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Résumé

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Résumé. À côté des produits de luxe fabriqués au Levant dans un style international transrégional, il existait au Bronze Récent un goût très marqué pour des objets de type explicitement égyptien. Un groupe de bols en faïence met bien ce caractère en évidence. On s'attachera ici à leur remarquable concentration à Chypre, au symbolisme hathorique et à son rapport au commerce du cuivre.

Studies of inter-cultural relations between courtly societies of the Late Bronze Age in the Ancient Near East and East Mediterranean frequently stress the role of luxuries. The proliferation of exotics, processes of emulation and the emergence of a trans-regional artistic style characterised by bland hybridisation are some of the characteristics of the period.¹ Of course, the intensification of interaction was much more complex with several contemporary agendas for accessing luxuries from distant locations and even for creating exotic-looking goods locally by the receipt of foreign specialists.² Some of these agendas seem to have co-existed in striking contradiction to each other. For example, participation in high status international networks was signalled by possession of elaborately decorated, precious goods that, as Feldman argues, deliberately avoided national identifiers.³ In contrast, the same East Mediterranean patrons also sought to create or obtain works that clearly associated their owners with Egyptian ideologies and artistic traditions.

The latter aim has a far older pedigree than the emergence of an international artistic koiné in the Late Bronze Age, with good examples at Byblos and Ebla in the 3rd millennium

1. E.g. E. Cline, D. Harris-Cline, *The Aegean and the Orient in the Second Millennium-Proceedings of the 5th Anniversary Symposium*, 1998, Liège.

2. E.g. Reheren *et al.* 2001, p. 227; P.R.S. Moorey, "The mobility of artisans and opportunities for technology transfer between Western Asia and Egypt in the Late Bronze Age", in A.J. Shortland (ed.), *The Social Context of Technological Change. Egypt and the Near East, 1650–1550 BC*, Oxford, 2001, p. 1–14.

3. Feldman 2006.

BC.⁴ It could be argued that this orientation went beyond Helms' notion of political legitimation and aggrandizement through identification with a perceived superior foreign political ideology and embraced a broad spectrum of Egyptian ways of doing things.⁵ In other words it was a cultural as well as a socio-political process. This paper seeks to explore one of the manifestations of this pervasive feature of Levantine societies towards the end of the Late Bronze Age.

The adoption of Egyptian motifs, conventions, deities and rituals is evident in a range of material and textual evidence. For example, we can see appropriations throughout the Levant in the depiction of local worthies with high-ranking Egyptian ladies.⁶ But they are not just stylistic borrowings since the compositions realistically invoke Egyptian drinking rituals in designer Egyptian settings. We can assume these were Egyptian-type rituals conducted by knowledgeable actors. In a textual instance, the king of Ugarit requests an Egyptian sculptor to make a statue of Merneptah that was to be placed in the Temple of Ba'al.⁷ No doubt the sculptor was desired in order to fashion the work in the correct Egyptian manner. Nor did the minor arts escape this goal of co-option. The same correspondence from Ugarit lists a request for carpenters from Egypt. Pro-active Egyptian strategies probably matched these Levantine consumer-led initiatives. This is evident from the sword bearing Merneptah's cartouche at Ugarit, since it is likely that pharaoh's cartouche was only executed in Egyptian royal workshops.⁸ That Egypt was also engaged in low-level cultural diplomacy is clear from the fact that it was prepared to transmit a batch of 300 faience (artificial lapis lazuli) tiles to Ugarit, presumably as inlays in furniture or the like.⁹ Perhaps they were made for export at Qantir-Piramesses, a contemporary centre for faience tile-making, ideally located for Mediterranean shipping.¹⁰ The Levantine artefact record also demonstrates Egyptian impact at sub-elite level. Beads, amulets, scarabs and other Egyptian-like small objects abound in mid and low status contexts, especially in the 14th-12th centuries BC.¹¹

4. M. Saghih, *Byblos in the third millennium BC: A reconstruction of the stratigraphy and a study of the cultural connections*, Warminster, 1983, p. 104-106; G. Scandone-Matthiae, "Les Relations entre Ébla et l'Égypte au III^e et au II^e Millénaire av. J.-C.", in H. Waetzoldt, H. Hauptmann (eds.), *Wirtschaft und Gesellschaft von Ebla: Akten der Internationalen Tagung Heidelberg, 4.-7. November 1986*, Heidelberg, 1988, p. 67-73.

5. M. Helms, *Ulysses' Sail: An Ethnographic Odyssey of Power, Knowledge, and Geographic Distance*, Princeton, 1988.

6. M. Feldman, "Ambiguous identities: The 'marriage' vase of Niqmaddu II and the elusive Egyptian princess", *JMA* 15, 2002, p. 75-99.

7. Lackenbacher 1995, p. 78-80

8. C. F.-A. Schaeffer, *Ugaritica III*, 1956, Paris, p. 169-178.

9. Lackenbacher 1995, p. 80.

10. W. Hayes, *Glazed tiles from a palace of Ramesses II at Kantir*, 1937, New York.

11 E.g. Higginbotham 2000; Jacobsson 1994.

There could be several reasons for this intensification of Aegyptiaca then. One is taphonomic. Many sites were destroyed and / or abandoned at the end of the Late Bronze Age, so ease of access by excavation means our sample-size is inflated for that period. We can see the resulting skew in many ways. For example, there is a revealing chronological mismatch in the evidence for Feldman's international artistic koiné. Textual evidence for the koiné comes mainly from the 14th century Amarna Period, whereas there is an explosion in objects of that style in 13th-early 12th century contexts.¹² Another reason may be political. Egypt's resurgent empire in the 19th and 20th Dynasties was accompanied by its heightened cultural influence in the Levant. While most obvious in her southern Levantine territories, it extended to more northern parts of the Levant, especially in the course of the 13th century as Hittite power weakened.¹³ Ugarit then showed extreme deference to the irradiating cultural power of Egypt in the way correspondents elaborated courtesy titles.¹⁴ A third, destabilising factor may be as, if not more, significant.

