

The interaction between the Egyptian and Greek civilizations until the first century BC.

التفاعل بين الحضارتين المصرية، واليونانية حتى القرن الأول قبل الميلاد.

公元前一世纪前埃及文明与希腊文明的互动

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المستخلص:

إن تتبع التفاعل بين الحضارة الفرعونية ونظيرتها اليونانية أمر مهم. هذا التفاعل يمكن رصده في التاريخ القديم من ثلاثة جوانب بحثية: مراكز الاتصال بين المصريين واليونانيين خلال النصف الثاني من الألفية الأولى قبل الميلاد؛ وأبرز الشخصيات التي نقلت المعرفة المصرية في العديد من المجالات المتنوعة للثقافة اليونانية؛ وأخيراً التفاعل بين الحضارتين وتطوره التاريخي حتى القرن الأول قبل الميلاد. وهذا الجانب الأخير هو ما تركز عليه هذه الدراسة المرتبط بالتطور التاريخي للعلاقات بين الحضارتين المصرية واليونانية.

وتكمن أهمية هذا الموضوع في أنه يساعد في فهم مسار الحضارة الإنسانية وتطورها عبر التاريخ حيث مثلت الدولة الفرعونية حلقة أساسية في سلسلة هذا التطور، ولعلها كانت أهمها بسبب دورها التأسيسي والمبدئي في البناء البشري في العديد من فروع المعرفة الإنسانية، سواء في العلم أو الفنون أو الأدب، حيث تميزت الحضارة الفرعونية بما يمكن التعبير عنه بمفهوم الأصالة في المعرفة.

لذلك، تتبعت هذه الدراسة تطور التفاعل بين الحضارتين المصرية واليونانية عبر العصور وصولاً للقرن الأول قبل الميلاد، مع التركيز على حالات محددة مثل كنز الطود المؤرخ بعصر الدولة الوسطى، واللوحه الجدارية مينيوية الطابع في تل الضبعة والمؤرخة من بدايات الدولة الحديثة، ومناظر وفود الكفتيو على جدران مقابر الأفراد في الدولة الحديثة في طيبة.

ثم تكتفت هذه العلاقات مع الدخول الكبير للمرتزة والتجار والعلماء اليونانيين إلى مصر خلال العصر الصاوي وما تلاه.

Abstract

The traceability of interaction between the pharaonic civilization and its Greek counterpart is important. This interaction can be observed in ancient history from three aspects of research: the communication centers between Egyptians and Greeks during the second half of the first millennium BC; the most prominent figures who transmitted Egyptian knowledge in many diverse fields of Greek culture; and, finally, the interaction between the two civilizations and its historical development until the first century BC. It is this last aspect that this study focuses on, which is related to the historical development of relations between the Egyptian and Greek civilizations.

The importance of this topic lies in the fact that it helps in understanding the path of human civilization and its development throughout history, as the pharaonic state represented an essential link in the chain of this development, and perhaps the most important of them because of its foundational and principled role in human construction in many branches of human knowledge, whether in science, arts or literature, where the pharaonic civilization was characterized by what can be expressed in the concept of originality in knowledge.

Therefore, this study traced the development of interaction between the Egyptian and Greek civilizations through the ancient periods to the first century BC, focusing on specific cases such as the treasure of El-Tod dated to the Middle Kingdom, the Minoan mural scene at Tell al-Dabaa dated to the Thutmoside period at the very beginning of the New Kingdom, and the scenes of *the Keftiu* delegations on the walls of private tombs in the New Kingdom in Thebes.

These relation were then intensified with the great entry of Greek mercenaries, merchants and scholars into Egypt during the Saite period and beyond.

Keywords

Hellenic – Egyptian – El Tod – Avaris – *Keftiu* -mercenaries - Saite.

Introduction

The search on the relations between the pharaonic civilization and its Hellenic counterpart, especially the Egyptian influence, is an important, sensitive and critical topic. The Egyptian influence could be studied across the development of relations between the two civilizations throughout the ancient History till the conquest of Alexander the great, dealing with contact centers between Egyptians and Greeks during the second half of the first millennium BC, and studying the most prominent figures who transferred Egyptian knowledge in many and varied fields to Greek culture. This study will concentrate on the Historical development of the cultural relations between the two civilizations till the Hellenistic Period.

The importance of this topic lies in the need to track the development of human civilization throughout history, so it was - in fact - the pharaonic state represented an essential link in the chain of this progress, and perhaps the most important one because of its founding role in many branches of human knowledge, whether in science, arts or literature, where the pharaonic civilization was characterized by the concept of originality in knowledge.

The sciences of medicine, pharmacy, chemistry were born on the land of Egypt, and geometry with its applications in architecture flourished in it, reached its peak, which the world still stands astonished in front of its capabilities and achievements. In addition to this, the emergence of functional theater to serve religious rituals and ceremonies was created within its temples. Otherwise, the literature, namely the poetry, epics, novels and wisdom, was invented by its genius intellectuals. Finally, the sculpture, mural iconography and music were an artistic expression of its cultural superiority.

It's obvious that knowledge and human civilization were circulating and transferring from one place to another according to environmental conditions and to human factors. It was born during the dawn of history (i.e., Neolithic period) where human settlement, food production and the emergence of villages throughout the Near East on the land of Palestine, with the knowledge of agriculture, herding, the fabrication of pottery and arrowheads within the Natufian civilization, dated from Late Epipaleolithic (12000-9500 BC).

