

“MINOANS”, *kftjw* AND THE “ISLANDS IN THE MIDDLE OF *w3d wr*” BEYOND ETHNICITY

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Abstract

“Minoans” have been recognised from the very discovery of the palaces on Crete as an enclosed ethnic group in the material assemblage known as the “Minoan” culture. They were defined as a race or an ethnic group and continued to be viewed so in the tradition of the cultural-historical archaeology. The Theban 18th Dynasty tomb representations of the Aegean figures played a large role in defining the “Minoans” as an ethnic group argued to be represented in the Egyptian imagery. This is how a cultural-historical construct of an ethnic group – the “Minoans” was labelled with an Egyptian term *kftjw* and both terms were taken to refer to an Aegean Bronze Age ethnic group with no doubt. This paper aims to disentangle *kftjw* from the “Minoans” by analysing the history and the process of this entanglement in the Aegean Bronze Age archaeology and Egyptology. Therefore the representations of the Aegean figures and the terms related to them will be analysed on the basis of the offered disentanglement. Egyptian tomb imagery and the representations of foreigners are formed with decorum, ideology and culturally particular world view and topography. This paper thus offers an entanglement based on the New Kingdom Egyptian cultural topography beyond ethnicity.

Key words: “Minoans”, *kftjw*, the islands in the middle of *w3d wr*, decorum, cultural topography

Introduction: How did the “Minoans” come to be?

Colonial roots of the “Minoan” archaeology have been so far emphasized by several different authors.² The discovery of Knossos and the “fabrication” of the distinctive “Minoan” culture is now understood as deeply entangled with the idea of the Greek soil bearing the first European civilization comparable to the civilizations of the ancient Near East.³ The term “Minoan” however predates the work of ARTHUR EVANS, with whom it is usually associated with, and was actually defined in the context of *Altertumswissenschaft*. EVANS actually translated an already existing term “minoisch” from the work of German scholars KARL HOECK and KARL OTFRIED MÜLLER who themselves used the term in a more chronological sense.⁴ He saw the “Minoans” as a pre-Hellenic race influenced by oriental cultures, but at the same time maintaining the cultural independence because of its “unique spirit”.⁵ This “unique spirit” paradigm strongly resembles the idea of JOHANN JOACHIM WINCKELMANN about the free artistic spirit of the later Greeks⁶, the concept of *Volksgeist* and the unchanging essence of “peoples”.⁷

The “Minoans” were seen as the rulers of the Mediterranean Sea in the work of EVANS, and he compared their supposed thalassocracy to the thalassocracy of the British Empire. Among other factors, this is partly because, based on the writings of THUCYDIDES, Minos was viewed as the one who fought pirates and as the first controller of the vast waters of the Mediterranean, being the first colonizer.⁸ The idea of the “Minoan” thalassocracy is

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² GERE 2009; HAMILAKIS 2006; HAMILAKIS AND MOMIGLIANO 2006; HITCHCOCK AND KOUDOUNARIS 2002; MATIĆ 2011; PAPADOPOULOS 2005.

³ MATIĆ 2011, 642–647; PAPADOPOULOS 2005, 90–91.

⁴ KARADIMAS AND MOMIGLIANO 2004, 244–247.

⁵ EVANS 1912, 278. Next to the “unique spirit” EVANS clearly viewed “Minoan” cultural supremacy as based on racial or biological superiority, MOMIGLIANO 2006, 77–78. This is especially explicit in his interpretations of “The Captain of the Blacks” fresco, MATIĆ 2011.

⁶ SHANKS 1996, 67.

⁷ SOMMER AND GRAMSCH 2011, 13

⁸ THUCYDIDES I. IV.

now discredited and viewed as part of one more modernist metanarrative.⁹

Racial discourse in early “Minoan” archaeology has also been a subject of recent discussions. EVANS not only viewed the “Minoans” as a pre-Hellenic race, but also used craniometrical measures to argue for a Mediterranean race for them.¹⁰ “The Captain of the Blacks” fresco was used by EVANS to argue for an indisputable domination of the “Minoan” *lords* and *captains* over their *negroid* mercenaries.¹¹ Colonial interpretations of the fresco have also suffered criticism.¹² The racism of EVANS was also pointed out in an analysis of his account on Bosnia and Herzegovina. Here he argued that he did not appreciate the “*égaltaire*” spirit of the Bosnian people who warmly addressed strangers as “*brat*” (brother) or “(*kom*) *shija*” (neighbour), and that he believed in “the existence of inferior races and would like to see them exterminated”, but these were as he himself wrote his “personal mislikings”.¹³ Thus, it cannot be more clear which ideas he nurtured, exactly because they were personal.

EVANS considered the “Minoans” both in racial and in ethnic terms, as he argued that the toponym “Minoa” was used in the dynastic and ethnic sense by the ancient Greeks, as it appears as a toponym for settlements on Crete.¹⁴ Soon after, VERE GORDON CHILDE, who studied under EVANS, offered the definition of archaeological culture as the material expression of “a people”. The material remains were in his work argued to be the remains of enclosed ethnic groups.¹⁵ He viewed the Aegean area and the future land of Greece as culturally dominant and stated that all vital contributions in Europe came from the Aegean area.¹⁶ CHILDE emphasized the uniqueness of the “Minoan” culture and its European origin, as EVANS did before

him.¹⁷ In his definition of the archaeological culture as an expression of a people sharing the same customs, beliefs and language, CHILDE was influenced by GUSTAV KOSSINNA, although unlike KOSSINNA, he denied any racial correlations with the archaeological cultures.¹⁸ The idea that artefacts, culture and language coincide neatly, especially in the distributions of archaeological cultures on maps, has been challenged both by anthropologists and archaeologists.¹⁹ It is argued that such classifications of the archaeological record reflect the nineteenth century obsession with ethnic and national identity and the emergence of the nation states as bordered territories inhabited by the particular nations. Being that ethnicity or any other identity category is far more complex, it is argued that there can be no straightforward labelling of peoples from the archaeological cultures because they are misleading representations of spatial variations of the archaeological record.²⁰ Ethnic identity is rather primarily based on the identifications of “us” and “others”. These identifications are rooted in the daily practice and historical experience, and are therefore subject to change, transformation and discontinuity.²¹ Spatial and temporal variations in the ways of life are indeed a fact manifested in the archaeological record. However the classifications of the cultural-historical archaeology were based on assumptions strongly connected to nineteenth century thought and the rise of nationalism. They are therefore historically specific rather than universal.²² These ideas were not necessarily shared in the Bronze Age world; however, archaeologists and indeed Egyptologists too, often *a priori* assume that they indeed were.

Therefore, even though the call for abandoning the term “Minoans” was reasoned,²³ it was rightfully criticised. Exchanging this term for yet

⁹ HAMILAKIS 2002, 3; KNAPP 1993, 332–334; MATIĆ 2011, 642–647; PAPADOPOULOS 2005, 94.

¹⁰ EVANS 1921, 8.

¹¹ EVANS 1928, 755–757.

¹² BLAKOLMER 2002, 84–87; MATIĆ 2011, 647–653.

