CHAPTER THREE
THE EGYPTIAN, PSEUDOEGYPTIAN AND EGYPTIANIZING MATERIAL

1. EGYPTIAN MATERIAL IN THE MEDITERRANEAN SPHERE

Egyptian manufactures achieved an extraordinarily wide range of distribution during the first millennium B.C., reaching the furthest corners of the Mediterranean world. Their distribution, however, was not uniform. It varied in time and above all in space.

Finds of course have been most numerous in the regions immediately adjoining Egypt, especially in the cities of the Phoenician coast and the interior of Syria and Palestine, which had had direct relations with Egypt since the remotest antiquity. Thus Egyptian products appear in the regions of the Mediterranean Levant from the earliest dynasties onward, and even in pre-dynastic times. In the centuries that followed relations with Egypt were not only commercial but also political. On more than one occasion the Pharaohs extended their protectorates or even their direct rule over these countries. It goes without saying that this influence has shown itself in the quantities of Egyptian material found in Syria and Palestinian deposits. Egyptian relations with the Levant followed a normal course during the first millennium, and Egyptian manufactures were still pouring in up to the Saite period and even beyond, though in these later times there were of course interruptions due to political events.¹

Two developments of a political kind channelled Egyptian manufactures into countries further east than Syria. First, there was the systematic large-scale looting by the troops of the Assyrian Empire, the victims of which were the small Phoenician, Syrian, and Palestinian

states. Their cities and palaces were sacked and their treasures carried off as booty to Assyria. Among them, of course, were products of Egypt.\(^2\) Secondly, the Persian Empire, by its political unification of the Near Eastern world, made it possible for Egyptian manufactures to reach its furthest corners.\(^3\)

One place in the eastern Mediterranean is of special importance for the quantity of Egyptian manufactures found there. The island of Cyprus was colonized at one time both by Phoenicians and by Greeks. It appears that the Bes cult made a particular impact on this island, which as we know from Herodotus was brought under Egyptian rule by Amasis in the sixth century.\(^4\) From Cyprus in recent years there has been a constant flow of Egyptian archaeological finds.\(^5\)

In Anatolia Egyptian material appears rather sporadically, both in the interior of the plateau and in the Greek cities of the Aegean coast, especially Ephesus. Its character is also very disparate, from the typical scarabs to Greek dedications inscribed to Egyptian deities.\(^6\)

The records we have from Greece, the islands of the Aegean, and Crete, are relatively numerous, but here too their heterogeneous character must be emphasized. We find ourselves in fact in a world which has assimilated Egyptian beliefs, incorporating them in its own civilization, so that there are frequent dedicatory inscriptions to Egyptian deities, temples consecrated to them, Hellenized names incorporating divine references, Greek statues of Egyptian gods or priests or simple worshippers. Manufactures of a characteristically Egyptian kind are also most abundant.

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\(^3\) This is the case, for instance, with an alabaster jar manufactured in Egypt, with one hieroglyphic and three cuneiform inscriptions in the name of the "Pharaoh", Artaxerxes, which was found in a Sarmatian "kurgan" in Orsk, U.S.S.R.: Savelieva, *XXIX* C.I.O., *Égyptologie*, 2, pp. 92ff.

