

# Exotic offerings in the archaic Rhodian sanctuaries

## A critical synthesis of the Egyptian and Egyptianizing votives

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### ABSTRACT

*During the Iron Age, especially between the 8<sup>th</sup> and the 6<sup>th</sup> century BC, Egyptian and Egyptianizing artifacts were spread within the Mediterranean world through various trade and cultural networks. The largest assemblage of the Aegyptiaca in the Aegean derives from the three sanctuaries of Athena at Lindos, Camirus and Ialysus, on the island of Rhodes. The aim of this paper is to present a critical synthesis of the most representative religious artifacts, which were imported or locally made, and to trace their multiple connotations and functionality within the specific archaeological context. By analyzing the material in relation to the special cultural interaction between Egypt and the Aegean during the 26<sup>th</sup> Dynasty, we will attempt to trace modes of interaction, perception and creative reinterpretation of Egyptian symbols and ideas within the religious milieu of the archaic Dodecanese. This paper is part of the Aegyptiaca Project: Ecumene and Economy in the Horizon of Religion, an international collaborative project of the University of the Aegean (Department of Mediterranean Studies) and the University of Bonn (Institute of Egyptology), which focuses on the systematic study of the Egyptian and Egyptianizing objects in Archaic Greece.*

### INTRODUCTION

Rhodes, owing to its 'strategical' geographical position, played a significant role in the sea routes of the Eastern Mediterranean from the Late Bronze Age (LBA) onwards. After the reactivation of trading networks in the Early Iron Age (EIA),<sup>1</sup> partially linked to the gradual develop-

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<sup>1</sup> Babbi *et al.* 2015.

ment of Cypriot,<sup>2</sup> Euboean<sup>3</sup> and Phoenician commercial activity,<sup>4</sup> the island grew to a key place for redistribution of products, motifs and ideas from Egypt and the Near East to the Aegean. From the 8<sup>th</sup> c. BC onwards the three main sanctuaries of the goddess Athena at Lindos, Ialysus and Camirus turned to centers of commercial and cultural interaction, as indicated by various imports from Syro-Palestine, Assyria, Cyprus and other places of the Aegean.<sup>5</sup> However, the most impressive corpus of these exotic votives in terms of variety and quantity includes Egyptian and Egyptianizing artifacts, the so called Aegyptiaca.

Aegyptiaca were spread to many sites of the Mediterranean world, i.e. to Syropalestine,<sup>6</sup> Cyprus,<sup>7</sup> Italy and Etruria,<sup>8</sup> Sardinia,<sup>9</sup> Carthage,<sup>10</sup> Malta.<sup>11</sup> Aegyptiaca from the Aegean constitute one of the greatest assemblages in the Mediterranean. They are dated mainly from the 8<sup>th</sup> to the 6<sup>th</sup> c. BC and are primarily concentrated at votive deposits of coastal sanctuaries and to a lesser extent in burial contexts.<sup>12</sup> The highest portion of (c. 3000 out of 5500 artifacts) derives from the sanctuaries at Lindos,<sup>13</sup> Camirus<sup>14</sup> and Ialysus.<sup>15</sup> Furthermore, from the middle of the 7<sup>th</sup> and during the 6<sup>th</sup> c. BC, Egyptianizing objects of mixed style -vessels, anthropomorphic and zoomorphic figurines and amulets- were manufactured in a faience workshop in Rhodes, most likely established with the contribution of Phoenician craftsmen.<sup>16</sup> Scarabs were also manufactured in a Greek workshop, which was probably situated on the same island, from the latter half of the 8<sup>th</sup> to the middle of the 7<sup>th</sup> c. BC.<sup>17</sup> The production of scarabs and other Egyptianizing

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2 Sherratt 2010; Iakovou 2012.

3 Lemos 2005.

4 Bourogiannis 2012; Stampolidis 2012.

5 Martelli 1988, 107-13; 2000; Kourou 2014.

6 Herrmann 1994; Herrmann and Staubli 2010.

7 For Kition, see Clerc *et al.* 1976. For Amathus see Clerc 1991.

8 Hölbl 1979.

9 Hölbl 1986.

10 Vercoutter 1945.

11 Hölbl 1989.

12 The first catalogue of Aegyptiaca from the Bronze and Iron Age Greece was compiled by Pendlebury 1930. For most recent catalogues, see Brown 1985; Webb 1978; for scarabs, see Gorton 1996; for general studies on Aegyptiaca of the Aegean see De Salvia 1991, 2011; Hölbl 2005, 2016; Kousoulis 2017; Kousoulis and Morenz 2007; Apostola, 2015, 2016, 2018; Webb 1978, 2016.

13 Aegyptiaca from the sanctuary of Athena at Lindos were the result of the Danish excavations (1902-1905) and have been published by Blinkenberg 1931, cols. 333-95 nos. 1207-559. See also Skon-Jedele 1994, 2205-334, nos. 3452-4307.

14 Aegyptiaca from the Acropolis of Camirus derive from the well and the votive deposit between walls D and E, which were excavated by Salzmann and Billioti in 1864. The collected material was not stratigraphied, but was dated in the late 8<sup>th</sup> - early 6<sup>th</sup> c. BC, based on other archeological material, see Jacopi 1932-3; Skon-Jedele 1994, 1987-2204 nos. 3003-451. For specific artifacts, see Hölbl 1994. The Egyptianizing material has been studied by Webb 1978.

