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JANUSZ CZEBRESZUK, MICHAŁ KOBUSIEWICZ, ALEKSANDER KOŚKO,
HANNA KÓČKA-KRENZ, MARZENA SZMYT

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Teksty angielskie

AGATA DREJER-KOWALSKA I AUTORZY

Adres redakcji

ul. Wodna 27, 61-781 Poznań
tel./fax: 0-61 852 82 51
e-mail: muzarp@man.poznan.pl

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Od Redakcji

Główne części 56. tomu „Fontes Archaeologici Posnanienses” przynoszą prace poświęcone dwom obszarom badawczym: wschodniemu Śródziemnomorzu oraz Niżowi Polskiemu. Obydwa łączy aktywność polskich archeologów, od lat z sukcesem prowadzących tam badania.

Tematem specjalnym jest zestaw artykułów skoncentrowanych na Egei oraz Egipcie, które naświetlają wybrane problemy archeologii śródziemnomorskiej. Blok tych pierwszych to głosy najmłodszego pokolenia adeptów archeologii, specjalizujących się w badaniach strefy egejskiej. Są one pokłosiem międzynarodowej konferencji studencko-doktoranckiej „Aegean Archeology Students’ Session”, która odbyła się w Muzeum Archeologicznym w Poznaniu w dniach 7-8 kwietnia 2016 r. Współorganizatorem sesji był Uniwersytet im. Adama Mickiewicza w Poznaniu. Zainteresowania młodych badaczy dotyczą przede wszystkim świata minojskiego i mykeńskiego. Uzupełnieniem tej części jest artykuł poświęcony zagadkowemu zabytkowi z Pustyni Zachodniej w Egipcie.

W dziale *Materiały* wracamy najpierw do dwóch znanych od wielu lat stanowisk wielkopolskich: Kotowa i Ciążenia. W obu przypadkach Autorzy proponują reanalizę dawnych źródeł pokazując, jak wiele nowych wiadomości można uzyskać pochylając się nad muzealnymi kolekcjami i archiwaliami. Cztery następne artykuły przedstawiają wyniki najnowszych badań, realizowanych w drugiej dekadzie XXI wieku. Cmentarzysko ludności kultury przeworskiej w Ochocicach, depozyt żelaznych wyrobów z Lubinicka, krypta kaliskiego kościoła pw. św. Wojciecha i Stanisława oraz fragment południowych fortyfikacji Poznania – to nowe źródła, które docenią zarówno archeolodzy i historycy, jak również wszyscy zainteresowani przeszłością naszego regionu i jego otoczenia.

Tom kończy dział *Varia*, w którym publikujemy sprawozdanie z działalności naszego Muzeum w roku 2019.

Marzena Szmyt

The Sistrum and its Mistress. Some thoughts about the usage of sistrum on Crete and its Hathoric associations

DAWID BOROWKA

Pani Sistrum. Kilka uwag dotyczących znaczenia sistrum na Krecie w kontekście związku instrumentu z boginią Hathor

Abstract: Most of the Egyptian objects found on Crete date back to the 18th Dynasty and confirm the intensity of communication between the elites of both centres. What happened before LM I is still rather obscure and some scholars believe that only sporadic and indirect contact occurred. The scarcity of evidence and the complexity of the problem makes it even more difficult to point out which Palatial centre was responsible for the importation of particular types of object. Recently, a significant new contribution was made to the debate by the Minoan Sistra discovered in Haghios Charalambos and Mochlos. The Egyptian influence on the production of Cretan sistra is clear as the Minoans seem to imitate the arched type of sistrum. Although the number of imports is limited, it gives insight into the development and perception of these kind of objects among the Minoan elite. The demand for this form of Egyptian material culture is additionally indicated by the depiction of sistra in Minoan art and script. The presence of the rattle in analogous cultic and magical contexts, further indicates that the Minoans were interested in the symbolic meaning of the Egyptian counterparts. In this article an attempt is made to analyze the Cretan sistra in connection to the Egyptian goddess Hathor, which goddess might have appealed to the Minoans, who worshipped a fertility goddess of their own.

Keywords: Hathor, Sistrum, Crete, Cretan Elite, Egyptian Influence, Ancient Instruments, Ancient Music

Abstrakt: Odkryte na Krecie przedmioty egipskie, z których większość datowana jest na czasy XVIII dynastii, świadczą o istnieniu ożywionych kontaktów pomiędzy elitami obu ośrodków. Okres poprzedzający epokę późnominojską LM I jest wciąż słabo poznany, co skłania niektórych badaczy do stwierdzenia, że kontakty te były sporadyczne. Niedostatek źródeł i złożoność problemu znacznie utrudniają wskazanie ośrodków pałacowych odpowiedzialnych za import poszczególnych typów przedmiotów. W ostatnim czasie nowy, istotny wkład do debaty nad tym zagadnieniem wniosły sistra minojskie odkryte w Haghios Charalambos i Mochlos. Egipski wpływ na produkcję sistrów kretańskich jest wyraźnie widoczny, gdyż Minojczycy wytwarzali je na wzór sistrum łukowego. Mimo że liczba zarejestrowanych do tej pory importów jest niewielka, daje ona podstawę do nakreślenia obrazu rozwoju tych instrumentów i sposobu ich wykorzystywania przez minojskie elity. Na zapotrzebowanie na tę formę egipskiej kultury materialnej wskazują także przedstawienia ikonograficzne sistrów w minojskiej sztuce i w piśmie. Obecność grzechotek w kontekstach związanych z kultem i magią dodatkowo potwierdza zainteresowanie Minojczyków znaczeniem symbolicznym ich egipskich odpowiedników. W niniejszym artykule podjęto próbę analizy kretańskich sistrów w odniesieniu do egipskiej bogini Hathor, która mogła oddziaływać na wierzenia kretańczyków czczących własną boginię płodności.

Słowa kluczowe: Hathor, sistrum, Kreta, elity kretańskie, wpływy egipskie, starożytne instrumenty, starożytna muzyka

The latest discoveries at Pylos, including a pendant bearing the likeness of Hathor and a carnelian seal depicting the motif of two Minoan genies¹, have expanded our catalogue of objects from the Aegean that testify to links with Egypt. While the associa-

tion of the so-called Minoan Genius to the Egyptian hippopotamus-goddess Tawaret has already been satisfactorily explained (Weintgarten 1991; 2000; Krzyszkowska 2005; Phillips 2008a: 156-167). Hathoric elements in the Aegean are still waiting for similar elaboration. Sir A. Evans was the first to notice common elements in the religious customs of the Minoan and Egyptian elites². He believed that

¹ The excavations at Pylos are conducted by the University of Cincinnati. More information about the recent finds the photos are available at the website of the university [access date-02.01.2020]:https://www.uc.edu/news/articles/2019/12/n20880507.html?fbclid=IwAR0v0xaL_pIpqq0tZEi-1UP1quKUf0FJBVSAts4kR0HgFyHGtZfnR5tYv0A.

² N. Marinatos (2009; 2010; 2017) offers the summary of theories of Arthur Evans regarding religious interconnections with Egypt.

Bronze Age Crete was associated with Egypt much more than with other Mediterranean cultures. He noted the adaptation of many symbols which had Hathoric associations. According to A. Evans, the cult of the Knossian elite was associated with *Wazet*; which, according to his findings, was a form of the goddess Hathor (Evans 1935b: 554). In his opinion, such elements were present in the iconography of the snake-goddess, peacock plumes and rich festoons on depictions of griffins, as well as in the faience reliefs from the Temple Repositories of the palace (Evans 1921: 509; 1930a: 51-57; 1930b: 480; 1935b: 464, 756, 914). Some of these elements like the distinctive Hathoric “side-locks” or “curls” could have been transferred to the island indirectly through Anatolia or the Middle East, where similar elements also existed (Evans 1932: 419-421; 1935b: 481-482). This indebtedness of Minoan cult to Egyptian religion, with an emphasis on the solar elements, has also been noticed by other scholars, most elaborately by N. Marinatos (Banou 2008; Marinatos 2009; 2010: 38, 58, 64-67, 102-111, 129-130; 2017; MacGillivray 2012: 125-126). Hathor as a deity also had strong ties to solar mythology, as can be seen in her name³ and iconography⁴. Therefore, the appearance of her cult can be seen as a part of a bigger process, connected with the adaptation of Egyptian and/or Near Eastern solar symbolism on Crete. Other elements of her cult potentially attractive to Minoans were connected with fertility, music, dance and indulgence. In this article, I would like to analyze whether these Hathoric aspects are apparent in the case of the sistrum. The appearance of this instrument on Crete during the MM IA period might have been a key factor in their development, and act as evidence of their simultaneous appearance on Crete. The term Hathoric when used in this article, will be understood as a trait, either in the material culture, or in religious customs, that connect Bronze Age Crete with the worship of Hathor, as known in Egypt.

