Forms and Functions of Rhytons in Ptolemaic Egypt

Marwa Abd el-Maguid el-Kady
Lecturer in Tour Guiding Department, Faculty of Tourism and Hotels, Alexandria University

Rhyton is simply a drinking-cup[1], a curved horn-like vessel with a funnel made in the form of an animal's head or forepart (known as "*protome*") set at the bottom of the vessel[2]. Liquid thus was poured from a jug passed through the funnel of the rhyton's horn in a thin stream from a hole made in the animal's mouth into another bowel below[3]. Some rhytons may have a hole with two or more spouts at the bottom[4]. The name "rhyton" (plural "rhyta") is derived from the Greek ῥυτόν meaning "flowing" or "running" or "liquid"[5], which in turn is derived from the verb ῥέω meaning "to flow", or "run" or "stream"[6].

Rhytons were originally Persian artifacts. Generally, under the Achaemenid Dynasty (550-331 BCE), fine bronze wares were produced[7] and Metal[8] vessels, preferably, gold and silver rhytons were were widely spread throughout the Acheamenid Empire[9] (fig.1) besides those made of terracotta[10]. Parthian[11] rhytons became longer

Endnotes

1- G. Savage and H. Newman, *An Illustrated Dictionary of Ceramics*, 2nd ed., (London, 2000), 245.

2- P. R .S. Moorey, 'Metalwork and Glyptic', in H. Bailey, P.W. Avery, C.E. Bosworth, I. Gershevitch, and H.S.G. Darke (ed.), *The Cambridge History of Iran, 2 The Median and Achaemenian Periods*, 4th ed., (Cambridge, 2003), 860.

3- H. Hoffmann, *Sotades Symbols of Immortality on Greek Vases*, (New York, 1997), 3.

4- Moorey, in Bailey, *et al*., *The Cambridge History of Iran, 2 The Median and Achaemenian Periods*, 860.

5- H. G. Liddell, *A Lexicon Abridged from Liddell and Scott's Greek-English Lexicon*, (New York, 1871), 627.

6- Liddell, *A Lexicon Abridged from Liddell and Scott's Greek-English Lexicon*, 623.

7- J. Diviš, *The Art of Bronze Brass and Copper*, (London, 1991), 14.

8- Metal works were known in ancient Iran from the seventh millennium BCE (Neolithic period). The earliest metal works were made of copper. Later objects were made of gold; silver and lead in the second half of the fourth millennium BCE. However, it was in the late second millennium BCE did the bronze objects reach their peak at the time when iron first appeared, J. Turner, *The Dictionary of Art, Hungary IV: Ceramics to Iran*, (London, 1996), 918. The Mesopotamians used the copper ore at the end of the fourth century BCE, while the Egyptians mined copper from 5000-4500 BCE, Diviš, *The Art of Bronze Brass and Copper*, 12.

9- P.R.S. Moorey, *Ancient Iran*, (Oxford, 1975), 37; Turner, *The Dictionary of Art, Hungary Hungary IV: Ceramics to Iran*, 919; Moorey, in Bailey, *et al*., *The Cambridge History of Iran, 2 The Median and Achaemenian Periods*, 860.

10- Turner, *The Dictionary of Art, Hungary IV: Ceramics to Iran*, 921.

11- Parthian: is a term that covers the area between the Syrian desert and central Asia during the period of third century BCE to third century AD due to certain artistic characteristics of Parthians, or developed within regions under their control, J. Wiesehöfer, *Ancient Persia from 550 BC to 650 AD*, (London, 1996), 127.

and thinner than earlier ones[1]. In some cases, the attached figure of the rhtyon (protome) was inspired from Greek mythical subjects such as centaurs, Aphrodite, and Dionysiac scenes[2].

Fig.1 an ancient Persian silver rhyton in the form of a wild goat, British Museum in London.
(After: F. Sarre, *Die Kunst des alten Persien*, (Berlin, 1923), fig.47.)

Moreover, one of the most characteristic motives of the Persian art is animals in different poses; standing, walking, or lying down with legs folded under the body. Most frequently they are untamed animals like ibex, wild goats with large curved horns (fig.1), and feline animals; like lion, panther, and leopard in addition to bulls and horses. The animals in the Persian mind were symbols or assistants of gods that played role in protecting beings against evil[3].

On the other hand, Greek household utensils were most commonly made of baked clay and wood. Objects made of copper and bronze were used in religious cults as gifts for temples. Only wealth households could afford bronze and copper utensils[4]. Animal headed rhytons were reproductions of classic Persian vases as Greek artists adopted luxurious silver and gold Persian artifacts, including Persian rhytons that were brought to Athens and imitated. The Athenians' copies of the Persian rhytons were used in burials and offerings to gods, as the artists made casts of the original metal Persian rhytons. However, the silver rhytons made by Greeks in course of time started to vary in forms and embrace creativity of their own[5].

1- E. Povada and R. Ettinghausen, *7000 Years of Iranian Art*, (Washington, 1965), 30.
2- Wiesehöfer, *Ancient Persia from 550 BC to 650 AD*, 126.
3- Povada and Ettinghausen, *7000 Years of Iranian Art*, 11.
4- Diviš, *The Art of Bronze Brass and Copper*, 30.
5- Hoffmann, *Sotades Symbols of Immortality on Greek Vases*, 5-6. For more concerning Athenian vessels, see J. Boardman, 'the Sixth-centuray Potters and Painters of Athens and their Public', in T. Rasmussen and N. Spivey (ed.), *Looking at Greek Vases*, Cambridge, 1991, 79-102.

Pouring wine from a jug to a bowel through rhytons is represented in many vase paintings and marble reliefs[1]. In Greece, in votive reliefs related to Agathos Daimon, and in the funeral banquets, rhytons are frequent; those which are terminated by the forepart of an animal, fantastic or normal, known by the precise definition of protome[2].

By early fifth century BCE, additions of shapes had been made, the earliest of these are the rhytons in form of animal-heads, and later more complex forms were added. The potter Sotades[3] was well known of the complex formed-rhytons, that included various motives like negros, crocodiles, sphinxes and knucklebones[4](fig.2). Some of Sotadean rhytons have reaches us, particularly those with a split head of two different animals; in some examples that of a donkey or a boar in the right side and a ram in the left[5].

