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The Art and Culture of Ancient Egypt:
Studies in Honor of Dorothea Arnold

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**The Art and Culture of Ancient Egypt:
Studies in Honor of Dorothea Arnold**

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Manfred Bietak and Bettina Bader

Canon and Freedom of Fringe Art: à propos the Fish Bowls in the Second Intermediate Period¹

The following article deals with a special class of pottery from the late Middle Kingdom and the Second Intermediate Period. Dorothea Arnold analyzed this material in one pioneering study in her rich scholarly life, which highlighted the origin and the peculiarity of Marl C ceramic production.² In the following article, we would like to add some outstanding specimens to this group, which were found at Tell el-Dabʿa in a ritual context within a Hyksos palace. This may shed some light on the function of bowls with very specific fish designs. At the same time, this study may lead to further research in a neglected field of art history, namely so-called fringe art, here tied to potters, a profession that was considered with condescension by the upper classes in ancient Egypt. We shall try to show, however, how these Egyptian craftsmen might have been connected to the wider eastern Mediterranean world and to what extent ingenuity and creativity were possible in their workshops at the fringes of ancient Egyptian society. At the same time, there may be an opportunity to glimpse the art of the Hyksos Period—a time tied to the rule of a foreign dynasty in Egypt. In relation to this period, the question has been raised: to what extent did these foreigners contribute to Egyptian art and culture? For the material discussed here, the impact of this foreign dynasty seems to have been indirect, but some of the motifs do not fit the Egyptian repertoire.

Our little article is in tribute to the outstanding contributions Dorothea has made to Egyptian archaeology and art history; in both fields we owe so much to her expertise and ingenuity. We are also indebted to Dorothea for her great friendship and her unfailing help and advice in many instances. This contribution is a token of our affection and admiration.

Introduction to the Archaeological Context

During recent excavations at Tell el-Dabʿa, a palace from the middle of the Hyksos Period was partly uncovered (fig. 1).³ It was most probably constructed during the reign of the Hyksos ruler Khayan and

¹ We would like to thank Ogden Goelet and Adela Oppenheim for editing the English of this manuscript. For consultation and bibliography on Near Eastern glyptic art we are very much indebted to Irit Ziffer; for Aegean art to Lyvia Morgan; for objects from Akrotiri to Andreas Vlachopoulos; and for zoological questions to Eran Levine and Yoram Yom-Tov. Figures 1-15 are from the joint archives of the Austrian Academy of Sciences and the Austrian Archaeological Institute, Cairo. The graphic work on figures 1-13 was done by Nicola Math and on figures 14-15 by Christa Mlinar. Unless otherwise stated, the photographs are by Axel Krause. Additional information, if necessary, is provided in the captions.

² Dorothea Arnold, “Ägyptische Mergeltone (‘Wüstentone’) und die Herkunft einer Mergeltonware des Mittleren Reiches aus der Gegend von Memphis,” in *Studien zur altägyptischen Keramik*, Dorothea Arnold, ed. (Mainz am Rhein, 1981), 167-191.

³ Manfred Bietak, “Où est le palais des Hyksôs? À propos les fouilles à Tell el-Dabʿa et ‘Ezbet Helmi,” *CRAIBL* (2007), 749-780; Manfred Bietak, “A Palace of the Hyksos Khayan at Avaris,” *Proceedings of the 6th International Congress of the Archaeology of the Ancient Near East 5–10 May 2009 «Sapienza», Università di Roma, 2, Excavations, Surveys and Restorations: Reports on Recent Field Archaeology in the Near East*, Paolo Matthiae, et al., eds. (Wiesbaden, 2010), 99-109; Manfred Bietak and Irene Forstner-Müller, “Eine palatiale Anlage der frühen Hyksoszeit (Areal F/II), Vorläufige

shows no similarities to the ground plans of Egyptian palaces. The additive plan, with towers jutting out of the façade, and the juxtaposition of different elements, such as building units and courtyards, is much more reminiscent of palaces in the Near East, particularly in northern Syria and Mesopotamia.⁴ The size of the building, about 10,500 square meters, corresponds to the large palaces of the northern Levant.⁵

In a later phase of the palace, a spacious courtyard 27.0 x 21.3 m with thick casemate walls was added to its southern corner (fig. 2). This courtyard was devoted to cult ceremonies including ritual feasting. Along the walls of the courtyard, benches of mud brick were constructed, which also cut through the middle of the court. Later, a kind of cellar was built against the northeastern edge of the courtyard and the benches were renewed along the southwestern edge of the cellar. The southwestern part of the courtyard was left untouched by new constructions, and we presume that an old surviving building of sand brick (a kind of brick composed almost exclusively of sand), which seemed to have had special importance, continued to be used. It is possible that this sand brick building was a kind of sanctuary, which would explain why it was left untouched.

Courtyards for ritual feasting within the context of a Near Eastern palace are very reminiscent of the *marzihu*—institutions for ritual repasts known in the ancient Orient from the third millennium B.C. until the first half of the first millennium A.D.⁶

Within this courtyard, a whole series of big pits filled with broken pottery, animal bones, ashes, and soil was excavated (fig. 3).⁷ The pits, designated pit complex L81, were mostly round and some had a diameter of more than 5 m. Some pits were covered by the cellar in the northeast and some other pits cut into benches and older pits. In short, there is a whole stratigraphy of such pits and installations that seem to be the remains of ritual feasting events recurring over a longer period of time. A total of over 6,000 vessels have been recovered so far. Most of them were hemispherical cups, goblets, beakers,

Ergebnisse der Grabungskampagne 2006 in Tell el-Dabʿa,” *ÄL* 16 (2006), 63-78; Manfred Bietak and Irene Forstner-Müller, “Ein rituelles Mahl und das Ende eines Palastes,” in “Festschrift für Hermann Hunger,” Markus Köhbach, et al., eds., *WZKM* 97 (2007), 21-34; Manfred Bietak and Irene Forstner-Müller with contributions by Frans van Koppen and Karen Radner, “Der Hyksos-Palast bei Tell el-Dabʿa. Zweite und dritte Grabungskampagne (Frühling 2008 und Frühling 2009),” *ÄL* 19 (2009), 92-119; Manfred Bietak, Irene Forstner-Müller, and Tomasz Herbich, “Discovery of a New Palatial Complex in Tell el-Dabʿa in the Delta: Geophysical Survey and Preliminary Archaeological Verification,” in *The Archaeology and Art of Ancient Egypt: Essays in Honor of David B. O’Connor* I, Zahi Hawass and Janet Richards, eds. (Cairo, 2007), 119-125.

⁴ Manfred Bietak, “Houses, Palaces and Development of Social Structure in Avaris,” in *Cities and Urbanism in Ancient Egypt: Papers from a Workshop in November 2006 at the Austrian Academy of Sciences*, Manfred Bietak, Ernst Czerny, and Irene Forstner-Müller, eds. (Vienna, 2010), 11-68.

⁵ Bietak, “Houses, Palaces,” 21-22, figs. 22-23.

⁶ On *marzihu* see Otto Eissfeldt, “Kultvereine in Ugarit,” in *Ugaritica* 6, Claude F.-A. Schaeffer, ed., Mission de Ras Shamra XVII (Paris, 1969), 187-195; Patrick D. Miller, “The MRZH Text,” in *The Claremont Ras Shamra Tablets*, Loren R. Fisher, ed., AnOr 48 (Rome, 1972), 37-48; Richard Elliot Friedman, “The *Mrzh* Text from Ugarit,” *Maarav* 2.2 (Spring 1980), 187-205; Marvin H. Pope, “The Cult of the Dead at Ugarit,” in *Ugarit in Retrospect: Fifty Years of Ugarit and Ugaritic*, Gordon Douglas Young, ed. (Winona Lake, Indiana, 1981), 159-179; Philip J. King, “The *Marzeah*: Textual and Archaeological Evidence,” *Eretz Israel* 20, Yigael Yadin Memorial Volume, A. Ben-Tor, et al., eds. (Jerusalem, 1989), 98*-106*; Theodore J. Lewis, *Cults of the Dead in Ancient Israel and Ugarit*, HSM 39 (Atlanta, 1989); Pierre Bordreuil and Dennis Pardee, “Le papyrus de marzeah,” *Semítica* 38 (1990), 49-68; John McLaughlin, “The Marzeah at Ugarit: A Textual and Contextual Study,” *UF* 23 (1991), 265-281; John L. McLaughlin, *The marzēah in the Prophetic Literature: References and Allusions in Light of the Extra-Biblical Evidence* (Leiden, 2001); J. Bottéro, “Boisson, banquet et vie sociale en Mésopotamie,” in *Drinking in Ancient Societies: History and Culture of Drinks in the Ancient Near East, Proceedings of a Symposium held in Rome, May 17-19 1990*, Lucio Milano, ed. (Padua, 1994), 3-13; Kevin M. McGeough, “Locating the Marzihu Archaeologically,” *UF* 35 (2005), 407-420.

⁷ David A. Aston and Bettina Bader with a contribution by Karl G. Kunst, “Fishes, Ringstands, Nudes and Hippos—A Preliminary Report on the Hyksos Palace Pit Complex L81,” *ÄL* 19 (2009), 19-89.

and bowls, with some more rarely attested types such as animal- and bird-shaped rhyta in the form of hippopotami, ducks, and falcons (for some of these forms, see David Aston’s article in this volume). One very special pottery vessel shows the form of a stocky nude woman in a crouching position. Some Tell el-Yahudiya ware of Egyptian production and a few white-painted III-IV jugs of Cypriot origin were also among the deposits. Besides small and large ring stands, the hoard also contained pedestals, large storage containers such as water jars (*zeirs*), beer jars, and some amphorae of Levantine origin. Among the finds were also footed bowls serving as incense burners, large, straw-tempered footed bowls, and ritual vessels such as libation jars.

Of special interest are Nubian sherds originating from the periphery of the Pan-Grave and Kerma culture,⁸ which prove that there was contact with the Kingdom of Kush from the middle of the Hyksos Period onwards. According to the Second Stela of Kamose, the 15th Dynasty rulers had diplomatic ties with the Kingdom of Kush.⁹ The sherds all belong to open forms such as cups and bowls and may suggest that Nubians who participated in this ritual feasting used their own ceramic corpus; as open shapes they do not represent suitable containers for imported goods, but were probably used as eating and drinking vessels.

The material found in these pits also included a number of so-called fish bowls, which will be the focus of this contribution. Their size and the large fish incised onto their interiors are an indication that their function was, indeed, to serve whole fish for these ritual repasts. Among the osteological material were remains of cattle, sheep, goats, hippopotami, birds, and fish as well.¹⁰ The representations connected to the Nilotic landscape on the above-mentioned bowls, rhyta in the shape of water birds, and hippopotami with incised lotuses, as well as the rhyton in the shape of a nude woman, add to the connotations of fertility and abundance. The archaeological context and the choice of representations on at least some of the bowls strongly suggest a ritual meaning that could be connected to the special function of the palace courtyard. On the one hand there were allusions to prosperity and fertility, but on the other there were perhaps funerary associations, particularly considering the presence of oval pieces of baked clay, which may be interpreted as meat models.

