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The faience finds of the Idaean Cave

Kyriakos Psaroudakis

in memory of
Yannis Sakellarakis

Die Fayenceobjekte aus der idäischen Grotte

ZUSAMMENFASSUNG Die Fayenceobjekte aus der Idäischen Grotte bilden eine interessante homogene Gruppe innerhalb der Weihungen des Heiligtums. Die meisten Stücke scheinen Importe, vor allem aus Phoenizien und dem weiteren levantinischen Bereich, wenige aus Ägypten, zu sein. Andere Funde zeigen einheimisch griechischen Charakter und weisen auf eine lokale Herstellung hin. Unter den Weihungen aus Fayence wurden auch einige Statuetten gefunden, die ägyptische Gottheiten darstellen und helfen, die komplizierte Natur des Kultes in der heiligen Grotte wie auch dessen orientalische und ägyptische Einflüsse besser zu verstehen. Die Datierung der Fayenceobjekte aus der Idäischen Grotte gleicht der anderer Orientalia, die im Heiligtum gefunden wurden. Ein Teil datiert in die sog. Dunklen Jahrhunderte, die meisten werden aber der geometrischen bis orientalisierenden Zeit zugeordnet und reichen damit bis in das Ende des 7. Jh v. Chr. Aufgrund von Glas- / Fayenceabfallfunden, die zwischen anderen Weihungen gefunden wurden, ist zu vermuten, dass sich im Umkreis der Kultgrotte eine Werkstatt befand, die Fayenceobjekte herstellte.
Schlagwörter Idäische Grotte; orientalisierende Zeit; Kult, Fayence; nahöstliche und ägyptische Einflüsse.

ABSTRACT The faience finds of the Idaean Cave compose a homogenous and interesting group amongst the votives that have been discovered in the sanctuary. Most of them are imported, mainly from Phoenicia and the wider Levantine region, and a lesser quantity from Egypt. A third, smaller group of finds consists of artifacts of Greek inspiration and execution. From a symbolic point of view, the figurines depicting Egyptian deities contribute to the better understanding of the complex nature of the cult which took place in the sanctuary, as well as to its eastern-Egyptian influence. As regards their dating, the objects unearthed in the Idaean Cave are similar to the rest of the orientalia. Some date back to the Dark Ages, however, most of them date from the Geometric–Orientalizing period until the late 7th century B.C. In terms of technology, the discovery of faience / glass waste is noteworthy, as it also makes possible the existence of a workhouse near the sanctuary.
Keywords Idaean Cave; orientalizing period; cult; faience; Near Eastern and Egyptian influence.

Τα αντικείμενα φαγεντιανής από το Ιδαίο Άντρο

ΠΕΡΙΛΗΨΗ Τα αντικείμενα από φαγεντιανή του Ιδαίου Άντρου αποτελούν μια ενδιαφέρουσα ομάδα, ανάμεσα στα υπόλοιπα orientalia. Τα περισσότερα από αυτά είναι εισηγμένα, κυρίως από τη Φοινίκη και την ευρύτερη Λεβαντίνια περιοχή και δευτερευόντως από την Αίγυπτο. Μία τρίτη, μικρότερη, ομάδα αποτελείται από έργα ελληνικής έμπνευσης και δημιουργίας. Η παρουσία ειδωλίων αιγυπτιακών, κυρίως, θεοτήτων, φαίνεται να συνδέεται και με τις λατρευόμενες θεότητες στο Ιδαίο Άντρο. Όσον αφορά τη χρονολόγηση, τα αντικείμενα του Ιδαίου εμφανίζουν μια εικόνα ανάλογη των υπόλοιπων orientalia. Τα πρωιμότερα ανάγονται στους Σκοτεινούς Αιώνες. Τα περισσότερα, ωστόσο, χρονολογούνται στη Γεωμετρική–Ανατολίζουσα περίοδο και φτάνουν έως το τέλος του 7ου αιώνα π. Χ. Από την άποψη της τεχνολογίας των αντικειμένων, έχει ενδιαφέρον η ανακάλυψη απορριμμάτων από την κατεργασία φαγεντιανής / υάλου, η οποία κάνει πιθανή την ύπαρξη κάποιου εργαστηρίου με προσωρινό χαρακτήρα.
Λέξεις-κλειδιά Ιδαίο Άντρο. Ανατολίζουσα περίοδος. Λατρεία. Φαγεντιανή. Ανατολικές και αιγυπτιακές επιδράσεις.

Fig. 1 The Entrance of the Idaean Cave

I. INTRODUCTION

The location of Crete ›in the middle of the deep blue sea‹ has seen the island become a crossroads of cultures and a melting pot of ideas and artifacts. A microcosm of this melting pot is the Idaean Cave *(fig. 1)*, which reflects this diversity in a most eloquent manner: exotic items next to local artifacts – imitations and amalgams, imports and local creations – compose a specific artistic and ideological environment. The finds made of faience – a material which in the Idaean Cave is connected with the Early Iron Age – can help us better understand not only the art of this time, but its religion and economy as well. It can also help us better understand a particular technology.

The majority of the studied material was unearthed during the excavations led by Y. Sakellarakis, which were conducted between 1982 and 1986[1], while only a small fraction of the material comes from earlier excavations[2]. The finds were dispersed all over the cave; while most of them were discovered in the great hall, a few were dug up in the south chamber and some were unearthed near the altar *(fig. 2)*[3]. They consist of human and animal figurines, as well as large and miniature vessels (mainly sherds), amulets, and beads. The number of finds is not particularly large if we consider the wealth of votives found in the sanctuary. Furthermore, their state of conservation is often fragmentary and poor as a

I would like to dedicate this article to the memory of Yannis Sakellarakis, who granted me this material, allowed its publication and placed his trust in me. For the drawings of the items my thanks go to A. Drigopoulou, for the photos to Y. Papadakis.

Abbreviations used in the Catalogue:
AMH . . . Archaeological Museum of Herakleion
NAM . . . National Archaeological Museum of Athens
EIA . . . . Early Iron Age (12th–9th cent. B.C.)
G–EO . . Geometric – Early Orientalizing (8th–7th cent. B.C.)
d. . . . . diameter
l. . . . . length
h. . . . . height
th.. . . . . thickness
w.. . . . . width

[1] Σακελλαράκης 1983; Σακελλαράκης 1984; Σακελλαράκης 1986.

[2] The first archaeological research into the Cave was carried out as a result of the cooperation between Greek and Italian archaeologists while Crete was still under Turkish control. See Σακελλαράκης 1986, 9–20.

[3] Marinatos refers to faience items found near the great altar (Πλάτων 1956, 410).

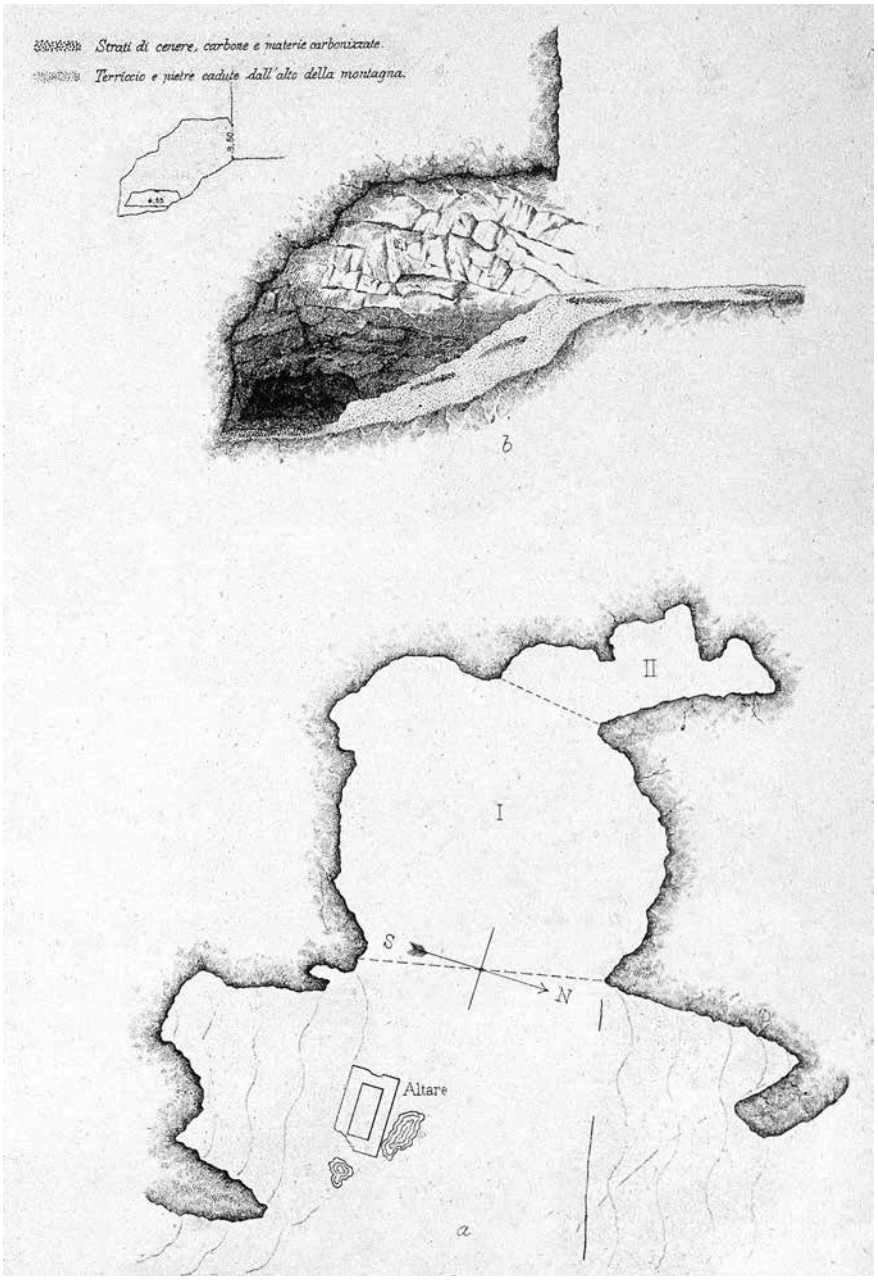


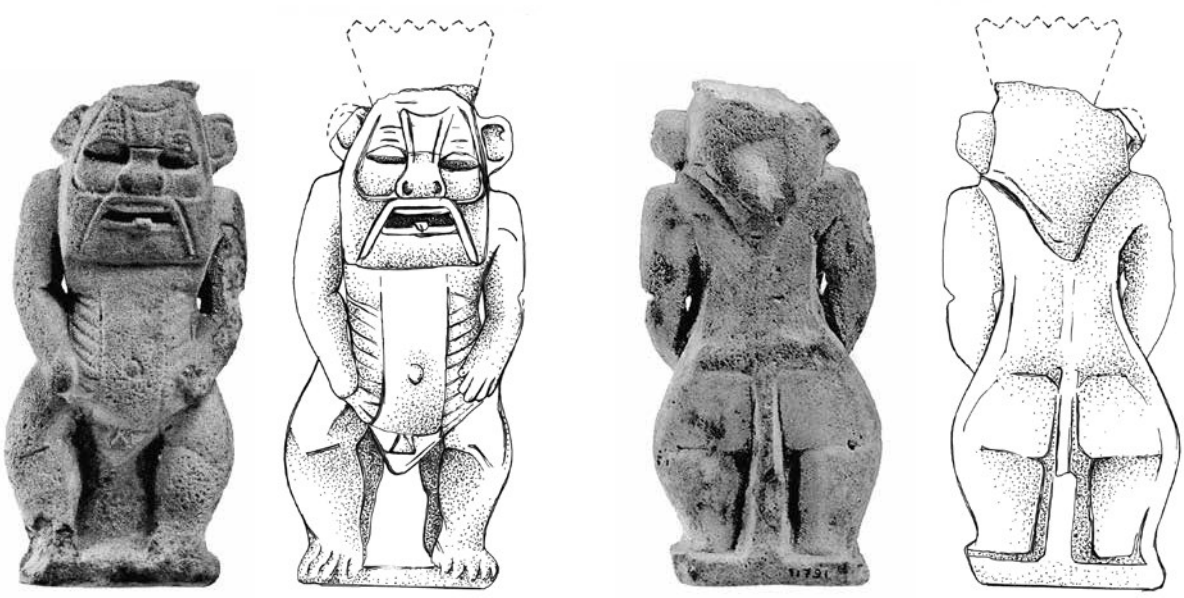
Fig. 2 The first published plan of the Idaean Cave

result of, among other factors, the humid climate of Crete, which erodes the early vitreous materials. Nevertheless, these finds present a variety of forms and shapes rarely found in other Early Iron Age sites. Unfortunately, they cannot offer us the information that a stratigraphical study would yield: although they have been soundly excavated, the excavation strata were found mixed up. Their dating will therefore be based on stylistic criteria alone.

In the Catalogue below (II), the faience finds are presented in the following order: A) human figurines, B) animal figurines, C) vessels (divided in vessels of open and closed type), D) scarabs, and E) varia. Basic information such as the inventory number, origin, and dating of each item can be found along with a short description. Next, the finds are analyzed (in the same order) with respect to their histories and general features and characteristics (III). In the next section (IV), careful attention is paid to their origins in Egypt, the Levant and the Aegean, and an effort is made to detect the main production / influence

centers associated with the items[4]. A general concern is also expressed regarding the current state of research into their creation. After that follow a discussion of the dating of the finds (V) and some remarks on ancient Cretan religious practices and beliefs (VI). Although this study does not include detailed research on the technology of the items, the means of their production are briefly discussed based on direct observation and arguments in favor of the existence of a faience workshop within the Idaean Cave or in its surrounding area are presented (VII). Finally, some conclusions are briefly set out (VIII).

II. CATALOGUE



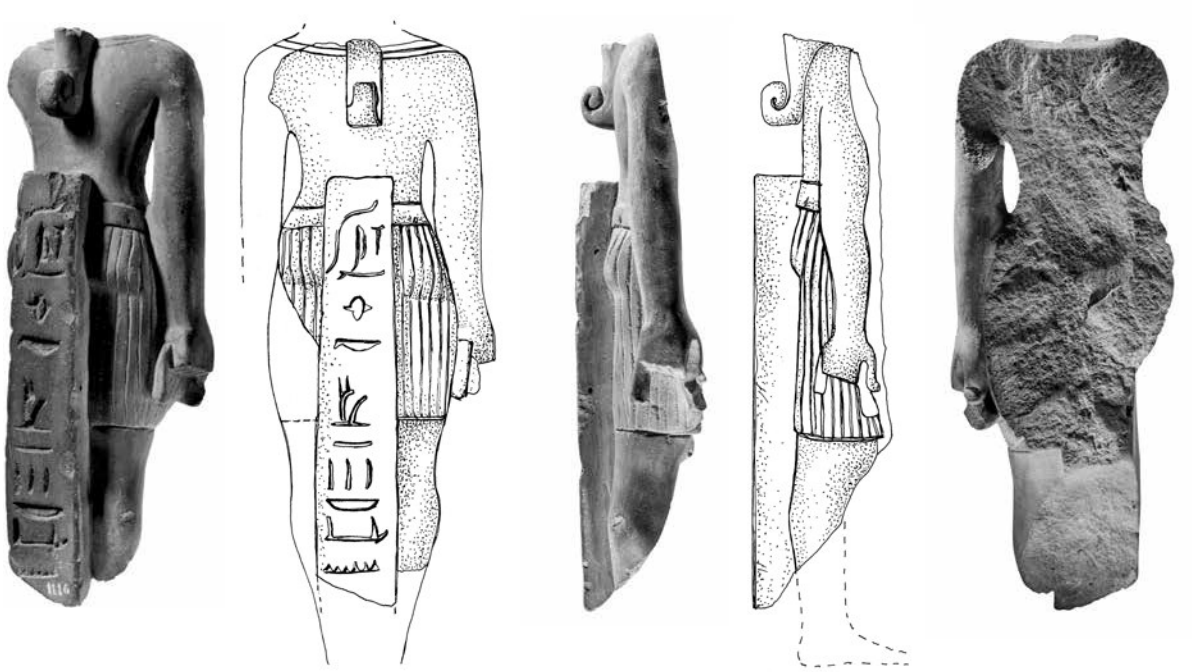
Cat. A 1 (scale 1 : 2)

A. Human Figurines

A 1 Figurine of the god Bes
Inv. no.: NAM 11791
Dimensions: h. 13.5 cm; h. (of face) 4.9 cm; w. (max.) 6.1 cm
Composition: faience of blue core without glazing
Origin: Egypt
Dating: G–EO
Bibliography: Halbherr – Orsi 1888, 69 f., no. 4; Μαρινάτος 1933, 98 fig. 4, 1; Μαρινάτος 1935, 198; Demargne 1947, 124; Elsaadani 1982, 45 no. 46; Stampolidis – Karetsou 1998, 222 no. 259; Shaw 1980, 247 no. 102; Stürmer 1992, 232 f. nos. D1c10. D1c13 pls. 78, 13. 14; 79, 3. 6; 105, 4; 252 f. Skon-Jedele 1994, 1761 no. 2788; Hoffman 1997, 48 no. I; Σακελλαράκης 1998, 87; Σακελλαράκης – Σαπουνά-Σακελλαράκη 2011, 187 fig. 1; 192.
Description: The figurine represents the Egyptian god from a frontal view, naked, and standing on a rectangular plinth. His face possesses the usual malformed features. He has deep-sunken almond-shaped eyes, protruding ears, a short nose with wide nostrils, and a mouth in the shape of a flat slot from which a small tongue pops out. He has a long moustache that extends over the cheeks and a square-shaped beard. His hands are bent at the elbows and rest on his projected and plumb belly with the navel marked in the middle. His ribs are formed by engravings and his bent knees are reminiscent of dwarf legs. Between them, the pubic triangle and the beginning of the genitals are visible.

A 2 Figurine of a male god
Inv. no.: AMH 1116
Donated by St. Mavrakis. Fragments from the figurine were found during the excavations of 1983 and 1985.
Dimensions: h. 15.3 cm; h. (of skirt) 5.9 cm; h. (of back) 4.4 cm; l. (of shoulders) 5.5 cm; l. (of pillar) 11.5 cm

[4] In the catalogue, the term ›Levant‹ is taken to designate Phoenicia and North Syria as well as Cyprus. ›Aegean‹ refers to the Aegean islands and Crete. The term ›local‹ indicates that the objects were manufanctured in Crete but not necessarily in the sanctuary, although the latter is possible.



△ Cat. A 2 (scale 1 : 2)
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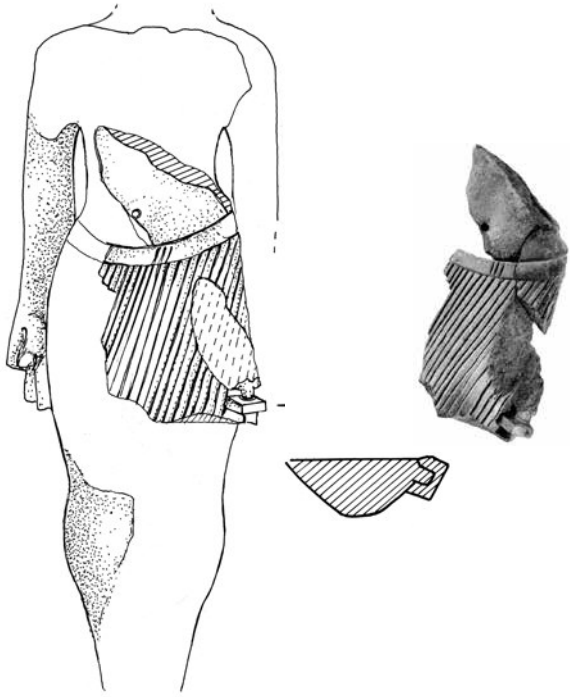
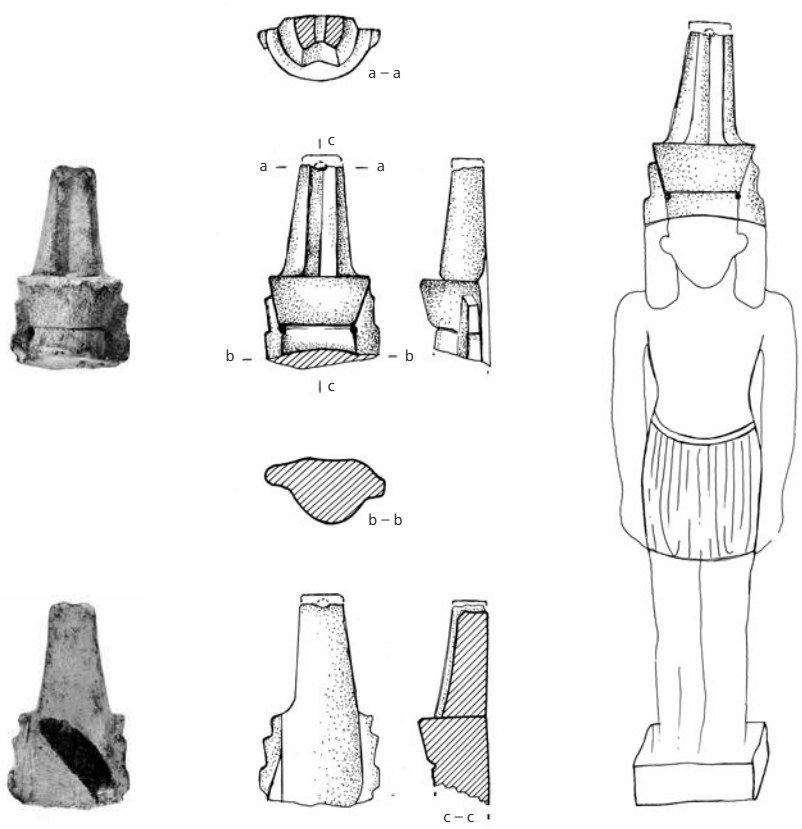


Composition: Egyptian blue
Origin: Levant
Dating: G–EO
Bibliography: Halbherr – Orsi 1888, 70–72 no. 5; von Bissing 1924, 213 no. 1110; von Bissing 1941, 95 n. 178; Demargne 1947, 123; Elsaadani 1982, 45 no. 47; Skon-Jedele 1994, 1747. 1761–1763 no. 2789; Hoffman 1997, 48 no. K; Jones 2000b, 344 no. 366; Σακελλαράκης – Σαπουνά-Σακελλαράκη 2011, 187 fig. 2.
Description: Figurine of a male figure standing on a back-pillar which is partially broken. The naked torso is thin, with a curved waist. The figure is wearing an Egyptian apron covering the body from the hips up to the knees. The perizoma begins with a wide belt and is formed by numerous continuous engravings. The head and the neck have been broken off. At the height of the shoulders, there is a double engraving probably from a necklace. The spiral ending of the lock, which must have ornamented the middle of the head, is preserved between the scapulae. In his right hand, close to the torso, the Kouros is tightly holding a curved rod, and in his left hand, which was attached to the thighs, he is probably holding an Ankh of a preserved abacus-shaped part. The hieroglyphics carved on the supporting pillar form a partly readable text.