³ The name Hathor (hwt-hr) is usually interpreted as ‘House of Horus’, emphasizing the relation to the sky god Horus. According to D. Basson “It could also again refer to the solar link, because the house could signify the sky, thus the house of the falcon (Horus)”- Basson 2012: 4.

⁴ In all iconographical representations (except those front-facing) goddess has a solar disk atop of her head. More in Hart 2005: 61-65; Basson 2012: 3.

The Sistrum as an exemplification of different functions of goddess Hathor

These Hathoric scenes and symbolisms, present in a variety of objects analyzed by Evans, might be even better exemplified by the appearance of a sistrum - the musical instrument closely connected with the goddess Hathor, her son *Ihj* and a variety of rituals of Egyptian elite⁵. Most objects of this type have been found on Crete after A. Evans had worked on this topic, and may provide additional support for his theses regarding elements associated with the goddess Hathor on the island. In Egypt Hathor through other deities had a solar aspect, while maintaining her functions connected with sex, sexuality and fertility (Hart 2005: 61-65; Basson 2012: 1-25). The connection with the sistrum derives from her role as a patron-goddess of music, dance and other indulgences (Bleker 1973: 56-57; Graves-Brown 2010: 114, 167; Basson 2012: 17). Her priestesses used the instrument during a ritual dance performed in the temple in front of the statues of the deities (Pawlicki 1974: 12). According to H. Hickmann (1961: 46), its sound was a signal to start the individual parts of the rites. A painting from grave No. 51 (fig. 1) in the Theban necropolis shows women shaking sistra next to people planting shrubs, which alludes to the fertility aspect of the goddess Hathor (Hickmann 1961: 6; Pawlicki 1974: 13). G. Roeder and L. Troy emphasize that the privilege of playing the sistrum in the most important cult rituals dedicated to Hathor and other deities was reserved for princesses and women of royal blood (Roeder 1956: 462; Troy 1986: 83-88). Depictions of *iHwy* (or *iHy*), a category of male priests of Hathor, playing sistra have also been found, suggesting that the instrument was not only reserved for women⁶. According to C. J. Bleker (1973: 53) dance and music were a significant part of the cult of Hathor because of the state of euphoria it could produce. The dance connected with the music was designed to put its participants into a state of “drunkenness”, that was induced by the sound of the instrument. This euphoric state was itself a tribute to the goddess, and a way to keep her satisfied and “drunk” through music (Bleker 1973: 57).

⁵ In the later periods as an effect of religious syncretism, the sistrum was also connected with other deities like Isis and Bastet - See Pawlicki 1974; Hart 2005: 47, 77-78.

⁶ A well preserved depiction of such priests has been discovered in the tomb of Antefoqer and Senet (TT 60) in the Theban Necropolis. For more information about *iHwy* (or *iHy*) and their depictions see Loyd 2012: 120.



Fig 1. The detail of the painting from Ouserhat tomb (TT51) Theban Necropolis showing women shaking sistra. After Hickmann 1961:6#26

The symbolic significance of sistrum in Egypt is well illustrated in *The Story of Sinuhe* (also known as *Tale of Sanehat*)⁷, which is dated to approximately the same time that the instrument reached Crete⁸. The hero named in the title of this text returns to Egypt after a forced escape. In his homeland, Sinuhe is welcomed at the royal court by princesses playing the sistra, after which Pharaoh, as the representative of the god Atum, restores his Egyptian status. We read:

Then brought them their necklaces, their rattles and their sistra, and presented them to His Majesty: Thy hands be on the Beauteous one, O enduring King, on the ornament of the Lady of Heaven. May Nub give life to thy nose, may the Lady of the Stars join herself to thee. Let the goddess of Upper

Egypt fare north, and the goddess of Lower Egypt fare south, united and conjoined in the name of Thy Majesty. May the Uraeus be set upon thy brow. Thou hast delivered thy subjects out of evil. May Re, lord of the lands, show thee grace. Hail to thee, and also to our Sovereign Lady⁹.

This story symbolically refers to the cosmic alliance of Atum and Hathor. As has been noticed by A. Gardiner this part of the story is “dominated by one idea, namely that the performer is Hathor, the goddess of song and dance, who bestows her favours on the prince before whom the performance takes place” (Gardiner 1916: 100). Evidence for this regenerative quality of the sistrum was the preeminent aspect of this class of object. The inscription from Menkheperasomnba’s grave mentions a group of musicians shaking sistra, allowing the deceased to receive Amun’s invigorating breath (Davies, Davies 1933: 14, pl.17). This funeral aspect of the goddess is underlined by the fact that sistra were used during funeral ceremonies (Spencer 2003: 114-115; Hart

⁷ The story is known from a variety of sources, including the Berlin Papyri nr 3022. More about this remarkable work of ancient ‘literature’ in Derchain 1970, Nagy 1977: 54, Parkinson 1999. The English translation used by the author comes from Gardiner 1916 and Lichtheim 1973: 3 222-235.

⁸ The action of the *Story of Sinuhe* takes place in around 2000 B.C., which corresponds to the late Prepalatial period on Crete.

⁹ English translation after Gardiner 1916: 175#270.

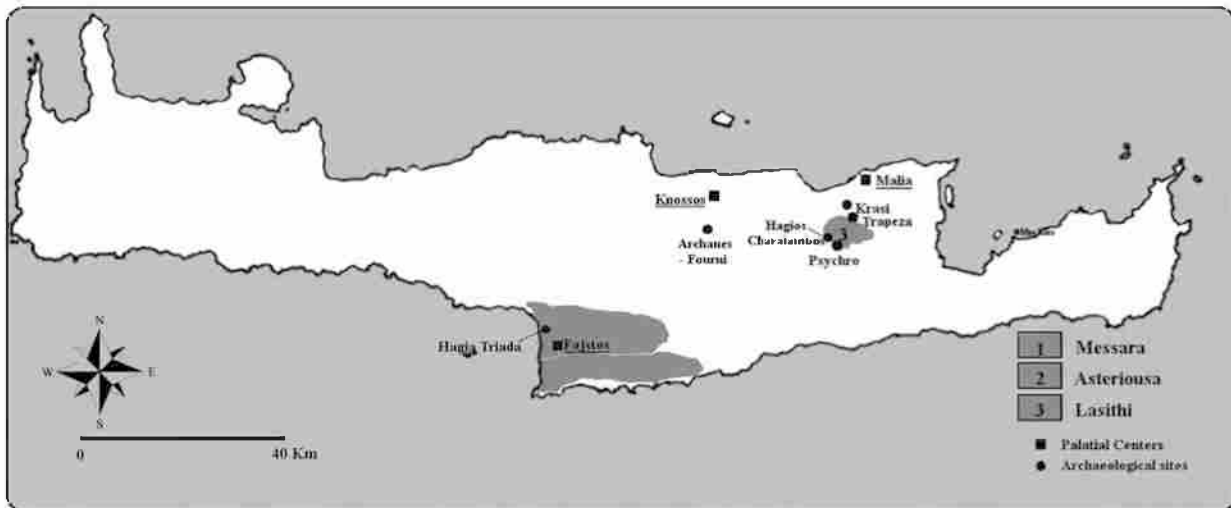


Fig 2. Distribution of sistra and sistrum depictions on Crete. Map by the author (based on a sketch from Phillips 2008a)

2005: 63; Manniche 2005: 13-19). This is evidenced by imagery extending from the Old to the New Kingdom, including a depiction of Akhenaton's children shaking the sistrum found in the burial space of Tell el-Amarna¹⁰, or the sistra shakers from the Niu-netjer's tomb in Giza (Junker 1951: Abb. 44; Spencer 2003: 114). The cult significance of the sistrum is also evidenced by the custom of placing the instrument in the furnishings of elite tombs¹¹.

