

Looking at the Archaeological Evidence Found in Enkomi and How It Shows the Trade Links and Relations to Egypt Through Copper.

Egypt was a vastly connected civilisation for thousands of years; the impact of Egyptian influence can be seen across different areas and throughout timelines, with the period known as the New Kingdom being the most prevalent in both wealth and interconnectivity with the surrounding civilisations. The archaeological evidence of the importation of goods from Egypt to other areas shows that there were strong links between them and import trade helped to both build relations and help develop civilisations through influence. Enkomi was a village in Cyprus established during the middle period of the Bronze Age, at the time possibly serving as the capital of Alasiya it is now near to what is modern Famagusta. Between the 16th Century_{.BC} and 12th Century_{.BC}, Enkomi was an important trade destination for copper; the trade of copper through Enkomi created links between different areas of the copper trade, with Egypt serving as an area to get copper imported from. Copper was an important material needed during the Bronze Age of Egypt, as it was the metal used most commonly for everyday use and objects. Copper ores were mined in areas around Egypt's Eastern desert, particularly in the Sinai Peninsula, which is the area connecting Lower Egypt to the rest of the middle East, and then exported to areas outside of Egypt or smelted down for use; Enkomi was also known for copper work and smelting. Archaeological evidence has been found in the excavated tombs of Eighteenth Dynasty Pharaohs depicting the copper trade and exportation. While Cyprus is fairly isolated from other areas geographically, there is some evidence that suggests there were trade links between Egypt.

The Sinai Peninsula of Egypt was the location of the copper mines used in Egypt's trade; Egyptian copper ores were strong due to the traces of arsenic found in the make up of the ore. When thinking about this in terms of copper trade around the Mediterranean, Egypt's copper trade would have been impactful on both economy and influence, as there would be a demand for the quality and strength of the copper. The placement of Sinai geographically in terms of Egypt and other civilisations was beneficial to the trade and economy of Egypt. When looking at the copper trade, it would be a much harder to maintain trade if the mines needed were located in Upper Egypt rather than Lower for example, so the interconnectivity of Egyptian copper trade was aided by the placement of the mines required for the ore.

The religious system of Egypt was one of polytheism, with different Gods being worshipped more prominently than others in different areas of Egypt as well as changing over time periods. The Goddess Hathor was closely associated with the Sinai peninsula and other desert areas of Egypt, being referred to in some evidence as a favoured protector of desert regions. The quarries of Egypt, such as those where copper ore was mined, would worship Hathor for protection, this can be seen in the fact that there was a temple dedicated to Hathor discovered in a locality of the Sinai Peninsula (Serabit el-Khadim). The link between Hathor and copper means that there is evidence in Cyprus of cults and worship dedicated to Hathor, as well as artifacts found named after her (i.e. Hathor bowls). The popularity of such

items grew with time, especially when the access to luxury items became easier to those outside of the higher statuses of society. Those who created such items, as is the same across history when referring to the use of depictions of religious or royal figures on items such as bowls, knew of the impact the depiction would be beneficial in both the sale of them and in the continued trade of the materials used. Copper would be used in and showing representations of Hathor, and this would help continue import and exportation. When the height of the copper trade began and the end of the Bronze Age, Enkomi became less prevalent.

The influence of Egypt can be seen across civilisations through the different links between them, whether that is trade or cult worship of religious deities. In Enkomi, there was cult worship of Hathor due to the transport of copper ores from Sinai and the worship of her for protection by those who would travel to trade and mine.



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TheBritishMuseum, "dish; plate", ca.1340.BC-1200.BC, Available at:
https://www.britishmuseum.org/collection/object/G_1897-0401-1042

This plate depicts a cow/bull being sailed on a papyrus boat over the image of a fish. While discovered in Cyprus, there is a clear Egyptianized design featured on the plate. The plate dates back to a period approximately towards the end of the New Kingdom in Egypt. This period of time was the declining of the wealth and power seen during the New Kingdom and the beginning stages of the non-Egyptian monarchies holding power (Third Intermediate Period). Also correlating with this period of time was the collapse of the Bronze Age and the lesser need for strong copper trade, due to the usage of iron being more prevalently used. The design seen on the plate depicts a cow/bull and a fish; with the clear Egyptianizing of the design, it can be interpreted that those animals depicted are meant to serve as representations of the Egyptian Goddesses, Hathor (anthropomorphised as a cow) and Hatmehit (anthropomorphised as a fish). These two Goddesses have been associated with each other, sometimes along with the Goddess Nephthys, possibly due to the idea of them

as being fragments of the primordial waters (The Nile River) and the Egyptian belief of creation that all life came from those waters. If the plate is meant to represent the two Goddesses, it shows the reach of the influence of Egypt through the trade of copper and the word of those importing it to Enkomi; with Hathor serving as a Protector of the deserts in which copper was mined, and the association to Hatmehit, the possibility that the animals depicted are meant to represent the two Goddesses.