15 Skon-Jedele 1994, 2355-644 nos. 4354-867 (Athena sanctuary). The votive deposit of Ialysus is dated from the middle of the 8<sup>th</sup> to the end of the 6<sup>th</sup> c. BC. Aegyptiaca from this site are currently being studied by the authors of this paper and the Aegyptiaca Project (official website: <http://aegyptiaca.gr>) and will be published as a complete monograph within 2020.

16 Coldstream 1969; Webb 1978, 9-10.

17 Scarabs of this type have been partially studied by Hölbl 1979, 1:209-14; Skon-Jedele 1994, 291-313; Gorton 1996, 63-79, but a thorough study of this material is still missing. The greatest assemblage of this kind of scarabs derives from the Heraion at Perachora, from strata dating from the late 8<sup>th</sup> to the middle of the 7<sup>th</sup> c., i.e. before the flourishing of the Scarab factory at Naukratis, see James, 1962, 462-4. Based on the study of the material and the repeating of garbled hieroglyphic signs on many scarabs, James argued that a series of workshops could have been established somewhere in East Greece, probably by Phoenician craftsmen. A great amount has also been found at Lindos, in the Archaic stratum datable to the 8<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> c. The predominant theory about the production of these scarabs in Rhodes is basically drawn by the fact that there was probably a faience workshop producing

artifacts in the Greek emporium at Naukratis during the 6<sup>th</sup> c. BC has more certainly been testified, as F.W. Petrie discovered the so called “Scarab factory”, an area with high concentration of scarabs, raw materials, waste and moulds, east of the Aphrodite temple.<sup>18</sup> The main phase of this workshop is placed between 600 and 570 BC.<sup>19</sup>

The high concentration of Aegyptiaca in East Greece reflects the intensifying cultural contact between the Nile land and the Greek world during the 7<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> c. BC, which was exemplified in many different ways. Greek traders were active in the Nile Delta from the middle of the 7<sup>th</sup> c. BC or even earlier,<sup>20</sup> but trade obtained a more profound character only after the foundation of Naukratis around 630 BC.<sup>21</sup> Another significant aspect of cross cultural interaction was the recruitment of Ionian and Carian mercenaries by Psammetichus I (664-610 BC).<sup>22</sup> Some of them who rose to high offices<sup>23</sup> were gradually assimilated in the Egyptian society by marrying Egyptian women, participated in religious ceremonies and even followed local burial customs.<sup>24</sup> Diplomatic relations between the rulers of the Saite Dynasty and cities of East Greece,<sup>25</sup> probably initiated by the growing need for Greek mercenaries, were expressed through the dedication of pharaonic gifts to Greek sanctuaries mentioned in Herodotus.<sup>26</sup> Another aspect of cultural

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Egyptianizing artifacts on the island, as shown by the typological study of Virginia Webb 1978. The distribution of these objects was similar to that of this type of scarabs, see Gorton 1996, 72. De Salvia (1991, 338-40) suggested that there was also a faience workshop established by Greeks at Corinth, although elsewhere in his paper mentions Egyptian craftsmen. The high number and variety of this type of scarabs in the votive deposit of Perachora (more than 300 out of approximately 750) along with the existence of many series of almost identical scarabs could indicate the existence of a workshop there or nearby. Further typological and chemical study of this material can shed more light to these questions. The published scarabs from Perachora are now reinvestigated by the *Aegyptiaca Project* in the light of the more recent categorization by Gorton 1996 and will be published within 2020.

18 Petrie 1886, 36-8; Gorton 1996, 91-2, 177-80. For recent treatment of products of the Naukratite faience factory, see also: Masson-Berghoff 2018; Webb 2013-2015a, 2013-2015b.

19 The main phase of the factory was during the reigns of Psammetichus II (595-589 BC) and Apries (589-570 BC), since scarabs found there bore only the names of these pharaohs and the Greek pottery belongs almost to the same time. For the dating of the factory, see Gorton 1996, 178; Webb 2016, 95; Masson-Berghoff 2018, 5. The decline of the workshop is probably related to reforms of Amasis, see Gorton 1996, 178.

20 Herodotus 4.152.4; The story of the Samian Colaeus indicates that Greek traders were present in the Nile Delta from the middle of the 7<sup>th</sup> c. BC; see Boardman 1999, 114; Villing 2018, 73-81.

21 Although Herodotus (2.178-179) states that Amasis gave Naukratis to Greek settlers, there is evidence that it was already founded under Psammetichus I (664-610 BC). For recent studies on Naukratis, see Möller 2000; Villing and Schlotzhauer 2006; Villing 2018, 77-80.

22 Herodotus 2.152-4. For Greek mercenaries in Egypt see Möller 2000, 33-6; Vittmann 2003, 197-206; Agut-Labordere 2012, 293-306.

