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edited by

Massimiliano S. Pinarello, Justin Yoo, Jason Lundock
and Carl Walsh

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BASHA, Walaa Aboubakr (University of Manchester) Stable Isotope Analysis of Soft Tissue from Kulubnarti (Sudanese Nubia).

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BRAUN, Christopher (Warburg Institute) Discovering Egypt's Pre Islamic Past: Ancient Egypt's Material Culture Mirrored in Medieval Arabic Treasure Hunter Manuals.

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STONER, Jo (University of Kent) The Cultural Life of Monastic Baskets in Late Antique Egypt.

STÖVESAND, Katharina (University College London/University of Cologne) Ancient Egyptian Coffins as Communicative Media for Religious Visual Strategies: Lower and Middle Egyptian Coffins of the Late and Ptolemaic Periods.

TAKENOUCHI, Keita (Waseda University) Some Remarks on the Distribution of Stone Production in Predynastic Egypt: A View from the Analysis of Mudstone Artefacts.

TITZ, Pavel and MUSIL, Jiri (Charles University in Prague) El-Hayz Project: Current State of Knowledge on the Egyptian Western Desert Oasis.

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WALSH, Carl (University College London) Establishing the Proper Etiquette: Diplomacy and the Transmission of Court Lifestyles between Egypt and Kerma during the Middle Bronze Age.

WYATT, John (Independent) Bird Hieroglyphs: An Ornithologist's Viewpoint on their Origin and Subsequent Depiction.

YOO, Justin (King's College London) Mercenaries, Merchants, Migrants and Marauders: Greeks in Late and Persian Period Egypt.

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MCGUINESS, Kevin (Brock University) Drag Queen: the Liminal Status of the Bust of Queen Nefertiti.

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SIFFERT, Uta (University of Vienna) From Object to Icon: Visual Reflections on and the Designations of Material Culture in the Reliefs and Paintings of Middle Kingdom Tombs.

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UGOLINI, Federico (King's College London) Upper Adriatic and Egypt in the Roman Empire: Ports and Trade.

WASMUTH, Melanie (University of Basel) Being 'Foreign' in an Ancient Multi-cultural Society: the case of the Egyptians in Early Iron Age Mesopotamia.

WATT, Kimberly (University of Cambridge) Does Form Follow Function? What Functions can be Deduced from a Floor Plan?

ZERMANI, Isabel (University of North Carolina at Wilmington) Sharing the Story: Creating a Dialogue with the Past and Present Community.

Keftiu and Griffins: An Exploration of the Liminal in the Egyptian Worldview

Beth Ann Judas

Introduction

Bronze Age Aegean (Keftiu)-Egyptian relations are an element of Egypt's political interactions from the 12th dynasty until at least the 20th dynasty (Fig. 10.1). The Keftiu, the Egyptian term for the Bronze Age Aegeans, are represented in the New Kingdom archaeological record in various ways: in Egyptian texts, imported ceramics, tomb paintings of the Theban elite and in the Aegean frescoes at Tell el Dab'a.

The evolution of the relationship between the early 18th dynasty Egyptians and the early Late Bronze Age Aegeans is demonstrated iconographically by the Egyptian use of the Aegean-type griffin. For both the Egyptians and the Aegeans, the beast is comprised of a leonine body with the head and wings of a raptor. The Egyptian griffin is falcon headed (Bisi 1965; Eggebrecht 1977, cols. 895–896; Wyatt 2009), while the Aegean version is eagle headed, sometimes with the beak of a vulture (Delplace 1967; Morgan 1988, 49). The griffin is a mythical animal that is part of both the Bronze Age Egyptian and Aegean iconographic corpora. It inhabits the space between the known and unknown, such as the world between the living and the dead and is a creature that is a symbol of liminality. Additionally, the Egyptians recognized that the Aegeans had their own griffin, which had similar associations with the sacred world.

