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Four Bes Vases from Tell el-Herr (North-Sinai): Analytical Description and Correlation with the Goldsmith's Art of Achaemenid Tradition

Catherine Defernez

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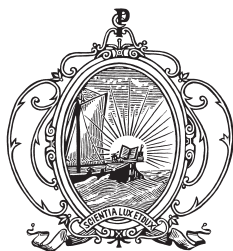
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UNDER THE POTTER'S TREE

Studies on Ancient Egypt
Presented to Janine Bourriau
on the Occasion of her 70th Birthday

edited by

DAVID ASTON, BETTINA BADER, CARLA GALLORINI,
PAUL NICHOLSON and SARAH BUCKINGHAM



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FOUR BES VASES FROM TELL EL-HERR (NORTH-SINAI):
ANALYTICAL DESCRIPTION AND CORRELATION WITH THE
GOLDSMITH'S ART OF ACHAEMENID TRADITION*

Catherine DEFERNEZ¹

*À Janine Bourriau, en hommage reconnaissant et en souvenir de
notre première rencontre dans le Sinaï, il y a déjà bien longtemps.*

This contribution highlights four vases, dedicated to one of the most marginal divinities of the Egyptian pantheon, which are remarkable both for their atypical profile, and their decoration.

These vessels, which were discovered at the fortified site of Tell el-Herr, situated in the Northern part of the Sinai peninsula, are characteristic of the ceramic repertoire of the Persian Period and that traditionally ascribed to the last indigenous dynasties: their contextual frame clearly indicates a dating in the period ranging from the middle of the 5th century to the first quarter of the 4th century BC.

Following a recent, and exhaustive study,² it is clear that Bes vases are significantly attested in the stratigraphic contexts of Tell el-Herr, and are spread over domestic, military or cultural *loci*. Their durability over several decades of occupancy of the site have thus enabled us to propose a fine-tuned classification of the vessels of this period, that is from the middle of the 5th century to the first quarter of the 4th century BC (Table 1).

Since the most common types have previously been described elsewhere, including their multiple variations in the final phases of the Late

* This is an English translation of an article which first appeared in French, under the title, 'Quatre vases Bès provenant de Tell el-Herr (Nord-Sinaï)' on the internet journal *Égypte Nilotique et Méditerranéenne* 3 (2010), 109-136. In view of Janine's long-standing interest in clay figure vases, it seems appropriate to include an English version of it in a book in her honour.

¹ UMR 8167 - Cnrs-Paris IV Sorbonne I wish to extend my grateful thanks to S. Marchi (UMR 8167-Cnrs-Paris IV Sorbonne) for preparing a fair copy of the illustrations, to J.-M. Yoyotte (UMR 8167) and J.-Fr. Gout (USR 3172-CFEETK) for the photographic surveys. I also wish to thank B. Böhm (University of Göttingen), N. Favry, N. Licitra, S. Margat (University of Paris IV-Sorbonne) for preparing the drawings, here reproduced at 1/2-scale.

² C. DEFERNEZ, 'Les vases Bès à l'époque perse (Égypte-Levant). Essai de classification', in: P. BRIANT, M. CHAUVEAU (ed.), *Organisation des pouvoirs et contacts culturels dans les pays de l'empire achéménide*, Persika 14 (Paris, 2009), 153-215.

Period, as well as the origin, attributes, and contexts where the Bes divinity appeared, these factors will not be considered again. It will be remembered, however, that this simultaneously beneficent and maleficent god apparently rose to fame under the Achaemenid Persian Empire, as, indeed, has been stressed on several occasions by K. Abdi,³ the publisher of a corpus of all the objects bearing the effigy of this god discovered in several satrapies of the Persian Empire.

The vases described in this article comprise atypical vessels without, or with hardly any, parallels let alone forerunners, and I have deemed it judicious to describe these in a separate paper.

1. Analytical description of the Bes vases

Four in number, the Bes figure vases examined here have been made on the wheel from a marl-based, finely levigated, calcareous clay, associated with the Tell el-Herr fabric C 1 or C 2 in my previously published classification.⁴ The fragmentary piece corresponding to Figure 4, how-

³ K. ABDI, 'Bes in the Achaemenid Empire', *Ars Orientalis* 29 (1999), 113-140; ABDI, 'Notes on the Iranianization of Bes in the Achaemenid Empire', in: M.C. ROOT (ed.), *Medes and Persians: Reflections on Elusive Empires*, *Ars Orientalis* 32 (2002), 133-162; Cf. C. DEFERNEZ, 'Les vases Bès à l'époque perse', 3, nos. 19-20.

⁴ See the descriptions provided below in the catalogue. Nevertheless, for further information, refer to C. DEFERNEZ, 'Les vases Bès à l'époque perse', 178. The classification is compatible with the one I have suggested in the context of an exhaustive study on pottery of the Persian period. Cf. C. DEFERNEZ, *La céramique d'époque perse à Tell el-Herr. Étude chrono-typologique et comparative*, Cahiers de recherches de l'Institut de papyrologie et d'égyptologie de Lille, Supplement 5 (Lille, 2001), 26-45; C. DEFERNEZ, 'Le mobilier amphorique provenant d'un édifice monumental découvert sur le site de Tell el-Herr (Nord-Sinaï)', *Cahiers de la Céramique Égyptienne* 8 (2007), 550; The origin of the production centres of these vases remains to be determined. One ought to mention, however, the existence of a fabric comparable to the Tell el-Herr group C 1 at Saqqara and its surroundings. Cf. P. FRENCH and H. GHALY, 'Pottery Chiefly of the Late Dynastic Period, from Excavations by the Egyptian Antiquities Organisation at Saqqara, 1987', *Cahiers de la Céramique Égyptienne* 2 (1991), 98, groups K 2 and K 5; G. LECUYOT, 'Quelques vases Bès sortis des sables de Saqqâra', in: I. RÉGEN, F. SERVAJEAN (ed.), *Verba manent. Recueil d'études dédiées à Dimitri Meeks*, Cahiers 'Égypte Nilotique et Méditerranéenne' 2 (Montpellier, 2009), 259-261, fabric IV presumably of local origin, according to Lecuyot. D.A. ASTON and B.G. ASTON, *Late Period Pottery from the New Kingdom Necropolis at Saqqara*, Egypt Exploration Society Excavation Memoir 92 (London, 2010), 5-6, fabrics K2 and K5, the frequency of this clay group in the region of Saqqara-Memphis supports the hypothesis, indeed, of its origin in this geographic area. Affinities in the composition and the texture of the clay may be noted with the *Marl A2* and *Marl A3* categories defined in the Vienna system. Cf. D.A. ASTON and B.G. ASTON, 'The Dating of Late Period Bes Vases', in: C.A. REDMOUNT and C.A. KELLER (eds.), *Egyptian Pottery. Proceedings of the 1990 Pottery Symposium at the University of California, Berkeley*, Archaeological Research Facility 58 (Berkeley, 2003), 102-103;

ever, seems to stand out by being fashioned from a mixed paste consisting of a mixture of Nile and marl clays. Whilst that example bears the diffuse remains of a thick red slip, the other specimens considered here reveal surface traces of extremely meticulous burnishing.

Forming the first type (type A) described in the classification which I have recently proposed,⁵ the (quasi-complete) mug illustrated on figures 1 and 16 exhibits relatively modest dimensions: a height equal to 13.5 cm and a slightly oval opening, ranging between 7.5 and 8 cm. Characterised by an ovoid body and a rather narrow ring base, this vessel possesses extremely thin walls: indeed, the thickness does not exceed 0.5 mm. A rather wide “*bandeau*”, highlighted by a series of protruding edges, delineates the mouth of this vase.

Confined to the upper half of the body, the decoration combining both incisions and applied pieces of clay shows an elaborate version of the god Bes. Although arranged slightly asymmetrically, the reproduced elements are drawn precisely and meticulously. The eyes, for instance, clearly circular in shape are marked by a small dilated pupil and a rather thin corner. They surround a nose perforated with two nostrils, whose central incision confers the aspect of an animal nose. Underneath, just below the nostrils, appears a pair of moustaches formed of two rather short, incised dashes. A piece of clay indicates the presence of a mouth, whilst the ends of two hardly visible fingers suggest the existence of arms. Between the thick and short eyebrows, surmounting the eyes, one may see a “prophylactic” circle, probably made using a punch or, as recently suggested, a vegetable stem.⁶ On both sides are applied two unequal, cut-off pieces of clay, acting as ears.

On this type of vessel, the elements forming the decoration of the face and of the body of Bes are spaced close to each other, as are those of the contemporary vase (fig. 2, 17) corresponding to the second type defined

H.-A. NORDSTRÖM and J. BOURRIAU, ‘Ceramic Technology: Clays and Fabrics’, in: DO.ARNOLD and J. BOURRIAU (ed.), *An Introduction to Ancient Egyptian Pottery*, Sonderdruck des Deutschen Archäologischen Instituts, Abteilung Kairo 17 (Mainz, 1993), 176-177, pl. IV.d-i and especially, pl. V.a-c.

