

BEYOND CYPRUS:
INVESTIGATING CYPRIOT CONNECTIVITY IN THE
MEDITERRANEAN FROM THE LATE BRONZE AGE
TO THE END OF THE CLASSICAL PERIOD

Edited by Giorgos Bourogiannis

AURA SUPPLEMENT 9

ΣΕΙΡΑ ΜΟΝΟΓΡΑΦΙΩΝ AURA 9

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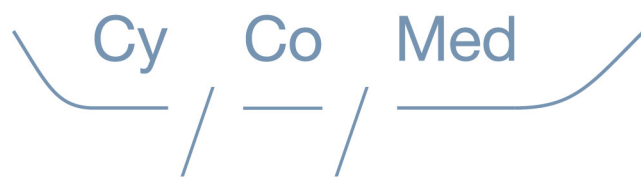
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Cypriot Connectivity in the Mediterranean

ATHENS 2022

AURA SUPPLEMENT 9 • ΣΕΙΡΑ ΜΟΝΟΓΡΑΦΙΩΝ AURA 9

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Egyptian gold at Enkomi

A material manifestation of a ruling ideology on Late Bronze Age Cyprus

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ABSTRACT

The establishment of Enkomi as one of the main export ports for Cypriot copper in the Late Bronze Age (LBA) left its imprint at the site, inter alia in the form of monumental architecture, extensive metallurgical remains and the earliest recorded use of script on the island. It also afforded considerable wealth to those engaged in international exchanges, which in turn led to an influx of foreign prestige goods, predominantly from Egypt, the Near East and the Aegean. These objects and the behaviours associated with them had a profound impact on the construction of political authority and social identities. Gold, in particular, played a significant role in the formation and maintenance of social hierarchies and the display of power on the island.

This is reflected in the gold finds from Tomb 93 at Enkomi. One item is a magnificent gold pectoral of a distinctive Egyptian type, called the “broad collar”. This is an emblematic type of Egyptian jewellery in use from early Pharaonic times to the Roman period. Of superb craftsmanship and precious materials, these collars appear around the necks of gods, kings and nobles and could even be offered by the Pharaoh as a reward for service to the king and state. The recovery of this example not only demonstrates the appreciation of Cypriots for Egyptian things, but also poses questions about how and why it ended up in Cyprus and, more importantly, what value and meaning it had for its Cypriot owner and the people of Enkomi.

An Egyptian landing on Cyprus in the LBA would have been perplexed by the Cypriot environment: no gigantic temples and palaces, monumental tombs or reliefs and inscriptions to broadcast the power of a king. Still, this Egyptian would have had to reconcile this absence of monumental manifestations of royal authority with the fact that his own king, as well as other rulers in the region, relied on good diplomatic relations with the small land of Cyprus in order to secure the provision of massive quantities of copper. The island had, by the mid-2nd millennium BC, emerged as a major supplier of copper to the Eastern Mediterranean.¹ In turn, socio-political evolution on Cyprus in the LBA can only be understood in the context of interaction with the economic and political structures of this region.² This period also witnessed an unprecedented influx of imported, prestigious artefacts and raw materials on the island, testifying to its internationalisation as well as to the emergence of a social hierarchy.³ Among them, an exceptional piece of Egyptian gold jewellery from Enkomi

1 Zaccagnini 1987, 59–63; 2000, 141, 153; Liverani 1990, 205, 269; Sherratt and Sherratt 1991, 365–71; Monroe 2005, 166; Kassianidou 2013; Knapp 2013a, 406–16. Also Kassianidou in this volume.

2 Muhly 1989, 301–2; Keswani 1996, 217–20; 2004, 85–6, 128, 143–44, 160–61; Peltenburg 1996; Knapp 1998, 204–5; 2013a, 352–59; Webb 2005, 176, 180–81.

3 Keswani 1996, 238–39; 2004, 126–27, 154–59; Knapp 1998, 193–203; 2013a, 381–89, 427–32; 2013b; Antoniadou 2005; Webb



Fig. 1. The broad collar from Enkomi Tomb 93, British Museum 1897,0401.535 (© The Trustees of the British Museum).

Tomb 93 outshines all others (Fig. 1).⁴ Its superb craftsmanship, sheer volume of glimmering gold and vividly-coloured inlaid materials as well as its utterly alien character, dramatically different than anything Cypriot, must have stood out in the eyes of all ancient viewers.

ENKOMI TOMB 93

Enkomi Tomb 93 was excavated in 1896 by the British Museum.⁵ No information on the position of the finds or the number of burials is available. In addition, several grave goods were stolen from this and other tombs. The British Museum Inventory for 1897 lists a total of 214 objects from Tomb 93; only 143, however, can be associated with certainty with this context.⁶ The remainder were reclaimed from the antiquities market in Cairo two years later, where they were bought by John Williamson, who had collaborated as an intermediary agent in the Enkomi excavations. His account of the rediscovery of the finds in Cairo is not without problems, especially since he sold the objects soon after to the British Museum.⁷ While it is not certain if they all came from Tomb 93, some certainly did: two pieces of a gold bar, one undoubtedly from Tomb 93, the other acquired by purchase, were found by Tatton-Brown and Crewe to join each other.⁸ It is fortunate that the find discussed here was certainly excavated by the British Museum in 1896.