¹³ EVANS 1877, 312; MATIĆ 2011, 647; MCENROE 2002, 63.

¹⁴ EVANS 1921, 1–2.

¹⁵ CHILDE 1929, V–VI.

¹⁶ CHILDE 1930, 238.

¹⁷ CHILDE 1964, 20.

¹⁸ GUSTAV KOSSINNA argued that sharply defined culture areas correspond with areas of particular tribes or peoples with no doubt, JONES 1997, 16–17; ROBERTS AND VANDER LINDEN 2011, 2.

¹⁹ JONES 1997; LUCY 2005; OLSEN AND KOBLYŃSKI 1991.

²⁰ ROBERTS AND VANDER LINDEN 2011, 2–3.

²¹ JONES 1997, 13.

²² JONES 1996, 64–65; Archaeological cultures are arbitrary entities which more reflect the history of the discipline than the reality of past lives and identities, STOCKHAMMER 2013, 13

²³ The primary reason for the criticism is the homogeneity and the cultural isomorphism this term implies as it obscures the regional trajectories and the possibility that not all settlements and regions of Crete at least may be looked upon as one cultural horizon, HAMILAKIS 2002, 17.

another one is not going to magically sweep away the colonial legacy of Aegean Bronze Age archaeology.²⁴ Rather than abandoning the term, we should be aware that every time we use it without critically addressing its genealogy, the colonial discourse will inevitably weave into our interpretations. We should look at the colonial discourse as a “thread” in archaeology and always be aware of its embedded presence. However, we should be critical towards it and, like Theseus, use it to find our way out through the labyrinth we ourselves created when we approach the “Minoans”. This relates to a broader call to archaeologists to re-examine the applications of archaeological cultures.²⁵ This is why the figures depicted in the Egyptian tombs, which are analysed in this paper, will be referred to as the Aegean figures in order to encompass a larger geographical region from which they could have come and avoid questionable cultural and political identifications.

The idea that certain artefacts are clear evidence for the presence of the “Minoans” as an enclosed ethnic group is still mostly taken for granted in Aegean Bronze Age archaeology.²⁶ Moreover, this view of archaeological culture and ethnicity was uncritically applied by Egyptologists in interpreting Egyptian representations of the Aegean figures in the Theban 18th Dynasty tombs. Ancient Egyptian representations, sometimes followed by texts, were used to strengthen the definition of the “Minoans” as an enclosed ethnic group.

Thus, an archaeological idea rooted in colonial and racial discourse was without criticism transferred and indeed transplanted in Egyptology. There it gained new roots and was as such, now however illustrated with Egyptian imagery, trans-

ferred back to the Aegean Bronze Age archaeology. Such a circular argumentation needs to be addressed and Egyptology needs to critically re-analyse its disciplinary history in order to be a mature discipline. This paper will therefore critically address such transfers and entanglements between the disciplines in order to disentangle them and offer an approach which is more based on the Egyptian world view, decorum and order of things.²⁷

How did the “Minoans” came to be *kftjw*?

EVANS recognized the “Minoans” in the representations of the Aegean figures in the Theban 18th dynasty tombs (Fig. 1; Fig. 2; Fig. 3; Fig. 4; Fig. 5). He provided analogies in the archaeological material for the representations of objects carried by the Aegean figures in the tombs of Senenmut, Useramun, Menkheperreseneb and Rekhmire equalizing the “Minoans” with the Egyptian term *kftjw*.²⁸ This term is attested for the first Syrian figure in the first register of the scene with foreign figures in the tomb of Menkheperreseneb²⁹ (Fig. 3) and in the case of the Aegean figures in the tomb of Rekhmire. The text above the Aegean figures in the tomb of Rekhmire does not label them only with the term *kftjw* but as coming from *kftjw jww hrj-jb nw w3d wr* “*kftjw* and/of the islands in the middle of *w3d wr* (sea)” (Fig. 4).³⁰ Thus, in the work of EVANS the “Minoans” became *kftjw*, and *kftjw* became an ethnic group who lived on Crete in the Late Bronze Age.³¹ EVANS was not an Egyptologist, so he did not consider that the term *kftjw* refers to a land, and not its inhabitants, as the word is written with the Egyptian determinative for land.³²

²⁴ Compare with the comments of KARADIMAS AND MOMIGLIANO 2004, 243.

²⁵ See HAMILAKIS 2002, 22; ROBERTS AND VANDER LINDEN 2011, 2.

²⁶ ERIC CLINE for example tends “to see if it is possible to resuscitate the living, breathing, flesh-and-blood people who originally lay behind the textual references and the extant artefacts which have been left to us” without however explicitly defining the uses of the terms “Minoan” and “people”, CLINE 1995, 267

²⁷ The critical deconstruction of disciplinary transfers related to the problems of this paper was already stated elsewhere, MATIĆ 2012, 235–239. Here it is developed further and in more detail.

²⁸ Already HEINRICH BRUGSCH connected *kftjw* with Caphtor and understood it as Crete using the terms geographically, see BRUGSCH 1858, 88; The first author to associate *kftjw* with the “Minoan” Crete was HARRY REGINALD HALL who however called them „peaceful *kftjw*“ and at the same time “Cretan Myceaneans”, see HALL 1902, 162–188; HALL 1904; HALL 1914, 201; HALL 1928, 199–206, cf. VERCOUTTER 1956, 33. It is EVANS however who defined “Minoans”, first as a race and then as an ethnic group with all of its characteristics, and used the term *kftjw* as an ethnonym for them. He at the same time assigned a peculiar modernity to them which influenced later authors.

²⁹ DAVIES AND DAVIES 1933, 4.

³⁰ DAVIES 1943a, 20.

³¹ EVANS 1928, 737–748.

³² ERMAN & GRAPOW 1971, 122.



Fig. 1 TT 71, Senenmut. Three remaining Aegean figures, facsimile (after DAVIES 1936, Pl. XIV).



Fig. 2 TT 39, Puimre. Four foreign figures, Syrian-Aegean hybrid figure third from the left, facsimile (after DAVIES 1922, Pl. I).

GEORG STEINDORFF, JOHN PENDLEBURY and NORMAN DE GARIS DAVIES, like HALL and EVANS before them, also described physical characteristics (skin colour, hair, nose profile), and approached the images from the Egyptian tombs as distinct “racial” and “ethnic” types and strongly emphasized their

“European” characteristics. The objects carried by the Aegean figures were described as the objects belonging to a particular archaeological culture (“Minoan” or “Myceanan”) based on the analogies in the archaeological material.³³ The depictions of the figures bringing these objects were interpreted

³³ DAVIES 1943a, 23–24; PENDLEBURY 1930, 82; STEINDORFF as reported by HALL 1928, 205.



Fig. 3 TT 86, Menkheperreseneb. From left to right: „Prince of Keftiu“, „Prince of Hatti“, „Prince of Tunip“ (Syrian figures) and Aegean figure, facsimile (after DAVIES 1936, Plate XXI).