A 3 Lotus-shaped crown of the god Nefertum
Dimensions: h. 5.5 cm; w. 3.3 cm; th. 1.9 cm
Composition: Faience of whitish core with blue glazing
Origin: Levant
Dating: Early 7th cent. B.C.
Bibliography: Σακελλαράκης – Σαπουνά-Σακελλαράκη 2011, 192.
Description: Lotus-shaped crown of the god Nefertum. The back side is flat. The crown is a reproduction of the known Egyptian crown of Nefertum with the lotus flower and upright feathers in the center.

A 4 Head of a female statuette
Inv. no.: Y713
Dimensions: h. 5.6 cm; w. 6.6 cm
Composition: Faience of yellowish core and glazing. There are remains of dark-brown paint between the locks and the details of the face.



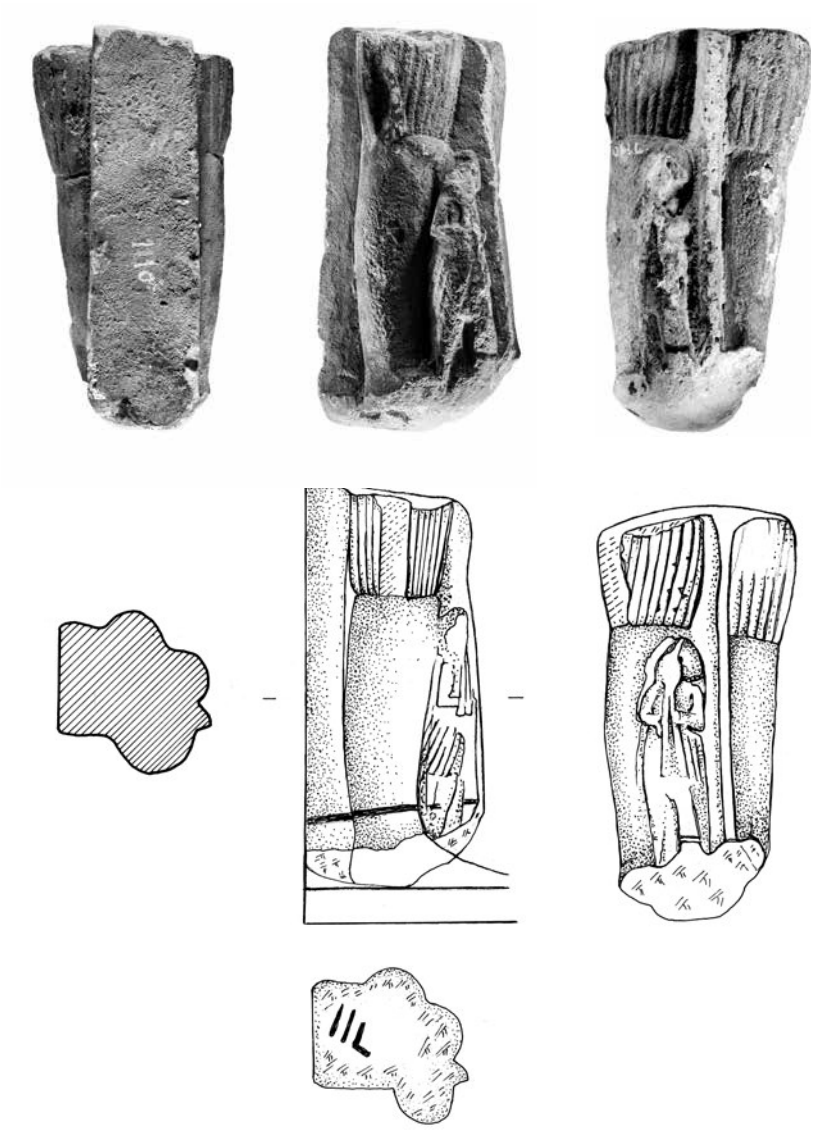
Cat. A 3 (scale 1 : 2)

Cat. A 4 (scale 1 : 2)

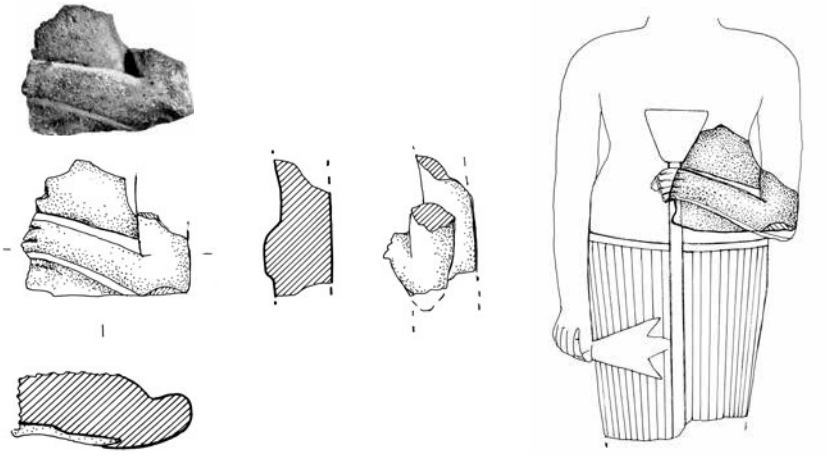
Origin: Levant
Dating: G–EO
Bibliography: Halbherr – Orsi 1888, 69 f. nos. 2. 3; von Bissing 1924, 213; Demargne 1947, 123; Elsaadani 1982, 44 no. 43; Skon-Jedele 1994, 1892–1895; Σακελλαράκης – Σαπουνά-Σακελλαράκη 2011, 187 fig. 3; 192.
Description: Female head in a frontal view. On the face, the wide surface of the cheeks is visible, as well as big eyes, a nose with large nostrils, and out-turning lips. The ears are not visible. The hair is composed of locks in the form of pyramids of different heights on the right and left side, while on the back the hair is formed by parallelepipeds of different heights.

A 5 Lower part of a figurine with a miniature musician next to the foot
Inv. no.: ΑΜΗ Π1110
Dimensions: h. 10.7 cm; w. (of lower part) 5.4 cm
Composition: Faience of whitish core with blue glazing
Origin: Levant
Dating: G–EO
Bibliography: von Bissing 1924, 213; Demargne 1947, 124; Skon-Jedele 1994, 1753. 1763 no. 2790; Hoffman 1997, 47 no. H.
Description: Small figurine of standing figure. The lower part of the Egyptian skirt is preserved, as are the bare legs below. Next to the right leg, there is a relief of a miniature musician. Between the legs of the human figure, there is a part of a stick. The figurine probably rested on a plinth.

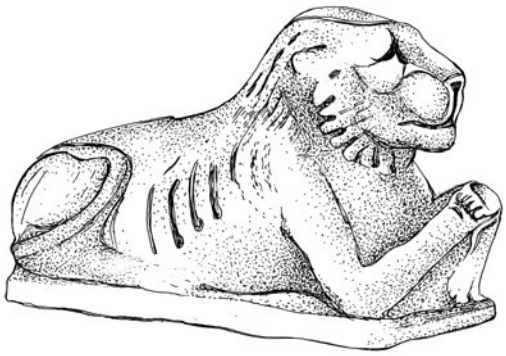
A 6 Part of a female figurine bearing flowers
Dimensions: h. 3.6 cm; w. 4.5 cm
Composition: Faience of whitish core with blue-green glazing
Origin: Levant
Dating: G–EO
Bibliography: Σακελλαράκης – Σαπουνά-Σακελλαράκη 2011, 192.



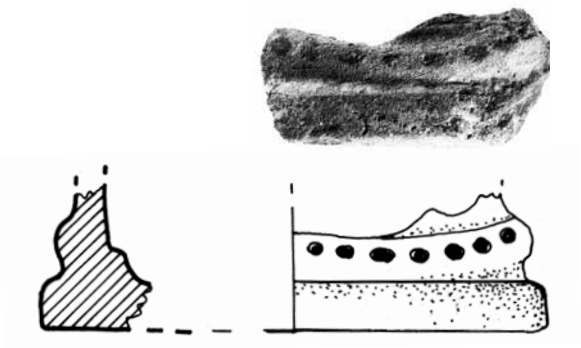
Cat. A 5 (scale 1 : 2)



Cat. A 6 (scale 1 : 2, reconstruction not to scale)



Cat. B 1 (scale 1 : 2)



Cat. B 2 (scale 1 : 1)

Cat. B 3 (scale 1 : 1)

Description: The left arm of a human figure bent under the breast and touching the belly. On the back side, there is a part of the supporting pillar.

B. Animal Figurines

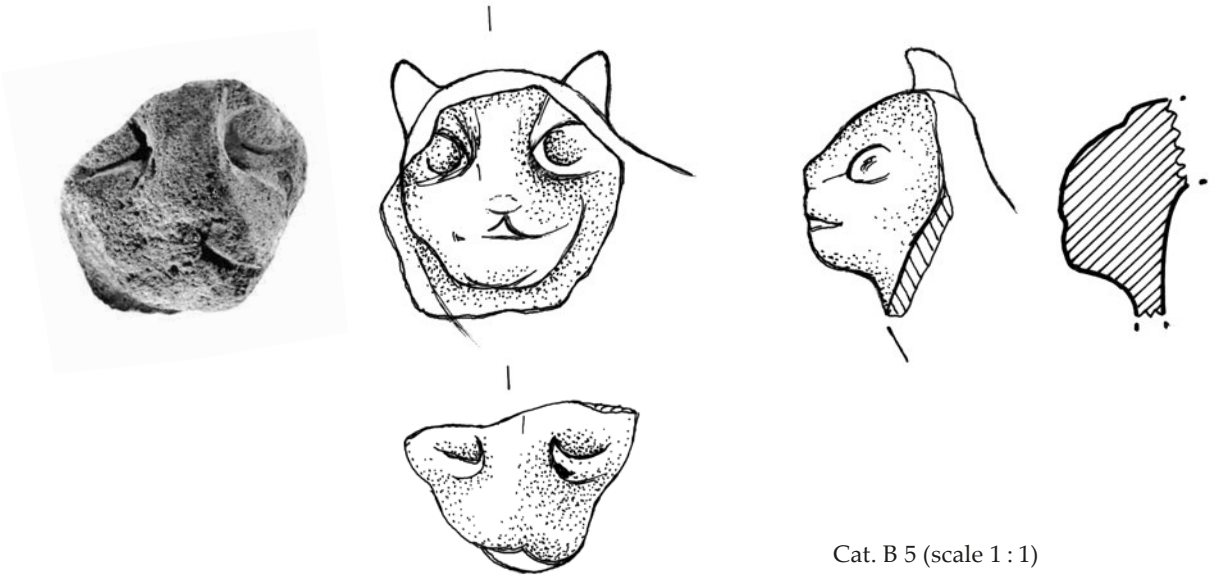
B 1 Couchant lion
Inv. no.: AMH Π1109 (donated by Th. Trifyllis)
Dimensions: l. (of base) 14.8 cm; h. 9.0 cm
Composition: Faience of yellowish core with blue-green glazing, partially worn out, with dark-brown paint.
Origin: Levant
Dating: G–EO
Bibliography: Halbherr – Orsi 1888, 70 nos. 1. 2; Levi 1927–1929, 460 f. fig. 588; Demargne 1947, 123; von Bissing 1941, 95 n. 178; Boardman 1980, 113; Elsaadani 1982, 44 no. 42; Skon-Jedele 1994, 1747. 1765 f. no. 2794; Hoffman 1997, 46 no. E; Σακελλαράκης – Σαπουνά-Σακελλαράκη 2011, 187 fig. 4.
Description: Couchant lion resting on a flat ellipsoid plinth. With its front legs folded like human arms, it is holding a deep cylindrical vessel with a hole at the bottom. The features of the face and the details of the body (ribs, mane) are painted.

B 2 Fragment from a plinth of a sitting lion
Dimensions: l. 4 cm; h. 1.8 cm; w. 2 cm
Composition: Faience of whitish core with blue-green glazing
Origin: Levant
Dating: G–EO
Description: Fragment from the plinth and the tail of the rear part of a sitting lion with successive painted dots on its tail.

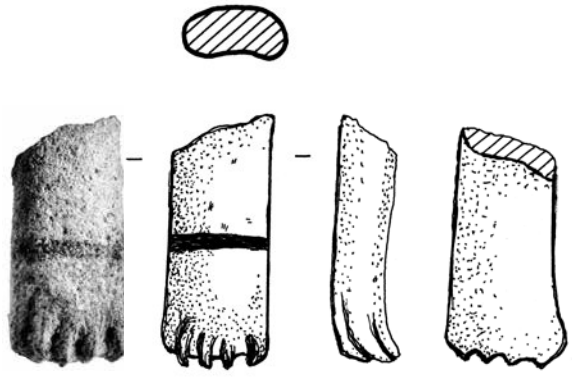
B 3 Lion head
Inv. no.: AMH 493
Dimensions: l. 5.9 cm; h. 4.2 cm
Composition: Faience of whitish core with yellowish glazing
Origin: Levant
Dating: G–EO
Description: Hollow lion head, fragment from a large figurine or plastic vessel. The facial details and the locks of the mane are painted.

B 4 Leg of a felid
Dimensions: l. 3.1 cm; w. 1.5 cm
Composition: Faience of whitish core with blue glazing
Origin: Levant
Dating: G–EO
Description: Front leg of a couchant felid (lion?) chipped on one side. Widened, flat, with four engravings at the end forming the toes, it bears a painted, vertical brown ribbon.

B 5 Fragment from a wildcat's face
Dimensions: h. 3 cm; w. 3 cm; th. 2 cm
Composition: Faience of whitish, porous core with blue-green glazing, mostly exfoliated
Origin: Egypt



Cat. B 5 (scale 1 : 1)



Cat. B 4 (scale 1 : 1)

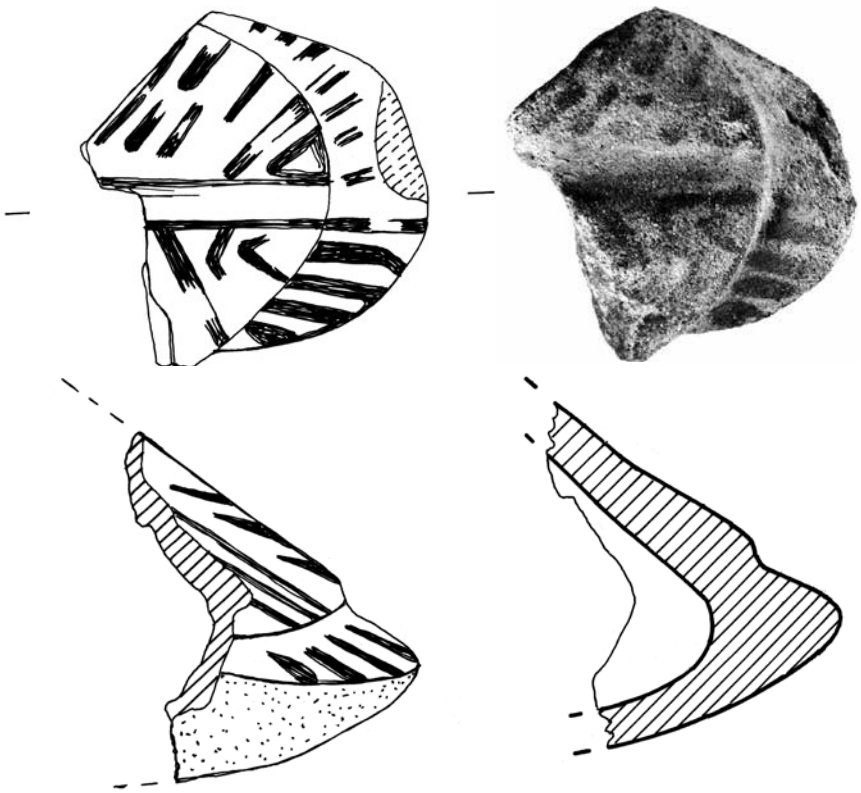
Cat. B 6 and B 7 (scale 1 : 1)

Dating: G–EO
Bibliography: Σακελλαράκης – Σαπουνά-Σακελλαράκη 2011, 192.
Description: Fragment from a wildcat's face, chipped in various places. The deeply carved big eyes are visible, as well as the mouth, the latter being chipped on one side.

B 6 Fragment from a left leg
Findspot: Central hall, found during the sieving of mound 5, group 13
Dimensions: l. (of shin) 2.5 cm; l. (of paw) 1.9 cm
Composition: Faience of blue-green core with porous surface
Origin: Levant
Dating: G–EO
Bibliography: Σακελλαράκης 1983, 473.
Description: Fragment from a left leg (chipped on the foot) from the shin to the paw. It is unknown whether it belongs to a human or a demonic figure (Bes?). On the paw, there is a painted, transversal, brown ribbon.

B 7 Fragment from an ape's head
Dimensions: l. 2.8 cm; w. 2.8 cm
Composition: Faience of whitish core and greenish glazing
Origin: Levant
Dating: G–EO
Description: Perhaps a fragment from an animal-figured vessel. The right almond-shaped eye is visible under the thick eyebrow as well as the ear. On its surface, there are parts of painted black lines.

B 8 Rear part of a sitting duck
Dimensions: l. 5.1 cm; h. 4.4 cm; w. 4.9 cm
Composition: Faience of whitish core with blue-green glazing
Origin: Levant
Dating: G–EO
Bibliography: Σακελλαράκης – Σαπουνά-Σακελλαράκη 2011, 192.
Description: The wide, boat-shaped rear part of a waterfowl, probably a duck. The ending of the wings and the rear part are represented plastically. A groove in the middle of the bird's back separates the two wings. On their surface, there are parallel dark-brown lines.



Cat. B 8 (scale 1 : 1)

Cat. B 9 (scale 1 : 1)

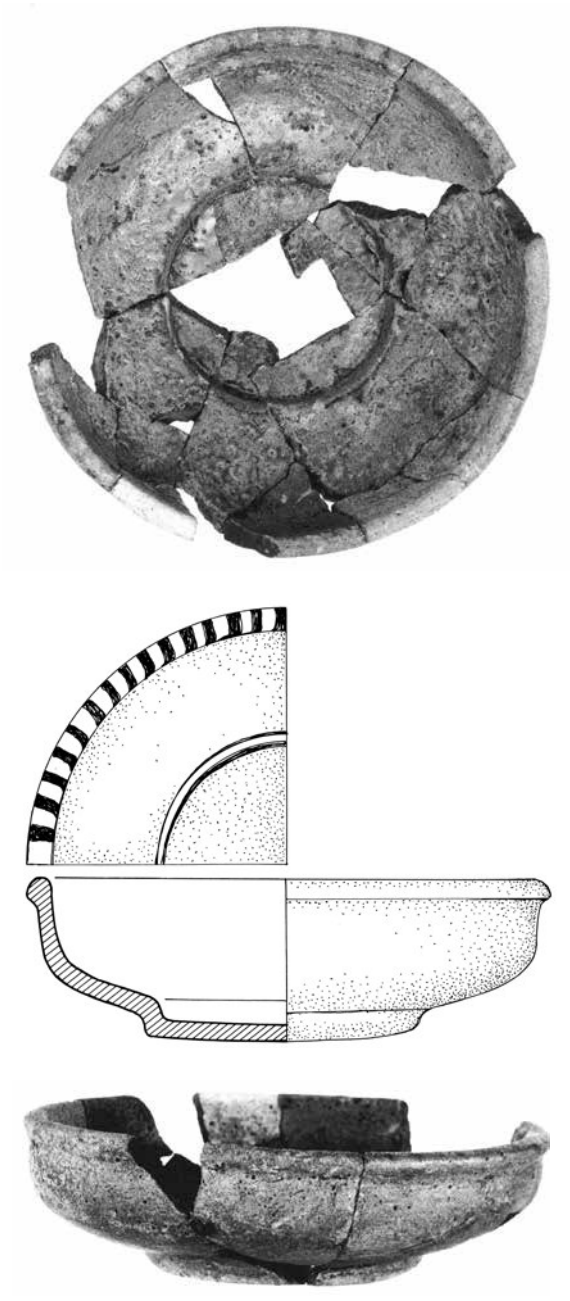
B 9 Part of an animal's limb
Dimensions: l. 5 cm.
Composition: Faience of whitish core with blue-green glazing
Origin: Levant
Dating: G–EO
Description: Elongated part of an animal's limb with parallel, shallow, sidelong grooves.