Few leaders must have had the prescience to note the irony in developments that saw 19th Dynasty Egypt assert its control over its erstwhile Asiatic possessions at the same time as palatial systems, including that of Egypt, were ineluctably losing control of their powers. This devolutionary trajectory is evident in numerous regions around the East Mediterranean basin, but for our purposes notice of three will suffice. The first is apparent in texts from Ugarit. Liverani and others have shown how high status groups there achieved greater independence from palace subordination during the 13th century. This is especially clear in the realms of taxation and other obligations amongst the classes of prefects, *tamkaru* and *maryannu*.¹⁵ A second case where similar decentralising pressures also became accentuated exists in Egypt. In describing the growth of personal economic transactions and eventually unfettered private demand, Kemp notes how these trajectories led to "the crumbling fabric of late New Kingdom society".¹⁶ Helck specifically ascribes this evolution to the loss of central palatial domination in post-Amarna times, and the ensuing emergence of independent temple economies and Asiatic merchants trading freely in Egypt.¹⁷ The third region is less restricted in scope since it concerns coastal navigation, a domain inherently more difficult to regulate and one that involved free-wheeling sea-going venturers. A. and S. Sherratt have done much to elucidate the manner in which

12. Feldman 2006, p. 143.

13. Higginbotham 2000; J. Lagarce, E. Lagarce, "Le chantier de la maison aux albâtres", *Syria* 51, 1974, p. 5-25; J. Weinstein, "The Egyptian Empire in Palestine: a Reassessment", *BASOR* 241, 1981, p. 1-28.

14. I. Singer, "New evidence on the end of the Hittite Empire", in E. Oren (ed.), *The Sea Peoples and their world: a reassessment*, 2000, Philadelphia, p. 22.

15. M. Liverani, "Le royaume d'Ougarit", in M. Yon, M. Sznycer, P. Bordreuil (eds.), *Le pays d'Ougarit autour de 1200 av. J.-C. Ras Shamra-Ougarit XI*. Paris, 1995, p. 53 ; Monroe 2000.

16. B. Kemp, *Ancient Egypt: Anatomy of a Civilization*, London, 1989, p. 242.

17. Helck 1987.

maritime trading communities in the East Mediterranean now outflanked centralized direction of economic systems on which much power was based.¹⁸ Such centrifugal trends in these three regions comprised widespread, interacting pressures on tight state control. How did they contribute to the intensification of Aegyptiaca ?

We see that the 13th century was a time of major socio-political structural transformations and growing factionalism in the Levantine basin in which segments of society negotiated new roles. In this re-orientation, status-conscious sectors deployed wealth items to alter social and political alignments, so leading to the more widespread occurrence of commodities widely recognized as politically charged.¹⁹ This centrifugal re-alignment helps to account for the proliferation of what were perforce becoming the less exclusive works of the international koiné, let alone Egyptian-related works, in non-royal contexts.²⁰ In a similar vein, Monroe argues that “city-states and kingdoms increasingly lost controlled access to copper and prestige goods that they depended on for legitimacy and military security”, but perhaps it was also the old order within those polities that additionally lost protected rights to such goods.²¹ The transformation represents a broad shift of access to symbolic and material resources that structured the discourse of power and inequality. By focusing here on the spatial distribution of certain Egyptian faience vessels in the Levant at this time, I wish to evaluate one instance of this contestation of hegemonic ideologies, while stressing the historical contingency of material culture patterning.²²

New Kingdom faience bowls

Late Bronze Age faience is too diverse to treat in a unitary manner. The resulting confusion of such an approach is evident in references to its production and consumption. Some assert royal monopolies in western Asia and Egypt,²³ others widely available, local production in Egypt.²⁴ Then there are those who believe it was produced as value-added goods for sub-elites, occurring in tombs of second-tier functionaries²⁵ and, alternatively,

18. Sherratt, Sherratt 1998, p. 339-340.

19. Cf. E. Brumfiel, “The politics of high culture: issues of worth and rank”, in J. Richards, M. Van Buren, *Order, legitimacy, and wealth in ancient states*, Cambridge, 2000, p. 131-139.

20. Compare the focus of these objects in royal contexts early in the LBA with examples from the later periods in the port of Minet el-Beidha and at Kition, Feldman 2006, p. 142-144. Contexts of many luxuries regarded as the insignia of an established exclusive class at this time may rather signify the creation of new, broader group.

21. Monroe 2000, p. 363.

22. Cf. Sherratt, Sherratt, 1998, p. 341; Monroe 2000, p. 361-364.

23. E.g. Feldman 2006, p. 118.

24. E.g. Shortland *et al.* 2001.

25. Keswani 1989, p. 67; S. Sherratt, “Commerce, iron and ideology: Metallurgical innovation in 12th-11th century Cyprus”, in V. Karageorghis (ed.), *Proceedings of the International Symposium Cyprus in the 11th Century B.C.*, Nicosia, 1994, p. 59-107.

manufacture as high value restricted precocities in the international artistic koiné.²⁶ In fact, faiences can occur in contexts as diverse as royal tombs and ubiquitously in common domestic contexts.²⁷ Recently, Shortland *et al.* argued that faience at Amarna was widely known and manufactured because of its ubiquity when compared to the rarity of glass.²⁸ In general, that may be, but here too we need to be cautious of a global prescription. Only 2.8 % of the faience at Amarna comes from vessels (in contrast to 14.5 % of the glass from vessels), suggesting different parameters within the domains of production and consumption of faience objects. A unitary re-construction of faience production systems as well as the often implied low value of all of its works seems unwarranted by these statistics. The synthetic material therefore had many roles and our assessment of its value must be culture specific, context dependent and related to execution complexity.

Stylistically, some faience containers, like several from Kition with their lively lion and bull hunts, and static, heraldic iconography, are luxury materials epitomising the international artistic koiné that eschewed national traits.²⁹ As a contrast, I want to consider the numerous contemporary faience bowls found in the Levant and Egypt that were exclusively decorated with unambiguous Egyptian imagery. They shed a different light on the complexities involved in the production and consumption of luxuries in the world of the Late Bronze Age. These are blue-glazed “common” bowls, a monochrome type of Egyptian faience adorned with a variety of brown-black line-drawn compositions on brilliant sky blue backgrounds. Ornate prestige items, involving several production steps unnecessary for faience beads and amulets, they occur throughout the Levant in 12th-14th century contexts.³⁰

With their vivid internal scenes of marshscapes, artificial pond surrounded by fish and emerging water plants, *tilapia* fish, pond weeds, lotus flowers, and humans and animals engaged in varied activities, these bowls have a visual impact that clearly conveys essential Egyptian concepts, myths, ideology, religious customs and technical expertise. Just as we are struck by the shimmering quality of the well-preserved examples, early Levantines were very likely awed by the dazzling blue glazes of the bowls as well as by their perceived magical properties. Virtually all other Egyptian-type faience containers in the Levant are closed vessels, hence the bowls with their novel iconographies were procured for their own sakes, not contents. As just mentioned, other contemporary faience