Fig. 4 TT 100, Rekhmire. Aegean figures in front of Egyptian officials, drawing (after DAVIES 1943b, Plate XVIII).

as showing real physical characteristics. Thus, narrow waists of the represented Aegean figures in the tomb of Senenmut were understood as a specific trait of the “Myceanean race”, and the Syrian-Aegean iconographic hybrid figures³⁴ were for lack of a

better term referred to as “Syro-Keftians” and located in Cilicia, although their existence there was, not surprisingly, not archaeologically confirmed.³⁵ Terms such as “race” or “cultural area” were indeed used before the concept of the archaeo-

³⁴ In this paper I understand hybrid figures as the figures which cannot be classified into predetermined analytical categories of the “Aegean” and the “Syrian” in Egyptian iconography. Therefore by using this term in this paper I do not refer to the postcolonial understanding of the hybrid and hybridity, cf. STOCKHAMMER 2013, 13.

³⁵ HALL 1904; HALL 1928, 200–204; Some even argue that the hybrid figures maybe represent a mixture of two or more populations which can be expected “in some of the

cosmopolitan port towns of Syria-Palestine or the Nile Delta in the Late Bronze Age”, REHAK 1998, 47; Similarly it is also argued in some recent publications that these iconographically hybrid figures could derive from accurate observations of the crews of the trading vessels docked in Egyptian ports and it was suggested that the men of the Uluburun ship might have resembled these hybrids, see DARNELL & MANASSA 2007, 202. The other extreme is not to take these hybrid figures into the account at all, see LABOURY 1990, 94.

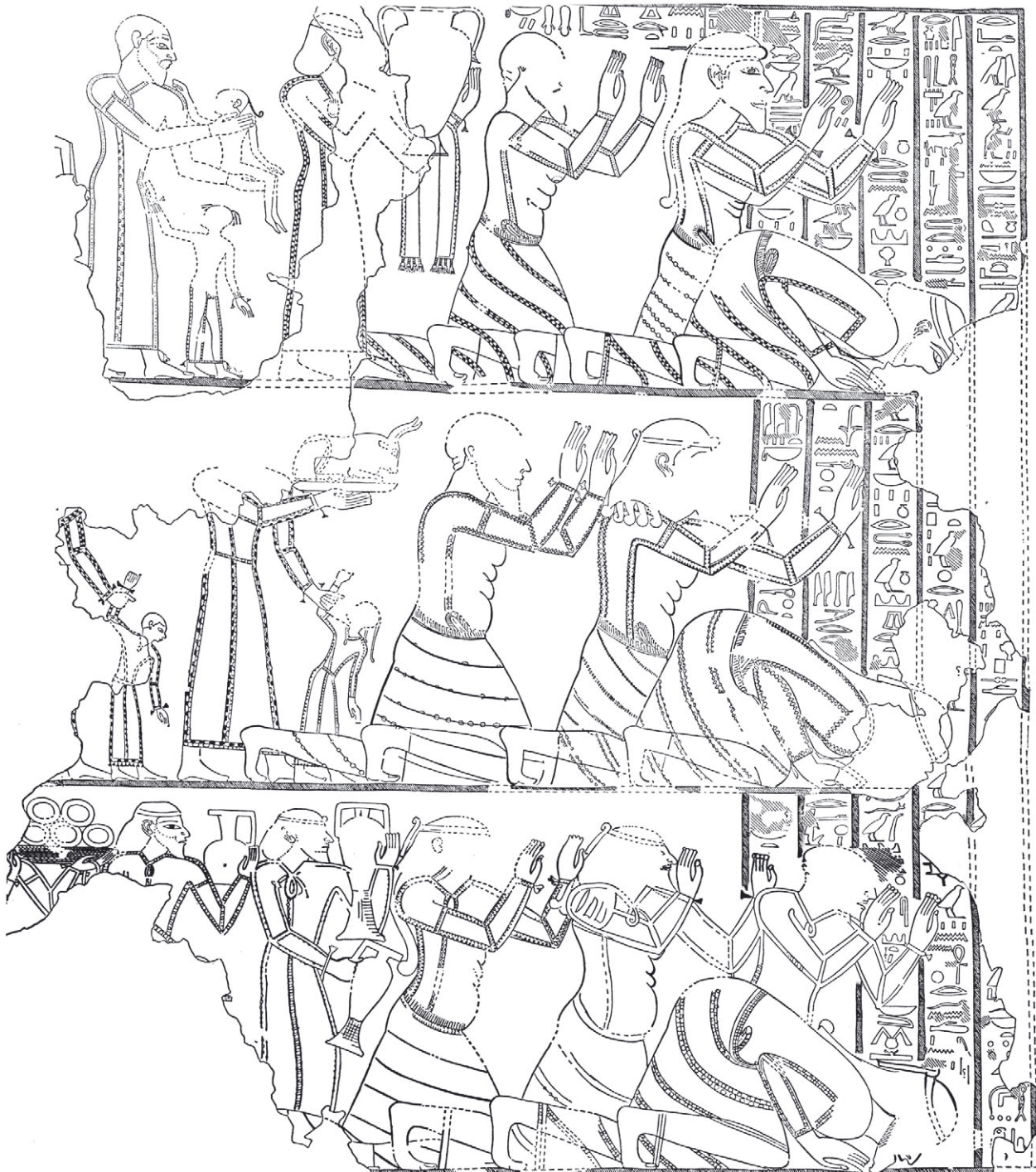


Fig. 5 TT 85, Amenemhab. Syrian figures labelled as *kftjw* and *mnnws*, third register, drawing (after DAVIES 1934, Plate XXV).

logical culture, while the term culture was usual in the archaeology of 1920s.³⁶ However, with the emergence of cultural-historical archaeology, emphasis was put on the archaeological culture as a clear determinant of a “people”. Material remains

were undoubtedly read as the remains of enclosed, unique ethnic groups as stated by CHILDE in his definition of archaeological culture as the material expression of “a people”.³⁷ “Minoans” became “people” in an ethnic sense now by a definition.

³⁶ JONES 1997, 16–17.

³⁷ CHILDE 1929, V–VI.

However, not all scholars accepted that the term *kftjw* refers to Crete and that the Aegean figures in Theban tombs were “Minoans”. GERALD AVERAY WAINWRIGHT argued that only 21% of objects carried by the Aegean figures are Cretan. He identified the Aegean figures in the tombs of Senenmut (Fig. 1) and Useramun as “Minoans” based on the “Minoan” objects they carry and the inscription referring to the figures from the tomb of Useramun as coming from *jw nb n hrj-jb nw w3d wr* “every island in the middle of *w3d wr* (sea)”.³⁸ Then he excluded all these objects and the figures carrying them from the register with the Aegean figures in the tomb of Rekhmire. As the accompanying text in the tomb of Rekhmire names the Aegean figures as coming both from *kftjw* and/of the “islands in the middle of *w3d wr* (sea)”, he thought that the non-excluded figures should represent *kftjw*, as if the Egyptian imagery can be studied like a mathematical equation.³⁹ This direct analogical reasoning is only one extreme of the cultural-historical approach to the Aegean figures and objects they carry. JOHN STRANGE also referred to the Aegean figures as “ethnic types” and described their “culture, dress and racial characteristics”; however he completely discredited the idea that these images are relevant to the localisation of *kftjw*. He concluded that *kftjw* refers to Cyprus as in some tombs it refers to the Syrian figures, or iconographically hybrid Syrian-Aegean figures.⁴⁰ However, it is now clear that his identification of *kftjw* with Cyprus is untenable.⁴¹