C. Vessels

C 1 Phiale
Dimensions: h. 4.3 cm; d. (of base) 7.3 cm; d. (of rim) 14 cm
Composition: Faience of whitish core and blue-green glazing
Origin: Levant
Dating: EIA
Bibliography: Σακελλαράκης 1983, 478; Σακελλαράκης – Σαπουνά-Σακελλαράκη 2011, 187 fig. 6; 192.
Description: Discoid base. Its shallow body forms a circular, shallow cavity at the bottom, which corresponds to the base diameter. It has a thick everted rim with successive black lines on its upper surface.

C 2 Fragment from a hemispherical phiale
Dimensions: l. 3.6 cm; h. 2.9 cm
Composition: Faience of whitish core
Origin: Local
Dating: G–EO
Description: Large triangular fragment from the body of the whitish faience vessel (near the rim).

C 3 Fragment from a phiale
Dimensions: h. 3.2 cm; w. 3.6 cm.
Composition: Faience of whitish core and blue-green glazing
Origin: Local
Dating: G–EO



Cat. C 1 (scale 1 : 2)

Description: A triangular fragment from the body and the rim of a phiale. It has a hemispherical body, probably plain, with a simple, narrow, horizontal rim. Under the rim, there is a wide, open hole for hanging.

C 4 Fragment from a miniature strainer-skyphoid
Dimensions: a) h. 3 cm; w. 3.5 cm; th. 0.6 cm
b) h. 2.7 cm; w. 2.8 cm; th. 0.7 cm; d. (of rim) 6 cm
Composition: Faience of whitish core and blue-green glazing
Origin: Levant
Dating: EIA
Description: Body of hemispherical shape with slightly everted rim. Under the rim, there is a horizontal, plain zone 2 cm in width; the rest of the body is full of small scattered holes.

C 5 Part of a small bucket
Dimensions: l. 3.6 cm; w. 3.3 cm; th. 0.4 cm
Composition: Faience of blue core with traces of black glazing
Origin: Levant
Dating: EIA (10th cent. B.C.)
Description: Part of the rim of an open vessel. A handle with an open hole in the shape of a circular cross-section adheres vertically to the rim.

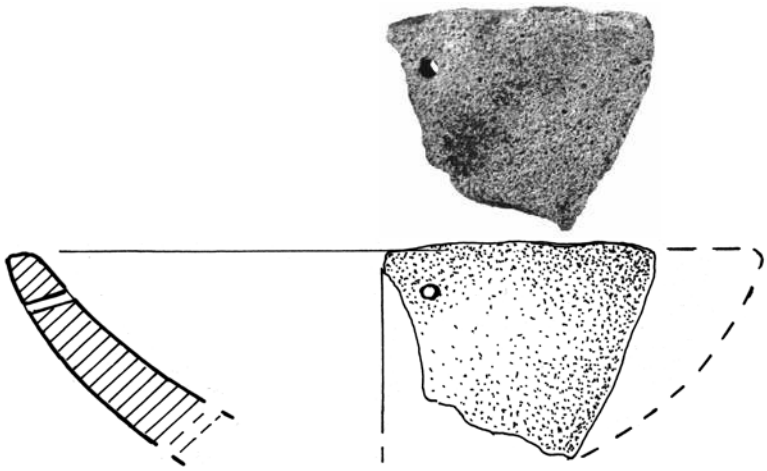
C 6 Fragment from a vessel's body (pyxis?)
Dimensions: h. 2.8 cm; w. 5.4 cm; th. 0.6 cm
Composition: Faience of whitish core without glazing
Origin: Levant
Dating: G–EO
Description: Part of the shoulder and the belly of a vessel, probably a pyxis

C 7 Base of a vessel
Dimensions: h. 1.2 cm
Composition: Faience of whitish core and blue glazing
Origin: Levant?
Dating: G–EO
Description: Flat base of a closed vessel

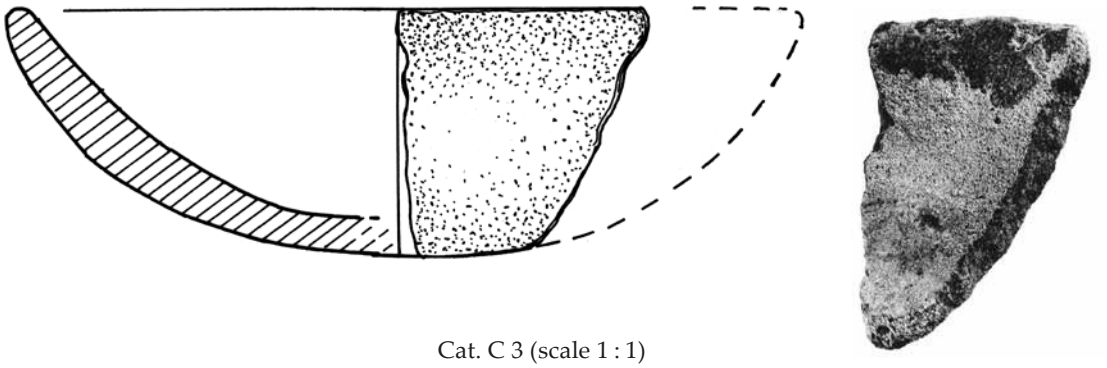
C 8 One-handled lekythion
Dimensions: h. 7.6 cm; d. (of rim) 2.4 cm; d. (of belly) 5.4 cm
Composition: Faience of blue core
Origin: Levant
Dating: G–EO
Description: Body of spherical shape without a base. It has a short neck with a relief ring in the middle of its height, where the vertical handle of ellipsoid cross-section adheres. It is funnel-shaped, with an everted rim.

C 9 Part of a lekythion's rim
Dimensions: h. 2.3 cm; d. 4.7 cm
Composition: Faience of whitish core and blue-green glazing
Origin: Levant
Dating: G–EO
Description: Part of a lekythion's everted rim

C 10 Part of an amphoriskos' rim
Dimensions: h. 3.7 cm; d. 3.8 cm; th. 0.5 cm
Composition: Faience of whitish core without glazing
Origin: Levant
Dating: G–EO
Description: Part of the neck and of the everted rim of an amphoriskos. It has a cylindrical neck, which

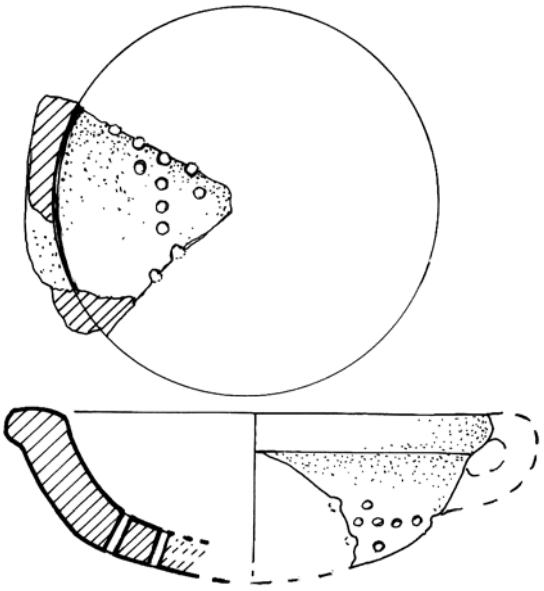


Cat. C 2 (scale 1 : 1)



Cat. C 3 (scale 1 : 1)

Cat. C 7 (scale 1 : 1)



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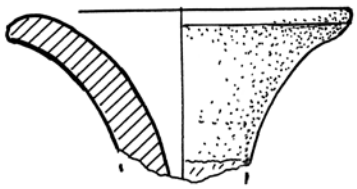

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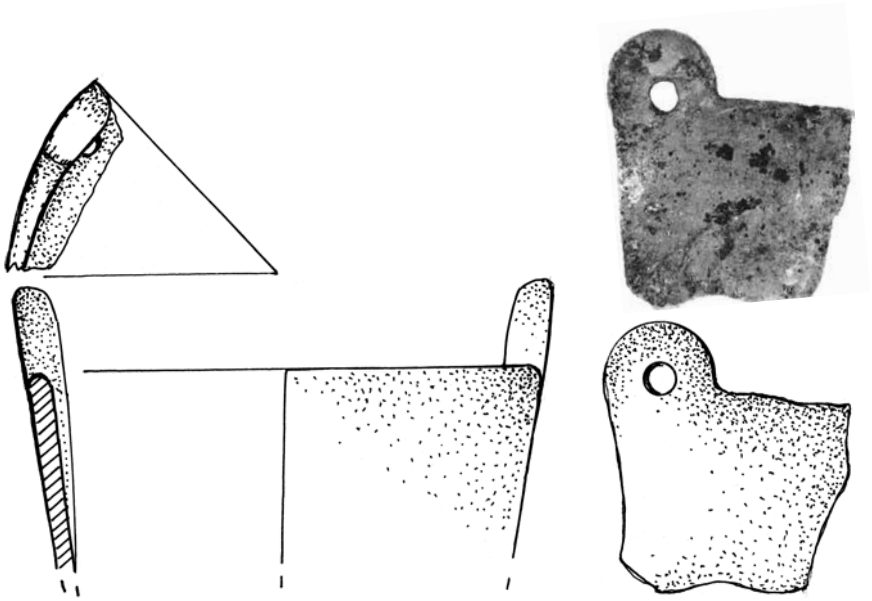

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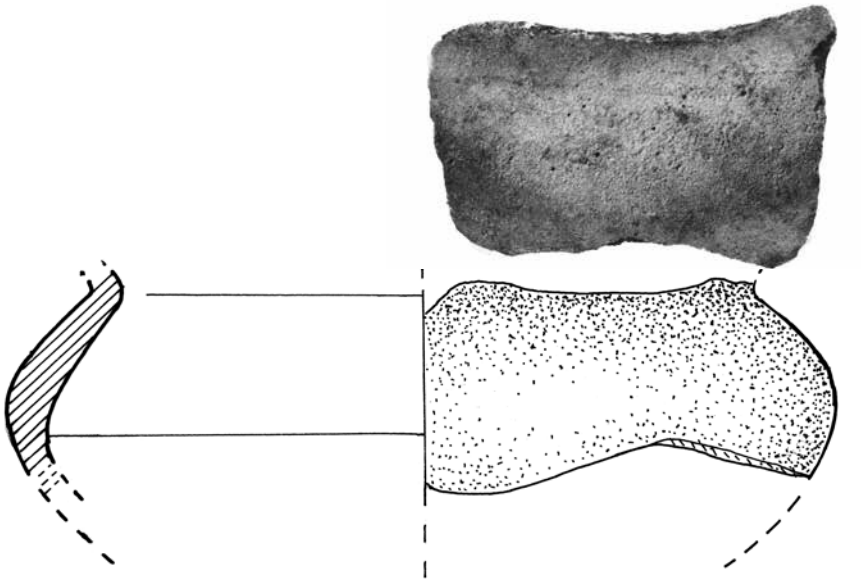

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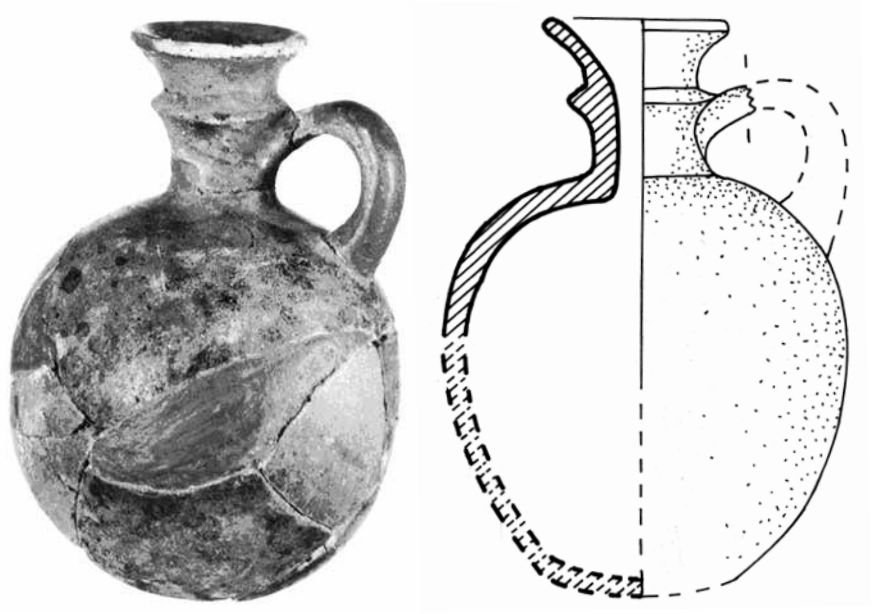

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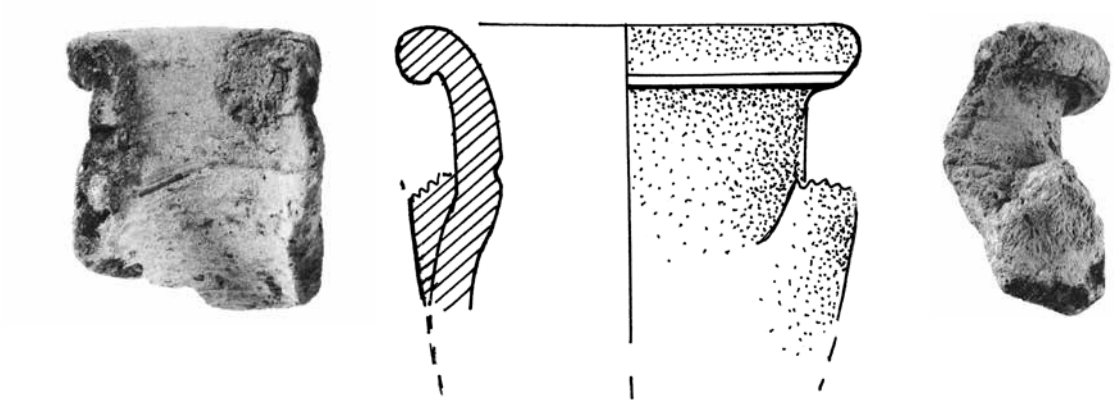
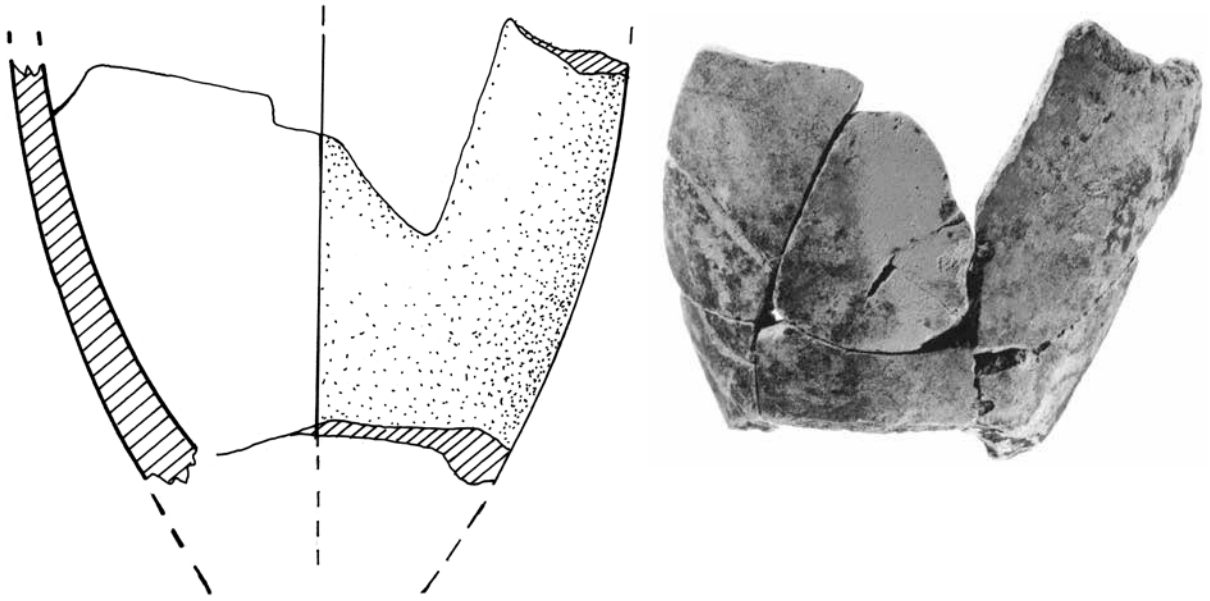
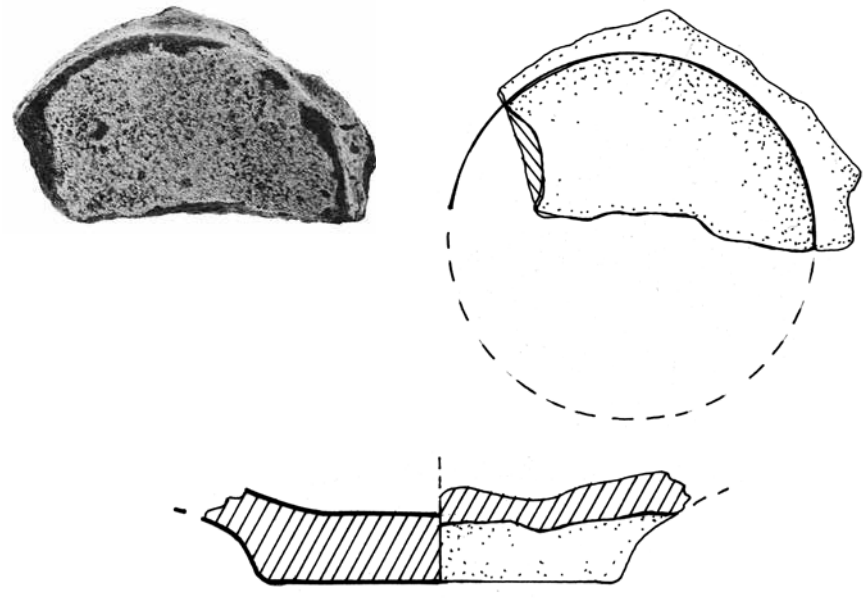


Cat. C 10 (scale 1 : 1)



Cat. C 11 (scale 1 : 1)



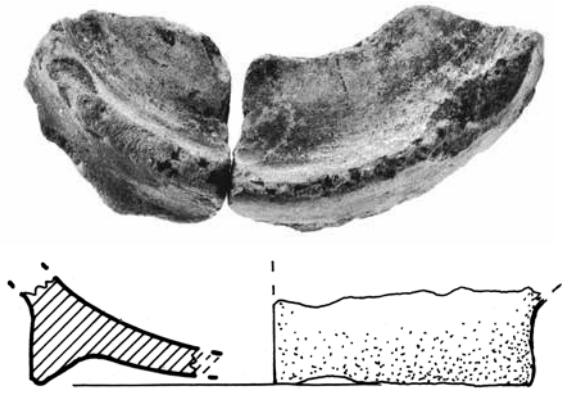
Cat. C 12 (scale 1 : 1)

narrows towards the top and which bears the beginning of a handle or pseudo-handle.

C 11 Body of a truncated conical vessel
Dimensions: h. 5.8 cm; d. (lower part) 4.6 cm; th. 0.6 cm
Composition: Faience of blue core
Origin: Levant
Dating: G–EO
Description: Ovoid part of the body (belly) of a vessel, probably an oinochoe

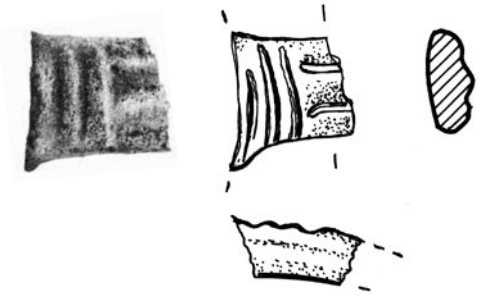
C 12 Part of a flat base
Dimensions: h. 1.2 cm; d. 4.8 cm
Composition: Light-green (exterior) and light-blue (interior) glazing
Origin: Local
Dating: G–EO
Description: Almost half of a round base of a vessel

C 13 Part of a ringed base
Dimensions: h. 1.3 cm; d. 6.7 cm
Composition: Faience of blue core without glazing
Origin: Local
Dating: G–EO
Description: Part of a ringed base of a vessel (oinochoe?)



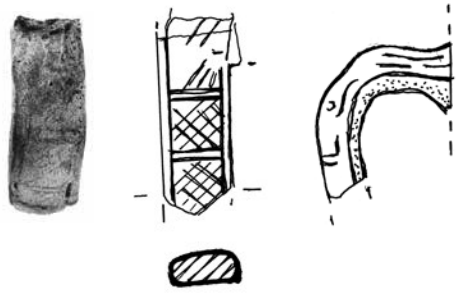
Cat. C 13 (scale 1 : 1)

C 14 Fragment from an oinochoe handle in the shape of an Egyptian lotus
Dimensions: l. 4.5 cm; h. 1.6 cm; w. 2.2 cm
Composition: Faience of whitish core with blue-green glazing
Origin: Egypt
Dating: EIA
Bibliography: Σακελλαράκης 1983, 473; Σακελλαράκης – Σαπουνά-Σακελλαράκη 2011, 192.
Description: The handle imitates the form of an open lotus flower coming out from a triple stem fixed on the rim with nails. Two relief nail heads and the beginning of a third one are visible on the interior vertical wall of the rim.