⁵ Cf. C. DEFERNEZ, ‘Les vases Bès à l’époque perse’, 158-160, 179-180, fig. 1: type A.

⁶ A hypothesis put forward by K.R. Kaiser, publisher of an extensive corpus of Bes effigy vases, datable from the New Kingdom to the Greco-Roman period. Cf. K.R. KAISER, *Water, Milk, Beer and Wine for the Living and the Dead: Egyptian and Syro-Palestinian Bes-Vessels from the New Kingdom through the Greco-Roman Period*, UMI Dissertation Services (Berkeley, 2003), 249 and n. 62. According to Kaiser, the emblematic circle affixed to the middle of the forehead, as well as the pupils, would have been achieved in a similar fashion. On this score and a possible meaning of the circle, one may look to the references in C. DEFERNEZ, ‘Les vases Bès à l’époque perse’, 159, n. 31, 34.

in the pre-established corpus (type B).⁷ The morphology and the size of this vessel point to its function as a cup or mug. With a height equal to 11 cm and a mouth diameter equivalent to 8 cm, this cylindrical cup has rather thin walls (≤ 0.4 mm). Its peculiarity lies in the presence of a slightly carinated shoulder with a rather high and thin banded rim. For greater stability, a thin-walled, flat bottom marks a sharp break in the profile.

Just like the vase previously mentioned, the details representing the image of the god Bes are carefully distributed over the upper portion of the body. Moreover, the arrangement of the decoration is similar: thick and short eyebrows situated symmetrically surmount a pair of round eyes, highlighted by a wide dilated pupil and a deep corner; at the same level, a nose perforated with two minuscule nostrils in the form of an animal nose has been added; underneath, a pair of moustaches formed of two short, oblique and incised dashes is discernible. On both sides of these patterns, a cut-off ear, a folded arm, terminated by a hand materialised by three small incised lines, as well as another hand composed of four fingers are also visible. Contrary to the previous type, A, the clay disc acting as a mouth has completely disappeared.

Represented only by a small sherd, the third shape to be examined in this paper (fig. 3) consists of a deep basin, with thin walls, small shoulders - indicated by the external bulge of the side - under the flared lip, delineating an opening equal to 9 cm, while two lug handles, formed by a slightly twisted piece of clay, provided for easier grasping, highlight the transition between the shoulder and the body. Similarities between this sherd and complete or nearly complete specimens (fig. 9-10), from more ancient or contemporary levels (Tell el-Herr phases VIA or VA), lead me to think that the form of the base was ring-shaped or rounded; the site of Tell el-Herr attests to the contemporaneity of both variations in the same context.

Although quite small, the piece at hand shows traces of what seems to have been a representation of Bes. Applied to the upper half of the vase, just below the shoulder, the apparent decorative elements are limited to a perforated ear and the nascent upper portion of an arm.

The last of the four pieces studied here comprises a fragmentary vessel (fig. 4), which may be defined as a cup or a mug, with somewhat more carefully drawn decoration. Made from a carefully purified mixed clay, this thin-walled vessel, with a thick red coating, is thus atypical for Late

⁷ C. DEFERNEZ, 'Les vases Bès à l'époque perse', 159-160, 180-181, fig. 2: type B.

Period Bes vases. Its basic shape consists of an ovoid body — as suggested by the orientation of the upper walls — with a 9.5 cm diameter mouth delineated by a small, scarcely outlined, convex lip.

Confined to the upper half of the vase, the extant decoration shows the curve of a rather thick, smartly drawn eyebrow and a round eye highlighted by a small pupil and a discrete corner.

The exceptional and unique character of these pieces at the site of Tell el-Herr is all the more remarkable since such vessels are somewhat rare, if not absent from the published record. Except for type A, illustrated as figure 1, which shows some similarity to Bes vases from Saqqara⁸ and Gurna⁹ the remainder have, as far as I know, no matching pieces in the existing literature. This apparent lack of parallels probably results from the random character of earlier excavations; since work in progress has demonstrated the presence of copies of certain vases (type A, for instance) in the sector of the Akhethetep mastaba at Saqqara. Consequently, it cannot be ruled out that future investigations undertaken at that site or in other geographical areas might provide parallels for the other vases. Nevertheless, this lack may also be tied to other phenomena, now well-known in the history of the Achaemenid Empire.

2. Towards a transposition phenomenon

Atypical ceramics in the Egyptian corpus, they are, moreover, absent from the other known ceramic repertoires of the ancient Near East. Whether one looks at the Levant (Syria-Palestine), Greece, Cyprus, Iran or Assyria, the established typologies for these regions fail to show precise parallels for our pieces. The rarity of ceramic parallels not only in Egypt but also in neighbouring countries, make these vessels extremely

⁸ G. LECUYOT, 'Quelques vases Bès', 260 and pl. II.3: inv. SA O3/99 = SP 644; Analogous shape in pink marl clay and practically identical dimensions (ht.: 13.7 cm; Ø rim: c. 7.3 cm). The little preserved decoration still reveals the eyebrows, the arms and a pair of moustaches. The contextual framework (well Q, north-east sector of the Akhethetep mastaba) places it in the period 450-350 BC. It ought to be noted that the shoulder protrusion is more marked than that of the Tell el-Herr specimen.

⁹ M.C. GUIDOTTI, 'A Proposito dei Vasi con Decorazione Hathorica', *Egitto e Vicino Oriente* 1 (1978), 112, fig. 14; M.C. GUIDOTTI, 'Ipotesi di Significato e Tipologia dei Vasi Egizi di Epoca Tarda Raffiguranti il Dio Bes', *Egitto e Vicino Oriente* 6 (1983), 46, fig. 7: type B1 from the sector of the mortuary temple of Tuthmosis IV; Also see K.R. KAISER, *Water, Milk, Beer and Wine*, 438, cat.no. 240 (type LP 5). The information on this vase remains rather scant: no measurements are given, but it is probably made of a marl clay based fabric. Cf. K.R. KAISER, *Water, Milk, Beer and Wine*, 247 and 260. The dating suggested by Guidotti and Kaiser covers the Late Period.

interesting. Indeed, the degree of refinement with which these vases were manufactured,¹⁰ might reasonably lead one to assume that their genesis should be sought somewhere outside of the ceramic sphere.

The same may be particularly true of type A (fig. 1) for which, as already mentioned, there are matching pieces at both Saqqara and at Gurna. However, similar vessels, but without the addition of Bes faces, are also well-known. Material from Tell el-Yahudiyah,¹¹ Suwa and Saft/Goshen,¹² excavated long ago by Sir Flinders Petrie, includes a number of pots closely similar to the later models of Tell el-Herr (fig. 5) though differing from them by having a rounded, rather than ring base. Furthermore the underwater site of Thonis-Heracleion¹³ offers an additional variation with a double raised filet at the transition between the lip and the shoulder. Manufactured from marl, or possibly mixed clay,¹⁴ this vessel indisputably belongs to the same family as the vase from Tell el-Herr. A great similarity can be noted in regard to its technical-morphological components as well as to its capacity: the height is 13 cm, whilst the mouth diameter is of the order of 7.5 cm. The suggested dating ranges from the end of the 5th to the middle of the 4th century BC.

¹⁰ The exquisite quality of the surface treatment is revealed by its uniformly smooth wall obtained as the result of regular polishing and slight rough-working, as shown by the succession of the still visible horizontal planes. Fine smoothing grooves complete the surface finish.

¹¹ W.M.F. PETRIE, *Hyksos and Israelite Cities*, British School of Archaeology in Egypt 12 (London, 1906), pl. XXIA.39; A pot from tomb 83 dated to the Ptolemaic Period. The shape and dimensions (ht.: 14.1 cm; Ø rim: 8.1 cm) suggest similarities with type A; this specimen however differs by having a strongly carinated shoulder.

¹² W.M.F. PETRIE, *Hyksos and Israelite Cities*, pl. XXXIXF.187 (tomb 179, Suwa); this vessel is especially similar to fig. 5 from Tell el-Herr. Cf. W.M.F. PETRIE, *Hyksos and Israelite Cities*, pl. XXXIXF.149-150; those vases fitted with two small handles correspond to another late variation of this group. The dating suggested by Petrie covers the Late Period (26th to 30th Dynasties). Also see W.M.F. PETRIE, *Hyksos and Israelite Cities*, pl. XXXIXJ.291.