JEAN VERCOUTTER greatly influenced later scholars in his definite identification of *kftjw* as Crete, and the Aegean figures as the “Minoans” to whom he referred to as the “pre-Hellenes”.⁴² However, he quite freely connected the Egyptian term *mnnws*, from the tomb of Amenemhab, with the mythical king Minos (!) and thus with Crete. Being that the terms, *kftjw* and *mnnws* both appear in this tomb,

for him this was only one more proof that *kftjw* is correctly identified with Crete.⁴³ That the figure from classical mythology was used as evidence for the location and ethnical identification of a Late Bronze Age land and population was not strange to the majority of scholars. Later authors influenced by VERCOUTTER’S seminal work identified *kftjw* unambiguously as Crete.⁴⁴ As for the term the “islands in the middle of *w3d wr* (sea)”, several authors interpreted it differently as the “Aegean world”,⁴⁵ “Minoan colonial empire”,⁴⁶ the Cyclades,⁴⁷ a part of *kftjw* territory or a neighbouring region,⁴⁸ or a network of smaller communities not bound to one single territory.⁴⁹

Contrary to the identification of *kftjw* as Crete and *w3d wr* as the Mediterranean Sea there are scholars who identify *w3d wr* as the Egyptian delta, and therefore *kftjw* as the “Minoans” settled in the delta.⁵⁰ ALESSANDRA NIBBI disassociated Crete from *kftjw* because she erroneously claimed that the only figure in the Theban tombs labelled with the term *kftjw* is “Semitic”.⁵¹ However, as the Aegean figures in the tomb of Rekhmire are indeed labelled as coming from “*kftjw* and/of the islands in the middle of *w3d wr* (sea)” her argument was invalid. CLAUDE VANDERSLEYEN emphasized in several of his papers that *kftjw* is to be located in “Asia”.⁵² This is because the references to *kftjw* in the Annals of Thutmose III from Karnak and the topographical list from Kom el-Hetan associate it with Syrian toponyms.⁵³ However, the identification of *w3d wr* solely with the Egyptian delta and *kftjw* with other locations than Crete has been discredited.⁵⁴ It is more correct in the light of iconography and archaeological evidence to think of the term *w3d wr* as *in extenso* the Mediterranean or the Aegean sea at least when the Aegean figures labelled by this term are in question. This interpretation is also accepted and followed further in this paper.

³⁸ WAINWRIGHT 1931, 2–7.

³⁹ WAINWRIGHT 1931, 2–7.

⁴⁰ STRANGE 1979, 607; STRANGE 1980, 145–184.

⁴¹ WACHSMANN 1987, 93–102; QUACK 1996.

⁴² VERCOUTTER 1954, 47–70; VERCOUTTER 1956, 33–123.

⁴³ VERCOUTTER 1954, 96–138; VERCOUTTER 1956, 159–182.

⁴⁴ SAKELLARAKIS & SAKELLARAKIS 1984, 202; STRØM 1984, 193; WACHSMANN 1987, 98–99; PANAGIOTOPOULOS 2001, 263–265.

⁴⁵ STRANGE 1979, 606.

⁴⁶ STRØM 1984, 193.

⁴⁷ SAKELLARAKIS & SAKELLARAKIS 1984, 202.

⁴⁸ WACHSMANN 1987, 98–99.

⁴⁹ SHERRATT & SHERRATT 1998, 339.

⁵⁰ DUHOX 2003, 211–228; MACGILLIVRAY 2009, 165; NIBBI 1975, 9–49; VANDERSLEYEN 1988, 75–79; VANDERSLEYEN 1999; VANDERSLEYEN 2002, 109–112; VANDERSLEYEN 2003, 209–21; VANDERSLEYEN 2008.

⁵¹ NIBBI 1974, 39.

⁵² With the use of the term “Asia” he refers to an Egyptological term referring to Syria-Palestine.

⁵³ EDEL UND GÖRG 2005, 166–167.

⁵⁴ QUACK 2007, 334–336.

The tradition of describing physical characteristics (skin colour, hair, nose profile) in order to make ethnic attributions of the foreigners was very influential in Egyptology. However, there were those who, although without criticising the racism behind it, argued the contrary. Egyptian representations are not photographs of reality, and the authors who criticised previous approaches concentrated instead on the transference of figures, objects and iconographic elements and iconographic hybridisation.⁵⁵ HELENE J. KANTOR pointed to the transference of the figures and that analogy for clothes of the Aegean figures can be found both on Crete and the Greek mainland, and therefore that the Aegean figures in the Theban tombs cannot be divided into “Minoans” or “Myceaneans”. Most of her analogies come from the mainland Greece; however, she argues that they must have existed on Crete also.⁵⁶ This is precisely the reason why, besides the historical contingency of culture-historical and colonial interpretations, it is not justified to refer to the Aegean figures in the Theban 18th Dynasty tombs as “Minoans” or “Myceaneans”.⁵⁷

However, on many interpretative levels, the erroneous culture-historical equation of the “Minoans” with *kftjw* is still present in the Aegean Bronze Age archaeology and Egyptology, even in the most recent publications.⁵⁸ YVES DUHOUX also argues that *w3d wr* does not refer to the sea, but to the Nile delta where supposedly *kftjw* lived. Thus, he sees *kftjw* as people whom he identifies as the “Minoans”. The basic idea behind his work is that after the Thera eruption the “Minoans” left to Anatolia and Levant, where they decorated palaces in Miletus, Alalakh and Kabri, and then migrated to the Nile delta by the end of Hyksos rule, and later painted the palaces in Tell el-Dab^a.⁵⁹ Thus, a

quite simplified model of “frog-leaping” fresco painters was offered to interpret material of a significant chronological range.⁶⁰ JACKE PHILLIPS criticised DUHOUX’s high Aegean chronology which is not accepted by all scholars. She also raised the questions of the supposed motives to leave the Levant and go to the delta in the time when Kamose and Ahmose invaded it. The delta would be their last choice to go during that time in her opinion. PHILLIPS also poses the question of the lack of the Late Minoan I finds in Tell el-Dab^a and the fact that the Aegean figures in the Theban tombs are represented like foreigners and not like the inhabitants of Egypt, as they would certainly be represented if they lived in the delta from the time of the Hyksos and if they were subjects of the Egyptian kings.⁶¹

The Aegean figures in the Theban 18th Dynasty tombs are not always followed by texts describing them, neither are they always referred to by the same term when a text is accompanying them. Texts accompanying registers with the Aegean figures are damaged or completely not preserved in the tombs of Senenmut (Fig. 1) and Intef.⁶² However, these figures are still referred to as *kftjw* by scholars.⁶³

Ordering the world: Cultural topography of the Aegean figures beyond ethnicity

A closer look at the available attestations shows that the term *kftjw* is not reserved only for the Aegean figures in the Theban tombs, as it also labels the Syrian and Syrian-Aegean hybrid figures. Therefore, it can also be argued on the basis of the tomb depictions themselves that we cannot easily equate the depicted Aegean figures with *kftjw* as an ethnonym. We cannot transfer it to the

⁵⁵ KANTOR 1947, 42–55; WACHSMANN 1987, 4–12.