In Egypt, we also find other depictions of the sistrum that offer further insight into the multiple aspects of the goddess Hathor. Different researchers have claimed that sistrum-shaped capitals of columns were designed to ward off evil and sadness, and served as an inaudible tribute to the apotropaic function of Hathor (Hickmann 1961: 150, Daumas 1967: 312). At the beginning of the Second Intermediate Period, a variety of statues depicting people wielding sistra started to appear in Egypt (Vandier 1949: 73; Clere 1969: 2). According to Vandier, these figures were commissioned by private individuals and placed in temples. Such a monument was intended to be an expression of special piety, thanks to which the donor could receive a blessing from Hathor (Vandier 1958: 211).

In consequence of its multi-purpose nature, the sistrum was an exemplification of the multi-faceted

goddess Hathor, who was arguably¹² the most important of the female deities in Egypt. The rattle, just like the goddess, performed multiple functions in Egyptian beliefs. Hathor "personified effervescent divine life and passion", and the sistrum was a "tool" used to propagate these aspects to the word of mortal humans (Bleker 1973: 57). The links between the instrument and the Egyptian elite are well documented. While analyzing the role of sistrum in Crete, it is more than likely that the sistrum first appeared on Crete as part of this "cultural package".

The appearance of the sistrum on Crete and its connection with Egypt

The sistra found in Crete (see fig. 2 for the distribution) have so far been published in excavation reports and articles (Raab 1988; Sakellarakis, Sapouna-Sakellarakis 1997; Betancourt, Muhly 2006; Betancourt 2011; Soles 2005: 433; 2008; 2011; Brogan 2013). J. Soles undertook a summary of the types of sistrum found in Crete, while J. Younger wrote about the sounds produced by the instrument (Younger 1998: 38-41; Soles 2011). Additionally, Minoan seals and sealings with motifs depicting objects thought to be in the form of sistra have been found in Archanes, Mikro Vouni (Samothrace) and

¹⁰ I am thankful to prof. Sławomir Jędraszek of the University of Gdańsk for his helping me to find adequate depictions from Tell el-Amarna.

¹¹ A perfect example comes from the pyramid complex of the Amenmhat I. See Hayes 1953: 248. See also the sistrum of pharaoh Teti – Hayes 1953: 125.

¹² This type of evaluation is certainly subjective, and open to criticism. The importance of deities in Egypt changed, sometimes drastically, over time. According to some Hathor was important but not more than other goddesses. According to C.J. Bleker (1973: 160), who analyzed the variety of aspects of the goddess, she was the most important.

Table 1. Sistra and sistrum depictions analyzed in the article

Site	Type of Object	Context	Selected Previous Publications
Archanes - Phourni	Bone baton with sealings that constitutes early Cretan script- the so called "Archanes Script". One sealing depicts an arch sistrum and an animal.	Building 6. Room 3- EM III-MM IA	Sakellarakis 1965: 177-180; CMS II.1 #391n; Yule 1981: 170; Decorate 2018: 344, fig. 2# Y5
Archanes- Phourni	Single clay, arch- type sistrum. Preserved with three discs.	Burial Building 9. MM IA	Raab 1988; Sakellarakis, Sapouna-Sakellarakis 1997: I:325,328-329; Karetsou <i>et al.</i> 2000: 267#265; Phillips 2008b: 35#53
Hagia Triada	Two parts of the handle of an arched type sistrum made of bronze. Archaeological Museum in Heraklion- catalog. number - 1234	Villa. The room that had probably served as a sacristy. LM I	Halbherr, Stefani, Banti 1977:74-75; Brogan 2013: 15-23
Hagios Charalambos	Six arch- type sistra made of clay of in various states of preservation and six sistrum discs.	Burial Cave. MM IA-II	Betancourt 2011: 3, fig.3; Betancourt 2014: 69-73#96-109
Krasi	Two sistrum discs.	Tholos Tomb. Precise context is unknown	Marinatos 1929: 122, fig. 15:45
Malia	Partially preserved three-sided prism of bronze steatite. An object, reminiscent of an arched-type sistrum is placed as a decorative motif along the axis of the prism. Two other objects (probably branches) flank the instrument.	Malia- Pediados. MM IIB	CMS II.2#134c; Younger 1998: 76#57
Mikro Vouni (Samothrace)	Sealing on a clay roundel depicting an object resembling an arch sistrum placed along with agrimi.	Unspecified. Middle Bronze Age	CMS Vsuppl.1B: #322; Younger 1998: 78#63
Mochlos	Bronze sistrum of the arched type. Well preserved - only the top part of the loop having been mended from several fragments.	House 3.C - pit underneath the floor of a room. LM I	Soles 2005: 433, pl.99f; Soles 2008; Soles 2011: 133-141
Trapeza	One discoidal object- a possible sistrum disc.	Cave. Undefined context.	Pendelbury, Pendelbury, Money-Coutts 1935-1936: pl.19
Hagia Triada	Vessel (the so-called Harvester Vase) made of black steatite in an ostrich egg-shell shape. Only the neck and upper part of the body are preserved. The scene decorating the latter shows a marching troop of men carrying three-pronged forks and following a leader. The second group is led by a sistrum player followed by three singing figures.	Villa. Room 13. LM I.	Savignoni 1903; Forsdyke 1954; Warren 1969: 176; Higgins 1981: 154; Preziosi, Hitchcock 1999: 118-119; Blakolmer 2007; Rumpel 2007

Malia (CMS V Supp.IB: no. 322, CMS II.1: no. 391n, CMS II.2: no.134c). A list of the objects under study is presented in the table (table 1) and distribution map (fig. 2)¹³.

The typology of Egyptian sistra created by F. Petrie constitutes the first attempt to classify

Egyptian objects of this type (Petrie 1940). As later noted by F. Pawlicki this typology had many inaccuracies, based as it was on only a limited amount of objects, which constituted its main drawback (Pawlicki 1974: 7). Currently, Egyptian sistra are divided into two basic types: arch (or loop) and naos types (Farmer 1957; Hickmann 1961; Pawlicki 1974; Soles 2011). This division existed also in ancient Egypt, where the arch sistrum was known as

¹³ The table does not mention clay tablets with Linear A and B signs resembling the shape of a sistrum. These signs are listed in Younger 1998: Plate 25, Betancourt, Muhly 2006: figs. 3-7.

sekhem(*šhm*) or iba (*ib*) and the naos type as *seshet* (*sššt*)¹⁴. The commonly used named “sistrum” is a derivative of the Greek word 'σειστόρον', which means “rattle”. On Crete, no imported examples of either type have been found. The Egyptian genesis of the first locally-made clay examples is therefore questionable. Since the first Cretan sistra had an arch-shaped loop (or frame), it was generally assumed that Egyptian arch sistrum was the main inspiration¹⁵ (Mikrakis 2000; Betancourt 2011; Soles 2011). All early Cretan examples (fig. 3: 1) represented a similar type, measuring from 16-18 cm in length. The handle and loop were made of one piece of clay. On both sides of the loop, there are two or three joints, through which wooden „rods” were placed. Two or three clay discs were placed on these bars, which made a sound when shaking the rattle.

