it was the first stepping-off station of the Greek colonists from Thera on their way to Cyrene.

What adds to the significance of these parallels on the African side is the fact that in Crete, though indeed the wigwam form of dwelling was not unknown, the

<sup>1</sup> See especially *Eastern Libyans*, p. 245 *seq.*

<sup>2</sup> "The Circles of the Senam of Msila" (D. Randall Maciver and Anthony Wilkin, *Libyan Notes*, 1901, p. 78 *seq.*, and Pl. xv, i.)

characteristic house plan from Neolithic times onwards was rectangular. The circular stone constructions which in Messarà were used as sepulchres for the dead represented, in fact, a form of dwelling-houses of the living which was not at home in the Island. On the Libyan side, on the other hand, they are seen to fit on to a class of round huts generally diffused throughout that region, and which correspond with an equally widespread class of ancient tombs. It is these, in fact, in their final evolution, that have given us such monumental mausolea as the Madrasen and Tombeau de la

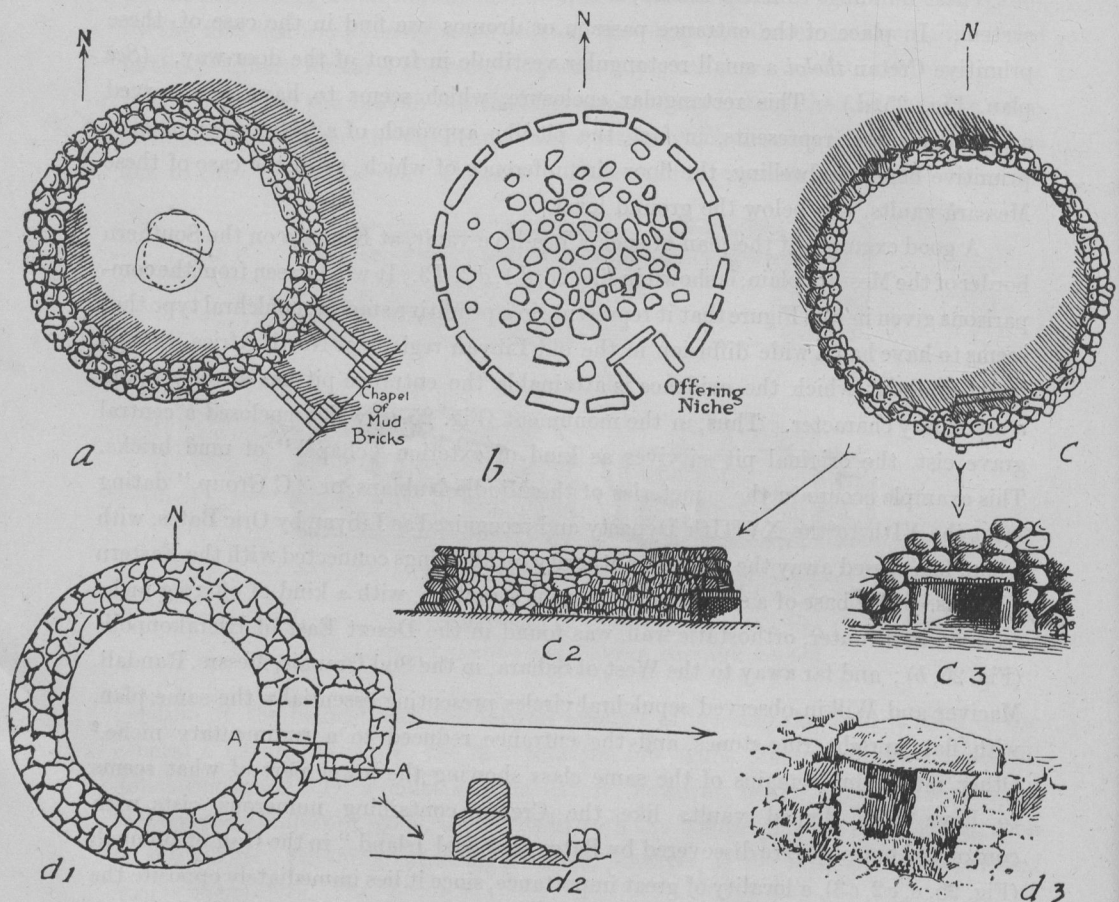


FIG. 25.—COMPARISONS BETWEEN CRETAN OSSUARY VAULTS AND LIBYAN EXAMPLES.

Chrétienne. But the prototype must still be sought in the traditional round huts of the old Libyan race, so well known to the Romans as "*Mapalia*." It is interesting, indeed, to find St. Jerome comparing these African huts with "furni" or "ovens,"<sup>1</sup> the name (*φούρνες*) by which the smaller beehive tombs are still known to the Cretan peasants.

<sup>1</sup> In Prol. Amos, "Agrestes quidem casas et furnorum similes, quas Afri appellant mapalia."