⁵⁶ KANTOR 1945, 385–386; KANTOR 1947, 42–55.

⁵⁷ cf. LABOURY 1990, 113; REHAK 1998, 42–45.

⁵⁸ BROCK 2000, 134; DUHOUX 2003, 211–228; HALLMANN 2006, 266; HOHLBEIN 2009, 23–24; HUSSEIN 2007, 34; MACGILLIVRAY 2009; REHAK 1998, 40; YOUNGER AND REHAK 2008, 157.

⁵⁹ DUHOUX 2003, 147–154. Indeed that the “Minoan” frescoes found at Tell el-Dab^a are evidence for the localisation of *kftjw* in the delta was already proposed by VANDERSLEYEN 1999, 122, ft. 132. This however does not explain the earlier and later attestations of *kftjw* and is contrasted by the short life of the “Minoan” frescoes at Tell el-Dab^a.

⁶⁰ BIETAK 2007a, 294–295.

⁶¹ PHILLIPS 2008, 112; Several individuals of clearly foreign origin (Maiherpri, Benia, Aper-El) are in their own tombs depicted as members of the Egyptian New Kingdom elite, RIGGS AND BAINES 2012, 3–6. For a culture-historical paradigm behind the interpretations of the “Minoan” frescoes, see MATIĆ 2015.

⁶² DORMAN 1991, 32–33; HALLMANN 2006, 127; SÄVE-SÖDERBERGH 1957, 15; WACHSMANN 1987, 27–28.

⁶³ Thus DIMITRI LABOURY, DIAMANTIS PANAGIOTOPOULOS and PAUL REHAK refer to all the Aegean figures as Keftiu in an ethnic sense, LABOURY 1990, 93; PANAGIOTOPOULOS 2001, 268; REHAK 1998, 40; ALEXANDER MACGILLIVRAY also refers to the Aegean figures from the tomb of Senenmut as Keftiu in an ethnic sense although the text accompanying the register is not preserved, MACGILLIVRAY 2009, 164.

“Minoans” and see it as an Egyptian term for a specific Aegean ethnic group. PHILLIPS rightly and convincingly emphasized the difference in the terms related to the Aegean figures in connection to the chronology of these tombs. The tomb of Useramun where the Aegean figures are described as coming from the “every island in the middle of *w3d-wr* (sea)” is dated to the early reign of Thutmose III, while the tombs having the term *kftjw* (Menkheperreseneb and Rekhmire) can be dated later in his reign. Thus, these terms were most probably not synonymous and at least in the New Kingdom they refer to two different entities, both bringing *jnw* (“gifts”).⁶⁴ The relevance of this in questioning the “pan-Minoan nation” and the colonial power of Crete, at least from an Egyptological perspective is great; however, a more contextual study of the problem of the political division of the Aegean is yet to be done.⁶⁵ One should also consider that the text in the register with the Aegean figures in the tomb of Rekhmire does not separate *kftjw* and the “islands in the middle of *w3d-wr* (sea)”.⁶⁶ Thus, the first noun and the second noun composition could be understood also as a direct genitive, where *kftjw* would be *of* the “islands in the middle of *w3d wr* (sea)”⁶⁷ in the sense of belonging to, or being located among the islands in a geographical sense.⁶⁸ A direct genitive would also imply a stronger connection between them; however, grammatically both versions are possible translations and are after all a question of interpretation.⁶⁹ The association between *kftjw* and the “islands in the middle of *w3d wr* (sea)” is not attested only in the tomb of Rekhmire but also unequivocally in the “Book of the Day” in the tomb of Ramesses VI. Here the lords of the

Busiris-nome are located in a land in the northern lands of the gods. Their city is *kft3w* and their transformations are taking place in the “islands in the middle of the northern *w3d wr* (sea)”.⁷⁰

The hybrid figure from the tomb of Puimre (second figure) is with other three figures (of the Syrian type) described as the prince of a foreign country of the “far north, Asia” (*phw stt*).⁷¹ The figures from the tomb of Useramun (Fig. 2) are of the Aegean type but they are not followed by a text referring only to them. There are six registers with foreign processions, the first one being the one with the Aegean figures, and the text referring to all of the registers is above the figure of Useramun. The text explains that *jnw* is brought from foreign countries of far north, “Asia” and “every island in the middle of *w3d-wr* (sea)”.⁷² Therefore, as the text referring to the Aegean figures in the tomb of Rekhmire describes them as coming from “*kftjw* and/of the islands in the middle of *w3d-wr* (sea)”, we can conclude that the Aegean figures in the tomb of Useramun also come from the “every island in the middle of *w3d-wr* (sea)” although this is not written in their register but in the text describing the whole scene.

The Aegean figures in the tomb of Menkheperreseneb are not organized in a specific register, as they are together with the Syrian figures and Syrian-Aegean hybrid figures occupying different registers of the scene. The first three figures (Fig. 3) in the first register are of the Syrian type. The very first one of them is depicted in proskynesis and is labelled as the “prince of *kftjw*” (*wr n kftjw*). The rest of the figures in the first register are the nine Aegean figures.⁷³ Being that there are no known Egyptian depictions of the Aegean

⁶⁴ PHILLIPS 2008, 113.

⁶⁵ “Minoan” societies are often viewed as a unified, homogeneous and an undifferentiated whole. The internal social contradictions, conflicts, disruptions and divergent developments in the different parts of Crete are rarely addressed research problems. This is among else a consequence of cultural evolutionist concepts and European romantic myths, HAMILAKIS 2002, 11.

⁶⁶ SETHE 1909, 1098; DAVIES 1943a, 20.

⁶⁷ This was already suggested by VANDERSLEYEN 2008, 42.

⁶⁸ That is why these islands cannot be understood as part of the *kftjw* territory as it was suggested, see WACHSMANN 1987, 98–99. It is rather the contrary, that *kftjw* is probably located in the area of these islands.

⁶⁹ The question is if the terms are in co-ordination or in apposition. However, in other registers too the attested components cannot be easily divided, DAVIES 1943a, 22–23. Additionally, the inscription above the figure of Rekhmire describing the whole scenes containing five registers with foreigners takes e.g. one toponym for each of the registers, thus *pwnt* for the first register, *kftjw* for the second register and *rtjnw* for the fourth register, SETHE 1909, 1094–1095. This is one more suggestion that the “islands in the middle of *w3d wr* (sea)” indeed serve as a closer designation of the toponym *kftjw*.

⁷⁰ STRANGE 1980, 87; QUACK 1994, 78; VERCOUTTER 1956, 98.

⁷¹ DAVIES 1922, 90; HALLMANN 2006, 163.