Fig.2 an Attic sphinx rhyton attributed to Sotades (470-460 B.C.), British Museum, GR 1873.8-20.265 (Vases E 788)
(After: D. Williams, 'Vase-Painting in fifth-century Athens', in T. Rasmussen and N. Spivey (ed.), *Looking at the Greek Vases*, (Cambridge, 1991), fig.48).

In Egypt, vessels were used for food and liquids in various forms and materials of utensils. The most common were those made of terracotta; besides others made of stone, metal and faïence[6], wood,

1- Hoffmann, *Sotades Symbols of Immortality on Greek Vases*, 3.
2- M. C. Picard, 'Les influences étrangères au tombeau de Petosiris: Grèce ou Perse?', *BIFAO* 30 (1931), 222.
3- Sotades was an Athenian potter and owner of a workshop, whose work is shown on vases particularly dating from mid-fifth century BCE. He is known to have created different shapes of vessels including rich forms of rhytons. The Sotades works are more likely to have been related to libation practices and drinking rituals, Hoffmann, *Sotades Symbols of Immortality on Greek Vases*, 1.
4- D. Williams, 'Vase-Painting in fifth-century Athens', in T. Rasmussen and N. Spivey (ed.), *Looking at the Greek Vases*, (Cambridge, 1991), 117.
5- Hoffmann, *Sotades Symbols of Immortality on Greek Vases*, 61.
6- 'Faience is a glazed non-clay ceramic material', P. T. Nicholson and E. Peltenburg, 'Egyptian Faience', in P. T. Nicholson and I. Shaw (ed.), *Ancient Egyptian Materials and Technology*, (London, 2000), 177.

glass, leather, bone, ivory and gourds[1]. Other types of vessels of precious metals like gold and silver were used for religious and ritual purposes[2]. Copper vessels of excellent craftsmanship were known in Egypt since the archaic period. However, it was used more widely in the New Kingdom[3].

Due to the increased foreign contacts in the New Kingdom, painted decoration on pottery was influenced by the Aegean ceramics[4]. Imitations of Aegean rhytons are figured on the walls of the tombs the nobles of the New Kingdom at least from the eighteenth Dynasty on[5]. Those were obviously made of precious materials, specially gold (painted in yellow), silver (painted in white), copper and bronze (painted in red)[6]. For those represented on the walls of the Theban tombs of the nobles, different forms of rhytons are clearly depicted. Those can be found in the tombs of Rekhmire (Thebes no.100)[7], Menkheperreseneb (Thebes no.86)[8] (fig.3), Mery (Thebes no.95)[9], Puimre (Thebes no.39)[10], Hepu (Thebes no.66)[11], Amenmose (Thebes no.89)[12], Horemheb (Thebes no.78)[13], Sebekhotep (Thebes no.63)[14], Imiseba (Theban no.65)[15], Amenemheb (Thebes no. 85)[1] in addition to

1- P. Lacovara, 'Vessels', in D. B. Redford (ed.), *The Oxford Encyclopedia of Ancient Egypt*, vol.III, (Cairo, 2001), 478.

2- J. D. Bourriau, 'Pottery', in P. T. Nicholson and *et al*. (ed.), *Ancient Egyptian Materials and Technology*, (London, 2000), 142.

3- Diviš, *The Art of Bronze Brass and Copper*, 12.

4- Lacovara, in Redford (ed.), *The Oxford Encyclopedia of Ancient Egypt*, vol.III, 478.

5- For more details concerning the Aegean rhytons, cf. R. B. Koehl, Aegean Bronze Age Rhyta, Archaeological Institute of America, Oxford, 2004.

6- J. Vercoutter, L'Égypte et le monde égeen préhellénique, étude critique des sources égyptiennes (du début de la XVIIIe à la fin *de la XIXe dynastie*, Imprimerie de l'Institut Français d'Archéologie Orientale, (Cairo, 1956), 316.

7- Rekhmire rx-mi-ra was a vizier from the time of Tuthmosis III to the reign of Amenophis II, PM I, 206.

8- Menkheperrasonb mn-xpr-ra-snb was the first prophet of Amun under Tuthmosis Tuthmosis III, PM I, 175.

9- Mery mry was the high priest of Amun, overseer of the fields of Amun, overseer of of the granaries and treasury under Amenhotep II, PM I, 195.

10- Puimre pw-im-ra was the second prophet of Amun under Thutmose III, PM I, 71.

11- Hepu Hpw was a vizier under Thotmose IV, PM I, 132.

12- Amenmose imn-msw was the steward in the Southern City (Thebes) under Amenophis III, PM I, 181.

13- Horemheb Hr-m-Hb was superintendent of the sacred cattle and captain of archers who served under Thutmose III through Amenhotep III, PM I, 152.

14- Sobekhotep sbk-Htp was an overseer of the seal under Thuthmosis IV and Amenhotep III, PM I, 125.

15- Originally the tomb was owned by Nebamun nb-imn the scribe of the royal accounts under Hatshepsut and was later usurped by Imiseba ii-mi-sbA the chief of the altar under Ramsses IX, PM I, 129.

to lion-headed rhyton in the tomb of Houya at Tell el-Amarna. The rhytons represented in these tombs have conical and ovoid shapes along with others with various animals' heads: bull, lion, griffon, and dog[2]. They are shown as part of Aegean of Mycenaean influence[3] and Syrian tributes[4]. Vercoutter classified the depictions of these rhytons according to their type[5]. Similar rhytons are represented by Thuthmosis III as Syrian tribute from his thirteenth campaign to the god Amun at Karnak[6], others are figured on the walls of the temple of Madinet Habu from the time of Ramsses III[7].