¹³ C. GRATALOUP, E. MCCANN and Y. STOLZ, 'La vie quotidienne dans la région canopique', in: F. GODDIO (ed.), *Trésors engloutis d'Égypte* (Paris, 2006), 230, cat.no. 375, also 307 (Maritime Museum of Alexandria, inv. H2 431, SCA 245). The more marked convexity of the body ought to be noted. A better quality photograph is provided in the Japanese version, cf. *Egypt's Sunken Treasures* (Yokohama, 2009), 176, cat.no. 391. See also, C. GRATALOUP, 'Everyday Life in the Canopic Area', in: F. GODDIO, M. CLAUSS (ed.), *Egypt's Sunken Treasures* (Berlin, 2006), 342-343, cat.no. 389.

¹⁴ Its composition and texture suggest a local and/or regional origin for its production, in the north-west part of the Delta, cf. C. GRATALOUP, E. MCCANN and Y. STOLZ, 'La vie quotidienne' 230; according to the authors mixed clays associated with the coast areas of the Delta would have been identified, cf. C. GRATALOUP, E. MCCANN and Y. STOLZ, 'La vie quotidienne', 221, n. 10. Pink beige to greenish beige in colour, the clay in question might optically correspond to Tell el-Herr fabric C 2, voids left by organic elements burnt out during firing appear in the section and on the surface.

As a rare form in the Egyptian repertoire, this mug, conspicuous by its ovoid body surrounded by a banded lip, which is highlighted by one or several ribs, has not been recorded so far, to the best of my knowledge, in previously published corpora; however, and, quite astonishingly, current investigations have revealed similarities solely with metal crockery such as a silver *situla* vase discovered in the Zelenskoi Tumulus tomb III,¹⁵ in the North Pontic region, and now in the Hermitage Museum. On the morphological plane several affinities between it and the vase of type A are obvious: with the addition of a handle and with the convexity of the thin wall, the silver vase offers several similarities; a pear-shaped body, a flared ring-base, and a banded lip outlined by a thin ridge. This formal matching strongly leads me to think that our mug of Type A is based on a metal prototype, even if its possible chronological timeframe does not really allow for direct comparison. All the associated vases, found in the Zelenskoi Tumulus are assigned, on the basis of comparative documentation derived from rich Macedonian inhumations, to the last quarter of the 4th century BC.¹⁶ However, as M.Yu. Triester rightfully puts it:¹⁷ “although, as has been already shown, some of the vessels (and what is interesting, the same types of them) are considerably older than the dates of the burials in the Zelenskoi Tumulus, on one hand, and in the Macedonian burials, on the other.”

This formal subordination is not limited to the Zelenskoi findings. Although still unclear, links may be noted with other silver *situlae* vases found on Egyptian territory, such as that from the Dendera deposit.¹⁸ Found near the sacred lake and attributed to the Ptolemaic Period, this vessel also has a substantial pear-shaped body but the base is rounded and the lip provided with two external small bulges; a Demotic inscription is engraved on the upper half of the body. Another connection which

¹⁵ Cf. M.YU. TREISTER, ‘Metal Vessels from Zelenskoya Gora Barrow and Related Finds from Karagodenashkh’, *Ancient West & East* 2/1 (2003), 59-60, figs. 8-9: Ermitage Museum, inv. Zel. 34. No scale is specified. Discovered in 1912, this vase was initially published by B. PHARMAKOWSKY, ‘Archäologische Funde im Jahre 1912: Rußland’, *Archäologischer Anzeiger* 28 (1913), 181, 185-186, fig. 10, who describes it as follows: “ein großes Silbergefäß auf niedrigem Untersatze mit Deckel, welcher mit einer Kette an dem Griffe befestigt ist”. The rarity of this shape ought to be emphasised. The other specimens known to Pharmakowsky have a different profile, cf. in particular, B. PHARMAKOWSKY, ‘Archäologische Funde im Jahre 1909: Rußland’, *Archäologischer Anzeiger* 25 (1910), 223 and 226, fig. 25.

¹⁶ M.YU. TREISTER, ‘Metal Vessels from Zelenskoya’, 67.

¹⁷ M.YU. TREISTER, ‘Metal Vessels from Zelenskoya’, 67.

¹⁸ Cf. A. FARID, ‘Sieben Metallgefäße mit Demotischen Inschriften aus Kairo und Paris’, *Revue d'égyptologie* 45 (1994), 126-131 and pl. XVI: Louvre Museum, inv. E 11664.

ought to be mentioned is a bronze *situla* vase recovered during the excavations of a warehouse in Alexandria;¹⁹ its dimensions are practically identical to the aforementioned type (the height ranges between 7 and 7.2 cm, while the diameter at the mouth is 5.7 cm),²⁰ and it is also dated to the Ptolemaic Period.

No direct correlation can be established with regard to type B (fig. 2). Nevertheless, its atypical profile allows for a few comparative suggestions. Indeed, strictly cylindrical forms are rarely found in the Egyptian ceramic repertoire. Few occurrences are known. Here again, the sharp break in profile marking the transition from the base to the body suggests a parallelism with metal (or stone) tableware, as does the small ledge formed by the shoulder of the vase. Thus, a striking analogy can be observed with bronze mugs found in the Achaemenid necropolis of Deve Hüyük²¹ (fig. 8), Northern Syria. The characteristic components of these containers are their cylindrical body with extremely thin walls and a flat or slightly rounded base, clearly distinguishable from the rest of the vessel by a sharp carination. A typological matching is not only obvious with type B, examined here, but it is all the more so with another category of vases, well represented in the recent contexts of Tell el-Herr (fig. 6-7), and among which comparable specimens have been found elsewhere, in the Delta especially: Mendes,²² Tell el-Moqdam,²³ Tell Defenna or the “Daphne of Pelusa”,²⁴ Tanis,²⁵ Memphis/Mit Rahineh,²⁶

¹⁹ Cf. F. GODDIO (ed.), *Trésors engloutis d'Égypte* (Paris, 2006), 293, cat.no. 160: Maritime Museum of Alexandria, inv. HXX 8276, SCA 1025, cf. the Japanese version, *Egypt's Sunken Treasures*, 145, cat.no. 259. The faint ridge slightly below the convex lip is reminiscent of that which can be observed on the clay copy found on the same site. Cf. note 13.

²⁰ The height is of the order of 8.2 cm, while the diameter at the mouth is equal to 5.6 cm.

²¹ P.R.S. MOOREY, *Cemeteries of the First Millennium B.C. at Deve Hüyük, near Carchemisch*, British Archaeological Reports, Supplement 87 (London, 1980), 39 and 41, fig. 7.120-122; C.L. WOOLLEY, ‘A North Syrian Cemetery of the Persian Period’, *Annals of Archaeology and Anthropology*, 7/3-4 (1916), pl. XXI.12.

²² S.J. ALLEN, ‘The Pottery’, in: K.L. WILSON, *Cities of the Delta, Part II: Mendes, Preliminary Report on the 1979 and 1980 Seasons*, American Research Center in Egypt Report 5 (Malibu, 1982), pl. XV.6, red alluvial clay flat bottom cylindrical mug, Late Period – ht.: 8.4 cm, also pl. XIV.11, little different, conical shape, with rounder base, probably a more ancient model than the previous type.

²³ C.A. REDMOUNT and R. FRIEDMAN, ‘Tales of a Delta Site: The 1995 Field Season at Tell el-Muqdam’, *Journal of the American Research Center in Egypt* 34 (1997), 67, fig. 9.a, average height, thick-walled mug.

²⁴ W.M.F. PETRIE, *Tanis, part. II: Nebesheh (Am) and Defenneh (Tahpanhes)*, Memoir of the Egypt Exploration Fund 4 (London, 1888), 65 and pl. XXXV.75-76, 78-79. The shapes 75 and 78 from site 51 (surface substrate) are very similar to the specimens found

the necropolis at Kafr Ammar,²⁷ Tell el-Yahudiyah, Suwa,²⁸ and finally, Saqqara,²⁹ to name but the main examples.

Closely similar on the morphological plane, these alluvial clay mugs are similar in size, with a height ranging between 12 and 15 cm; the height of the bronze vessels being between 8.5 and 13 cm, while the maximum diameter varies between 7 and 10 cm. Entirely covered with a thick red to brown-red, horizontally ring-burnished slip, the examples reproduced in figures 6 and 7, as well as their matching pieces from the Delta, appear as authentic replicas of the bronze vases of Deve Hüyük. The Syrian necropolis, which was founded in the first half of the 5th century BC to house the burials of Persian mercenaries barracked near the Euphrates,³⁰ has revealed numerous pieces of fine precious and

at Tell el-Herr (fig. 6-7). Petrie ascribed them to the 26th Dynasty, more precisely to the beginning of the reign of Psammetichus I, which is probably too early, cf. C. DEFERNEZ, *La céramique d'époque perse*, 447-449, 490-495. In addition to the illustrated shapes, several other examples have been discovered, some of them inside large amphorae, strengthening *de facto* their possible usage as measuring vessels (cf. *supra*). Most of them have a small capacity, and because of the thinness of the vessel wall, cf. W.M.F. PETRIE, *Tanis II*, 65. Petrie termed them "egg-shell" ceramics. W.M.F. PETRIE, *Tanis II*, 66. The presence of miniature mugs was also noticed in the foundation deposits of the small temple erected by Amasis at Tell Nebesha, cf. W.M.F. PETRIE, *Tanis II*, pl. V.26, 28. It will be noted that most of the pottery represented in these deposits corresponds to earthenware counterparts of metal vessels (*situlae*, incense burners, carinated vases) and stone vessels, cf. W.M.F. PETRIE, *Tanis II*, 15.