⁷² DZIOBEK 1994, 91; HALLMANN 2006, 23.

⁷³ HALLMANN 2006, 30.

figures in proskynesis⁷⁴ the artist may have used an existing motif of the kneeling Syrian figure because he lacked the motif of the kneeling Aegean figure in his copy book. Indeed, a figure in proskynesis is also the first figure in the second register of the foreign procession scene in the tomb of Menkheperreseneb where the Syrian and Syrian-Aegean hybrid figures are depicted.⁷⁵

The second register of the procession scene in the tomb of Menkheperreseneb is occupied mostly by the Syrian and Syrian-Aegean hybrid figures with only the fourth figure in the register being an Aegean figure. The third register is also mostly occupied by the Syrian figures except the two Aegean figures or Syrian-Aegean hybrid figures. The text above the third register refers to these figures as *ḥ3w-nbwt*.⁷⁶

The second register of the procession scene in the tomb of Rekhmire (Fig. 4) is occupied by the Aegean figures referred to in the accompanying text as the princes of “*kftjw* and/of the islands in the middle of *w3d-wr* (sea)”.⁷⁷

The Syrian figures in the third register of the procession scene in the tomb of Amenemhab are referred to in the accompanying text as coming from “*kftjw*, *mnnws* and all foreign countries together”.⁷⁸ Thus, the term *kftjw* refers to the Syrian figures in all cases (Menkheperreseneb and Amenemhab) except in the tomb of Rekhmire. The only context in which the term *kftjw* refers to the Aegean figures is the tomb of Rekhmire. Here, however, as must be stressed, it appears together with the “islands in the middle of *w3d-wr* (sea)” as the place of origin of the Aegean figures. Being that *kftjw* is almost unequivocally understood as Crete, the appearance of this term in relation to the Syrian figures or the appearance of the objects carried by the Syrian figures in the hands of the Aegean figures is often understood as an incon-

sistency or an argument against the identification of *kftjw* with Crete.⁷⁹

The so called “inconsistencies” in the depictions and the accompanying texts are so far usually explained as the result of the artist’s error,⁸⁰ the use of the copy book⁸¹ or the phenomenon of transference.⁸² Indeed it was already pointed out that in Egyptology there is a custom of defining Egyptian terms by identifying the depiction with the adjacent Egyptian word. When, however, a different depiction is found labelled with the same term, the previously established interpretation is not changed. Instead the artist’s lack of skills or erroneous labelling is given as an explanation. Thus, most of the definitions of the Egyptian terms are “ostensive definitions” functioning in Egyptology through circular argumentation. KENT WEEKS critically addressed such argumentation in Egyptology by posing a set of questions and answers according to which visual and written culture of Ancient Egypt is interpreted:⁸³

a) What are those figures? b) The word accompanying them is x. c) These figures are therefore x’s. d) What would we call these figures in English? e) We would call these figures the “Minoans”/ “Aegeans”. f) In Egyptian therefore the word for the “Minoans”/ “Aegeans” is x. Indeed as it was shown in the previous part of this paper this is how the “Minoans” came to be *kftjw*.

This interpretative *chaîne opératoire* is problematic because as this paper shows the researchers had a preconceived idea of the figures in question. Additionally, “ostensive definitions” themselves are open to implicit or explicit stipulation of pertinence, meaning that ostension can mean at least two different things and needs additional indexical devices to make it clear.⁸⁴

Such a circular argumentation will be avoided in this paper in an attempt to explain the “inconsistencies” from the decorum point of view

⁷⁴ The kneeling figure in the first register of the procession scene in the tomb of Intef is indeed so damaged that it does not allow much safe reconstruction with which we could compare the kneeling “Prince of *kftjw*” from the tomb of Menkheperreseneb, SÄVE-SÖDERBERGH 1957, 15.

⁷⁵ DAVIES AND DAVIES 1933, Pl. IV.

⁷⁶ HALLMANN 2006, 30; SETHE 1909, 930–931. *ḥ3w-nbwt* is one of the most debated “geographical” terms in Egyptology, see BONTTY 1995; GOEDICKE 2002, 126–136; NIBBI 1975, 51–58; VANDERSLEYEN 1975; VERCOUTTER 1954, 37–47; VERCOUTTER 1956, 15–32; QUACK 2007. In this paper I will follow the interpretation of JOACHIM QUACK who relates the

term to the Aegean region and argues that its limits were in the north, as these are the limited hints offered by the Egyptian sources, QUACK 2007.

⁷⁷ DAVIES 1943a, 20; HALLMANN 2006, 38–39.

⁷⁸ DAVIES 1934, 189–192; HALLMANN 2006, 46; SETHE 1909, 908.

⁷⁹ cf. NIBBI 1974, 39.

⁸⁰ PENDLEBURY 1930, 82.

⁸¹ WACHSMANN 1987, 12–25.

⁸² WACHSMANN 1987, 12.

⁸³ WEEKS 1979, 62–63.

⁸⁴ ECO 1976, 225.

because these “inconsistencies” and transferences do show an interesting pattern, most probably ordered by the decorum, and therefore *meaningful* rather than erroneous or *meaningless*. Decorum, as it is used here, is a set of rules and practices defining what may be represented and pictorially displayed with captions, and possibly written down, in which context and in what form.⁸⁵ The concept itself is related to enacting and representing the proper order of the world⁸⁶ and is therefore of great significance for analysing and interpreting the patterns of representation and transference.

Examining the patterns of representation in this way one can recognise that the Aegean figures are hybridised only with the Syrian figures (tombs of Puimre and Menkheperreseneb); the Aegean objects are transferred to the Syrian figures and *vice versa*;⁸⁷ the term *kftjw* is labelling the Aegean figures in the tomb of Rekhmire but also the Syrian figures in the tomb of Menkheperreseneb and Amenemhab. Thus, it is clear that there is a predetermined culturally specific connection in the Egyptian topography between what we archaeologists name the “Aegean” (“Minoan” or “Mycenaean”) and “Syrian”. There are no hybridisations of the Aegean elements with other elements except “Syrian”, although figures coming from Egypt, Nubia and Punt are also depicted in these tombs. As for the transference, there are only a few examples of transference of other elements (non-Syrian) into registers with the Aegean figures.⁸⁸

Regarding the hybridisation, it was previously argued by SHELLEY WACHSMANN that this is a consequence of an artist’s desire to vary colour scheme or a way to represent an “unseen people”-Hittites.⁸⁹ This cannot be accepted because contacts with Hatti are already well attested in the Annals of Thutmose III and in the tomb of

Menkheperreseneb, where “princes” of Hatti bring *jnw*.⁹⁰ These evidences are following a long tradition of previous cultural contacts.⁹¹ It was also argued by Lyla Pinch Brock that these hybrid figures reflect people who originated in the Aegean world and became either trading partners of the Syrians or colonists.⁹² However, this interpretation is not adequately explained and argued. ANGELA MUROCK HUSSEIN identifies the Syrian figure labelled with *kftjw* in the tomb of Menkheperreseneb as “Minoan” elder priest. She argues that the “Minoan” priests are in the “Minoan” iconography represented with beards, “Syrian” axes and long robes suggesting that all these elements were marks of their priestly status.⁹³ However, the figure referred to by HUSSEIN neither has an axe nor a long robe but is wearing a kilt and is depicted in proskynesis.