2005, 176–78; Peltenburg 2012, 15; Peltenburg and Iacovou 2012, 346–50.

4 British Museum Inv. No. 1897,0401.535; Murray 1900, pl. 6; Marshall 1911, 36–7, no. 581 fig. 6, pl. V; Tatton-Brown 2003, 53, 66 fig. 15.

5 Tatton-Brown 2003, 53–5.

6 Crewe 2007, 64.

7 For an account of these excavations, Tatton-Brown 2003; Kiely (forthcoming).

8 Tatton-Brown 2003, 53 n. 38.



Fig. 2. The burial assemblage of Enkomi Tomb 93 (British Museum, © The Trustees of the British Museum).

Tomb 93 is a rock-cut chamber with a short dromos, which was probably disturbed in antiquity.⁹ More than half the registered finds are of gold, including two or possibly four necklaces, 26 strips or diadems, 58 earrings, 15 rings and several pieces of scrap. There is also some silver jewellery, a glass vessel, cylinder seals (Mitannian?), Late Helladic (LH) IIIA–IIIB and Late Cypriot (LC) pottery, as well as a few LH and LC terracotta figurines (Fig. 2). The chronological range of the grave goods is LC IA–LC IIC.¹⁰ The tomb had apparently been used for several burials over a long period and, while the gold finds cannot be associated with individuals, it is clear that its occupants had privileged access to this metal. Despite ancient and modern looting, and even without taking into consideration the gold items acquired in Cairo, Tomb 93 is the wealthiest tomb excavated at Enkomi, in fact on the entire island, if wealth is measured by the weight of gold grave goods, which in this case is an impressive 1,430 gr.¹¹

THE “BROAD COLLAR” FROM ENKOMI

The find from Enkomi Tomb 93 that attracts immediate attention is a spectacular gold pectoral (Fig. 1). This is undoubtedly an Egyptian work of the 18th Dynasty that belongs to a distinct type of jewellery, whose ancient name survives in Egyptian texts. It was called *wesekh*, meaning “the broad one”, hence the modern term “broad collar”.¹² The example from Enkomi has been occasionally mentioned previously. It has not, however, with a few notable exceptions,¹³ received the attention it deserves.

9 Murray 1900, 5 fig. 4; Crewe 2007, 60 fig. 2, 64.

10 Tatton-Brown 2003, 53–5 fig. 15; Keswani 2004, 126, 236.

11 Crewe 2007, 64; 2009, 29.

12 Aldred 1971, 36–9; Wilkinson 1971, 30–3, 108.

13 Åström and Åström 1972, 507, 579–80, 583; Goring 1983, 68, 254–55, 257–59, 376; Courtois et al. 1986, 47, 109–10, pl. XXI:1; Jacobsson 1994, 58–9 no. 320, 84, pl. 36; Crewe 2007, 94; Knapp 2013b, 3; Paule 2018, 90–3.

The Enkomi broad collar consists of several (at least six) rows of pendants of different shapes, made of hammered and inlaid gold sheet in various forms and strung together in strands. These are arranged so as to form a large, bib-like pectoral designed to cover the entire chest and shoulders, reaching up to the base of the neck. About 120 beads and pendants (some double) of at least seven different types survive, but their exact arrangement is unclear. Most are either husk-shaped, concave at the back, or flat, of an elongated, leaf-shaped form; others are bell-shaped, discoid, or spoon-shaped (the latter reproducing the hieroglyphic sign *nefer*, “beautiful”),¹⁴ also concave at the back. They were equipped on both extremities with tiny loops for strings to pass through. The majority replicates plain or pleated leaves, fruits and flowers.¹⁵ Reconstruction is based on comparable finds from Egypt (see below), which, however, were also found disarticulated. The strands of beads were fastened at the back with large gold clasps in the form of lotus flowers. These clasps, as well as some of the flat pendant beads, are divided into cloisons, inlaid not with true enamel but with vitreous paste in alternating blue, white, and red colours.¹⁶

THE BROAD COLLAR IN EGYPT

In order to evaluate the importance of such an outstanding Egyptian object in a Cypriot context, we need first to discuss its meaning in its place of origin, as well as the mechanisms that allowed its entry into the Cypriot material record and its incorporation into local social practices. In Egypt, the *wesekh* was the most iconic element of sumptuous personal adornment, appearing in reliefs, paintings and statuary around the necks of gods, royals and noble men and women participating in court, cult and funerary rituals. It appears in the 4th Dynasty, in the mid-3rd millennium, and continues to be worn for almost three millennia, down to the Ptolemaic and Roman periods.¹⁷ In addition, they were regularly painted on the chests of anthropomorphic coffins, not only for adornment but also as a protection device for the mummified body.¹⁸ Their exact form depended on the material, shape and number of the pendants and their combinations, resulting in more than 15 varieties of the broad collar.¹⁹