Fish Bowls: Introduction

The so-called fish bowls are oval, boat-shaped, and made from Marl C clay. They are frequently incised with a fish design on their interior that depicts a Nile perch (*Tilapia nilotica*).¹¹ Three types of decoration

⁸ David A. Aston and Manfred Bietak, “Nubians in the Nile Delta: à propos Avaris and Peru-nefer,” in *Nubia in the New Kingdom: Lived Experience, Pharaonic Control and Indigenous Traditions: The Annual Egyptology Colloquium Thursday 11 July and Friday 12 July 2013*, N. Spencer, ed. (London, in press).

⁹ On the presence of Kerma culture in Egypt during the Second Intermediate Period, see Janine Bourriau, “Relations between Egypt and Kerma during the Middle and New Kingdoms,” in *Egypt and Africa: Nubia from Prehistory to Islam*, W. V. Davies, ed. (London, 1991), 129-144; Janine Bourriau, “Beyond Avaris: The Second Intermediate Period in Egypt Outside the Eastern Delta,” in *The Hyksos: New Historical and Archaeological Perspectives*, Eliezer D. Oren, ed., University Museum Monograph 96 (Philadelphia, 1997), 159-182; Perla Fuscaldo, “The Nubian Pottery from the Palace District of Avaris at ‘Ezbet Helmi, Areas H/III and H/VI Part I: The ‘Classic’ Kerma Pottery from the 18th Dynasty,” *ÄL* 12 (2002), 167-186; Irmgard Hein, “Kerma in Auaris,” in *Begegnungen Antiken Kulturen im Niltal: Festgabe für Erika Endesfelder, Karl-Heinz Priese, Walter Friedrich Reineke und Steffen Wenig*, Caris-Beatrice Arnst, Ingelore Hafemann, Angelika Lohwasser, et al., eds. (Leipzig, 2001), 199-212; Aston, “Fishes, Ringstands, Nudes and Hippos,” 63-64, fig. 10.89-91.

¹⁰ Kunst in Aston, “Fishes, Ringstands, Nudes and Hippos,” 70-72.

¹¹ Identified and illustrated by Martin Dambach and Ingrid Wallert, “Das Tilapia-Motiv in der altägyptischen Kunst,” *CdE* 41 (1966), 273-275.

on the bowls can be distinguished. One has a net or pond motif engraved in the centre of the dish (fig. 4), while another type shows a representation of a fish in the same position (figs. 5-6).¹² A third category, identified with a number of bowls found at Kahun and Lisht, is decorated exclusively with geometrical patterns.¹³ The fish bowls appear in two sizes ranging in length from about 35 cm to over 50 cm. They are, indeed, suitable to offer fish at such ritual meals, although the complete bowls are very heavy. Pit complex L81 is the first ritual context in which such bowls have been found.¹⁴

The typological development of fish bowls begins in the late 12th Dynasty and seems to last until at least the middle of the Hyksos Period at Tell el-Dabʿa, while they continued to be produced in Memphis;¹⁵ the continued production throughout the entire Second Intermediate Period is directly connected with the most likely origin of the Marl C fabric used to create the bowls. At least one production centre supplying the northern part of Egypt with such ceramics was situated in Middle Egypt, most likely in the Memphis-Fayûm region, as Dorothea Arnold has suggested based on the archaeological evidence.¹⁶ More recent quantitative research also corroborates this assumption.¹⁷ The Memphis-Fayûm region is the area where fish cults may be expected for environmental reasons, and in the Middle Kingdom it was the focus of royal attention.¹⁸ Precise dating of the various types of fish bowls is quite difficult because of their uniqueness and the large number of complete bowls that lack a dateable archaeological context. Fortunately, the finds from Kom Rabiʿa/Memphis and Tell el-Dabʿa pit complex L81 now offer the opportunity for a more precise chronology. Thus, it seems that the bowls with the fish in the centre of the dishes are later in time than those with the net/pond motif, although there are not enough examples from well-dated contexts to be absolutely certain. The choice of motifs might also be status-related.

Fish Bowls as a Medium for Art and Cult

These vessels, with the incised net/pond and the fish motif on the interior of the bowls, were also a medium for minor art. It should be noted that in the larger ceramic repertoire of the late Middle Kingdom and the Second Intermediate Period this vessel type represents the only elaborately decorated one. In

most cases, the entire interior of the bowl was incised with representations of open and closed lotus flowers and reeds or sometimes horsetails and other aquatic plants sprouting from the centre (fig. 4). More elaborate bowls include additional fish, hippopotami, and other animals and vegetation on the interior, incised in a lively and at the same time original style (figs. 6-12). Often a juxtaposition of Nilotic and desert landscapes can be found.¹⁹

The combination of tilapia fish and lotus flowers has a very distinct religious connotation in Egypt. The tilapia, as a mouthbrooder,²⁰ has a regenerative meaning associated with the sun god Ra.²¹ In combination with the lotus, which opens every morning in the sunlight, this motif distinctly signifies regeneration and fertility.²² The combination of tilapia and lotus also appears on the interior of New Kingdom faience bowls.²³ Hitherto most of these faience bowls have been found in ritual contexts, while fish bowls were restricted to profane settlement environments. But with the discovery of pit complex L81 at Tell el-Dabʿa, the picture has changed.

Tilapia fish also appear on scarabs of the Second Intermediate Period in association with the king’s role as the smiter of the Syrian storm god, who is considered to be a patron of seafaring (fig. 13A).²⁴ The fish, the sea, and the Syrian storm god are a combination that suits the landscape of Tell el-Dabʿa particularly well, as there were harbours at Avaris²⁵ and later at Peru-nefer.²⁶ In addition, evidence of Canaanite cults exists at the site in the form of Near Eastern temple ground plans dating to the 17th and 16th centuries B.C.,²⁷ as well as a representation of the Syrian storm god as the patron of sailors on a locally produced cylinder seal from the early 13th Dynasty (fig. 13C).²⁸ The cults of Canaanite divinities are also attested from the naval base of Peru-nefer in the Tuthmoside Period,²⁹ which could be seen as evidence of a continuation of foreign tradition from the time of Avaris (17th/16th century B.C.) to the time of Pi-Ramesse (12th century B.C.).³⁰

¹⁹ D. G. Jeffreys and Lisa L. Giddy, “Memphis, 1988,” *JEA* 75 (1989), 5, fig. 3.
²⁰ The tilapia fish incubates its eggs in its mouth and thus the young fish seem to originate entirely from this orifice. A similar observation was made by the ancient Egyptians in connection with the scarab beetle, which lays its eggs in a dung ball.
²¹ Dambach, “Das Tilapia-Motiv,” 275-294.
²² Stephan Weidner, *Lotos im Alten Ägypten* (Pfaffenweiler, 1985), 46, 79-81.
²³ For the latest discussion of the topic and literature, see Susan J. Allen, “Faience Bowls,” in *Hatshepsut from Queen to Pharaoh*, Catharine H. Roehrig, et al., eds. (exh. cat., New York, 2005), 176-180.
²⁴ Othmar Keel, “Ein weiterer Skarabäus mit einer Nilpferdjagd: Die Ikonographie der sogenannten Beamtenskarabäen und der ägyptische König auf Skarabäen vor dem Neuen Reich,” *ÄL* 6 (2006), 126.
²⁵ Manfred Bietak, *Der Fundort im Rahmen einer archäologisch-geographischen Untersuchung über das ägyptische Ostdelta*, Tell el-Dabʿa II (Vienna, 1975), 187, 192, 198; Irene Forstner-Müller, Tomasz Herbich, Christian Schweitzer, and Michael Weissl, “Preliminary Report on the Geophysical Survey at Tell el-Dabʿa/Qantir in Spring 2008,” *ÄL* 18 (2008), 87-106. Hervé Tronchère, et al., “Geoarchaeology of Avaris: First Results,” *ÄL* 18 (2008), 327-339.
²⁶ Manfred Bietak, “The Tuthmoside Stronghold Perunefer,” *EgArch* 26 (Spring 2005), 13-17; Manfred Bietak, “Perunefer: The Principal New Kingdom Naval Base,” *EgArch* 34 (Spring 2009), 15-17; Manfred Bietak, “Perunefer: An Update,” *EgArch* 35 (Autumn 2009), 16-17. See also here note 30.
²⁷ For the latest survey on the sanctuaries in Tell el-Dabʿa, see Manfred Bietak, “Near Eastern Sanctuaries in the Eastern Nile Delta,” *Baal*, Hors-Série, vol. 6 (Beirut, 2009), 209-228.
²⁸ Edith Porada, “The Cylinder Seal from Tell el-Dabʿa,” *AJA* 88 no. 4 (Oct. 1984), 485-488; Manfred Bietak, “Zur Herkunft des Seth von Avaris,” *ÄL* 1 (1990), 9-16; Christoph Uhlinger, “Leviathan und die Schiffe in Ps. 104, 25-26,” *BN* 71/4 (1990), 499-526.
²⁹ Rainer Stadelman, *Syrisch-palästinensische Gottheiten in Ägypten*, PÄ 5 (Leiden, 1967), 104, 147.
³⁰ Manfred Bietak, “From Where Came the Hyksos and Where Did They Go?” in *The Second Intermediate Period (Thirteenth - Seventeenth Dynasties): Current Research, Future Prospects*, Marcel Marée, ed., OLA 192 (Leuven, 2010), 139-181.

However, the bowls were manufactured in Middle Egypt, probably in the Memphis-Fayûm region, far from the Canaanite community of Avaris (see above). Whether or not the producers had Canaanite religious concepts in mind as well as Egyptian ones must remain an unanswered question. The exceptional bowls, which will be discussed in the following sections, seem to have been made, however, during the Hyksos Period or only slightly earlier. It is, therefore, perfectly conceivable that the users at Avaris—at that time the political overlords of the country—had some influence over the choice of motifs, particularly because the incised representations are exceptional in style and content.

Description of the Fish Bowls from Tell el-Dab’a

The Demon Bowl

The bowls thus far discussed display the usual aquatic scenes. Interesting intruding representations, which do not seem to fit to the aquatic scenes, can be found on the bowl reg. no. 9195 (fig. 6). On this piece, the large tilapia fish is depicted in the centre of the dish with its customary decoration: a herringbone-pattern stripe running across the length of its body that transforms the lateral fin into a decorative motif, a tail filled with cross hatching, and scales represented by vertical thumbnail imprints all over the body. One long dorsal fin and only two small fins are situated at the front and back of its abdomen. The middle abdominal fin is presumably missing due to lack of space or because a single lotus flower seems to grow out of the fish’s body. A bunch of five lotuses emerges from the fish’s mouth, with a big open flower in the middle and buds and smaller flowers at the sides.