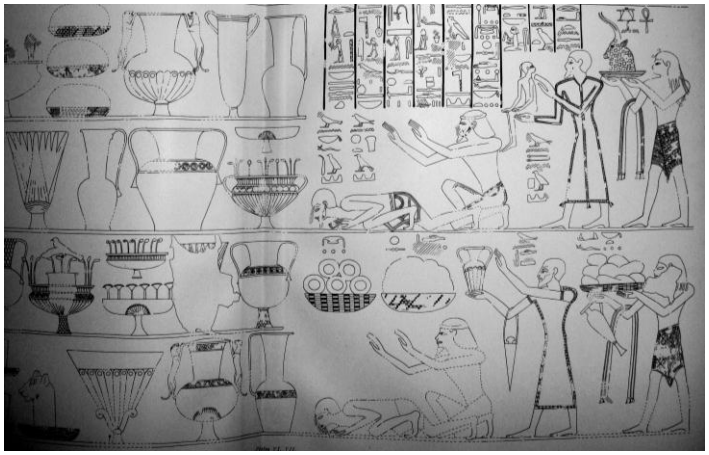


Fig.3 Different forms of rhytons carried by tribute bearers, tomb of Menkheperrsonb (Thebes no.86)
(After: N. de G. Davies, *The Tombs of Menkheperrasonb, Amenmose, and Another*, (London, 1933), pls.IV)

1- Amenemheb imn-m-Hb was a prince and a royal registrar under the reigns from Thutmose III to Amenhotep II, PM I, 170.

2- Vercoutter, *L'Égypte et le monde égeen préhellénique, étude critique des sources égyptiennes (du début de la XVIIIe à la fin de la XIXe dynastie*, 311.

3- Despite being of Aegean origins, Egyptian influences and motifs in general can also appear on Mycenaean metal rhytons and vases, see J. T. Hooker, 'The Mycenae Siege Rhyton and the Question of Egyptian Influence', *in AJA* 71, no.3, (1967), 269-81.

4 Davies, *The Tombs of Menkheperrasonb, Amenmose, and Another*, 7-8.

5- See Vercoutter, *L'Égypte et le monde égeen préhellénique, étude critique des sources égyptiennes (du début de la XVIIIe à la fin de la XIXe dynastie*), 311-28.

6- S. Wachsmann, Aegeans in the Theban Tombs, (Leuven, 1987), 58; Vercoutter, L'Égypte et le monde égeen préhellénique, étude critique des sources égyptiennes (du début de la XVIII e à la fin de la XIXe dynastie), 58-9, 311, doc.246, 316, doc.267 a.

7- Vercoutter, *L'Égypte et le monde égeen préhellénique, étude critique des sources égyptiennes (du début de la XVIIIe à la fin de la XIXe dynastie)*, 312-6, doc.254 a-c., doc.262, docs.281-2, a dog-headed rhyton of a race of pending ears recalling those in the Mycenaean hunting scenes Vercoutter, *L'Égypte et le monde égeen préhellénique, étude critique des sources égyptiennes (du début de la XVIIIe à la fin de la XIXe dynastie)*, 316-7, doc.267 b.

The bull-headed rhytons are in some cases made in forms in which horns are smoothly curved or crooked in the Egyptian manner as Egyptian prototypes rather than Aegean[1]. Although, the jackal-headed and dog-headed rhytons[2] reflect Aegean origins, they are in some examples influenced by the Egyptian pedigree, especially in the jackal-headed ones[3]. The lion-headed rhytons seem to have been more popular in Egypt. The existence of such object dating from the Ramsside period indicates that the Egyptian artisans manufactured these rhytons. Lioness-headed rhytons are also figured. The rhytons with griffin's heads can also be seen among these products[4].

Conical rhytons of Crete Minoan tradition are also represented among other foreign tributes on the walls of the Theban tombs from the New Kingdom (fig.3). They are figured among the vases carried by the "Keftiu" and Syrians on the walls of the eighteenth dynasty tombs of Rekhmire, Menkheperreseneb, and Sebekhotep[5]. Those are made of

1- Wachsmann, Aegeans in the Theban Tombs, 57; Vercoutter, L'Égypte et le monde égeen préhellénique, étude critique des sources égyptiennes (du début de la XVIIIe à la fin de la XIXe dynastie), 317-9, docs. 270-9. The bull-headed rhytons of this form were found in Crete as Mycenaean art, where they were made of precious metals (gold and silver). The Aegean artists used to represent the horns en face. The form with the head of a bull with horns in profile is at the same time normal in the Egyptian representations. Thus, it should be noted that the Egyptian artists waived the Egyptian tradition of the horns in profile with design in the Aegean tradition in a way that the two horns of the bull can be seen. In other words, we are in front of a foreign object with a foreign technique imported by the Egyptians. Since it was made in an Egyptian workshop, the artists adopt the Aegean traditions and waived them to Egyptian conventions, Vercoutter, L'Égypte et le monde égeen préhellénique, étude critique des sources égyptiennes (du début de la XVIIIe à la fin de la XIXe dynastie), 320-1.

2- Vercoutter, L'Égypte et le monde égeen préhellénique, étude critique des sources égyptiennes (du début de la XVIIIe à la fin de la XIX edynastie, 316-7, docs.264-5, docs. 268-9, 275.

3- Wachsmann, Aegeans in the Theban Tombs, 58; Vercoutter, L'Égypte et le monde égeen préhellénique, étude critique des sources égyptiennes (du début de la XVIIIe à la fin de la XIXe dynastie), 316, doc.266.

4- Lion-rhgytons, Vercoutter, *L'Égypte et le monde égeen préhellénique, étude critique des sources égyptiennes (du début de la XVIIIe à la fin de la XIXe dynastie*), 311, docs.244-5, 247-53. Lioness-rhytons, Vercoutter, *L'Égypte et le monde égeen préhellénique, étude critique des sources égyptiennes (du début de la XVIIIe à la fin de la XIXe dynastie*), 313-4, docs.256-8. Griffin-rhytons, Vercoutter, *L'Égypte et le monde égeen préhellénique, étude critique des sources égyptiennes (du début de la XVIIIe à la fin de la XIXe dynastie*), 314, docs.259-61, 263. Conical rhytons, Vercoutter, *L'Égypte et le monde égeen préhellénique, étude critique des sources égyptiennes (du début de la XVIIIe à la fin de la XIXe dynastie*), 323-4.docs.302-5.