26. Feldman 2006, p. 41-42, 141.

27. Strauß 1974, p. 87; James, McGovern, 1993, p. 124-163.

28. Shortland *et al.* 2001.

29. Feldman 2006, p. 41-43.

30. For further criteria that distinguish the “common” type of bowl, and references to Levantine examples, see Peltenburg 1986: 155-161; and “East Mediterranean Faience: Changing Patterns of Production and Exchange at the End of the 2nd millennium BC”, in E.A. Braun-Holzinger and H. Matthäus (eds.), *Die nahöstlichen Kulturen und Griechenland an der Wende vom 2. zum 1. Jahrtausend v. Chr. Kontinuität und Wandel von Strukturen und Mechanismen kultureller Interaktion*, Möhnesee, 2002, p. 75-108.

vessels were produced in a hybrid style, so it is significant that all these bowls display unequivocal Egyptian compositions. They furnish us with other perspectives on the complexities that attended the circulation of luxuries in the world of the Late Bronze Age. With the exception of a few examples, all belong to the post-Amarna and the 19th-20th Dynasties, broadly contemporary with LH IIIB pottery.

Spatial patterning of Egyptian faience bowls in the Levant

These visually expressive artefacts evoked a complex array of Egyptian symbolism that affected the identities of people who used them. But before considering their impact, we need to distinguish between two, quite disparate groups of people. The nearly 200 New Kingdom bowls from the Levant have been recovered from two broadly, but fundamentally different contexts of use: Egyptian imperial centres and indigenous polities. In assessing their reception by Asiatics abroad, we need to omit material from the provincial administrative garrison at Beth Shan and the temple dedicated to Hathor at the official Egyptian mining station of Timna.³¹ While it is conceivable, even probable, that some local people used the faiences there, the contexts are Egyptian. Higginbotham similarly excludes material from these special situations when evaluating elite emulation in the southern Levant.³² What is striking of the remaining c. 145 bowls from indigenous contexts in the Levant is their spatial patterning.

Figure 1 shows an exceptional concentration of these bowls on the island of Cyprus, and that excludes an additional nine unprovenanced bowls allegedly found there. The bowls have been described on numerous occasions.³³ Outside Egypt and its imperial Asiatic outposts, the coastal cities of Enkomi and Kition, and Megiddo in Palestine, have yielded the most examples. Of course, every distribution map is out-dated even before publication, but *Figure 1* is based on many decades of fieldwork and hence it has some claim to be representative. It could be argued that the Syro-Lebanese coast where there are no examples has not been as intensively investigated as Cyprus and the southern Levant, but the recent excavations at faience-rich Tell Kazel has not altered the overall picture.³⁴ It is also significant that Ugarit has yielded only 11 bowls, few of which belong to the 'common' type considered here (see below), whereas Enkomi and Kition have produced

31. James, McGovern, 1993, p. 124-163 ; Schulman 1988.

32. Higginbotham 2000, p. 127-128.

33. Especially in Lagarce, Lagarce 1986, p. 143-6; Peltenburg 1986, p. 155-61; and Jacobsson 1994, p. 33-42. Note that in all regions of the Levant and Cyprus, where doubt exists about the ascription of the few bowls to the lotus or the common type (below), they are treated as common.

34. I am grateful to Valérie Matoïan for confirming the absence of Egyptian/ising bowls at Tell Kazel (pers. comm.). See L. Badre, E. Gubel, "Tell Kazel (Syria): Excavations of the AUB Museum, 1993-1998. Third Preliminary Report", *Berytus* 44, 2000, Figs. 10 a-e, 12 I, j, 27 d, e for the impressive range of LB Asiatic faiences.

14 and 16 examples respectively of this type.³⁵ Almost all of the bowls from Ugarit were found in the tombs of merchant families and traders in its port, Minet el-Beidha, and not in the residential quarters of the city where “men of the king” lived and were buried.³⁶ In other words, these valuable goods seem to have circulated outside palace domains. Moreover, it seems quite unlikely that Ugarit was a re-distributive centre that supplied the bowls on Cyprus.

From their spatial patterning we may infer that the faïences arrived on the island by way of directional rather than down-the-line exchange via the mainland and that this insular market was targeted for specific economic, political and social reasons, regardless of proximity. With some 70 bowls, the Cypriot record stands in sharp contrast to that of Ugarit, including its port, which has yielded only three or four examples, and to the southern Levant, which only has some 45 examples from indigenous centres, although it borders Egypt.³⁷ How can we account for the anomalous concentration in Cyprus? To begin to do so, we need to assess more closely the imagery and contexts of these open forms.

Hathoric imagery

Faïence bowls in Egypt are often described in a number of ways, as marsh bowls, or wine bowls or Nunschale.³⁸ They are especially popular as ritual items in the temples to the Egyptian goddess Hathor at Serabit el-Khadem, Deir el-Bahri, Faras and Timna³⁹. Apart from royal name bowls, the only deity mentioned on them is Hathor or Bastet, with whom she is identified⁴⁰. In their study of decorative schemes inside the bowls from Cyprus, Lagarce and Lagarce also emphasize the constant Hathoric imagery, while

35. For many examples, see Jacobsson 1994, p. 36-42.

36. V. Matoïan, *Ras Shamra-Ougarit (Syrie) et la production des matières vitreuses au Proche orient au II^e millénaire avant Jésus-Christ*, Unpublished PhD thesis, Université de Paris I, 2000, vol. IIA, p. 172-175, Pls. 40-41, 87; nos. are 17650, 17652, 17653 (?) and probably 17653 and 17657 are common bowls.

37. The total number of common bowls from Megiddo and Gezer is uncertain. In the case of Megiddo, much depends on the actual number found as heirlooms or antiques in the German Brandschicht IV. Three are attributed to the New Kingdom here, together with several unpublished examples from Level VIIA, Locus 1787 from the American excavations. The fragmentary condition and poor early publication of some 6 possible examples from Gezer makes for difficulties, but there should be between 5 and 11 bowls represented. It may be pointed out that total numbers in Cyprus and Palestine are about even (53 and 49), but that the inclusion of Beth Shan would significantly alter the balance.

38. Pinch 1993, p. 308-15; Rogers 1948; Schulman 1988, p. 129; Strauß 1974.

39. See respectively W. Petrie, C. Currelly, *Researches in Sinai*, London, 1906, p. 141; E. Naville, H. Hall *The XIth Dynasty Temple at Deir el-Bahari III*, London, 1913, p. 13; F. Griffith, “Oxford Excavations in Nubia”, *AnnLiv* 8, 1921, p. 86; Schulman 1988.