23 Names of Greek mercenaries participating in the expedition of Psammetichus II to Nubia were inscribed on the legs of the statue of Ramesses II at Abu Sibel. Among the names inscribed there was a man named Telephos from Ialysus, see Vittmann 2003, 202 fig. 101. Egyptianizing statues of Greek mercenaries of high rank have been found in Greek sanctuaries; cf., for example, the cube statue of Pedon from Priene dating to the 7<sup>th</sup> c. BC in Höckmann and Vittmann 2005, 99-100. For a basalt male statuette of the 6<sup>th</sup> c. BC, with donor's name restored as [Σμύ]ρδης from Camirus, see Skon-Jedele 1994, 1989-90 no. 3011. Another fragmentary basalt statue, inscribed with the same name has been found in the sanctuary of Zeus Atavyrios, see Kourou 2014, 86-7 fig. 39.

24 The most famous case was that of Wah-ib-Re-em-akhet, the son of Alexikles and Zonodote, who was buried in an Egyptian sarcophagus around 600 BC; see Vittmann 2003, 203 pl. 21. For the well known wooden painted plaque from Saqqara showing Ionians in a procession with the Isis cow and the Apis bull, see Vittmann 2003 242-3 pl. 24b; for Greek grave stelae from Saqqara with mixed iconographical features and the bronze votives with Greek inscriptions in Egypt, see Höckmann and Vittmann 2005, 97-101; Villing 2018, 75-7.

25 For the political friendship of Amasis with the tyrant of Samos Polycrates, see Herodotus 3.39-3.43; Lloyd 2007, 44-5.

26 Except for the chest sent by Necho II as a tribute to the temple of Apollo at Brachidae near Miletus, various donations were sent by Amasis to the sanctuary of Delphi, the Heraion of Samos, Lindos, Cyrene and Sparta. For the dedication of pharaonic gifts, Herodotus 2.159.3, 2.180-182, 3.47; Möller 2000, 37-8; Lloyd 2007, 35-50. Concerning Rhodes, apart from the two stone statues and a linen breastplate sent by Amasis to the sanctuary

contact was the impact of Egyptian ideas on monumental sculpture, architecture and pottery, which has been analyzed in many studies.<sup>27</sup> Less visible, but still traceable, is the relation of Egyptian religious ideology with Greek philosophy.<sup>28</sup>

Although Egyptian and Egyptianizing artifacts have adequately studied, modes of transmission, interaction and transformation of Egyptian religious ideas within the Archaic cultic milieu have not thoroughly investigated in modern scholarship.<sup>29</sup> Study of Egyptian and Egyptianizing votives of cultic and magical character (e.g. amulets, scarabs) and their divine representations, can shed more light to this procedure. Thus, in the limited space of this paper we restrict ourselves to present some representative a critical review of this material deriving from the three sanctuaries of Rhodes.

## AMULETS AND FIGURINES DEPICTING EGYPTIAN DEITIES

Amulets and figurines, mostly of Egyptian origin, representing popular deities of the Nile Land, are among the most common categories of Aegyptiaca found on Rhodes.<sup>30</sup>

In the votive deposits of Rhodes, as in Aegean as a whole, the most frequent Egyptian deity was the lion headed dwarf demon-god Bes.<sup>31</sup> Due to his role as hypostasis of Re, Bes's protective and apotropaic power affected different spheres of human life.<sup>32</sup> He was mainly regarded as protector of the household, women and childbirth as well as sexuality, but he was equally significant in war, in the sphere of the underworld, in music and dance, in sleep and dreams.<sup>33</sup> He was closely associated with the region of Memphis, as implied by the multiple Bes bronze and faience figures discovered at the site.<sup>34</sup>

Most of Bes figures and amulets from the island date to the 7<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> c. BC and follow the typical representation of the Third Intermediate and Late Periods. The demon-god is depicted in frontal squatting pose with hands resting on the thighs, wearing a feather crown of plumes and often has large protruding eyes.<sup>35</sup> A particular type of double-faced amulets represents the god in the typical squatting pose, wearing a crown of four upright plumes, with a bulbous nose, a mouth surrounded by a drooping mustache and a brow rendered by vertical and horizontal incised lines above the deeply recessed eyes (**Fig. 1**).<sup>36</sup> This type dates to the 25<sup>th</sup>-26<sup>th</sup>

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of Athena at Lindos, faience inlays with hieroglyphic inscriptions from the sanctuary of Athena at Ialysus have been considered to be part of a wooden shrine donated by Necho II, see Kousoulis and Morenz 2007, figs. 2-4.

27 For the Egyptian impact on the Archaic art, see various studies in Beck *et al.* 2005.

28 See Haider 2004, 447-73, with further bibliography.

29 For a detailed bibliography, see n.12.

30 For a general review of faience figurines and amulets depicting Egyptian deities in the Archaic Greece, see Apostola 2016.

31 For Camirus see Jacopi 1932-3, 306-21; For Lindos, see Blinkenberg 1931, 343-4; See also Skon-Jedele 1994, 1992-7 (Camirus), 2207-12 (Lindos), 2373-91 (Ialysus). Some of the Bes figures come from the excavations of Salzmann and Billioti in the acropolis of Camirus and are housed today in the Louvre and in the British Museum, see Hölbl 2016; Skon-Jedele 1994, 1994-7. For a general review of Bes in Rhodes and in the Aegean, see Apostola 2018.