Cat. C 15 (scale 1 : 1)

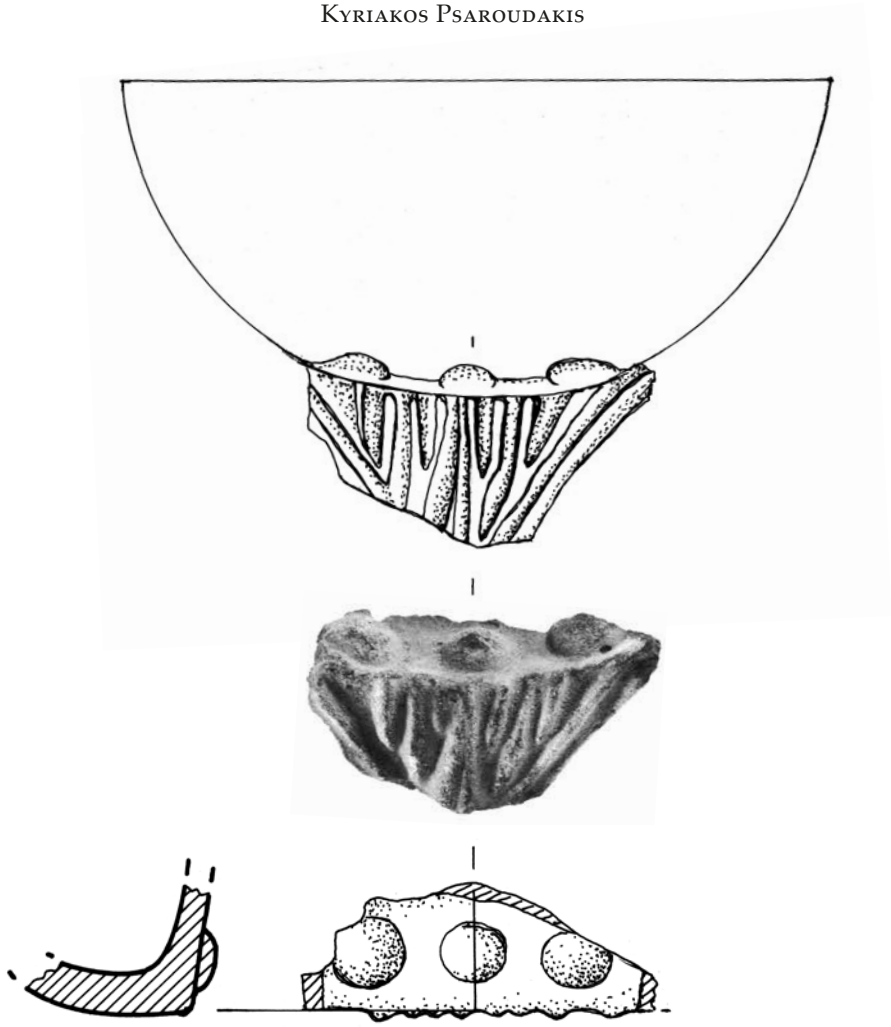
C 15 Fragment from a strap handle
Dimensions: l. 1.5 cm; w. 1.3 cm; th. 0.6 cm
Composition: Faience of whitish core with blue glazing
Origin: Aegean
Dating: G–EO
Description: Fragment from a strap handle around the base of a skyphos. On its upper surface, there is a relief decoration of a horizontal triglyph carved on top of a vertical triglyph.



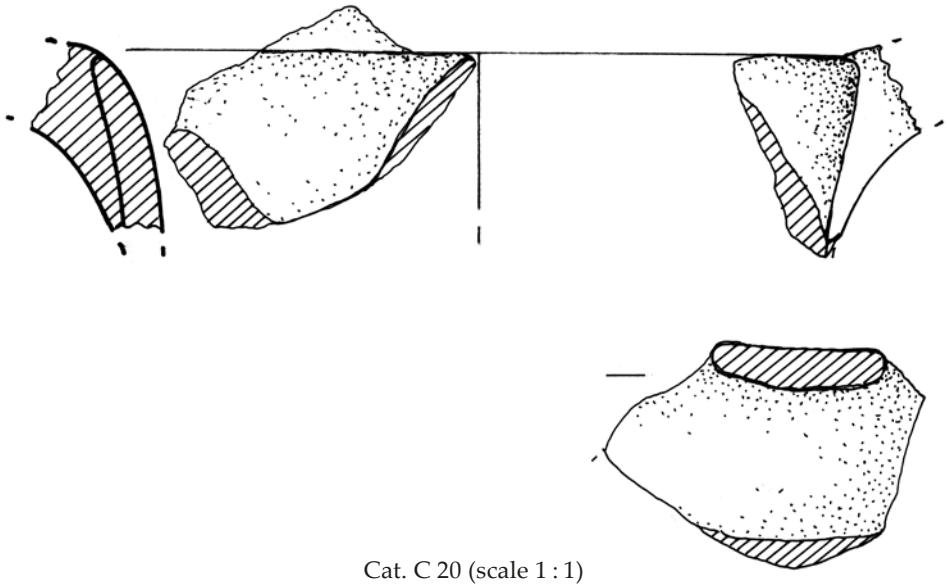
Cat. C 16 (scale 1 : 1)

C 16 Handle of ellipsoid cross-section with net-like ornament
Dimensions: l. 2.3 cm; w. 0.9 cm
Composition: Faience of whitish core with blue-green glazing
Origin: Aegean
Dating: G–EO
Description: Small strap handle chipped on its base. On its surface, it bears successive metopes, which are formed by a net-like ornament and which are divided by a double engraving; on their long edges, the metopes are defined by a continuous deep engraving.

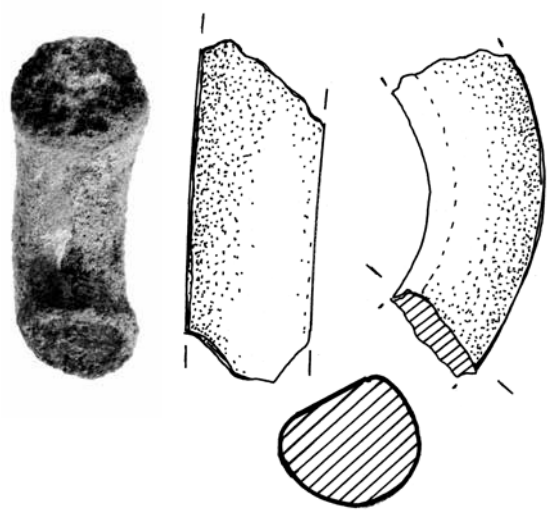
C 17 Part of a handle with a groove on the top
Dimensions: l. 3 cm; d. 1.1 cm
Composition: Faience of whitish core without glazing
Origin: Aegean
Dating: G–EO



Cat. C 14 (scale 1 : 1)



Cat. C 20 (scale 1 : 1)

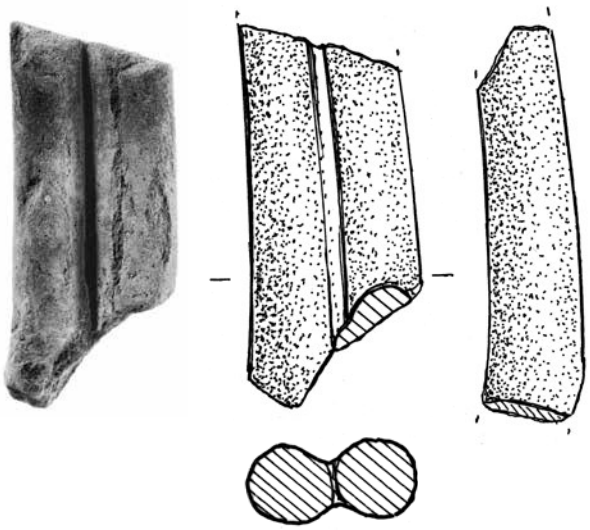


Cat. C 17 (scale 1 : 1)

Description: Grooved fragment from a handle of ellipsoid cross-section

C 18 Part of twin handles
Dimensions: l. 5 cm; w. 2.1 cm
Composition: Faience of blue-green core without glazing
Origin: Aegean
Dating: G–EO
Description: Part of twin handles with a deep groove dividing the two shafts

C 19 Part of twin handles
Dimensions: l. 2.3 cm; w. 1.8 cm; th. 0.8 cm
Composition: Faience of whitish core with green glazing
Origin: Levant
Dating: G–EO
Description: Part of twin handles with a shallow groove between the two shafts. On the surface of the fragment, there is a narrow black brushstroke on either edge.

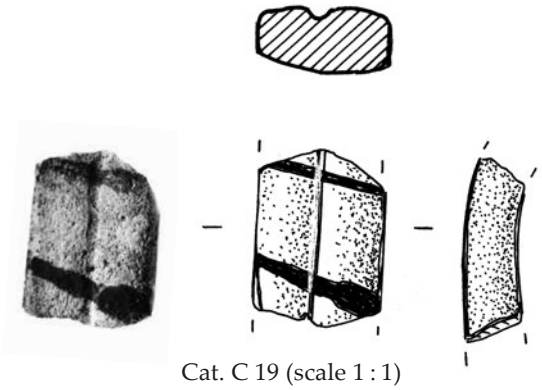


Cat. C 18 (scale 1 : 1)

C 20 Lower part of a handle
Dimensions: h. 3.9 cm; w. 2.8 cm
Composition: Faience of blue core
Origin: Aegean
Dating: G–EO
Description: The beginning of a strap handle of a vessel

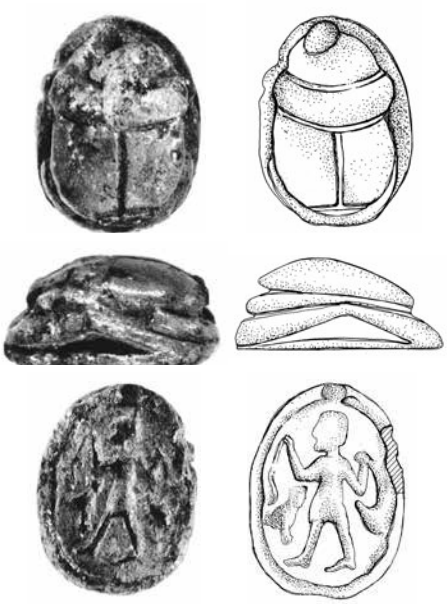
D. Scarabs

D 1 Scarab
Inv. no.: AMH 2982
Findspot: Central hall, mound 5, layer 5, group 37
Dimensions: h. 0.6 cm; w. 1.1 cm; d. 1.4 cm
Composition: Faience of blue-green glazing
Origin: Levant
Dating: G–EO
Bibliography: Σακελλαράκης 1983, 472 fig. 8, 10; 478; Σακελλαράκης – Σαπουνά-Σακελλαράκη 2011, 187 fig. 7; 192 f.
Description: The pronotion is separated from the elytra by a double thin and curved line. The wide head is separated from the pronotion by another double curved line. The legs are deeply curved. On its bottom surface (seal), a figure is walking to the left with raised arms, holding animals. The representation is surrounded by an elliptical transversal line.



Cat. C 19 (scale 1 : 1)

D 2 Scarab
Inv. no.: AMH 3419
Findspot: Central hall, layer 3, found during the sieving of mound 5
Dimensions: h. 0.5 cm; w. 0.9 cm; d. 1.3 cm
Composition: The upper curved surface is brown; the bottom surface (seal) is whitish.
Origin: Egypt



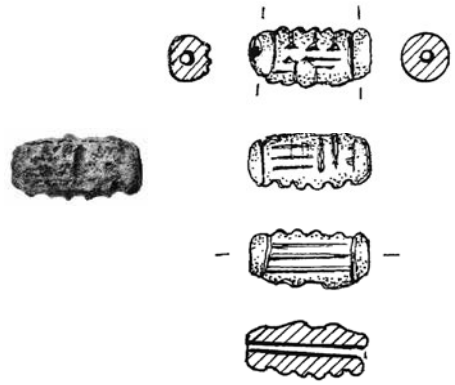
Cat. D 1 (scale 2 : 1)

Cat. D 2 (scale 2 : 1)

Dating: G–EO
Bibliography: Σακελλαράκης – Σαπουνά-Σακελλαράκη 2011, 192. 195.
Description: A simple line separates the elytra from the pronotion and the head. Two lines define the thorax. It bears an open hole in length. There are hieroglyphics on the flat bottom surface.

E. Varia

E 1 Cylindrical bead
Inv. no.: AMH 2984
Findspot: Central hall, mound 5, group 32



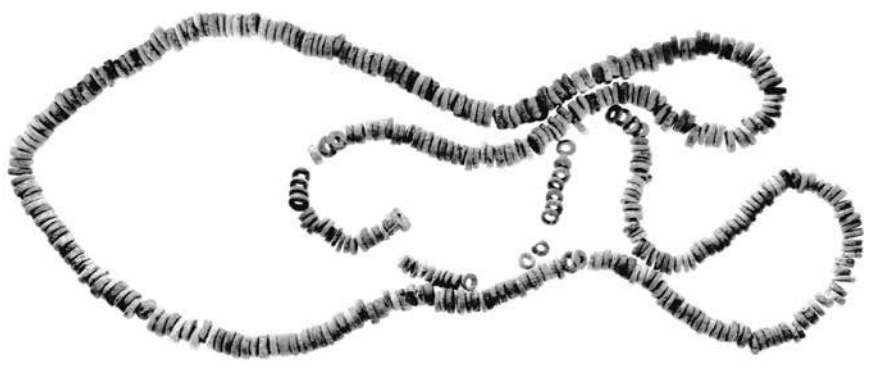
Cat. E 1 (scale 1 : 1)

Dimensions: l. 1.6 cm; d. 0.8 cm
Composition: Faience of whitish core
Origin: Levant
Dating: EIA
Bibliography: Σακελλαράκης 1983, 478.
Description: Cylindrical bead-seal with an open hole at length. On its surface, there are two sets of parallel engravings running perpendicular to each other. There are also vertical cuts, which create a series of painted dots. Between the engravings, there are traces of dark red.

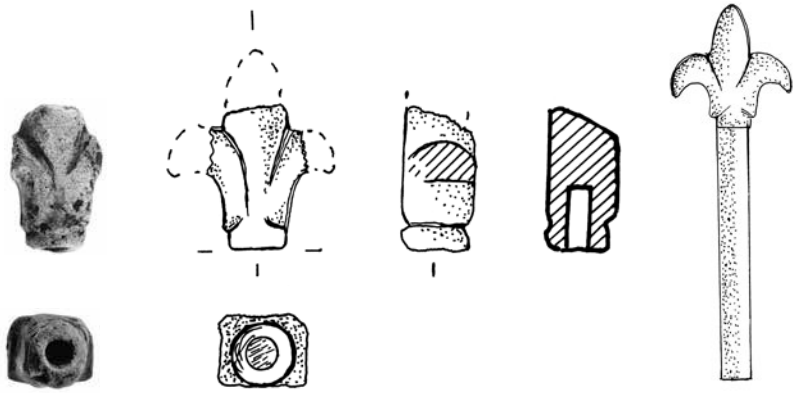
E 2 Beads
Dimensions: d. 0,4–0,7 cm
Composition: Faience of whitish core
Origin: Levant
Dating: EIA
Bibliography: Σακελλαράκης – Σαπουνά-Σακελλαράκη 2011, 189. 195. 198.
Description: 400 discoid beads (most of them having a widened discoid shape, and some of them having a small cylindrical shape and open holes) in a variety of colors.

E 3 Lotus-shaped scepter head
Dimensions: h. 1.9 cm; d. (of base) 0.8 cm
Composition: Faience of blue core without glazing
Origin: Levant
Dating: EIA
Description: Prominent lotus flower with chipped ends on three of its leaves. On its ring-shaped base, there is a blind (transversal) hole through which other objects can be attached.

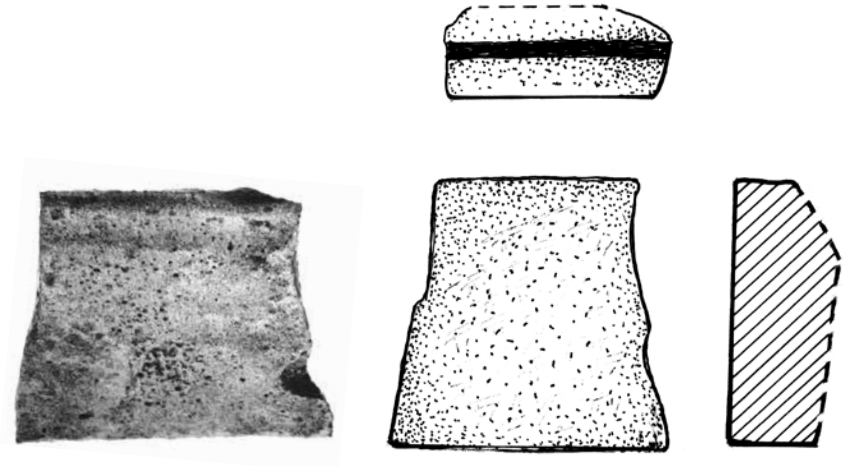
E 4 Fragments from a plaque
Dimensions: l. 3.7 cm; w. 3.7 cm; th. 1.5 cm
Composition: Faience of whitish, porous core with blue glazing
Origin: Levant
Dating: EIA
Description: Trapezoid plaque. The back side is worn out. The upper and the long sides are original. One side forms a vague cyma.



Cat. E 2 (not to scale)



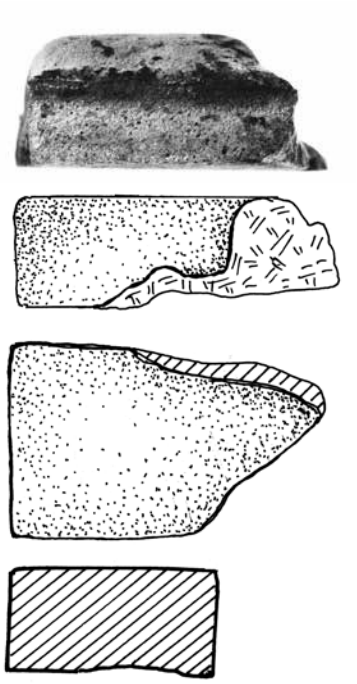
Cat. E 3 (scale 1 : 1, reconstruction not to scale)



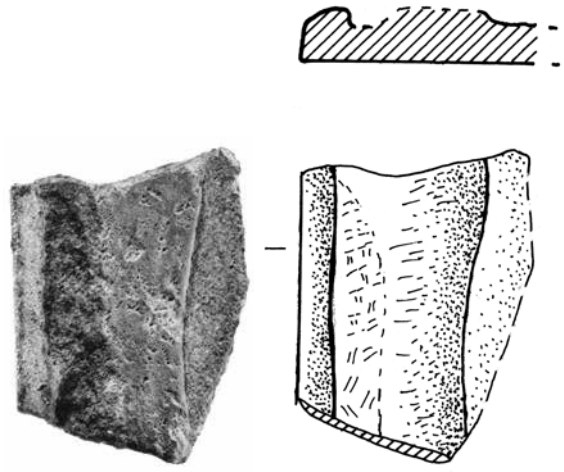
Cat. E 4 (scale 1 : 1)

E 5 Fragments from a plaque
Dimensions: l. 4.1 cm; w. 2.7 cm
Composition: Faience of whitish, porous core with blue glazing
Origin: Levant
Dating: EIA
Description: Rectangular plaque. The back side is worn out. The upper and the long sides are original.

E 6 Part of a flat plaque
Dimensions: l. 3.80 cm; w. 2.90 cm; th. 0.08 cm
Composition: Faience of whitish core with light-green glazing
Origin: Levant
Dating: Unknown
Description: The front side is eroded, and the glazing is exfoliated. The back side is flat.



Cat. E 5 (scale 1 : 1)



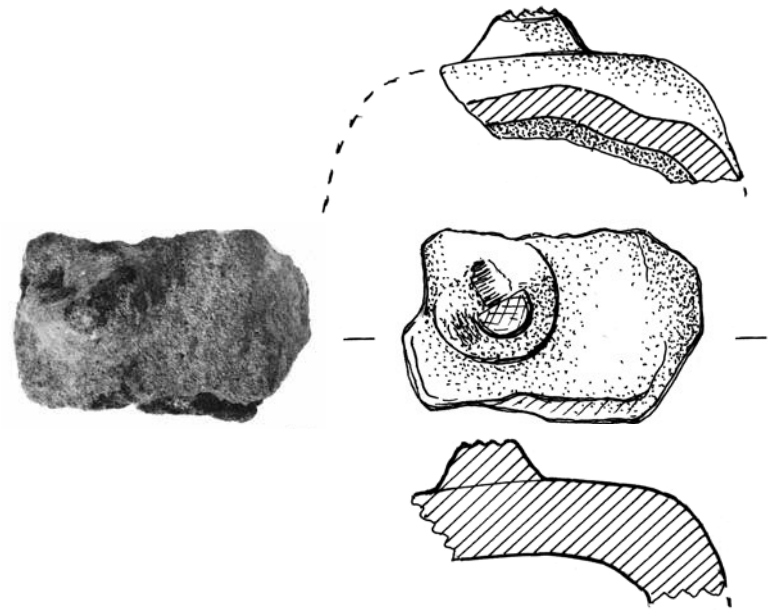
Cat. E 6 (scale 1 : 1)

E 7 Base of a spouted vessel
Inv. no.: ΑΜΗ Π1111
Dimensions: l. 6.8 cm; h. 2.0 cm; w. 6.5 cm
Composition: Faience of whitish core with traces of blue glazing
Origin: Levant
Dating: G–EO
Bibliography: Καρέτσου et al. 2000, 345 no. 369.
Description: The beginning of the walls of a (closed-shaped) ovoid vessel is preserved on a horseshoe-shaped plinth and a connate cylindrical spout. On the right corner of the plinth, there is an ellipsoid base of a cylindrical item, which is fragmentarily preserved.

