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## AN EGYPTIAN ITINERARY OF THE AEGEAN SEA FROM 14th CENTURY B.C.

**Abstract:** The Aegean toponymical list, preserved in one of the inscriptions of Amenophis III (ca. 1406–1369 BC) from his funeral temple at Kom el-Hetan, represents a constituent part of an Egyptian itinerary describing Crete („Keftiu“ of the Egyptian sources), its inhabitants (i.e. the Greek Danaans) and localities known from the Linear B and Classical texts (e.g. Amnisos, Knossos, Kydonia, Lyktos and so on). The document mentions also minor islands located near Crete (e.g. Antikythera), but omits completely – according to the author’s opinion – the Hellenic continent.

Egyptian Pharaohs of the New Kingdom liked to adorn their temples with lists of foreign (especially Nubian and Asian) localities actually or allegedly under their domination [Astour 1966:313]. In 1965 Dr K. A. Kitchen, Professor of Egyptology at the University of Liverpool, published the topographical enumerations on three statue bases in Amenophis the Third’s funeral temple at Kom el-Hetan (built about 1380 BC.). One of these, the inscription from the statue base C [Kitchen 1965:5–6] is of valuable interest not only to Egyptologists but also to Mycenologists and students of the Aegean and Greek toponomastics and history.

The problem was reviewed many times by such researchers as for. ex., W. F. Albright, M. C. Astour [1966], A. Bartoněk [1983; 1985], E. Edel [1966; 1988], P. Faure [1968; 1969], W. Helck [1979], K. A. Kitchen [1966], G. A. Lehmann [1970] and B. Sergent [1977]. The list of Amenophis III (reigned 1406–1369 BC., according to Kitchen) consists of two basic nomenclatures, namely the region of *Kf-tj-w* (i.e. the island Crete) and the ethnonym *Tj-n;-jj-w* (i.e. the Homeric Danaans), and 13 toponyms, only two of which seem to be partially damaged. It is composed in the so-called “group writing”, i.e. the Egyptian syllabic orthography for transcribing foreign names. The modern Latin transliteration, given according to the system of W. Helck [1962; 1979], can be found below in table 1. All the place-names in the list in question were new, without any parallels in the known Egyptian texts, and since the time of their publication an Aegean interpretation has been devised for most of them. According to Kitchen [1965:6], “two names *’Amniša* and *Kunuša* look uncomfortably like Amniso(s) and Konoso(s), Knossos, famous ancient settlements on the north coast of Crete, well-attested in the Linear B tablets found in the palace of Knossos”. He also compares *Rikat(a)* with Lyktos, the Cretan city known as *ru-ki-to* in the Mycenaean texts. Subsequently, Prof. Albright brilliantly identified two more names

as clearly Aegean, namely *Nupi Rayi* = Nauplia, the ancient port for Mycenae, and *Kútira* = Cythera, the main island and “entrepôt” between the Peloponnese and Crete. On the basis of these and some other identifications it was suggested that the toponyms in question represent a “part of what might be an itinerary” [Kitchen 1966:23]. Albright’s and Kitchen’s observations were extended by other researchers. Astour [1966:316] concludes, e.g., that “four toponyms of the new list would belong to the Kingdom of Pylos, four to Crete, and one to the principal island between the two”. After considering two “cartouches” on the right side of the statue base C as designations of Crete (the land of “Keftiu”) and its inhabitants (Homeric *Δαναοί*) and accepting the itinerary character of the Egyptian list, Faure [1969] situated most toponyms in Crete and placed the Egyptian *periplous* mainly in Cretan waters. On the other hand, Sergent [1977] tried to demonstrate that almost all the names refer to the Helladic mainland, especially to the Peloponnese. Both Faure’s and Sergent’s extensive identifications and locations are hardly acceptable in some cases and can be adopted only to some extent [Kazanskiene-Kazanskij 1986:44]. New proposals of identifying the toponyms have been recently suggested, see the discussion about the equation of *di-q’-j’-s* with the Boeotian Thebes [Bartonek 1983; 1985; Edel 1988].