In the 14th century, a new type of broad collar came into fashion, and it is to this version that the *wesekh* from Enkomi belongs. The new type is decorated with beads in the shape of floral elements made of multi-coloured materials, replacing the tubular beads of the earlier type, strung in a variety of groupings into a tight mesh of alternately-coloured rows and bordered by drop pendants. The terminals, which were previously plain and semi-circular, were now made in the form of falcon heads or lotus flowers. The beads imitate folded leaves of olive or willow trees, lotus and other flower petals, and mandrake or persea fruits and dates.²⁰ The type is considered to be a more permanent version of pectorals made of real flowers, petals and leaves, such as those preserved in the tomb of Tutankhamun and depicted elsewhere.²¹

The representations of men and women and even sacred animals and inanimate objects, such as the prows and sterns of royal barques, adorned with broad collars are innumerable. However, a few images may be singled out to demonstrate the significance of such gold artefacts, when shown not simply as decorative elements but as playing an important role in ritual contexts. Such is the case of the broad collars offered to princess Setamun,

14 Johnson 1999.

15 For the herbal prototypes see Faegersten 2005, 268–71; Tomashevskaya 2019, 4–27.

16 Goring 1983, 68, 254–55, 257–59, 376 (vol. 1); 168–69 cat. no. 559 (vol. 2); Jacobsson 1994, 58–9 no. 320; Paule 2018, 91–2.

17 Aldred 1971, 36–9, pls. 7, 10, 54–5, 57, 91; Wilkinson 1971, 30–3, 108–10; Feucht 1977; Andrews 1990, 199–200; Patch 2018, 71–2, 74–5.

18 Handoussa 1981, 144–48; Riggs 2001, 57–9; Auth 2005, 315–17.

19 Patch 2018, 71–2.

20 Aldred 1971, 38; Wilkinson 1971, 32, 206; Andrews 1990, 37; Johnson 1999; Tomashevskaya 2019, 4–27.

21 Manniche 1989, 27–31; Auth 2005, 315; Faegersten 2005, 268–71; Patch 2018, 71–2.



Fig. 3. The broad collar from Tomb KV 55 (Thebes, Valley of the Kings), 18th Dynasty; National Museum of Egyptian Civilization, Cairo (JE 39631/CG 52674); (after Vernier 1925, pl. XL:52.674).

daughter of Amenhotep III, depicted in duplicated images on the back of a throne found in her grandparents' tomb;²² of King Sethi I, depicted multiple times offering gold broad collars to gods in his temple in Abydos;²³ of Nefertiti in an Amarna relief, in the act of clasping Akhenaten's own broad collar;²⁴ and of the *wesekh* on a stand next to the royal couple, themselves also adorned with superb broad collars, on the back of the golden throne of Tutankhamun.²⁵

Despite the plethora of artistic representations, relatively few actual examples survive. These are made of various colourful materials, such as gold, semi-precious stones, glass and faience, often combined. One of the best parallels for the Enkomi find is the gold broad collar from the 18th Dynasty Tomb KV 55 at Thebes, dating to the second half of the 14th century BC (Fig. 3).²⁶ Several identifications have been proposed for the occupant of this tomb, according to one of which it housed none other than Pharaoh Akhenaten.²⁷ A second, very fragmentary example in the British Museum, allegedly from Memphis, consisting of a gold clasp and the remnants of seven different types of gold pendants, some originally with inlays (Fig. 4), is also similar to the Enkomi broad collar.²⁸ Comparable pieces, dated to the first half of the 15th century, were found in the Tomb of the Three Foreign Wives of Thutmose III, with gold pendants originally inlaid with carnelian and turquoise.²⁹ There are also several broad collars that were made mainly with faience beads, combined with gold ones, such as the partially preserved example recently recognised in the tomb of Tutankhamun, made of small beads of

22 Eaton-Krauss 1989.

23 Gardiner 1933, pls. 13, 16, 23, 33; 1935, pls. 12, 19, 27; Handoussa 1981, 144–48; for other representations of such dedications in Theban temples by Pharaohs from Hatshepsut to the Ptolemies, see Porter and Moss 1972, 4, 45, 49, 70, 71, 106, 116, 117, 129, 228, 241, 332.