32 Altenmüller 1975, 721-2; Dasen 1993, 64-5.

33 Dasen 1993, 67-78.

34 Daressy 1905-6, 183-94.

35 For a general review off this material, see Skon-Jedele 1994, 1992-7 nos. 3014-33 (Camirus), 2207-12 nos. 3455-547 (Lindos), 2373-96 nos. 4375-4417 (Ialysus).

36 Blinkenberg 1931, 344 no. 1228 pl. 54 (Lindos); Skon-Jedele 1994, 2208-9 no. 3458 (Lindos), 2373-6 nos. 4375-8 (Ialysus); Hölbl 2016, 239 (Camirus).



Fig. 1. Double faced Bes amulet from the votive deposit of Ialysus (preserved ht. 6.2cm) from the votive deposit of Ialysus, Archaeological Museum of Rhodes, inv. no. 10867, Ephorate of Antiquities of Dodecanese. Photographer: Niki Spartali. Fig. 2. Faience amulet of Bes (preserved ht. 3.6 cm) from the votive deposit of Ialysus, Archaeological Museum of Rhodes inv. no. 7725, Ephorate of Antiquities of Dodecanese. Photographer: Niki Spartali. Fig. 3. Faience Nefertum figure with Sekhmet on the back (preserved ht. 4.5 cm) from the votive deposit of Ialysus, Archaeological Museum of Rhodes, inv. no. 7703, Ephorate of Antiquities of Dodecanese. Photographer: Niki Spartali.

Dynasties (c. 744-525 BC),<sup>37</sup> and it was spread out in Israel/ Palestine,<sup>38</sup> in Italy<sup>39</sup> and in Malta.<sup>40</sup> Moreover, Bes-head figures and amulets would have been found at Lindos and Ialysus.<sup>41</sup> Except for authentic Egyptian works, it is highly plausible that Bes figures were also produced in the local faience workshop, as implied by some notably coarse examples.<sup>42</sup> Indicative of the symbolical connotations of Bes are large figures of the god holding and nursing a small figure from the sanctuary of Athena at Ialysus (**Fig. 2**).<sup>43</sup> Figures of this type were mainly found in sites of the Nile Delta (Tanis, Bubastis) and were used either as finials attached to wooden furniture or as handles of ritual sistra to avert evil powers threatening childbirth.<sup>44</sup>

Another deity of the Memphite theological cycle frequently found on Rhodes is Nefertum, the youthful god of the lotus blossom, often identified with the sun god and associated with ideas of regeneration.<sup>45</sup> In Late Period he was merged with Horus the Child and was considered as a protector against crocodiles and other dangerous animals.<sup>46</sup> The majority of finds from the three votive deposits depicts the god in the typical striding pose, with hands hanging down at the sides, with some examples inscribed with a good wish formula on the back pillar.<sup>47</sup> Of particular interest are Sekhmet-backed Nefertum figures found in the votive deposit of Ialysus, Camirus and Lindos,<sup>48</sup> with parallels from Kition (**Fig. 3a-b**).<sup>49</sup> Webb stresses out that some of

37 Hölbl 1979, 1:199.

38 For example in Tell *Gemme*, Achsib, Tell en Nasbe, see Herrmann 1994, 364-5 nos. 414-7.

39 Hölbl 1979, 1:199, 2:117-8 nos. 505-8 pls. 55-9.

40 Hölbl 1989, no. 3, 178 pl. 5.

41 A large Bes-head figure and two small Bes-head amulets have been found in the sanctuary of Athena at Lindos, whereas Bes head amulets with aegis were unearthed at Ialysus, see Blinkenberg 1931, 343 no. 1227 pl. 54; Skon-Jedele 1994, 2207-8 nos. 3455-7 (Lindos), 2447-8 nos. 4484-5 (Ialysus).

42 Jacopi 1932-3, 308, 318 no. 10, 309 figs. 43, 59; Skon-Jedele 1994, 1995-6 nos. 3020-1.

43 Skon-Jedele 1994, 2395-8 nos. 4415-6; Apostola 2018, 117.

44 For parallels see Clerc *et al.* 1976, 240-1 figs. 19-22; Bulté 1991, 17-29.

45 Andrews 1994, 18-9.

46 Hölbl 1979, 1:111.

47 Blinkenberg 1931, cols. 338-9 nos. 1207-11 pl. 53 (Lindos); Jacopi 1932-3, 302-6, 320-1 nos. 1-2, 43, 46, 48 figs. 38, 61, 63-4; (Camirus), Skon-Jedele 1994, 2003-7 nos. 3040-53 (Camirus), 2213-16 nos. 3551-612 (Lindos), 2401-14 nos. 4420-41 (Ialysus).

48 For Camirus, see: Hölbl 2016, 231 pl. 2.3; Skon-Jedele 1994, 2007 nos. 3048-51 (BM 1864, 1007.764, BM 1864, 1007.765, BM 1864, 1007.767, BM 1864, 1007.769). Hölbl (2016, 231) mentions that there is an amulet of the same type from Lindos, housed today in the Copenhagen Museum (inv. no. 10375).