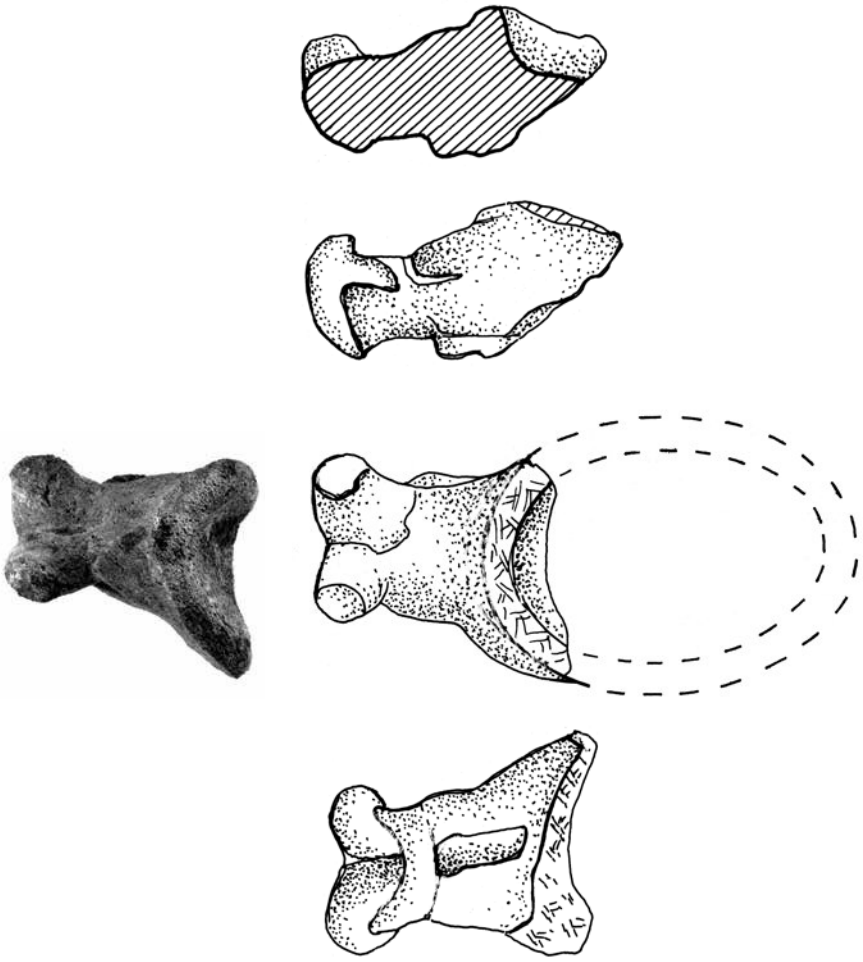
E 8 Fragment from a pomegranate
Dimensions: h. 2.2 cm; w. 4.1 cm; th. 1.3 cm
Composition: Faience of whitish core
Origin: Levant
Dating: G–EO
Description: A small model of (probably) a pomegranate. Its surface is coarse, with a protruding finial.

E 9 Unknown figure
Dimensions: l. 3.6 cm; h. 2.0 cm; w. 2.2 cm
Composition: Faience of whitish core
Origin: Unknown
Dating: Unknown
Description: Coarse funnel-shaped object. A pair of breasts stands out in high relief on its narrow edge, while the wider edge ends up in a curved surface. The shape and function of the object are uncertain.

Cat. E 7 (scale 1 : 1)



Cat. E 8 (scale 1 : 1)



Cat. E 9 (scale 1 : 1)

III. ANALYSIS OF THE FINDS

A. Human Figurines

There are not many faience human figurines amongst the Idaean Cave discoveries. They have both votive and cultic characteristics, and they normally depict Egyptian deities; the god Bes is included in this category in spite of his demonic appearance.

The god Bes

F. Halbherr mentions in the 1888 report the presence of a figurine of the god Bes made of Egyptian clay[5] (**A 1**). The figurine came down through the Trifyllis collection and was later donated to the Library of Friends of the Herakleion Educational Association (Φιλεκπαιδευτικός Σύλλογος Ηρακλείου). Today, it is kept at the National Archaeological Museum of Athens. The figurine is one of the largest found in the Aegean (13.5 cm in height without the feather crown). Its size and high artistic quality indicate that it was probably carved in Egypt in the 7th century B.C. Its great similarity to another figurine, from Amnisos[6], may lead to the conclusion that it was manufactured in the same workshop.

Although the god Bes is not included in the convention pantheon of Egyptian deities, he is believed to have been one of the most beloved. He was probably created during the Middle Kingdom – as there are no previous depictions of him – but he became very popular during the New Kingdom[7]. His depiction barely changes during the Dynastic Periods. What characterizes him is a demonic appearance with a mixture of human and animal features. His most typical representation is in frontal view, with short and slightly bent legs, a feathered cover on his head, a lion's mane, and a tail. During the Third Intermediate Period, when the figurine in question was manufactured, he is depicted with a moustache and a beard, while his tongue pops out of a series of menacing teeth.

Figurines of this beneficent demon are often found in assemblages connected with fertility and well-being in general. The Egyptians believed that they could control the chaotic maleficent forces that infected natural transmissions from one state to another, such as the annual floods of the Nile and the birth of a child. At the Idaean Cave, these figurines were probably compatible with the function of the sanctuary, as well as with the nature of the deity worshipped there.

Figurine of a male god

Halbherr's report of 1888 describes a headless torso of a male figurine, which is nowadays kept in the Archaeological Museum of Herakleion. The figurine (**A 2**) represents a standing young man looking ahead and leaning on a back pillar, which is partially broken. In the last excavation, in 1985, two more fragments were discovered that probably restore part of its front side.

The god's naked torso is thin, with a curved waist. He is wearing an Egyptian apron covering his body from his hips up to his knees. The perizoma begins with a wide belt and

[5] Halbherr – Orsi 1888, 69 f. no. 4.

[6] Stürmer 1992, 232 f. pls. 78, 13. 14; 79, 3. 6; 252 f. Figurines of the god Bes have been discovered in other Cretan sites, such as Inatos (Καρέτσου et al. 2000, 338 no. 356) and Gortys (Stampolidis – Karetsou 1998, 222 no. 260).

[7] For more information on the god Bes, see Dasen 1993, 55 f.

is formed by numerous continuous engravings. The head and the neck are broken. At the height of the shoulders, there is a double engraving probably from a necklace. The spiral ending of the lock, which must have ornamented the middle of the head, is preserved between the shoulder blades.

In his right hand, close to his torso, the young man is tightly gripping a curved rod, and in his left hand, which was attached to his thighs, he was probably holding another object, from which an abacus-shaped part is preserved.

The head, which is broken from the lower part of the neck, must have been shaved (or have had very short hair), as it is so indicated by the lock whose spiral end is preserved between the shoulder blades. The torso is supported in the back by an inscribed pillar.

Although the quality of the figurine cannot be considered exquisite, its special morphological characteristics render it unique in the Aegean region. The figurine is characterized by a two-dimensional flat-form shape. Only the buttocks are plastically shaped, but in an unnatural, almost angular way. The upper part of the torso with the wide, round shoulders has the form of a trapezium rather than of a triangle, since the waist and the hips are slightly widened. There are no particular anatomical details sculpted on the body, with the exception of the navel. The Egyptian apron is formed by vertical engravings on the hips and sidelong engravings on the front, but it is uncertain whether it possessed a third apron piece between the thighs[8]. The necklace, which circles the lower part of the neck, is another indication of the high social status of the figurine[9].

The dating of this statuette is also doubtful. According to some scholars, it was made in the New Kingdom[10], but most scholars believe it dates back to the 7th century B.C.[11]

The shape and style of the figurine is reminiscent of the creations of the Old and Middle Kingdoms. Both hands rest on the perizoma, or next to the thighs, in accordance with the traditional plastic arts practices of the Old Kingdom[12]. This posture is quite common in votives (clay or metal) in Cyprus and Greece, which are more commonly identified with mortals (pilgrims or officials) than with gods. The figurine probably dates to between the 8th and the 7th century B.C., stemming from the 25th Dynasty (the Nubian Dynasty, 747–656 B.C.) or the 26th Dynasty (the Saite Period, 656–525 B.C.). During these periods, sculpture flourishes again, having been greatly inspired by earlier models of the Old and Middle Kingdoms[13].

The origin of the figurine has also been debated. P. Demargne assumed that it was Phoenician and compared it with a statuette from Sparta[14]. On the contrary, N. Skon-Jedele, D. W. Jones, and M. Elsaadani consider it Egyptian[15].

According to Halbherr, the hieroglyphics inscribed on the spinal pillar cannot be translated, but are purely decorative[16]. Demargne[17] and F. W. von Bissing[18] believed so too. Recently, however, Skon-Jedele claimed that the clean-cut signs can be read with some small corrections. In this case, the figurine could constitute an authentic Egyptian introduction[19].

According to Skon-Jedele, the preserved text reads: »Dd mdw in ib (ny) nb? Nfr-tm?, n…nb dim n….«, which means »words said from the heart of the Lord? Nefertum?...«, and

[8] The perizoma exists in all periods of Egyptian art, with only minor differentiations appearing over time. During the New Kingdom, it is presented with folds (narrow pleats).

[9] For more on Egyptian necklaces, see Wilkinson 1971, 65–69.

[10] Καρέτσου et al. 2000, 344 no. 366; Halbherr – Orsi 1888, 70–72 no. 5.

[11] 7th cent. B.C. (see also Jones 2000a, 278 no. 103).

[12] During the New Kingdom, this posture was replaced by the one that had one hand placed next to the thigh and the other placed near the chest. In the same period, the most usual posture of the Egyptian Kings was with their left hand curved near their chest and holding a scepter.

[13] For the Archaistic trends of the Late Egyptian Period, see Wolf 1957, 619–626; Aldred 1981, 126 f. 149 f.

[14] Demargne 1947, 123.

[15] Skon-Jedele 1994, 1753; Elsaadani 1982, 45 no. 47; see also Jones 2000a, 278 no 103.

[16] Halbherr – Orsi 1888, 70–72.

[17] Demargne 1947, 123.

[18] von Bissing 1924, 213.

[19] Skon-Jedele 1994, 1749.

the last two parts of the phrase mean »let there endure«, and »let there be established«. The rest of the text is not preserved; therefore the full meaning of the phrase remains unknown. The group of symbols with the one horizontal carving, the three vertical carvings, and the crescent under a sitting deity may represent a distorted rendering of many of the symbols of the god Nefertum's name, but we cannot be certain. Consequently, the fragmentary content of the inscription and its possibly mistaken writing cannot help us identify the figurine.

The preserved ending of the figurine's hair is of decisive importance for its identification. There are two possible haircuts that could include a spiral lock of hair. The first one is the shaved head with only a protruding ponytail[20], and the second is the valanced wig, which is a rare type of wig with the lock at the side of the head and in front the chest[21]. The problem with these two styles is that in our figurine the lock grows from the side and not from the center of the head (side-lock). One possible explanation for this would be that the lock was between the shoulder blades instead of the side for reasons having to do with artistic taste. Another reason is that the (missing) head was turned to the side, while the body looks straight ahead[22].

However, the peculiar haircut of the Idaean figurine could – in certain contexts – be indicative of a royal male offspring, officer, or warrior. The same haircut appears in the relief of the Shihan Warrior, which dates to the beginning of the 12th Dynasty (ca. 2000 B.C.), and on cylinder seals[23]. It is also very similar to a male figurine of a young prince (as well as his body and apron), who is depicted on a Bronze Age stone seal from Palestine[24].

The young man of the Idaean Cave held an object in his left hand, from which a part of a thick square plaque is preserved close to the thigh. The latter seems thereby swollen by the slight projection of the left leg. It is unlikely that this item was the loop of an Ankh[25], as its most probable explanation as forming part of the handle does not match. It could, however, form part of a weapon (sword?). Moreover, it is difficult to identify the curved shaft held in the figure's right fist. Von Bissing described it as a shaft ending in a papyrus[26]. It could also be a corrupt representation of the Omega symbol, the Hittite ideogram that means ›life‹[27].

In conclusion, we could say that the young man of the Idaean Cave is an Egyptianizing figurine. The hieroglyphics (even if they need some corrections to become legible), the curved object in the right fist, and the lock in the center of the head instead of on the side (side-lock), as was common in Ancient Egypt, could be interpreted as mistakes made in an effort to imitate an authentic Egyptian work which was probably created in the Levant.

Nevertheless, its production was not limited to Egypt alone. Metal figurines with Egyptian features found in Cyprus are considered to be a particular case Egyptian patterns having been brought over by the Phoenicians at the behest of Cypriot individuals[28]. The young man of the Idaean Cave could have been the end-result of a similar process.

[20] This is the typical haircut of children in ancient Egypt – of all periods – that they maintained until their coming of age (the side-lock or *Knabenlocke*). It also characterizes some children of gods (e.g. the god Chons) and even more commonly some groups of people such as priests (especially the high priest of god Ptah). See Janssen – Janssen 1990, 37 f.

[21] Cody 2004, 397–399.

[22] The spiral ending of the lock resembles the ending of the Hathoric hair or of the *syrische Spirallocke*. This haircut is mainly typical of female figurines and sphinxes, with locks falling on either side of the face and not on the back of the head. See also Ziegler 1997, 272 cat. 44. 37.

[23] Dussaud 1912; Tufnell 1953a, 161–166.

[24] The man has a side-lock, a necklace, and an apron; the figure probably represents a winner. In his right hand, he is holding a stick and in his left a small vessel. In front of him, there is a large Ankh, and he is surrounded by many animals. See Eder 1995, 244 f. no. 116.

[25] Skon-Jedele 1994, 1762.

[26] von Bissing 1924, 213.

[27] Van Buren 1945, 106–108.

[28] Markoe 1990, 111–122.

Lotus-shaped crown

The lotus-shaped crown discovered during the excavations of 1983 (**A 3**) belonged to a statuette of the god Nefertum. It is a reproduction of the Egyptian hairstyle with the lotus flower and the upright feathers in the center. This wig is a rough imitation of the normal lotus-shaped hairstyle of the god Nefertum and stresses the Egyptianizing character of the figurine. A similar hairstyle characterizes the figurines of the god Nefertum found in Knossos[29] and Kition[30]. Statuettes of this god have also been discovered in other Cretan sanctuaries, such as Kommos[31] and Inatos[32].

This type of statuette presents the god standing in front of a board-shaped pillar and wearing the Egyptian perizoma. His hands are attached to his thighs, while his left leg is projected outwards. In contrast to the previous statuette, the style of this figurine – as well as its lack of a pillar – evinces Syrian-Palestinian influence[33].

Nefertum was the son of the god Ptah and the lion-figured goddess Sekhmet with whom he composed the divine trinity of Memphis. His name means ›beautiful‹, and according to Egyptian mythology he appeared in the Waters of Chaos as a light-blue lotus flower[34]. From his initial identification with this primal plant, he came to be connected with rejuvenation and rebirth.

Head of a female statuette

During the excavations conducted by Halbherr in 1885, two female heads with Egyptian wigs were unearthed, and they were identified with sphinxes[35]. In their description, it is stressed that they are very similar to the heads of the ivory plates from Nimrud. The two sphinxes came down to the Mitsotakis collection, and traces of them were lost thereafter.

Given that the items of the Mitsotakis collection were later shared between the National Archaeological Museum of Athens and the Archaeological Museum of Herakleion, it was logical to search for the above-mentioned heads in these two museums[36]. In the latter, the only object that resembles the relevant descriptions of the sphinxes is a female head with inv. no. Y713, which comes from the (unidentified) Lilliano Cave[37] (**A 4**). The conditions under which this head was discovered force us to look at – and possibly to identify – one of the lost heads of the Idaean Cave. This human-figured head was found in a box in the repository of the Archaeological Museum of Herakleion with »Lilliano Cave« on its cover. However, the head of the Egyptian figurine actually belonged to the Mitsotakis collection. According to the hand-written note stuck on the box, it contained »finds of the Idaean Cave, head of Egyptian figurine from the Mitsotakis collection«. The exceptional quality of the head, the heterogeneous content of the box (mainly Late Minoan pottery, but also earlier),

[29] The statuette of Knossos is the largest such figurine found in Greece, measuring 32 cm in height. See Webb 1996, 604 f. fig. 182 pls. 297. 298.

[30] Clerc et al. 1976, 600 no. 439 pls. 11. 12.

[31] Shaw 1980, 229 no. 50; 235 no. 63; 247 pl. 65 e.

[32] Stampolidis – Karetsou 1998, 220 nos. 255. 256; Καρέτσου et al. 2000, 339. 350. 353 nos. 358. 379. 383.

[33] Cf. mainly Clerc et al. 1976, 140 no. 443 pl. 6 and figurine from Knossos (Καρέτσου et al. 2000, 355 no. 387).

[34] The figure of Nefertum is connected with the lotus flower. For its religious and cosmological symbolism, see Morenz – Schubert 1954.

[35] Halbherr – Orsi 1888, 69 nos. 2. 3; von Bissing 1924, 213; Demargne 1947, 123. See also Hoffman 1997, 47 nos. F. G.

[36] Faience sphinxes are rare in Greece. Only two examples are known: one from the Athenian agora dating from the 6th cent. B.C. and one from Kamiros dating in the Archaic Period too (Webb 1978, 97 nos. 560. 561).

[37] Kanta 1971, 438; Stampolidis – Karetsou 1998, 221 f. no. 258.

as well as the absence of other objects that normally accompany the faience items, may explain the (unintentional) co-existence of the ›Sphinx‹ of the Idaean Cave and the finds from the Lilliano Cave in the same box.

Most probably, ›Head Υ713‹ belongs to a figurine representing a Phoenician goddess, perhaps Astarte[38]. It could not have been a full-body figurine; if it had been, its height would have reached 30 cm. The hairstyle of the Idaean head is particular and does not entirely imitate a specific type of wig, as its grooves are neither completely horizontal nor completely vertical. It is characterized, however, by an Egyptianizing style. The astragaloi of the wig falling on either side of the face are reminiscent of certain New Kingdom wigs, which were imitated during the Late Egyptian Period. It should be noted that both the hairstyle and the technical details render the head comparable to the famous ›woman at the window‹ figurines from Syria-Palestine[39], although it is uncertain whether the head had been carved in that region[40].

As is well-known, the worship of the goddess-protector of Tyros was transmitted throughout the Aegean by the Phoenician merchants that flowed into the Mediterranean Sea during the 8th century B.C., and the qualities of the goddess were later assimilated by indigenous deities such as Aphrodite.

Lower part of a figurine of a male deity with a miniature musician next to the foot

This is a small figurine of a standing human figure (**A 5**). Only the lower part of the Egyptian apron with the two naked shins is preserved. Its right leg is standing still, while its slightly projected left leg is probably resting on a plinth. The figure is wearing a long perizoma up to its knees with vertical folds and no sidelong folds, while there is part of a stick between its legs. The right hand of the figure must have been stuck at the side of the thigh owing to an impression of a straight coarse line visible along the thigh. On the back, there is an uninscribed pillar whose diameter narrows towards the top. Next to the right leg, there is a small figure of a musician in relief playing a double flute.

The statuette is rather imperfectly rendered. The height of the incised line defining the lower part of the apron on the back differs in height on the two legs (similar imperfect incision is also observed on the type of the deity bearing flowers in **A 6**). On the front, the same incised line of the apron deepens where it meets the beginning of the naked shins. A narrow black ribbon runs horizontally along the ankle of the deity and continues on to the body of the miniature figure[41].

The miniature figure of the flute-player is also imperfectly rendered. He is wearing an Egyptian wig and an apron with folds which are sidelong on either side, and he is projecting his left leg forward, which gives the impression that he is in mid-stride. He is playing a double-flute with both of his hands. This statuette must have been more than 30 cm in height, which makes it one of the largest faience statuettes discovered in the Aegean.

[38] According to Stampolidis and Karetsou, it probably belongs to a woman rather than to a deity or queen, as it possesses no symbols of divine or royal power (Stampolidis – Karetsou 1998, 221 f.). However, these symbols would not necessarily have been placed or carved on the head.

[39] Moscati 1988, 408. 410. 597 no. 81; 598 no. 82.

[40] In A. Kanta's publication, it is mentioned as being Egyptian, (Kanta 1971, 438). Cf. the ivory figurine (1st half of 7th cent. B.C.) with the long Egyptian wig, whose two ribbon-shaped locks almost reach the breast. The face is wide, with big eyes (Stampolidis – Karetsou 1998, 271 no. 342).

[41] This is also seen on the statuette from Tel Dan (Biran 1978, pl. 53 C.).

It is quite difficult to identify the figure, as the upper part of the torso and the head are missing. The type depicting a human figure with a miniature figure on the right is common in Egyptian sculpture and painting. More particularly, the figure with a stick between the legs and a miniature figure on its right recalls the figurine of the goddess Sekhmet of Kommos which has an animal (a wildcat) standing on its left side. Similar are the figurines of hawk-shaped deities that have been found in the Western Mediterranean, which date, however, to subsequent periods[42].

The fact that the accompanying figure is a miniature in all relevant examples denotes the divine status of the main figure and is not related to age. Consequently, here also we have a deity accompanied by a flute-player who defines its divine status.

The sex of the figure is unknown, as its preserved characteristics could belong to both male and female figures: the apron in Egyptian art may characterize female figures as well[43], especially when made in a Phoenician workshop[44], while a male figurine may have breasts. Similar also is the relatively large group of figurines from the sanctuary of Bustan esh-Sheikh (Sidon), where the figures are also wearing an apron with folds and are accompanied by lions[45]. A close example has also been discovered in Tel Dan. In that case, there is a seated monkey next to the human figure [46]. Unfortunately, none of the above-mentioned examples preserve the upper part of the torso; therefore, we do not know the figure's sex or exact sculpture type [47].

In conclusion, if the figure of the Idaean Cave is male, it could be identified with Thoth, Horus, or Osiris[48], whereas if it depicts a female goddess it could be identified with an Aegean version of Hathor: instead of the traditional attributes of the Egyptian deity, one sees a flute-player.

As far as the miniature figure is concerned, the flute-player image is very common in Egyptian painting, but not in Egyptian faience or bronze sculpture – with the exception of some figurines found in areas of Greek cultural presence such as Naukratis[49]. Although in Egypt this statue type is unknown, such statuettes have been discovered in the temples of Artemis in Ephesos[50], in Smyrna[51], and in Erythrae[52], and most of them were manufactured in the workshop of Naukratis. The examples from Taras[53] and Lokroi[54] are also of great interest. In Crete, a figurine of a flute-player has been discovered in Knossos[55].