24 Aldred 1973, 69 fig. 45.

25 Eaton-Krauss 2008, 25–56, pl. VIII.

26 Vernier 1925, 223–24, pl. XL (52.674); Aldred 1971, 120–21 pl. 57; Wilkinson 1971, 109, pl. XXXVII:B.

27 Gabolde 2009, with references.

28 Andrews 1990, 60.

29 Aldred 1971, 120 pls. 54–55; Wilkinson 1971, 109–10; Lilyquist 2003, 169–73, cat. nos. 129–30, 132, figs. 162–64.



Fig. 4. Gold broad collar from Memphis (?), British Museum, EA3074 (© The Trustees of the British Museum).

gold, red haematite, turquoise and yellow glass.³⁰ The only broad collar still in position on the chest of its owner was revealed in the X-rays of the unwrapped mummy from the burial of the architect Kha and his wife Merit in Deir el-Medina, dated to the reign of Amenhotep III.³¹ Merit still wears her elaborate broad collar, composed of at least eight rows of beads, probably made of gold and faience, glass or semi-precious stones (Fig. 5).

GOLD JEWELLERY IN EGYPT

Among its many social roles, gold jewellery held a specific function within the Egyptian system of prestige and political symbolism. Gold fixtures were often offered by the Pharaoh to high status Egyptians (but not foreigners) as a reward for their accomplishments or services to the king and the state. The reward, called in Egyptian texts the “Gold of Praise” or “Gold of Honour”, was offered to those selected in public ceremonies in the royal court, especially during the Amarna period, and involved gold collars, armlets and bracelets.³² The most important item awarded was the *shebyu* collar, composed of two or more rows of large lentoid beads of gold.³³ In contrast to other royal honours, such as the provision of titles or land, this could be worn and emphatically displayed by the honoured person; it was a visible manifestation of royal favour. Receiving such a reward was clearly a memorable moment and privileged individuals frequently commemorated the event in paintings, reliefs and inscriptions in their tombs, especially during the 18th to 20th Dynasties.³⁴ In these representations, *shebyu* collars are often combined with broad collars, placed one above the other.³⁵ Occasionally the broad collar

30 Gabolde 2016, 9–11, and 17–20 for parallels in faience; see also Aldred 1971, pls. 7–8, 10, 91.

31 Brand 2006, 17–9; Binder 2012, 3–5; Bianucci et al. 2015.

32 Wilkinson 1971, 7–9; Vomberg 2004; Binder 2008, 1–2, 36–7, 62, 88–9, 212, 232–36, 256–57, 261–63, 363; 2012, 1–6. It must also be noted that the hieroglyphic sign for gold depicts such a gold collar (Klemm and Klemm 2013, 22).

33 Brand 2006; Binder 2008, 1–2; 2012, 3–5.

34 Binder 2008, 261–66, 269–74; 2012, 7–8.

35 Binder 2008, 6.



Fig. 5. X-Ray of the unwrapped mummy of Merit from Deir el-Medina, still wearing her broad collar, 18th Dynasty (© Museo Egizio, Torino).

is shown even if the *shebyu* is not,³⁶ and it is evident that the former could also be given as part of the “Gold of Honour”. Several reliefs show servants fastening an elaborate broad collar around the neck of the honoree during this ceremony, in some cases in combination with the *shebyu* collar (Fig. 6);³⁷ others depict the honoured individual, already wearing several *shebyu* collars, in the act of receiving a broad collar from the Pharaoh.³⁸

From this brief overview, it is obvious that there is a close connection between broad collars and Egyptian deities, royalty and court officials. In other words, the broad collar from Enkomi Tomb 93 appears to be completely out of place. It seems as if one or more occupants of this grave enjoyed a special connection with the Egyptian royal court.³⁹

³⁶ Binder 2008, 142.

³⁷ E.g. Binder 2008, 6, 118, 130, 137, 212, 218, 233, 236, figs. 8:30, 8:35, 8:37, 9:2, 11:2, 13:8; Ivanov 2018, 4 fig. 4 (Fig. 6).

³⁸ Aldred 1973, 19–21 fig. 5 (relief showing the reward of Ay, who later became Pharaoh himself).

³⁹ It is important to note that Tomb 93 delivered two more finds associated with Egyptian royals, a scarab with the name of Tiye, wife of Amenhotep III and mother of Akhenaten, and a silver ring engraved with the name of Akhenaten; for this and other Egyptian jewellery with royal inscriptions from Enkomi, Knapp 2006, 54–5; 2013b.



Fig. 6. The Royal Scribe Tjay receiving the “Gold of Honour”, consisting of gold *shebyu* collars and a broad collar; relief from his tomb in Thebes (TT 23), Ramesside period (© Centre for Egyptological Studies of the Russian Academy of Sciences, Moscow).

THE OWNER(S) OF THE BROAD COLLAR AT ENKOMI

The Egyptian divine, royal and elite connotations of this find from Enkomi call for an enquiry into the identity and social status of the individual(s) buried in Tomb 93.⁴⁰ This question is linked to a second one – how did this artefact reach Cyprus. There are no compelling reasons to suggest that it belonged to an Egyptian residing on the island. That there were Egyptians stationed on Cyprus (and *vice versa*), and that some could die while abroad, is well documented in the Amarna correspondence.⁴¹ However, Tomb 93 and the great majority of its contents are entirely in keeping with LC burial practices.