49 Clerc *et al.* 1976, no. 443 pl. 6.





Fig. 4. Sekhmet amulet made of blue compound (ht. 3.2 cm) from the votive deposit of Ialysus, Archaeological Museum of Rhodes, inv. no. 7760, Ephorate of Antiquities of Dodecanese. Photographer: Niki Spartali. Fig. 5. Faience Ptah Pataikos amulet (ht. 5.6 cm) from the Sanctuary of Athena at Camirus, Archaeological Museum of Rhodes, inv. no. 14620. Ephorate of Antiquities of Dodecanese. Photographer: M. Papanousis.

these pieces could be ascribed to the local workshop.<sup>50</sup> The combination of both deities is reasonable due to their strong mythological link and may intend to strengthen the efficacy of the amulet.

Amulets of lion-headed goddesses are very frequently found among votive offerings at the three sanctuaries of Rhodes.<sup>51</sup> They could represent goddesses, like Bastet, Mut, Pakhet, and Wadjyt,<sup>52</sup> but they are usually identified with Sekhmet. Except for being the divine mother of the king, protector of the country, consort of the god Ptah and mother of Nefertum, Sekhmet was also a ferocious manifestation of the Eye of Ra who could destroy humankind.<sup>53</sup> She was considered the alter ego of Bastet, the lion or cat-headed goddess of fertility and love making.<sup>54</sup> On New Year's Day Egyptians used to exchange Sekhmet amulets in order to pacify the wrath of the goddess, expressed through her 'seven arrows', demonic manifestations causing famine, plague and various diseases, during the 'epagomenal days'.<sup>55</sup>

Sekhmet amulets from Rhodes are usually represented standing upright or striding on a rectangular base and holding in her left hand a scepter that terminates in a blossom, whereas she is occasionally accompanied on the back by a wish formula of this type: "Words spoken by the lady Sekhmet: Give Life, Prosperity, Health (Dd mdw jn sxmt nb dj anx wDA snb)" (**Fig. 4a-b**).<sup>56</sup> Representations of a seated goddess<sup>57</sup> or an aegis with the head of the goddess are limited.<sup>58</sup>

Another deity commonly appearing in the votive deposits is Ptah-Pataikos, a dwarf demon-god, interpreted as manifestation of Ptah, Horus, Amun-Re, Osiris, Min, Sokar.<sup>59</sup> Pataikos amulets had a manifold significance and use. They were often worn to speed up delivery and

50 Webb 2016, 71, n. 442-3.

51 Blinkenberg 1931, col. 339 no.1213 pl. 53; Skon-Jedele 1994, 2221-2 nos. 3633-41, 2432-53 nos. 4460-78, 4488-93. For a general review of Sekhmet amulets on Rhodes and in the Aegean, see Apostola 2015.

52 Andrews 1994, 33-4.

53 See Sternberg 1984, 324-7, with further references. Hathor, Bastet, Wadjyt and Mut were also identified with the "Eye of Ra".

54 Sternberg 1984, 325.

55 Sternberg 1984, 325-6.

56 Skon-Jedele 1994, 2432-3 no. 4460.

57 Skon-Jedele 1994, 2441 no. 4478

58 Skon-Jedele 1994, 2432-53 nos. 4488-93; Hölbl 2016, 227 n. 93, color pl. 1.4

59 Dasen 1993, 89-95; Andrews 1994, 39; Györy 2003.

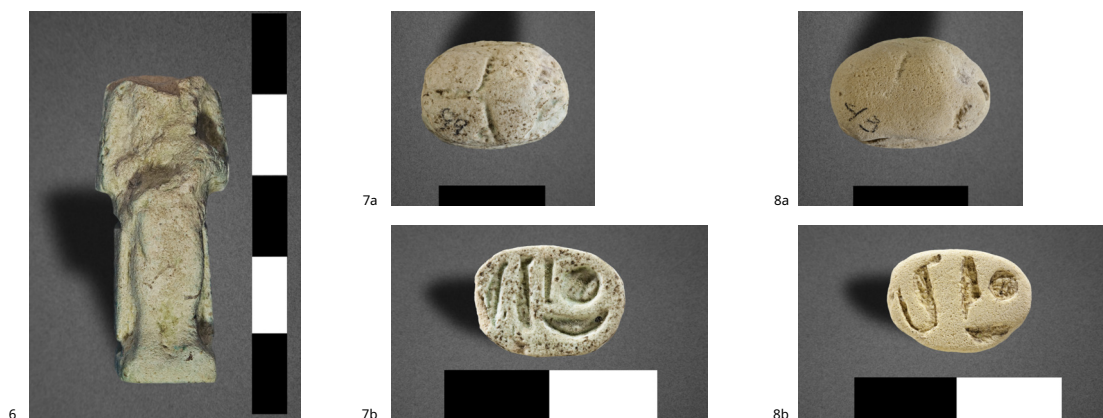


Fig. 6. Isis with Horus amulet (preserved ht. 3.8 cm) from the Sanctuary of Athena at Camirus, Archaeological Museum of Rhodes, inv. no. 14620, Ephorate of Antiquities of Dodecanese. Photographer: M. Papanousis. Fig. 7. Faience scarab from the votive deposit of Ialysus (1.4x1x0.6 cm), Archaeological Museum of Rhodes, inv. no. 11, Ephorate of the Dodecanese. Photographer: M. Papanousis. Fig. 8. Faience scarab from the votive deposit of Ialysus (1.4x0.9x0.6 cm), Archaeological Museum of Rhodes, inv. no. 43, Ephorate of the Dodecanese. Photographer: M. Papanousis.