Cretan sistra and the Egyptian connection

According to J. Soles, the genesis of the sistrum on Crete might be connected with the process of “stimulus diffusion” as described by A. Kroeber. According to this theory, it was the “idea” of the sistrum, rather than the actual object, which was exported to the island (Soles 2011: 141). Is it possible, then, that the instrument attracted the Minoans because of its religious (Hathoric) significance? Certainly, religious or cult/magical meaning does not exclude the utilitarian function of the instrument. Given the prestigious nature of Egyptian finds from the late Prepalatial period, early imported sistra were probably few (Sherratt, Sherratt 1991; Watrous 1998; Colburn 2008). It is possible that, according to the hypothesis of the Sherratts, the number of such objects found in archaeological contexts is disproportionate to their social or political significance (Sherratt, Sherratt 1991). The preceding sentence is incomprehensible. Additionally, because the first sistra were produced at the very same time when a great wave of Egyptian

imports reached Crete it is more than likely that Minoans had owned Egyptian sistra¹⁶.

All the earliest examples of the sistrum, dated to MM IA- MM II were found in burial contexts (see fig. 2 for distribution map). The first and most likely the oldest known example comes from Burial Building 9 (fig. 3: 1) in Archanes-Phourni (Sakellarakis, Sapouna-Sakellarakis 1997: I: 325,328-329; Karetsou *et al.* 2000: 267 no.265). Six further examples of analogous type (fig. 3: 2, 3) come from the Hagios Charalambos burial cave (Betancourt 2011: 3, fig. 3; Betancourt 2014: 69-73#96-109). Two sistrum discs found by S. Marinatos in the Krasi tholoi, might have come from the same class of object, thus from approximately the same period (Marinatos 1929: 122, fig. 15: 45).

The appearance of the first sistra on Crete coincides with the intensification of foreign contacts with Egypt and/or the Levant, which occurred during that period (Watrous 1998; Manning 2010: 114-120). In the late Prepalatial period (EM III-MM IA) stone vessels and scarabs began to be imitated, mainly in the Mesara region and the Knossos area (Phillips 2008a: 80-89; Borowka 2018). Additionally, examples of adaptations of Egyptian iconography have been found in various parts of the island, such as the images of a sphinx, a cat in a Nilotic landscape, the goddess Tawaret, Bes/ Beset or Crouching Baboons (Karetsou *et al.* 2000: 56#30-31 57#33, 304#296; Pareja 2015: 41-54; Krzyszkowska 2016). The previous Cycladic traditions in stone-vessel making are replaced by new ones. The new materials including hippopotamus ivory, blue frit and faience are used in the production of local goods (Panagiotaki 2000; Krzyszkowska 1986: 163-171; Panagiotaki, Tite, Manitis 2015). This process in all probability was linked to the new activity of the Cretan elite which put emphasis on seafaring (Broadbank 2000: 285). According to I. Schoep this gradual adaptation and/or adoption of foreign elements “should be understood as relating to the social and political change on Crete”¹⁷ and is more than likely connected with the rise of the first palaces in MM IB. Minoan elite groups from that time might have used these

¹⁴ Sekhem (*šhm*) also meant “divine power” or “power”, while *seshet* (*sššt*) is derived from the verb „to make sheesh” (*ari seshsh*) which was an onomatopoeic term for cult activities. More in Hickmann 1961: 39; Pawlicki 1974: 8. The transliteration after A. Gardiner 1927: 534.

¹⁵ Sistra produced in Mesopotamia at that time had an open-loop and their shape was less likely to be the inspiration for the Cretan class. The loops of Anatolian sistra also had different shape. Examples of Mesopotamian sistra are mentioned in Pawlicki 1974: 11.

¹⁶ More in the text below. For the overview of the subject see also Watrous 1998; Manning 2008: 114-120.

¹⁷ After Schoep 2006: 50.

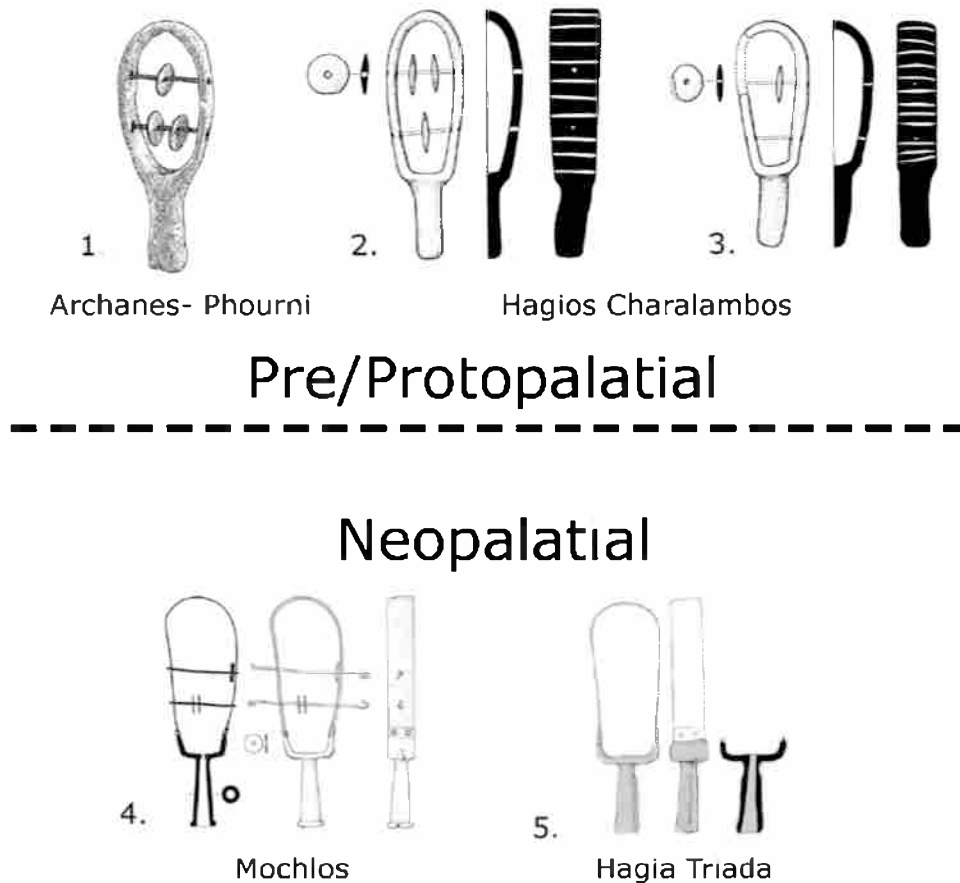


Fig 3. Examples of sistra found on Crete in Pre/ Protopalatial and Neopalatial contexts. Archanes- Phourni after Phillips 2008b: 302#53; Hagios Charalambos after Betancourt 2011: 3, fig.3; Mochlos after Soles 2011: 136, fig.14.3 (drawing- D.Faulmann); Hagia Triada after Brogan 2013: 18, fig.3.5

foreign elements to legitimize their own supremacy, through the imagery and religious customs of the well-established Egyptian elite. C. S. Colburn proposed that the earliest of these “exotica”, might have been used as emblems by members of the earliest Cretan elite groups (Colburn 2008).

The earliest examples of sistra (fig. 3: 1-3), placed in the final resting place of possible elite group members should, therefore, be interpreted as evidence of social stratification. Certainly, some level of social organization was needed to obtain them, and their symbolic value might have been the factor that was decisive in placing them in burials. As has been mentioned before, the custom of placing sistra in tombs was very much at home in Egypt¹⁸, therefore the Cretans might have consciously chosen to

do the same with their instruments. Additional evidence for this deliberate, “elite” deposition, comes from other “Egyptianizing” objects found alongside the sistra in Archanes-Phourni and Haghios Charalambos (fig. 4), namely figurines of single or double crouching baboons¹⁹ (Phillips 2008b: 302 no.54, 55; Betancourt 2011: 2, fig. 1-2). The shape of these figurines, as well as the bright colour of the raw materials from which they were made, indicate that they were imitating the Egyptian baboon deity Hedj-wer²⁰ (*ḥd-wr* -) known as „the Great White One”. Figurines of this god, which have been found in Egypt had a form and shape similar to the examples from Crete. Hedj-wer (and later Toth) was a de-

¹⁸ A perfect example comes from the pyramid complex of the Amenmhat I. See Hayes 1953: 248. See also the sistrum of the pharaoh Teti – Hayes 1953: 125.