The list as a whole is nowadays taken as an itinerary (*periplous*) along coastal regions of the Aegean area. Some of the suggested interpretations seem to be fully acceptable, but others are less satisfying. In some cases detailed locations of these place-names or regions are not finally established yet. That is why I would like to discuss the problem once more.

Accepting the itinerary character of the Egyptian list of toponyms, I intend to list the equations and locations which are entirely certain. They are five: №. 1 (Amnissos), №. 3 (Kydonia), №. 10 (Knossos), №. 11 (= №. 1), №. 12 (Lyktos). It is worth noticing that all acceptable identifications refer to the island of Crete, as suggested by the cardinal “cartouches” on the right side of the statue base C.

Three further toponyms have persuasive readings, but their locations are ambiguous, see №. 4 (Mycenae), №. 7 (Nauplia or Nauplioi), №. 8 (Cythera). As far as the location of Mycenae is concerned, Edel [1966:43] locates it in Argolis, while Faure [1969:141] points out that “les texts antiques mentionnent une Mycènes en Crète, et précisément dans la région de Κυδωνία qui précède”, cf. Benseler [1884:957–958]. The neighbourhood of Kydonia (№. 3) and Mycenae (№. 4) in the list of Amenophis III prefers the Cretan location.

The toponym *Nu-pi-Ra-ji LAND* was generally identified with Nauplia, a port near Tiryns in Argolis [Kitchen 1966:23 following Albright; Faure 1969:142–143; Sergent 1977:136–138]. The town was indeed inhabited in the Late Helladic Period, though “it is unknown whether it already bore its classical name“ [Astour 1966:70]. Nauplia is not men-

tioned among the towns of the Argolid in Homer's Catalog of Ships. If it had appeared in the Linear B texts, it would have been spelled \**Na-u-pi-ri-ja* (according to the spelling rules distinguished by Ventris and Chadwick [1973:43–46]). However, a similar toponym *na-u-pi-ri-jo-i* occurs once at the Knossian tablet KN Fh 5432(+5461+fr). As all place-names from Knossos have exclusively Cretan contexts, it is clear that the Linear B name cannot be identified with Nauplia in Argolis. On the other hand, the Linear B evidence indicates that the Egyptian form might refer to a Cretan place-name rather than to the Helladic one. The Egyptian ideogram LAND, connected with the toponym in question, suggests that Linear B *na-u-pi-ri-jo-i* denotes an island like both *k-f-tj-w* LAND and *kú-ti-ra* LAND designate two islands – Crete and Cythera, respectively. It is noteworthy that on the Knossos tablets we can find at least two different minor islands, namely Gaudos (Myc. *ka-u-da* [KN Fs 21.1], Class. Καῦδα, Καῦδος or Γαῦδος) and Akytos (Myc. *a<sub>1</sub>-ku-to-de*, Class. Ἄκυτος) both located near Crete [Witzcak 1992:89].

The tenth toponym *kú-ti-ra* LAND is safely interpreted as Κύθηρα. It is usually connected with the larger island to the south-west of Akra Malea in southern Laconia [Astour 1966:315; Faure 1969:143]. Kythera was a peripheral center of the Minoan civilization. In the Linear B texts from Pylos we find the feminine toponymic adjective *ku-te-ra<sub>3</sub>* (nom. pl.) and *ku-te-ra-o* (gen. pl.), i.e. the ethnic form *kutherrai*, *-aōn* probably derived from the name of the island Κύθηρα [Palmer 1968:114; Ventris-Chadwick 1973:558; Chadwick 1988:80]. Moreover, an Old Babylonian cuneiform votive inscription of Naram-Sin, the king of Eshnunna, and a stone cup with the Egyptian name of a Fifth Dynasty temple found in Kythera bear evidence of the island's early connections with western Asia and Egypt. But a different island of Crete is named as (τά) Κύθηρα by Hesychius (HAL<sup>2</sup> k4442). Since he distinguishes carefully between this island and τινὲς δὲ νῆσον πρὸ Μαλέου, he must regard the island of Anticythera as Cretan Κύθηρα, distinct from the Laconian Cythera [Brown 1985:114]. Thus it is possible to suggest not only a Helladic location, but also a Cretan one.