Aquatic scenery is shown on the walls of the bowl. On one side there are three tilapiae: the middle one seems to have its back to the centre, while the others are positioned in a standard manner with their backs towards the rim. One of the three fish floats in the opposite direction towards a hippopotamus, realistically rendered with its folds of skin. The hippopotamus seems to be caught in a flying gallop, but it was probably meant to be shown as if swimming. We shall see on the next bowl that a fish also swims in an opposite direction, this time facing a crocodile (figs. 7, 8A).

Along the underside of the large tilapia, two small fish positioned one above the other swim towards its tail (fig. 6), and through a bunch of lotuses. The remaining space contains two very unconventional representations, which seem to be out of place amidst the aquatic scenery. In front of a hippopotamus we find a single monkey with an elongated muzzle and a tail. It can be identified as a baboon and looks very similar to the baboons climbing a palm tree on a more elaborate bowl (figs. 10, 12A). The monkey on this bowl climbs what seems to be a single palm branch, but the bowl illustrated in figures 10 and 12A suggests it is an abbreviation for a much more elaborate palm tree.³¹

Behind the monkey is a representation of a well-known Egyptian hippopotamus demon, who stands upright and holds a knife in its hands. Its body has been rendered according to the conventions used to portray this type of demon. Its arms and legs are thin and could be described as anthropomorphic, which was especially necessary in order to enable the demon to hold a knife. The limbs are poorly integrated with the plump hippopotamus body, which has a pronounced navel that protrudes abnormally from its front contour.³² The body was filled with cross hatching. The back of the hippopotamus numen has the

³¹ An axe head dated to the Middle Kingdom/Second Intermediate Period, now housed in The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York 30.8.111, also shows a monkey climbing a papyrus stalk. We would like to thank Adela Oppenheim for drawing our attention to this object. For the dating of this object, see Eva Kühnert-Eggebrecht, *Die Axt als Waffe und Werkzeug im Alten Ägypten*, MÄS 15 (Munich, 1969), 62-64.

³² Similar to the vignette of the Book of the Dead of Userhetmos, which dates to the 19th Dynasty, see Patrick F. Houlihan, *The Animal World of the Pharaohs* (Cairo, 1996), 183.

characteristic crest that flows into a kind of extra tail. This female numen is frequently depicted on so-called magic knives of the Middle Kingdom³³ and Second Intermediate Period.³⁴ A hippopotamus goddess named Ipi or Ipet is known in the Old and Middle Kingdoms; later the name Taweret becomes more popular for the creature.³⁵ The simple designation *rr.t* “the sow” is also used for this goddess.³⁶ Her function is related to the protection of mothers and children, especially as patroness of childbirth,³⁷ and with the knife in her hands she is supposed to ward off any possible aggressors. A closer identification of the hippopotamus goddess with the knife on our bowl is not possible.³⁸

The baboon climbing the palm leaf that stands for the complete tree and the hippopotamus goddess appear to be unrelated to this otherwise aquatic composition. These disparate intruders may have been taken from a different pattern book and have a meaning that we do not yet fully understand. The association of the hippopotamus demon with childbirth may hint at a possible connection to the regenerative symbolism of the tilapia and the aquatic scene.

The following example we present here exhibits a static, canonical mode of representing animals (reg. no. 8994C; figs. 7-9), while another shows a similar scene in a more dynamic style with naturalistic movement of animals (reg. no. 9000A; figs. 10-12).

The Static Bowl

The bowl with static representations seems to have been produced in another workshop or by another “artist,” although we do not know very much about the organization of pottery workshops and how or if labour was strictly divided between pottery makers and pottery decorators (reg. no. 8994C; figs. 7-9).³⁹ Here the traditional aquatic scenes are restricted to the high, narrow ends of the bowl, in order to provide space for the intrusive desert scenery, which seems alien to the original aquatic concept. From the mouth of the tilapia incised in the centre protrude lotus flowers and buds flanked at both ends by some other water plants. The vegetation separates the aquatic representation from a herd of ungulates, which is therefore split into two groups. Behind the tail of the tilapia are three fish, two floating to the right. The first one, reversed, floats above the two other fish and faces a big crocodile mouth to mouth. The crocodile’s snout is slightly open and its body is filled with cross hatching, in contrast to all the other animals shown; only its head and neck are decorated with incised dots. Otherwise the method of depiction is similar to crocodiles on contemporary scarabs (fig. 14). Like the large tilapia in the centre of the bowl, the bodies of the smaller fish are filled with curved, vertical incisions indicating scales.

The side walls of the bowl show an unusual representation of a herd of ungulates. Those with the wavy-shaped horns can probably be identified as Addax antelopes (*Addax nasomaculatus*).⁴⁰ The

³³ Hartwig Altenmüller, “Die Apotropaia und die Götter Mittelägyptens: Eine typologische und religionsgeschichtliche Untersuchung der sogenannten ‘Zaubermesser’ des Mittleren Reichs” (PhD diss., Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität, Munich, 1965); Hartwig Altenmüller, “Ein Zaubermesser des Mittleren Reiches,” *SAK* 13 (1986), 1-27.

³⁴ Susanne Voss, “Ein Zaubermesser aus K95.2,” in Daniel Polz, et al., “Bericht über die 6., 7. und 8. Grabungskampagne in der Nekropole von Dra’ Abu el-Naga/Theben-West,” *MDAIK* 55 (1999), 390-399, especially 397-398; see also the literature cited there.

³⁵ Altenmüller, “Ein Zaubermesser des Mittleren Reiches,” 26.

³⁶ *rr.t* Wb. II, 438, 8-11, esp. 10.

³⁷ Voss, “Ein Zaubermesser aus K95.2,” 397-398 with additional literature.

³⁸ Voss, “Ein Zaubermesser aus K95.2,” 393.

³⁹ The scarcity of decorated pottery of any kind in the Middle Kingdom and the Second Intermediate Period seems not to warrant such a division of labour.

⁴⁰ For the identification of the animals we are indebted to Eran Levin and Yoram Yom-Tov from the zoological gardens of Tel Aviv University.

antelopes have incised collars and therefore should be considered semi-domesticated animals, a practice which is particularly known in ancient Egypt during the Old and Middle Kingdoms.⁴¹ The antelopes are stockier than the animals on the “dynamic bowl,” perhaps a sign of their domesticated status, which could be connected to excess of food and lack of movement. In contrast, the animals on the “dynamic bowl” are shown naturally slim.

The almost rectangular bodies of the antelopes are set off from the legs by a line. The bodies were filled with short, horizontal incisions representing hair or fur, the legs have vertical incisions, and the head and neck were left without texture. The eyes are very large and almond shaped, in contrast to either the usual incised dot or the absence of eyes. Their tails are short and full. The long horns are shown in profile with two parallel wavy lines; they are bent backwards and have slightly upturned tips. Because the rump is completely set off from the legs by an incised line, it is not possible to decide if a natural stride is meant or the usual ambling motion in which mammals on the move are normally represented in Egyptian art.⁴²

On one side of the bowl these animals are shown in a single register, on the other side they fill between one and three registers. While on the “dynamic bowl” (see below and figs. 10-12) the animals were drawn using a more informal perspective without base lines, here the body and fins of the tilapia in the centre of the dish serve as base lines. When several animals are arranged vertically, base lines were introduced, for example for the predator, the antelope in front of it, and the pigs below. Undoubtedly, this piece of folk art is derived from traditional Egyptian art, while the “dynamic bowl” may also reflect other influences. Only one fish is suspended in the air and drawn unrealistically above the land animals. The crocodile, on the other hand, with its four articulated legs, seems to walk on top of the fins of the fish. However, this impression may not be in keeping with the intention of the artist, because space was very restricted in the area behind the large fish’s tail. The dish seems to be composed with the same sense of *horror vacui* also found in hieroglyphic writing.

Amazing is the contrast between the stiff domestic animals and the predator behind the ungulates in terms of the mastery with which the predator’s elegant movement is captured (fig. 9C). The drawing of the predator on the “static bowl” is far superior to that on the “dynamic bowl” (fig. 11B). Not only is its form more characteristic of a feline, but its stride and raised, curved tail are also natural and powerful. The animal appears to be a lion with an unadorned face/chest and a full neck. In contrast to the “dynamic bowl,” the body and the legs of the predator were filled with horizontal incisions, in a similar fashion to the domestic animals on the “static bowl.” Most probably this pattern signifies fur.

The lion has not yet attacked any of the animals, but seems to stride menacingly behind an adult antelope (fig. 9C). Below the lion are two pigs with lozenge-shaped bodies filled with the same horizontal incisions that adorn most other animals on the bowl. Their legs are relatively long and thin in keeping with the Egyptian mode of representing pigs.⁴³ Below the antelope, another animal with long ears and a hairy body was drawn. Due to its smaller size and its long tail it may be identified as a dog accompanying the herd.

⁴¹ Emma Brunner-Traut, “Domestikation,” *LÄ I*, 1123-1124.

⁴² Heinrich Schäfer, *Principles of Egyptian Art*, Emma Brunner-Traut, ed., John Baines, trans. and ed., and with a foreword by E. H. Gombrich (Leipzig, 1919; paperback reprint, Oxford, 2002), 293; Manfred Bietak, “The Mode of Representation in Egyptian Art in Comparison to Aegean Bronze Age Art,” in *Proceedings of the First International Symposium: The Wall Paintings of Thera I*, S. Sherratt, ed. (Athens, 2000), 221.

⁴³ Joachim Boessneck, *Die Haustiere in Ägypten*, Veröffentlichungen der Zoologischen Staatssammlung München 3 (Munich, 1954), 19.

The Dynamic Bowl

Related in theme to the previous bowl, but different in style and the rendering of motion, is the frieze on the inner wall of the so-called “dynamic bowl” (reg. no. 9000A; figs. 10-12). The usual tilapia fish is situated in the centre of the bowl interior, in this case slightly fatter than the other examples. Its head is set off from the body, which is in turn divided by a stripe with a herringbone pattern that signifies the median line or the spine. The tail is filled with a square or chequered pattern, while the body has deeply incised vertical thumbnail indentations to indicate the scales. The fish has a long dorsal fin and three small fins on the abdomen, which interrupt the animal frieze (see below). The first fin on the abdomen is shown as a pair and partly overlaps the body of the fish.