Although we do not know the specific circumstances that brought this object to the island, or the identity of the people involved in its relocation, a few relevant aspects may be highlighted. To begin with, we can assume that, since broad collars carried a high degree of prestige which was directly transferred to their bearers, this change of ownership must have happened at an exceptionally high social level.

There were several mechanisms and motivations for the circulation of prestige objects in the Eastern Mediterranean and Near East, ranging from the most ceremonial, such as gift exchange between royal courts, to the most mundane, such as tomb looting.⁴² To take the latter first, it was not uncommon for plundered objects from Egyptian tombs to find their way into the market, despite severe penalties for despoiling royal burials. However, when it came to metal objects, particularly those of gold, looters took precautions to conceal their source by

40 Cf. Paule 2018, 92–3.

41 Lynn Holmes 1975, 378; Moran 1992, 107–08 [EA 35:30–4, 35–9]; Kopanias in Mantzourani et al. 2019, 107.

42 Cf. Sparks 2003 (in relation to exported Egyptian stone vessels).

melting them down and distributing the raw material rather than the actual artefacts;⁴³ this makes it difficult to accept such an origin for the *wesekh* of Enkomi.

Gift exchange between royal courts, on the other hand, was the main mechanism behind the circulation of prestige objects.⁴⁴ The distribution of luxury goods at an international level through this highly formalised practice has been seen as a diplomatic disguise for essentially commercial enterprises;⁴⁵ it is, nonetheless, sharply differentiated from the import of other products in bulk quantities through more commercial modes of trade. Gifts were personal and indented for specific recipients, giving rise to special social and political bonds. In a letter sent from Babylonia to the Pharaoh, the king is very explicit in this respect: *[Between] kings there is brotherhood, friendship, alliance and [good] relations [if] there is abundance of precious stones, abundance of silver, abundance of [gold]*.⁴⁶ Letters from Egypt, Ugarit and elsewhere refer to the exchange of gold jewellery between courts,⁴⁷ occasionally as part of larger consignments of gifts relating to royal marriages. The Amarna Letters, for instance, record that the Mitannian king Tushratta dispatched various valuable items for the marriage of his daughter to Amenhotep III, including two necklaces made of gold and lapis lazuli.⁴⁸ Could such an occasion be a viable explanation for the arrival of the broad collar in Cyprus? And what would this mean for the status of the individual(s) buried in Enkomi Tomb 93?

Eastern texts relating to Cyprus (as Alashiya) inform us that this land was ruled by a king, but the exact nature of this kingship remains elusive.⁴⁹ The fact is we lack any incontestable archaeological signs of a royal presence on the island in this period. We have no idea how the palace or tomb of a Cypriot king might have looked, and indeed some other tombs at Enkomi, such as Tomb 66, are much more elaborately constructed than Tomb 93 and also have their share of gold grave goods, albeit in lesser quantities.⁵⁰ Thus, even if the *wesekh* from Tomb 93 would have befitted a king, we should not insist too much and there are alternatives. Even in Egypt such items were also worn by courtiers. More importantly, kings were not the only beneficiaries of gift exchange, as textual evidence indicates the same practice among state officials and their counterparts abroad.⁵¹ The offices held by these individuals, including men from Alashiya, ranged from the political and diplomatic (governors, ambassadors and messengers) to the economic (merchants).⁵²

The same texts record that, next to the king, Alashiya was also governed by a chancellor, headed by an official with important political and diplomatic responsibilities who bore the title of *rabisu*, usually translated as “governor”, “commissioner” or “prefect”.⁵³ These officials were authorised to manage state affairs in the name of the king and to write directly to their peers in Egypt or Ugarit.⁵⁴ In an Amarna Letter, the Alashiyan governor corresponds directly with his opposite number in Egypt, addressing him as his brother and reporting the exchange of greeting gifts between them.⁵⁵

Since the *wesekh* from Enkomi is of a type relatively rarely found *per se* even in Egypt and, given that it is the only example excavated anywhere beyond Egypt, we can assume that it was not made to be exported in a

43 Phillips 1992; Strudwick 2013.

44 Liverani 1990; Zaccagnini 2000; Kopanias in Mantzourani et al. 2019, 111–16.

45 Panagiotopoulos 2001, 275–78; Manning and De Mita 1997, 110–11.

46 Zaccagnini 1987, 61–3; Moran 1992, 22 [EA 11:19–23].

47 E.g. Cochavi-Rainey and Lilyquist 1999, 11, 24, 32–3, 141–42, 150–2, 154; Matoian 2019, 755.

48 Goring 1983, 258–59; Moran 1992, 50 [EA 21: 33–41]; Panagiotopoulos 2001, 275–78.

49 For the issue of kingship in Cyprus in the LBA, Manning and De Mita 1997; Peltenburg 2012; Knapp 2013a, 432–47; Mantzourani et al. 2019.