This kind of living spread throughout the Near East from the Jarmo and Tell Hassouna in northeastern Iraq and Ubaid in its south stretched from the Gulf region to Nabta in the Western desert of Egypt. So, The Natufian influences moved towards the southwest to pass through the land of Sinai and settle in the Neolithic villages of Fayoum, Merimde Beni Salama and Helwan throughout the Nile Valley. (J. J. Ibáñez and others, 2018, p. 226-252) Villages developed into towns, cities and metropolises during the fifth and fourth millennium BC through predynastic times and the Naqada civilization in its three phases. (M. Bosker, 2022, p. 103677)

This crucial stage in the history of human civilization completed around the end of the fourth millennium BC. With the Egyptians' knowledge of writing and the birth of the dominant central state, which extended its influence over the Nile Valley and the neighboring deserts. (D. Valbelle, 1998, p. 1-34) Therefore, it was the most prominent and ancient model of the central state in the world, which was characterized by its anciently, originality and amazing ability to continue and survive over thousands of years. (J.-C. Moreno-Garcia, 2013, p. 185-217)

Although Egypt was sometimes exposed to migrations and infiltrations, the state in its strength confronted, and in its weakness swallowed and digested it. Significantly, these migrations have played a major role in the development of Egyptian society, its ensuring the continuation of its contribution to all human civilization. (D. Valbelle, 1990)

Because of the importance of the Egyptian contribution to the course of human civilization, all international scientific and cultural institutions paid attention to its history, and educational programs devoted chapters to its achievements and excellence. Even, the major international universities established professorships, complete educational, research programs and specialized scientific institutes to study the ancient Egyptian civilization or what has become currently the "Egyptology". (E. Bloxam and I. Shaw, 2020, p. 1-32)

In our time, where the West represents the title of its progress with its scientists, thinkers, philosophers, and theorists, it is believed that the locomotive of human civilization was once in the East and in its focus the pharaonic state. Rather, the fascination with this state reached the point of inspiration among intellectuals, and what is known as obsession for Egypt (Egyptomania). (J. S. Curl, 1994)

Here comes the role of the Greek civilization, which acted as a bridge through which the manifestations of Eastern civilization moved to the West and its philosophers, thinkers and scientists for what they transferred from Egypt and the ancient Near East. Therefore, philosophy was born from the wisdom of the priests, the emergence of theater appeared from religious ceremonies, mathematical and physical theories began with the scientific priestly schools in Egypt, Phoenicia, Babylon and others.

Herodotus, the father of Greek historiography was fascinated by the land of the pharaohs. He pointed out that Egypt is the origin of many elements of Greek culture. This culture also benefited from the Near Eastern civilizations, Phoenician, Babylonian, Assyrian and Aramaic. Egypt may have played a role in this way as a civilized bridge between these Eastern civilizations and Greece. (C. A. R. Gordillo, 2021, p. 98-121)

Similarly, Diodorus of Siculus mentioned that Egypt is the country that includes in its parts the wonder of the Seven Wonders of the World, the first and the most preserved, which is the Great Pyramid. (Diodorus Siculus, *Bibliotheca Historica Books I-V*; P. A. Clayton, and Price, Martin, 1990, p. 158)

The origin of Greek miracle

The research about the origins of Greek civilization has been raised since the publication of Martin Bernal's *Black Athens* which is based on the Afro-Asian origins of classical civilization. (M. Bernal, 1991; id. 2006) This study aimed to reject Eurocentric theory, which has a racist nature characteristic of the Aryan element, and which attributes the origin of the "Greek miracle" and the credit for human progress to Indo-Europeans and the peoples of the North. (M. Akmal 2010, p. 26–30 ; Samir Amin, 1988 ; A. S. Ansari 1976, p. 155–166; G. Bademci, B. Gulsah, S. H. Funda 2005, p. 810–812; S. Bessis 2003; J. M. Blaut, 1993; J. M. Blaut, 2000; P. Bairoch, 1993; E. H. P. Baudet, 1959; Leo J. Elders, 2018; Nahyan Fancy, 2013, p. 525–545; Andre Gunder Frank, 1998; K. Haushofer, 1924 ; Kees Van der Pijl, 2014; C. Kren, 1971, p. 490–498; V. Lambropoulos, 1993; M. Lefkowitz, 1996; D. Lin, 2008, p. 41–45; S. Lindqvist, *Exterminate all the brutes*. New Press, New York 1996; R. Malhotra, 2013; R. Preiswerk, 1978; J. Rabasa, 1994 ; J. Rüsen, 2004, p. 118–129; E. Shohat and R. Stam, 1994; K. Vlassopoulos, 2011; I. Xypolia, 2016)

However, Bernal and his hypothesis has come under much criticism, and a third school has now emerged that proposes the idea of the internal development of Greek civilization away from external influences. Nevertheless, even the proponents of this trend cannot deny the civilized contact with Pharaonic Egypt. The obvious critique of Bernal's theory was that he fell into another fatal trap, the growing of Afrocentrism, another racial theory.(M. Ani, 1994; M. K. Asante, 1988 ; M. K. Asante 1990 ; M. K. Asante 1998 ; M. K. Asante 2007 ; M. Karenga, 1993 ; T. Kershaw, 1992, p. 160–168 ; T. Adeleke, 2009; R. C. Bailey, 2003; J. Berlinerblau, 1999; A. J. Binder, 2002; A. T. Browder, 1992; E. A. Henderson, 1995; F. Reno, 2003; S. Howe, 1998; D. Konstan, 1997, p. 261–269; M. Lefkowitz, 1996; M. Lefkowitz, 1996; M. Lefkowitz, and R. G. M. Rogers 1996; W. J. Moses, 1998; P. M. Sniderman, 2002; C. E. Walker, 2000)

Bernal's assumptions were part of the analyses of this emerging trend, which was embodied at the turn of the new millennium in the Indian writer Depesh Chakrabarti's *Provincializing Europe: Postcolonial Thought and Historical Difference*. (D. Chakrabarty, 2000)

The development of Egyptian Hellenic relations during the Bronze Ages

It is perhaps useful to trace the development of Egyptian Hellenic relations historically until the middle of the first millennium BC, when the civilizational link between them reached its peak. Several evidence can be identified as clear evidence of the cultural communication between Egypt and Greece during the Bronze Ages.