The figurine resembles figurines of flute-players found in Greece (mainly in Rhodes) and on the coast of Asia Minor which were accompanied by a human or animal on their left[56]. Worshippers used to offer figurines of flute-players to temples because they believed

[42] Hölbl 1986, pl. 40, 2.

[43] As G. Hölbl has observed, it is incorrect to quickly identify as male the figures that are depicted with apron and naked breasts if there is other evidence that points to their being female (Hölbl 2000, 147 n. 121).

[44] This was common, especially in the Phoenician ivory statues.

[45] Hölbl 2000, 148; Nunn 1996, 257 figs. 8 a–c; 9 a. d.

[46] Biran 1978, 270 pl. 53 C.

[47] According to Hölbl, the example from Tel Dan belongs to the type of woman holding flowers (see Hölbl 2000, 148). However, this type, in its Egyptianizing version, is almost two-dimensional and has shallow incisions, unlike the type from Tel Dan and the Idaean Cave, which is larger and more plastically rendered.

[48] Osiris was considered to be the patron god of music (Harris 1922, 69–75, esp. 69. 72). The flute was conspicuous in Egyptian representations of orchestras, and it was Osiris whom the children of the Nile thanked for the discovery of this means of producing dulcet sounds. Osiris is credited, alongside Apollo, with the invention of the flute.

[49] Stampolidis 2001, 513 no. 984.

[50] Hölbl 1978, 2; Hölbl 1979, 283.

[51] Hölbl 1985, 39.

[52] Hölbl 1985, 39.

[53] Hölbl 1978, 283.

[54] Hölbl 1978, 283.

[55] Webb 1978, 89 no. 389 pl. 13; Brock 1957, 100 no. 1149 pl. 173; 208; Καρέτσου et al. 2000, 356 no. 389a.

[56] Webb 1978, 86 nos. 354 (with a female figure). 355–360 (with a hawk). 361–363 (with a goat) pl. 12.

the gods were pleased to listen to them. I am not aware of any flute-players who accompanied other deity figures.

The figurine of the Idaean Cave comprises a mixture of different cultures. The theme of the flute-player is considered to be a Greek contribution, although in the Greek sculptures he is normally naked[57] while here he is wearing an Egyptian wig and the Egyptian apron. The back pillar and the stick between the deity's legs are Egyptian elements, neither of which is used for reasons of stability. The figurine might have been made in the workshop of Naukratis, where figures of flute-players were frequently produced.

This figurine may be the flute-player that von Bissing saw in the Archaeological Museum of Herakleion amongst other votive offerings of the Idaean Cave[58]. Demargne[59] speaks of a »petit joueur de flûte«, while Halbherr and Orsi do not mention anything relevant.

Part of a female figurine bearing flowers

The fragment from a hand, bent at a right-angle under the breasts and touching the belly, probably belongs to a figurine of a »female figure bearing flowers« (**A 6**). It is a type of figurine known from several areas, such as Kition[60], Amnisos[61], and Sidon[62], and dates back to the 7th century B.C. This figure is wearing an apron with vertical straight folds and was probably holding a lotus flower in her left hand; her right hand must have been stuck to the body. The lotus flower she was holding in front of her breast is reminiscent of Egyptian models of a standing woman with a lioness' head and holding a papyrus scepter.

The find of the Idaean Cave (as well as the respective finds at Kition and Amnisos) does not seem to be Egyptian, but Cyprio-Phoenician. It had a back pillar like its Egyptian counterparts, but it was not as thin. In this way, the Idaean figurine bears a stronger resemblance to that of Kition, and it was possibly manufactured in the same workshop[63].

If the Egyptian elements of the papyrus scepter and the lotus flower retain their original meaning, this figurine should be identified with a goddess and not with a dedicator[64].

However, it is difficult to discover the identity of this goddess. In the case of the temple of Sidon, Hölbl suggests her identification with Astarte, the goddess-protector of birth and creation[65]. In Kition, she has been described as »un personage feminine«[66], while in Amnisos she has been referred to as a »female figure« and a »figure holding flowers«[67].

In the case of the Idaean Cave, however, the figure could be associated with the goddess Hathor, wife of the sun god Ra; in her hands, the lotus flower – as sun symbol – could be seen as the Ankh[68]. Moreover, in several cases the goddess is depicted as holding a scepter ending in a lotus[69].

The naked female figurine holding a lotus flower is a type that was borrowed from the Near East, where it was often referred to as ›Qadesh‹[70]. The Qu-du-shu is a Syrian-Palestinian import to Egypt and represents the erotic and apotropaic aspect of goddesses. Basically, this is the Syrian naked goddess, but it could also be considered to be a syncretic blend of characteristics from Sekhmet, Isis, and Hathor[71].

[57] Elsaadani 1982, 126.
[58] von Bissing 1924, 213.
[59] Demargne 1947, 124.
[60] Clerc et al. 1976, 139 pls. 12. 13. Karagheorghis 1967, esp. 321. 323 fig. 119.
[61] Stürmer 1992, 233. 251.
[62] Biran 1980, 97 fig. 6 pl. 5 B; Nunn 1996, 256 pls. 4 A–C.
[63] The figurine of Amnisos does not possess a back side-pillar.
[64] Many Cypriot statues and statuettes represent standing dedicators, in the same posture, bearing a flower; cf., e.g., Yon 1974, 107 f. 142–144.
[65] Hölbl 2000, 148–150.
[66] Clerc et al. 1976, 139 fig. 439.
[67] Stürmer 1992, 251.
[68] Wilkinson 1994, 161. 182.
[69] Meza 2000, 199–212, esp. 211.
[70] Prent 2005, 373; Riis 1948, 85 f.
[71] Marinatos 2006, 16.

B. Animal Figurines

A number of animal-shaped fragments have been discovered in the Idaean Cave, but due to the fragmentary state of their preservation we are not able to certify whether they belong to figurines or plastic vases.

Couchant lion

During the excavations of 1885, a vessel was discovered, in the form of a couchant lion, holding a cylindrical vase with its projected anterior legs (**B 1**). It belongs to the category of trick vases, as the smaller vase held by the lion contains a tube leading into the interior of the animal, where water was kept. This way, the liquid would come out of the legs of the lion each time the vessel was used[72].

Its model were probably the Egyptian royal faience sphinxes, such as the one of Amenhotep II[73]. Although there is a clear connection between sphinxes and lions, there are also several differences, such as their shape and decoration[74]. Despite this vessel's particularity, it was a quite common vessel type in the Near East[75]. In Megiddo, South Palestine, three examples have been discovered, which, however, date from ca. 1000 B.C. This type became popular in Crete later on (around 8th–7th cent. B.C.), and, apart from faience vessels, there have also been local clay imitations (Arkades). A concurrent example from Knossos is considered to be an Egyptian import from Palestine[76]. The Idaean vessel must date from between 850 and 650 B.C.[77], and according to Demargne, it must have been manufactured in Naukratis[78].

In the Idaean Cave, this specific type of vessel is also found in imported ivory examples from northern Syria, which date from the end of 9th and the beginning of the 8th century B.C.[79]

Fragments from lion figurines

The fragment from a plinthos and the tail of a sitting lion with successive painted dots on its tail (**B 2**)[80] probably dates to the beginning of the 7th century B.C. The lion, either in the form of a figurine or as a decorative figure on vessels, was extremely popular in Egypt, as well as in the Aegean. The lion head with inv. no. 493 (**B 3**) must be a fragment from a large figurine or vessel with an Egyptianizing style. It is similar to the lion-shaped vessel from the North Cemetery of Knossos[81]. The front leg of a felid (**B 4**) must be a fragment from a resting lion.

[72] The painted eye on the small vase held by the lion of Megiddo may suggest that it contained oil or ointment for treating eye infections (Wartke 1999, 348 fig. 169).

[73] Sphinxes were familiar to the Levantines since the Middle Bronze Age, when similar statuettes were imported from Egypt.

[74] Peltenburg 2002, 87.

[75] Hampe 1969, 13–15.

[76] Webb 1996, 606 f. fig. 180 pls. 298–300.

[77] See also Webb 1996, 607.

[78] Demargne 1947, 124.

[79] Σακελλαράκης 1984, 559–562 fig. 6 pl. 246 B; Sakellarakis 1992, 113 pl. 1.

[80] See Webb 1978, 72 fig. 22.

[81] Webb 1996, 606 f. Apart from Crete, it has also been found in Ialyssos in Rhodes (Webb 1978, 72 fig. 22).

Fragment from a wildcat's face

The excavations of 1983 unearthed a fragment from the face of a felid (**B 5**). It probably represents a wildcat, which in Egypt had long been very popular (even as a domesticated animal) and which was worshiped as a god. The cat constituted the symbol of the goddess Bastet, who, especially during the Late Egyptian Period, was often identified with the goddess Sekhmet. Bastet was connected with fertility; therefore, she is often depicted as being surrounded by her offspring. Since Middle Mycenaean times, she has been a common theme on Cretan clay rhytons and figurines. Her presence in the Idaean Cave must have been as a votive, as her religious symbolism was very likely to have been recognized[82].

Fragments from Demonic figures

Two faience fragments with demonic features may belong to an ape figurine (**B 7**) or an ape-shaped lekythion[83], where the right eye and ear are visible. The demonic figure – that could represent the god Bes – must have had apotropaic (averting the evil) character. In Egypt, apes were connected with fertility, while the Phoenicians worshiped them as gods.

The sitting duck

Another fragment represents the wide, boat-shaped rear part of a natatorial bird (**B 8**). Vessels in duck form have been unearthed in Lefkandi (LPG)[84], Amathus (T. 201), and Megiddo (Level IV), and they date to before the 8th century B.C.[85]

However, the figurine of the Idaean Cave seems to represent a goose and is later than the previous fragment. The short, flat tail resembles Egyptian prototypes, like the duck from the 19th or 20th Dynasty in the Albert Gallatin collection[86]. Some rare examples of scent bottles of the dozing duck type from Rhodes, which also produced an exotic kind – the Egyptian goose (Alopochen aegyptiacus) – date from the Early Archaic Period. Such examples have been discovered in Cerveteri and Vulci in Italy[87].

Other fragments from figurines were discovered during the excavations of 1983 and 1985. The fragment from a left leg (part of the shin and the foot; **B 6**) seems to belong more to a demonic figure (Bes?) than to a human one.

Another fragment seems to be part of an animal figurine (**B 9**). Its plastic rendering – despite the obvious linearity – and the short parallel lines on its surface are indicative of an animal's limb.

C. Vessels

The vessels form another important category of faience find. The majority of these finds are fragments and not whole vessels, and they were brought to light during the excavations conducted by Sakellarakis[88]. I was not able to detect the »fragments from Egyptian faience

[82] A pendant of Bastet from the Saite Period has been discovered in the Cave of Eileithyia at Inatos (Andrews 1994, 33 f.).

[83] For ape-shaped vessels, see Levi 1927–1929, fig. 597.

[84] Popham – Lemos 1996, pl. 141 G.

[85] Schumacher 1908, 89 f. 131 f.; Peltenburg 2002, 87 f.

[86] Cooney 1953, 13 no. 64 pl. 37 A.

[87] Sannibale 2003, 173 fig. 17.

[88] Apart from the fragments presented in the Catalogue, there are other, smaller ones from at least 16

vessels« mentioned in S. Marinatos' reports[89]. Similarly, the fate of fragments from unidentified objects mentioned by Halbherr[90] remains unknown.

In many cases, the faience vessels seem to imitate metal and pottery models, although normally they are smaller.

Open shapes

Phiale

Most of the fragments from a monochrome phiale (**C 1**)[91] were discovered in the lowest layer of mound 5 (central hall) during the excavations conducted by Sakellarakis. The base of the vessel is short and discoid, while the main body is shallow with thick walls and a round cavity corresponding to the diameter of the base. The rim is thick, with short, successive black lines on its upper surface. The height of the vessel is 4.3 cm, and its rim diameter is 14 cm.

The shape of this phiale is common in the Near East, especially in Israel and Syria. A variation with everted rim has been discovered in Megiddo and Beth Pelet[92]. The phiale from Megiddo is the closest example to the Idaean phiale. It is made of bronze, and its dimensions are slightly larger (5 cm in height, rim diameter of 19 cm)[93].

The phialae with thin or thick walls and slightly everted, rounded, or angular rims date from as early as the 13th century B.C., while phialae with thin walls and diameters from 15 cm to 19 cm have been found in sites dating from the beginning of the Iron Age (11th and 10th century B.C.), such as Gaza, Beth Pelet, Beth Shean, Megiddo, Deir el Balah, and Gezer[94].

The vitreous texture of the vessel, its one-color painting, and the technique of the written lines are characteristics detected on faience vessels of Middle Kingdom and New Kingdom Egypt[95]. Vessels from Serabit el Khadem indicate that this technique was still in use until the second half of the 12th century B.C.

The phiale found in the Idaean Cave with the metal models could have been manufactured during the Early Iron Age, in the 10th or 9th century B.C., possibly in an Egyptianizing workshop like the one that operated in Megiddo.

Fragment from a hemispherical phiale

This is a triangular fragment from the body and the rim of a phiale. It has a hemispherical body, probably plain with a simple, narrow horizontal rim. Under the rim, there is a wide-open hole for hanging (**C 2**).

This type of phiale, which originated in the Near East, is very common in Cyprus. In Crete, it dates from the 9th to the 8th century B.C. (the rim diameter is 13 cm to 25 cm)[96]. The hole under the rim is a Cretan characteristic and is found on bronze vessels of the Geometric Period, sometimes even of the 7th century B.C. On the Greek mainland (Kerameikos), a

vessels. Today, they are kept at the Archaeological Museum of Herakleion.

89 Μαρινάτος 1956, 410; Ορλάνδος 1956, 110.

90 Halbherr – Orsi 1888, 71 f.

91 Cf. bronze chernips from Kouklia-Teratsoudia (Late Cycladic III): Karageorghis-Michaelides 1990, 34 pls. 24. 54.

92 Guy 1938, pls. 119, 5; 124, 22.

93 Loud 1948, pl. 190, 13. See also Peltenburg 2002, 90.

94 Shallow phialae with low feet and thick rims are found amongst bronze vessels of the 19th Dynasty (Radwan 1983, no. 270).

95 Peltenburg 1983, 423.

96 A bronze hemispherical phiale (Geometric Period / Early Anatolian Period) with a rim diameter of 13 cm has been discovered in the Idaean Cave (Stampolidis – Karetsou 1998, 240 no. 290). It is considered to be a typical product of the Cypriot workshops in operation from the 8th to the 6th cent. B.C. The most typical parallels date from the late 9th to the 7th cent. B.C.

phiale typically has two holes, which indicates that the vessel was used before being offered to the sanctuary[97].

Fragment from a phiale

The fragment (**C 3**) belongs to a plain hemispherical phiale with no particular base or rim. This type of vessel forms part of a rather common vessel category found on the Greek mainland and on Crete in the Geometric Period.

Fragment from a miniature strainer-skyphoid

Eight faience fragments with blue-green glazing from the bodies of more than one vessel were discovered during the excavations of 1984 (**C 4**). Some are fragments from the preserved rim of a one-handled miniature skyphos. The body of the vessel is hemispherical with a slightly everted rim and without a clearly shaped base. It is 2.2 cm in height, and its rim has a diameter of 5 cm. Except for a plain, horizontal zone that is 2 cm in width under the rim, the rest of the body is full of small holes scattered throughout its surface. The vessel must have had a small strap handle stretching from the rim to the body.

In Crete, strainers were not particularly popular. A very small number has been discovered in tombs[98]. This type of vessel imitates Cyprio-Phoenician models dating to the beginning of the Iron Age, as well as models of metal vessels. Similar vessels have been discovered in Megiddo[99], Beth Shean[100], and Shiloh.

Part of a small bucket

This is part of a cylindrical vessel, probably a small bucket, with almost vertical walls and an elevated connate handle in the form of a discoid ring. Its rim diameter is 7 cm (**C 5**).

The vessel type with the discoid handles was very common in many areas of the Levant, Cyprus (Enkomi), and Mesopotamia[101], and even more popular in Babylonia (South Mesopotamia), where it has been discovered at numerous sites (e.g. Babylon, Kish, Ur, Mari). It belongs to the so-called ›International Western Asiatic Style‹ and dates to the end of the Bronze Age and the beginning of the Iron Age[102].

Its shape is particular and obviously imitates metal models. It was more popular in Babylonia than in the West. The item found in the Idaean Cave imitates the above-mentioned Near Eastern vessels; it could have been imported from the Near East; and it probably dates back to the Early Iron Age.

Closed shapes

One-handled lekythion

The one-handled lekythion made of blue faience, which was found in fragments, is also quite interesting (**C 8**). The vessel imitates imported models of clay one-handled lekythia, which were widespread not only in Knossos (in Fortetsa[103] and in the North Cemetery), but in Eleutherna as well. These vessels are sometimes referred to as »Cypriot« and at other times as »Cypriot-Phoenician«[104].

[97] Stampolidis – Karetsou 1998, 240 no. 290.
[98] Τσιποπούλου 1985, 36.
[99] Harrison 2004, 39 pl. 20, 11–13.
[100] Mazar 1985, figs. 31, 11; 43, 6.
[101] Harrison 2004, 93 fig. 128 b pl. 9.
[102] Peltenburg 1972, 136 (with bibl.).
[103] Brock 1957, 64 no. 694 pl. 45; 190.
[104] See Stampolidis – Karetsou 1998, 171 no. 156; Karageorghis 1983, 205.

Cypriot Black on Red imports arrived in Crete between the late 9th and the 7th century B.C. and include oinochoae, lekythia, and more often aryballoi. It has been suggested that the production of Cretan imitations of the Cypriot Black on Red pottery is divided into two phases: the first one took place at the end of the 9th and the beginning of the 8th century B.C., and the second in the middle of the 8th century B.C. Cretan copies of Cypriot pottery have been unearthed at many Cretan sites[105]. The Cypriot prototypes are usually shorter than 10 cm, while the Creto-Cypriot prototypes are generally higher than 1.1 cm[106]. The rim with **C 9** must belong to another one-handled lekythion. The Idaean find could be either an import from the Cyprio-Phoenician region or a product of a local Cretan workshop.

The rim (**C 10**) must belong to an amphoriskos, and the fragments of blue faience (**C 11**) likely form part of the body of an oinochoe. Finally, both the part of a flat base (**C 12**) and a part of a ringed base (**C 13**) probably belong to oinochoae or amphoriskoi.

Fragment from an oinochoe handle in the shape of an Egyptian lotus

During the excavations of 1983, a fragment from an oinochoe with a lotus-shaped handle (**C 14**) was unearthed from mound 5 of the Idaean Cave's central hall. This type of vase is quite well-known by a number of bronze finds from the Early Iron Age (11th–9th cent. B.C.), which were created by Egyptian craftsmen; they must have arrived in Crete (Knossos, Amnisos), Cyprus, and the wider Aegean (Thera, Euboea, Peloponnese) via Syria-Palestine[107]. Most of them, and particularly the earliest ones, have been discovered in the Idaean Cave. About 15 small oinochoae have been found in the sacred cave, and it seems that they represent the first imports from the Near East[108]. According to W. Culican,[109] the oinochoe of Egyptian origin has one or more decorative nails between its two sides, as well as functional nails[110], in contrast to the examples without nails, which he considers to be Phoenician. The Egyptian origin of the five oinochoae of the Idaean Cave was first declared by von Bissing. Halbherr and Orsi had not identified them as imports. According to G. Roeder, they also constitute products of an Egyptian workshop, while more recently Skon-Jedele claimed that they are authentic imports which probably arrived in Crete during the Orientalizing Period[111]. They may have arrived in Crete along with those of Knossos after being manufactured in an Egyptian workshop.

This type of faience oinochoe is unusual; therefore, the Idaean find is considered to be quite valuable. The origin of the vessel is probably Egyptian, but its dating is as problematic as that of the metal oinochoae from Crete (Knossos, Amnisos), which were also unearthed without stratigraphy. Nevertheless, most of the scholars believe that the metal oinochoae date to a time prior to the Orientalizing Period[112].

However, the discovery of similar bronze oinochoae in tombs from the late 10th and the 9th century B.C. at Lefkandi (Euboea) proves that this type came to Greece before the 9th century B.C.[113] The fact that there were also Protogeometric finds near the Knossos oinochoe

[105] The term ›Creto-Cypriot‹ was initially used by Brock to determine a known series of Cretan lekythia imitating Cypriot models (Brock 1957, 158 f.) and later by Coldstream for all categories of Cretan pottery imitating Cypriot vessels (Coldstream 1984).

[106] Coldstream 1984, 131.

[107] This type was very common in Egypt and Nubia, and it was exported to the West, in Cyprus and the Aegean region more broadly.

[108] Generally on the subject, see Culican 1976, 83; Radwan 1983, 133; Matthäus 1985, 250; Stampolidis – Karetsou 1998, 228 f. nos. 268. 269.

[109] Popham et al. 1980, 249 f.

[110] The imitation of metal vessel nails as knobs was a practice already in use during the Neolithic Period (e.g. in ceramic beak-rimmed oinochoae).

[111] Roeder 1956, 418 f.; Skon-Jedele 1994, 1744.

[112] See Brock 1957, 136 nos. 1571. 1572 pl. 113; 200 f. According to Brock, the handle of a similar oinochoe found in Amnisos is also Archaic. Boardman also believes that the Knossos vessels date prior to the middle of the 7th cent. B.C. See Boardman 1961, 113. 152.

[113] Boardman 1980, 144; Popham et al. 1980, 249.

could support an earlier dating of the vessels from Knossos as well[114]. In conclusion, although the Idaean oinochoe theoretically dates between the 10th/9th and the 7th century B.C., it is highly possible that it was manufactured during the Protogeometric Period.