These interpretations give explanations with weak or basically non existing archaeological argumentation and indeed only explain hybridisation. They do not explain the quite specific “rules” of the transference of the iconographic elements and the accompanying texts (Syrian vessels transferred into the registers with the Aegean figures and *vice versa*). An additional question is why would there be a hybrid figure among four northern princes in the tomb of Puimre if the artist wanted to vary colour scheme? Why would the artist vary the colour of only the third one of the all together four figures here depicted?⁹⁴ The placement of the hybrid figure with the Aegean elements among the figures coming from the north rather suggests Egyptian association of the Aegean with the north. PANAGIOTOPOULOS, referring to the hybrid objects and transference, suspects that they are showing Egyptian incapability or indifference in clearly distinguishing the foreign artistic tradi-

⁸⁵ BAINES 1990, 20.

⁸⁶ BAINES 2007, 16.

⁸⁷ The Aegean figures are carrying copper ingots only in the tomb of Rekhmire and the same type of ingots are in all other tombs found carried by the Syrian figures. Additionally, the three copper ingots are in the pile of brought objects in the Aegean register in the tomb of Rekhmire depicted in the same place as the four copper ingots in the pile of brought objects in the Syrian register of the same tomb, WACHSMANN 1987, 51. Therefore, the term *Keftiubarren* introduced by BUCHHOLZ 1959 for these ingots is not justified.

⁸⁸ Transference of Egyptian motifs on Aegean rhyta, e.g. Anubis head as a rhyton, WACHSMANN 1987, 56–58, or the

transference of Egyptian *hs* vessels among the objects carried by Aegean figures, however with an addition of “Minoan” S type handle, LABOURY 1990, 107; WACHSMANN 1987, 67–68. Red leather bags are transferred from registers depicting figures from Punt into the objects carried by Aegean figures in the tomb of Rekhmire, WACHSMANN 1987, 74.

⁸⁹ WACHSMANN 1987, 8.

⁹⁰ HALLMANN 2006, 306.

⁹¹ BREYER 2010.

⁹² BROCK 2000, 137.

⁹³ HUSSEIN 2007, 36.

⁹⁴ Aegean-Syrian hybrid in the tomb of Puimre has red-brown skin while the other three have yellow-brown skin.

tions.⁹⁵ However, that there were entirely non-arbitrary and by the decorum ordered transferences and hybridisations points to everything but incapability or indifference. All these lead to the question of hybridism fusing together unlike things, at least on the first glance and through our modern geography. We should in no case see representations of the reality behind these figures, especially not direct reflections of the reality. There probably never existed “down to the waist Aegeans and up to the waist Syrians” but there certainly existed other ways to order the world and make associations.

Decorum is that which is clearly determining what is to be transferred and where and what can be hybridised. Being that decorum is closely related to a culturally specific world view, it is interesting to question this observed connection between the “Aegean” and the “Syrian” further. The Aegean-Syrian hybrid figure from the tomb of Puimre is coming from far north, from “Asia”.⁹⁶ The tomb of Useramun contains a text referring to the Aegean and other foreign figures. This same text is grouping “every island in the middle of *w3d-wr* (sea)” together with the foreign countries of the far north, “Asia”.⁹⁷ The Aegean figures were in the tomb of Menkheperreseneb together with the Syrian figures associated with the lands of the north opposite to Nubia, which represented the lands of the south.⁹⁸ Turning to other evidence related to *kftjw*, “The London Medical Papyrus” refers to two spells in the *kftjw* language, and one of them is used against an “Asiatic” disease.⁹⁹ If we bear in mind that there are numerous examples attested in Egyptian magic where like is used to fight like¹⁰⁰ we can maybe argue with great caution for one more element connecting *kftjw* and the Aegean figures with the Egyptian concept of the northern realms. The relatedness of *kftjw* to the north in Egyptian cultural topography was already emphasized by QUACK on the basis of the “Book of the Day” from the tomb of Ramesses VI and the demotic myth about the Sun Eye (Leiden 3,34).

According to QUACK the fact that *kft3w* is in the tomb of Ramesses VI related to *pb* (corrupted from *kbn*-Byblos) is only an additional argument for the location of *kft3w* in Crete, as both Byblos and Crete are from the Egyptian point of view on the same axis. Both are north of Egypt, Crete in the west and Byblos in the east.¹⁰¹ NIBBI suggested the same association with the north; however, she could not reconcile that *kftjw* being in the north in the Egyptian cultural topography also could mean localisation on the island of Crete. She argues that as the word *kftjw* is not written with an island determinative it cannot refer to the island of Crete and that there is no attestation saying that *kftjw* are the people from the “islands in the middle of *w3d-wr* (sea)”.¹⁰² However, as it was pointed out, *kftjw* is anyhow not an ethnic term and the text from the tomb of Rekhmire associates *kftjw* and the “islands in the middle of *w3d-wr* (sea)” as geographical terms. Disassociating *kftjw* and the “islands in the middle of *w3d-wr* (sea)” from the island of Crete and the Aegean world would mean completely neglecting the pictorial and textual evidence from the tomb of Rekhmire and the reference to *kftjw* in the “Book of the Day” from the tomb of Ramesses VI. Some authors would gladly locate *kftjw* and the “islands in the middle of *w3d-wr* (sea)” in the Egyptian delta even by referring to the frescoes found at Tell el-Dab^a as direct proof for longer presence of the “Minoans”.¹⁰³ However, the frescoes found at Tell el-Dab^a do not suggest any longer presence of the Aegean foreigners at the site.¹⁰⁴

Maybe cultural topography and *the order of things* is one possible way also to understand the famous “Aegean list” on a statue base of Amenhotep III (E_N) from his temple at Kom el-Hetan on the left bank of the Nile facing Luxor.¹⁰⁵ The here attested terms *kftjw* and *tjn3yw* are understood by the majority of scholars as Aegean toponyms for Crete and the Danaoi,¹⁰⁶ but are on this statue base (E_N) found in association with the north and “Asia” as the text above the toponyms states *t3w*

⁹⁵ PANAGIOTOPOULOS 2012, 56.

⁹⁶ DAVIES 1922, 90; HALLMANN 2006.

⁹⁷ DZIOBEK 1994, 91; HALLMANN 2006, 23.

⁹⁸ STRANGE 1980, 16–56.

⁹⁹ STRANGE 1980, 99–101; KYRIAKIDIS 2002, 211–216.

¹⁰⁰ RITNER 1993.

¹⁰¹ QUACK 1996, 77–79; cf. HALL 1902, 161–162

¹⁰² NIBBI 1974, 38.

¹⁰³ DUHOX 2003, 211–228; MACGILLIVRAY 2009, 165; NIBBI 1975, 9–49; VANDERSLEYEN 1988, 75–79; VANDERSLEYEN 1999; VANDERSLEYEN 2002, 109–112; VANDERSLEYEN 2003, 209–21; VANDERSLEYEN 2008.