¹⁹ The oldest figurines of this type, found in the region of Mesara can date back to the times of EM III. Examples are listed in Karetsou *et al.* 2000: 184#172, 172#153, 174#157, 184#171.

²⁰ Examples of Egyptian figurines of similar type Petrie 1902:25, Karetsou *et al.* 2000: 169#149.

ity responsible for the contact with noble, deceased ancestors (Quirke 2001: 47-48, 64 ill. 25; Barbash 2013: 34-46; Pareja 2015: 51-54). Members of the early Minoan elite might have been attracted to the role of Hedj-wer as the messenger of the dead, who was used to legitimize the power of newly-elected rulers (Barbash 2013: 45). This is confirmed by the burial context of the sistra coming from Haghios Charalambos and Archanes-Phourni. Members of the Minoan elite could thus distinguish themselves from the rest of society, and perform a kind of self-categorization. Also, Minoans could be interested in solar connotations which baboons had in Egypt. Just like sistrum these apes were identified with concepts of renewal and rebirth, which seemed to particularly interest Minoans (Quirke 2001: 47-48, 64 ill. 25; Barbash 2013: 34-46).

Another link between Egyptian and Minoan usage of sistra comes from the fact that in both places the instrument was used in funerary ceremonies (Sakellarakis, Sapouna- Sakellaraki 1997: I: 325,328-329; Karetsou *et al.* 2000: 267#265; Betancourt 2011). Since the goddess Hathor had a function as a funerary deity, the sistrum from the Old Kingdom onwards is known from depictions where sistrum players along with dancers and singers are shown performing during funeral processions at the entrance to the tomb (Spencer 2003: 115). These performances were usually arranged by the so-called *hnr* – a group of professional musicians and dancers that were attached to important places of cult, including temples and cemeteries (Nord 1981, Anderson 1995: 2563; Spencer 2003: 115). It is rather unlikely that a similar elaboration in practice was undertaken on Crete during that period. The meaning behind the sound created by sistra, however, might have been similar in both places: providing rejuvenation for the deceased and serving as a tribute to a deity. In this case, the Minoan elite would have had to adapt traits of the goddess Hathor to the cult of their fertility goddess. This type of religious syncretism is very difficult to prove, since the amount of sistra found on the island is rather limited. Some indirect evidence for the aforementioned syncretism come from the so-called “Archanes-Script”, which is a group of seal impressions, constituting predecessor of the Cretan Hieroglyphic Script, dated to the

Late Prepalatial period (Sakellarakis 1965: 177-180; CMS II.1 #391n; Yule 1981: 170; Decorte 2018: 344, fig. 2 no. Y5). One of the sealings (fig. 5: 2) from that group depicts an arch sistrum, resembling the actual instrument known from that period. Archanes script, although still deciphered, most likely mentions word JA-SA-SA-RA-ME- the possible name of the Minoan goddess, which also appears in the so-called “Libation formula” (Karetsou, Godart, Olivier 1986, Younger 1998: 75). The placement of a sistrum in this group perhaps confirms its cult relationships at that time, and connection to the Minoan deity. The sistrum is depicted as slightly bent, and, due to lack of space on the surface of the seal, it did not have a handle. The shape of the loop, nevertheless, resembles the loops of the clay arch sistra found in Archanes and Haghios Charalambos. Depictions of a similar type of object were also found on a Minoan sealing found in Mikro Vouni (Samo-thrace) and a seal from Malia (fig. 5: 1, 3; CMS V Supp.IB: no.32;2; CMS II.2: no.134c).

The Egyptian arch sistrum might not have been the only type of this instrument that was in use on Crete. It is possible that during Late Prepalatial/Protopalatial period Minoans possessed knowledge of a variety of sistrum types. This is suggested by signs occurring in the Cretan Hieroglyphic and Linear Scripts. Besides the sign of the arch type sistrum known from the clay tablets found in Tyliossos and Hagia Triada, one sign (57) of the Cretan Hieroglyphic Script, represented a key type sistrum (Evans 1909: 169 no 97a., CMS XI#12, Olivier, Godart 1996; Younger 1998: 80). This sign appears on a series of clay tablets and dishes in Knossos and Malia, as well as on eight seals from that time. According to J. Younger, yet another type of sistrum is depicted on sign 181, which was later passed on to become signs in Linear A and B script (Olivier, Godart 1996; Younger 1998: 80). The knowledge about the instrument in the Cretan society, could thus have gone beyond the evidence of the actual finds. It is possible that Minoans assigned a syllabic value to the instrument. The MM IA period seems to be the most important in establishing the symbolic and sociological value of the instrument on Crete.

The arch sistrum survived the MM period and was still used by the elite in the Neopalatial period.

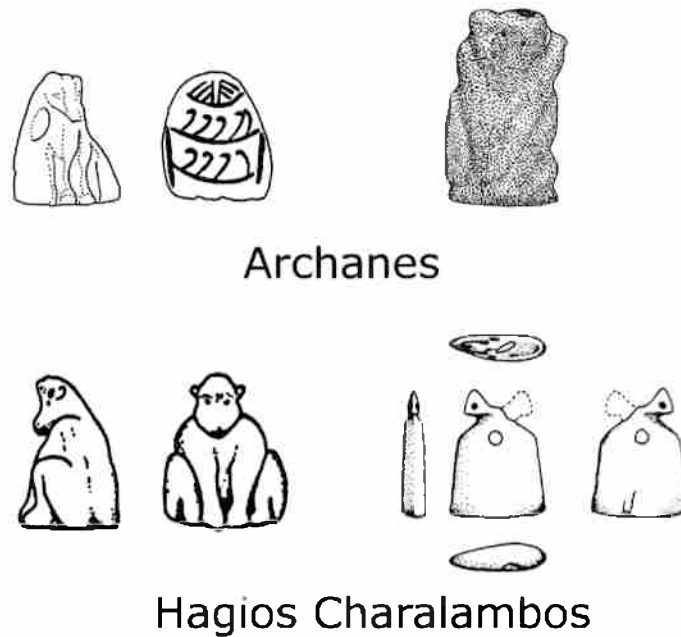


Fig. 4. Figurines of crouching baboons, found in Archanes-Phourni (Burial Building 9) and Hagios Charalambos. After Phillips 2008b: 302#54-55 and Betancourt 2011: 2, fig.1-2



Fig. 5. Examples of arch sistrum depictions from the Middle Minoan Period. 1. Mikro Vouni (Samothrace) – After CMS V Supp.IB:#322, 2. Archanes – Phourni – after CMS II. 1:#391n, 3. Malia- after CMS II.2:#134c

The manufacturing technique on the island had changed. In this period instrument was made of bronze. The handle and loop were smelted separately and then joined with rivets. The bars were bent at the ends and when shaking the instrument moved together with the metal disks that were placed on them. Two arch sistra of this kind have been found. The better-preserved example was found in Mochlos (fig. 3: 4), in a workshop where luxury metal objects for the Minoan elite

were made (Soles 2011: 135). Two parts (fig. 3: 5) of sistra of analogous type have been found in the Royal Villa of Hagia Triada (Brogan 2013: 15-23). It is from the same building that we have, the only known depiction of how the sistrum was used at that time. It comes from the relief scene placed on the unique vessel, known as the “Harvester Vase” (Savignoni 1903; Forsdyke 1954; Warren 1969: 176; Higgins 1981: 154; Preziosi, Hitchcock 1999: 118-119; Blakolmer 2007; Rumpel 2007).