The Aegean-style griffin appears in Egypt at the very start of the 18th dynasty, when Egypt began empire building and reinforced its earlier Middle Kingdom ties with the early Late Bronze Age Minoans. The reign of Ahmose roughly corresponds with the LM IA period in Crete, which represented the height of Minoan influence in the Aegean (Fig. 10.1). The early 18th dynasty's representations of the Aegean-style griffin in Egypt are clearly associated with the Keftiu (the Minoans at this time). The ancient Egyptians viewed them as a people who, situated at the edge of the known world, inhabited the liminal space between the known and the unknown (Judas 2013). This identification between the Aegean-style griffin and the Keftiu fades after the early 18th dynasty as the political situation in the Aegean changes with the waning influence of the Minoans and the rise of the Mycenaeans.

Mainland Greece, Crete, and Cyclades	Egypt
LH I LM IA	Hyksos Period to Early 18th Dynasty
LH IIA LM IB	Early 18th Dynasty to Thutmose III
LH IIB LM II	Thutmose III (late) to Thutmose IV
LH IIIA1 LM IIIA1	Amenhotep III
LH IIIA2 LM IIIA2	Amenhotep III to Akhenaten
LH IIIB LM IIIB	Akhenaten/Tutankhamun to Tausret
LH IIIC LM IIIC LH IIIC late	Setnakht/Ramesses III to Ramesses X
Submycenaean Subminoan	Ramesses XI Third Intermediate Period
Protogeometric	Third Intermediate Period

LH = Late Helladic (Mainland Greece) LM = Late Minoan (Crete)

Figure 10.1. Comparative Chronologies for the Bronze Age Aegean and Egypt © B. A. Judas.

Identification of the Keftiu

Although the Keftiu are mentioned in earlier Middle Kingdom texts (Cline 1994, A.7–8, 108; A.9–10, 109) and Middle Minoan Kamares ware is found at Middle Kingdom sites (Kemp and Merrillees, 1980; Warren and Hankey, 1989), depictions of Keftiu only first appear in the early 18th dynasty. These are found in paintings of a select number of Theban tombs belonging to high officials of Hatshepsut, Thutmose III, and Amenhotep II (Cline 1994; Strange 1980; Vercoutter 1956; Wachsmann 1987). The Keftiu are shown with other foreigners – Nubians, Asiatics and Puntites – who visit the royal court to present tribute or, in the case of the Keftiu (who are not conquered by Egypt), diplomatic gifts. These gifts consist of Aegean type objects (with examples in the Aegean archaeological record), which are presented to Pharaoh or his representative, usually the tomb owner (Bleiberg 1988, 1996; Merrillees 1972, 281–294; Panagiotopoulos 2000, 2001, 2012; Warburton 1997).

Only eight of the tombs of the Theban elite depict the Keftiu, and within this group only four show identifiable ‘true’ Keftiu, rather than ‘hybrid’ figures: Senenmut (TT 71), Useramun (TT 131), Menkheperresonb (TT 86), and Rekhmire (TT 100) (Davies 1933, 1944; Dorman 1991; Dziobek 1994, 91–92; Hartwig 2004; Hallman 2006; Porter and Moss 1960, TT 71, 86, 100, 112, 131; Wachsmann 1987, 29–31). A ‘true’ Keftiu is a red-skinned, bare-chested, clean-shaven male with long curly hair who wears a cod-piece or kilt, and sometimes sandals or boots (Fig. 10.2). A ‘hybrid’ displays a mix of physical features (such as skin colour and hair) and clothing from the Aegean, the Near East, Nubia or Libya. The hybrids are often labelled Keftiu, but are not recognizable specifically as Aegeans.