50 Crewe 2009, 28–30.

51 Heltzer 1978; Zaccagnini 1987; Manning and Hulin 2005.

52 Lynn Holmes 1975, 376.

53 Singer 1999, 721; Peltenburg 2012, 11–2; Peltenburg and Iacovou 2012, 346–50; Knapp 2013a, 438–47; Kopanias in Mantzourani et al. 2019, 110–16.

54 Peltenburg and Iacovou 2012, 348.

55 Moran 1992, 113 [EA 40:1–15]; Kopanias in Mantzourani et al. 2019, 114–16.

commercial transaction. Such artefacts typically remained in the treasuries of temples and palaces and in the hands of Egyptian nobility. Then again, commercial activity was a source of economic and social power that could make the acquisition of such an object possible, albeit not as part of market-oriented trade. Near Eastern and Egyptian texts provide important information on traders, occasionally also on some from Cyprus.⁵⁶ In the international mercantile environment of the LBA Eastern Mediterranean, there was enough scope for trading individuals to amass wealth, either as private entrepreneurs or as royal envoys.⁵⁷ Some of these wealthy merchants would have been in a position to build long-term relations with their peers in foreign lands, with the result that they could take on responsibilities as royal representatives and act as ambassadors or envoys, as stated in an Amarna Letter sent from Alashiya to Egypt.⁵⁸ In fact the texts often alternate or couple the terms used for ambassadors and envoys with that used for merchants.⁵⁹ Such influential mercantile groups were not uncommon in the Eastern Mediterranean,⁶⁰ but the inclusion of their business in royal correspondence, in which the king writes directly to the Pharaoh to secure the interests of his commercial agents, is uncharacteristic and indicative of their eminence in Alashiya's state affairs. Peltenburg even suggested that it was Alashiyan individuals in charge of the copper trade who were conferred with the political office of *rabisu*.⁶¹

Any individual belonging to one of these circles would have been in the economic and social position to acquire an Egyptian broad collar, and it can be no coincidence that this link to the land of the pharaohs comes from the richest LC tomb found on the island. But if this was the means, what was the motivation?

THE SOCIAL IMPORTANCE OF GOLD AND *EXOTICA*

Whatever the source of the wealth of the individual buried with the Egyptian *wesekh*, and those with him/her in Tomb 93, they seem to have accumulated an unparalleled quantity of gold during their lives. Gold and silver jewellery was always a reserve of portable wealth, which could be worn to advertise a privileged economic and social position, but also hoarded, deposited in tombs, passed down for generations, or transferred across long distances.⁶² The large number (ten) of gold diadems/strips found stacked in a White Slip (WS) bowl in Tomb 93 (Fig. 2),⁶³ for instance, suggests that these items were not there to adorn the dead but rather as reserves of wealth, as were broken gold items from the same tomb, of the kind we would expect in a hoard.⁶⁴ In addition, gold served as evidence of contacts with the cultures of Egypt and the Near East,⁶⁵ and there is a distinct correlation of rich burial assemblages with exotic luxury objects. In Cyprus, such objects appear to have had a prominent social role.⁶⁶

56 Lynn Holmes 1975, 379–80.

57 Zaccagnini 1987; Singer 2011, 9; Gestoso Singer 2015, 92–97; Liverani 2015.

58 Moran 1992, 112–13 [EA 39:14 20 and EA 40:16–20]; Ahrens 2006, 28–9; Singer 2011, 79–80; Kopanias in Mantzourani et al. 2019, 107.

59 Zaccagnini 1987, 58; Knapp 2006, 60; Brysbaert and Veters 2013, 178; this is also verified by the Alashiyan king himself, when he writes to the Pharaoh: “*My brother, let my messengers go promptly and safely so that I may hear my brother's greetings. These men are my merchants...*” (Moran 1992, 112 [EA 39:10–20]).

60 Heltzer 1978, 121–28, 139–42; Manning and Hulin 2005; Kopanias in Mantzourani et al. 2019, 110, 118.

61 Peltenburg 2012, 11; Peltenburg and Iacovou 2012, 348.

62 Keswani 2004, 126–27; Voutsaki 2012, 161–62, 182–84.

63 Tatton-Brown 2003, 53.

64 This does not mean that this material represents the cache of a goldsmith, either, since such accumulations of scrap metal stood for something more than reserves of raw material: They were a form of storing wealth as they always kept their market value in exchanges; cf. Gestoso Singer 2015, 97–9.

65 Renfrew 2012; Voutsaki 2012, 184; Legarra Herrero and Martín-Torres 2021.

66 Manning and Hulin 2005; Bevan 2007, 152–56; Kiely 2010, 55; Knapp 2013a, 427–32.

Much older and recent research has been devoted to the study of the social roles of luxury imports and the complex mechanisms of their manufacture, exchange and consumption.⁶⁷ The prevalent perspective maintains that imported prestige goods were mainly obtained through gift exchange, controlled by elite circles that had established personal links in distant places. By promoting a commercial advantage, they were able to convey messages of social privilege, which were then translated into political power.⁶⁸ Most of these ideas have proven useful in describing the social role of *exotica*, although it is acknowledged that there are important limitations in their application. As there is extreme temporal, spatial and typological variability and heterogeneity in the classes of *exotica*, it is evident that a single approach cannot cover all cases. What is needed most is the contextualised, individual history of specific items, rather than general notions applicable to all imports.⁶⁹ In the case of the *wesekh* of Enkomi, an isolated find on the island so far,⁷⁰ it would be better to focus on the specific item and to discuss a rather neglected aspect of the study of *exotica*, notably the ways in which they could be related to specific individuals.