²⁵ PH. BRISSAUD, V. CARPANO, L. COTELLE, S. MARCHAND, L. NOUAILLE and C. VEILLARD, 'Répertoire préliminaire de la poterie trouvée à Sâh el-Hagar (2e partie)', *Cahiers de Tanis I* (Paris, 1987), 84, fig. 6.83: mug from the surface debris.

²⁶ H.G. FISCHER, 'The Pottery', in: R. ANTHES, *Mit Rahineh 1956* (Philadelphia, 1965), 153 and pl. 64.553, 555, red alluvial clay mugs.

²⁷ W.M.F. PETRIE and E. MACKAY, *Heliopolis, Kafr Ammar and Shurafa*, British School of Archaeology in Egypt 24 (London, 1915), pl. XXIII.10-13. The mugs have a cylindrical body but a rounded base. Their height ranges between 9.5 and 12 cm. The dating suggested for the whole of the illustrated material covers the 23rd to 25th Dynasties, but this is undoubtedly too early, cf. D.A. ASTON, *Egyptian Pottery of the Late New Kingdom and Third Intermediate Period (Twelfth – Seventh Centuries BC)*, Studien zur Archäologie und Geschichte Ägyptens 13 (Heidelberg, 1996), 35-36.

²⁸ W.M.F. PETRIE, *Hyksos and Israelite Cities*, pl. XXA and, especially, XXX-IXF.136-139. Shapes dated from the 26th to the 30th Dynasties.

²⁹ J. BOURRIAU and D.A. ASTON, 'The Pottery', in: G.T. MARTIN (ed.), *The Tomb-Chapels of Paser and Ra'ia at Saqqâra*, Egypt Exploration Society 52th Memoir (London, 1985), 53-54, pl. 37.105, also 122. The type no. 105, analogous to the examples of Tell el-Herr, is made of alluvial clay covered with a polished red slip (ht.: 15.7 cm; Ø: 11.2 cm), while no. 122 is made of marl-based clay (ht.: 8.2 cm). Found in an embalmer's cache exposed in the southwest of Paser's tomb, these vessels were then assigned to the 4th century BC, cf. J. BOURRIAU and D.A. ASTON, 'The Pottery', 54-55, but have since been related to the period 550-400 BC. Cf. D.A. ASTON and B.G. ASTON, *Late Period Pottery*, 112.

³⁰ On this score, see in particular: P.R.S. MOOREY, 'Iranian Troops at Deve Hüyük in Syria in the Fifth Century B.C.', *Levant* 7 (1975), 108-117; C. TUPLIN, 'Xenophon and

semi-precious metal tableware comprising a variegated range of drinking vases or other pieces of ceremonial crockery, representative of the Persian Period. With regard to this type of vessel, Moorey points out that “simple mugs with vertical sides have been reported from other sites in the Achaemenid period (...) where they represent only the latest in a long line of simple drinking or measuring vessels.”³¹ The correlated forms thus mentioned, also made of bronze, come from the necropolis of Ur³² and of Nippur.³³

These examples are not the only ones known from the Achaemenid Empire. Recently, bronze mugs similar in shape and size to the Syrian copies — their height ranges between 13 and 14.5 cm — have been discovered at the submerged site of Thonis-Heracleion.³⁴ Attributing them to the Ptolemaic Period raises a few reservations:³⁵ the known later examples, such as certain pieces originating from the famous treasure of Tukh el-Qaramus³⁶ in the Eastern Delta, or those exhumed from the Dendera deposit,³⁷ usually possess flared walls, a reduced capacity and, in

the Garrisons of the Achaemenid Empire’, *Archäologische Mitteilungen aus Iran* 20 (1987), 167-245; C.L. WOOLLEY, ‘A North Syrian Cemetery’, 127-129.

³¹ P.R.S. MOOREY, *Cemeteries of the First Millennium B.C.*, 39.

³² C.L. WOOLLEY and M.E.L. MALLOWAN, *Ur Excavations IX. The Neo-Babylonian and Persian Periods* (London, 1962), pl. 32.15; This cylindrical mug possesses slightly flaring sides and a flat base.

³³ D.E. McCOWN, R.C. HAINES and D.P. HANSEN, *Nippur I. Temple of Enlil, Scribal Quarter, and Soundings*, Oriental Institute Publications 78 (Chicago, 1967), 79 and pl. 108.12; cat. 2N 351, context: TA 73 IV; small-sized bronze mug akin to that discovered in the Ur necropolis.

³⁴ D. FABRE, ‘Cultes et rites’, in: F. GODDIO (ed.), *Trésors engloutis d’Égypte* (Paris, 2006), 160, 300, cat.nos. 275-276; Maritime Museum of Alexandria, inv. HXX 7022, SCA 987 et HXX 7058, SCA 992. The maximum diameter in the body part lies between 9.7 and 11 cm.

³⁵ Their dating to the Ptolemaic period undoubtedly rests on a comparative analysis with pottery mugs which can be dated to that epoch, and which were discovered at Heracleion and Canopus. Cf. C. GRATALOUP et al., ‘La vie quotidienne’ 231, 307, cat.nos. 382-383; Maritime Museum of Alexandria, inv. C1 3011, SCA 1132 et HXX 1443, SCA 251. The bronze mugs discovered at Heracleion are indisputably the matching pieces to the Achaemenid vases of Deve Hüyük. Their pottery counterparts find greater echoes among that from Tell el-Herr, cf. figs. 6-7.

³⁶ Cf. M. PFROMMER, *Studien zu Alexandrinischer und Großgriechischer Toreutik frühhellenischer Zeit*, *Archäologische Forschungen* 16 (Berlin, 1987), 269, pl. 26.c: KTK 30, Cairo JE 38116 – ht.: 8 cm, and pl. 27.a-b, e: KTK 30.31, 32.33 et 34 – ht.: 6 and 8 cm; A. FARID, ‘Sieben Metallgefäße’, 119-122, pl. XIII: Cairo JE 38116 and JE 39591. The dating of these vessels covers the end of the 4th and the first half of the 3rd century BC.

³⁷ A. FARID, ‘Sieben Metallgefäße’, 124-126, pl. XVII: Louvre Museum, inv. E 11661 and E 11662.

some cases, a protruding rim. Nevertheless, the durability of these models into the early part of the Ptolemaic Period, is perhaps possible, inasmuch as a specimen has been collected from the Tukh el-Qaramus deposit.³⁸ Moreover, numerous cylindrical cups or mugs, some of which were found at Tell el-Yahudiyah,³⁹ have been recorded in the classification of metal vases established by Sir Flinders Petrie.⁴⁰

As an echo of the observations reported in the publications of items from Deve Hüyük, the Egyptian vessels, whether made of metal or earthenware, also reveal a progressive evolution of this form of drinking or measuring vase.⁴¹

If the basic morphology of the type B vessel (fig. 2) reveals close affinities with bronze tableware, other typological details suggest similarities with “goldsmith’s art”, more specifically the “Achaemenid goldsmith’s art.” Indeed, the ledge drawn by the profile at the transition between the lip and the body, forming a slight shoulder, is a specific characteristic frequently observed on metal drinking vases, especially on *phiales* and silver, bronze or gold bowls,⁴² whose frequency in the

³⁸ M. PFROMMER, *Studien*, 269, pl. 27.d: KTK 29, Cairo JE 38121 – silver mug, ht.: 16 cm, optically pl. 27.c: KTK 35 but poorly preserved. Dated to the end of the 4th and to the first half of the 3rd century BC, as the rest of the objects, this vessel perhaps corresponds to a more ancient model, here re-used in a more recent deposit.

³⁹ Cf. W.M.F. PETRIE, *Ancient Weights and Measures*, British School of Archaeology in Egypt 39 (London, 1926) 34, 36-38, pl. XXI.77-80. Petrie also published a few ceramic mugs which he associates with measures, cf. W.M.F. PETRIE, *Weights and Measures*, 35, pl. XXIII.208-211; some pieces differ by their small dimensions.