The concept and status of foreigners in Egypt

For the Egyptians, there were two types of people: the Egyptians and the ‘other’ (Baines 1996, 372; Hornung 1979–1980, 1.176–181, 2.134–137). A foreigner’s status in the Egyptian world was expressed on a sliding scale. O’Connor defines a ‘good foreigner’ as one who was engaged in correspondence, who participated in reciprocal exchanges, gifting, and perhaps intermarriage (Hartwig 2004, 66; Loprieno 1988; O’Connor 2003, 167). They acknowledged Egypt’s place in the cosmos, which was demonstrated by their appropriate diplomatic behaviour. Thus, the ‘good foreigner’ acted to uphold Ma’at, while the ‘bad’ foreigner exhibited aggressive behaviour, which often resulted in militaristic action by Egypt that was only resolved through war and treaties (O’Connor 2003, 171).

The Minoan Keftiu delegations were said to come to Egypt because they ‘heard’ (*sdm*) of the might of Pharaoh, they did not ‘see’ (*m33*) the might of Pharaoh (Galán 1995, 92–93; Panagiotopoulos 2001, 271). They didn’t compete for territory and, more importantly, they were involved with the trade of copper and tin (Betancourt 2012, 129–132; Muhly 1976, 190–192, 271–288, 334–335, 343–350). These early Keftiu delegations therefore appear to have fit into the ‘good foreigner’ category, as they actively engaged in purely diplomatic and mercantile relationships with Egypt (Judas 2010, 793–808). However, this categorisation could be reversed into ‘bad foreigner’ if the ideology or behaviour of either party changed.

In addition, the Keftiu were outside of the range of conquest and provided a physical and geographical buffer between the known and unknown. They represented the liminal space where *ma’at* and *isfet* met and inhabited this physical boundary of the Egyptian known (real) and unknown (supernatural) worlds. This association with boundaries and liminal spaces created an association with Horus, who was related to horizons, boundaries (Morenz 1973, 23) and, by extension, possibly griffins.

Keftiu and Horus

A Middle Kingdom stela (CG 20539), belonging to a 12th dynasty treasurer of Senwosret I named Montuhotep, links the Minoan Keftiu to Horus (Lange and Schäffle 1908, 155, 7–10; Leitz 2002, 294; CG 20539). Montuhotep refers to himself as ‘*Hm*-priest of the secrets of the house of life’, ‘Overseer of the ‘Big Hall/Portal’, and ‘*hm*-priest of Horus of the Keftiu (*Hrw Kftiw*)’ (Cline 1994, 108; Helck 1979, 26–27; Sakellarakis and Sakellarakis 1984, 198, no. 13; Strange 1980, 71–73, no. 21; Vercoutter 1956, 40–45).

This is one of the earliest references to the Keftiu and specifically associates them with Horus and a cult. The cult must have had some importance, however small, especially if the priest was a high level official of Senwosret I. Interestingly, this is the only reference to this



Figure 10.2. Example of a ‘true’ Keftiu depiction © B. A. Judas.

particular version of Horus, with no other textual or iconographic attestations of this deity. Horus has many attributes aside from kingship (Allen 1915, 11, 16–17, 20; Allen 2003, 27; Morenz 1994, 23; te Velde 1967, 59–63) being linked also with horizons, the limitless sky, winds, the north wind and with the boundaries of time, such as the period between the old and the new years. Horus, therefore, has clear associations with aspects of liminal spaces and peoples. This is apparent in the distribution of Horus cult centres at fortresses in Nubia (Buhen, Aniba, Bigeh and Kubban) and in the northwestern Delta and coast (Zawyet Umm el Rakham, el Gharbaniyat and el Alamein) (Morris 2005). These fortresses sit at boundaries of Egyptian territory, many of which were considered tenuous. Therefore, Horus' associations fit neatly into the concept of the Egyptians view of the Keftiu, who lived at the boundary of the Egyptian world.