5- Tomb of Rekhmire, Vercoutter, L'Égypte et le monde égeen préhellénique, étude critique des sources égyptiennes (du début de la XVIIIe à la fin de la XIXe dynastie), 323-4.docs.302-5. Tomb of Menkheperreseneb, Vercoutter, L'Égypte et le monde égeen préhellénique, étude critique des sources égyptiennes (du début de la XVIIIe à la fin de la XIXe dynastie), 324-7, docs.306, 308, 316. Tomb of Sebekhotep, Vercoutter, L'Égypte et le

precious metals[1]. Besides the animal-formed-protome rhytons, there are also the two other shapes of ryhtons; the conical, and the ovoid (fig.3). The latter are provided with one or two handles, neck and borders[2]. The ovoid rhytons are more or less pointed at the base and look different in the Egyptian figurations[3]. There are also representations of ovoid rhyton with a double handles of the same form but ornamented with heads of animals at the inferior of one of them[4].

In addition to these representations, few actual rhytons have reached us and now displayed in different museums all over the world. An interesting rhyton restored of greenish-blue glaze faience of conical form influenced by Crete Minoan tradition is now in the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston (classification no. 00.702a-d) (fig.4). It was found in a tomb dated from the eighteenth dynasty at Abydos[5]. The form and decoration of the vase are of Cretan Minoan culture used as a libation vessel. The body is ornamented with motives executed in lustrous black paint, while across the edge are ornaments of pendant solid black triangles[6]. It is one of the rare examples of Aegean vase forms made of Egyptian materials and techniques. The shape is related to Cretan prototypes of the first Late Minoan period with the decoration of the running spirals. Similar is another blue glaze faience conical rhyton also dated from the New Kingdom and now in the British Museum (EA 22731) (fig.5). This one was found at Tuna el-Gebel, influenced by Crete Minoan tradition and decorated with two rows of irregular solid-black pendant triangles alternating with two rows of diamonds[7]. In addition to precious metal rhytons, fragments of rhytons made of painted pottery from the New Kingdom were also found, particularly at Tell el-Amarna. Good examples of the latter are now in Petrie

---

monde égeen préhellénique, étude critique des sources égyptiennes (du début de la XVIIIe à la fin de la XIXe dynastie), 324, doc.307.

1- G. W. Nelson, 'A Faience Rhyton from Abydos in the Boston Museum of Fine Arts', *AJA* 40, no.4, (1936), 502; Wachsmann, *Aegeans in the Theban Tombs*, 69.

2- Vercoutter, *L'Égypte et le monde égeen préhellénique, étude critique des sources égyptiennes (du début de la XVIIIe à la fin de la XIXe dynastie*), 325.

3- Vercoutter, *L'Égypte et le monde égeen préhellénique, étude critique des sources égyptiennes (du début de la XVIIIe à la fin de la XIXe dynastie*), 325.

4- Treasure of Amun at Karnak (Thutmos III). One of these objects (314 b) is of silver, the other is of gold. The treasure of the temple possesses only an example of each of these objects, Vercoutter, *L'Égypte et le monde égeen préhellénique, étude critique des sources égyptiennes (du début de la XVIIIe à la fin de la XIXe dynastie*), 326, docs.314 b-315.

5- Nelson, *AJA* 40, 501.Tomb D 11, D. Randall-Maciver and A. C. Mace, *El Amrah and Abydos, 1899-1901,* (London, 1902), 90.

6- Nelson, *AJA* 40, 501. The spirals are inspired from the Cretan vases of the first Minoan period. However, the slender-proportioned pendant triangles in solid black on the rim of the rhyton is of Egyptian tradition, characteristic of Egyptian glazed pottery from the eighteenth dynasty, Nelson, *AJA* 40, 504-505.

7- Nelson, *AJA* 40, 503-5

Museum. They have conical shape, like the piece (UC24478) or have a shape of a vase with a protome of an animal; like the two pieces (UC24499) and (UC24500) in the same museum[1].

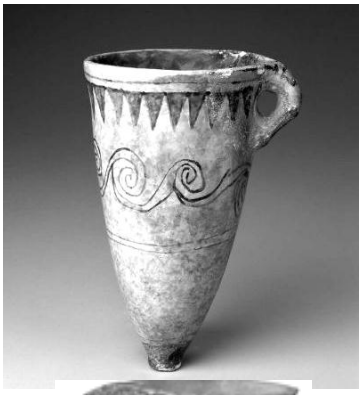


Fig.4 a greenish-blue glaze conical faience rhyton, Museum of Fine Arts in Boston (classification no. 00.702a-d) (After: http://www.mfa.org/collections/coll_keywords=rhyton)

Fig.5 a faience rhyton of Crete Minoan influence, British Museum (EA 22731) (After: http://www.britishmuseum.org/explore/highlights/highlight_objects/aes/f/faience_rhyton.aspx)

The walls of the tomb of Petosiris[2] show interesting examples of rhytons being manufactured in Egyptian workshops. The dating of this tomb is still subject of debate. According to Lefebvre, it is dated from mid-fourth century BCE, after the fall of the second Persian occupation in Egypt, or more properly at the time of the official reign of Ptolemy Soter[3]. Picard also dates it to the end of the fourth century (around 300 BCE.)[4]. According to Strasbourg, it is dated to 406-399 BCE (fifth century BCE), thus at the end of the first Persian occupation and national awakening in Egypt in the twenty-eighth dynasty. According to Montet all the novelties in this tomb are not particularly of Greek influence, but rather Persian, and thus according to him, Petosiris died

1- http://petriecat.museums.ucl.ac.uk/desc_result
2- The tomb is found on a plain in the necropolis of Tounah-Derouah, known as Fassaqi. It was discovered in 1919, M. G. Lefebvre, *Le tombeau de Petosiris, Première partie, Description*, Institut Français d'Archéologie Orientale, (Cairo, 1924), III-IV; A. Adriani, 'Rhyta', *BSAA* 33, 357.
3- M. G. Lefebvre, 'Le tombeau de Petosiris', *ASAE* 20, (1920), 44.
4- Picard, *BIFAO* 30, 227.

