

PREFACE BY THE EDITOR

Egyptian and Egyptianising objects outside Egypt are sources for the study of the impact of the pharaonic culture abroad, in the present case on an important island in the Mediterranean, in considerable distance from Egypt, difficult to be reached directly because of the prevailing currents and winds. Therefore the Minoan civilisation was not so much in the focus of Egyptian interests as the Near East. A study on Egyptian and Egyptianising objects in Crete is challenging as objects and ideas from the Nile valley were often disseminated indirectly to such remote areas via other cultures reworking Egyptian artefacts and iconography. Such derivations have to be recognised in order to fully understand the functions of maritime connections in antiquity. The author has acquired the knowledge of the relevant material not only of Egypt and of the Minoan civilisation but also of the Bronze Age Cultures in the Levant and Cyprus to deal with this challenge and has presented with this corpus a hoard of information, which will stimulate further evaluation of this material in the future.

The original concept of this corpus and study was to lay the foundation for a transfer of Egyptian chronology to Crete and indirectly to the Aegean world - one of the tasks of the SCIEEM 2000 project and it was fortunate that the substance for such a study existed already with the dissertation of the author. However, the intensive on-going research in Crete made a complete re-analysis and enlargement of the corpus essential. A chronological evaluation

made further studies on the contexts of the objects necessary. The problem of such a project is, however, the incomplete information about the archaeological contexts, especially when objects originate from antique markets and not from scientific excavations. Another problem is that artefacts probably were already in circulation for some time and arrived on Crete from indirect sources. This corpus also incorporates local Cretan imitations and derivations of pharaonic objects, which show at least to some extent from what point onwards such productions could be expected. Whether they were Egyptian or Egyptianising, the termini *post quos* produced by the knowledge of the material culture of Egypt on Crete are often very broadly based. The chronological synchronisation has to rely therefore on only a selection of objects with safe contexts and their deposition not extended by heirloom effect.

The corpus gives, however, also another result: it illustrates the extent, the quality and the kind of Egypt's cultural impact on the island of Crete and the media and agents of this dissemination. This study will gain in value as the author is currently collecting and to studying Aegyptiaca on the Greek mainland. These two studies together will yield the full spectrum of the extended Aegean world and its relationship to Egypt.

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