Griffins

In addition to the 'Horus of the Keftiu', the Aegean-type griffin also appeared in the late 17th dynasty and early 18th dynasty. The Minoans, and later the Mycenaeans, viewed the griffin as both wild and domesticated (Morgan 1988, 52–54; Morgan 2010). The Aegean-style griffin is often shown seated with a deity, accompanying a deity, pulling a chariot, solitary, or a hunting wild predator. The Aegean griffin, like its Egyptian counterpart, had solar and divine attributes which the Egyptians could have easily associated with the solar and divine attributes of their own griffins and falcon headed deities. However this appearance of the Aegean griffin in the late 17th early 18th dynasty seems to signal a significant change in the use and meaning of griffins in Egypt, which was tied to relations with the Keftiu.

Egyptian griffins in the Middle Kingdom

Here I will give two examples to illustrate the typical usage of griffins in Egypt before the introduction of the Aegean-style griffin. The tomb of Kheti (Tomb 17) at Beni Hassan features a griffin on the north wall of the chapel. It is falcon headed with a lion's body and tail ending with a lotus blossom, and obviously female, with prominent teats (Davies 1933, 26–28, fig. 5; Newberry 1893: II, pl. 13). She has no easily recognizable wings, instead having a geometric/linear design on her back, possibly a textile. The griffin also wears a leashed collar that tethers her to the ground and appears alongside domesticated dogs, demonstrating that she is a domesticated mythical animal and hunting companion (Bisi 1965, 26–27; Davies 1933, 26–28, fig. 5; Newberry 1893: II, pl. 13; Shedid 1994, Abb. 64).

The griffin, as depicted in this funerary scene, inhabits both the real world, as a hunting companion, but also the supernatural realm and underworld as a mythical animal. Despite this supernatural connection she is not dangerous or harmful because she is domesticated. Kamrin (1999, 87) suggests that the griffin is an *apotropaic* animal, which would further explain its appearance in this funerary context. This depiction of both mythical and realistic beasts sharing common activities indicates a blurring of the lines between worlds, which is common in tomb scenes and demonstrates the association between the griffin and liminal space.

Griffins also appear in royal iconography. A pectoral belonging to Senwosret III, from the tomb of his daughter Mereret at Dashur, depicts two griffins flanking the cartouche of the king (CG 52002 (JE 30875); de Morgan 1895; Vernier 1927). They are each striding on an enemy of Egypt and holding another down with their paws (Fig. 10.3). These griffins also wear *atef*

crowns, associating them with kingship and the divine, and symbolising the Pharaoh as a warrior. Additionally, their solar/*apotropaic* attributes along with their role as domesticated or harnessed mythical predators, symbolically represent the triumph of *ma'at* over *isfet* in royal and elite iconography.

Aegean griffins in the New Kingdom

At the end of the 17th dynasty, there is an addition to the Egyptian griffin corpus. The Aegean-style griffin (Fig. 10.4) is represented on the axe of Ahmose (JE 4673), found in the tomb of his mother, Queen Ahhotep (von Bissing, 1900; Bongioanni and Croce 2001, 369; van den Boorn 1988, 340–347; Goedicke 1995. For a photo see Lacovara 2008, 119–123, obj 67; Reeves 2002, 50–52). The ceremonial axe is decorated with standard Egyptian royal iconography that represents the strength and protection of the pharaoh. The reverse of the axe is split into three registers:

1. The top register contains *Heh*, the god of eternity.
2. The middle register depicts Nekhbet and Wadjet as well as the sedge and lotus of Upper and Lower Egypt.
3. The bottom register has a couchant sphinx, which wears a possible *nemes* headdress and beard and holds a head in one of his paws. There are no names or titles present.

The obverse continues the theme of royal authority with three registers:

1. The top register has the *nomen*, *praenomen* and titles of Ahmose.
2. The middle register depicts Ahmose wearing the blue crown with a *uraeus*, in a typical striding and smiting pose and holding an unidentified kilted enemy by his short hair.
3. The lower register contains a couchant griffin with outstretched wings with an inscription reading 'beloved of Montu'.