A date palm grows from the mouth of the tilapia, instead of the usual central open lotus flower; to the side of the palm are what remains of the traditional motif, six antithetically arranged lotus flowers (fig. 10). Thus, a new motif is created, with a tree of life replacing the lotus as a symbol of regeneration. Four monkeys climb the tree and pluck dates: two of them are arranged antithetically and climb up the trunk, while two are on the outer edges of the palm’s crown. They have long tails and pronounced muzzles, meaning they can be identified as baboons. A collar suggests that they are tame animals. Their bodies are filled with incised dots and their eyes are indicated by short incisions. Their movement can be compared to walking on the ground on all four legs.

The scene on the interior wall of the vessel differs from the more usual cycle of water plants and fish. Only an abbreviated representation of an aquatic scene can be found: the lotuses beside the palm tree and two tilapia fish to its right with a smaller one below the lotus. The small fish display the same iconography as the large, central fish and have the same incised scale pattern on their bodies. They are on the same level as the mammals on the frieze, which runs all around the bowl’s wall. The palm tree in the middle of the lotuses is probably the result of a reinterpretation of the regenerative meaning of the lotuses or the incorporation of the “tree of life.”

The contents of the remainder of the scene could be defined as a kind of narrative, in which a feline predator roams through a herd of ungulates. The feline’s body has the spots of a leopard, while a lion is suggested by the heavy head and the stout neck, set off from the slim body by three wavy lines indicating a kind of mane. We may conclude that the artist intended to draw a leopard but was unfamiliar with its anatomy.⁴⁴ It is much more clumsily drawn than the predator on the “static bowl” (fig. 9C). Its tail is rendered too massively and it is shown near the back of the animal. One of the front paws reaches out horizontally over the prey, while the other legs seem to be in a kind of trotting motion similar to the feline on the “static bowl.” The attitude is very similar to that of the falcon-headed sphinxes trampling foreigners, an example of which is found on the 12th Dynasty pectoral of Mereret.⁴⁵

Seven animals in the herd under attack at first look like ibexes because of their long, continuous, backward bending horns. If the artist did not mix up the desert ungulates, the identification as antelopes is, however, more likely, as they have distinct tails.⁴⁶ Most probably they can be identified as scimitar-horned oryx (*Oryx dammah*).⁴⁷ The three leading animals, however, have their horn tips bent slightly

⁴⁴ In Egyptian art features of lions and leopards are frequently mixed, see, for example, Pascal Vernus and Jean Yoyotte, *Bestiaire des pharaons* (Paris, 2005), especially 181 (Pap. Ani).

⁴⁵ J. de Morgan, *Fouilles à Dahchour Mars-Juin 1894* (Vienna, 1895), pl. XIX, no. 1.

⁴⁶ Dale J. Osborn with Jana Osbornová, *The Mammals of Ancient Egypt* (Warminster, 1998), 157-170, 180-185.

⁴⁷ See here note 40.

upwards and have very short raised tails; otherwise they look the same. They might be identified as addax antelopes, like the stockier parallels on the “static bowl.”⁴⁸ Below them are two smaller animals, which may be identified as wild donkeys rather than antelopes. The seemingly long ears cannot be horns, because the animals would then lack the ears that are indicated on most of the others.

The animals are loosely arranged, lack base lines, and are suspended in the air in two registers. In one case, four animals are shown one above the other. The feline slays a young animal, shown on its back with raised legs. It seems to have a goat beard. The rest of the animals are on the run, including an ostrich, a small hippopotamus, and a more stocky bovine with lyre-shaped short horns rendered frontally (probably a hartebeest, *Alcelaphus buselaphus*).⁴⁹ All motion is directed towards the right on both bowls, which interestingly is the preferred orientation in Egyptian hieroglyphic writing.⁵⁰ The bodies of the animals are filled with incised cross-hatching, which is reminiscent of the filling technique for anthropomorphic divine bodies and animal representations on contemporary scarab motifs (see figs. 13B, 14). The animals in this herd are elongated, slim, and realistically rendered in different sizes.

The animals on the “dynamic bowl” (figs. 10-12) are drawn walking or trotting all around the frieze, with the outer legs outstretched in front of and behind the animal, and the inner legs under the body. That natural motion, most likely a trot, is definitely displayed by the diagonal legs touching the ground or reaching out simultaneously. It is a mode of rendering motion otherwise unknown in Egyptian art before the second half of the 18th Dynasty.

The motif of baboons plucking fruit from a tree is known from minor art objects and tomb paintings, for example at Beni Hassan, where a sycamore rather than a palm tree is depicted.⁵¹ At Beni Hassan the baboons are also distributed in a more naturalistic manner in the crown of the trees; when several baboons are shown, they are distributed in an asymmetrical composition. A New Kingdom faience dish from Kahun has a very similar representation, with asymmetrically arranged climbers that seem to be human.⁵² The heraldic composition of climbing animals seen on our fish bowl seems closer to Near Eastern representations of this theme.⁵³ An example from Jericho shows antithetically arranged apes climbing a tree carved into the surface of an eye axe (fig. 17).⁵⁴ A frequent heraldic arrangement in

glyptic art, which conveys the same sense but employs different animals, depicts antithetically arranged goats on either side of a tree, particularly a palm tree.⁵⁵ Another comparable composition is the heraldic arrangement of men climbing a date palm on the “investiture painting” from the palace of Mari.⁵⁶ Thus, both Egyptian and Near Eastern parallels for this scene exist.

Conclusions

The question arises: what was the purpose of displaying these exceptional scenes on Second Intermediate Period fish bowls? These representations constitute a genre of fringe art that was meaningful in connection with the rituals performed in the palace courtyard. Besides the traditional aquatic scenes, which can be related to the regenerative powers symbolized by the tilapia with lotus flowers growing from its mouth, the most important new scene related to the Hyksos Period is the feline predator behind a herd of ungulates. It is surely meaningful that one bowl shows a domesticated herd, while on the other bowl we encounter wild ungulates. The former displays static features and closer adherence to the Egyptian canonical art tradition, while the latter is designed in a particularly dynamic style that deviates in many respects from the art canon. The neglect of a base line, animals suspended in the air, and the natural mode of movement that disregards the canonical ambling motion are signs of a freer and more animated composition that was atypical in traditional Egyptian art. Occasional deviations occur in the art of the First Intermediate Period⁵⁷ and the Middle Kingdom,⁵⁸ such as the lack of a base line in representations in the tomb of Ukh-hotep, son of Senbi in Meir.⁵⁹ There, however, the animals in the lowest register rest on the base of the scene, while the animals in the uppermost register follow an invisible ground line; only in the middle register are the animals suspended.

The composition of the “dynamic bowl” seems to reflect a subtle influence that may have come from the Aegean. As an example of probably contemporary art, one may look at a basin from Thera (fig. 15),⁶⁰ which illustrates a similar herd of running animals fleeing a hunter. They are also suspended in the air and rendered with a kind of “cavalier perspective.” They are engaged in a flying gallop, or more probably a canter, with the front legs lower than the hind legs. In contrast to the animals of the “dynamic bowl,”

⁴⁸ See here note 40.

⁴⁹ Osborn, *Mammals of Ancient Egypt*, 171-173.

⁵⁰ Henry George Fischer, *The Orientation of Hieroglyphs*, pt. I, *Reversals*, Egyptian Studies II (New York, 1977), 6-8 explains the preference of the rightward orientation by the prevalent righthandedness of mankind. It is also significant that in early Egyptian rock art, most of the friezes with animals are oriented towards the right.

⁵¹ Percy E. Newberry, *Beni Hassan*, pt. I, ASE 1 (London, 1893), pl. XXIX; Sylvia Schoske, Barbara Kreißl, and Renate Germer, “Anch”-Blumen für das Leben: Pflanzen im alten Ägypten (exh. cat., Munich, 1992), 38, Abb. 22; Patrick Francis Houlihan, “Harvesters or Monkey Business?” *GM* 157 (1997), 31-47.

⁵² Petrie, *Kahun, Gurob, and Hawara*, pl. XVIII, no. 35.

⁵³ The motif is already known from Ur, Early Dynastic IIB, see Azad Hamoto, *Der Affe in der altorientalischen Kunst*, FARG 28 (Münster, 1995), no. 33, fig. 17. See also Levantine cylinder seals from Kition, Edith Porada, “Appendix IV: Two Cylinder Seals from Tomb 9 at Kition,” in Vassos Karageorghis, *Excavations at Kition I, The Tombs* (Nicosia, 1974), 163-166 (cylinder seal 1, pp. 163-164); Beatrice Teissier, *Egyptian Iconography on Syro-Palestinian Cylinder Seals of the Middle Bronze Age*, OBOSA 11 (Fribourg, 1996), 112-113, no. 236; Dominique Collon, “The Green Jasper Cylinder Seal Workshop,” in *Insight through Images: Studies in Honor of Edith Porada*, Marilyn Kelly-Buccellati, et al., eds., Bibliotheca Mesopotamica 21 (Malibu, 1986), 57-69, no. 6; Dominique Collon, “The Green Jasper Seal Workshop Revisited,” in *Decade: A Decade of Archaeology and History in the Lebanon*, Claude Doumet-Serhal, et al., eds. (Beirut, 2004), 348-358, fig. 6, no. 1 with further references.

⁵⁴ Lorenzo Nigro “L’ascia fenestrata e il pugnale venato: due tipologie di armi d’apparato e l’inizio dell’età del Bronzo Medio in Palestina,” *Bollettino dei Monumenti Musei e Gallerie Pontificie* 23 (2003), 7-42.

⁵⁵ Othmar Keel, *Goddesses and Trees, New Moon and Yahweh: Ancient Near Eastern Art and the Hebrew Bible*, JSOT Supplement Series 261 (Sheffield, 1998), figs. 34-36 (scarabs showing goats on both sides of the tree of life); in Egypt see also Newberry, *Beni Hassan*, pt. I, for example pl. XII, second register right; Irit Ziffer, *At that Time the Canaanites Were in the Land: Daily Life in Canaan in the Middle Bronze Age 2 2000–1550 B.C.E.* (exh. cat., Tel Aviv, 1990), 11*.

⁵⁶ André Parrot, *Le Palais: Peintures murales*, Mission archéologique de Mari II, Bibliothèque archéologique et historique 69 (Paris, 1958), 53-66, figs. 47-48, 50, pls. VII-XIV, col. pl. A; Jean-Cl. Margueron, *Mari: Métropole de l’Euphrate au IIIe et au début de IIe millénaire av. J.-C.* (Paris, 2004), 424, pl. 56; 477, fig. 456; 508-512; the investiture painting has been newly dated to the Ur III Period.

⁵⁷ For example the tomb of Ankhtifi in Moalla, see Jean Vandier, *Moalla: La tombe d’Ankhtifi et la tombe de Sébekhotep*, BdÉ 18 (Cairo, 1950).