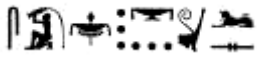
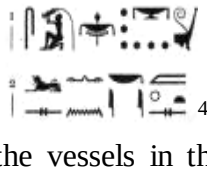
and buried at the time when the Achaemenid dynasty had control over Egypt, thus 500-460 BCE (sixth/mid-fifth century BCE)[1]. However, Cavaignac suggests that it is dated from 406-300 BCE (fifth to end of fourth century BCE, i.e. the second Persian occupation in Egypt)[2]. This means that by this time (Persian period), Egyptian goldsmiths had manufactured many vessels of rhytons of Persian influence. However, the workers in the goldsmiths' scenes of Petosiris are dressed in Greek, in addition to working rhytons, which also might be objects of Greek influence rather than Persian[3].

Two goldsmiths where rhytons are being manufactured can be seen on the north wall of the pronaos of Petosiris. The first can be seen on the west side, on the pilaster corner of the portal, between the columns. This scene consisted originally of four registers, now only two exist[4] (fig.6). The upper register shows three seated workers on low stools: one is dressed in loincloth, while the other two wear tunics without sleeves relieved by a belt. The first from the left is holding the chisel in one hand and a hammer in the other to carve a delicate gesture of a muzzle of a wild goat of which the fore-limber forms the end of a rhyton[5]. The inscription above the scene to the left indicates "goldsmith-sculpture engraving in silver and gold […] placed before him till fall of night".

[6]. This indicates that the vessels being manufactured in the scene are made of silver and gold, in the form of a goat-headed rhyton as obvious in the scene (fig.6).

Fig.6 the first goldsmith, tomb of Petosiris. (After: M. G. Lefebvre, *Le tombeau de Petosiris, Troisieme Partie: Vocabulaire et Planches,* Institut Français d'Archéologie Orientale, (Cairo, 1924) pl.VII

1- M. P. Montet, 'Note sur le Tombeau de Petosiris, pour servir à l'histoire des Perses en Égypte, *RAr* 23, (1926), 168-70.
2- M. E. Cavaignac, 'La date du tombeau de Pétosiris', *REA* 2, (1928), 56-7.
3- Adriani, *BSAA* 33, 359-61.
4- Lefebvre, *Le tombeau de Petosiris, Première partie, Description*, 49, 51.
5- Lefebvre, *ASAE* 20, 65-6.
6- M. G. Lefebvre, *Le tombeau de Petosiris, deuxième partie, Les textes*, Institut Français d'Archéologie Orientale, (Cairo, 1923), 10, 28 (a); Lefebvre, *ASAE* 20, 66.

The second scene of goldsmith in the tomb of Petosiris, is located on the same side of the pronaos. It consists of four registers (fig.7). The lower register shows the refining of pieces, as parts of the vessels are being assembled. The first worker from the left is passing a metal tool on a quite looking strange object which is composed of a small column with Ionic capital surmounted by heads of horses and terminated by a sort of a bell surmounted by a winged genie[1]. The other on the rightmost side of the register is kneeing on ground pressing on the arm of an anvil and refines the mouth of a rhyton with a head of a goat that had already been worked in the previous scene of the first goldsmith. At the center is a nude slave submitting a vase in the left hand and a goat-headed rhyton in the right in the appreciation of a scribe who is standing in front. The second register from the bottom represents the polishing of metal vessels. It shows three workers (from left to right): one is holding in the two hands an elongated tool which he rests on ground against his extended right leg. The next worker is engaged in working on the rumen of a goat-headed rhyton. Above the two workers is the general legend: "(workers) cleaning (swab) the silver and gold for their master"  [2]. Above the worker (whose figuration is no longer clear) on the rightmost side is the legend "(worker) cleaning the silver and gold for their master, there is no other (that is worth) in their part"[3]  [4]. Again here in this register, the texts indicate that the vessels in the scene are made of silver and gold. It is noticeable that the rhyton-vessels in the scene are also those of goat-headed, like in the previously mentioned cases of Petosiris.

The third register is consecrated to weighing the worked metals. The fourth and at the same time the uppermost register shows six men wearing tunics without sleeves transporting works manufactured in the goldsmiths into a safe under control of a scribe sitting in front of the men with no legend[5]. The first and the fifth porters from the left are holding goat-headed rhytons.

1- Lefebvre, *Le tombeau de Petosiris, Première partie, Description*, 52.
2- Lefebvre, *Le tombeau de Petosiris, deuxième partie, Les textes*, 11, 31 (a); Lefebvre, *ASAE* 20, 66.
3- Lefebvre, *Le tombeau de Petosiris, Première partie, Description*, 53.
4- Lefebvre, Le tombeau de Petosiris, deuxième partie, Les textes, 11, 31 (d).
5- Lefebvre, *Le tombeau de Petosiris, Première partie, Description*, 55; Lefebvre, *ASAE* 20, 67-8.

Fig.7 the second goldsmith, the tomb of Petosiris
(After: Lefebvre, *Le tombeau de Petosiris, Troisieme Partie: Vocabulaire et Planches*, VIII)

It can be concluded thus that the north wall of the tomb of Petosiris bears scenes of craftsmen modeling rhytons with protome in the form of a goat made of silver and gold as indicated in the legends. It is also noted that these rhytons represented in the tomb of Petosiris are of Persian influence of the Achemenide tradition. This indicates the existence of fourth century BCE workshops in Egypt that manufactured metal vessels along the artistic lines of the Achemenide Dynasty[1]. Being influenced by Persian tradition can be easily proved by comparing the rhytons represented on the walls of the tomb of Petosiris with those of Persian origins from the same period (fig.1), as wild goat was one of the most common Persian motives used to decorate the body of the rhytons.

The best example of metal Ptolemaic rhytons found in Egypt is a restored gilded-silver rhyton of the treasure of Tukh el-Qaramus[2] in the Egyptian Museum (JE 38093) (fig.8). It is dated from 300 B.C[3], or properly from the end of fourth and beginning of the third century BCE

1- M.-D. Nenna, Marie-Dominique and M. Seif el-Din, *La vaisselle en faïence d'époque gréco-romaine, Catalogue du Musée gréco-romain d'Alexandrie*, Études alexandrines 4, Institut Français d'Archéologie Orientale, (Cairo, 2000), 132.