The Ahmose axe griffin is distinct from the Egyptian type griffin found in the two Middle Kingdom examples. It has an eagle-type head (elongated compared with that of a falcon and without the eye markings) with a crest of feathers and a vulture-type beak, which are characteristic of an Aegean griffin. Its wings are outstretched and the feathers are delineated more realistically than the Senwosret III pendent. Little spirals are indicated on the neck and



Figure 10.3 Egyptian Griffin from the pectoral of Senwosret III (12th Dynasty) © B. A. Judas.



Figure 10.4. Aegean-Type Griffin from the Ahmose Axe (18th Dynasty) © B. A. Judas.

edges of the wings, another characteristic of Aegean griffins. Together these attributes create a visually distinct form of a griffin.

This Aegean griffin has inspired much discussion, especially by Vronwy Hankey (1993, 14), who believed it signalled the defeat of the Keftiu at the hands of Ahmose. This is a puzzling inference, especially as Ahmose was occupied with the Hyksos and the kingdom of Kerma, and a potential naval battle in the Aegean seems rather implausible. Betsy Bryan suggests the axe was created prior to Ahmose re-uniting Egypt, due to the writing of his name (*Urk.* IV, 813: 5, 13, 16, 583: 15; Bryan 2000, 220). If so, this would suggest a continuing or renewed alliance between the Keftiu and the Theban rulers prior to the expulsion of the Hyksos.

The axe represents royal power and his ability to conquer, protect, and rule. The reverse side represents an eternal and united Egypt under Ahmose's rule, while the obverse demonstrates the legitimacy of his rulership. Additionally, the inscription confirms that his reign was blessed by Montu, a falcon headed deity possibly associated with Thebes, thereby connecting the Theban rulers with the reunification of Egypt at the end of the 17th dynasty. In a similar manner to Senwosret III, Ahmose merges the role of kingship with the strength and predatory nature of the griffin to communicate that he is the king of a united Egypt. This use of the Aegean griffin, with its own connection to divinity and royalty, within Egyptian royal iconography demonstrates the familiarity of the craftsmen with Minoan and Egyptian concepts of the griffin.

Aegean-Style griffins at Tell el Dab'a and their Aegean counterparts

The Aegean-style griffin is also found in the frescoes of a palatial building at Tell el Dab'a/Avaris, which Manfred Bietak dates to the reign of Thutmose III (Bietak *et al* 2007, 27; 2013a). These frescoes, made in the traditional Aegean fresco and painting technique, demonstrate distinctly Late Bronze Age Aegean elite iconography and painting traditions. The scenes, due to their palatial and upper elite Aegean iconography, suggest a diplomatic party were associated with the rooms for a long-term, yet probably temporary, stay. Once the wall paintings started to break away from the walls, they were discarded and thrown into rubbish dumps (Bietak *et al.* 2007, 26–38).

The iconography of the paintings include bull-leaping in the manner of the bull-leaping representations at Knossos, decorative motifs similar to those found on Cretan palatial frescoes, and both miniature and full scale representations of Aegean-style griffins (Bietak *et al.* 2007, 40–41). The griffins have the same physical features as their Minoan brethren with eagle heads and vulture-like beaks (Morgan 1988, 49–50; Morgan 2010, 304), and hanging spirals along the edge of their wings. Blue and red are also utilised in the same colour scheme as Aegean griffins, such as the one that decorates a wall in Xeste 3 at Akrotiri on Thera.

The miniature Aegean griffin depicted in the Tell el Dab'a frescoes (identified by Livia Morgan (2010a), has, like the Ahmose griffin, an eagle-like head with a stiff crest comprised of small, curled feathers and larger blue, upright feathers. It also has raised bent wings and is in a flying gallop pose (Morgan 2010a, 309–312). Very fine, red lines suggest feathers on the head and a large black oval outlines the area of the face. Hanging spirals, separated by red triangles, line the edge of the neck and up through the top edge of the wing. This griffin is a wild predator and caught in the act of hunting, being part of a larger hunt scene that is reminiscent of the miniature hunt scene found on the east wall of room 5 in the West House at Akrotiri. In this hunting scene the wild griffin is posed in manner similar to the Tell el Dab'a griffin (Doulas, 1999, 47–49, 64–65, pls. 30–31; Morgan, 1988, 49–54), while hunting prey with a leopard (Morgan 2010b, 283–284) along a river lined with colourful rocks and flora.