⁵⁸ On deviations from the canon in Middle Kingdom art see here Bietak in note 42.

⁵⁹ Aylward M. Blackman, *The Rock Tombs of Meir*, pt. II, *The Tomb-Chapel of Senbi’s Son Ukh-hotp (B, No. 2)*, ASE 23 (London, 1915), pls. VI-VII.

⁶⁰ Dimitra Kriga, “Οι Ασάμινθοι στο Ακρωτήρι Θήρας. Σκέψεις για τις Θεσεις των Ασάμινθων κατά την Υστερη Εποχή του Χαλκού στο Αιγαίο,” in ΑΠΟΝΑΥΤΗΣ, Τιμητικός τόμος για τον καθηγητή Χριστό Γ. Ντούμα, Andreas Vlachopoulos and Kiki Birtacha, eds. (Athens, 2003), fig. 16; Angelia Papagiannopoulou, “From Pots to Pictures: Middle Cycladic Figurative Art from Akrotiri, Thera,” in *Horizon: Symbolism, Interactions, Centrality: Recent Work on the Prehistory of the Cyclades*, McDonald Institute for Archaeological Research, University of Cambridge, 25th-28th March 2004, Neil Brodie, et al., eds. (Cambridge, 2007), 433-449, fig. 40.1-4.

the legs that are more distant from the viewer stretch out farther than those closer to the viewer. They are composed in two partly interlocked “registers” very similar to the arrangement on the dynamic bowl. No invisible base lines are introduced on either of them, as was done in the relief from the tomb of Ukh-hotep. In Aegean art, inverted landscapes and interspersed vegetation can be frequently found, but both are missing on the “dynamic bowl.”

Precisely this type of motion and arrangement can also be found in Syrian glyptic art from the 17th century (low chronology) onwards (fig. 16). Our bowls were also produced in the 17th century. The motif of a predator chasing a herd of ungulates may come from the Near East or the Aegean, because in the representational art of ancient Egypt, prey is not composed as a herd, but is normally split into smaller groups of animals. It seems possible that in our case the artists conceived the natural trotting gait of the animals from their own observations, without the influence of Egyptian canonical art. The motifs, however, show to some extent an eastern Mediterranean influence.

Hunting scenes can be considered prestige representations related to the royal court, as well as a symbol of order over chaos.⁶¹ Hunting scenes need to be differentiated. There are scenes where men—usually courtiers, provincial dignitaries, or the king himself⁶²—perform the hunt and shoot ungulates in the desert, generally in an area enclosed by fences. In addition to being a pleasurable activity, the representation of this type of hunt displays power transposed into the realm of the animal world. In Egypt this cruel activity is also included among the duties of the king and his dignitaries as a means of eliminating desert animals that symbolize chaos and threaten the well-being of the country.

Scenes also exist in which feline predators, lions and leopards, hunt ungulates without human intervention.⁶³ In ancient Egypt, scenes where such a predator assumes the function of the human hunter are thus far only known from the Late Predynastic and Early Dynastic Periods. They can usually be found on palettes and on the ivory handles of flint knives.⁶⁴ On the “Battlefield Palette” and the “Hunters’ Palette,” the lion assumes the role of the king and attacks human enemies.⁶⁵ In later periods

these scenes disappear. In Old and Middle Kingdom tomb scenes, when a lion attacks an ungulate, usually a bull,⁶⁶ or kills a gazelle,⁶⁷ or when leopards stalk prey,⁶⁸ these episodes are subsidiary events inserted into hunting scenes with human hunters as the key actors. It is never a frieze of its own.⁶⁹ As a result, the hunting scenes with the predators on the two bowls are particularly unique and unusual for Egypt during the Middle Kingdom and the Second Intermediate Period. Although fragments of bowls with lions have been found at Kahun and Kom Rabi’a,⁷⁰ it is unfortunately impossible to understand the complete compositions on these objects. From where do the themes and the composition originate?

Scenes of felines hunting ungulates without human intervention could be seen as symbols of royal power transformed into the realm of the animal world. Such representations, including griffins as predators, are known from the Aegean in wall paintings, glyptic art, and transportable goods such as ivory objects and inlaid daggers and boxes.⁷¹ Such scenes may involve a single or several predators. Near Eastern glyptic art from the prehistoric and Early Bronze Age periods onwards also included scenes in which lions chase ungulates;⁷² Syrian seals in particular seem to be at the forefront of this development.⁷³ These themes resume

⁶⁶ N. de G. Davies, *The Mastaba of Ptahhetep and Akhetetep at Saqqareh*, pt. I, *The Chapel of Ptahhetep and the Hieroglyphs*, ASE 8 (London, 1900), pl. XXII; Aylward M. Blackman, *The Rock Tombs of Meir I, The Tomb-Chapel of Ukh-hotp’s Son Senbi*, ASE 22 (London, 1914), pl. VI.

⁶⁷ Percy E. Newberry, *Beni Hasan*, pt. II, ASE II (London, 1893), pl. IV, 1st register, pl. XIII, 1st register.

⁶⁸ Blackman, *The Rock Tombs of Meir*, pt. II, pl. VII.

⁶⁹ An exception is the dagger of Ahmose, which has an inlaid scene showing a lion chasing a bull calf, see William Stevenson Smith, *Interconnections in the Ancient Near East: A Study of the Relationship between the Arts of Egypt, the Aegean, and Western Asia* (New Haven, 1965), fig. 37. This dagger is, however, considered to be a product of Aegean craftsmen or at least inspired by their work.

⁷⁰ Petrie, *Kahun, Gurob, and Hawara*, pl. V.5; Janine Bourriau, personal communication.

⁷¹ Marinatos, “The Feline Scene from Tell el Dab’a,” 127; Marinatos, “The Tell el-Dab’a Paintings,” 83-99; Morgan, “Power of the Beast,” 17-31; Morgan, “Art and International Relations: The Hunt Frieze at Tell el-Dab’a,” 249-258; Morgan, “Feline Hunters in the Tell el-Dab’a Paintings,” 285-298.

⁷² Amnon Ben-Tor, *Cylinder Seals of Third-Millennium Palestine*, ASOR Supplement Series 22 (Cambridge, Mass., 1978), 8-9, 52-57, class II: animals, fig. 6 and pl. 6, nos. 34-37, fig. 7 and pl. 7, both no. 45; Briggs Buchanan, *Catalogue of Ancient Near Eastern Seals in the Ashmolean Museum II, The Prehistoric Stamp Seals*, P. R. S. Moorey, ed. (Oxford, 1984), 191, 193, 194(?); Nancy Lapp, “Some Early Bronze Age Seal Impressions from the Dead Sea Plain and Their Implications for Contacts in the Eastern Mediterranean,” in *Trade, Contact, and the Movement of Peoples in the Eastern Mediterranean: Studies in Honour of J. Basil Hennessy*, Stephen Bourke and Jean-Paul Descœudres, eds., Mediterranean Archaeology Supplement 3 (Sydney, 1995), 43-51, esp. 47, 2 (Jericho, same seal as Ben-Tor above), 3 (Hazor), 4 (Beth Shean), and 5 (same seal as Ben-Tor above); Nancy Lapp, “Early Bronze Age Seals and Seal Impressions from Taanach,” in *Archaeology, History and Culture in Palestine and the Near East: Essays in Memory of Albert E. Glock*, Tomis Kapitan, ed., ASOR Books 3 (Atlanta, 1999), 151-163, esp. 158-159. Compare Byblos, M. Dunand, *Fouilles de Byblos I, 1926–1932* (Paris, 1939), pl. 133, nos. 3232, 5684; Muntaha Saghieh, *Byblos in the Third Millennium B.C.: A Reconstruction of the Stratigraphy and a Study of Cultural Connections* (Warminster, 1983), pl. 33, nos. 12613, 11298, 11572; Pierre de Miroschedji, “La glyptique palestinienne du Bronze ancien,” in *De Chypre à la Bactriane: Les sceaux du Proche-Orient ancien*, Annie Caubet, ed. (Paris, 1997), 198, fig. 10, nos. 1-4 (from Numeira, Jericho, Hazor, Beth Shean); Beatrice Teissier, *Ancient Near Eastern Cylinder Seals from the Marcopoli Collection* (Berkeley, 1984), nos. 329, 330, 339; Daphna Ben-Tor, *Scarabs, Chronology, and Interconnections: Egypt and Palestine in the Second Intermediate Period*, OBO 27 (Fribourg, Switzerland, 2007), pl. 96, nos. 9, 11, 21, 33, 36.

⁷³ A. Ben-Tor, “Glyptic Art of Early Bronze Age Palestine and Its Foreign Relations,” in *The Land of Israel: Cross-roads of Civilizations*, E. Lipiński, ed., OLA 19 (Leuven, 1985), 13 concludes, “The resemblance of the Jericho and Hazor material to the Byblian seals and impressions is so close that one should conclude either that then impressed vessels were imported from Byblos, or that they were locally impressed by imported seals”; see also fig. 20. Jacques Cauvin, *Les outillages néolithiques de Byblos et du littoral libanais*, Fouilles de Byblos IV (Paris, 1969), fig. 27, see also figs. 21-22.

⁶¹ Stan Hendrickx, “The Dog, the Lycaon Pictus and Order over Chaos in Predynastic Egypt,” in *Archaeology of Early Northeastern Africa in Memory of Lech Krzyzaniak*, Karla Kroeper, Marek Chlodnicki, and Michal Kobusiewicz, eds., Studies in African Archaeology 9 (Poznan, 2006), 735-736, 743-744.

⁶² In the mortuary temple of Sahure; see H. A. Groenewegen-Frankfort, *Arrest and Movement: An Essay on Space and Time in the Representational Art of the Ancient Near East* (London, 1951; reprint, Cambridge, Mass., 1987), fig. 4.

⁶³ Lyvia Morgan, “Power of the Beast: Human-Animal Symbolism in Egyptian and Aegean Art,” *ÄL* 7 (1997), 17-31; Lyvia Morgan, “Art and International Relations: The Hunt Frieze at Tell el-Dab’a,” in *Timelines: Studies in Honour of Manfred Bietak II*, Ernst Czerny, et al., eds., OLA 149 (Leuven, 2006), 249-258; Lyvia Morgan, “Feline Hunters in the Tell el-Dab’a Paintings: Iconography and Dating,” *ÄL* 14 (2004), 285-298; Nannó Marinatos, “The Feline Scene from Tell el Dab’a,” *Cretan Studies* 5 (1996), 127; Nannó Marinatos, “The Tell el-Dab’a Paintings: A Study in Pictorial Tradition,” *ÄL* 8 (1998), 83-99; Nannó Marinatos and Lyvia Morgan, “The Dog Pursuit Scenes from Tell el-Dab’a and Kea,” in *Aegean Wall Paintings: A Tribute to Mark Cameron*, Lyvia Morgan, ed., British School at Athens Studies 13 (London, 2005), 119-122.