40. Milward 1982.

Caubet relates their frequency in tombs to Hathoric and associated symbolism.⁴¹ Both colour and iconography are consistent with her worship. Her title “Lady of Mefkat” is translated as “Lady of Turquoise”, the main colour of these bowls. Other associations also exist for the colour.⁴²

Major recurrent scenes are thematically affiliated with Hathor.⁴³ *Marshscapes* serve as typical backgrounds and, as in the case of Hathor, they are also associated with fecundity, birth and rebirth. Cows and other animals in marshscapes belong to this genre. Hathor was sometimes known as the Great Wild Cow, and this is the aspect evoked in the charging animals on virtually identical bowls from Egypt and Cyprus (*Fig. 2a, b*). Backgrounds can be abbreviated to papyrus clusters which were sacred to Hathor because papyrus formed the natural setting in which the goddess chose to manifest herself. The *artificial pond surrounded by fish and emerging water plants* symbolizes the relationship of these concepts. The fish is the *tilapia Nilotica* and one or more of them are frequently shown with lotus buds stemming from their mouths (*Fig. 3a, b*). It has the peculiar habit of guard its young in its mouth, so that when they come and go it seems like spontaneous regeneration. Here the complementary symbolism of rebirth and regeneration is clearest, one that accords with the Hathoric title “Mistress of Life”. Similarly, the *blue lotus* opening and closing in its diurnal cycle signifies renewal of life (*Fig. 4a, b*). In Egypt, cow-eared Hathor is typically presented and worshipped as a cow, usually in a marsh when a landscape element is included. In the bowls this is recalled by the popular marshscapes mentioned above and by individuals *punting cows on skiffs* in the marshes. The theme of *gazelle in marsh setting* evokes the story of Hathor applying the milk of the gazelle to heal Horus.⁴⁴ These motifs – *cow in marshscape, marshscapes, lotus flowers, pond weeds, fish, birds, water* – are linked to the myth of Hathor in Chemmis and the emergence of the divine child from the Nun, the chaotic primordial waters.⁴⁵

The association of other compositions with multi-faceted Hathor is less certain. Bowls with *female musicians* sometimes shown in arbors with papyri could be related to Hathor whose link with music is indicated by her representations on loop sistra and naos sistra (*Fig. 5a, b*).⁴⁶ However, it was not a defining characteristic, and so other associations are possible. *Wadjat* eyes on bowls are also uncertain given their ubiquity, but they are found singly or in pairs as votives and on eye plaques at Hathor’s shrine at Deir el Bahri and they occur frequently at the Hathor shrines of Serabit el-Khadem, Gebel Zeit and Mirgissa.⁴⁷ The notion that they can be related to the story of Hathor restoring the sight of Horus

41. Lagarce, Lagarce 1986, p. 143-144 ; Caubet 2005, 94.

42. Strauß 1974; cf. Caubet 2005, p. 94.

43. See in general Pinch 1993, p. 308-315.

44. A. Gardiner, *Late-Egyptian stories*, Brussels, 1932, p. 51.

45. Strauß 1974.

46. Givon 1978, p. 68-72 ; Pinch 1993, p 159.

47. Pinch 1993, p 254-256.

with milk may not be so fanciful given the alleged discovery of milk in a bowl at Deir el-Medinah.⁴⁸ On the bowls the eyes occur with *nefer* signs unlike any from her temples in Egypt. Of all the examples mentioned here, this is the only combination that does not seem to have a faience parallel within Egypt. But the arrangement was known there since it occurs exactly as on the faiences with *nefer* and *wadjat* over a stylized basal water (?) motif on a stone vessel from Gurob Tomb 37, dated to Ramses II. Its absence amongst faiences is probably fortuitous.⁴⁹ In sum, there is general consensus that these scenic bowls were closely associated with the cult of Hathor.⁵⁰ For our enquiry, the substantive issue is why complex Hathoric imagery should have been so popular in Cyprus.

Hathor, guardian of copper mining

One of this composite goddess's many roles was protectress of mining operations and the acquisition of raw materials from abroad.⁵¹ Her epithet "Lady of Turquoise" stemmed from her role at Serabit el-Khadem and it was subsequently applied to Egyptian mining enterprises in general. This is clear from her divine association with Maghara, Wadi Kharit, Bir nasib and Timna where only copper was mined or smelted. Pinch argues that *mfk³t* was a general term for turquoise, copper ore, malachite or any blue-green mineral.⁵² So, the secure relationship between Hathor and copper leads us to consider further links in this chain of associations: copper – Cyprus – common bowls of faience.

Although references are patchy and of variable quality, Egyptians consistently mention Cyprus (= Alašia) and copper together during the 2nd millennium BC. The earliest reference to the island concerns Amenemhat's II raid c. 1900 BC which resulted in the transport of scrap and new copper from the island to Egypt.⁵³ Much later, the Amarna correspondence articulates the fame of Cypriot bulk copper in well-known detail.⁵⁴ There is little pertinent textual evidence from the time of these bowls following the Amarna Period. Alašia is the only producer of copper in the List of Minerals belonging to the reign of Ramses

48. B. Bruyère, *Rapport sur les Fouilles de Deir el Médinah 1933-34*. Fouilles de l'Institut français d'archéologie orientale du Caire 14, Cairo, 1937, p. 89-90.

49. G. Brunton, R. Engelbach, *Gurob*, London, 1927, 11, Pl. 30.33; Lagarce and Lagarce 1986, p. 144-146.

50. References above and Milward 1982, p. 141.

51. Givon 1978, p. 61-67.

52. Pinch 1993, p. 49.

53. H. Altenmüller, A. Moussa, "Die Inschrift Amenemhets II aus dem Ptah-Tempel vom Memphis", *Studien zur Altägyptischen Kultur* 18, 1991, 1-49; K. Kitchen, "Alas(h)i(y)a, (Irs) and Asiya (Isy) in Ancient Egyptian Sources", in R. Merrillies (ed.), *Egypt and Cyprus in Antiquity*. International Conference, Nicosia 3-6 April 2003, in press.

54. W. Moran, *The Amarna Letters*, London, 1992, p. 104-13, EA 33-40.

II, but the list is a poor historical source.⁵⁵ Nonetheless, Cypriot copper was probably imported into Egypt at this time according to lead isotope analysis of an oxhide ingot fragment from Qantir-Piramesses.⁵⁶ On another, functional level, the close relationship between faience and copper is also evident at Qantir-Piramesses where the whole vitreous materials industry was part of a copper-centred industrial complex.⁵⁷

Since Hathor was so closely identified with copper-mining, and her association with copper is clearly testified abroad in the Levant and the Sinai peninsula, the unusual concentration of her cultic equipment in copper-producing Cyprus is unlikely to be fortuitous. But if now, why not earlier in Amarna times when c. 30 tons of copper were shipped to Egypt in no more than 30 years, probably much less? To answer this requires us to consider the convergence of broader developments in both lands.