⁴⁰ Cf. W.M.F. PETRIE, *The Funeral Furniture of Egypt with Stone and Metal Vases*, British School of Archaeology in Egypt 59 (London, 1937), 29, pl. XLI.77-79, also see nos. 75 and 80. As Petrie rightfully puts it: “The series of bronze cylinders, 75-80, appear to be measures, and similar cylinders were made of pottery... The three regular cylinders, 77-79, are in the proportion of 5: 3: 2, the basis being the Syrian *kotyle*”; No provenance is specified, except for no. 79, cf. preceding note. The chronological range assigned to them is rather long since Petrie dates them from the 21st to the 26th Dynasties.

⁴¹ In the light of the documentation of Saite period found in the past in the Sanam necropolis, in Nubia, the tendency of the evolution of the metal cups or mugs goes from small-sized vessels with rounded or flattened base, at the beginning of the Late Period, to high and straight vessels, with clearly carinated bases, at the end of the period. Cf. F.LI. GRIFFITH, ‘Oxford Excavations in Nubia’, *Annals of Archaeology and Anthropology* 10 (1923), pl. XVI.Ib-c, II. It is also the prevailing impression when looking at currently available ceramic corpora. The known pottery versions, correctly dated to the Saite period or the beginning of the Persian period (cf. no. 22-24; and ancient models of Tell el-Herr. C. DEFERNEZ, *La céramique d’époque perse*, 103-107, pl. XV) have indeed a small capacity in comparison with the examples datable to the end of the 5th and the first decades of the 4th century BC; The history of this group’s evolution requires further research.

⁴² To quote but a few examples: J.D. COONEY, *Five Years of Collecting Egyptian Art 1951-1956* (Brooklyn, 1956), 44-45, pl. 75, no. 51: silver bowl discovered at Leontopolis; R.W. HAMILTON, ‘A Silver Bowl in the Ashmolean Museum’, *Iraq* 28/1 (1966), pl. Ic:

Achaemenid period needs hardly be demonstrated here. Other types of vessel, such as *situlae* or *alabastra*, also exhibit such features⁴³, as, moreover, sometimes do pieces of stone crockery.⁴⁴

An object of multiple studies and controversies, the Achaemenid bowls or *phiales*, represented in large numbers on the reliefs of the Apadana at Persepolis⁴⁵ somehow constitute the first milestones of what

Ashmolean Museum, inv. 1964.482 – silver *phiale*, and pl. Iib: Ashmolean Museum, inv. 1951.32 – bronze *phiale*; M.-J. CHAVANE, *Vases de bronze du musée de Chypre (IXe – IVe s. av. J.-C.)*, Collection de la Maison de l'Orient 11/Arch. 8 (Lyon, 1982), 41, fig. 47-49: 25, 42, fig. 50-52: 26 and, 45, fig. 59-62: bronze bowls; M. PFROMMER, *Studien*, pl. 6: Cairo JE 38096, pl. 11: Cairo JE 38097, pl. 44.d-f, pl. 45: several copies preserved in the Cairo Museum; I. ÖZGEN and J. ÖZTÜRK, *Heritage Recovered. The Lydian Treasure* (Istanbul, 1996), 91, cat.no. 37, Usak: inv. 1.32.96 – silver *phiale*; S. RAZMIOU, 'Religion and Burial Customs', in: J. CURTIS and N. TALLIS (eds.), *Forgotten Empire. The World of Ancient Persia* (London, 2005), 180, cat.no. 284: British Museum, inv. ANE 1898-6-16, 1 – bronze bowl; E. REHM, 'Man trank aus goldenen Gefäßen' Über die Tafelfreuden der Perser', in: *Pracht und Prunk der Großkönige - Das Persische Weltreich* (Stuttgart, 2006), 194, fig. a: Stuttgart, Württembergisches Landesmuseum, inv. 98/W 24a – bronze bowl, and 195, fig. e-f: Stuttgart, inv. 98/W 24b – bronze bowls. Such a morphological peculiarity appears on certain imitations of attic *phiales*, cf. M.C. MILLER, 'Adoption and Adaptation of Achaemenid Metalware Forms in Attic Black-Gloss Ware of the Fifth Century', *Archäologische Mitteilungen aus Iran* 26 (1993), pl. 20, 2 and 21, 1.2.

⁴³ Cf. I. ÖZGEN, J. ÖZTÜRK, *The Lydian Treasure*, 123, cat.no. 77: Usak, inv. 1.60.96 – silver *alabastron* with small carinated shoulder, and 238, cat.no. 228: Usak, inv. 1.1.89 – silver *alabastron*; D. FABRE, 'Cultes et rites', 136, 138 and 294, cat.no. 176: National Museum of Alexandria, inv. HXX 32, SCA 223 – bronze *situla* with ledge at the transition between the neck and the body, dated to the Ptolemaic period; vase reproduced at larger scale in the Japanese version, cf. *Egypt's Sunken Treasures* (Yokohama, 2009), 164, cat.no. 329. Also see the copies recovered from the necropolis of Saft/Goschen W.M.F. PETRIE, *Hyksos and Israelite Cities*, pl. XXXVIII A. One may also refer to S.I. HODJASH, *Ancient Egyptian Vessels in the State Pushkin Museum of Fine Art Moscow* (Moscow, 2005), 103, pl. 36-37, cat.no. 379: bronze *situla*.

⁴⁴ Cf. S.J. SIMPSON, 'The Royal Table', in: J. CURTIS and N. TALLIS (eds.), *Forgotten Empire. The World of Ancient Persia* (London, 2005), 126, cat.no. 131: Teheran Museum, inv. 2071; this small varnished ceramic jar from Persepolis shows a strongly marked shoulder. Also see E. REHM, 'Man trank aus goldenen Gefäßen', 194, fig. d (but b in the catalogue). It is a stone *phiale*, of which the transition between the neck and the body is highlighted by a ledge.

⁴⁵ These are the processions engraved on the walls of the staircases leading to the terrace of the great audience hall of Xerxes, the Apadana. Its purpose was for the delegations representing the 23 provinces of the Empire to deliver their tributes to the King. Painted reliefs have been restored. See especially E.F. SCHMIDT, *Persepolis I. Structures. Reliefs. Inscriptions*, Oriental Institute Publications 68 (Chicago, 1953) pl. 31B, 32A-B, 34B, 38A-B and 41A-B; E.F. SCHMIDT, *Persepolis II. Contents of the Treasury and Other Discoveries*, Oriental Institute Publications 69 (Chicago, 1957), 94-95, pl. 68.1, 69A and 70A; C.M. ABKA'I-KHAVARI, 'Die Achämenidischen Metallschalen', *Archäologische Mitteilungen aus Iran* 21 (1988), 93-137: especially 137, fig. 13: illustrations of the different types of bowls brought by the delegations; P. CALMEYER, 'Die Gefäße auf den Gabenbringer-Reliefs in Persepolis', *Archäologische Mitteilungen aus Iran* 26 (1993), 150, 152,

has recently been coined the industry of the “international Achaemenid style;”⁴⁶ of Neo-Assyrian origin: these vases possess numerous earthen, glass and faience counterparts.⁴⁷

The above mentioned forms — strictly cylindrical smooth-walled mugs — have not been reported on the known symposia or procession scenes of the Achaemenid period. Other variations are however depicted.

156-157, 159: repertoire of the delegations and associated vases, pl. 44-45, 47-50: cups presented, among others, by the Lydians, the Ionians, the Arachosians, the Babylonians and the Assyrians, i.e. the delegations V, VI, VIII, XII, XV and XXIII. On a recent identification of the delegations represented in the reliefs of the Apadana, see G. GROPP, ‘Die Darstellung der 23 Völker auf den Reliefs des Apadana von Persepolis’, *Iranica Antica* 44 (2009), 283-359: in particular, 332, fig. 7, 335, fig. 8, 340, fig. 10, 343, fig. 11, 346, fig. 12. The wall decoration of Petosiris’ tomb at Tuna el-Gebel, in Middle Egypt, shows Egyptian expert craftsmen fashioning vessels akin to the “achaemenid bowls”, cf. G. LEFEBVRE, *Le tombeau de Pétosiris* (Cairo, 1924), pl. VII-IX: northern wall of the pronaos; N. CHERPION, J.-P. CORTEGGIANI and J.-F. GOUT, *Le tombeau de Pétosiris à Touna el-Gebel. Relevé photographique*, Bibliothèque générale 27 (Cairo, 2007), 34: scene 31 and 36: scenes 33 and 34.

⁴⁶ Cf. note 71.