Discussions of the social power of the exotic are increasingly combined with the influential concepts of “cultural biographies” and the “social lives” of things,⁷¹ reminding us that some of these imports both had a past in other places and times and acquired new meaning in their new setting.⁷² In this particular case, the deposition of the broad collar in Tomb 93 at Enkomi was but the final episode in a longer genealogy, associated with the life not only of its last, Cypriot owner, but with the lives of those who had made and used it in Egypt. We cannot connect all the dots, but we can perhaps appreciate its importance for LC society without losing sight of its foreign character.

THE SOCIAL IMPORTANCE OF THE BROAD COLLAR FROM ENKOMI

The discussion of the possible identity of the owner of this find from Enkomi, and its capacity to confer power and prestige, do not explain *how* this was affected. In other words, what did it mean for a Cypriot to display it around his/her neck or to take it to his/her grave? Was it important only because of its material and aesthetic value, or was there something more to it?

The importance of the *wesekh* from Enkomi is evident in the fact that, as noted above, no other example has been found outside Egypt.⁷³ The only somewhat comparable case that I am aware of is that of two pectorals of gold foil and of a different type from a Middle Bronze Age (MBA) context at Byblos, which, however,

67 Sherratt and Sherratt 1991; Knapp 2006, 56–7; Panagiotopoulos 2012; Brysbaert and Veters 2013.

68 Broodbank 1993; Helms 1993, 145; Keswani 2004, 136–37; Webb 2005, 178–81; Knapp 2006; Colburn 2008; Arrington 2015, 2–3.

69 As argued e.g. in Knapp 1998; 2006; Laffineur 2005; Colburn 2008; Foster 2008; Panagiotopoulos 2012; Brysbaert and Veters 2013; Arrington 2015; Legarra Herrero and Martín-Torres 2021. One of the main shortcomings of some theoretical approaches to the exotic is that they often dismiss the importance of geographical or chronological differences between imported items and present oversimplified theories that are indiscriminately applied to all periods, from the Bronze to the Iron Age, and in all places, from Mesopotamia to the Levant and from Egypt to the Aegean.

70 In Cyprus, broad collars made a second, unrelated to the first, appearance in art in later times, on some Cypro-Archaic, Egyptianizing statues (Faegersten 2005, 268–71, pls. 37:1, 39:5, 40:6–7). It must also be noted that the three gold, spoon-shaped beads from Enkomi, Swedish Tomb 3 may have once belonged to a disentangled, similar collar (Åström and Åström 1972, 507 no. 7, 509 no. 35; Goring 1983, 264, 371).

71 Appadurai 1986; Kopytoff 1986.

72 Helms 1993, 145; Knapp 1998; 2006, 49–59; Gosden and Marshall 1999; Sparks 2003, 40–3; Cline 2005; Laffineur 2005, 53; Panagiotopoulos 2012, 54, 58; Brysbaert and Veters 2013.

73 For other rare Egyptian objects with royal connotations found in the Levant, mainly stone vessels, rings and scarabs, see Sparks 2003; Ahrens 2006; 2015.

are Egyptianising imitations rather than actual imports.⁷⁴ The recovery of this example on the island not only demonstrates the appreciation of Cypriots for Egyptian prestige goods, but also raises questions about the value and meaning it had for its Cypriot owner and the people of Enkomi. Would Cypriots confronted with this object have known anything about its intimate association with gods and pharaohs in Egypt, or have been able to recognise it as Egyptian at all?⁷⁵

For a foreign object to work as a marker of social distinction in a new environment, it must be able to communicate some information, not necessarily accurate, on its provenance and use in its place of origin. Certainly, no-one would have had a problem in realising that a *wesekh* was to be worn around the neck, or in acknowledging its exotic character. Far more important than its material or practical value, however, was its symbolic one. Such external attributes and ornaments, worn close to the body and dominating the wearer's appearance, were markers of identity and status intended for an audience, as they transmitted notions of wealth and privileged access to it. To wear such an Egyptian artefact in Cyprus would have been primarily a performative act and a statement of distinction and extraordinary status. No other personal possession from Tomb 93 or elsewhere at Enkomi could challenge the splendour of the broad collar. As magnificent as any Mycenaean gold necklace would appear (and there were at least two in Tomb 93),⁷⁶ it would be no match for this Egyptian jewellery piece.