The nature of the link between Hathor, faience and Cypriot copper production

Some scholars infer a breakdown of central power on the island by the 13th century BC with evidence for the expansion of urbanism, construction of public monumental structures at diverse locations and regional metallurgical centres.⁵⁸ Inside Enkomi, pointers towards greater autonomy for sub-groups include the break-up of its 'fortress' into discrete, smaller units, and dispersal of copper production throughout the city.⁵⁹ Outside the city, a series of polities especially along the south coast seems to have gained more independent control of the export of copper. Although there is still a king of Alašia at the end of the 13th century BC, Kušmašuşa, and he was the superior to the king of Ugarit, the increased number and physical complexion of the towns of Cyprus indicate a greater degree of local autonomy, at least by this time. I have argued that without the existence of a palace-based society, the political structure of Cyprus was in any case never as highly centralised as in traditional Near Eastern systems, so this was a change in degree rather than kind.⁶⁰ It is in this scenario of more economically and politically devolved centres

55. K. Kitchen, *Ramesside inscriptions, translated and annotated, translations*, II, Oxford, 1996, p. 410.

56. Rehren *et al.* 2001, p. 230, referring to information from Z. Stos-Gale.

57. Rehren *et al.* 2001, p. 227. A similar association seems evident at Iron Age Qatna : M. Al-Maqdissi, M. Luciani, D. Morandi Bonacossi, M. Novák and P. Pfälzner (eds.), *Excavating Qatna I*, Damascus, 2002, p. 160-161.

58. E.g. J. Muhly, "The organisation of the copper industry in Late Bronze Age Cyprus", in E. Peltenburg (ed.), *Early Society in Cyprus*, Edinburgh, 1989, p. 298-314; A. B. Knapp, *The archaeology of Late Bronze Age Cypriot society: the study of settlement, survey and landscape*, Glasgow, 1997, p. 65-66.

59. S. Pickles, E. Peltenburg, "Metallurgy and the Bronze/Iron transition in the East Mediterranean and the Near East", *RDAC* 1998, 67-100.

60. E. Peltenburg, "King Kušmašuşa and the decentralised political structure of Late Bronze Age Cyprus", in G. Cadogan, M. Iacovou, K. Kopaka and J. Whitley (eds.), *Parallel Lives: Ancient Island Societies in Crete and Cyprus*, British School at Athens Studies, London, forthcoming.

that we see the appearance of Egyptian bowls in several sites in the LC IIC-III period: Kition, Hala Sultan Tekke, Klavdhia, Maroni, Kalavastos-Ayios Dhimitrios, Episkopi-Bamboula, Kouklia, Ayios Sozomenos, in the vicinity of Idalion and at Enkomi.

Prestige exotics like these faiences are often considered as general Orientalia that legitimate new elite authority in Cypriot LC secondary state formation processes, mainly through a wealth finance system.⁶¹ But given their late date within the LC period and their frequency at well-established Enkomi, it may be that the value of these bowls lay more specifically in the realms of commercial relations, influence, the perpetuation of entrepreneurial elites, and competitive display of “esoteric knowledge derived from interactions with distant partners”.⁶² Antoniadou points out how, by this time, imports had become widespread, islanders integrated exogenous objects into their own system of meanings and that our understanding of their role is best defined by contexts of use.⁶³ These contexts were quite varied. Half the 18 bowls from Kition were deposited as ritual equipment in the temple compound, whereas none comes from the shrines at Enkomi. Kition’s usage therefore is consistent with practices in Egypt and Palestine where the overwhelming number comes from temples, rather than with practices at Enkomi and Ugarit where deposition in tombs predominates.

The trajectory in Egypt is of a different character in that it concerns the evolution of the faience bowls. Up till now we have largely treated them as a single class, but in fact there is a highly significant typological development that can be related to their impressive influx on Cyprus.⁶⁴ Prior to the 19th Dynasty, the bowls were relatively thick-walled with ring or disc bases, carinated walls, flat rims, and with dark blue/violet or purple-black lined decoration which was also applied to depict external lotus designs, thus transforming the whole bowl into schematic, three dimensional renderings of the lotus blossom. This lotus bowl typically has on its interior the artificial pond and *tilapia* motifs. An additional type, the common bowl, appeared by the 19th Dynasty. It is usually smaller, deeper, with thinner walls curving up to plain, dotted rim without break, rounded base and dark brown line drawn decoration (see *Fig 5b*, section). Unlike the standard bowls, exteriors are plain, so its meaning has become divorced from the naturalistic lotus. The range of interior compositions expanded enormously on common bowls, with humans and animals largely replacing pond life. Internal decoration was no longer bound by the constraints of conventional Hathoric iconography, even though her symbolism remains paramount in common bowls. And it is this common type, not the lotus type, that occurs

61. Keswani 1989; Webb 2005; A. B. Knapp, “Orientalization and prehistoric Cyprus: the social life of oriental goods”, in C. Riva, N. Vella (eds.), *Debating Orientalization. Multidisciplinary approaches to change in the ancient Mediterranean*, London, 2006, p. 48-65.

62. P. Keswani, “Hierarchies, heterarchies, and urbanization processes: The view from Bronze Age Cyprus”, *JMA* 9, 1996, p. 238.

63. S. Antoniadou, “Common materials, different meanings: changes in Late Cypriot society”, in S. Antoniadou and A. Pace (eds.), *Mediterranean Crossroads*, Athens, 2007, p. 483-508.

64. For this typology see Rogers 1948; Milward 1982; Peltenburg 1986.

in Cyprus.⁶⁵ Significantly, common bowls are absent from Hathor sites in Egypt at Deir el-Bahri, as well as at Serabit el-Khadem and Timna.⁶⁶ Lotus bowls persist at those cult centres, so a significant typological development is associated with changes in function and consumption.