I. The Middle Bronze Age and the discovery of El-Tod Treasure

The relations between Egypt and the centers of Minoan civilization in Crete were ancient, as both regions were part of an extensive trade network in the eastern Mediterranean since the end of the third millennium BC. The most prominent evidence of this is the discovery in Crete of a dish sherds made of Egyptian Obsidian, and scarab seals of models dating back to the First Intermediate Period in Egypt (c. 2160-2055 BC). (J. G. P. Best, and N. M. W. Vries, 1980; R. Hägg and N. Marinatos, 1987; K. Branigan, 1981, p. 23–33; O. Dickinson, 1994, p. 284.)

At a later stage, namely the First Middle Minoan (MM I) Period (c. 2000-1800 BC), Minoan craftsmen imitated Egyptian scarab seals with Minoan motifs. A sistrum was also uncovered made of burnt clay, known to be an Egyptian musical instrument used in the processions of the ritual goddess Hathor. This object was dated from the first Middle Minoan period (MM IA) (c. 2000 – 1900 BC). (M. Jorrit, E. Sara and E. H. Cline, 2016, p. 9-17; P. G. Quenet and others, 2013, p. 515–25)

On the other hand, the Louvre Museum (E 15128-E 15318) and the Egyptian Museum in Cairo keep a collection of artifacts dating back to the reign of King Amenemhat II (c. 1915-1885 BC). It

was unveiled in the foundations of the god Montu temple in the Tod area south of Luxor by Bisson de la Roque in February 1936, part of which arrived at the Louvre Museum in 1936 according to the laws of sharing. This collection is known as the "Treasure of Tod" and considered as one of the most important qualitative archaeological discoveries in pharaonic Egypt. A group of archaeological pieces and finds made of various metals and semi-precious stones like lapis lazuli but dominated by silver artifacts. Since the Egyptian environment lacks silver metal as well as lapis lazuli, it is believed that these products are brought from abroad.

Since the closest silver mines to Egypt were on the island of Crete, it became logic that silver artifacts were brought from there and be linked to the flourishing Minoan civilization on the island during the Middle Bronze Age. A hypothesis emerged that approximates it to what was found in the Minoan metropolis in Knossos and dates from the nineteenth century to the seventeenth century BC. But the only observation about this assumption is that what was found in Knossos were artifacts of terracotta. (P. G. Quenet and others, 2013, p. 515–25)

For P. Warren and V. Hankey, specialists in Minoan archaeology, the most likely hypothesis is that the artisans who made the silver tom vessels were Cretans or people in close contact with the Cretans, because Minoan pottery reproduces identical shapes. (1989, p. 131-4.)

There is a similarity between the silver vessel preserved in the Egyptian Museum (CGC 70591) and the vessel of Peristeria Kantharos, which was found in a Mycenaean archaeological context. If the possibility of a post-Amenemhat II date of burial of the treasure is enslaved, the only remaining hypothesis is that the vessel of Peristeria Kantharos is an ancient Minoan style that was inserted into Mycenaean tomb.⁽¹⁾(R. Laffineur, 1988, p. 27 and pl. II/c-d; J. Maren, 1987, p. 221-2, fig. 1-2)

¹ Cf. another team of specialists linked some of the pieces of this collection to Asian origins, especially made from lapis lazuli extracted from the mines of the Iranian plateau. The cylinder seals from Mesopotamia, from Ebla and a

II. Egypt and the Aegean islands by the beginning of the New Kingdom

The relations that linked the ladies of the ruling house in Egypt at the time of the exit of the Hyksos from Egypt, and the islands of the Aegean, especially the Minoan centers in Crete, were unique and still provoking questions for researchers. The most prominent of these women is queen Ahhotep, the wife of Seqenenra Taa II and the mother of both Kames and Ahmose I.

One of the most prominent artifacts found in her tomb in Draa Abu al-Naga in the western bank of Luxor is the famous fighting axe, which is made from Gold-plated wood bearing the name of her son Ahmose I, an ornament of the legendary griffin of Minoan art, and a Minoan style silver boat model was also revealed inside the tomb.

On the other hand, this queen assumed the title *nbt ḥ3w-nbw* meaning "Lady of the Aegean Islands", a title, with the finds, that show the Minoan influence, some specialists have led to the suspicion that the queen is of Minoan origin. (P. Jánosi, 1992, p. 99–105; E. D. Carney, 2001, p. 25–41; M. Betrò, 2022 p. 131–152)

However, archaeological reality shows that the Minoan trading centers of Crete had economic relations with both rival kingdoms in Egypt: the Hyksos in Avaris and the kings of the Seventeenth Dynasty in Thebes. (M. K. Jorrit, S. E. Cole and E. H. Cline, 2016, p. 9-17)

III. The iconographical Minoan mural fresco at Tell el-Dabaa

The iconographical Minoan mural fresco found at Tell el-Dabaa is of particular interest to Egyptologists as well as specialists in the study of Minoan civilization in Crete, although these

third group postulated another region, Anatolia, as the origin of some gold Artifacts in the group. (P. R. S. Moorey, 1999)

studies have seen a wide critique of the identity of Cretan artists. The painting depicts a bullfighting scene known in Minoan art, a scene of legendary griffins and hunting scenes.

Some scattered pieces of the mural in the palace were discovered by the Austrian archaeological mission led by Manfred Bietak working around the Hyksos capital, Avaris (Tell el-Dabaa).² Although, M. Bietak, in his preliminary publication, in his book “*Avaris: The Capital of the Hyksos*” believed that the scene was dated from the Hyksos period or the beginning of the 18th dynasty. (M. Bietak and N. Marinatos, 1995, p. 49-62) This hypothesis is now excluded, and the fresco is dated by the coregency period between Hatshepsut (c. 1479-1458 BC), and Thutmose III (c. 1479-1425 BC). It represents evidence on the Egyptian relations with Crete and the world of the Aegean islands.