The life-sized griffin, on the other hand, has been suggested by Clairly Palyvou to be in a couchant pose, while Bietak believed that it flanked a possible throne (Bietak and Palyvou 2000), based on the reconstructions of the throne rooms at Knossos and Pylos. The best-preserved fragment of this griffin depicts running spirals along the top edge of a wing and its reconstruction is based on several examples from the Aegean, such as those at Thera and Knossos (Immerwahr 1990, 176: Kn No. 28). A particular comparison comes from a scene from Xeste 3 in Akrotiri, depicting a woman/goddess (Doumas 1999, 130–131, 158–159, pls. 122, 128; Kontorli-Papadopoulou 1996, 101) seated on a tripartite piece of architecture, who accepts crocus stamens from a blue monkey. Behind her sits a large, domesticated griffin, with outstretched wings and its head turned upwards (Doumas 1999, 130–131, 158–159, pls. 122, 128). Hanging spirals run along the edge of the wings and triangular designs indicate individual feathers. The Xeste 3 griffin also has a leash, which indicates its domestication and subordination to the woman/goddess. The Akrotiri fresco of a seated authoritative female figure accompanied by a seated griffin could be represented at Knossos and later Pylos, where physical thrones were flanked by painted, recumbent griffins (Marinatos 2013, 50–51, 65, 165; Morgan 2010, 304–305), in turn supporting a similar reconstruction at the Tell el-Dab’a palace.

Keftiu and griffins in the early 18th dynasty Theban tombs of the Nobles

As mentioned above, the early 18th dynasty wall paintings in the tombs of the nobles at Thebes depict the Keftiu with many readily identifiable objects from the Aegean. One of these object types, the animal-headed rhyta, are of particular note. This ritual vessel type was a traditional item in the Aegean vessel corpus and was made in ceramic, metal, and stone (Koehl 2006). Both bull and lion-headed rhyta, which are found in the Aegean, are painted in the tombs of Menkheperresonb, Useramun and Rekhmire and demonstrate the movement of these distinctive vessels from the Aegean to Egypt. Particularly noteworthy is a yellow griffin-headed rhyton painted in the tomb of Useramun, presumably made of gold (Dziobek 1994, pl. 20). The raptor head of the beast is slightly narrower than the typical Egyptian falcon head as seen in the Senwosret III pectoral. Like the Ahmose axe, the Useramun griffin head is depicted with a crest and spirals. A griffin-headed rhyton is also depicted in the tomb of Rekhmire (Davies 1944, pl. 18), and is stacked with other objects presented to the pharaoh by the Keftiu. Although most of the head is damaged, the slightly flatter edge of the beak, the narrow curve of the back of the head and the crest of feathers are preserved and are easily recognizable features of an Aegean-style griffin.

Like the griffins on the Ahmose axe and at Tell el Dab’a, the griffin heads in the Theban tombs are Egyptian representations of an Aegean griffin. The paintings are also from a similar timeframe as the Tell el Dab’a griffins. The Egyptians clearly associated certain attributes to the Aegean-style griffin: the narrower head shape, the crest of feathers on the head of the griffin and the hanging spirals.

Changing relations: Mycenaean Keftiu interactions with Egypt

It is important to separate the depictions of the early 18th dynasty Aegean-style griffin from the representations of the mid-to late-18th dynasty Aegean-style griffin. The representations of the griffin at Tell el Dab’a, the griffin rhyta in the Theban tombs and the griffin on the Ahmose

axe are connected to specific moments, places and individuals. These are not objects that could be exchanged freely between rulers and the elite. They are all associated with royalty and the 'other': the axe with the names and titles of pharaoh, the presence of Aegean frescoes in a royal compound and the references to luxury items presented by a specific set of foreigners to Pharaoh and his royal representatives. However, the Aegean griffin never replaced or was used interchangeably with the Egyptian griffin. Instead, the Egyptian griffin continued to be used in Egyptian religious, royal and funerary iconography.