Handles and vase bases

Finally, certain vessel handles and bases were found during the excavations conducted by Sakellarakis (between 1982 and 1986). These fragments belong to vases of Greek inspiration, which may represent respective workshops. A fragment from a strap handle elliptical in section, around the base of a skyphos, is made of whitish faience with blue glazing (**C 15**). On its upper surface, there is a relief decoration of a horizontal triglyph carved on top of a vertical triglyph. Another, smaller handle of ellipsoid cross-section also belongs to a skyphos; it is made of whitish faience with blue-green glazing and it has a net-like ornament on its surface, which is formed by two parallel engravings on each side (**C 16**).

There are other fragments from handles belonging to oinochoae. Part of a handle of ellipsoid cross-section with a groove on the top is made of whitish faience (**C 17**), and a fragment from curved twin handles is made of blue-green faience (**C 18**). Another part of twin handles (**C 19**) and the lowest part of another handle (**C 20**) are also included in the material discovered during the excavations.

D. Scarabs

Although the scarabs were amongst the most popular categories of (Egyptian) items in Minoan times, during the Iron Age, Crete produced few faience scarabs – at least fewer than did Rhodes or other Greek sites. All of these items were found in tombs (Knossos-Fortetsa[115], Arkades[116]) and in sanctuaries (Kommos[117], Inatos[118], Syme[119]).

The scarabs found in the Idaean Cave – as well as most of the scarabs found in Crete – date to between the second half of the 8th and the first half of the 7th century B.C., that is, prior to the Naukratis workshop (ca. 620 B.C.)[120]. These earlier workshops have not been detected yet. The workshop that provided the scarabs discovered in the Idaean Cave must have been situated in Cyprus or Palestine, and its products were influenced by both Egyptian and Phoenician models[121].

The first scarab

In the central hall of the cave, in the lowest layer of mound 5, the first scarab made of blue-green glazed faience was found along with other votive offerings (**D 1**). On its flat bottom surface, there is a human figure walking with raised arms, curved at the elbows, holding objects of vague form. The lower part of the figure (feet and skirt) strongly resembles that of

[114] The offerings of grave P, where the two bronze oinochoae were discovered, date between the Late Protogeometric Period and the Late Orientalizing Period (see Skon-Jedele 1994, 1844 f.).

[115] Four Egyptian blue scarabs in Tomb 78: F3, F4, F9 and F10 (Webb 1996, 604).

[116] Levi 1927–1929, pl. 12 TL; Skon-Jedele 1994, 1713 f.

[117] Shaw 1980, 241; Skon-Jedele 1994, 1888 f.

[118] Skon-Jedele 1994, 1795–1802.

[119] Lebessi – Muhly 2003, 97 f. pl. 8.

[120] The Naukratis workshop supplied the whole western Mediterranean region.

[121] Amongst the finds of the Idaean Cave, there were no scarabs from the Rhodes-Perachora or Hallmark groups, which were discovered on the southern coast of Crete.

the god Reschef; however, the latter is normally depicted with a pointed hat and a spear[122]. The raised arms also recall scenes of ›Potnios Theron‹[123].

The standing figure must be identified with a king if what he is wearing on his head is the crown of Lower Egypt. Kings, as well as hunting scenes[124], were often depicted on scarabs. The ropes from the raised arms of the king are connected to animals: a feline to the left[125] and an unclear figure (cobra?) to the right[126].

The scarab is Egyptianizing and possibly Phoenicio-Palestinian mainly because the figure is moving to the left[127]; it dates from the 8th to the 7th century B.C.[128]

The second scarab

Another scarab (**D 2**), which must have been discovered during earlier excavations than those conducted by Sakellarakis, has an open vertical hole for hanging. On its bottom surface (seal), it bears vertical, engraved decoration on both sides: on the lower right side, there is a symbol with phonetic value *mn*, and on the left side there is possibly a poorly designed feather. On the upper right side, there is an oinochoe *hs* and on the left side a sitting figure, possibly a goddess. On her knees, she is keeping the symbol of life, the Ankh.

A similar hieroglyphic legend has been discovered in Kition, in ›Bothros I‹ in a stratified context and in depth that dates between 600 and 450 B.C.[129], while a scarab with a similar legend is included in the Catalogue of the Cairo Museum and dates back to the 19th Dynasty[130]. In the Kition legend, the sitting figure is identified with the goddess Maat, as she has an ostrich feather on her head[131]. According to W. M. F. Petrie, the symbol *hs* could be translated as »worship« and the symbol with the phonetic value *mn* as palace. Thus, the meaning of the hieroglyphics is »worship Maat in the palace«[132]. According to Hölbl, these legends are variations of a typical legend that reads »to whom the Lord of the palace loves« and the possessor of the scarab wanted to be protected by the king / god[133].

However, on the bottom surface of the Idaean scarab, the symbol *hs* must be translated as ›bless‹[134], while the hieroglyphic symbol next to the one of the palace must have phonetic value and not show a feather[135]. Consequently, the meaning of this legend could be that the

122 Cf. Hölbl 1986, 246.

123 The figure's posture is reminiscent of other Egyptian scarabs with a male standing figure with raised arms (Brunton 1930, pl. 169) or holding a crocodile in both raised arms (typical of the 21st Dynasty). In other cases, the figure is holding birds (Dunbabin 1962, 510 D673 pl. 193) or humans (Plassart 1928, 63 fig. 57) instead of animals.

124 Hunting scenes appear for the first time during the Hyksos Period and become fairly common during the 19th Dynasty (Newberry 1906, 39. 78).

125 The king holding a lion by the tail seems to have been imported from Mesopotamia (Petrie 1925, 22).

126 The first systematic reference to the difficulties of the scenes' interpretation and the methodology that was followed was by Grenfell (1908).

127 The correct reading of the Egyptian hieroglyphics is from right to left (Hölbl 1982, 260 f.).

128 The typology of the scarabs of the 1st millennium has been much less studied than that of the 2nd millennium. The various typological systems range from a systematic and detailed analysis of the head, back, and sides to a more general estimation of the appearance (surface).

129 Clerc et al. 1976, 102 no. 1044.

130 Steatite-glazed (l. 1.5 cm, h. 0.8 cm, w. 1.1 cm). Newberry 1907, pl. 6 no. 36616. See also Hornung – Staehelin 1976, 143.

131 Clerc et al. 1976, 102.

132 Petrie 1925, 22 no. 763 pl. 13.

133 Hölbl 2006, 95 no. 54.

134 According to O. Keel (2011, 345), the symbol *hs* should be interpreted as ›praise‹ when used by mortals and as ›bless‹ when used by gods. The symbol *hs* accompanied by the depiction of a deity dates to the beginning of the 18th Dynasty, but it is a characteristic of scarabs made in the 26th Dynasty.

135 I would like to thank Mr. V. Xhrisikopoulos for our constructive discussion on the subject.

bearer of the scarab is blessed by the Lord of the palace or the god. This is a common wish carved onto scarabs[136]. The scarab in question must be an original Egyptian find and not an imitation, and it must date to between the 8th and 7th century B.C.

E. Varia

This category contains finds that could not be included in the previous categories, such as beads, plaques, and a fruit model.

Cylindrical bead

In mound 5 of the central hall, a cylindrical bead (**E 1**) was unearthed, which had been initially registered as a cylinder seal. The bead has an open transversal hole, while on its surface there are parallel engravings vertically intersecting other parallel engravings[137].

The bead dates from the beginning of the Iron Age and is probably from the 10th century B.C., as it is so indicated by similar finds from Megiddo[138], Lachish[139], and Palaepaphos[140]. G. Brunton's corpus of 22nd Dynasty beads from Lahun, where the same kind of beads are represented under different names, shows that the same kind of beads was made in Egypt[141].

Beads

Around 400 beads were discovered during the excavations of 1983–1985. They were either of widened discoid shape or cylindrical with open holes in a variety of colors (**E 2**)[142]. Most of the beads were found in the central hall of the cave. The beads are made of fine white faience and were formed in a mold before being glazed[143]. Similar beads of various colors and sizes have been discovered in Early Iron Age tombs in Cyprus, Crete[144], and Euboea and are attributed to workshops in the Near East[145]. Several interpretations have been suggested for their use[146].

The most probable use of the Idaean beads was for necklaces. However, their use is also documented in other cases, such as in the fragment from the painted human-shaped vessel rim *(fig. 3)*, where widened discoid beads are used for the eyes and the mouth[147].

136 Newberry 1906, 78.

137 Σακελλαράκης 1983, 478.

138 Lamon – Shipton 1939, 41. 55 pl. 91.

139 Segmented beads are more common in the earlier Tombs 223 and 218 (ca. 900 B.C.). See Tufnell 1953b, 399 f. pl. 66 nos. 38–42.

140 Karageorghis 1983, pl. 62, 38.

141 Petrie et al. 1923, pl. 62.

142 The type of the flat discs was quite common in Crete since the Late Minoan I Period and in the Greek mainland since the LH II Period, and continued during the Early Iron Age (Eleutherna: Stampolidis – Karetsou 1998, 224 no. 264; Σταμπολίδης 1994, 126; Arkades: some 400 disc beads, see Levi 1927–1929, pl. 13).

143 For the manufacturing technique, see Vandiver 1983.

144 Boardman suggests that faience beads found in Protogeometric Cretan tombs were presumably made in Egypt (Boardman 1960, 148).

145 Stampolidis 2001, 61; Lemos 2002, 226; Webb 1996, 600; Τριανταφυλλίδης 2005, 175. Coldstream believes that faience disc beads found in Cyprus were hawked to Cypriots from the Levantine coast (Coldstream 1977, 52).

146 Σταμπολίδης 1994, 126 no. 79. It has been suggested that they might ornament pouches or funerary gowns (Stampolidis – Karetsou 1998, 224). In Cyprus, such beads have been found in tombs at Amathus, where they had been placed on the bodies of the dead. Their use and prestige is likely to be connected with the custom of the Third Transitory Period in Egypt, which is to cover the mummified body with a bead-knitted net and faience pendants.

147 Apart from the Idaean example, we should also note a particularity of Cypriot Middle Bronze Age

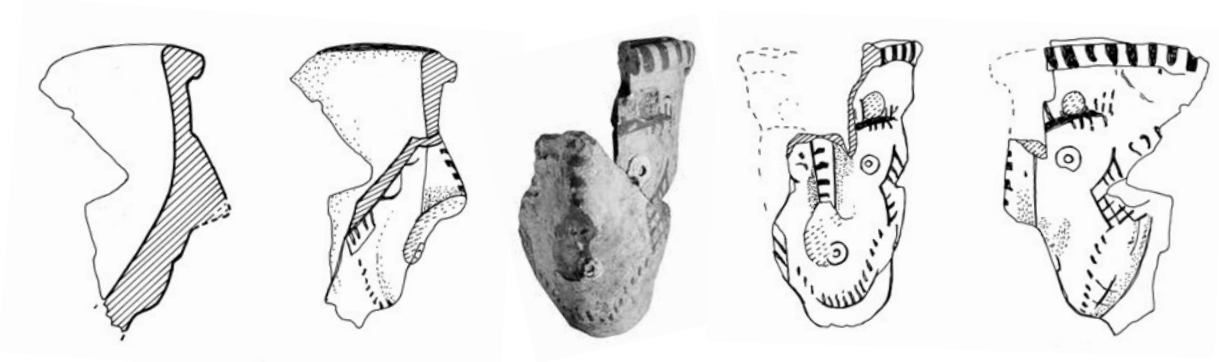


Fig. 3 Fragment from painted human-shaped vessel rim (scale 1 : 2)

Lotus-shaped scepter head

The edges of the three leaves of the prominent lotus flower are chipped (**E 3**). On its ring-shaped base, there is a transversal blind hole for attaching onto another object made of the same or different material.

The possibility for it to have been attached to the handle of a vessel (phiale or lekane)[148] is quite small because in all known faience examples the flower is formed connate with the handle.

Even though no exact parallels of this faience object have been discovered, the lotus flower most probably constitutes the head of a scepter with cylindrical cross-section like those held by various figures in wall paintings or plastic vessels. The rod attached to the lotus flower could be made of other material, as in the case of the scepter found near Hala Sultan Tekke, Cyprus, which bears traces of ivory in its attachment hole. The scepter has a papyrus flower on its top and bears a cartouche with the name of Pharaoh Horemheb (1333–1306 B.C.)[149]. A lotus-shaped rod, which symbolizes the Kingdom of Lower Egypt, seems to have been held by the goddess Sekhmet, who, with her husband Ptah and her son Nefertum, composed the divine trinity of Memphis.

However, it is more likely, given its size, that it formed the crowning part of a small votive rod, such as the one depicted in the bronze relief from Kato Symi in Herakleion, Crete.

The dating of the Idaean scepter is uncertain, as it could have been carved in any period of the Early Iron Age. Given its tiny dimensions, its use was votive.

Plaques

Two fragments from faience plaques were discovered during the excavations of 1983 and 1984. The first one (**E 4**) is trapezoid, made of whitish, porous faience with blue glazing, and probably manufactured in a mold. The second fragment (**E 5**) belongs to a rectangular

pottery, where faience beads are placed on soft clay before baking, thus achieving a rather good aesthetic result (see Buchholz 2008, 489–497).

148 This type of vessel was created in Cyprus between the 10th and the 8th cent. B.C. It was exported to the west and to Crete, where, during the 7th cent. B.C., it became extremely popular. The respective metal type, which was very common during Cypro-Geometric I and Cypro-Geometric II, is represented in the cemeteries of Kourion, Amathus, and Palaepaphos. In Crete, as well as in the Near East, these exports led to the long-standing local production of such vessels (8th–7th cent. B.C.). Cf. Kyrieleis 1986, 127–136, esp. 130.

149 The Cypriot scepter has the shape of a papyrus flower and bears an impression with the name of Pharaoh Horemheb (1333–1306 B.C.). The head, which is the only one made of faience found in Cyprus, has the following dimensions: height 3.65 cm, base diameter 2.1 cm, head diameter 3.6 cm, and hole length 1.5 cm (Aström 1979, 46).

plaque; its flat surface and sides are undecorated and bear no traces of inscriptions. Inscribed plaques with the cartouche of Pharaoh Amenhotep III (1390–1360 B.C.) have been discovered in the Mycenaean citadel. Plaques of this type are known from Egypt, where they have been discovered on foundation deposits, and have a votive character[150]. Their initial use, however, might have been decorative[151].

The next plaque (**E 6**) is so poorly preserved that we cannot identify it. However, the wavy line on its flat surface cannot be the result of corrosion; rather, it is likely part of a relief decoration.

Base of a spouted vessel

»The complex of two forms of the so-called Egyptian clay« of the Trifyllis collection, mentioned in a letter of S. Koumanoudis[152] can probably be identified with the horseshoe-shaped plinth which preserves the base of a (plastic) vase with connate spout. The base of a cylindrical support is preserved on the right corner of the plinth (**E 7**).

The horseshoe-shaped base and spout are reminiscent of lekythia with plastic figures of the 7th century B.C., such as the vases in the form of a kneeling naked man behind a vase on which there is a sitting frog. These vessels have two openings: one on the top of the man's head and the other in the mouth of the frog. The example from the Idaean Cave, however, does not identify as one of these vessels; it must therefore constitute an earlier type.

Fragment from a pomegranate

This fragment (**E 8**) probably belongs to a pomegranate model and not to a vessel in the form of a fruit. The models of fruits reproduce the globular at the top with navel-like excrescence[153], while the vessels in the form of a pomegranate are actual vases with the corolla at the top[154].

In the Aegean, most of such examples come from Late Bronze Age tombs in Cyprus and on the Greek mainland, but not from Crete itself[155]. A vessel in the form of a pomegranate from the cemetery in Lefkandi (Tomb 39), which dates to the Early Iron Age, is considered to be a Phoenician import[156]. However, most of the examples from historic times (both vessels and fruit models) date to the Geometric Period, and especially to the Late Geometric Period, while others belong to the Orientalizing Period. Some have been discovered in cemeteries and others in sanctuaries, the most characteristic of them being the models from the Heraion of Samos. The Idaean find must therefore be dated like these examples and not like the example from Lefkandi.

[150] Καρέτσου et al. 2000, 250–252 nos. 249. 250. Generally for plaques, see Cline 1987, 8–10 figs. 6. 7; Cline 1994, 37; Lambrou-Phillipson 1990, 344 f., 440–446 pl. 63.

[151] Faience plaques covered the walls of the palace of Ramesses II near the temple of Amun-Ra (see Καρέτσου et al. 2000, 250–252 nos. 249. 250).

[152] Σακελλαράκης 1998, 164.

[153] See Immerwahr 1989, 406–409.

[154] Regarding the connection of the pomegranate with aspects of life (e.g. fertility) in the Eastern Mediterranean during the Early Iron Age, see Ward 2003, 530.

[155] Ward 2003, 536.

[156] Popham et al. 1982, 242 pl. 31 e.

IV. ORIGIN OF THE FINDS

The faience finds of the Idaean Cave were quite valuable votives. Faience was considered to be an exotic material, as its main source – at least for the Aegean – was to be found in the exotic countries of the East. Thus, the imported items, as Orientalia, were very popular amongst the upper social class. At the same time, faience was a material of prestige and luxury, as its scarcity and complex elaboration rendered its possession to be a privilege[157].

Most of the Idaean finds were manufactured away from Crete, and they arrived at the sanctuary either through visits from the East (merchants or pilgrims) or through an organized exchange network[158]. Tracing the different workshops and the origin of the finds is very difficult mainly because many of the finds incorporate elements from various areas and artistic styles, both foreign and domestic.

During the Early Iron Age, there was extensive copying of Egyptian items in the Mediterranean region with such fidelity, that it is often impossible to distinguish between the copies and the authentic items[159]. What is more, many of the Egyptian items were made in Egypt by Greeks, as in the case of the scarab workshop of Naukratis, which produced both Egyptian and Egyptianizing items[160]. On the other hand, we should realize that these items constitute a typical cultural and cult expression, which is common in both Egypt and Syria-Palestine. Therefore, a term such as ›production center‹ is to be avoided while a term such as ›influence center‹ is to be preferred because it better demonstrates the complexity of the situation.

Clearly, there are no absolute criteria for classifying the items in workshops and countries of origin, and when this happens it is based on a combination of criteria and contains the element of relativity. The first criterion is the cultural context in which we find exact or at least similar parallels. The manufacturing material is also important, but is not a determining factor, since craftsmen as well as materials circulated around different areas. For instance, the statuette with inv. no. 1116 (**A 2**), although it is made of Egyptian blue, does not seem like an authentic Egyptian creation, but like an imitation. Items with Egyptian hieroglyphics are considered to be Egyptian, but not when their inscription is misspelled, because this implies that they have been copied (see hieroglyphics on statuette inv. no. 1116 [**A 2**] and the captions on the scarabs inv. nos. 2982 [**D 1**] and 3419 [**D 2**]). This also applies to the figurines with a pillar on their back. The fact that the pillar is considered to be an Egyptian characteristic does not eliminate the possibility of someone having copied it, as the statuettes nos. 1116 (**A 2**) and 1110 (**A 5**). The rarity as well as the good quality of an item argue for its authentic import, as long as their origin is known.

Finally, another significant criterion is the technology used in the production of a given item, but even in this case it is difficult to classify said item, as technology could also be imitated or transmitted and shared. A typical example is glazing. The items with glossy and shiny surfaces were initially considered to be Egyptian. Nevertheless, authentic Egyptian items were discovered without glossy surfaces at other Greek sites (such as the Saite instal-

[157] The use of faience by the members of the social elite is not the case all throughout the Eastern Mediterranean, as there are variations depending on the period and area. According to S. Sherratt, faience was considered to be a value-added material for sub-elites (Sherratt 1988, 295).

[158] The co-existence of imported items made of faience, metal, and ivory (not only at the Idaean Cave) is also of great interest. This phenomenon is not random, and it implies either a common production center or (in the case of imports) common distribution by an exchange network, which probably also included merchants from the East. This network seems to connect to the Cretan bourgeoisie who constituted the receivers of these items.

[159] Without a chemical analysis, we cannot substantially distinguish the Egyptian products from their imitations. With regard to the Idaean finds, such analyses are expected to be performed in the future.

[160] Nicholson 1998, 62.

lation of Ialyssos, Rhodes), which altered this belief. Similarly, in some miniature vessels produced in Greek workshops, the vitreous color is shiny and the surface remains intact.

In conclusion, the localization of the influence centers identified from analyzing the Idaean Cave items can only be vague, but there are three main regions which must have functioned as production centers: a) Egypt, b) the Near East (the Levant and Cyprus), and c) the Aegean.

A. Egypt

Some decades ago, all faience items were considered to be Egyptian[161]. Their raw material and their elaboration technology, which were known to the Egyptians since the 4th millennium B.C., have rendered Egypt the main supplier of faience in the Aegean. Most of the earliest Egyptian items have been discovered in Crete[162], but the authentic Egyptian items are not dispersed where one would expect them to be; therefore, we should search for more complicated types of distribution and trading patterns[163].

Due to the material and style of certain items discovered in the sacred Idaean Cave, they can be considered to be authentic Egyptian imports. For instance, the figurine of the god Bes (**A 1**) that represents the dwarf god in his typical posture belongs to this category[164]. Also, both the wildcat's face (**B 5**) and the scarab (**D 2**) seem to be of Egyptian origin. There are also some vessels which are considered to be Egyptian. The most characteristic of them is the oinochoe handle in the form of an open lotus flower coming out from a triple stem fixed on the rim with nails (**C 14**).

B. Near East

Most of the Idaean finds seem to have been influenced by the Phoenician region; inside the sanctuary, the Phoenician impact can also be seen in other types of materials. The Phoenician influence is confirmed by the case of the bronze Idaean vessels (the Cyprio-Phoenician vessels seem to have replaced those of Syrio-Phoenician style at the end of the 8th and at the beginning of the 7th cent. B.C.) as well as by the case of the ivory vessels.