“Harvester Vase” sistrum player – the case for Egyptian influence

The sistrum and its symbolic significance were established on Crete before the Neopalatial period. It is only during that time, however, that we find the most remarkable depiction of its use. The instrument is being shaken by a rather peculiar looking figure on the relief scene of the so-called “Harvester Vase” (fig. 6; 7; 11): a vessel the shape of which imitates closely the ostrich egg-shell rhytons, known from Egypt²¹. The sistrum player is depicted among a group of 27 people, most of whom carry a hoe. The group is led (or followed?) by a figure often known as “The Leader” (see below- fig.11), who is distinguished, by the long- hair and a scaly cloak he is wearing. Behind the sistrum player, there is a group of three singers, wearing long robes. The procession (or ceremony) depicted on this famous stone vessel, has been the subject of many analyses. Interpretations of a variety of scholars have suggested the scene shows a processional dance, the triumphal homecoming of warriors, a sowing festival, a ‘harvest’ ceremony or a propagandistic depiction of forced labor (Savignoni 1903; Forsdyke 1954; Warren 1969: 176; Higgins 1981: 154; Preziosi, Hitchcock 1999: 118-119; Blakolmer 2007; Rumpel 2007). Currently, most agree that the scene somehow relates to agriculture, either harvesting or sowing and ploughing. As it was noted by J. Soles, the sole use of sistrum suggest that the ceremony had more to do with planting rather than harvesting (Soles 2011: 141). The sistrum, because of its connection with the goddess Hathor in Egypt, and the Minoan fertility goddess on Crete, was rather promoting the fertility of the land. The music of the instrument, therefore served as a request for the success of the labor.

The Hathoric aspect of depiction is further supported when we take a look at part of the scene where one of the ‘harvesters’ is stooping or stumbling (fig. 6). This figure according to J. Forsdyke “is said to be one of the harvesters who is fallen in his drunkenness” (Forsdyke 1954: 2). The towering figure of a man, who has turned backwards, has an open mouth and is either shouting at the “drunk harvester” or gives further directions to the closed-

mouthed harvesters, who stood behind him. These type of indulgences were also common during the various of celebrations of the goddess Hathor in Egypt. According to C. Graves-Brown alcohol intoxication was a key feature of the Hathor cult (Graves-Brown 2010: 168). Goddess was known sometimes as the “Lady of Drunkenness”, and celebrated during the “Festival of Drunkenness” (Roberts 1995: 13; Graves-Brown 2010: 168; Basson 2012: 18-19). The “holy intoxication”, that was applied by the participants of these events was bringing them closer to Hathor and strengthened the relationship between the goddess and her worshippers. It is not that far-fetched to assume that a similar intention drove the stumbling figure from the “Harvester Vase”

Since the discovery of the vessel, some effort has been devoted to the iconography of the figures depicted on the vase. “The Leader” (fig. 11) is usually thought to be an authoritative, priest-like figure. He is wearing a distinctive tasselled garment that finds parallels on seals found on Crete as well as in Ebla in Syria (Evans 1921: 680, fig. 500 no.i; Jones 2019: 266-269). He was likely a member of the elite which was using the depicted procession/ ritual for the legitimization of their supremacy or an existing order of things. The similarity to figures from Ebla should not be surprising since similar types of ceremonies were organized by other elites in other parts of the Mediterranean, including contemporary Egypt and the Near East.

The relationship to the Egyptian ceremonies, especially the cult of goddess Hathor, is quite well emphasized when we take a look at the part of the relief, depicting the sistrum player and the three singers (fig. 7). This part of relief has never been thoroughly analyzed, although the “shamanistic” aspect of the player was recently suggested by K.A Kolotourou (2012: 213-214). A. Evans suggested that the player might be an elder member of the Cretan priest-class and compared the facial features of the depicted man to the portrait head, found on a seal from the “Little Palace” (Evans 1935a: 218). The sistrum player is usually described as wearing a kilt, sideburns (or beard) and short cap or hair. His posture is taken as an indication of obesity (Evans 1921: 84; Younger 1998: 39). Scholars, while describing the scene also

²¹ For more about the adaptation of the ostrich egg-shell shape see Sakelarakis 1990; Phillips 2008a: 148-152.



Fig. 6. Detail of the 'Harvester Vase' relief. The intoxicated man is stooping or stumbling on the ground. Heraklion Archaeological Museum – HM 184. Source: https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Harvester_Vase,_steatite,_Agia_Triada,_1450_BC,_AMH,_145139.jpg. Photo by Zde. Modification by the author

noticed that the appearance of the sistrum shaker is rather unusual and it does not find any direct analogies on Crete²². The three singers placed behind the sistrum player also have an unusual appearance. Because of their feminine features, they were considered by some to be women or eunuchs (Evans 1928a: 47; Forsdyke 1954: 1-2; Younger 2007: 4). The type of long robe they are wearing, in fact finds its best parallel on the Hagia Triada sarcophagus, where is worn by both males and females. However the lack of the full image of the singers on "Harvester Vase" makes the comparison theoretical.

The figure of a sistrum player remains our best evidence on how the sistrum was used on Crete, at least during the Neopalatial period. The sis-

trum depicted is of the arch type, and according to T. Broogan might be the one that was found in the same "royal" villa in Haghia Triada (fig. 3: 5)²³. The "Egyptianizing" aspect of sistrum player is, however, emphasized not only by the use of sistrum. The similarities between "Harvester Vase" sistrum player and Egyptian sistrum players are seen in a variety of features, namely headwear, the position of the body as well as the garment worn. It is worth taking the effort to analyze these depictions to find further connections to Egyptian customs.

The headwear worn by the sistrum player from the "Harvester Vase" differs from the other figures depicted. The most common type, worn by the "harvesters" consisted of a cap worn on a presumably

²² The sistrum player, although not clearly obese has been compared to the two votive figurines depicting men of similar 'pudgy' posture and wearing a similar kilt. One figurine was found in Tylissos, other has no context. See Verlinden 1984: nos.30, 31.

²³ The preserved parts of the sistrum handle have not been published as such by the excavators. M. Wiener and T. Broogan identified the parts of the sistrum in 2006. The reconstructed sistrum is now exhibited in the Archeological Museum of Heraklion (catalogue number: 1234). See also Broogan 2013.

bald head. Then there is the “Leader” (fig. 11) who wears his hair long, and a group of three singers with curly, yet not fully uncovered hair. The sistrum player wears a short, round wig/ cap, that leaves the ears uncovered and ends above the shoulder. J. Forsdyke considered it to be a cap resembling the *tutulus* worn by Roman Priests (Forsdyke 1954: 1). Chronologically closer analogies are found, however, in Egyptian iconography. The type of wig (or cap), worn by the Hagia Triada sistrum player was in fact at home in Egypt. Besides musicians it was worn by elite women and men during the Old and Middle Kingdom as well as in the Late Period (Robins 1999: 64). This type of wig is found worn by the priests of Hathor (*ihwy*), in the Theban tomb (fig. 8) of Antefoker and Senet (Lloyd 2012: 120). The priests of this class were known to dance and clatter castanets in honour of the goddess (Oesterley 1923: 60).

Another good example comes from the tomb of Niunetjer in Giza (Junker 1951: Abb.44; Spencer 2003: 114-115). The scene (fig. 9) depicted shows a group of dancing players (*ib3wt*) accompanied by three singers (*ḥswt*), who rhythmically clap their hands. Together they formed a group called a *ḥnr*, which was known for performing during important festivals and funerals. Spencer notes that the group consisted of musicians and dancers who were usually hired by the local authorities (Spencer 2003: 115). Initially, *ḥnr* members were most likely exclusively female. Towards the end of Old Kingdom, male performers start to be depicted as well (Nord 1981: 29-38).

Besides wearing the same type of a short wig, the player on the ‘Harvester Vase’ seems to be in a similar position to the ‘sistrum dancers’ from Niunetjer tomb (fig. 7; 10 and fig. 11 for close comparison). The arm he uses to hold the instrument is bent at the height of his neck and just like his Egyptian counterparts, he leans backward. The kilt he is wearing is just like the kilts of the *ib3wt*, which allowed him to make more and energetic complicated movements. It is likely that just like them he was in act of dancing while playing the instrument. This would allow the sistrum player to put himself in the euphoric state, which would serve as a tribute to the Minoan fertility goddess, keeping her satisfied and indulged through music. As has been mentioned before, the very same custom was undertaken in the celebra-

tion of Hathor in Egypt (Bleker 1973: 53). The exact movement of the ‘Harvester Vase’ player is, unfortunately, difficult to establish, since the lower part of the vessel is not preserved.