Pinch concludes that temple faïences such as lotus bowls were ritual vessels, not votives.⁶⁷ They may be regarded as officially sanctioned for temple usage since they were only manufactured in workshops at or for shrines, institutions embedded in the authority of the state. Common bowls circulated outside temples and may have been manufactured in devolved workshops. Nonetheless, they are frequently decorated with Hathoric themes. For example, an unprovenanced example from Cyprus shows a gazelle in marsh setting (see above).⁶⁸ While still conveying Hathoric symbolism, such motifs are but one component of an expanded repertoire of popular, scenic compositions. Bowl contexts change and they are now found more frequently in domestic, funerary and other contexts such as the burnt deposits at Gurob.⁶⁹ In these altered circumstances where corporate worship increasingly gave ground to personal piety it may well be that state faïence workers and overseers were supplementing their normal roles or becoming entirely independent.⁷⁰ Once the bowls began to circulate more freely in non-royal and non-temple spheres, they could be deployed for new agendas.

Taking these features together, there is a correlation between changes in the political landscape of Cyprus, the transformation of faïence-using customs in Egypt and the 13th century BC proliferation of Hathor-related faïence on Cyprus. As we noted above, underlying all these developments is the more widespread access to and use of luxury products in the East Mediterranean, a result of agents acting independently from palaces in the international political economy. Given the equation between the faïence bowls, Hathor and copper, what we may be seeing in their popularity on Cyprus is an awareness amongst financiers and others engaged in the copper industry of the benefits of invoking Hathor for the prosperity of copper mining operations. In other words, the significance of these shimmering exotics exceeded their undoubted role as status-affirming markers. Their proliferation suggests that islanders' social identities were modified as they absorbed the cultural traditions of Egyptian popular religion.

From an Egyptian perspective, it was meaningful and appropriate to furnish Hathor-related items to copper-producers. The provision of Cypriot trade partners with such

65. The two types are often treated as one. Strauß 1974: 23, n. 45 confusingly includes common bowls from Cyprus amongst her Nunschale.

66. Shrines at Faras, Mirgissa and perhaps Jebel Zeit yield faïence, but occupation is scarce or barely extends into the 19th Dynasty at these sites. Cf. Pinch 1993, p. 26-48, 71-77.

67. Pinch 1993, p. 360.

68. Jacobsson 1994, p. 38-9.198, Pls. 72, 95.198.

69. Petrie 1891, p 16-20.

70. Shortland *et al.* 2001, p. 155-156.

symbolic valuables had the multiple advantages of ensuring the fecundity of the Cypriot mines (clearly a perceived cause for concern given the depredations of Nergal mentioned in EA 35 of the Alasia letters) and constructing beneficial relations by expanding trade and increasing wealth. Ideologically, Egyptian gifts abroad were conceived as donations to Hathor, so they had not really left the Egyptian orbit.⁷¹ It is less likely that they were traded items from Egyptian temple ships that began to purchase goods abroad now according to Helck since, as we noted above, common bowl production had disengaged from temple control by the 19th Dynasty.⁷² Seen as tied to a more entrepreneurial copper trade between Cyprus and Egypt during the 13th century BC, Egyptian faience common bowls on Cyprus played an active role in fashioning cultural attitudes amongst Cypriot elites and were instrumental in forming and maintaining significant trade networks in a way that was denied to other parts of the Levant since, crucially, these lacked major productive copper sources.

The question of local production

As demonstrated by copies of Mycenaean pottery, seal transformations and the development of iron-working, Cypriot artisans were noted emulators and innovators.⁷³ so if the scenic bowls were so popular there, could at least some also have been manufactured locally? Are they another example of Susan Sherratt's "luxury import substitution", that is, value-added products under direct control of elites who therefore did not have to rely on long-distance exchange ?⁷⁴ Such a possibility would naturally diminish the exchange model sketched here, although it would reinforce the argument for a trend towards the appropriation of Egyptian customs, art and technology outside the palace in the course of the Late Bronze Age. Unfortunately, there is no clear-cut answer to the question.

Stylistic analysis has to take account of the possibility of movement of attached artisans, the fact that even in Egypt the popularity of the bowls led to quite rough creations that could easily be classed as derivative if found abroad, and alterations to faience fabric and

71. M. Liverani, *International Relations in the Ancient Near East, 1600-1100 BC*, Houndmills, 2001, p. 168.

72. Helck 1987.

73. E.g. J. Smith, "International style in Mediterranean Late Bronze Age seals", in N. Stampolides, V. Karageorghis (eds.), *ΠΛΟΕΣ... Interconnections in the Mediterranean 16th-6th c. BC. Proceedings of the international symposium held at Rethymnon, Crete September 29th-October 2nd 2002*, Athens, 2003, p. 291-304.

74. S. Sherratt, "Immigration and archaeology: some indirect reflections", in P. Åström (ed.), *Acta Cypria II. Acts of an international congress on Cypriote archaeology held in Göteborg on 22-24 August 1991*, Studies in Mediterranean Archaeology Pocket Book 120, Jonsered, 1992, p. 361-78. In general for attached artisans, see P. Peregrine, "Some political aspects of craft specialization", *WArch* 23, 1991, 1-11.

glazes wrought by hostile soil conditions in Mediterranean environments.⁷⁵ Adaptations to local preferences are often cited as evidence for devolved production. Even if patrons sought esoteric Egyptian-ness, misunderstandings and local features would eventually surface. Where Cypriot artisans are known to have copied Egyptian prototypes, as in Egyptianising cylinder seals and glass pomegranate vessels, the differences with originals are clearly discernible.⁷⁶

Based on these criteria, it is difficult to distinguish common bowls on Cyprus from parallels in Egypt. *Figures 2-5* juxtapose bowl interiors from Egypt (left) and Cyprus (right), and while identity is seldom evident, it should be remembered that quite varied execution characterizes common bowl designs in Egypt. It is inappropriate, therefore, to expect strict uniformity amongst common bowls within Egypt, let alone between Cyprus and Egypt. This variability does not apply to standard bowl production. If we broaden the question to consider other classes of monochrome faience vessels with brown/black line-drawn decoration, then there are hints of local manufacture or Egyptian production for an export market. They come chiefly from faience tripod dishes at Enkomi and other sites, a popular local shape in stone, but one lacking in the faience corpus of Egypt.⁷⁷ One even shows the typical Hathoric symbolism of cow in marshscape.⁷⁸ So some import-substitution of the bowls with similar scenes could have existed, although the absence of any local adaptations such as the helmeted warriors on the same kind of monochrome faiences at Mycenae, suggests that if it existed, it was restricted.⁷⁹ In such a case, faience-

75. Compare the pristine condition of *Fig. 5a* (admittedly early in the series of common bowls) with *Fig. 3b*, a well preserved bowl from Cyprus. Note that, because of frequent wear and devitrification, all figures of bowls except these two are shown with restored blue glazes approximating the typical 19th-20th Dynasty blues.