⁴⁷ As regards the ceramic counterparts, the examples are too numerous to provide a substantially exhaustive list, their presence is indeed borne out in several ancient satrapies of the Empire. It is sufficient to refer the reader to the article of E.R.M. DUSINBERRE, ‘Satrapal Sardis: Achaemenid Bowls in an Achaemenid Capital’, *American Journal of Archaeology* 103 (1999), 73-102. This documentation will be considered at length in a forthcoming article C. DEFERNEZ, ‘Les témoignages d’une continuité de la culture matérielle saïte à l’époque perse: l’apport de l’industrie céramique’, in: D. DEVAUCHELLE (ed.), *La XXVI^e dynastie: continuités et ruptures* (University of Lille III, in press. Let us mention, however, a few Egyptian attestations: at Heracleion: C. GRATALOUP *et al.*, ‘La vie quotidienne’, 233, 309, cat.no 412: Maritime Museum of Alexandria, inv. J5 9085, SCA 1082; at Tell el-Herr: C. DEFERNEZ, *La céramique d’époque perse*, 330 and pl. LXXII.208, this fragment most likely corresponds to an Achaemenid type bowl and not a carinated vase, as I had previously assumed. Since *La céramique d’époque perse* numerous complete examples have been discovered: at ‘Ayn-Manawir in the oasis of Kharga, especially M. WUTTMAN, B. BOUSQUET, M. CHAUVEAU P. DILS, S. MARCHAND, A. SCHWEITZER and L. VOLAY, ‘Premier rapport préliminaire des travaux sur le site de ‘Ayn Manawir (oasis de Kharga)’, *Bulletin de l’Institut Français d’Archéologie Orientale* 96 (1996), 418, group 1.15-16. Additionally, cf. the references in C. DEFERNEZ, ‘Les témoignages d’une continuité’, no. 3-11. A few specimens made of blue varnished ceramic or faience are also known in Egypt, for instance in Memphis/Mit Rahineh, cf. W.K. SIMPSON, ‘Faience’, in: R. ANTHES, *Mit Rahineh 1956* (Philadelphia, 1965), 120, fig. 17.233, 126 and pl. 47.a. In Alexandria: cf. M.-D. NENNA, M. SEIF EL-DIN, *La vaisselle en faïence d’époque gréco-romaine*, Études Alexandrines 4 (Cairo, 2000), 235-240 and pl. 7.T5. The illustrated shapes correspond to late variations of Achaemenid inspiration. As regards the glass examples, see in particular: P. FOSSING, ‘Drinking Bowls of Glass and Metal from the Achaemenian Time’, *Berytus* 4 (1937), 121-129; M. ABKA’I-KHAVARI, ‘Die achämenidischen Metallschalen’, 133, fig. 10 and 134; S.J. SIMPSON, ‘The Royal Table’, 119, cat.nos. 113-114: bowl and *phiale*; P. HUYSE, ‘Die altpersische Keilschrift und ihre Entzifferungsgeschichte’, in: *Das Persische Weltreich*, 226: bowls; F. KNAUSS, ‘Ancient Persia and the Caucasus’, *Iranica Antica* 41 (2006), 87, fig. 7: bowl from Tsintsqaro.

Their shape consists of a high, slightly conical, smooth- or rib-surfaced body (i.e. entirely covered with an array of horizontal flutings);⁴⁸ while the lip flares outwards. Several metal versions are attested,⁴⁹ as well as Attic imitations or adaptations.⁵⁰ This series ties in, apparently, with a long tradition of the customs and usages of the drinking ritual in Iran.⁵¹

However, it remains tricky to grasp the affiliation of certain types of vases, such as that of figure 3. Despite its fragmentary condition, this vessel calls for a few remarks.

In the light of the data provided by Tell el-Herr, the connection of this fragment to a group of vases could be established. The stratigraphy of the site enables us to monitor the development of the series to which this

⁴⁸ Cf. E.F. SCHMIDT, *Persepolis I*, pl. 27B: Median delegation, pl. 32A: Syrian delegation, pl. 33B: Arachosian delegation, pl. 38B, 41A-B: Bactrian delegation; E.F. SCHMIDT, *Persepolis II*, 94-95 and pl. 70B; P. CALMEYER, 'Die Gefäße auf den Gabenbringer-Reliefs', 152-155, 159 and pl. 43, 44-48. Three types of mugs are represented: (a) fluted, (b) simple and flared, and (c) simple, flared with a protrusion almost halfway up, they are carried in particular by the Medes (delegation I), the Armenians (delegation III), the Lydians (delegation VI), the Ionians (delegation XII) and the Bactrians (delegation XIII). S. RAZMJOU, 'The Palace', 65-67: carried by the delegations VI, XII and XV, 106, fig. 47.

⁴⁹ Cf. Z.H. ARCHIBALD, 'Thracian Interpretations of Greek and Oriental Elements in Fourth-Century Metalwork', in: B.F. COOK (ed.), *The Rogozen Treasure. Papers of the Anglo-Bulgarian Conference, 12 March 1987* (London, 1989), 12-25, pl. III.a-b: cylindrical mug with horizontal flutings and flared lip; YU. GAGOSHIDZE, 'Achaemenid and Achaemenidizing Silver Vessels found in Georgia', in: *Paper delivered at the University of Aarhus 26 September 2003. Seminar in the Occasion of the 60th Birthday of Niels and Lise Hannestad* (2003), PPT, pl. 26: golden mug from the necropolis of Vani in Georgia; R. ALBERTZ, 'Die Perser in der Bibel', in: *Das Persische Weltreich*, 183: Berlin, Staatliche Museen, inv. 30963 – silver mug with rounded base from Lydia; The presence of other variations with more elaborate decoration ought to be mentioned, cf. M. ABKA'I-KHAVARI, 'Die Achämenidischen Metallschalen', 134, 135, fig. 11: Z5, Z7, supposedly from the site of Hamadan.

⁵⁰ Cf. M.C. MILLER, 'Adoption and Adaptation', 114-115, 126-127 and pl. 29-30. Certain vessels correspond to faithful copies of their metal prototypes, others with adaptations, with the addition of a grasping element, cf. M.C. MILLER, 'Adoption and Adaptation' pl. 30; lastly, M.C. MILLER, *Athens and Persia in the Fifth Century BC. A Study in Cultural Receptivity* (Cambridge, 1997), 141-147, fig. 51; Also R. ALBERTZ, *Die Perser in der Bibel*, in: *Pracht und Prunk der Großkönige*, 183: Karlsruhe, Badisches Landesmuseum, inv. H 881.

⁵¹ The mugs or flat bottom "beakers" follow a long tradition since they are directly inherited from cylindrical drinking vases with curved profile or concave and flared sides, introduced around the beginning of the First millennium BC. It is probably a piece borrowed from the Assyrian collection, taking into account the frequency of the examples on the Iranian plateau. Cf. H. MAHBOUBIAN, *Art of Ancient Iran. Copper and Bronze. The Houshang Mahboubian Family Collection* (London, 1997), 244, fig. 318: bronze mug from Hamadan; W. SEIPEL (ed.), *7000 ans d'art perse. Chefs-d'œuvre du Musée National de Téhéran* (Milano, 2002), 76, 152, cat.no. 78: electrum mug discovered in the necropolis of Marlik; Compare with a later variant: EXHIBITION CATALOGUE, *Gold der Thraker. Archäologische Schätze aus Bulgarien* (Mainz, 1979), 31, 131, cat.no. 264.

type belongs, from the middle of the 5th to the first quarter of the 4th century BC. Comprising a rather deep basin with a slight external bulge below the lip, this cup differs, in the older levels, by having two handles placed halfway up the body (fig. 9-10); while the latest models or derived forms may (or may not) possess lug handles below the carination or shoulder bulge (fig. 3 and 12). The few complete specimens show that they are normally provided with a ring base although a variation characterised by a flattened base is attested.

The fineness of the vessel walls emphasizes the exceptional character of this category of ceramics whose execution, quality and stylishness are incomparable. As specified above, the published documentation contains very few occurrences: none, to the best of my knowledge, among the Egyptian repertoire; and rather inconsistent ones in other repertoires, such as that relative to goldsmith's art. The known publications, indeed, include few entries. Despite its late date, a form comparable to figure 10 ought, however, to be mentioned. It is a conical (or sub-conical) silver cup with vegetable decoration where the position of the handles halfway up the body, the exquisitely thin walls; and the profile of the delicately flaring rim suggest relevant similarities (fig. 11).⁵² According to Pfrommer, this tableware, originating from a treasure assigned to the 1st century BC,⁵³ would have been manufactured in a workshop located in Bactria, or in the more ancient Greco-Bactrian sphere of influence.

Although of less significance, affinities are also recognisable in a silver bowl (fig. 13) originating from the treasure of the necropolis of Montefortino, central Italy.⁵⁴ Dated to around 300 BC, this vessel offers similarities with figures 9 and 12, especially in the form of the body and the curve drawn by its transition from the base; the flared lip is short and

⁵² M. PFROMMER, *Metalwork from the Hellenized East. Catalogue of the Collections* (Malibu, 1993), 180-181, 229, cat.no. 67 (inv. 86.AM.754.4). Its dimensions are as follows: height equal to 9 cm and diameter at the opening equivalent to 13.8 cm.