In other words, I am inclined to locate these three toponyms in the Crete area rather than in the Helladic Mainland.

Two toponyms (№. 2 and 13) are partially illegible, but their context suggests a Cretan solution. The toponym *bi-ja-š-XX* is attested between two Cretan harbours Amnisos (№ 1) and Kydonia (№. 3). Its location in Peloponnese is highly doubtful, as Sergent's identification with the toponym Pisa in Elis cannot be correct. The name Πίσα or Πῖσα is most probably identical with the Pylian toponym *Pi-\**82 (or *Pi-twa*) and derives from the early Greek form \**Pitwa* [Melena 1983:264–265]. This archetyp has nothing to do with the Egyptian spelling *bi-ja-š-XX*. The last toponym *XX-ja-ta-XX* (№. 13) appears in the neighbourhood of three characteristic Cretan localities,

namely Knossos (*r.* 10), Amnissos (*r.* 11) and Lyktos (*r.* 12), thus it may be safely located in Crete. Of course, Faure's identification [1969:144] with the modern harbour Sitia (Myc. *se-to-i-ja*, Class. Σητεία [Brown 1985:199]) is nothing else than a guess.

Two other place-names may be differently interpreted and located. The toponym *r.* 5, transliterated by Edel [1966:1988] as *di-q'-'j'-'s* and by Helck [1979] as *di-qa-ê-s*, won three basic interpretations. From the linguistic point of view, Astour's interpretation [1966:314] *Dikiā* (see Myc. *di-ka-ta*, Class. Δίκτη) is recognized as „impossible“ [Faure 1969:141], as it shows a dental *t*, which does not occur in the Egyptian text. Kitchen's Tegea (Class. Τεγέα [1966:24]) is the well-known Arcadian site, which lies rather far from the sea and played virtually no role in Egyptian political or economic concerns. That is why Faure's Tegeai [1969:141–142] is situated in Crete, where a different town bearing the same name is documented [Benseler 1884:1499–1500]. On the other hand, Bartoněk [1983:201–204; 1985:44–45] suggests the name of Boetian Thebes as the interpretation for the toponym *r.* 5 – either in the form of the dat.-loc. pl. (*Thēg<sup>h</sup>ais*) or, in the derived form (*Theg<sup>h</sup>ais, -idos*) which is known to have been the Classical name for the whole district of Thebes (Gk. Θηβαίς). The town itself is inland, but it is not as distant from the sea as Arcadian Tegea is, and it lay in a region with a good harbour at Aulis. The link with the area of Thebais seems doubtful, because the Egyptian name contains no ideogram *LAND*. It is worth noticing that two different toponyms bearing the same or similar name occurred also in Crete. They are preserved as Modern Σίβα (West-Central Crete) or Σίβας (Central Crete) till now [Faure 1967:70].

Both restorations Tegea and Thebes are possible, and both place-names may be located not only in the Helladic mainland, but also in Crete.

The toponym *W-'i-ra-ja* or *W-'i-la-ja* was tentatively connected with (W)iliōs, Hom. Ἰλιος, i.e. the well-known Troy in Asia Minor [Kitchen 1966:24; Edel 1966:46–48], but such a location seems hardly probable for geographical reasons. Astour [1966:315] tries to compare it with the Pylian name *wa-e-ro* (PY Cn 1197.2), but neither the phonological correspondences are perfect nor we are sure whether it is in fact a toponym. Sergent [1977:152–161] combines *W-'i-Ra-ja* with the Laconian province Ἐλεία to no avail. It is a derivative of the toponym Ἐλος (literary 'marsh-meadow, marshy ground'), mentioned as dat.-loc. sg. *e-re-e* / *e-re-i* in the Mycenaean texts from Pylos (PY Jn 829; Jo 438; Xn 442), see Ventris-Chadwick [1973:545]. The name is Greek (ἔλος n.) and its Indo-European equivalents (e.g. Sanskrit *saras-* n.) demonstrate no trace of *-w-* in the root. Alternatively, Faure [1965:230; 1969:143] links *W-'i-la-ja* with the harbour *Elaea*, mentioned by Pliny the Elder (Nat. Hist. IV, 59 [120]) in north-west Crete between Phalasarna and Kissamos. This possibility is phonologically accurate, but I think that one can find a better solution. A different Cretan locality, bearing a similar name, has