76. Peltenburg 1986, p. 152-155; Webb 2005. Raw glass may have been sent from Cyprus to Egypt, but as in the case of ivory, it may have been a circulated rather than locally produced raw material. See Z. Cochavi-Rainey, *The Alashia texts from the 14th and 13th century BCE. A textual and linguistic study*. Alter Orient und Altes Testament 289, Munster, 2003, p. 28.

77. See Peltenburg 1986, p. 159-60 for this argument. For stone tripods: H-G. Buchholz, "Steinerne Dreifusschalen des ägäischen kulturkreises und ihre Beziehungengum osten", *JDAI* 78, 1963, 1-77. Note that stone tripods from Ugarit have deep, not flat interiors: C. Elliott, "The ground stone industry", in M. Yon (ed.), *Arts et industries de la pierre. Ras Shamra-Ugarit VI*, Paris, 1991, p. 81-94, Fig. 7.3-7, 8.1-2, 20.13-4.

78. P. Dikaios, *Enkomi. Excavations 1948-1958*, Mainz am Rhein, 1969, p. 355, Pl. 200.17. Other possibly locally produced pieces include a common bowl with dancer on a raft (H-G. Buchholz, V. Karageorghis, *Prehistoric Greece and Cyprus*, London, 1973, 457.1679) and a plate with unusually large fish below skiff (A. Murray, et al. *Excavations in Cyprus*, London, 1900, 35, Fig. 63.1042). Apart from the motif, the plate shape and the device of steadying it with a low ring base made of an inlaid band of faience are stylistic and technical aberrations within the Egyptian repertoire.

79. E. Peltenburg, "Greeting gifts and luxury faience: a context for Orientalising trends in Late Mycenaean Greece", in N. Gale (ed.), *Bronze Age Trade in the Mediterranean*, Studies in Mediterranean Archaeology 90, Jonsered, 1991, p. 162-179.

workers imported the technology wholesale since the glaze recipes and body formation variants are different from acknowledged north Levantine faience vessel production.

Scientific analysis also raises more problems than it solves, due in part, one suspects, to the paucity of research in this field. Cowell's analyses of two common bowls from Hala Sultan Tekke and Klavdia in the British Museum showed a diagnostic indicator, barium, at the same levels as in analysed New Kingdom monochrome Egyptian vases.⁸⁰ It may be significant that cobalt and nickel levels distinguish the glazes in two non-Egyptian faiences from Enkomi. If the Egyptian-type vessels were being made locally, producers were using Egyptian glaze recipes and perhaps imported raw material. However, there are simply not enough analyses to form meaningful conclusions, a situation that also applies to relevant material from Ugarit.

Caubet and Kaczmarczyk showed that the ratio of manganese to iron was higher on bowls there than in Egypt, and that the presence of barium in the black glaze indicates another source for the manganese than used in Egypt.⁸¹ The analyses led them to the conclusion that local Egyptianising faience production existed at Ugarit. However, of the three bowls analysed, only one belongs to the common bowl type, a heavily restored example depicting the *wadjat* and *nefer* design discussed above.⁸² While further research is clearly required before scientific analyses can make unequivocal contributions to the issue of glaze and core recipes and perhaps sources of this monochrome faience vessel series in the northern Levant, it is worth recalling the contemporary situation at Beth Shan. There McGovern found that, although pendants and amulets were made locally, monochrome faience vessels, including common bowls, required much more expertise and had to be imported.⁸³

Comments

We have seen that it is possible through stylistic and spatial analysis to move beyond the treatment of preciosities as status markers and to consider the economic and cultural role of assimilated Egyptian goods in Late Bronze Age Cyprus. A maximalist interpretation suggests that the unprecedented popularity of faience bowls with Hathoric imagery led to a greater familiarity with and attachment to aspects of her cult and her many attributes. After all, these are display pieces cherished for their symbolism rather

80. M. Cowell, "Report on the examination of some Late Bronze Age faience vessels from Cyprus and Egypt", in E. Peltenburg, "Ramesside Egypt and Cyprus", in V. Karageorghis (ed.), *Acts of the International Archaeological Symposium "Cyprus between the Orient and the Occident"*, Nicosia, 1986, p. 173-174.

81. A. Caubet, A. Kaczmarczyk, "Bronze Age faience from Ras Shamra", in M. Bimson and I. Freestone (eds.), *Early Vitreous Materials*, British Museum Occasional Publications 56, London, 1987, p. 47-56.

82. A. Caubet (ed.), *Faïences et matières vitreuses de l'Orient ancien*, Paris, 2007, p. 58, 217, 211.

83. James, McGovern 1993, p. 159-163.

than closed containers valued for contents. This may account for their frequency in the temple at Kition where they may have been deployed by elites as part of a strategy of sacred legitimization of status.⁸⁴ Such an interpretation would support Caubet and Pic's argument that Hathor was amalgamated with local goddesses in Late Bronze Age Cyprus, although supporting evidence from a pendant and masks remains slim.⁸⁵ At a minimal level, the expanded imagery of the common bowl series transmitted esoteric symbolism embedded in Egypt's visual culture. After all, Hathor is not depicted on surviving bowls from Cyprus and while the scenes might have been self-evidently Hathoric to Egyptian donors, the association may have been more elusive to Cypriots. Nonetheless, the imagery is a coherent and sophisticated projection of the central themes of regeneration and transformation, and these played an active role in the creation of identity, social values and relations in LC Cyprus. As Annie Caubet has shown, it was not until the Iron Age that Hathoric cults on the island were unambiguously established, even if the trend towards syncretism began in the Late Bronze Age.⁸⁶ In other words, the later 2nd millennium BC was a phase in which a predisposition to Egyptian goods and customs was accommodated within changing local systems of meanings, and only later was there a more unequivocal adoption of Egyptian cults. The adaptive phase of the Late Bronze Age is also evident in the iconography and ideology of other imported high value Egypt goods such as the magnificent gold necklace from Enkomi Br T. 93 and the Horemhab papyriform staff head from Hala Sultan Tekke.⁸⁷

On a more specific level, we have related the disproportionately high number of faience common bowls in Cyprus to the copper trade.⁸⁸ Their widespread occurrence in numerous communities is symptomatic of the ability of diverse sections of the population to obtain exotics, in contrast to the more restrictive palace-based societies of the mainland. Moreover, their diffuse coastal distribution is inconsistent with central dissemination from a single royal source.