The stratigraphical context confirmed that they date back to an early period of the Eighteenth Dynasty. Nonetheless, the Austrian Egyptologist justified his dating by saying that the pieces of the painting were found in layers older than the period of construction of the palace. (M. Bietak, 2000, p. 185-205) However, finding more pieces of painting in an excavation area dating back to the Eighteenth Dynasty was entirely crucial to the subject of dating. Whilst the excavations continued, stratigraphical context indicated that the date of the fresco is the early reign of Thutmose III connected with two scarabs bear the names of pharaohs from the early eighteenth dynasty, as part of the early stage of palace construction. Likewise, a group of small pieces fell from the entrance wall, others in dumps beneath the northeast palace. (M. Bietak, 2000, p. 185-205; M. Bietak, 2018, p. 231-257)

² Tell el Dabaa is in the district of Faqous – Sharqiah Governorate in the east of Delta.

Its original emplacement was in the sanctuary of the king Thutmose III's palace and consisted of thousands of small pieces of colored limestone plaster that often covered the walls of the palace. Fragments of the painting have been partially reassembled to show scenes of bull jumping and wrestling, depicting cats chasing their prey, some hunting scenes, human figures, a white lady in a skirt, and the legendary griffin. (M. Bietak, 2008, p. 249-250)

The details of the painting show symbols of Crete's Minoan art, especially the palace area of Knossos, such as the half-rose decoration and the presence of a large griffin the same size as that of the throne room in Knossos. The technique of the painting is identical to that known in the Aegean islands. It consists of two - or three-layer base coating of limestone plaster, the surface polished with a stone buoy, over which the painting's scenes are painted in wet colors over its white floor. (M. Bietak, 2018, p. 231-257)

Otherwise, there is a prevailing debate about the origin and ethnicity of the artists who painted the painting. Some claim that the fresco was painted by Minoan artists, while others, such as E. H. Cline, believe that this cannot be proven, and that the artists may have had a deep knowledge of Aegean art but are not Minoans. The mural scene may simply be an indication that local artists adopted Minoan culture. (Eric H. Cline, 1998, p. 199-219)

The techniques using plaster in two layers with a highly polished surface, the style and decorations leave no doubt that the artists were Minoans and are not Egyptian. It first appeared in Minoan frescoes. (M. Bietak 2008, p. 249-250) For example, the use of blue instead of gray is a Minoan character, and the Egyptian style of painting will be influenced by it afterwards. (M. Bietak, 2000, p. 185-205)

Moreover, the scenes have not any hieroglyphic legends as the Egyptian style. The composition of the painting also included mountain views and decorations that fit perfectly with those of the Aegean world. It is clear the scene was made by Minoan artists working in Avaris. (M. Bietak, 2000, p. 185-205)

The pressing question now must be why this painting appeared in one of the palaces of king Thutmose III, a puzzling question for Egyptologists as well as Minoan specialists. According to M. Bietak, the use of specific Minoan royal motifs in a palace at Tell el Dabaa indicates a meeting at the highest level that must have taken place between the court of Knossos and Egypt. (M. Bietak, 2008, p. 249-250)

The presence of Minoan royal emblems in the scene, such as griffins, and the depiction of women in skirts often indicate a political marriage between Thutmose III and a princess from Crete. (M. Bietak, N. Marinatos, and C. Palyvou, 2007. p. 173; M. Bietak, 2008b)

The unique style of paintings revealing an international era of cultural interaction between Egypt and the Eastern Mediterranean region. Tell el-Dabaa also appears as a center of cultural exchange, which means that the city was very important to Egypt after the exit of Hyksos. (M. Bietak, 2008, p. 249-250; N. Marinatos, 2010, p. 325-356; N. Marinatos, 2013)

The location of Avaris on the eastern bank of the Pelusian branch of the Nile, at least as of the Hyksos rule, was one of the most important points of contact between the eastern Mediterranean regions and Egyptian civilization, especially about Egyptian relations with the Aegean region. This contact reached its peak during the reign of King Thutmose III, with the depiction of the *Keftiu* delegations in the tombs of high officials in Luxor, and the influences of the Aegean region in Egyptian art became increasingly evident.

During this phase, different sites can be identified in Avaris and Bi-Rameses (Tell el-Dabaa/Qantir), which can be described as spaces of cultural encounter, each within a different social sphere: the first is the river port, where sailors and artisans meet and some kind of exchange of experiences takes place, perhaps focusing primarily on economic concerns; the second is the temple of the god Seth, which has been agreed to be glorified by many areas of Syria and the eastern Delta in Egypt; the last is the royal palace of Thutmose III, where the interweaving of different cultural practices in architecture and art is expressed at the highest political level. This linking of different cultures, visible at the site of Tell el-Dabaa/Qantir, resulting from external migration and economic, ritual and social contact, formed the basis for the prosperity and creative achievements that characterized the Eastern Mediterranean during the Late Bronze Age. (M. Bietak, and C. von Rüden, 2016, p. 18-23)

IV. Scenes of the *Keftiu* in the New Kingdom private tombs at Thebes

With the beginning of the New Kingdom, the representation of foreign delegations bringing tributes (gifts) to the Egyptian king was a favorite theme in the iconographic program of the private tombs at Thebes. Eight of these scenes in tombs belonging to the senior officials of the Egyptian state are characterized, among other peoples, by their association with the inhabitants of the Aegean islands and always consist exclusively of male envoys.

In the legends on its scenes, they were called by the ethnic expression "*keftiu*", which was often the name for the habitants of Crete, or "*people from $jw-hry-ib-nw w3d-wr$* " which can be translated as "people from the islands in the middle of the Great Green" and this expression almost certainly represented the Egyptian geographical definition of the Aegean islands, perhaps including the Peloponnese Peninsula.