The multiplicity of these connections with the old indigenous race of the opposite African coast, and with which we undoubtedly have to deal in the predynastic population of the Nile Valley, can in fact be hardly explained on any other hypothesis than that of an actual settlement in Southern Crete. Here, as I was able to establish in 1924, not far from the great Minoan foundation of Phæstos and in the neighbourhood of primitive sepulchral monuments such as those described, lies the ancient port of Komò,<sup>1</sup> which was also the starting-point of a line of built way across the central ranges of the Island to Knossos, the principal seat of its Priest Kings.

That, later on, these proto-Libyan immigrants became entirely assimilated to the old Cretan population is only what we should expect. But the engrafting of this artistic element on the indigenous island stock may well have contributed to the later bloom of the Minoan culture.

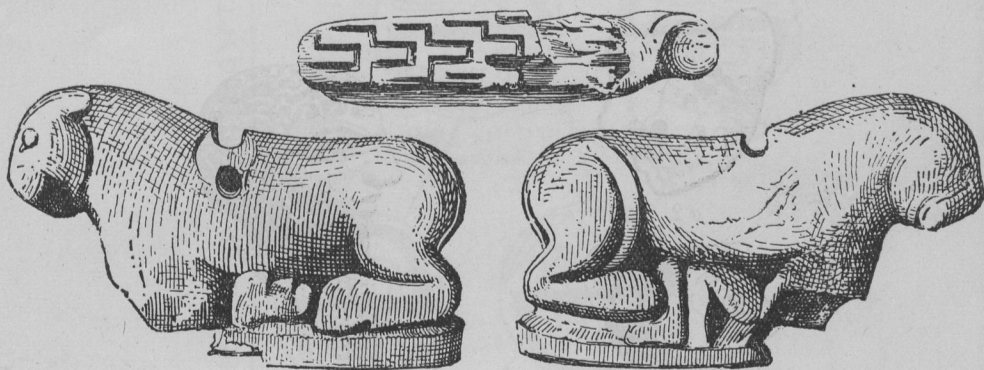


FIG. 26.—IVORY RELIC FROM THOLOS OSSUARY, KALATHIANÀ.

Among the minor relics found in the large *tholos* tomb of Kalathianà, an ivory object (Fig. 26) showing a couchant lion recalls a frequent concomitant of the late prehistoric and earliest dynastic deposits of Egypt. But in this case it has a peculiar interest. The King of Beasts does not appear here as a devourer, but as serenely guarding the body of a man, seen in the same contracted attitude as the dead within the vault.

Rough as the portraiture is, it is yet characteristic, and the high head, prominent nose, and sharply cut features certainly recall the old Nilotic racial type such as we see it in the case of ivory figures from Hierakonpolis.

A curious relic (Fig. 27, a 1, a 2) obtained by me from the Messarà district at a time when objects derived from the Hagios Onuphrios ossuary were in peasants' hands, suggests some early contact at least with an ethnic ingredient of negroid affinity.

The object itself is an inlay of *Tridacna* shell—the nearest habitat of which, as already noted, was the Red Sea—such as was used in Crete for small carved works from the close of the Neolithic Age. The bearded face, of repugnant aspect, here

<sup>1</sup> See *Palace of Minos*, vol. ii, § 35.

seen, with its disproportionately large eyes, snub nose and thick lips, certainly recalls the men belonging to some conquered tribe, the exposure of whom to wild beasts is recorded on a late predynastic tablet (Fig. 27, *b*). The captives here, who wear the distinguishing sheath, seem to be negroid Libyans, and it is possible that the shell inlay had belonged to some composition of the same character.

In the dark period that intervenes between the VIth Dynasty of Egypt and the foundation of the Middle Kingdom there seems to have been a revival of the old element in the Nile Valley which finds some echo in Crete during the last Early Minoan phase. I have elsewhere called attention to a curious evidence of this in a type of Minoan button seal that now appears, marked by what may appropriately be called the "double sickle" motive. But this motive, as will be seen from the diagrammatic sketch (Fig. 28),

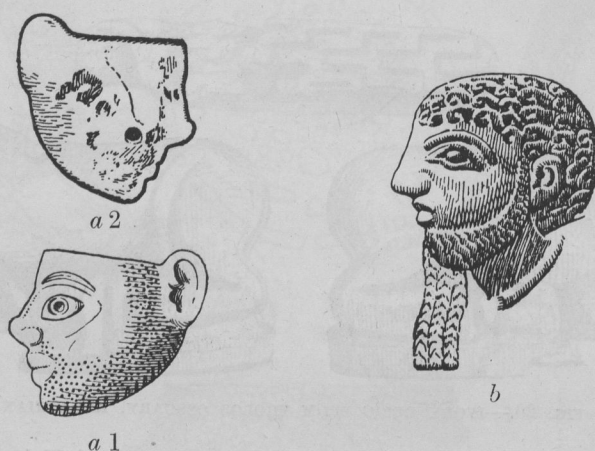


FIG. 27.—*a 1, a 2.* INLAY IN FORM OF FACE WITH NEGROID CHARACTERISTICS;  
*b.* OF MAN OF CONQUERED TRIBE ON PREDYNASTIC TABLET.

originates in a recurring device on "Egypto-Libyan" seals of the same button-like shape presenting a schematic figure of two reversed lions.