protect from the risks of the childbirth.<sup>60</sup> They could also provide the living, especially children, with protection against dangerous reptiles (snakes, scorpions, etc.) or diseases.<sup>61</sup> Pataikos amulets were also found in burials, probably due to their rejuvenating and apotropaic power.<sup>62</sup> Some amulets could also be used as charms-seals, as indicated by the presence of hieroglyphic inscriptions bearing magical formulas underneath their base.<sup>63</sup> In Rhodes the greatest amount of Ptah-Pataikos amulets derives from Lindos and incorporates mostly composite types, with snakes on hands or in the mouth, usually backed by Isis and occasionally flanked by Isis and Nephthys,<sup>64</sup> whereas a small amount derives from Ialysus<sup>65</sup> and Camirus (**Fig. 5a-b**).<sup>66</sup>

Less common in the assemblage is the presence of amulets representing Isis. Except for her leading role as a mother goddess and protector of Horus and the Pharaoh, Isis was also venerated as the protector of the deceased and as a divinity of magical knowledge and healing.<sup>67</sup> Amulets representing Isis with Horus would protect women and children in this world and even in the Afterlife.<sup>68</sup> Most amulets from Rhodes represent the goddess in this pose (**Fig. 6**).<sup>69</sup> Apart from imports, large figurines of Isis with Horus were manufactured in the Rhodian faience workshop.<sup>70</sup> Isis can also be represented wearing a wig and a horn-and-disc crown, occasionally accompanied on the back by the standard formula “words spoken by (Dd mdw jn)”.<sup>71</sup>

The high concentration of figures and amulets depicting Egyptian deities strongly connected with fecundity, childbirth and regeneration, such as Bes, Ptah Pataikos, Isis with Horus, in the three sanctuaries of Athena on Rhodes, is in line with the nature of the worshipped deity,

60 Györy 2003, 18; The use of a dwarf amulet during delivery is prescribed in the Papyrus Leiden I.348, spell 31, vs. 12,6, see Borghouts 1971, 29; Dasen 1993, 97; Hermann and Staubli 2010, 75.

61 Györy 2003, 11.

62 Dasen 1993, 97.

63 Daressy 1905-6, 201 no. 38805.

64 Blinkenberg 1931, col. 331-42 nos. 1216-26 pl. 53; Skon-Jedele 1994, 2217-21 nos. 3615-30.

65 Skon-Jedele 1994, 2418-26 nos. 4443-53.

66 Jacopi 1932-3, 304-6, 320-1 nos. 5-6, 10, 48 figs. 39, 41-2, 64; Skon-Jedele 1994, 2007-11 nos. 3054-8; Hölbl 2016, 240-2.

67 Andrews 1994, 48; Wilkinson 2003, 146-9.

68 Andrews 1994, 48.

69 Skon-Jedele 1994, 2013-5 nos. 3065-7 (Camirus), 2221 no. 3631 (Lindos), 2430-2 nos. 4458-9 (Ialysus).

70 Webb 1978, 99-100.

71 Skon-Jedele 1994, 2221 no. 3632 (Lindos), 2427-30 nos. 4456-7 (Ialysus).



Fig. 9. Faience scarab from the votive deposit of Ialysus (1.1x0.8x0.5 cm), Archaeological Museum of Rhodes, inv. no. 93, Ephorate of the Dodecanese. Photographer: N. Spartali. Fig. 10. Steatite scarab from the votive deposit of Ialysus (1.5x1.1x0.8 cm), Archaeological Museum of Rhodes, inv. no. 119, Ephorate of the Dodecanese. Photographer: N. Spartali. Fig. 11. Steatite scarab from the votive deposit of Ialysus (1.5x1.1x0.7 cm), Archaeological Museum of Rhodes inv. no. 152, Ephorate of the Dodecanese. Photographer: N. Spartali

as implied by the character of other votives, apart from Aegyptiaca, such as ivory plaques with female figures, jewellery, etc.<sup>72</sup> It is also noteworthy that most of the represented deities, such as Bes, Sekhmet, Nefertum, Pta-Pataikos, are closely related to the mythological cycle of Memphis, which was inhabited by many Greek traders and mercenaries.