Because Cyprus is an island rather than connected to the mainland, the plate may be depicting a scene of Hathor, the cow on the papyrus boat being sailed by a man, and Hatmehit, the fish swimming underneath, being sailed to Cyprus (as the plate was discovered there). The palms seen shading the cow on the boat also gives the cow an aspect of regality, along with the power difference seen in the cow being sailed on a shaded boat by the man, which can further the idea that the depictions are meant to represent Hathor. Hathor's role in Egypt was varied, being seen as the Goddess of Love and Music, but also as Protector of the Eastern Desert, she was an important deity and would be represented with this respect in mind.

This idea of the Goddesses being depicted as sailed over from Egypt and beginning/spreading the cult worship of them outside of Egypt helps as a way of showing the cultural contact between the civilisations. The fact that there was cult worship of Egyptian Gods in Cyprus and the creation of items intended to represent these deities, such as the plate seen above, shows that the demand for items bearing the depiction of Gods and Goddesses from differing cultures and religious systems was present during the trade of copper, as the plate dates back to the end of that era. The plates dating as being from the end of the New Kingdom and the height of the copper trade implies that there would have been a market for such items, as the introduction of them would not have been something that began as the period was closing. In Egypt, being gifted an item bearing the representation of God, or of a royal figure, was one of great significance to the recipient, as the luxury nature of the item made it a wealthy possession. When such possessions became more available to those not of such a stature, there may have been an increase seen in their production to coincide with the demand.

The plate can be interpreted as a visual form of the cultural connections began and heightened through the trade of copper between Egypt and Cyprus; but also acts as a demonstration of the skills required to create such a piece. If intended as a gift, possibly between high status individuals, the plate would have needed to be as visually impressive as possible, in the design and colours as well as the possible links to religious figures. When looking at the colouring of the plate, while faded from that of its original colour, there is still a clear blue colouration of the plate, possibly turquoise. Also mined in the Sinai Peninsula, and therefore protected by Hathor, was turquoise; Egyptian deities would be known by different names relating to the aspect of their purpose, in regards to Hathor and the mining of the peninsula, she was sometimes referred to as "Lady of Mefkat" which means "Lady of Turquoise" though may have been intended to include all minerals that were of a similar colour. This colouration of the plate, if believing that it was intended as a depiction of the Goddesses, would serve as another way of honouring the Goddesses through the use of the vibrant colours and for the protection she offered those mining the desert.

Excavations conducted on tombs discovered in Enkomi have shown that the tombs are among the known wealthiest, as stated by Crewe in the Enkomi excavation lithograph, but mostly featuring items of clear expense and exoticness. Items locally created were featured in the tombs but not to as great of an expense as those such as the plate above; items that gave off a “foreignness” as is called in the lithograph were more favoured to be placed within the tombs. This, while being common practice in burials (having luxury items to take to the afterlife), there is a strong aspect of Egyptianization in its practice in Cyprus; tombs excavated from Egypt are of higher status individuals (or families) who could afford to be entombed and take such items with them to the afterlife. The only true idea which can be seen of the contents of an Egyptian tomb, in terms of material goods, would be that of Tutankhamun (Eighteenth Dynasty, New Kingdom) and while this was a royal burial and therefore more wealth would be available, the preference towards high value items within the tombs found at Enkomi give an Egyptian materialistic mindset towards the afterlife, when taking into consideration the influence and spread of religious cult worship along with it.

The cultural connections between Egypt and Cyprus through the trade of copper can be seen in one way through the increased cult-worship of the Goddess Hathor, with possible depictions of her, as well as what could be identified as Hatmehit, and interpreted through the choices of items which would be included in the tombs excavated in 1896. The geographical positioning of Cyprus in regards to other civilisations of the same time period is isolated and smaller than that of Egypt; but through the links of trade and the networks between civilisations, the influence and integration of cultures through that can be seen clearly.

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