The game of draughts, which is also illustrated on Early Minoan bead-seals, shows a board and men identical with that perpetuated in Egypt by the "*Men*" sign, while the Egyptian game in turn goes back to a predynastic prototype.

In estimating the indebtedness of Cretan culture to the early civilization of the Nile Valley it is often difficult to say how far it was due to the old Delta people and how far, at second hand, to the Egyptians of the early dynasties. If in the early *tholos* builders of Messarà we may trace an actual settlement of a fragment of the original Nilotic race, we may conclude that the ancient Cretans learned from them by actual contact in the Island certain secrets of their crafts. How, indeed, without such actual apprenticeship at hand, could Minoan lapidaries have so early gained an almost equal perfection in dealing with their native rocks? The fabric of glazed



wares in Crete, which goes far back into the Early Minoan Age, must have been derived from the same source, for in this case, too, the older folk were the instructors of the Egyptians. As Professor Newberry has shown, it is to the Tehenu of the Western

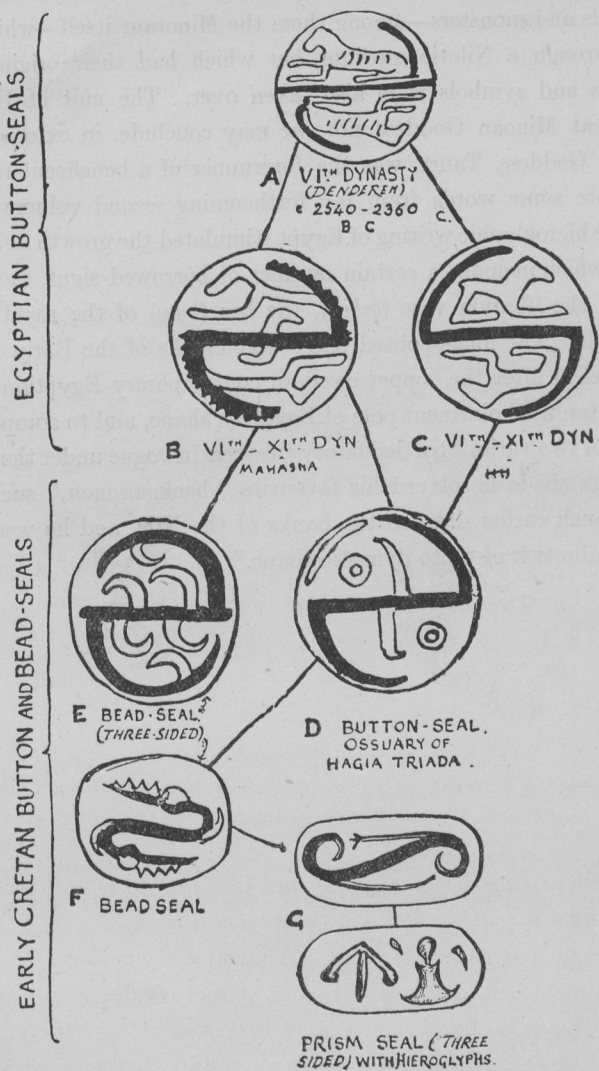


FIG. 28.—DIAGRAMMATIC SKETCH OF "BUTTON-SEALS," ETC., SHOWING ORIGIN OF "DOUBLE SICKLE" TYPE.

Delta (who in the predynastic period had already attained a knowledge of the making not only of glazed ware but of glass itself) that the Egyptian word for such products, *tehent*, is due—an expression of a cultural debt which recalls our own word "china."

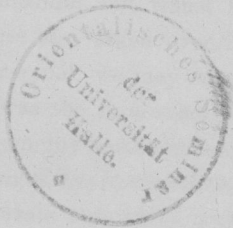


It is impossible within the limits of a short address to do anything like justice to the influence exercised on the beginnings of Minoan culture by Egypt, both in its late prehistoric and early dynastic phase. Much, too, might be said on the part played by early Egyptian cylinders in introducing into the Early Minoan seals exotic forms of animals and monsters—among them the Minotaur itself—which had passed, indeed, thus through a Nilotic medium, but which had their origin further East. Religious types and symbols were also taken over. The cult of Hathor affected that of the great Minoan Goddess not, we may conclude, in externals only. The Hippopotamus Goddess, Taurt, was the forerunner of a beneficent race of Minoan genii. To quote some words from my forthcoming second volume on the Palace of Minos: “the hieroglyphic writing of Egypt stimulated the growth of an independent Minoan script which included a certain number of borrowed signs, such as the *ankh*, or life symbol, the libation vase (*gebeh*), the bee (*byty*) of the royal title, and the Palace sign itself. The long-spouted teapot-like crocks of the Early Minoan household were modelled after the copper ewers of contemporary Egyptian usage. Even the humble Cretan used ointment pots of Egyptian shape, and to complete his toilette had the choice of two varieties of depilatory tweezers in vogue under the Old Kingdom. Beneath the ilex shade he played his favourite “backgammon,” such as had been popular at a much earlier date on the banks of the Nile, and he went to bed with the aid of a candlestick of proto-dynastic shape.”

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