CHAPTER ONE

THE GREEKS IN EGYPT FROM THE BRONZE AGE TO THE TIME OF HERODOTUS

The history of the Greeks in Egypt can be divided into four stages:

1. The Mycenaean Period (c. 1580-1100 B.C.).
2. The Dark Ages and Orientalizing Period (c. 1100-680 B.C.).

For present purposes it is only necessary to discuss relations down to the middle of the Fifth Century B.C.

I. THE MYCENAEAN AGE

The Mycenaean Age, and with it the history of Greeks in Egypt at that time, can be divided into two phases:

I. A period of flourishing Bronze Age culture (c. 1580-1230 B.C.).
II. A period of collapse (c. 1230-1100 B.C.).

I. The period c. 1580-1200 B.C. marks the high summer of Bronze Age civilization throughout the Near East and Eastern Mediterranean. Mycenaean Culture was only one of a number of brilliant civilizations which were often closely enmeshed by political, military, cultural and economic ties. Such interrelations are rarely difficult to detect but it is frequently impossible to establish, when only the last two categories are involved, whether they were of a direct or indirect nature. So it is with contact between Greeks and Egyptians, at least in the first 180 years of this age. It certainly existed but how far it was the result of Greeks going to Egypt or vice versa it is impossible to say. It is, in fact, not until the collapse of Crete, when the Late Bronze Age had run almost half its course, that the evidence becomes sufficient for us to say with confidence that Mycenaean Greeks were certainly visiting the Valley of the Nile.

At the end of L.M. II (c. 1400 B.C.) the ancient political and commercial
hegemony of Minos passed irrevocably to Mycenaean Greece. This development will have involved, amongst other things, the Mycenaean assumption of Cretan relations with Egypt and an examination of our information on that topic will, therefore, inevitably tell us much about the nature of this Greek involvement.

Relations between Crete and Egypt began during the Cretan Neolithic but certain evidence of the presence of Cretans in Egypt is not available until the New Kingdom. During that time small quantities of Minoan antiquities occur in the country and there is ample proof of strong Minoan artistic influence. Furthermore, in the New Kingdom for the first time we find the Egyptian word for Crete (Kftiw). That these data

3 The Marseilles Oinochoe of unknown provenance and L.M. Ib date (Evans, op. cit., II, p. 509; Pendlebury, op. cit., pl. XL, I); the Sedment alabastron of the same period (Petrie & Brunton, Sedment, II, London, 1924, pl. XLVIII, grave 137; Evans, op. cit., IV, p. 271); L.M. II sherd from El Amarna (Frankfort & Pendlebury, The City of Akhenaten, London, 1933, II, p. 110); the Gurob alabastron of early XVIIIth Dynasty date (Brunton & Engelbach, Gurob, London, 1927, pl. XIII, 4) and the L.M. Ib affinities of pottery from Anibah in Nubia (Evans, op. cit., IV, p. 267 ff.) virtually exhaust the material.
4 The flying gallop is probably Cretan (Evans, op. cit., I, p. 714). The griffin on the axe of King Aḥmose looks very Minoan (Evans, op. cit., I, pp. 710-12) as do the rocky outlines on the dagger of Queen Aḥḥotpe (Evans, op. cit., II, p. 361), S-scrolls (N. de G. Davies and Gardiner, Tomb of Amenemhét, London, 1915, pl. XXXII, c) etc. In general, vide Stevenson Smith (op. cit.) and Schachermeyr (op. cit.).
5 That this is the meaning of Kftiw is demonstrated beyond any reasonable doubt by Vercoutter (Essai, p. 93 ff.). The one alleged pre-New Kingdom example of the word (Admonitions 3, 8-9) is suspect. Since the context of this work is First Intermediate Period, V. (L’Égypte, p. 42 ff.) regards the word as evidence of contact at that period. This will not do. The manuscript dates to the XIXth Dynasty and V. (op.