These scenes appeared from the reign of Queen Hatshepsut until the early reign of King Amenhotep III, a period spanning nearly a century between 1480 and 1380 BC, and these scenes are as follows:

Tomb Number	King	Function	Name
TT 71	Hatshepsut	Chief steward of Amon	Senenmut.
TT 39	Thutmose III	Second prophet of Amon	Baimre
TT 155	Thutmose III	Chief steward of Amon	Antef
TT 131	Thutmose III	Vizir	Useramun
TT 86	Thutmose III	First prophet of Amon	Menkheperreseneb
TT 100	Thutmose III- Amenhotep II	Vizier	Rekhmire
TT 85	Thutmose III- Amenhotep II	Prince, royal registrar	Amenemheb
TT 89	Amenhotep III	Steward in the Southern City	Amenmose

In one of the most important textual types of evidence accompanying these scenes is the depiction of the *Keftiu* delegation in the tomb of Vizier Rekhmire:

"The coming of the chiefs of Keftiu and the chiefs of the sea islands in peace, with humility, bow their heads because of the power of his Majesty the king, Menkheperre, may he live forever, when they heard his achievements in all foreign countries, carrying gifts (Inu) on their backs, asking to breathe, and wanting to be loyal to his Majesty the king, so that they may be protected by the power of his Majesty." (N. d. G. Davies 2021; G. Pieke and A. Den Doncker, 2019)

In any case, upon closer examination, these scenes appear to be illustration of a historical reality that has exaggerated Egyptian control. The men of the *Keftiu*, depicted, although shown prostrate in the presence of the pharaoh appear as equal members of the international diplomatic community of the Near East, not as representatives of states under Egyptian control.

This type of diplomatic nature was a symbolic form of strengthening and affirming political and economic relations. From the Egyptian point of view, it serves as a document of the Egyptian imperial political strategies adopted by the policy of the Egypt in the Late Bronze Age. (C. Algarvio, 2023, p. 1–35)

Processions of foreigners became a favorite theme for XVIIIth dynasty artists, not only because of the Egyptian ethnographic interest in exotic lands, but also because the depiction of these ceremonial events was an integral part of the power structures of Egyptian society.

These ceremonies and their scenes, from social and political point of view, served the Egyptian pharaoh and his senior statesmen as a two-pronged tool of political power. On the one hand, to show how close his employees are to him and delegate some of them to perform some of his sovereign functions such as receiving foreign delegations, and on the other hand, he showed his people that his power had reached the borders of the ancient world with its inhabited parts. (D. Panagiotopoulos, 2001, p. 263-283; J. Vercoutter 1956, p. 33-123, 125-158; E. Sakellarakis 1987; Wachsmann 1987, 93-99; Haider 1988, 1-8; Osing 1992a, 273-280; Osing 1992b, 25-36; Cline 1994, 32; Helck 1995, 21-30)

Otherwise, the Myceneans cultural expansion in the Near East during the Late Bronze Age, provides a clear example of later Greek settlements. In Egypt, however, the nature of contacts with Myceneans was quite different, and at least during this era the concept of foreign settlements within its territory was not accepted. However, late Myceneans pottery has been found in small quantities

at more than a dozen Egyptian sites along the Nile Valley to Thebes. There are even references to isolated discoveries as far south as Aswan and Nubia. (J. Kelder, 2013, p. 125–140)

These finds were mostly of the amphora style characteristic of the Peloponnese Peninsula which were used for maritime shipping. This archaeological evidence only proves the existence of a Mycenaean trading activity and cannot be considered as an indication of the existence of regular Mycenaean colonies, although there is no doubt that many Greek merchants may have temporarily resided in Egypt to tend their trade. (J. Kelder, 2013, p. 125–140)

During the first millennium BC

By the end of the LBA about the 12th century BC, and the great attack that wiped out most of the civilizations and states of the ancient world, groups of them reached the northern coasts of Egypt, attacked it by sea, and Rameses III (c. 1186-1155 BC) was able, with his army, to stop their naval advance. These groups were called "the Sea Peoples" by Egyptian sources, perhaps including Greeks who were invaded by other, more virulent factions, whom Greek sources identified as the Dorians. (N. K. Sandars, 1978)

Although the Egyptian state succeeded in halting the advance of the sea peoples, its arrival heralded the end of an era of the imperial politics that dominated the capabilities of the ancient world, the beginnings of the Iron Age in the Aegean Sea and the Near East with the birth of new political entities.

Egypt also experienced a long period of shrinking political and military influence after the imperial tide period during the LBA. However, this period, which is termed the Late Period in the term of time and in exterior politics, witnessed some attempt of revival and self-assertion. (F. Payraudeau, 2020, p. 19-63)

In any case, the Greek interest in Egypt before their use as mercenaries in the Egyptian army was limited, but the discovery of some Egyptian finds in Greece indicates the existence of relations and perhaps direct contact between the two civilizations. Some pieces of Egyptian antiquities appear in Greece such as amulets, statues, pottery, scarabs and stone seals - intermittently at Greek sites during the First Iron Age as random imports, possibly via the Near East or through the maritime way. Some have been found in Crete, Sparta, Argos, Athens, Corinth, Rhodes, and Chios. (B Porter and R. L. B. Moss, Rosalind L. B., 1951, p. 401; R. B. Brown, 1974)

Nevertheless, there are two centers in the Greek world that were characterized by direct relations with Egypt, Crete and Samos. This seems normal; Crete was the first stop on the direct sea route between Egypt and Greece. On Crete, small pottery, bronze vessels and cups with handles in the shape of the Egyptian lotus plant were found: five of them in the Ida Cave, two from tombs near Knossos and one from Amnesos. (J. Boardman, John, 1967 ; J. N. Coldstream, 1967, p. 147-148) Egyptian finds in Knossos, Euboea and Lefkand seem to indicate an older date from the middle of the 9th century BC. (J. Boardman, 1977, p. 83, pl. 18)