### EGYPTIAN AND EGYPTIANIZING SCARABS<sup>73</sup>

Scarabs were the most popular category of Aegyptiaca in the votive deposits of the three sanctuaries on Rhodes. The majority belongs to types possibly manufactured from the latter half of the 8<sup>th</sup> c. BC to the middle of the 7<sup>th</sup> c. BC in the aforementioned faience workshop of Rhodes.<sup>74</sup> However, the high number and great variety of such scarabs in the votive deposit at Perachora indicate that the origin of their workshop should be reconsidered.<sup>75</sup> In scarabs attributed to the “local” workshop the prothorax is usually outlined with a semicircular or lightly angular single line and the elytra are divided with a single straight line.<sup>76</sup> They usually bear combinations of certain, albeit often debased, hieroglyphic signs and symbols (mAat, nfr, anx, nb, sA, uraeus, sun-disc), which could be either correspond to a good luck formula or they are just meaningless. Some examples show variations of the formula “all good things (xt nbt nfrt)” or the “everything just (xt nbt mAat)” (Fig. 7a-b).<sup>77</sup> They may also have been decorated with a squatting deity usually identified with the goddess Ma’at, who is holding the mAat-feather and is flanked by uraei or other signs (nb, nfr, sA).<sup>78</sup> Several other scarabs bear a garbled combination of nb-mAat-ra, which correspond to the prenomen of Amenhotep III, accompanied by other signs or symbols (i.e. nfr-sign, nb-basket, anx-sign, mAat-feather, uraeus) (Fig. 8a-b).<sup>79</sup> This type of

72 See Martelli 2000, 112; Kourou 2014.

73 Representative example, mostly from Ialysus votive deposit, are examined here, since the typological classification of the corpus is still in progress.

74 Hölbl 1979, 1:209-14; Skon-Jedele 1994, 291-313; Gorton 1996, 63-79.

75 See n. 17.

76 See type XXII, Gorton 1996, 63-72.

77 Blinkenberg 1931, cols. 387-9 nos. 1480-97, 1500-3, 1509, 1518-9 pl. 62 (Lindos); Skon-Jedele 1994, 2268-75 nos. 3844-74 (Lindos), 2512-8 nos. 4600-10 (Ialysus).

78 For Lindos: Blinkenberg 1931, cols. 381-2, 1403, 1408-13, 1546-8 pls. 60, 62 (Lindos); Skon-Jedele 1996, 2278-80 nos. 3882-92 (Lindos), 2521-5 nos. 4613-25 (Ialysus).

79 Skon-Jedele 1994, 2075-6 nos. 3208-9 (Camirus), 2254-8 nos. 3808-19 (Lindos), 2493-5 nos. 4568-72 (Ialysus).



scarabs is the most widely distributed in the Aegean, thus examples from Rhodes have close parallels from Ephesus, Argive Heraeum, Perachora and Aegina.<sup>80</sup>

Scarabs, scaraboids and seals from the Naukratis workshop or predating workshops from the Delta were frequent in the votive deposits of the island.<sup>81</sup> One of the most common motifs on these scarabs is an animal (lion, ibex, horse, cat, ox, etc.) couching, seated or striding with a sun-disc over its back and occasionally accompanied by a debased form of mAat-feather, or another sign (**Fig. 9a-b**).<sup>82</sup> This kind of composition has been occasionally interpreted as a cryptographic writing for the name of Amun-Ra.<sup>83</sup>

The corpus from Rhodes contains also scarabs attributed to an Egyptian workshop of the New Kingdom or manufactured in later workshop imitating earlier royal names.<sup>84</sup> A steatite scarab from Ialysus shows a sacred bark with a sun disk on the upper part and a pharaoh kneeling in front of the *ankh*-symbol below (**Fig. 10a-b**).<sup>85</sup> The prothorax and the elytra of the scarab are outlined by deeply incised single lines and the elytra bear two well defined triangular notches. The whole synthesis could be interpreted as a cryptographic formula for the name of Amun-Ra: worshipping figure = j (from jAj= praise), anx = m (from mAw-Hr = mirror), bark = Amun-Ra. Scarabs with similar cryptographic writings (kneeling pharaoh and an obelisk) were produced since the Ramesside Period to the 26<sup>th</sup> Dynasty (c. 664-525 BC) and were widely spread to Israel/Palestine.<sup>86</sup>

Phoenician and Cypro-phoenician scarabs were also rare in the Aegean, as indicated by few examples found mostly in Rhodes.<sup>87</sup> A steatite scarab from Ialysus is decorated with an uraeus at right, whereas at left there is a squatting deity wearing a wig and sun disc crown and holding an anx on the knees (**Fig. 11a-b**).<sup>88</sup> The scene is framed by striated nb-baskets in exergues. According to the shape, the size, the material and the subject, the scarab can be attributed to Gorton's XX type, most likely produced in a Cypriot workshop and widely distributed in Punic sites.

The great majority of scarabs in the Aegean derive from coastal sanctuaries of female deities, while significant number has often been found in child or female graves in Camirus necropolis<sup>89</sup> and Vroulia<sup>90</sup>, as well as in other sites of the Aegean.<sup>91</sup> De Salvia, based mainly on scarabs from female and child geometric burials of Pithekoussai -the earliest Greek colony in the West- references on Egyptian papyri and written sources of Roman period, interpreted scarabs distributed outside Egypt as amulets ensuring children's protection and women's fer-

80 Gorton 1996, 64-71.

81 Gorton 1996, 91-130 (XXVIII-XXXVI)

82 Skon-Jedele 1994, 2298-304 nos. 3955-86 (Lindos), 2547-53 nos. 4684-706 (Ialysus). For the distribution of the motif on scarabs from the Mediterranean, see Gorton 1996, 94-5 nos. 6-48 (type XXVIII A). For parallels at Naukratis, see Petrie 1886, nos. 34, 37 pl. 37.