The shift in political and cultural power from Minoan Crete to the Mycenaean Greek mainland not only affected the diplomatic and mercantile relationships with Egypt, but also the perception of the Aegeans by the Egyptians. This change is sometimes referenced in regards to the change in the clothing of the Keftiu in the tomb of Rekhmire. The mid-to late 18th dynasty Egyptians viewed the Mycenaean Keftiu in a different light than the earlier Minoans. The Aegeans were no longer viewed as 'good foreigners' as suggested by the inclusion of the Keftiu in the list of enemies on Amenhotep II's (Kenamun TT 93) and Amenhotep III's (Anen TT120) throne bases depicted in Theban elite tombs. This may be due to the shift in power to the Greek mainland and the Mycenaean palatial sites there, which could have disrupted the previous good relations between Minoan Crete and Egypt. Perhaps the Egyptian diplomatic envoy sent to the Greek islands and mainland, as indicated by the Place-Name List from Amenhotep III's statue base at Kom el Hetan, signals the moment when the Aegeans become less cooperative to the Egyptians and their agenda in the Eastern Mediterranean. The possibility that the Aegeans inhabited an exotic, liminal, supernatural space is dashed, and the Keftiu lose their status as 'good foreigners'. As a result, the mid-to late 18th dynasty pharaohs viewed the Keftiu in a more reserved and cautious manner as they realized that a new group of peoples were in power in the Aegean, a group who did not necessarily continue to act in concordance with Egypt's interests and were no longer 'ideologically loyal' (O'Connor 2003, 167). It may be that the Mycenaean political and diplomatic agendas no longer dovetailed with Egypt's.

However, the Aegean type griffin continued to circulate through Egypt, as well as the wider Eastern Mediterranean, as part of the iconography of the so-called International Style (Feldman 2006, 29, although '*koiné*' may be a more appropriate term). The 'International Style' resulted in a mutually understood visual aesthetic and artistic program for the royal courts in the Eastern Mediterranean. Portable luxury items were deliberately decorated with mixed cultural and often royal iconography and were intended for diplomatic exchange between royal courts. The resulting style created a very specific visual language targeted towards a select group of individuals. The evolution of the so-called 'International Style' iconography between Egypt and its diplomatic partners started to become popular during the reign of Thutmose III, but it was during the reign of Amenhotep III that International Style objects circulated on a large scale (Feldman 2006, 143). This timing coincides with the very active diplomatic relationships between the greater and lesser kingdoms in the eastern Mediterranean during the mid to late 18th dynasty.

Conclusions

The Aegean was at the edge of Egypt's geographical awareness and, during the early New Kingdom, the Minoan Keftiu were considered 'good foreigners', and were associated with Horus of the Keftiu and the griffin. Their actions were in line with Egypt's needs and desires, which were demonstrated by their appropriate and positive diplomatic behaviour. Yet, this relationship

changed with the fall of Minoan Crete and the rise of the Mycenaeans and the resulting growth of their influence and power in the Aegean. The early 18th dynasty Aegean griffin image and its use in specific spaces indicated the Minoan Keftiu, the idea of a good foreigner, the association of liminality, and a special relationship between Egypt and the Aegean. In the mid-to late 18th dynasty, however, the Keftiu lose their good foreigner status as a result of the Mycenaean takeover of Knossos and the destruction of other palace centres on Crete. Although the Mycenaeans become part of the larger diplomatic and mercantile interaction with Egypt, they do not attain the status that the Minoans held with the early New Kingdom Egyptians. The Aegean type griffin is severed from its specific identification with the Minoan Keftiu in Egyptian art, and becomes part of the larger eastern Mediterranean visual international style.

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