2- Tukh el-Qaramus lies between Abukir and Hehia in Delta. The site embraces ruins of an enclosure wall of a limestone temple of which the foundation deposites indicate that it was built by Philip Arrhidaeus (323-316 BCE), D. Arnold, *The Encyclopedia of Ancient Egyptian Architecture*, (London, 2003), 249. Concerning details of the restoration see P. André, 'Technique de la fabrication et de la restauration d'un rhyton en argent doré d'époque ptolemaique', *BSAA* 33, (1939), 363-5.

3- Picard, *BIFAO* 30, 222.

(early Ptolemaic period)[1], judging from the date on the coins found with the rhyton; as they are silver coins bearing the names of Ptolemy I Soter and that of Ptolemy II Philadelphus[2]. The rhyton has the shape of a horn vase ended with a protome in the form of a winged griffin. It is made of silver with gilded parts (in the row of rosettes that runs just below the edge, wings, crest and feathers of the animal around the head and along the throat). It consists of two parts made separately, and then embedded into one another; the body of the griffin and the rest of the vase which is crisscrossed by a series of horizontal grooves. The two legs of the animal are made forward and the beak is open. The eyes were once inlayed with a paste[3].

Fig.8 gilded-silver rhyton in the form of a winged griffin from Tukh el-Qaramus, Egyptian Museum (JE 38093)

One of the rare examples of rhytons made of precious materials also dated from the Ptolemaic period is a fragment of an agate rhyton found at Qift (Coptos) with a bullfighting head in the Egyptian Museum[4] (JE 55038) (fig.9).

Fig.9 Fragment of an agate rhyton with a bullfighting head, Egyptian Museum (JE 55038).

1- Marie-Dominique and Seif el-Din, La vaisselle en faïence d'époque gréco-romaine, Catalogue du Musée gréco-romain d'Alexandrie, 132.
2- Adriani, *BSAA* 33, 352.
3- Adriani, *BSAA* 33, 350-1.
4- Adriani, *BSAA* 33, 358.

Besides the rhytons made of precious materials, there are others made of cheap ones, most commonly terra-cotta. Among the latter, there is a terracotta rhyton with a head of a goat found by Duncan at Suwa (Zagazig, (undated tomb 109) together with two vessels of which Duncan dates to late period). It is similar in form to that represented in the tomb of Petosiris, namely the goat-headed rhytons. The vases which found with the rhyton were dated by Duncan himself to the Ptolemaic period and recognized as Greek. Therefore, it is possible that the goat-headed rhyton can also be attributed with certainty to early Ptolemaic period[1]. In addition, there is a rhyton in Baltimore, Walters Art Museum (Inv. 48.368) also dated from the Ptolemaic period (third-second century BCE) (fig.10). It is made of blue-green glazed faience in a horn form decorated in friezes of egg-and-tongue pattern, braids, row of rosettes, wave patterns, griffins separated by palmettos, foliage of ivy, and suspended garlands with bows[2].

Fig.10 blue-green glazed faience horn rhyton, Baltimore, Walters Gallery (Inv. 48.368)
(After: http://art.thewalters.org/viewwoa.aspx?id=31798)

Fine collection of pottery glazed rhytons can be found in the Greco-roman Museum in Alexandria as well[3]. One of them is made in the form of a vase ending with a protome of an animal (Inv 18736) (fig.11). It was found at Abu Quir (Canopus) in Alexandria. The top and large part of the animal body are broken. The vase is decorated with friezes separated by bands with no decorations. The friezes are of flowers and buttons of blue lotus; rosettes with eight petals and hollowed cores; and a band of bipartisan scales. Concerning the remaining part of the animal, it shows paws tucked under the belly and a double long mop under the chin. The animal therefore must have

1- Adriani, *BSAA* 33, 358-9.
2- Marie-Dominique *et al.*, *La vaisselle en faïence d'époque gréco-romaine, Catalogue du Musée gréco-romain d'Alexandrie*, 246; Y. Mao, 'Lead-Alkaline Glazed Egytptian Faience: Preliminary Technical Investigation of Ptolemaic Period Faience Vessels in the Collection of Walters Art Gallery', *JAIC* 39, no.2, (2000), 187.
3- Adriani, *BSAA* 33, 352.

been an ibex or a goat with a goatee[1]. In front between the paws is an emission for the liquid to pour through. The shape and the way of the representation of the rhyton recalls that of Tuch el-Qarmus and thus contemporary to it. In other word, it is dated to early Ptolemaic period[2].

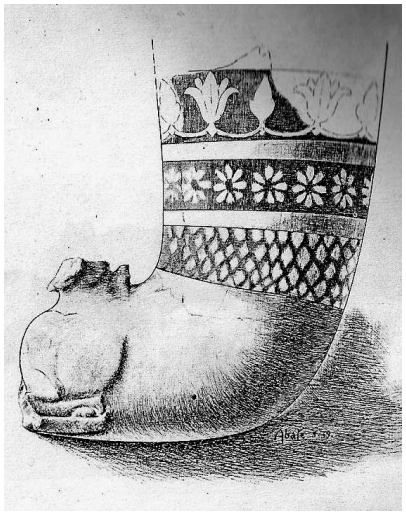


Fig.11 pottery glazed rhyton with a protome of an animal, Greco-roman Museum in Alexandria (Inv 18736)
(After: A. Adriani, 'Rhyta', *BSAA* 33, (1939), fig.1)

There is another fragment of a terracotta rhyton painted in black[3], red and white of the same type (vase with a protome) in the Greco-roman Museum in Alexandria (Inv.9815) (fig.12). A large part of the vase is missing. Only the protome remained provided with a front emission. It shows part of a body and the head of a goat that was carried on shoulders of the figure represented. It is difficult to identify the figure of this rhyton. It might be however a young male bust with a band twisted around the waist emerged in the form of a crown of long leaves which embrace the lower part of the body with two bands across the chest. Both arms of the figure are missing. At the rear of the figure it is easy to recognize an attachment of two wings with white and red painted feathers. The identification of the figure therefore remains obscure[4]. In addition, there is a fragment of pottery glazed rhyton (P.14527), in the same museum of unknown provenance. The fragment represents the lower part of a rhyton in the form of a horn with a protome of a griffin. Two wings in relief are arranged on each side of

1- Marie-Dominique et al., La vaisselle en faïence d'époque gréco-romaine, Catalogue du Musée gréco-romain d'Alexandrie, 247; Adriani, BSAA 33, 351.
2- Adriani, *BSAA* 33, 354.
3- The terracotta rhyta covered with black paint of Alexandria Museum show that this type of vessels was treated well in Hellenistic Egypt also by hands of descendants of Greeks or of descendents of locals working according to the traditional technique of the ceramic of the Attican type and in a style purely Greek, Adriani, *BSAA* 33, 361.
4- Adriani, *BSAA* 33, 355.

the (broken) head. The vase rests on two small rectangular bases. The opening of the vase is made under the head of the griffin[1].