⁶⁴ W. M. Flinders Petrie, *Ceremonial Slate Palettes*, BSAE 66 (London, 1953); J. Vandier, *Manuel d’archéologie Égyptienne* 1, pt. 1, *Les époques de formation: La préhistoire* (Paris, 1952), 533-550, 570-609; A. J. Spencer, *Early Dynastic Objects*, Catalogue of Egyptian Antiquities in the British Museum V (London, 1980); Béatrix Midant-Reynes, *The Prehistory of Egypt from the First Egyptians to the First Pharaohs* (Oxford, 2000), 231-250; Michael A. Hoffman, *Egypt before the Pharaohs: The Prehistoric Foundations of Egyptian Civilization* (Austin, Texas, 1991); Günter Dreyer, “Motive und Datierung der dekorierten prädynastischen Messergriffe,” in *L’art de l’Ancien Empire égyptien: Actes du colloque organisé au musée du Louvre par le Service culturel les 3 et 4 avril 1998*, Christiane Ziegler, ed. (Paris, 1999), 195-226; Bruce Williams and Thomas J. Logan, “The Metropolitan Museum Knife Handle and Aspects of Pharaonic Imagery before Narmer,” *JNES* 46 (Oct. 1987), 245-285.

⁶⁵ Petrie, *Ceremonial Slate Palettes*, pl. E and A3.

in the Middle Bronze Age,⁷⁴ when some prey animals are shown fleeing in a flying gallop.⁷⁵ Again Syria leads in this kind of imagery. The best comparanda date to Alalakh VII (17th–16th century B.C., that is before 1531 according to the low chronology),⁷⁶ and therefore contemporary to the Hyksos Period. As the people who became the Hyksos rulers of contemporary Egypt most likely originated from the realm of the northern and not the southern Levant,⁷⁷ it may be that this theme and its execution came from that area.

It is conceivable that the representations on these unusual fish bowls originated from a wall decoration programme found in a palace. To have such intrusive decorative elements on ceremonial fish bowls in the context of a palace might be an indication that indeed the producers, situated at Memphis, a long distance from the palace in the Delta, may have received an order with detailed instructions from the palace. Such transmission would imply that copies of pattern books with palatial imagery were transported to provincial pottery workshops. The lion and the domesticated animals on the “static bowl” and the leopard with the wild ungulates on the “dynamic bowl” might even be looked upon as complementary themes needed for the magic of a ritual that took place in the courtyard. The same is true for the interpretation of the date palm as a tree of life. The themes of the representations were to some extent known and varied in Egypt, but the model used can be defined in a more general way as eastern Mediterranean.

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Abstract

This article discusses several aspects of the decoration of so-called fish bowls, a typically Egyptian ceramic type that occurs in the late Middle Kingdom and the Second Intermediate Period. The find of several such bowls with rather unusual combinations of single motifs in a multiple pit system belonging to a palace of the mid- to late Hyksos Period at Tell el-Dabʿa, prompts a consideration of fringe art, which is to date a severely neglected area in Egyptian art history. These bowls represent a unique expression of fringe art embedded in an eastern Mediterranean network of art tradition.

⁷⁴ Briggs Buchanan, *Catalogue of Ancient Near Eastern Seals in the Ashmolean Museum I, Cylinder Seals* (Oxford, 1966), 175-176, pl. 56, nos. 897-898; Hicham el-Safadi, “Die Entstehung der syrischen Glyptik und ihre Entwicklung in der Zeit von Zimrilim bis Ammitaqumma,” *UF* 6 (1974), 312-352, no. 131; Claude F.-A. Schaeffer-Forrer, *Corpus des cylindres-sceaux de Ras Shamra-Ugarit et d’Enkomi-Alasia I*, Mission archéologique de Ras Shamra-Ugarit et d’Enkomi-Alasia (Paris, 1983), 14-15; Collon, “Bull-Leaping in Syria,” 81-88; Teissier, *Egyptian Iconography on Syro-Palestinian Seals*, as subsidiary scenes 13, 25, 35, 43, 133, 139, no. 144, 152, 156, 166, 182, 223.

⁷⁵ Buchanan, *Near Eastern Seals in the Ashmolean Museum I, Cylinder Seals*, no. 898; Collon, “Bull-Leaping in Syria,” pls. 1, no. 2; 2, nos. 6, 9; 3, no. 17.

⁷⁶ A detailed survey of the different chronological schemes with additional literature can be found in Regine Pruzsinszky, *Mesopotamian Chronology of the 2nd Millennium B.C.: An Introduction to the Textual Evidence and Related Chronological Issues*, CCeM XXII (Vienna, 2009).

⁷⁷ Manfred Bietak, “The Predecessors of the Hyksos,” in *Confronting the Past: Archaeological and Historical Essays on Ancient Israel in Honor of William G. Dever*, Seymour Gitin, J. Edward Wright, and J. P. Dessel, eds. (Winona Lake, Indiana, 2006), 285-293; Bietak, “From Where Came the Hyksos and Where Did They Go,” 150-151.

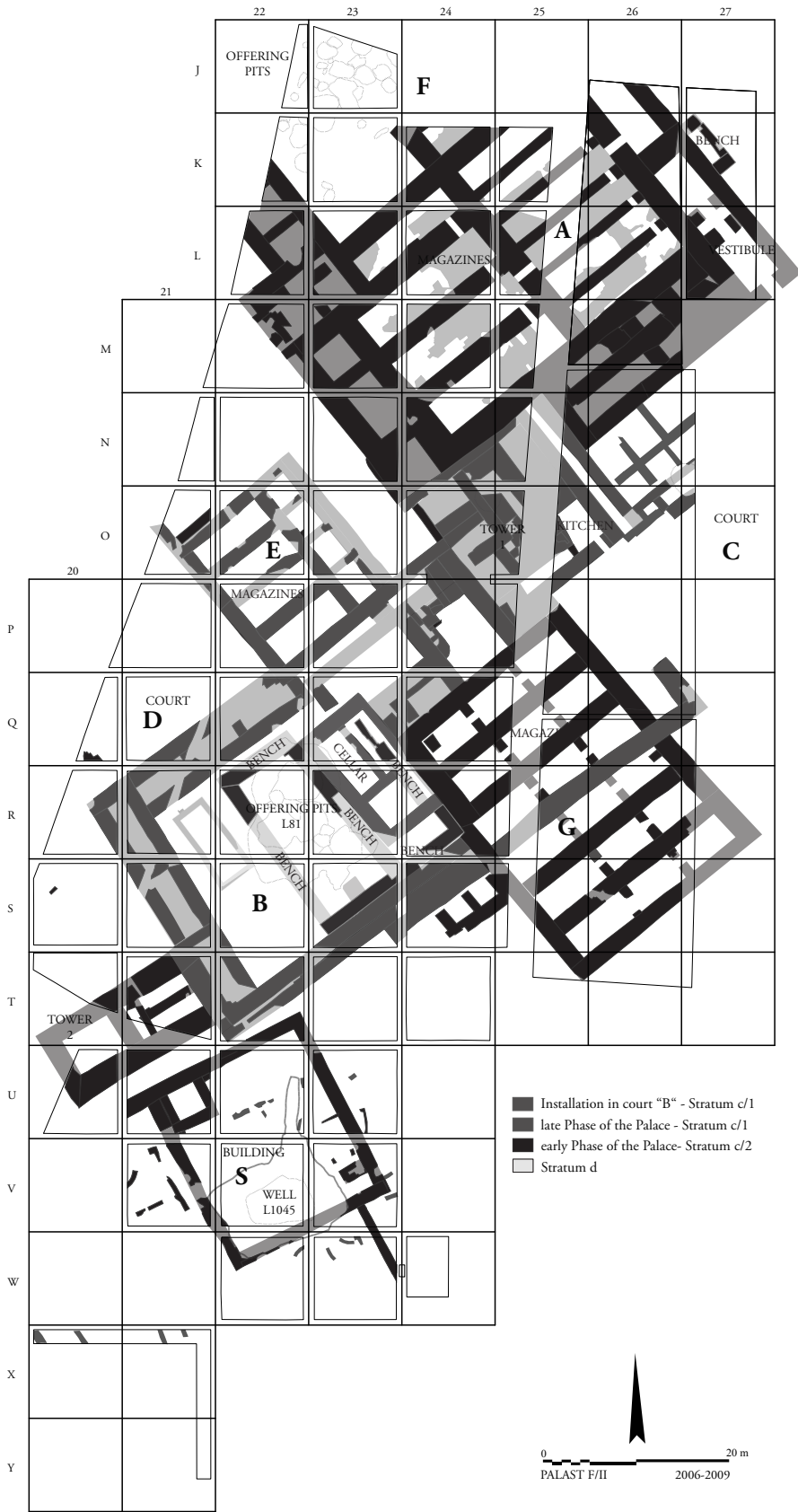


Fig. 1. The Hyksos palace, most probably to be attributed to Khayan. After Bietak and Forstner-Müller in *ÄL* 19 (2009), fig. 2

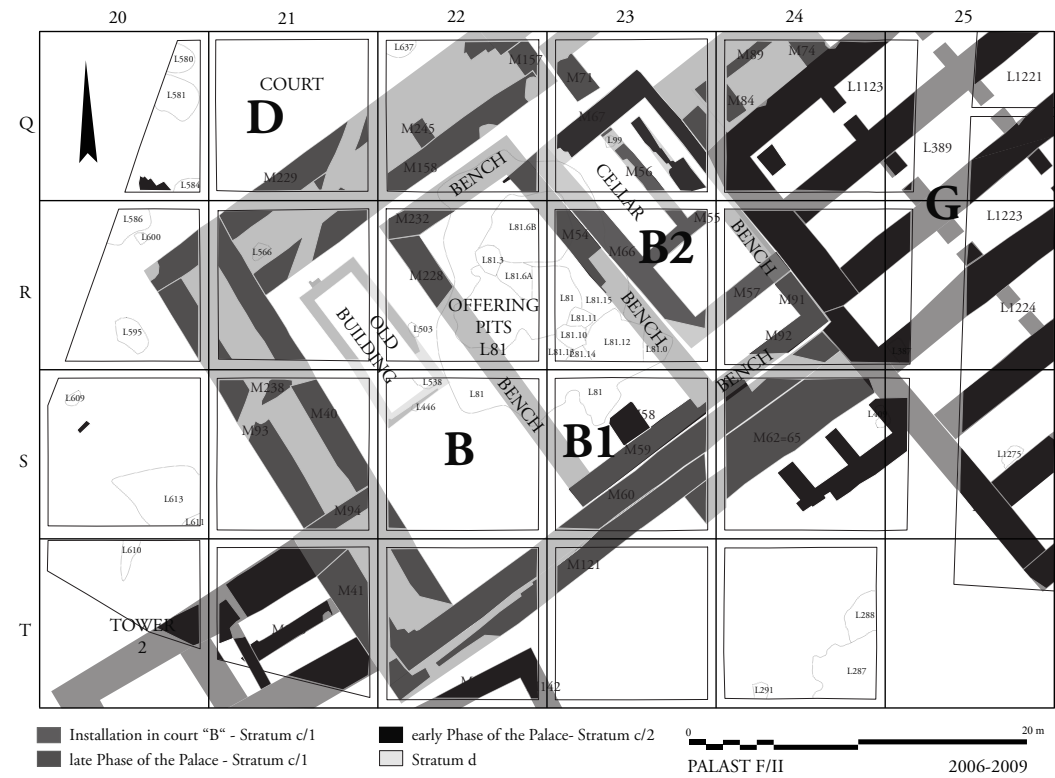


Fig. 2. Courtyard of the Hyksos palace with the offering pits, benches, and cellar indicated