Another analogy between these two depictions comes from the fact of placing three singers next to the sistrum players. In Giza just like on “Harvester Vase” they seem to be depicted in a row, most likely singing some sort of harmony or parallel octaves (Younger 2007: 4). According to J. Younger, it is probable that on Crete, just like in Egypt the music used low, closely spaced tones with an interval of the fourth (Younger 1998: 2). The musical arrangement of festivals and other cultural events might have had the same form.

The sistrum player and accompanying singers might tell us even more about the nature of the Minoan scene itself. In Egypt, professional musicians, forming a *ḥnr*, were hired by the local elite, who were delegating them to temples, funerary estates and significant burial places like tombs or cemeteries (Spencer 2003: 114). If we assume that the musicians from the ‘Harvester Vase’ were indeed a quasi-entertaining group or similar, we would have further proof of the direct involvement of the elite in organizing and maintaining communal events on Crete. These festivals, just like their Egyptian counterparts, would be responsible for legitimizing the “natural” order of things, and (through the religious apparatus) reassuring the position of the members of the elite members. The sistrum player and singers might have been professionals who were under the jurisdiction of the local authorities, represented probably by “The Leader” (fig. 11). N. Marinatos, considered “Leader” to embody “the divine and secular authority as a leader of the harvest procession, similar to the Egyptian Pharaoh involved in the feast of Opeth” (Marinatos 2010: 22). Similar schemes were also prevalent throughout the Near East (Keel 1978: 278-279). The sistrum player, through his playing, might have been serving the Minoan fertility goddess, whose approval was necessary both for the local rulers as well as the ‘harvesters’. His identification as a priest is questionable, since we do not possess a sufficient number of comparable depictions from Crete. In Egypt, headwear and garments of a similar kind



Fig. 7. Detail of the 'Harvester Vase' relief. Sistrum player is followed by a group of three singers. Heraklion Archaeological Museum - HM 184. © albertis-window.com (<http://albertis-window.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/05/Screen-Shot-2017-05-03-at-8.50.09-PM.png>). Modification by the author.



Fig. 8. Depiction of the Priests of Hathor found in the tomb of Antefoker and Senet in Thebes (TT 60). © www.osirisnet.net (Courtesy of Dr Thierry Benderitter)

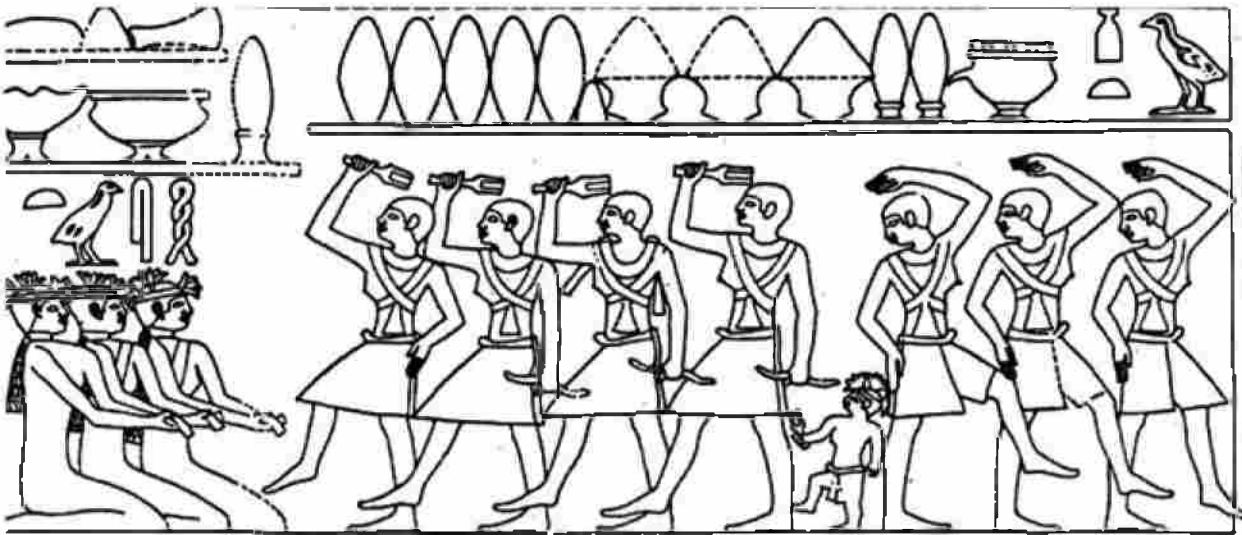


Fig. 9. A detail from the relief scene from the tomb of Niunetjer in Giza (After Junker 1951:Abb.44)

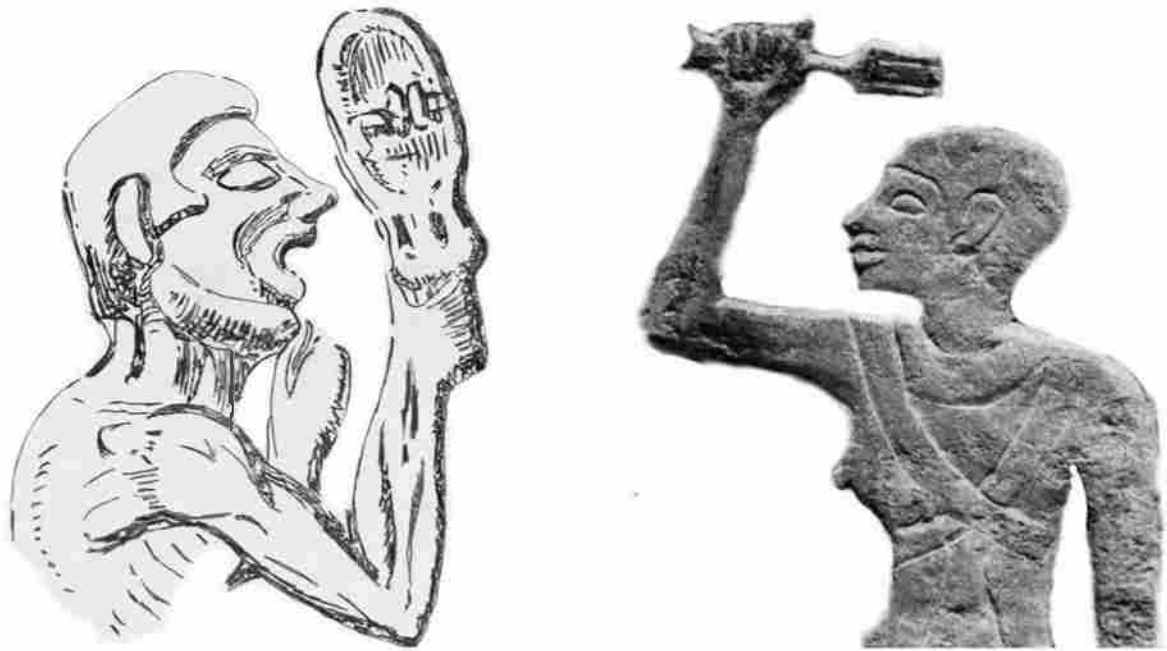


Fig. 10. Comparison of the "Harvester Vase" and sistrum shaker from tomb of Niunetjer in Giza. Drawing and editing by the author



Fig. 11. Detail of the 'Harvester Vase' relief showing the so-called "Leader". Photo by the Author. Heraklion Archaeological Museum – HM 184. Source: https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Harvester_Vase,_steatite,_Agia_Triada,_1450_BC,_AMH,_145138.jpg. Photo by Zde. Modification by the author

were worn by both male and female musicians, members of the elite and their servants (Hickmann 1961: 24-27; Robins 1999: 56, 59 fig. 1, 68 fig. 6). At the same time as the “Harvester Vase” was made, a class of male Hathor priests in Egypt were known wearing similar type of wigs (Oesterley 1923: 60; Loyd 2012: 120). Although they were known to play the castanet sistrum, no depiction of them playing an arch sistrum is known. A suggestion that one of them might have come to Crete to participate in the local festival seems a bit far-fetched. However, taking into consideration the discovery of a statuette of User²⁴ in Knossos, we cannot preclude the presence of the real Egyptians, performing functions at the elite courts of Crete.