¹⁰⁴ BIETAK 2007b, 38–39.

¹⁰⁵ CLINE AND STANNISH 2011; EDEL UND GÖRG 2005, 166–167; STRANGE 1980, 21–27; WACHSMANN 1987, 98;

¹⁰⁶ Summarized and with references in CLINE AND STANNISH 2011, 7.

nbw šty [nw] phw nw stt “all reachable lands of the north (and) of Asia”.¹⁰⁷ This, however, doesn’t necessarily mean that *kftjw* and *tjnzyw* can be physically located in Syria-Palestine (*stt* “Asia”) in the Late Bronze Age,¹⁰⁸ but rather in the north as it was suggested.¹⁰⁹ However, such an interpretation of northern and Asiatic association of *kftjw* and *tjnzyw*, cannot be used *in extenso* and must be received with caution. The main reason is the attestation of the toponym *d3rd* [...], identified as *d3rdny* (attested in the Battle of Qadesh record),¹¹⁰ in the list of African toponyms on the List ETL XIIId on the west colossus of Ramesses II from Karnak.¹¹¹ The argument of cultural topography would in this case be false as the toponym *d3rdny* is an all other known cases attested with the northern toponyms. Therefore, in this case we should either accept that the toponym attested on the List ETL XIIId is not the same as *d3rdny*,¹¹² or that its location here is indeed a scribe’s mistake. A similar case is the list of Near Eastern toponyms from the same statue base which contains two “Lybian” toponyms *mšwš* (ETL XIIc: 10) and *tmḥ* (ETL XIIc: 11).¹¹³

Nevertheless, as it was pointed out through different examples in this paper, we should consider that there are other ways, and certainly there were other ways, of ordering the known world.¹¹⁴ This would explain a specific cultural association of the Aegean figures and objects to the north in the Egyptian cultural topography, and therefore allow us to understand previously emphasized “inconsistencies” and frequent attestations of hybridisation with the Syrian elements.

Conclusion

The Aegean figures in the Theban 18th dynasty tombs are not attested as coming only from *kftjw* and therefore, besides the fact that *kftjw* is a term for a land, it cannot be understood as an ethnonym meaning the “Minoans”. This is, among reasons, because the “Minoans” are an archaeological fiction originating in the construct of the “Minoan”

culture having a genealogy in the racial and colonial discourse of the late 19th and early 20th century. The entanglement of the “Minoans” with the Egyptian term *kftjw* is clearly the result of a cultural-historical view of the archaeological cultures as “peoples” and of the uncritical labelling of the archaeological cultures with the terms from the records of the literate societies (e.g. the Egyptian tomb inscriptions). Such an entanglement hides the colonial roots of the term “Minoans” but also their supposed ethnical unity constructed on the basis of European nationalistic ideas which were certainly not shared by the inhabitants of the Late Bronze Age world. The basic problem is that the majority of the previous studies of the Aegean figures from the Theban 18th dynasty tombs were used for *occidental* materialisations of the “Minoans” and that those Egyptologists who pointed to the associations of *kftjw* with “Asia” did not pay too much attention to the pictorial evidence.

After analysing the decorum of these representations it is better to call for a specific cultural topography¹¹⁵ in order to explain why the figures are definitely coming from the Aegean associated in the Egyptian world view with the northern realms and “Asia”. The Aegean figures in the Theban tombs are in the accompanying texts identified as “princes” (*wrw*) coming from the *jw nb n ḥrj-jb nw w3d wr* “every island in the middle of *w3d wr*” (Useramun, early reign of Thutmose III), *ḥ3w-nbwt* (Useramun, early reign of Thutmose III) and *kftjw jww ḥrj-jb nw w3d wr* – “*kftjw* and/of the islands in the middle of *w3d wr*” (Rekhmire, later reign of Thutmose III-Amenhotep II). There is not only one place of origin for these figures attested in every single tomb where they appear; however, the fact is that in two cases they come from the “islands in the middle of *w3d wr* (sea)”.

The objects brought by the Aegean and the Syrian figures are in mutual transference; with the Aegean objects being depicted brought by the Syrian figures and *vice versa*. The hybrid Syrian-Aegean figures are in the accompanying texts

¹⁰⁷ EDEL UND GÖRG 2005, 161.

¹⁰⁸ Contra NIBBI 1974, 38–40; VANDERSLEYEN 2003, 210–211.

¹⁰⁹ MATIĆ 2012, 248.

¹¹⁰ EDEL UND GÖRG 2005, 25–36.

¹¹¹ LEGRAIN 1914, 43.

¹¹² It is indeed not entirely preserved so we can not be entirely sure that it ends with *-ny*.

¹¹³ EDEL UND GÖRG 2005, 25; LEGRAIN 1914, 43. However, if in this case one can also speak about cultural topography is open for discussion.

¹¹⁴ Systems of classification are particular cultural products rooted in time and place, see FOUCAULT 1970.

¹¹⁵ MOERS 2010.

identified as coming from *ḥꜣw-nbwṯ* (Menkheperreseneb), *pḥr wr* -“Euphrates” (Menkheperreseneb), *tꜣ nṯr* -“God’s land” (Puimre) and *pḥw sṯt* -“far north, Asia” (Puimre).¹¹⁶ All of these toponyms are in the Egyptian cultural topography placed in the north.

There also surely never existed real Syrian-Aegean hybrids as depicted in the Theban tombs. It can be said rather that the iconographic hybridism of the Aegean and the Syrian expressed the close relation between the two in the Egyptian cultural topography and systematisation. Being that the terms used to refer to the Aegean, the Syrian and the hybrid Syrian-Aegean figures are all related to the north, we can assume that the reason for their close relation in the Egyptian iconography is their northern location in the Egyptian cultural topography. Therefore, for the New Kingdom Egyptians these populations were conceptually related. When the toponym *kftjw* is associated with the other figures and toponyms than the ones associated with the Aegean, it does not mean that *kftjw* can not refer to Crete. On the contrary this rather means that the regions we tend to sharply

separate were not so sharply separated by the New Kingdom Egyptians. This also does not mean that they did not make any difference between them at all.

Decorum clearly determines what can be hybridised in depictions and what can be transferred and where, ordered by cultural topography and a specific world view. This allows for the “inconsistencies” to be meaningful, and not the random errors of the artists. Only the cultural topography can materialise a reconciliation between Crete and the Aegean as the homeland of the depicted Aegean figures and the association of *kftjw*, *jww hrjw ib nw wꜣḏ wr* - “the islands in the middle of *wꜣḏ wr* (sea)” and ultimately *tjnꜣyw* with the north together with the Syrian toponyms, figures and objects. We should always bear in mind that the past is not only a “foreign country” where they “do things differently” (*sensu* LESLIE POLES HARTLEY), it is also a place and time with a potentially *different order of things*. Such a different order of things allows *kftjw* to be identified with the island of Crete and to be associated with Syria at the same time.

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¹¹⁶ HALLMANN 2006, 267.

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