Fig.12 fragment of a terra-cotta rhyton with a protome of obscure figure carrying a goat, Greco-roman Museum in Alexandria, (Inv.9815)
(After: Adriani, *BSAA* 33, fig.2)

Another piece of a terracotta rhyton with a protome of a lion painted in black from the early Ptolemaic period is also found in the Greco-roman Museum in Alexandria (Inv.25586) (fig.13). The two frontal legs are stretching forward, the mouth is open and the head turns slightly to the left like in the case of Rhyton of Tuch el-Qarmus. The hole of emission is located between the two frontal legs[2]. In addition, there is a restored fragment of the lower part of a pottery glazed rhyton in the form of a dolphin (Inv.24050) (fig.14). The back of the dolphin is elongated on the belly of a satyr, he clings with his legs and arms outstretched on the dolphin, his broken tail ascend along the neck of the rhyton. The satyr's head which is partly broken is treated in a caricature way (flat nose, sunken eyes surmounted by wrinkles, long ears with a pointed end). His broken mouth forms an opening. On his back, a frog stretches from the head towards the rear of the rhyton, of which we can see the body and the posterior legs[3].

1- Marie-Dominique et al., La vaisselle en faïence d'époque gréco-romaine, Catalogue du Musée gréco-romain d'Alexandrie, 248, Pl.46, 271.
2- Adriani, *BSAA* 33, 355.
3- Marie-Dominique et al., La vaisselle en faïence d'époque gréco-romaine, Catalogue du Musée gréco-romain d'Alexandrie, 247-8, Pl.46, 270.

Fig.13 fragment of a terracotta rhyton with a protome of a lion, Greco-roman Museum in Alexandria, (Inv.25586)
(After: Adriani, *BSAA* 33, fig.3)

Fig.14 Fragment of pottery rhyton (Inv.24050), from the collection of Don Nahman, Greco-roman Museum
(After: M.-D. Nenna, Marie-Dominique and M. Seif el-Din, *La vaisselle en faïence d'époque gréco-romaine, Catalogue du Musée gréco-romain d'Alexandrie*, Études alexandrines 4, Institut Français d'Archéologie Orientale, (Cairo, 2000), Pl.46, 270)

Besides the rhytons with a protome type, the Greco-roman Museum in Alexandria has fine collection of fragments of glazed rhytons in form of horns found in Alexandrian tombs of Kom el-Shuqafa (Inv.5801)[1], el-Hadra (Inv.16637, Inv.16579), el-Chatby (Inv.19366,

1- 33 pieces were discovered in the necropolis of Kom el-Shuqafa which seems to have been started to function in the 1st century AD. But, this region was consisted in part of a masses of terra cotta deposed came from other parts of the city. So, we are not surprised to find pieces from early Ptolemaic period in this sector, Marie-Dominique *et al.*, *La vaisselle en faïence d'époque gréco-romaine, Catalogue du Musée gréco-romain d'Alexandrie*, 38.

Inv.16515)[1], and from the collection of Don Nahman (Inv.24050, Inv.23827)[2]. It is noted that these pieces are of light greenish glaze for the parts executed in relief, dark blue for the intaglio, decorated with friezes separated by bands. The friezes are decorated with egg-and-tongue pattern, braids of two strands, rosettes of sixteen petals, griffins and palmettos[3]. In the last frieze of the piece Inv.5801 is a hunting scene showing a horse galloping with a knight who is ready to strike a boar by a sword held in the right hand[4].

Among unglazed terra-cotta rhytons of the same period, there is an interesting incomplete and undecorated one found in 1932 at Abu el-Nur in Meidum and now in the Egyptian Museum (JE 57516). It has the form of a horn that ends with a protome of a horse with the opening made in the mouth of the animal (fig.15).

Fig.15 unglazed pottery rhyton in the form of a horn ended with a horse's head, Egytian Museum in Cairo, (JE 57516).

It can be concluded that rhytons as vessels were originally a Persian product that was adopted by the Greeks. The latter inspired the forms and shapes of the Persian rhytons, but later created their own forms. For the original Persian rhytons, they are characterized by the

1- The necropolis of Chatby seems to have utilized between 325 and 240 BCE. It revealed 129 fragments of which 38 belonged to oenovhoeds of queens, Marie-Dominique *et al.*, *La vaisselle en faïence d'époque gréco-romaine, Catalogue du Musée gréco-romain d'Alexandrie*, 38.

2- Marie-Dominique *et al.*, *La vaisselle en faïence d'époque gréco-romaine, Catalogue du Musée gréco-romain d'Alexandrie*, 246-8.

3- Marie-Dominique et al., La vaisselle en faïence d'époque gréco-romaine, Catalogue du Musée gréco-romain d'Alexandrie, 246-8; E. Breccia, La necropolis di Sciatbi, Catalogue général des antiquités égyptiennes (Musée d'Alexandrie) Nos 1-621, vol.1, L'Institut Français d'Archéologie Orientale, (Cairo, 1919), 182.

4- Marie-Dominique *et al.*, *La vaisselle en faïence d'époque gréco-romaine, Catalogue du Musée gréco-romain d'Alexandrie*, 246-7, Pl.45.

shape of the horn with the protome of ibex or wild goats, lions, and horses. On the other hand, in the Greek models, the protome of rhytons can be a dog, a bull, a ram, a boar, an eagle, or a mythical creature like the winged sphinx and griffin[1].