Egyptian or not, the placement of the sistrum player on “Harvester Vase” scene in itself suggests that the Minoan’s own fertility deity might have adapted the features of Hathor, and was celebrated by using the same instrument, which was creating a similar type of a sound. This depiction, as well as the two bronze arch sistra found in Mochlos and Hagia Triada, further prove the continued existence of the instrument since MM IA, and its connection to the Minoan elite in Neopalatial Period.

Conclusions

On Crete the sistrum is most likely to have had rigidly elite connections. Geographic distribution suggests that the instrument was used by members of the elite group from the Mesara region as well as the Knossos area and perhaps Malia²⁵. The first clay arch sistra, most likely imitations of the Egyptian arch sistrum, have been found in burial contexts in the north-eastern part of Crete (Archanes – Phourni) and the burial cave of Hagios Charalambos. The appearance of these objects in the Late Prepalatial/MM IA period is likely to be connected with the first wave of Egyptian imports to Crete. Just like the imported and imitated Egyptian scarabs and

stone vessels, they could have been adopted as emblems by the early members of the Cretan elite, who could have used them as markers of their social ranking (Colburn 2008). In later periods, although their construction became more advanced, the basic “Egyptianizing” form of the loop remained the same. This is proven by the sistra found in LM I contexts in Mochlos and in ‘royal’ villa of Hagia Triada, which according to their finder were produced and manufactured for the use of the contemporary elite. The appearance of sistrum signs in Cretan Hieroglyphic Script as well as Linear A, suggest that the Minoans (most likely the wealthiest) might have begun to assign a syllabic value to the instrument.

Besides the instrument itself, it was the symbolic significance of the sistrum that interested Minoans. The first clay sistra that were found in Archanes and Hagios Charalambos, according to their finders were used in funeral ceremonies, which relates to the function of the goddess Hathor as the protectress of the dead in Egypt. Another analogy comes from “Harvester Vase” relief scene, where sistrum is shaken as a tribute to her, and as a request for the success of the labour undertaken. This Hathoric influence is further proven when one takes into consideration usage of the sistrum symbol in the so-called “Archanes-Script” where the word JA-SA-SA-RA-ME- the possible name of the Minoan goddess is mentioned. The adaptation of Hathoric traits by the Minoan elite could be partially explained when one considers the role that the deity had in Egypt. The Pharaoh’s wife and the queen mother were her high priestesses and the goddess had the attribute of being the nurturer of the sun and the king. The etymology of Hathor means ‘House of Horus’, which had a strictly royal association and suggests that she was the protectress of king and his palace. N. Marinatos²⁶ has already proved that many solar elements connected to both Egyptian and Near Eastern religions were influential in the formation of the religion of the Cretan elite (Marinatos 2010: *passim*). Therefore, we cannot preclude that it was this aspect of the goddess, as well as her connection with fertility, that drew the Minoans to the items used for her worship in Egypt. Evans, who analysed the objects which he found in Knossos, therefore

²⁴ Some scholars thought that the statuette is evidence for the presence of User on Crete. Others thought that it might be a robbed tomb statuette that came on Crete as an import. See Evans 1899-1900: 27; Evans 1921: 286-290, fig. 220; Pendelbury 1930: #29, pl. II: 29; Ward 1961: 27-29; Pomerance 1973: 25-26; Panagiotaki 1999: 254; Karetsou *et al.* 2000: 61-62#39.

²⁵ This interpretation might be supported by the depiction of a sistrum on a seal from that site. See CMS II.2#134c; Younger 1998: 76#57.

²⁶ For further references see Marinatos 2009; 2010 and 2017.

might have been very prophetic in his assessments regarding the goddess worshipped in Knossos. She indeed might have been connected to Hathor, and celebrated through very same means, one of them being the music of sistrum. This, of course, does not preclude the existence of elements of other deities, perhaps of Near Eastern and Anatolian origin which might have inspired the ways the Minoans perceived their own goddess.

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Pani Sistrum. Kilka uwag dotyczących znaczenia sistrum na Krecie w kontekście związku instrumentu z boginią Hathor
Streszczenie

Tematem artykułu są sposoby wykorzystywania i symbolika sistrum na Krecie epoki brązu. Szczególną uwagę zwrócono na egipskie związki instrumentu z Hathor i możliwą adaptacją części wierzeń z nią związanych na Krecie. W artykule pod uwagę wzięto konteksty archeologiczne kretańskich sistrów, przedstawienia sistrów w ikonografii minojskiej (gliptyce), a także obecność symboli przypominających egipski instrument w pismach kretańskich (Kretańskim piśmie hieroglificznym, Piśmie Linearnym A oraz tzw. Piśmie z Archanes).

Artykuł okraszony jest wstępem, w którym autor odwołuje się do szeregu znanych zabytków analizując przy tym obecny stan badań dotyczący wpływów egipskich na Kretę minojską. Przywołuje jednocześnie stosunkowo dobrze poznane przykłady egipskich zapożyczeń w ikonografii Krety epoki brązu. Stwierdza, że wpływ kultu bogini Hathor na minojską elitę wciąż nie został dokładnie wyjaśniony. Następnie przechodzi do części artykułu, w którym wyjaśnia rolę sistrum, jako egzemplifikacji różnych funkcji bogini Hathor w starożytnym Egipcie. Powołuje przy tym na dobrze rozpoznane źródła ikonograficzne z Egiptu a także na źródła pisane (tzw. Historia Sinuhe).

W kolejnej części artykułu analizowana jest geneza pojawienia się sistrum na Krecie, związana prawdopodobnie z importem szeregu egipskich klas przedmiotów na wyspę pod koniec okresu Przedpałacowego (okres ŚM IA). Autor bierze pod uwagę kontekst archeologiczny najstarszych sistrów na Krecie z Archanes Fourni i Agios Charalambos a także odnalezione wraz z nimi figurki kucających małp, być może reprezentujące egipskiego boga Hedj-wera. Stawiana jest teza dotycząca sposobu wykorzystywania instrumentu w obrzędach funeralnych, który zdaniem autora podobnie jak sam instrument również

mógł zostać zaczerpnięty z Egiptu. Na koniec autor odwołuje się również do nielicznych przedstawień sistrum łukowego znanych z minojskiej gliptyki oraz fakcie wykorzystywania hieroglificznego znaku sistrum we wczesnych pismach Kreteńskich. W ostatniej części artykułu autor skupia się na analizie sistrów łukowych znanych z Okresu Młodszych Pałaców. Stawiana jest teza o ścisłych związkach instrumentu z minojską elitą. Szczegółowo przeanalizowana jest reliefowa scena umieszczona na tzw. Wazie Żniwiarzy, odnalezionej w tzw. królewskiej wili w Agia Triada. Autor szczególną uwagę kieruje na postać muzyka potrząsającego sistrum oraz towarzyszącym mu trzem śpiewakom. Czynności wykonywane przez muzyka, podobnie jak sama procesja umieszczona na wazie porównywana jest z rytuałami egipskimi ku czci bogini Hathor, których stałym elementem było wykorzystywanie charakterystycznej grzechotki. Dzięki odnalezionym analogiom z ikonografii egipskiej i źródeł pisanych stawiana jest teza o możliwych adaptacjach cech bogini Hathor na Krecie oraz jej związkach z kreteńską boginią płodności. Tekst wieńczy krótkie podsumowanie, w którym autor dokonuje kompilacji tez stawianych w artykule.

Author/Autor:

mgr Dawid Borowka, Uniwersytet Gdański, Wydział Historyczny, Instytut Archeologii i Etnologii,
ul. Bielańska 5, 80-851 Gdańsk,
davidborowka@gmail.com, ORCID: 0000-0003-0135-8074