Among the most notable Egyptian objects uncovered in Greece is a bronze mirror in Perachora, dated before the end of the 8th century in the Museum of Athens. A bronze statue of the god Horus in Argos, two statuettes and a decorative element in Rhodes and a statuette of an ibis representing the god Thoth at Miletus. (P. A. Mountjoy, 2004, p. 189 – 200.) Necklaces and amulets were also found small flower-shaped, probably belonging to Egyptian earrings or wreath, at various locations in eastern Greece, where they in turn inspired locally produced flower or fruit necklaces. (J. Boardman, John, 1967; J. N. Coldstream, 1967, p. 147-148)

However, as of the beginning of the 7th century BC, a workshop in Rhodes produced small pottery that elaborately imitated models Egyptian is like a brown vase found in Athens and dates to the

second quarter of the seventh century. (V. Webb, 1972, p. 150, V. Webb, 1978; E. Brann, 1962, 58, no. 287) In Tarquinia, a pottery seal and vase bearing the name of the Egyptian king Bochoris (c. 720-715 BC) was discovered.

On the other hand, the earliest reference in the texts to the Greek presence in Egypt appears, in what Herodotus mentions regarding the story of a merchant from the region of Coleus, whose journey to the west veered while on his way to Egypt. The story indicates that the journey was usual for him and that the adventure in which the protagonist was to be took place around 638 BC. This meant that there were trade relations between Egypt and Eastern Greece in the mid-seventh century. (Hdt, IV, 152; A. B. Lloyd, 1975, chap. 2; T. S. Brown, 1965, p. 60-76.)

During the 6th century in Saïs, one of the leading of the families of Libyan origin, succeeded in controlling the Delta and establishing a new dynasty, the XXVIth Dynasty, or the Saite dynasty. The founder of the dynasty, Psamtik I (c. 664-610 BC), first hired Carian mercenaries from Asia Minor to defeat his rivals in the Delta. From this time the numbers of Greeks in Egypt as merchants and mercenary soldiers began to grow. (Hdt, II, 2-3; A. Spalinger, 1976. p. 133–147; F. Payraudeau, 2020, p. 229-245)

In this context, Herodotus gave another indication about the Carian mercenary soldiers. The prophecy of Commander Psamtik I encouraged the call of the "bronze men" to reclaim his throne. Soon after, the ships of Ionian pirates and Carians were diverted by the storm; they reached the Egyptian coast wearing bronze shields. By helping Psamtik, he was able to get rid of his rivals, and as a reward for his help, gave them lands – known as Stratopeda, i.e. camps - stretching on the Pelusian branch of the Nile River in the far east of the Delta. (Hdt, II, 2-3; A. Spalinger, 1976, p. 133–147)

Herodotus reports that these mercenaries were treated with generosity and respect by the king, who even founded the "School of Interpreters". He adds that because of their settlement in Egypt, and thanks to their relations with the ruling family, the Greeks began to communicate with them when they came to Egypt, whether for trade or to work as mercenary soldiers in the Egyptian army. Since they were the first foreign men to settle in the Nile Valley. (Hdt, II, 152-4: A. B. Lloyd, 1975, chap. 14) Diodore mentions that Psamtik also encouraged the Greeks to trade with Egypt. (Cezary Kucewicz, 2014, p. 9-12) While Herodotus indicates that the Carians and Ionians arrived on the Egyptian coast by mistake, it is not excluded that Gyges, the Anatolian king of Lyia, sent them to help Psamtik I. (A. H. Gardiner, 1961, p. 359; A. Spalinger, 1976, p.133–147; F. Payraudeau, 2020, p. 227-236)

There is no direct evidence of the use of Greeks as mercenary soldiers during the reign of king Necho II (c. 610–595 BC), but Herodotus states that the king himself dedicated to the god Apollo the shield he wore during his victorious campaign in Syria in 608 BC, at the temple of Branchids, near Miletus.(Hdt, II, 159-161; Diodorus Siculus, III, 43 : C. H. Oldfather 1933; D. B. Redford, 1992, p. 447-48) This mention in Herodotus may mean that the king appreciated the participation of Greek mercenary soldiers in his campaign against Syria.

In 605 BC, the Babylonian forces led by Nebuchadnezzar defeated the Egyptian army led by Necho II at Karkimish. In the ruins of Qarqamish, filled with Egyptian finds, including seals bearing the name of king Necho himself, a Greek-style bronze shield has been found. The discovered site may indicate that this object belonged to a Greek mercenary soldier who participated in his war against the Babylonians. (L. Woolley and T. E. Lawrence, 1921, p. 123, House D; F. Payraudeau, 2020, p. 246-249)

As a continuation of the increasing presence of Greek mercenaries in the Egyptian army, Herodotus also noted their participation in a campaign by king Psamtik II (c. 595-589 BC) on Nubia. (Hdt, II, 159: A. B. Lloyd, 1972, p. 268; A. B. Lloyd, 1975, p. 32) Egyptian antiquities show that this was a

major campaign carried out in 591 against the kingdom of Nabata, which was once again threatening the southern Egyptian borders. (A. H. Gardiner, 1961, p. 359 s; F. Payraudeau, 2020, p. 254-258)

Greek inscriptions on Egyptian antiquities cannot be overlooked as evidence of the Greek presence in the Nile Valley during this stage of its history; there are inscriptions engraved on the legs of the huge rock statues of Abu Simbel, about 300 km south of Aswan. These inscriptions belong to Greek and Carian soldiers who accompanied the king and may have held important positions there later. Among these inscriptions are the following: "When King Psamatikhos came to Elephantine, those who sailed with Psammatikhos the son of Theokles wrote this, and they came upstream above Kerkis as far as the river permits. Potasimto commanded the non-native speakers, Amasis the Egyptians. Arkhon son of Amoibikhos inscribed us, and Peleqos son of Oudamos". (J. H. Breasted, 1906, p. 506-8; A. Bernard and O. Masson, 1957, p.1-46; O. Masson, 1994, p. 137-40)