83 Keel 1995, 243-6 §647-9; Masson-Berghoff 2018, 26-9.

84 Gorton 1996, 34-8.

85 Skon-Jedele 1994, 2506 no. 4591.

86 Keel 1995, 242-6 § 644, 649-50 fig. 569.

87 Gorton 1996, 43-60 (types XV-XXI).

88 Skon-Jedele 1994, 2521 no. 4613.

89 Jacopi 1932-3, 27, 40 no.2 figs. 30, 32 (Camirus).

90 Two scarabs with similar decoration have been found in the inhumation burial of a 6-year old child at Vroulia cemetery (grave S), see Kinch 1914, cols. 47-8 no. 15 pl. 31.

91 Skon-Jedele 1994, 65-8 nos. 8, 10-1 (Athens), 119, 121 nos. 25, 28-9 (Eleusis-Isis grave). For scarabs found in child burials of North cemetery at Knossos, see Webb 1996, 604. Six scarabs were found in a girl's grave dating to the early sixth century BC; see Webb 2016, 99 nos. 167-72.

tility.<sup>92</sup> This assumption has been partially confirmed by the depiction of scarabs as parts of necklaces on archaic and classical terracotta and stone figurines of female figures and boys.<sup>93</sup> Considering the rejuvenating power of scarabs and the potential associations with children and women, as indicated by burials, it is plausible that in some cases dedications of scarabs in the sanctuaries of Athena were intrigued by their symbolic value.

Hölbl remarks that the general idea of rejuvenation incorporated in scarabs agrees with the general idea of eternal transformation, known in Greek society.<sup>94</sup> He further notes that, although hieroglyphic inscriptions on scarabs were most likely not conceivable outside Egypt, particular signs could be recognized.<sup>95</sup> The imitation of magical inscriptions may imply that some ideas about the prophylactic efficacy of legendary pharaohs, of specific symbols (such as the anx-sign, the mA'at-feather, or the sun disc) or deities, such as Maat, were also imported in the Aegean. The garbled reproduction is though indicative for the adaptation of Egyptian motifs and ideas. While in Egypt the signs were recognized as signs forming prophylactic texts-although not always understandable, since most much of the population and the craftsmen were illiterate- in the Aegean they were most likely perceived as separate images with a general magical power. It is noticeable that such scarabs were small, mass-produced and the rendering of the signs was crude. They can hardly be considered as items of decorative character or simple trinkets. Thus, they were most likely imitated mainly for their amuletic power and symbolic meaning.

## CONCLUSION

The analysis of the afore-mentioned characteristic case studies from Rhodes points to the polysemous interpretation of Egyptian materials and concepts within the cultic environment of Archaic East Greece. The concentration of amulets and figurines of Egyptian deities which are compatible with the nature of the local worship suggest that basic properties of the depicted divinities were known and their dedication could have been dictated by their appropriateness to the symbolic connotations of a Greek divinity. This procedure reflects transmission of knowledge of Egyptian beliefs within Archaic Greece. This assumption is justified by the presence of Greek soldiers and traders settled in the Delta and assimilated in the local cultic context, which could also explain the high number of divinities worshipped in the Delta, specifically in the Memphite region. Furthermore, the presence of cultic objects associated with childbirth rites (i.e. furniture or sistra in the form of Bes) may imply that the knowledge about specific Egyptian practices could have also been transmitted.

The transmission of Egyptian religious beliefs or cult practices of the Nile Delta is justified by the historical context. Flourishing direct contacts between Egypt and the Aegean during the 7<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> c. BC indicate that owners and dedicators of these votives were more likely Greek traders or mercenaries and their wives returning back from the Nile land, although Phoenician and Cypriots cannot be excluded. In any case, the above examined votives should not be considered just as athrymata or exotic items. Greek sources, both archaeological and literary, do not classify the offerings according to material or value. Anything could be dedicated and, thus, consecrated within the sacred environment of the sanctuary. A homogeneity of the offer-

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92 De Salvia 1978, 1041-7.

93 Lagarce 1976, 169-74.

94 Hölbl (1979, 1:230-1) connects the regenerative symbolism of scarab with the concept of «τὰ πάντα ῥεῖ».

95 Hölbl 1979, 1:230.

ings that depends on the reciprocal correlation between the dedicators and the nature of the particular cult could easily be detected on most cases from Greek sanctuaries.

Some of these Aegyptiaca could also have served as objects of daily use and amuletic value, worn by women, children, mariners, mercenaries or other social groups, and, consecutively, they have been dedicated as votive offerings. Their dedication may be in many cases dictated by the relation of their symbolic meaning with the character of the worshipped deity. In fact, their amuletic power could enhance their votive value. As talismans constituted special items for the dedicator and they could be offered through critical situations, in order to enhance request or just to express gratitude for the successful outcome of a disease, a difficult delivery or a dangerous journey. The exotic element, particularly in the case of the prophylactic Egyptianizing figurines, could only bring an additional protection. It adds somehow to the protection of the Greek divinity receiving the offering all the oriental magic contained in the object. In Egypt, gods and demons cannot be comprehended outside their religious or magical environment. Thus, Egyptian magical artifacts could be transformed into votive offerings to the Greek gods, without completely been stripped out of their original Egyptian symbolism.

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