⁵³ M. PFROMMER, *Metalwork*, 180. The assembly composing the treasure II thus described includes a *rhyton* and other bowls of Hellenic tradition.

⁵⁴ Cf. A. OLIVER, Jr., *Silver for the Gods: 800 Years of Greek and Roman Silver* (Toledo, 1977), 66, cat. no. 33. The general curve of this vase, today kept in the Metropolitan Museum of New York (inv. 08.258.50), especially reminds of the profile of the cup illustrated on Figure 12. Its dimensions are as follows: ht., 11.5 cm, Ø rim, 16.5 cm, Ø base: 7.4 cm. As Oliver puts it (*ibid.*, 66): "Although no other silver bowls exactly like this one are known, pottery bowls of this shape were standard in households of the period." Also refer to D. VON BOTHMER, 'A Greek and Roman Treasury', *The Metropolitan Museum of Art Bulletin* 42/1 (New York, 1984), 62, no. 111. According to him, the shape is rare; it is akin to silver bowls or basins fitted with "swinging handles" discovered in Macedonia.

the curled handles are applied parallel to the lip. It stands out, moreover, by its exquisitely thin walls.

As regards this category, the comparison is not solely confined to goldsmith's art. Indeed, the existence in the Achaemenid period of a production of refined crockery with a characteristic light fabric, ought to be mentioned. Attested in the Persian tombs of the necropolis of Ur,⁵⁵ in Nimrud, in the palace complex,⁵⁶ in Nippur,⁵⁷ in Susa,⁵⁸ in the palace of Artaxerxes II on the right bank of the Chaour river, as well as in Babylon,⁵⁹ these vessels, described as luxury tablewares, possess walls whose thickness rarely exceeds 1 mm,⁶⁰ and, by reason of their brittle walls, are thus more commonly known by the designation of "eggshell ware".⁶¹ Their forms consist of drinking vases represented by hemispherical or sub-hemispherical cups lined with a short, thin and flared rim,⁶² similar to certain specimens from Tell el-Herr (compare with figs.

⁵⁵ It is on this site that these "new and technically sophisticated" ceramics were initially identified in notable quantity. Cf. D. FLEMING, 'Egshell Ware Pottery in Achaemenid Mesopotamia', *Iraq* 51 (1989), 165-166, 178-179, fig. 1, 180-181, fig. 2; and, especially, C.L. WOOLLEY, and M.E.L. MALLOWAN, *Ur Excavations IX*, 90 and pl. 38: 2-3, 5-7.

⁵⁶ Refer to D. FLEMING, 'Egshell Ware Pottery', 182-183, fig. 3F, H-I; J. OATES, 'Late Assyrian Pottery from Fort Shalmaneser', *Iraq* 21/2, 1959, 130-146 (in particular 136 and pl. XXXVII).

⁵⁷ See for example, D.E. McCOWN, R.C. HAINES and D.P. HANSEN, *Nippur I.*, pl. 103: 13-14.

⁵⁸ Cf. R. BOUCHARLAT and A. LABROUSSE, 'La fouille du palais du Chaour à Suse', *Cahiers de la Délégation Archéologique Française en Iran* 2 (Paris, 1972), 94 and fig. 51: 8-15; R. BOUCHARLAT and A. LABROUSSE, 'Le palais d'Artaxerxès II sur la rive droite du Chaour à Suse', *Cahiers de la Délégation Archéologique Française en Iran* 10 (Paris, 1979), 74-75 and 109, fig. 29: 3-6.

⁵⁹ D. FLEMING, 'Egshell Ware Pottery', 182-183, fig. 3G.

⁶⁰ On this score, see the remarks of D. FLEMING ('Egshell Ware Pottery' 167): "... its fragility would have prevented normal working use, the vessels can rarely stand alone as virtually all of them lack any form of constructed bottom, and the absence of obvious decoration would suggest that they were not merely ornamental." Further down (169), Fleming mentions that these "EW" vases were neither slipped nor painted but solely polished. S.J. SIMPSON ('The Royal Table', 109) mentions moreover about the "eggshell-thin pottery bowls": "The perfect balance of these bowls was achieved by leaving the base slightly thicker than the lower walls... Their light weight is as much a reflection of the fineness of the clay as it is the thinness of the vessel walls..." These remarks may apply to the cups or mugs of Tell el-Herr studied here which differ by finely purified, light clay.

⁶¹ For further information on this series of vases, one may mainly refer to D. FLEMING, 'Egshell Ware Pottery in Achaemenid Mesopotamia', *Iraq* 51 (1989), 165-185.

⁶² Some cups or bowls discovered on the sites of Ur or of Susa resemble in their profile, especially at the level of the lip and of its transition with the body, the types 3, 9 and 10 attested at Tell el-Herr; thin incised grooves below the rim are visible on a few copies. Cf. C.L. WOOLLEY, M.E.L. MALLOWAN, *Ur Excavations IX*, pl. 38.6; D. FLEMING, 'Egshell Ware Pottery', 179, fig. 1.C, 181, fig. 2.F-G.

10 and 14). A certain uniformity can be noted in the thickness of the profile. In view of these aesthetic and technical aspects, it is tempting to compare these vessels with this new series of vases which appears in southern Mesopotamia around the middle of the First Millennium BC — after the conquest of the region by the Achaemenid Persians — and whose origin is still open for discussion. According to D. Fleming “it may have been that the potters who made the E[ggshell] W[are] were copying metals other than silver.”⁶³

The small size of the vase reproduced as figure 4 — only the edge is preserved — does not enable one to define its general morphology. The conical shape of the upper portion of the vessel, as well as the convex profile of the rim, may however suggest similarities with the *situla* family.

3. Towards the “international Achaemenid style”

At the end of this brief comparative analysis, the Bes vases considered in this paper appear as possible replicas, or cheaper adaptations, of metal prototypes or other types of luxury or semi-luxury tableware. Numerous details strengthen this reasoning: the carinated profiles, the presence of ridges, of mouldings or of flutings, are characteristics suggesting connections with the repertoire of ceremonial metal, stone or earthenware crockery.

From the Persian Period on, pottery craftsmen are well known to have sometimes transposed some formal elements of metallic tableware into ceramic tableware. The development of the metal or stone industry, which catered to the pronounced taste of the existing elites for this type of object,⁶⁴ has undoubtedly influenced the evolution of the ceramic

⁶³ D. FLEMING, ‘Eggshell Ware Pottery’, 170. He specifies further: “The shapes of the EW are far more reminiscent of metal vessels than of contemporaneous pottery cups or plates (...). EW’s extremely thin profile walls and the very regular surface produced by hard even firing remind one of metal examples, although the colours of the EW do not, unlike some grey Iranian vessels that obviously copied silver originals.”

⁶⁴ As regards the “Royal Table”, see S.J. SIMPSON, ‘The Royal Table’, 104-131. As Simpson rightfully puts it (‘The Royal Table’, 104), the tableware or other metal objects were used, according to the sources, by the upper layers of society, in addition to the Persian Court and its aristocracy. Nevertheless, as mentioned by Simpson, ‘The Royal Table’, 109, “Not everyone could afford tableware of metal, glass or stone, and far away from the court, potters strove to copy or reinterpret the same shapes in clay... In other cases potters used red burnished slip to emulate the visual effect of gold.” One may refer moreover to L. ALLEN, *The Persian Empire. A History* (London, 2005), 87-91. The surface treatment of the ceramics illustrated as my Figures 5-7 and 12, which

industry during the Persian Period. The gradual introduction of a corpus of adopted and adapted forms of metal prototypes can indeed also be observed in the Attic region.⁶⁵

Thus, nothing prevents us from assuming that the origins of our pieces tie in with a repertoire other than that of the pottery industry. Indeed in a forthcoming study I aim to show that a number of rare pottery forms found at Tell el-Herr have similarities with metal and stone vessels of the Achaemenid period, discovered at Susa and Persepolis. In that study I query the development of, and the influences on, certain groups of vases whose introduction occurred during the 5th century BC.

If the literature does not really provide any comparable forms, this may be due to the chance of the discoveries (or the excavations) and, in consequence, to the lack of archaeological documentation relating to the Persian Period, the 5th and 4th centuries BC.⁶⁶ However, we must acknowledge the following: these quasi-unique vases do not tie in with the formal Egyptian repertoire, and several clues lead me to think that they result from the “migration of the dense, regional and interregional cultural exchanges” then seen in the Achaemenid Empire. At a crossroad for consumption, entertainment and probably as a major craft centre in the border region of the Delta, the garrison at Tell el-Herr offers, once again, evidence of the economic and commercial dynamism of this strategic geographic area;⁶⁷ undoubtedly the testimonies of a diverse population

includes the application of a ring-burnished red slip, strengthens the remarks established by S.J. Simpson. This phenomenon has recently been put forward for certain groups of vases of the New Kingdom. Cf. M. GANDER, ‘Materialimitationen bemalter Gefäße aus Gräbern des Neuen Reiches aus dem Ägyptischen Museum und der Papyrussammlung Berlin’, *Studien zur Altägyptischen Kultur* 38 (2009), 83-99; and older periods; see, in this volume, the contribution of S. Marchand, ‘La transposition céramique dans l’Égypte ancienne’.