been attested as Heleia in an ancient inscription [Matt-Alexiou-Platon-Guamella 1967:143; Press 1972:50] and preserved till now as Ἐλαία or Ἐλιά, a village located 7 kilometres east of Knossos [Spitael-Faure 1977:67]. This location is most acceptable, as *W-'i-la-ja* (№. 9) precedes Knossos (№. 10) in the list of Amenophis III. Thus the geographical and inscriptional order indicates a close neighborhood of *W-'i-la-ja* and Knossos. There was also an ancient locality Ἐλεία in Eastern Crete [Brown 1985:181]. It is named in the treaty between the peoples of Ἴτανος and Ἱεράπυτνα, whose text is given in *Inscriptiones Creticae* (3, IV, 9) as Itanos 9.

The sixth name *mi-da-na LAND* is usually identified with the town Messene or the region Messenia [Astour 1966:314–317; Faure 1969:112; Sergent 1977:128ff.]. Egyptian *d* transcribed the Semitic *zayin* and *sade* [Helck 1962:591] and was an equivalent of Greek *zēta*. The name *mi-da-na LAND* perfectly corresponds to the toponym *me-za-na* in the several Linear B texts from Pylos (PY Cn 3,1; Sh 736), but not with the district Μεσσηνία. This is why Kitchen [1966:24] is correct suggesting that Egyptian *mi-da-na LAND* „might be Linear B *Mezana*, but hardly Messenia“. If *me-za-na* is to be taken as a toponym, it may refer to the city of Messene, since it appears in commercial documents from the Messenian Kingdom of Pylos [Astour 1966:316]. The Classical Messene was only built after 368 B.C., but there is a reason to suggest that the archaic capital of the country which was destroyed by Lacedemonians around 720 B.C., already bore the name of Messene, from which Messenia, the name of the region, was derived. However, the suggested equation with the Pylian place-name *me-za-na* (Gk. Μεσσήνη, Doric Μεσσήνα) must be excluded for formal reasons (*mi-da-na* terms *LAND*, not town). Finally, it can be concluded that the Egyptian *mi-da-na LAND* is a *hapax legomenon* and has no acceptable interpretation.

On the basis of the above, we are able not only to identify the island Crete and its Greek inhabitants, but also to locate unquestionably almost all toponyms from Amenophis III's list in the Cretan area, thus the Egyptian itinerary is to be placed in Cretan waters.

#### Summary and conclusions:

1. The inscription of the pharaoh Amenophis III (reigned 1406–1369 B.C.) from Kom el-Hetan is the first Egyptian document mentioning specific localities in the Aegean area, especially in Crete. It proves that in the 14th century B.C. the Egyptians were acquainted with Crete and adjacent regions much better than was hitherto supposed.

2. The list of Amenophis III represents an Egyptian itinerary (*periplous*) of the Aegean Sea and mentions the island Crete (*K-f-tj-w LAND*), inhabited by the Danaans (*Tj-n'-jj-w*), and also 13 towns or islands (fictitiously construed as tribute). The analysis of thirteen Aegean toponyms allows to place the Egyptian itinerary exclusively in Cretan waters.

3. As far as the detailed locations are concerned, six place-names belong evidently to Crete (№. 1–3, 10–13), others may be alternatively equated with the Cretan ports or towns trading with Egypt (№. 4–5, 9) or with the minor islands near by Crete (№. 7–8). Only one toponym (№. 6) cannot be interpreted with certainty, but there is no reason not to posit its Cretan location on purely contextual grounds.