Fig. 3. Offering pits (locus L81) from the Hyksos palace during excavation

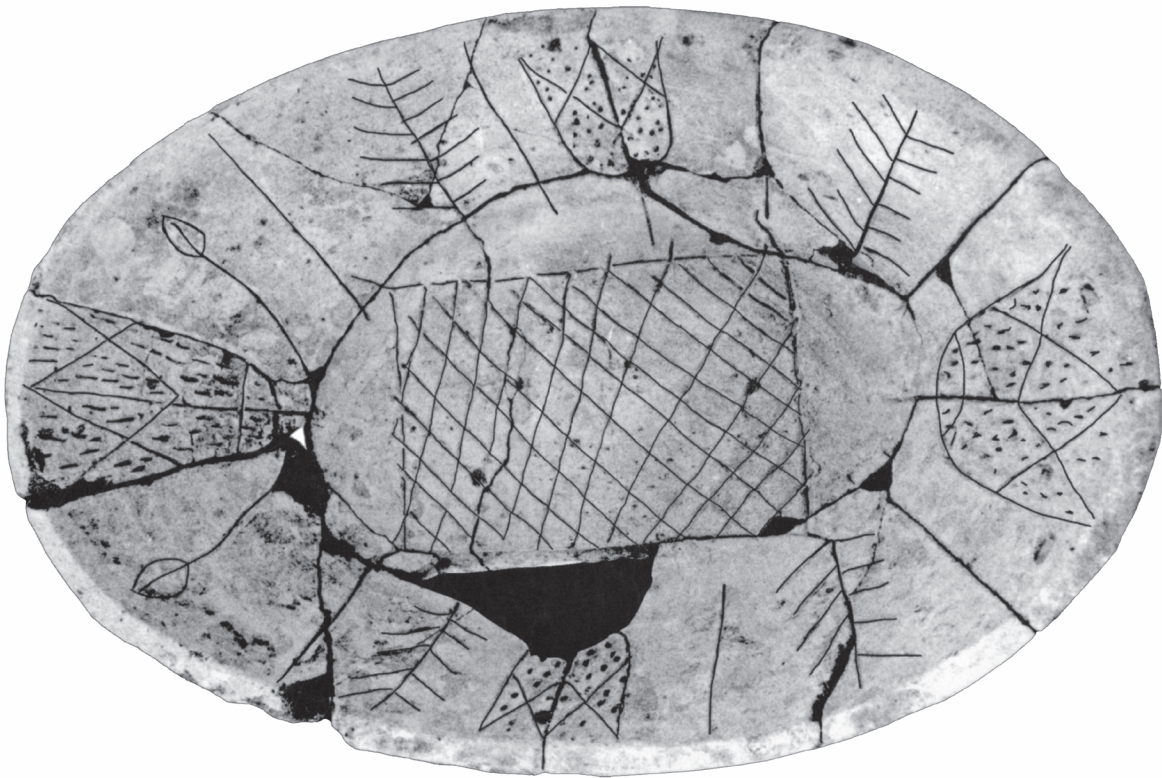


Fig. 4. Fish bowl (reg. no. 2529) from a house of phase G/3-1 at Tell el-Dab'a, with a pond or a fish net at its base, surrounded by lotus flowers and horsetail



Fig. 5. Fish bowl (reg. no. 9015M) from offering pit L81, phase early D/3 of the Hyksos palace

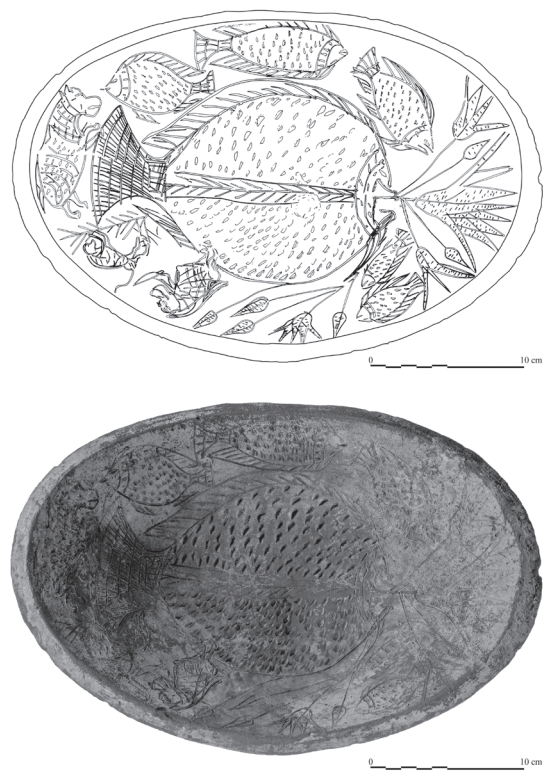
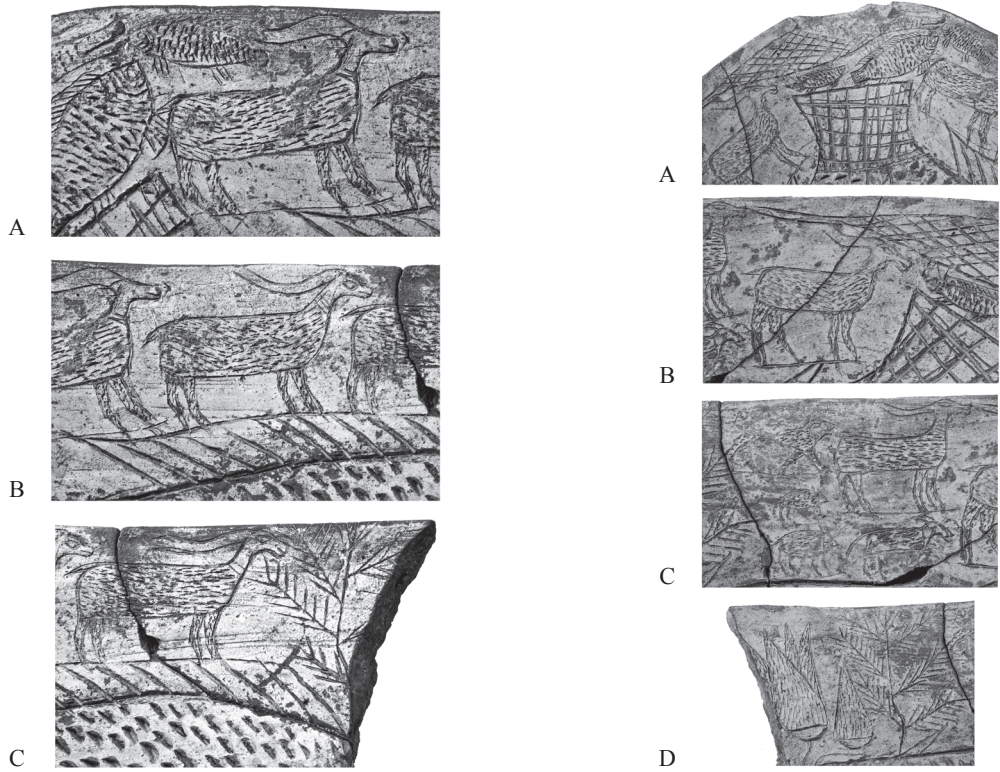


Fig. 6. The “demon fish bowl” (reg. no. 9195) from offering pit L81 of the Hyksos palace



Figs. 8-9. Details of the “static fish bowl” (reg. no. 8994C) from offering pit L81 of the Hyksos palace

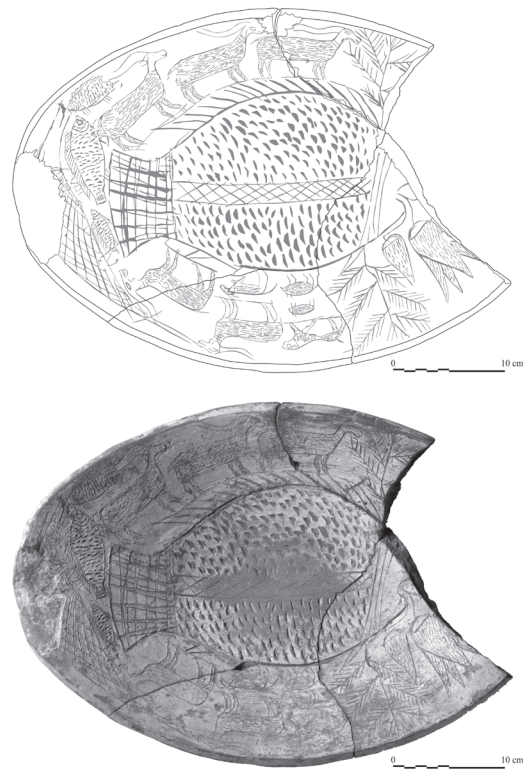


Fig. 7. The “static fish bowl” (reg. no. 8994C) from offering pit L81 of the Hyksos palace