King Abries (c. 570-589 BC) expanded the use of Greek mercenaries. In 570, he led an army of thirty thousand Carrian and Ionian soldiers to confront his rival for the throne Ahmose II (Amasis). (Hdt, II, 161-169; Diodorus Siculus, *Bibliotheca Historica*, I, Chap. 68 ; P. Clayton, 2006, p. 195-197; I. Shaw, P. and Nicholson, 1995, p. 36-37; M. Abd El-Maksoud et D. Valbelle, 2013, p. 1-13; F. Payraudeau, 2020, p. 260-265 ; M. H. Nour, J. M. Iskander and S. Hashem, 2023, p. 221-239)

Despite their courage and valor in defense, they were defeated and Amasis became king (c. 570-526 BC). Nevertheless, this clash with the Greek mercenaries of Abries, Amasis favored the Greeks and seems to have used them early in his reign to oppose the attack of the king of Babylon, Nebuchadnezzar II. He even married a Greek princess from Cyrina. (J. Ray, 1996, p. 27-31; F. Payraudeau, 2020, p. 265-272)

According to Herodotus, Amasis transferred stratupida's mercenaries to Memphis and took them as his guards. (Hdt, II, 154, 181) Greek mercenaries occupied a fortress in the far east of the Delta,

Daphnae (now Tell Defenneh). The most important privilege granted by Amasis, however, to the Greeks was the privilege of living in the Greek way in Naucratis. (Hdt, II, 178-9)

Therefore, it can be assumed that the large number of Greek delegations to Egypt and the formation of communities and colonies may have begun with their use as mercenary soldiers, then merchants, students of science and seekers of knowledge, and this was intensively from the sixth century BC and from many regions in Greece, whether from Crete, the Peloponnesian Peninsula, continental Greece, the Ionian coasts and the Mediterranean islands.

The great centers of communication between the Egyptians and the Greeks were represented in the Delta, such as Naucratis and Sais, which received the most prominent Greek figures who were influenced by the Egyptian civilization in many fields, including Thales, the father of philosophy, Pythagoras, the author of mathematical theories, Solon, the famous Athenian legislator and one of the seven greats, his Spartan counterpart Lycurgus, Archimedes in the field of natural sciences, Herodotus, the father of history, Plato the ideal philosopher, Aristotle, the first teacher, and others. These personalities who represent the keys to Hellenic knowledge had a strong interaction with the Egyptian civilization whether this influence is through direct visit or through the transmission of knowledge.

Egyptian influence

In light of the continuous change in the theories of civilizational emergence and development, which does not stop evolving, justifying and rooting, one of the most prominent constants of all these theories remains that the initial Hellenic sources themselves indicate undoubtedly that Egypt is considered the cradle of many cultural characteristics in various fields such as religious thought, the development of philosophy, the foundations of architecture, construction and experimental sciences.

A clear fascination can be observed in the writings of Greek travelers, thinkers and historians such as Plato Hekataios, Hecataeus of Abdera³ and Herodotus. Diodorus of Sicily gave a list of Greek philosophers and scientists who traveled to Egypt in search of science and knowledge, where poets, architects, theorists, legislators, mathematicians and mythological figures such as Orpheus, Homer, Lycurgus, Solon, Plato, Pythagoras. (Muntz 2017)

The Greeks had many contacts with the Egyptians since ancient times, perhaps dating back at least to the VIth dynasty by the end of the third millennium BC, whether with the Minoans on Crete, other Aegean Islands, or later with the Mycenaeans of the Peloponnese Peninsula during the Middle and Late Bronze Age. Otherwise, during the first millennium BC with the arrival of Greek mercenaries and merchants to Egypt with king Psamtik I's summoning the direct contact between the two cultures was reinforced. The kings of XXVIth dynasty (c. 664-525 BC) expanded their use of Greek mercenaries and traders.

It was during this period this time the trading colony of Naucratis was founded in the western Delta around the middle of the 6th century BC. This colony represented a point of commercial and cultural contact between the Egyptian and Greek civilizations. It was in this colony that the Greeks obtained privileges granted to them by Ahmose II "Amasis" (c. 571-526 BC). A pharaoh who bore the epithet "Greek lover". He admired the Hellenic culture by participating in their religious celebration at Naucratis and even by celebrating the reconstruction of the Apollo's temple at Delphi, which was destroyed in 548 BC. (A. Jr. Leonard, W. D. E. and Coulson, 1979, p. 151-168; A. Jr. Leonard and W. E. Coulson, 1982, p. 361-380; A. Jr. Leonard, 1997; A. Jr. Leonard, 2001; W. D. E. Coulson, 1996; A. Villing, 2019, 204-247)

³ Many of scholars believe that most of the Egyptian account related by Diodorus of Sicily is drawn primarily from Hekataios of Abdera's work on (Dillery 1998, p. 255-275).

The Greeks learned a lot from the Egyptians. The sculptor Rhoecus of Samos, at the end of the 6th century BC, imparted the technique of casting wax into hollow molds to make statues, a technique that revolutionized Greek sculpture. The ancient Egyptians had known it for at least three thousand years.