Cyprus was at the forefront of the structural changes that led to the nemesis of palace-centred Late Bronze Age economies. Interpreted as entrepreneurial trade items, the faiences show one way in which this complex process developed. It was a co-evolutionary process, in that the appearance of these luxuries in Cypriot polities was only made possible by socio-economic shifts within Egypt towards the liberalization of hitherto state / temple-controlled goods. The scenic bowls therefore played an active

84. A.B. Knapp, *Copper production and divine protection: archaeology, ideology and social complexity on Bronze Age Cyprus*, Studies in Mediterranean Archaeology Pocket-book 42, Göteborg, 1986.

85. Caubet, Pic 1982.

86. Caubet, Pic 1982; A. Caubet, "Héracles ou Hathor", *Revue du Louvre*, 1973, 1-6.

87. Lagarce, Lagarce 1986, Pl. 21.1; Peltenburg 1986: 165-166.

88. Rather than unguents, oils or opium since Cypriot juglet imports to Egypt decline at this time.

role on several levels: they promoted devolved trade, consolidated exchange alliances, enhanced recipients' status, undercut centralised systems and expanded awareness and desirability of magical Egyptian goods and customs amongst Cypriot elites of the Late Bronze Age.

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Figure 2a original photograph © 2008 Museum of Fine Arts, Boston.

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NOTE ON COLOUR FIGURES

Adverse soil conditions have severely leached the original glaze colours on most bowls. In order to invoke their original impact, I have restored all except *Fig. 3b*, which is shown in its current state. This is justifiable since the original hue and nuance of blues occur in patches of residual intact glaze, or on parallels. The parallels comprise common bowls, not lotus bowls where blues approximate more closely to *Fig. 5a*, an exception within the common series.

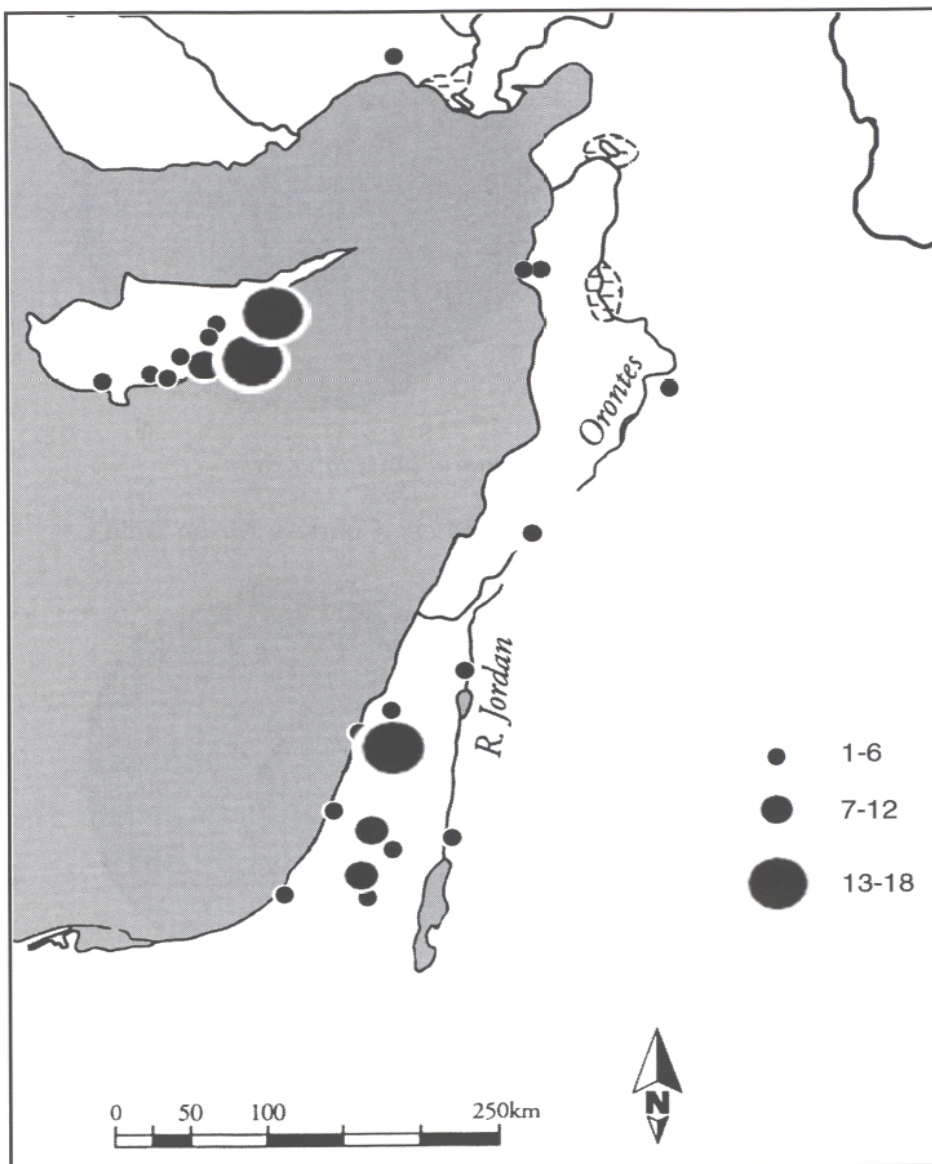


Figure 1. Distribution of faience common bowls in Levantine indigenous sites, 14th-12th centuries BC.

Illustration non autorisée à la diffusion

Figure 2. Common bowls with central medallion of wild cow in marshscape.

a) from Egypt, Diam. 16.2 cm. Boston Museum of fine Arts, 1979.204.

b) from the vicinity of Idalion, Diam. 13.6 cm. After Cesnola 1903, Pl. 108.5.



Figure 3. The tilapia Nilotica motif on common bowl interiors.
 a) from Gurob. After drawing in Loat 1905, Pl. 4.O72;
 b) from Kalavassos-Ayios Dhimitrios, Tomb 13, Diam. 14 cm. Courtesy Alison Todd.



Figure 4. Bordered lotus blossom filling entire interior of common bowls.
 a) from Gurob, Diam. 13.4 cm. After drawing in Petrie 1891, Pl. 17.44;
 b) from Klavdia, Diam. 9.5 cm., courtesy Trustees of the British Museum.



Figure 5. Seated female musicians with plants.
 a) from Egypt, Diam. 14 cm. Courtesy P.M. M.G. Akkermans, Rijksmuseum van Oudheden, Leiden ;
 b) from Maroni, drawing, Diam. 13.8 cm. Courtesy Trustees of the British Museum
 (Note: section shows distinct layer of Variant A faience at rim).