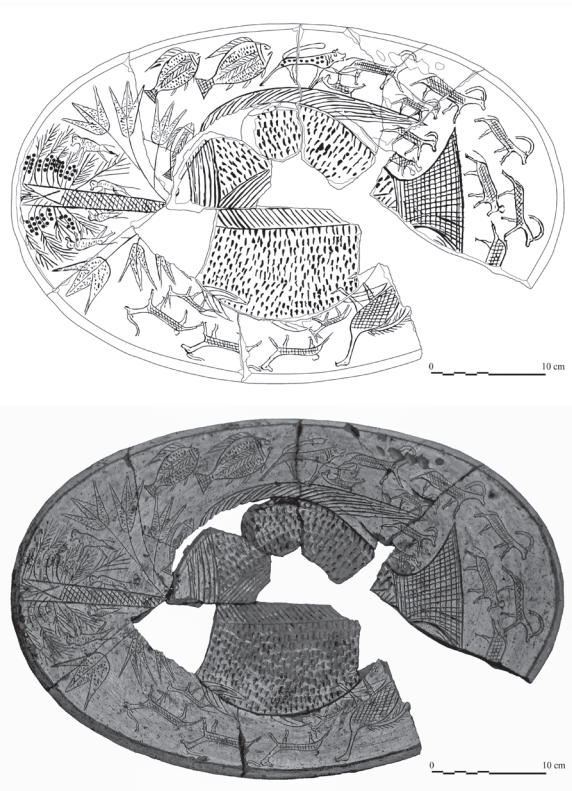
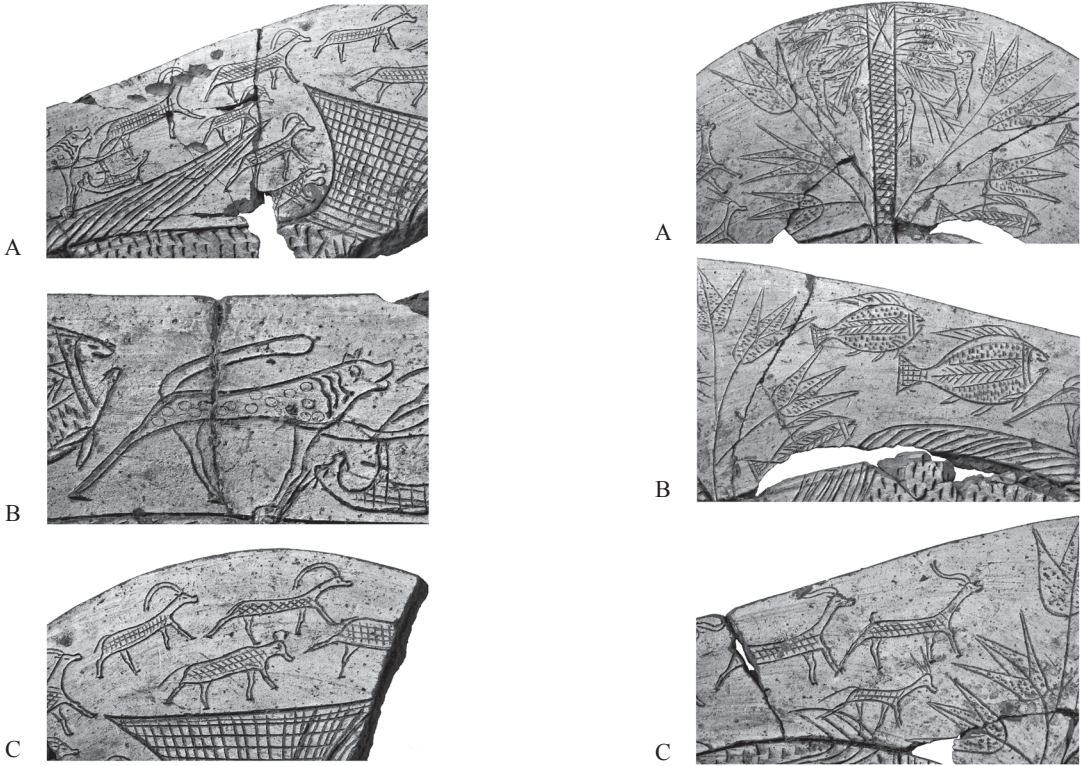


Fig. 10. The “dynamic fish bowl” (reg. no. 9000A) from offering pit L81 of the Hyksos palace



Figs. 11-12. Details of the “dynamic fish bowl” (reg. no. 9000A) from offering pit L81 of the Hyksos palace

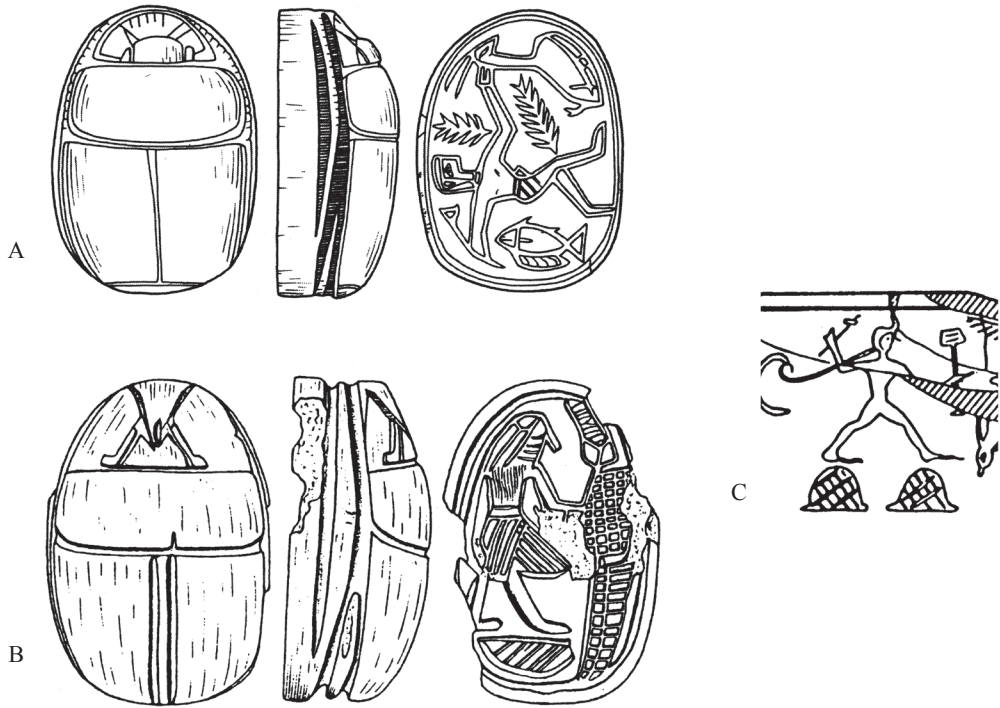


Fig. 13A-C. Seals from Tell el-Dab'a. Tilapia on a scarab combined with a striding man clubbing a goat (fig. 13A), influenced by representations of the Syrian storm god slaying a goat (fig. 13C)
Fig. 13B. Scarab with the representation of an anthropomorphic god with cross-hatched body

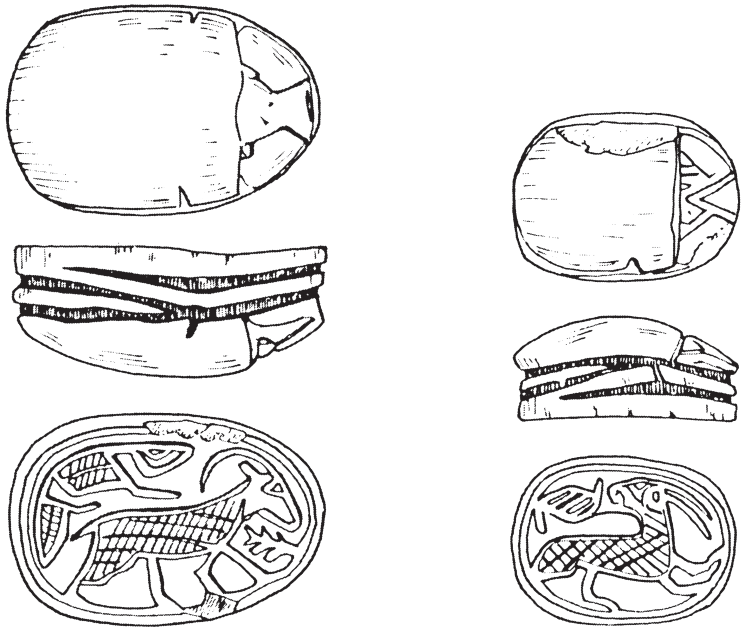


Fig. 14. Scarabs from the second part of the Hyksos Period showing ibexes, a crocodile, and a snake with bodies filled with cross-hatching similar to the animals on the “dynamic bowl”



Fig. 15. Hunting frieze on basin (no. 8886) from Akrotiri, Thera. Courtesy Christos Doumas and The Akrotiri Excavation Archives



Fig. 16. Lions hunting ibexes and bulls on a Syrian seal cylinder in the Ashmolean Museum, Oxford.
After Dominique Collon, *AL* 4 (1994), 88, pl. 3/17

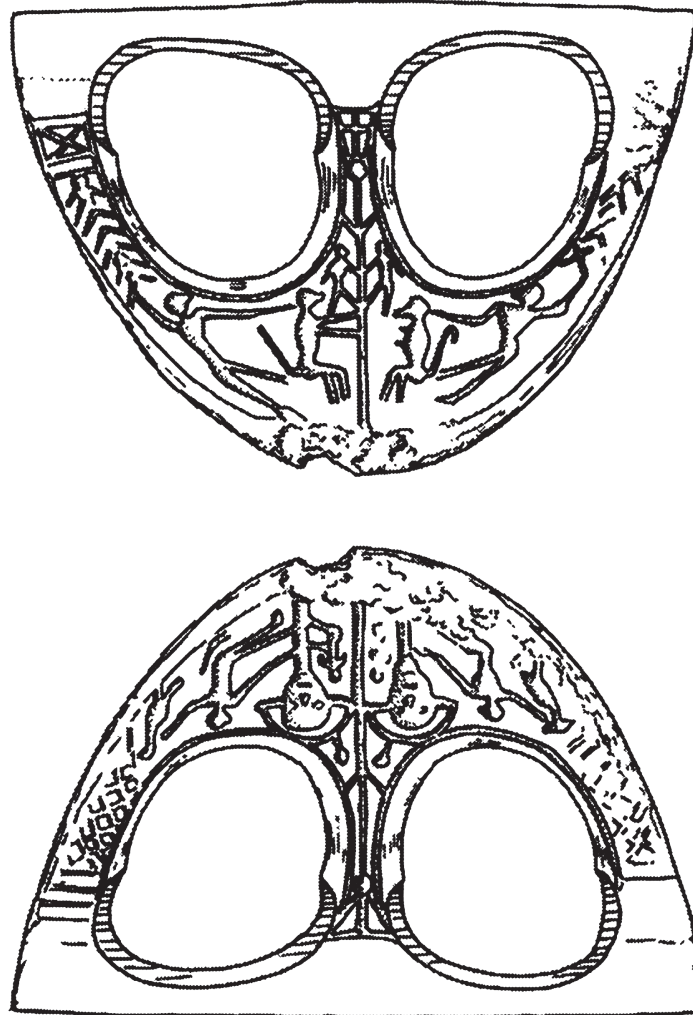


Fig. 17. Apes climbing a tree on an axe from Jericho.
After Lorenzo Nigro, *Bolletino dei Monumenti* 23 (2003), fig. 20