

Given the New Kingdom dates, the Aegean Long Chronology faces serious obstacles on the Minoan front. In order to fill the period between the proposed 1628 BC Long Chronology date for the Theran eruption and the *ca.* 1479 BC accession of Tuthmosis III, in whose reign Minoan objects similar in appearance to those found in LM IB destruction deposits on Crete are depicted on Theban tombs, it is necessary either to extend the LM IA period for several decades after the eruption and to stretch LM IB to fill at least three generations, or to extend LM IB to five generations. It is possible to reduce the gap by a generation by postulating that the objects of LM IB aspect which Minoans are shown carrying were heirlooms or removed from earlier deposits, or had been circulating in the eastern Mediterranean, or were still being manufactured in LM II (WIENER 1998a). Any major increase in the chronological span between the Theran eruption late in LM IA and the destructions at the end of LM IB strikes many Minoan specialists as unlikely, however, given the lack of any site with successive LM IB strata providing indications of stylistic evolution of the pottery. In addition, the Aegean Long Chronology requires that a series of Aegean objects in Egyptian and Near Eastern contexts must have been deposited later than their floruit in the Aegean, and a scarab bearing the cartouche of Amenophis III from Sellopoulo Tomb 4 at Knossos must have arrived and been deposited very soon after his accession in *ca.* 1390 BC, or have been deposited after the period of production of the LM/LH IIIA1 pottery in the tomb (MANNING 1995, 226). None of these propositions is attractive singly, and the problem is compounded when they are considered collectively.

The most serious challenge to the Aegean Long Chronology, however, comes from the evidence gathered in the current excavations at Tell el-Dab^a, ancient Avaris. Material from New Kingdom stratum C there includes Minoan or Minoanizing wall paintings that in a number of respects closely resemble those of Thera, Theran waterborne pumice chemically determined to be from the Bronze Age eruption, and above all, White Slip I pottery (BIETAK 1996, 76, 78; *idem* 1998; see also BIETAK, this volume).

While the presence of both the wall paintings and pumice in New Kingdom contexts supports the Aegean Short Chronology, neither is conclusive. As regards the wall paintings, it has been argued that the paucity of LM IA comparanda from Crete leaves open the possibility that the Dab^a paintings may be of a later date than those of Thera. The existence of Minoan or Minoanizing paintings at the Hyksos site of Tell Kabri and at Alalakh, together with the use of yellow as a skin colour at Tell el-Dab^a, not thus far attested in Crete, has led to the suggestion that the Dab^a wall paintings were the work of Minoan-trained artists or families of artists who had lived abroad for a number of years, if not generations (SHAW 1995, 110).⁶ It is also possible that pattern books existed and remained in use, and even that the Dab^a wall paintings represent two time periods, similarities between the two deposits of wall painting fragments notwithstanding. The forthcoming publication of new reconstructions of the Dab^a paintings based on the discovery and cleaning of additional fragments and the use of computer imagery, however, should provide support for the view that some of these paintings are among the finest of Minoan works, executed at least in part by a Knossian artist, and that at least some of the depictions, particularly that of the griffin, are very close to their Theran counterparts.⁷

Similarly, the first appearance of Theran pumice at Tell el-Dab^a in early New Kingdom stratum C is certainly a significant argument in favour of the Aegean Short Chronology, but the fact that the pumice was waterborne and could have been picked up at any time, or even deliberately imported as an abrasive, means that this evidence also is inconclusive. Theran eruption pumice is very often found in the Aegean in much later contexts (WIENER 1998b, 26).

It is the Cypriote pottery from Tell el-Dab^a, and particularly the White Slip I and Proto-White Slip, which is critical to the debate. The finds there, to date, include ten examples each of PWS and WS I plus another four of WS II and eight examples which are undiagnostic (BIETAK and HEIN, this volume). Six of the PWS examples come from the final Hyksos stratum D/2, including one complete bowl clearly

⁶ M. BIETAK has noted (*pers. comm.*) that one of the Xeste III boys from Thera has a yellow colouration not always apparent in reproductions. M. POPHAM has kindly called my attention to the fact that analysis of the pigments employed at Thera disclosed the use of the colour yellow (FILIPPAKIS 1978).

⁷ I am most grateful to Professor MANFRED BIETAK for showing and discussing with me the wall painting fragments and reconstructions at Tell el-Dab^a in the week following this conference.