However, the greatest difficulty consists not only in detecting the imitations of Egyptian items that were produced in the Levantine region by local workshops, but also in finding which products correspond to which workshops.

[161] As many scarabs were found with hieroglyphics carved onto them, they were exclusively compared with their Egyptian parallels and particularly those of the 26th Dynasty from Naukratis. This happened partly because the Egyptologists estimated that every artistic flourishing that followed the Third Intermediate Period took place during the 7th and 6th cent. B.C. (which corresponds to the 26th Dynasty), and until recently they did not pay much attention to the Third Intermediate Period.

[162] More Egyptian works have been found in Crete in comparison with Cyprus, where Egyptianizing works, created by Cypriot and Phoenician craftsmen, are more frequently discovered. The bronze statuette of Amun from Diktaion (Pendlebury 1930, 13 no. 15 fig. 1), an authentic Egyptian work of art, dates to 900 B.C., while the figurine of the goddess Sekhmet from Fortetsa dates to 970–920 B.C. (Brock 1957, 30 no. 264 pl. 21; 208). The Aigyptiaka from Inatos were genuine Egyptian items according to K. Davaras, which demonstrate the commercial intercourse between Crete and Egypt in the Orientalizing Period (Davaras 1976, 85).

[163] The authentic Egyptian imports, e.g. bronze and ivory items, first arrived on the northern coast of Crete and then made their way to the center of the island; oddly enough, they did not reach the southern coast of Crete, which is opposite Egypt.

[164] A figurine of the same type, but smaller in height, has been discovered in Amnisos and is considered to be Egyptian (Μαρινάτος 1933, 98 fig. 4, 1).

At the Idaean Cave, the similarity of the human-shaped head (›Sphinx‹) to the ivory plates from Nimrud makes their Phoenician origin more probable. Furthermore, the discoid beads that have been found in several parts of the cave must originate from workshops in the Near East. The plastic vessel in the form of a lion is probably Levantine[165] and not Egyptian. Finally, some vessels, such as the one-handled lekythion or the lotus-shaped scepter head are influenced by the Cyprio-Phoenician style.

It is obvious that Cyprus and the Cyprio-Phoenician region more generally played a very important role in the process of producing faience items[166]. It has been suggested that the first effort to imitate Egyptian items took place in Kition during the 14th and 13th centuries B.C.[167]. What is more, during the 12th century B.C. in Cyprus and Palestine, there were workshops of large-scale faience production[168]. On the Levantine mainland, an Egyptianizing workshop was founded in Megiddo in the 10th century B.C. (Tell el-Mutesellim II), which might have supplied the Idaean Cave with products such as the phiale (**C 1**).

C. The Aegean

The only documented faience workshop in the Aegean is in Rhodes. Its products have been found in Crete, mainly at Inatos and Amnisos[169]. Nonetheless, some of the faience items discovered in Cretan sanctuaries and tombs could have been produced on the island. This has been suggested for Knossos, Amnisos, and Arkades, while it is also highly possible for the Idaean Cave, as will be discussed below. This workshop seems to have produced mainly vessels if one were to go by the fragments of phialae (**C 2**, **C 3**) and the oinochoae handles (**C 15**–**C 18**, **C 20**).

V. DATING

During the Bronze Age, Minoan Crete possessed a wealth of faience items. Many of these were imported from the Near East and others were locally produced. We ignore what happened with the production and distribution of these items after the fall of the Minoan palaces. For a long period, it was believed that after the Late Bronze Age faience items drastically diminished, almost vanishing completely[170]. During the Geometric Period, they flourished again and finally enjoyed a resurgence during the Orientalizing Period.

165 Both Halbherr and Orsi (1888, 70 f.) and Demargne (1947, 123 f.) agree with the Phoenician character of the vessel.

166 The link between Crete and Cyprus during the Early Iron Age is attested in the region of Knossos also, by the presence of Cypriot imports and local imitations of Cypriot goods.

167 Karageorghis 1974, 137–139.

168 According to Elsaadani (1982, 107) the existence of a Cypriot workshop that produced Egyptianizing vessels is probable. Until the beginning of the 7th cent. B.C. no significant works of Egyptian or Egyptianizing origin were discovered in Cyprus. The abovementioned ones of the 13th cent. B.C. are relatively few.

169 The same items, which were considered as imports from Egypt to Crete, turned out to be products of the workshop in Rhodes (Skon-Jedele 1994, 1672).

170 V. Webb believed that faience »was quite lost« after the Late Bronze Age, and only very few vessels could date earlier than the Rhodes workshop, which flourished in the 7th cent. B.C. (Webb 1978, 2). Even G. Hoffman considered that only the ring with hieroglyphics from Fortetsa, a small dog from Arkades and two aryballoi from Fortetsa can prove the presence of faience during the Early Iron Age (10th cent. B.C.; Hoffman 1997, 38–49 no. 24; 139).

The Idaean finds seem to have taken the same route that has just been described. It is noteworthy that after the fall of the Minoan palaces such votives continued to be offered in the Idaean Cave. Along with Knossos – where finds are quite similar to that of the Idaean Cave – and Eleutherna, they document the existence of faience during this problematic period[171].

The lotus-shaped oinochoe (**C 14**) may date to between the 11th and the 9th century B.C., if we accept that it arrived at the cave during the same period as the similar bronze oinochoae and not later – during the Orientalizing Period. The same goes for the phiale (**C 1**), which possesses several elements of earlier periods and may date to the 10th century B.C.[172] Finally, some of the roughly 400 beads unearthed in the cave could date from the same period, as they do not present any variations in form and they are usually found in ensembles dating from between 1110 and 700 B.C.

The rest of the faience items of the Idaean Cave date to the Geometric / Early Orientalizing Period (8th to the middle of the 7th century B.C). The items in this category outnumber the others, as during this transitory period faience production reaches its peak. In the same period, the items are created in accordance with models from earlier periods. Although the statuette (**A 2**) presents features of the Old Kingdom's style, it must have been manufactured in the 7th century B.C. The same is true for the scarab (**D 2**), which has models from the 19th Dynasty.

There are no finds dating to after the middle of the 7th century B.C. For the following periods, there is no data. P. Faure's report on the existence of faience during Roman times is not confirmed by this study[173].

The above-mentioned dating of the faience items seems to correspond to that of the rest of the Orientalia which were discovered in the Idean Cave, notably the metal and the ivory items.

With regard to the imported metal finds (of Phoenician origin), the first imports started ca. 800 B.C., but the large quantities arrived at the sanctuary in the middle and at the end of the 8th century B.C.[174]

It is noteworthy that the dedication of faience items stops in the middle of the 7th century B.C. This also seems to be the case for the rest of the Orientalia. The reasons for this situation are certainly multifold; however, they must have something to do with the distribution network, which was probably common for all exotic objects. We cannot exclude its connection to the changes in votive customs and cult activities which are supposed to have taken place during the 7th century B.C.[175]

[171] Apart from the Fortetsa ring (Brock 1957, 15 no. 106 pl. 173), amongst the earlier faience items from Knossos there are also beads and a pendant of the goddess Sekhmet (10th – early 9th cent. B.C.). In addition, seals from Vrokastro with parallels from the 20th to the 22nd Dynasty (Pendlebury 1930, 39 nos. 58–63; Skon-Jedele 1994, 1944 f.) date from the same period, as well as another one of white steatite from Eleutherna (Skon-Jedele 1994, 1724).

[172] See also Peltenburg 2002, 90 f.

[173] Faure 1964, 104.

[174] Matthäus 2011, 118.

[175] Matthäus 2011, 118. 125.

VI. RELIGION

The symbolism of the faience items is an important part of the religious identity of the Idaean Cave[176]. This, however, is mainly related to the figurines (human-shaped and animal-shaped) and less related to the other categories of finds, such as the vessels. Since we talk about imported items, the question is whether they were: a) considered to be curiosa and exotic objects, b) maintained the symbolism of their original environment, or c) adjusted to an *interpretatio Cretica*.

a) It is true that the majority of the figurines (and the scarabs) reflect more the exotic charm and magic of Egypt and less its cultic influence. The hieroglyphics also lead us to this conclusion (see **A 2**, **D 2**), as their content would not be easily understood by their dedicators. The small number of pendants[177] is also of particular interest, at least in how they compare with those discovered in other Cretan caves and sanctuaries.

b) The figurines may be perceived as depicting Egyptian deities or as depicting these deities in the context of the cult of the Idaean sanctuary. A few of them seem to be authentic imports from Egypt, but the majority have been ›filtered‹ through the Cyprio-Phoenician region[178]. Nevertheless, the presence of deities in the birthplace of Cretan-born Zeus that in Egyptian theology are related to rebirth and rejuvenation, such as Bes, Nefertum, and Ptah, cannot be coincidental. The figurines are normally large, which may indicate that they were used in cultic contexts.

A typical example of Crete's ideological diversity is the case of the demonic, but also beneficent, god Bes (**A 1**). Protector of pregnant women, newborn babies, and adolescents, this Egyptian god recalls the Kouretes, the demons that dwelled in the Idaean Cave protecting the ›holy infant‹ from evil. The god Bes, having emerged from the world of indigenous Egyptian demons who lived at the *eschatiai* (borders) of civilization, could, as one of them, play an educational role at the Idaean Cave by leading the young into adulthood.

The fragment from a large figurine of the god Nefertum (**A 3**) refers to the worship of the dying and reborn Cretan Zeus, who was born in the sacred cave. Although the discovery of numerous figurines of Nefertum in the Aegean increases the likelihood that the dedication of the Idaean figurines was not unique, we cannot but underline the similarities between Cretan Zeus and the member of the trinity of Memphis.

Apart from the main deity that was worshipped in the sanctuary (Zeus), there is also evidence for a co-worshipped female deity, who can be identified with two large figurines (fragmentarily preserved): a woman bearing flowers (**A 6**) and what may be a woman accompanied by a miniature musician (**A 5**). These figurines may be identified with the goddess Hathor or the goddess Isis, goddesses of music and fertility.

c) With regard to the animal figurines, the cat (**B 5**) was an attribute of the goddess Bastet, and during the Late Egyptian Period of the goddess Sekhmet, thanks to the religious syncretism that had developed over time. The goddess Bastet, whose cult center was in Memphis, is also connected with fertility; this is why she is often depicted as being

[176] Regarding the penetration of Egyptian beliefs into Early Iron Age Crete, see Σταμπολίδης 2007, esp. 55 f.; Ψαρουδάκης, forthcoming.

[177] The pendants were figurines that were worn and protected their possessor from evil, death, and sickness, but they also protected the soul of the dead from the dangers of the afterlife. Pendants have been found in cemeteries (Afrati, Eleutherna, Knossos), as well as in sanctuaries (Kommos). Numerous pendants have also been discovered in the Cave of Inatos.

[178] In Crete, the figurines of Egyptian deities became popular at the end of the 8th and the beginning of the 7th cent. B.C., but it is unclear whether their semantic content was accepted.

surrounded by her offspring[179]. Her presence in the Idaean Cave may have been votive in character, as her religious symbolism was probably accepted. The same is true for the ape (**B 7**), which in Egypt was connected with fertility, as well as with lions (**B 1**–**B 4**), which are included in Egyptian iconography[180].

VII. FAIENCE TECHNOLOGY

Faience is a compound material made of powdered quartz, sandstone, or flint and a dilution of sodium carbonate[181]. In Crete, this material varies and is not of very high quality. Normally, two colors are mixed, and the most popular combination is white and blue.

At the Idaean Cave, the core of the items is usually yellowish, but there are also some samples of blue and greenish faience. Several items maintain their glazing, while others have been exfoliated. The coloring of the glazed items varies from dark brown to blue-green. The yellow color is the result of the mixing of iron oxides; the dark blue is the result of the mixing of cobalt oxides; and the greenish comes from the mixing of iron oxides with copper[182]. As for the Egyptian blue, the surface of the items was covered with a dilution of copper oxide and sand, and was then re-fired.

The Idaean finds were manufactured in different ways, which may indicate that they were manufactured at different workshops. Certain techniques come from Egypt, but they are also present in the broader Near East, especially on the Levantine coast. The figurines, scarabs and beads, as well as the relief parts of vessels, such as the handle in a lotus form, were created with the use of molds. Most of the vessels were created with the throwing wheel. The decoration is made with dark-brown paint (see the details of the animal figurines, the handle of reticulated pattern, and the rim of the deep phiale)[183].

The excavations of 1982 brought to light workshop waste and test drops (over 30 small shapeless pieces of blue frit; *fig. 4*) quite similar to the respective elements found in workshops of Late Bronze Age Mycenae and Tiryns[184]. The exact location of the workshop is not known, as its waste had been removed from its original place and was deposited elsewhere in the cave[185]. The most likely location, however, is near the sacred cave.

The workshop waste constitutes serious evidence for the existence of a local workshop, but we need to have more data before we can make a case for its existence. In his first excavation reports, Halbherr and Orsi mention that amongst the small faience fragments there were also pieces of cyan[186]. They believed that cyan was utilized as coloring material in

[179] In Crete, the depiction of cats is first found in the Middle Minoan Period on clay rhytons and figurines (Καρέτσου et al. 2000, 178 no. 164).

[180] The lion was the symbol of the sun god Ra and consequently of his earthly representatives / delegates, such as the Pharaohs.

[181] See Sinclair 2012, 119 f.; Nicholson 1998.

[182] See Noble 1969, 437.

[183] See also Noble 1969, 439.

[184] See Panagiotaki et al. 2005. The earliest glass workshop in the Aegean identified at Knossos was by the Royal Road west of the palace; it dates to the Late Minoan I B Period (see Cadogan 1976). For glass workshops in northern Italy, especially in Frattesina, see Bellintani 1997, 126 f. In the workshop were found finished objects, tools, glass ingots, and waste.

[185] Such a deposition would not come as a surprise, since faience as a material was connected with magico-religious beliefs and thus even the waste from the workshop could have been placed in the cave as a votive offering or dedication.

[186] Halbherr – Orsi 1888, 71. See also Dunbabin 1962, 468 n. 2 on blue frit. Petrie mentions the presence of blue paste lumps, which were considered to be the raw material used in the production of scarabs (Petrie et al. 1886, 37). See also von Bissing 1941, 93–95.

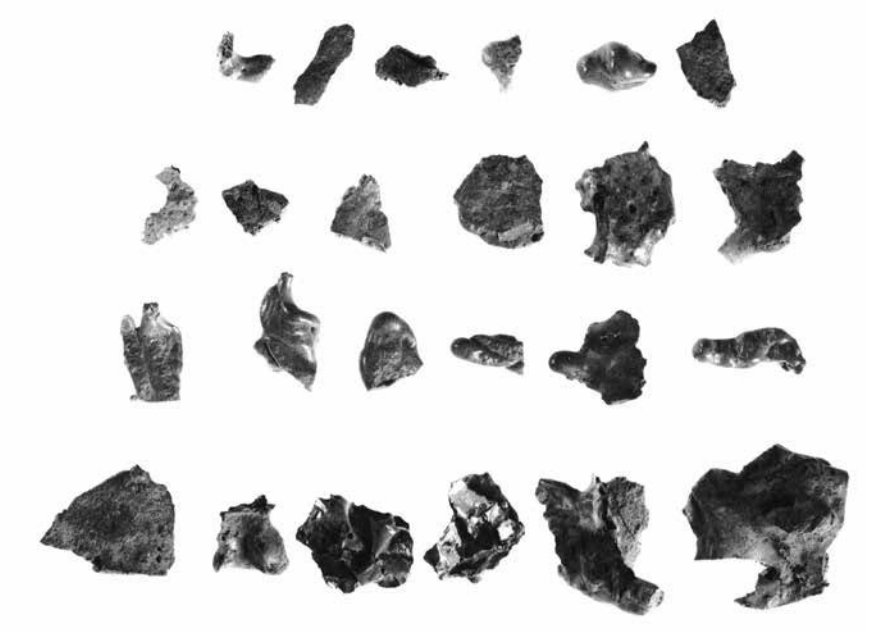


Fig. 4 Waste products from the Idaean Cave

faience production[187]. Both D. Levi and von Bissing accepted the interpretation of Halbherr and Orsi, and it was based on this interpretation that they supposed that the faience votives of the Idaean Cave were produced in Crete[188]. Skon-Jedele expressed a different opinion, considering the pieces to be remnants of votives[189].

Today, it is widely accepted that the faience technology was known in Crete since the Minoan-Mycenaean Period and that it was not necessarily forgotten during the so-called ›Dark Ages‹, as discussed above. During the Early Iron Age, and after the relations with the Near East were re-established, the relevant know-how seems to be enriched with the knowledge brought by craftsmen from the Near East to Crete.

Although a faience workshop could have functioned on the island, it is not yet confirmed with certainty. The uniqueness of certain types of objects that have not been discovered elsewhere in Greece could imply their local production, but cannot prove it. Even in the case of the Fortetsa cemetery, Brock speculates on the existence of a local Cretan faience workshop which may have supplied the cemetery without having the relevant proof to verify its existence.

Although there is more evidence from the Minoan-Mycenaean Period, it is not always more helpful. The elaboration of glass is indicated, even indirectly, on the plates of Linear B from Pylos, Knossos, and Thebes with the term cyan or κυάνιος λίθος[190]. The workshop evidence of elaborating glass and faience in the form of waste is scarce and limited to the discovery of, mainly, stone molds. Glass kilns have not been detected thus far, while only a small amount of glass waste comes from the Mycenaean glass workshop of Tiryns[191].

It seems that in the workshops glass and faience were elaborated with the import of raw materials (at least for the glass) in the form of ingots probably from Egypt and not from

[187] Halbherr – Orsi 1888, 759. Cyan is a synthetic matter made of the same materials as faience, and it was manufactured in two phases: first, all materials were mixed and baked (coarse mixture), and then the mixture was ground and baked again at a lower temperature (powdery mixture).

[188] von Bissing 1941, 95 n. 178; Levi 1927–1929, 460.

[189] Skon-Jedele 1994, 1751.

[190] Nightingale 1998, 213.

[191] Panagiotaki et al. 2005, 14 f.

Mesopotamia. Besides, there is no evidence for the presence of glass-making workshops on the Greek mainland or the Aegean in Mycenaean times. The belief that glass was imported from the Near East is reinforced by the discovery of 175 circular glass ingots in the merchant shipwreck of Ulu Burun (14th cent. B.C.)[192] and of those found in melting containers at Tell el Amarna and the House of Ramesses in Egypt[193].

It is clear that the workshop waste from the Idaean Cave constitutes the first serious evidence that could prove the existence of a faience workshop in Crete. The association of workshops with sanctuaries was common during that period[194], while the presence of a workshop at the Idaean Cave has also been suggested for certain ivory objects[195], as well as for metal objects[196], that have been found in the cave.

In this case, we can imagine that some of the finds of the cave, which are considered to be imports or which are attributed to an unidentified Greek workshop, may have been manufactured in an Idaean workshop that most probably functioned at the end of the 8th and in the 7th century B.C. The fact that the quantity of the finds is small does not form a serious impediment to the argument, as the existence of a workshop does not presuppose that it existed for a long time or that it produced a large quantity of items. We should not think of the Idaean workshop as a building with permanent staff, but as a (big or small) group of craftsmen that visited the cave in the summer (only then was it open to pilgrims) in order to cover the votive needs of believers during religious festivals. We cannot be certain about whether the staff of the workshop consisted of Near Eastern or Cretan craftsmen. Nevertheless, the co-existence of the two categories of craftsmen, where (at some point) the former taught the latter, seems to be the most likely situation.

VIII. CONCLUSION

In the Idaean Cave, the items made of faience – a particular material not only because of its complex elaboration, but also because of its symbolic properties – present an image similar to the rest of the Orientalia. These finds mainly derived from two cultural zones: that of Egypt and that of Phoenicia / Levant. However, the exact production area of each item remains unknown. Additionally, there are some works that derive from a third cultural zone, the island of Crete itself (and / or in the Aegean). They were mainly copies of foreign – but also of local – creations. The Idaean finds can be divided into two main categories: figurines and vessels. However, we are not certain whether they were produced in one workshop. The figurines (human and non-human alike) were clearly based on Egyptian models, although most of them were produced outside Egypt. The vessels are Phoenician and Greek creations, which normally imitate ceramic or metal models. Their material is similar to the

[192] According to modern analyses, the glass originated from an Egyptian workshop and was transported to a production center in the Aegean region. See also Μελάς 2002.

[193] Jackson et al. 1998.

[194] See Psaroudakis 1999.

[195] Data concerning style suggests that some of them were carved by local craftsmen (Boardman 1967, 58–67; Sakellarakis 1992, 116 f.). According to Sakellarakis, there was a Cretan school which was taught by Near Eastern craftsmen (Sakellarakis 1992, 116).

[196] According to Boardmann (1961, 162), there was a workshop that supplied the Idaean Cave and perhaps other sanctuaries too with tripods, while Benton (1934/1935, 124) has mentioned evidence of tripods construction.

Sources of illustrations: *Fig. 1:* Σακελλαράκης – Σαπουνά-Σακελλαράκη 2011, 36. – *Fig. 2:* Halbherr – Orsi 1888. – *Fig. 3:* A. Drigopoulou (drawings), Y. Papadakis (photograph). – *Fig. 4:* Photo Y. Papadakis. – *Cat. drawings:* A. Drigopoulou. – *Cat. photographs:* Y. Papadakis.

material used at nearby Knossos, whose port must have functioned as a common entrance for the imported items. All the items date from the entirety of the Early Iron Age (11th–late 7th cent. B.C.): they cover not only the Late Geometric and Orientalizing Periods but also (occasionally) the so-called ›Dark Ages‹, thus rendering the Idaean Cave one of the few areas of Crete to have such early imports.

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