Any Cypriot man or woman wearing such an extravagant jewel would not only attract immediate attention and admiration, he/she would also look like an Egyptian, at least in the eyes of those who had seen one in real life or in an artistic representation. Nothing would have had more effectively associated this individual with the land of the Nile. To look like an Egyptian king or courtier was sought after even by foreign rulers. King Niqmaddu of Ugarit in the 14th century BC, for instance, ordered the manufacture of an alabaster vessel showing him and his queen in a typically Egyptian manner and style. Going a step further, he not only fancied to be depicted as an Egyptian king, but also had his name written on the vase in Egyptian hieroglyphs.⁷⁷ Egyptian images and symbols were, apparently, highly desirable in other lands, not only because of their material value, but because they advertised close relations with Egypt and the Pharaohs.⁷⁸ Royal courts and the elites of surrounding cultures had, thus, developed an appetite for Egyptian luxury goods, often leading to an aesthetic, as well as symbolic, "Egyptomania".⁷⁹

This is most evident in the case of Egyptian statues circulating in the Near East, as witnessed in royal correspondence recording requests for Egyptian statues of deities and kings made directly to the Pharaoh by various rulers.⁸⁰ The Mitannian king Tushratta received from Akhenaten two statues depicting himself and his daughter, apparently in an Egyptian style,⁸¹ while a king from Ugarit asked the Pharaoh Merneptah to send him a sculptor to carve a statue of the Egyptian king, to be set opposite a statue of the god Baal in his Ugaritic temple, itself also dispatched from Egypt.⁸² This "Egyptomania" was extended from things to people, or this is the impression we get from an Amarna Letter revealing that a king of Babylon asked the Pharaoh to send an Egyptian princess to be his bride. When the Pharaoh declined, the Babylonian king suggested that he could instead dispatch any Egyptian beauty to Babylon, whom he would present as a daughter of the Egyptian monarch.⁸³ It was not imperative that things were genuinely Egyptian, as long as their owners could effectively claim them to be so. The

74 Montet 1928–1929, 166–69, nos. 619–20, pls. XCV, XCVI; Ahrens 2006, 25–7.

75 Cf. Sparks 2003, 45–6.

76 Tatton–Brown 2003, 53–4.

77 Feldman 2002; Matoian 2019, with references.

78 Foster 2008, 328; Brysbaert and Veters 2013, 176–77.

79 For this term, albeit for later times, Radner 2009, 226 n. 27.

80 Morris 2015, 320–21; Ahrens 2011; 2016.

81 Moran 1992, 84–6, 86–90 [EA 26:30–48 and EA 27:19–34, 43–4]; Papasavvas 2018, 237.

82 Lackenbacher 2001; Morris 2015, 316–17; 320–24.

83 Zaccagnini 1987, 59; Moran 1992, 8–9 [EA 4:4–22]; Feldman 2002; Foster 2008, 328; Panagiotopoulos 2012, 58.

connection to Egypt and its power was perhaps enough, with the specific circumstances of objects and their acquisition left for viewers to imagine.⁸⁴

In sum, the Egyptian *weseḫ* from Enkomi must have publicised the close association of its owner with the most eminent royal court of the LBA. In Egypt itself not many objects were as illustrative of high status, or more precious in symbolic and economic terms as gold broad collars. When this example reached Cyprus, it was incorporated into local social practices, a re-contextualisation that added considerably to its value and expanded its already complex biography. It linked its holder to the international world of the Eastern Mediterranean and demonstrated his/her privileged communication with powerful partners abroad. All objects that find their way to a distant place implicate human agents. Exceptional and singular objects, however, may further signify an intimate relationship between persons at each end of the exchange, whose social identity, prestige and authority were expressed through the same extraordinary object, albeit in different (Egyptian and Cypriot) contexts.⁸⁵

The possession and display of this spectacular artefact in life and death must have offered a significant spectacle to its owner's contemporaries at Enkomi. Much more than just a personal adornment, it would have greatly enhanced the social status of its owner. It seems that the occupant of Tomb 93 had, to an extent, fashioned his/her public image in accordance with Egyptian court dress and manners. We do not know his/her identity or the kind of occasions during which the broad collar was worn or displayed, but the sight of this individual attired in an Egyptian style would have created a powerful image for local audiences, a visual code able to communicate messages of wealth and authority by association with a prestigious foreign culture. In fact, this Egyptian symbol of high social status from Enkomi is probably the closest we can get to a material manifestation of a ruling ideology on LBA Cyprus.⁸⁶ Its display would have assisted anyone from one of the leading elite circles discussed above, and those around him/her, whether from the king's house, or from groups of people with political and administrative liabilities or top-level economic pursuits, to proclaim their membership in the ruling sector of society, whether within Enkomi or beyond it.

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84 Cf. Feldman 2002, 78.

85 Cf. Keswani 2004, 138–39; Colburn 2008; Foster 2008, 327–29; Voutsaki 2012, 182–84.

86 The only other known similar case is that of the disputed gold sceptre from Kourion *Kaloriziki* Tomb 40 (Goring 1983, 355–59; Paule 2018, 93).

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