



Symposium Announcement

RELIGION, POLITICS AND CULTURE IN THE MEDITERRANEAN FROM THE 8TH TO THE 6TH C. B.C.: EGYPT AND NEAR EASTERN OBJECTS IN ARCHAIC GREEK SANCTUARIES AND THEIR SOCIOPOLITICAL IMPLICATIONS

International Symposium
University of the Aegean
Rhodes, July 11-12, 2014



ORGANIZERS

University of the Aegean, Department of Mediterranean Studies
University of Bonn, Institute of Egyptology
University of Illinois at Chicago, Department of Classics and Mediterranean Studies
University of Thessaly, Department of History, Archaeology and Social Anthropology

INVITED SPEAKERS INCLUDE (ALPHABETICAL)

Giorgios Bourogiannis (Mediterranean Museum, Stockholm)
Günther Hölbl (Vienna)
Nota Kourou (University of Athens)
Dimitris Kyrtatas (University of Thessaly)
Nanno Marinatos (University of Illinois at Chicago)
Alexandros Mazarakis-Anian (University of Thessaly)
Ludwig Morenz (University of Bonn)
Nikolaos Chr. Stampolidis (University of Crete and Museum of Cycladic Art)
Alexandra Villing (British Museum)
Virginia Webb (British Museum).



SHORT TOPIC DESCRIPTION

The broader Mediterranean region, which includes twenty-five nations today, witnessed the development of some of the most important cultures of the past one of the reasons being the facilitation of trade and cross-cultural exchanges afforded by the Mediterranean Sea. Exchanges were made on the level of goods as well as modes of thought. Foreign affairs could be solved through diplomatic exchanges whereas wars

between monarchs necessitated the use of foreign mercenary armies. Braudel characterised the Mediterranean as the “sum of its routes in which the essence of the region is the product of intellectual and commercial intercourse”. The concentration of port-cities around its coast reveals the ease with which cultures have been spread by this medium.

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In the absence of adequate written evidence the history of contacts in the eastern Mediterranean during the Geometric and Archaic periods is largely based on our knowledge and evaluation of imports and their archaeologically visible influence in indigenous material horizons. An exception to the dearth of sources is Herodotus. These imports are often examined alongside patterns of transmission of technology and craftsmanship, in an attempt to understand the gradual *orientalizing* awakening of the Aegean that reached its apogee in the 7th and 6th centuries BC. Egyptian and near eastern iconography reached the Greeks and western Mediterranean via two main channels of communication or cultural networks. There was direct contact between Greeks from Asia Minor and islands with Egypt. The Greek colony at Naukratis, in the Egyptian Delta, facilitated to a great extent an undeniably great impact on one civilization to the other, which went both ways, as it is revealed in a variety of artistic and literary modes. As well, contacts between Greece, the East, Italy and Sicily occurred via the intermediary Phoenician cities. This may be inferred because Phoenician artifacts are found all over the Mediterranean during the *Orientalizing* and Archaic periods.

This symposium was born out of the interdisciplinary research project *Aegyptiaka: Ecumene and Economy in the Horizon of Religion*, which is coordinated by the University of the Aegean and the University of Bonn and it focuses on the Egyptian and Near Eastern material from the archaic Greek sanctuaries and on the re-evaluation of the Egyptian cross-cultural interactivity with the Aegean world in the sphere of economy and religion.

The great majority of these objects are somewhat related to the sacral field, but not exclusively restricted to it. Right from the start we can notice a complex interplay between the sacral, the political and economic field. The functionality and contextualization of these objects within the broader nexus of the international relations of the seventh and sixth centuries BC, must be seen as an epitome of the continuous attempts by the Saite kings of the Twenty-sixth Dynasty to re-establish a political and social link with major cultic centers in the Aegean and the Levant. Although no information on the ideological component of these votive offerings survives, the locally manufactured egyptianizing objects clearly exemplify that Greeks had gained insight into Egyptian religious beliefs. Thus, they were probably familiar with the significance of at least some of these objects and the magical connotations they carried. Even if these objects were not used in the precise manner that they should have been back in Egypt, they were regarded as highly precious and venerated objects, having been assigned a whole new function and identity within a different cultural environment.

The objects themselves have not been changed; only the nature of its reception – to Egypt they were exports, while to Greece they were imports – and possibly its status and worth. They were adapted to the international syncretistic religious background of the receptive culture. The importance of these objects within the development of the Greek culture is obvious from the fact that they generated an enormous cultural wave of *egyptianization and orientalizing* in the Mediterranean world. The islands of Rhodes and Samos, especially, are the places of the strongest Egyptian impact on the Greek material culture and thus probably the mentality too.

SUGGESTED TOPICS

- Aspects of religious symbolism and transmission of knowledge in these objects and the decorative arts of the Greeks of the Early Iron Age and the Archaic era
- Analysis of creative misreadings in the adaptation of foreign elements
- Analysis and re-evaluation of the Egyptian cultural and religious semantics (religious values, icons and identities; demonic motifs either genuinely Egyptian or adopting hybrid forms with clear Egyptian characteristics)
- Investigation of the religious semantics of these donations and re-evaluation of the Egyptian cultural values in the Aegean world
- Reevaluation of the cross-cultural implications of these donations in the sphere of trade, economy and religion
- The role of the monarchs Croesus and Amasis in the formation of international relations in the 7th and 6th century
- The social role played by Greeks living in Egypt or Asia Minor abroad and their relationship to the mainland

CONFERENCE FORMAT AND ABSTRACT SUBMISSION

The conference will be articulated into sessions of 30 minute papers and discussion at the end of each session. People interested in presenting a paper are requested to send a paper title and an abstract of no more than 500 words in English to egyptology@aegean.gr. The abstract should also contain author(s) name(s), affiliation(s) and contact details. All abstracts will be reviewed before they are accepted. If there are more abstracts than the available paper slots, papers will be chosen on a competitive basis. The deadline for abstract submission is the 31st March 2014.

CONFERENCE PROCEEDINGS

The organizing committee intends to publish the proceedings of the conference in a separate volume of the *Journal of Ancient Egyptian Interconnections* (University of Arizona, <https://journals.uair.arizona.edu/index.php/jaci/>). All papers will be reviewed before they are accepted for publication. More detailed information will be provided at the end of the venue.

SYMPOSIUM ACKNOWLEDGMENT

The symposium is part of the international “AEGEAN SUMMER SCHOOL ON THE ANCIENT EASTERN MEDITERRANEAN RELIGIONS AND RELIGIOUS LANGUAGE,” occurring on Rhodes June 30 to July 13, 2014. For more information of both events, please visit our website at <https://arrel2013.pns.aegean.gr/>.