4. Under my analysis, the Egyptian itinerary begins from Amnisos (№. 1), drives to the north-west coast of Crete [Kydonia – Mycenae – Tegea?, №. 3–5), mentions two minor islands near by Crete (Nauplioi – Cythera, №. 7–8), and comes back to the northern area of central Crete (Heleia, Knossos, Amnisos, Lyktos, №. 9–12).

Table 1  
Aegean names from Amenophis IIIrd's Temple

No	Egyptian reading	Early Greek form	Linear B form	Classical form	Geographical situation	Identification
I.	<i>k-ft-j-u</i> LAND	?		Κρήτη	island Crete	Convincing
II.	<i>tj-n',jj-u</i>  TOPONYMS	<i>Danaioi</i>	?	Δαναοί	Greeks F Peloponnese S Cretan Greeks W	Ethnonym preferable
1.	<i>'a-m-ni-ša</i>	<i>Amnisos</i>	<i>a-mi-ni-so</i>	'Αμνισός	Northern Crete	Probable
2.	<i>bt-ja-š-XX</i>	Phaistos? E Sisaia? F Pisaia? S	<i>pa-i-to</i> ? <i>pi-82 ??</i>	Φαιστός Σισαία Πισα	Southern Crete Northern Crete Elis	Uncertain
3.	<i>kú-tu-na-ja</i>	<i>Kudônia</i>	<i>ku-do-ni-ja</i>	Κυδωνία	North-West Crete	Convincing
4.	<i>mu-k'a-nu</i>	<i>Mukāna(i)</i>	?	Μυκῆναι	Northern Crete FW Argolis S	Preferable in Crete
5.	<i>di-qa-ê-s</i>	Dikta? A Tegea? KF	<i>di-ka-ta</i> ?	Δίκητη Τεγέα	Northern Crete A Arcadia K	Preferable in Crete
		Theg <sup>w</sup> ai? BW	<i>te-qa</i>	Θῆβαι	North-West Crete F Boeotia B Crete W	
6.	<i>mi-qa-na</i> LAND	<i>Messānā?</i>	<i>me-za-na?</i>	Μεσσήνη	Messenia	Doubtful
7.	<i>nu-pi-Ra-ji</i> LAND	Nauplia S Nauplia K Nauplioi W	? <i>na-pe-re-wa</i> <i>na-u-pi-ri-jo-i</i>	Ναυπλία ? ?	Argolis S Messenia K island near Crete W	Unclear
8.	<i>kú-ti-Ra</i> LAND	<i>Kuthēra</i>	<i>ku-te-ra<sub>3</sub></i> (adj.)	Κύθηρα	island near Crete W Peloponnese S island near Crete W	Both possible
9.	<i>w' i-Ri-ja</i>	Willios? Troy E Whelaiā? SFW	? ?	'Ιλιος E 'Ελαία F 'Ελος S 'Εληα W	Troada E North-West Crete F Laconia S Northern Crete W	Preferable in Crete
10.	<i>kú-nú-ša</i>	<i>Knōssos</i>	<i>ko-no-so</i>	Κνωσός	Northern Crete	Persuasive
11.	<i>'a-m-ni-ša</i>	<i>Amnisos</i>	<i>a-mi-ni-so</i>	'Αμνισός	Northern Crete	Probable
12.	<i>Ri-ka-ta</i>	<i>Luktos</i>	<i>ru-ki-to</i>	Λύκτος	Northern Crete	Probable
13.	<i>X-ja-ta-X</i>	<i>Setoija? F</i>	<i>se-to-i-ja</i>	Σητεία	North-East Crete	Uncertain

Notes:

1. For the Egyptian readings see Helck [1979] and Faure [1968].
2. Abbreviations: A = Astour [1966], B = Bartoněk [1986], E = Edel [1966], F = Faure [1968], K = Kitchen [1965], S = Sergent [1977], W = Witzcak.

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