A consecration text recorded on a vase dedicated to the goddess Aphrodite uncovered in the ruins of the city of Naucratis confirmed the existence of this famous sculptor in Egypt between 575 and 550 BC. (D. Williams, 2015, p. 177-198) According to Herodotus, upon his return he developed the design of the temple of Hera on Samos, and the shape of its many columns was inspired by the hypostyle halls in the Egyptian temples. (H. Kyrieleis, 1993. p. 125–153; H. Kyrieleis, 2004; B. A. Barletta, 2001; A. Ohnesorg, 1990, p. 181–192)

Furthermore, Greek sculpture may owe the Egyptians the Kouros, a statue of a young man standing, advancing with his left leg as Egyptian style. Diodorus was told that it looks a lot like Egyptian statues. Some specialists in Hellenic art have also put forward the hypothesis of Egyptian influence in the emergence of the "Archaic smile" known in the features of Egyptian statues, which appeared in many Greek statues in the sixth century BC, such as Kore of Thera. (Sarcone 2021, p. 193-214) This smile marked the statues of the pharaohs Apries and Ahmose II (Amasis). (J. Krebsbach, 2024)

Similarly, regarding the cults and rituals of the Greek religion, ancient writers noted a great influence from Egyptian thoughts. Herodotus devoted at least twenty chapters in his book on Egypt to show Egyptian influences in the religious field. For example, he wrote about similarities between the cult of Dodonian Zeus and the worship of Amun-Ra in the oracle temple at Siwa oasis where the acts of divination. In particular, the hieroscopy which is a divinatory technique based on

the observation of the viscera of sacrificed animals, was common to the Greeks at this time, came from the land of the pharaohs. (Hdt, I, 1; II, 55–56 ; Vitek, 2016, p. 139-164)

According to Herodotus, the Thesmophoria transmitted the rituals of the Danaids from the Nile Valley to Greece, festivals whose rituals dedicate the civilized role of the worship of Demeter, the idol of agriculture and harvest. (Hdt, II, 171; Holland, 2015, p. 182)

On the other hand, while Homer and Hesiod made the superhero Heracles illegitimate son of the idol Zeus, Herodotus considered this hero a child of Amphytrion and Alcmene, who, according to their ancestors, were of Egyptian origin. (Hdt, II, 43) They were descended from Perseus, who was himself a descendant of Aigyptos and Danaos. As for the Greek goddess Athena, it is said that she was inspired by the Egyptian goddess, Neith. Identical to her qualities, she idolized the city of Sais, the capital of the country during the twenty-sixth dynasty in an era that bears her name, the Saite period. (R. El-Sayed, 1982)

In a religious sanctuary where one of Egypt's important annual festivals was held, the feast *Lychnokaia* "Illumination of Lamps". The philosopher Plato spoke in his *Timaeus* that whether they believed the inhabitants of Sais, the founding deity of the city is a goddess whose name, in the Egyptian, is Neith, and in the Greek, as Egyptians claimed is Athens. They had a great appreciation for the Athenians and declared that they are their relatives in some way. (Abdelwahed, 2015, p. 31-45)

However, Herodotus himself agreed that fundamental differences still existed between Greek and Egyptian rituals. For example, he pointed out that cows were sacred in Egypt, and they were not so in Greece. The pig was also unclean to the Egyptians, while it was the characteristic offering of

the worship of Demeter during the Greek festivals of Eleosis or Thismophoria. (Hdt, II, 14; P. E. Newberry, 1928, p. 211-225; Warren R. Dawson, 1928, p. 597-608)

Or again, Greek religious belief sanctified many heroes and turned them into deities, whereas this was not proposed in Egyptian thoughts. (A. Ellis, 2021, p. 1228-1233) The Egyptian religious had sanctified some human figures, and transformed them into a form saints, such as Imhotep, who was sanctified and Heqaib in Aswan, Imhotep son of Habu, Queen Ahmose Nefertari, her son Amenhotep I in the village of Deir el-Medina, King Sneferu in Sinai, and others. (F. Haikal, 2007)

Perhaps it is important to note that Egyptian influence often overlaps with other civilizations of the ancient Near East, and the totality of these civilizations is treated in a single civilizational mass expressed in tradition by the term Eastern origins. The reason for this confusion may be that one of the main routes of movement from Egypt to Greece was via the land route from Sinai to the coast of Palestine, Phoenicia and Asia Minor. (B. Chrubasik, Boris and D. King, 2017, p. 1-11)

Therefore, many Egyptian influences reached Greece through trade movements along this overland route. Nevertheless, through this route, Egyptian influence was also strong in Phoenicia, whose art was deeply imbued with Egyptian artistic traditions, and new Hittite antiquities in northern Syria and Asia Minor borrowed many of their decorative elements from Egyptian art. (J. Aruz, J. 2008, 387-94; M. Bietak, 2013, p. 188-99; B. M. Bryan, 1996, p. 33-79; B. M. Bryan, 2000., p. 71-84; 244-47; M. R. Feldman, 2006 ; E. Gubel, 2000, p. 185-214; M. Heltzer, 1994, p. 318-21; G. Mumford, 2007, p. 141-204; P. Quenet and others, 2013, p . 515-25; B. M. Bryan, 2018.)

Thus, many of the elements that appear to be of Egyptian origin in Greek civilization may have been indirectly connected through the Near Eastern civilizations that served as a gateway for it, especially Phoenician. However, it is also likely that many Egyptian cultural influences were transmitted directly from Egypt by the Greeks via maritime contact.

Conclusion

Finally, this study exposed the development of cultural interconnection between Egypt and the Hellenic world from the MBA to the end of the 1st millennium BC throughout the archaeological and textual evidence. Subsequently, the anciently and originality of Egyptian civilization on one hand and the confirmation of the existence of its relations with Hellenic world approve without doubt its impact as a beacon of knowledge and scientific radiation for the ancient world in general and for the Hellenic civilization in particular.

Furthermore, Egypt was the main dispatch point for Greek scholarship students and seekers of knowledge who came to Egypt in search of its wisdom and knowledge especially with a desire to disciple at the hands of its knowledgeable priests, searching throughout it for wisdom and treasures of Egyptian science.

Then it looks obvious that the Hellenic culture which was the source of inspiration for the renaissance and the beginning of the western development, acted as a cultural bridge to transfer the oriental knowledge, especially the Egyptian one to the occident world. This is the reason that the Egyptian culture was considered as the starting point for the human knowledge in most of its domains, science, arts and literature. This also explains the western interest in it that its curricula insist on teaching in its educational institutions.

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