It is marked through the previously mentioned facts and evidences that most of the horned Egyptian rhytons are dated to the early Ptolemaic period[2]. Most of the pieces that have reached us are made of pottery and faience[3]. The horns of the rhytons of this period are most often lightly angled and elongated, while the top of the vase is slightly flared. Those faience rhytons are usually decorated with friezes of egg-and-tongue pattern, and rosettes with sixteen petals. The decoration of these rhytons can also embrace scenes and figures (rows of griffons, or a hunting scene) and/or with vegetal motives (a suspended garland ribbon, frieze of flowers and buds of blue lotus, and foliage of ivy) and vegetal chalices. As for the rhytons' protome figured at the end of the horns, they can be of various forms: more often that of a goat, a lion's head, or a fantastic animal like griffin[4]. In many cases the animals' legs are advanced (figs.8, 13). In others the legs are tucked together under the chest[5] (fig.11). In few cases, the protome has the form of a dolphin (fig.14), a horse (fig.15), or a bullfighting head (fig.9).

Despite the fact that rhytons are originally foreign products, they were manufactured by hands of Egyptian craftsmen. This is easily proved by the various scenes figured on the walls of the pronaos of Petosiris (whether under the Persian or the Greek influence) showing Egyptian artists fashioning rhytons in the traditional form of a horn ended with a protome in the form of the goat (figs.6,7). It seems that the rhytons represented in the tomb of Petosiris were of Persian influence either due to Persian occupation or being a product introduced by the Greeks later into Egypt in the early Ptolemaic period.

Moreover, the rhytons was no longer a foreign art. This can be particularly proved by a very interesting terra-cotta rhyton of phallic Bes (fig.16). It was found at Tell el-Nawa Mit Rahina (Memphis) and

1- Savage and Newman, An Illustrated Dictionary of Ceramics, 245.

2- Marie-Dominique *et al., La vaisselle en faïence d'époque gréco-romaine, Catalogue du Musée gréco-romain d'Alexandrie*, 246.

3- The most popular centers of producing Ptolemaic faience are Naucratis and Memphis in early Ptolemaic period, K. Mysliwiec, 'Athribis, entre Memphis et Alexandrie', *LDA* 213, (1996), 41. The artisans in manufacturing faience rhytons used moulds to manufacture, Marie-Dominique *et al., La vaisselle en faïence d'époque gréco-romaine, Catalogue du Musée gréco-romain d'Alexandrie*, 18.

4- Adriani, *BSAA* 33, 357.

now in the Egyptian Museum in Cairo (JE 31938). The rhyton figures Bes with his usual features; wide eyes, protruding tongue, shaggy beard, and short legs. He is wearing his feather crown and holding a phallus in his right hand which he raises to his head. The funnel of the rhyton can be found at the end of the large phallus of Bes[1], from which the poured liquid would pass through.

Fig.16 pottery rhyton in the form of phallic Bes, Egyptian Museum in Cairo, (JE 31938).

Regarding the function of the Persian rhytons; they were usually made of precious metals, and thus were used by royal courts and wealthy houses, especially during the Achaemenid and Parthian periods. They were adopted by the Minoans who added their own touches to this art. The majority of Minoan rhytons were made of gold and silver figured with bull's heads with openings provided in the

1- This one of the forms of Bes in which he is figured as a phallic dwarf reflecting his function as a fertile god. This particular cult of Bes had a great fame in ancient Egypt especially during the Greco-roman period. This is proved by terra-cotta figurines that have been found representing ithyphallic Bes. This Phallic form of Bes was thought to bring about pregnancy and fertility, p. G. P. Meyboom and M. J. Versluys, 'The Meaning of Dwarfs in Nilotic Scenes', in L. Bricault, M. J. Versluys, and P. G. P. Meyboom (ed.), *Nile into Tiber. Egypt in the Roman World*, Proceedings of the IIIrd International Confrence of Isis Studies, (Leiden, 2005), 205; D. Frankfurter, *Religion in Assimilation and Resistanc. Roman* Egypt, (Princeton, 1998), 127; L. Manniche, *Sexsual Life in Ancient* Egypt, (London, 1987), 12.

mouth of the bulls. However, it is also noted the Minoan clay rhytons were sometimes not spouted. Thus, they were more used as votives or funerary dedications rather than used in banquette[1]. In addition, the Cretan conical rhytons pierced at the base (like that of the eighteenth dynasty found in Abydos) appeared in the later years of the third Middle Minoan period (1700-1580 BCE). These Minoan and Mycenaean vases were used as libation vessels. Some of them survived made of stone, metal and pottery found in Crete and the Aegean islands, the mainland of Greece, and Egypt. Despite the rarity of Aegean rhytons in Egypt, the flourishing commercial intercourse between Crete and Egypt in the Late Minoan age indicated by the vases, makes it possible that these Aegean conical rhytons were once more numerous there[2].

Explaining the use of rhytons in Ptolemaic Egypt is even harder. It is possible that they had a ceremonial use and thus played the same role as it did in Persia and Greece as they were used as luxurious ceremonial wine vessels particularly in ritual purposes, and in ceremonies that included drinking rituals such as harvest or pressing grapes for making wine. In Greece, Metal rhytons were specially used in religious wine rituals, particularly connected with Dionysus and Dionysian banquets[3]. In Egypt, they might have had the same connection with the cult of Dionysus (the Greek wine god). This can be emphasised by the fact that most of the rhytons found in Egypt were discovered in places of cemeteries, especially those that were made of faience and found in Alexandria. This can indicate that they must have been part of funeral rituals, perhaps to pour libation, or at least connected with funeral beliefs and more or less with funeral furniture.

1- Hoffmann, *Sotades Symbols of Immortality on Greek Vases*, 6.
2- Nelson, *AJA* 40, 501. It continued throughout the Late Minoan age (1580-1200 BCE), Nelson, *AJA* 40, 501-2.
3- Hoffmann, *Sotades Symbols of Immortality on Greek Vases*, 8, 11