⁶⁵ On this score, one may refer to the works of M.C. MILLER, ‘Adoption and Adaptation’, 109-146, pl. 18-42; M.C. MILLER: *Athens and Persia*, 135-152; lastly, M.C. MILLER, ‘The Poetics of Emulation in the Achaemenid World: the Figured Bowls of the ‘Lydian Treasure’, *Ancient West & East* 6 (2007), 43-72.

⁶⁶ Cf. D. ASTON, ‘In Search of the Funerary Archaeology of the Persian Period’, in: A. LEAHY and J. TAIT (eds.) *Studies on Ancient Egypt in Honour of H.S. Smith*, Egypt Exploration Society, Occasional Publications 13 (London, 1999), 17-22.

⁶⁷ On this topic, see: C. DEFERNEZ, ‘Le Sinaï et l’Empire perse’, in: D. VALBELLE and Ch. BONNET (eds.), *Le Sinaï durant l’Antiquité et le Moyen Âge. 4000 ans d’histoire pour un désert* (Paris, 1998), 67-74; C. DEFERNEZ, *La céramique d’époque perse*, 433-526; lastly: J.-Y. CARREZ-MARATRAY and C. DEFERNEZ, ‘L’angle oriental du Delta: les Grecs avant Alexandre’, in: P. BALLET (ed.), *Grecs et Romains en Égypte. Territoires, espaces de la vie et de la mort, objets de prestige et du quotidien, Proceedings of the international conference organised by the French Classical Archeological Society, 15 March 2008* (Cairo, in press).

who may confuse us through the complex mixing of the material culture of this vast empire. The Persian Period is one of permanent interactions. The customs and the traditions of the then-existing elite fostered the introduction of new styles in minor arts. The attraction for luxury and semi-luxury objects, symbols of royal hegemony and of power, has undoubtedly promoted such genesis.⁶⁸

De facto, the diversity of the cultural traditions of the Empire is such that understanding the origin of certain artefacts⁶⁹ is not always easy, as in the case of the vases studied here. All the more so since the phenomenon of transpositions may be complex: what object does it imitate initially? Does the pottery object imitate the metal object or vice versa? Within the framework of our exhaustive study, it is apparent that the prototypes of certain pottery vessels are reported among assemblages of metal or stone vases, themselves deriving in some cases from the repertoire of ceramics. Thus, narrowing down the genesis of certain groups has to take on board the complex problem of transposition (from metal vases to pottery vases and vice versa), a topic addressed on several occasions regarding a few pieces of tableware of Attic origin.⁷⁰

In any case, beyond this diversity, a cultural unification process has been implemented. For a short time, several scientists have evoked the style of the Court, i.e. the “international Achaemenid style.”⁷¹ The currently accessible documentation highlights a uniformity of certain productions in several satrapies of the Empire. From this point of view, it may reasonably be inferred that the pieces (or some of these pieces)

⁶⁸ See especially the remarks of M.C. MILLER, ‘The Poetics of Emulation in the Achaemenid World’, 66-69.

⁶⁹ As mentioned by I. ÖZGEN and J. ÖZTÜRK, *The Lydian Treasury*, 55, about metal vases: “The cultural identity of many items is ambiguous”. This consideration may also bear upon a few pieces of earthenware crockery produced in the second half of the first millennium BC.

⁷⁰ On this score, refer to the contribution of D.K. HILL, ‘The Technique of Greek Metal Vases and Its Bearing on Vase Forms in Metal and Pottery’, *American Journal of Archaeology* 51/3 (1947), 248-256; also to that of M.C. MILLER, (‘Adoption and Adaptation’, 111-112) who stresses: “It is often difficult to determine whether material in one medium imitates that of another, and what criteria can be safely used to test the claim... Foreign parentage should not be assumed without specific evidence for a form in the giving culture.”

⁷¹ See especially, A.S. MELIKIAN-CHIRVANI, ‘The International Achaemenid Style’, *Bulletin of the Asia Institute* 7 (1993), 111-130; also, M.Yu. TREISTER, ‘The Tereutics of Colchis in the 5th-4th Centuries BC Local Traditions, Outside Influences, Innovations’, in: A. IVANTCHIK and V. LICHELI (eds.), *Achaemenid Culture and Local Traditions in Anatolia, Southern Caucasus and Iran. News Discoveries*, Ancient Civilizations from Scythia to Siberia 13, (Leiden-Boston, 2007), 97-101.

discussed in this paper should be put in correlation with standardised forms manufactured for the Court of the Great King, still poorly known to this day. The high degree of execution of these vases allows for such inferences. However, as S.J. Simpson puts it: “Other forms are presently unknown in metal and some may represent potters’ responses to local consumer needs...”⁷² It may well point to an aptness between the vase and its owner. Their “good workmanship” undoubtedly refers to some social status of their owner. The quality of the material with which these vessels were engineered confers high artistic value, a value which would account for their symbolic scope, the fact they are devoted to Bes.⁷³ Their rarity implies that they were luxury or semi-luxury vases. These considerations contribute to instil these objects with great social value. At this point of the analysis, it appears fundamental to mention the presence of the effigy of Bes on cups and other service vessels intended for the drinking ritual among the Achaemenid and Hellenistic goldsmith’s art.⁷⁴

It ought to be noted that the vases which we have chosen to illustrate in this paper are not isolated cases. Their analysis in the context of this contribution depends on the relatively small number of known occurrences, whether at the site of Tell el-Herr or on other Egyptian sites. Among the specimens illustrated in the open-ended table (table 1), many seem to tie in with another repertoire other than that of pottery.⁷⁵ Each season, the assemblages accumulated at Tell el-Herr fuel this complex study.

⁷² S.J. SIMPSON, ‘The Royal Table’, 109. The author goes on to specify: “for instance, the rounded bodies and pinched spouts of upright-spouted Achaemenid pottery jars from northwest Iran are features typical of working with clay rather than copying vessels made of other materials. The development of local traditions is also evident in the Egyptian manufacture of faience rhytons, or the Babylonian production of eggshell-thin pottery bowls.”

⁷³ With regard to the dedication of the Bes vases, see C. DEFERNEZ, ‘Les vases Bès à l’époque perse’, 171-174.

⁷⁴ Cf. D. VON BOTHMER, ‘A Greek and Roman Treasury’, 32-33, cat.no. 37 (silver *oinochos* with Bes head at the base of the handle); M. PFROMMER, *Studien*, 266-267 and pl. V.a: Cairo JE 38091 – lid of a silver *thymiaterion* from Tuhk el-Qaramus; J. CURTIS, *Ancient Persia* (London, 2000), 56, fig. 61; S.J. SIMPSON, ‘The Royal Table’, 114, cat.no. 101: British Museum, inv. ANE 135571 – silver bowl with decoration composed of alternating lobes and Bes-headed animal figures.

⁷⁵ These vessels will be covered in later studies. Let us mention first and foremost the presence in F.W. VON BISSING, *Steingefäße*, Catalogue Général du Musée du Caire nos. 18065-18793 (Vienna, 1904), pl. IV: JE 18342-alabaster amphora, of a shape akin to type E in my classification (cf. table 1).

4. Catalogue

4.1 *The Bes vases*

a) MUG (TEH inv. P98/595, TYPE A), fig. 1, 16.

Context: Tell el-Herr, Northeast sector, room PNE 4, N 1513.

Preservation condition: reconstructed from twenty fragments; a few parts of the body missing.

Dimensions: ht.: 13.5 cm; Ø base: 4.3 cm; Ø max. body: 11.15 cm; Ø rim: 7.6 cm (slightly oval).

Composition of the clay: calcareous paste, Tell el Herr fabric C 1 of fine and dense texture, pitted by thin voids and containing a small quantity of scattered mineral inclusions: mica, ochre particles and small sandy quartz (of the order of the 0.1 mm).

Colour of the section: pink (*Munsell*: 5YR 7/4 or 5YR 7/6).

Colour and surface treatment: whitish (*Munsell*: 7.5YR 7/2), except for the lower part of the body identical in colour to that of the section; marks of meticulous burnishing.

Dating: 3rd quarter of the 5th century BC (phase VIA); example discovered under an amphora deposit datable to the end of the 3rd quarter-last quarter of the 5th century BC.

b) MUG (TEH inv. P05/280, TYPE B), fig. 2, 17.

Context: Tell el-Herr, Southeast sector, street SE 82, N 2.

Preservation condition: reconstructed from fifteen fragments; a portion of the lower body is missing.

Dimensions: ht.: 11 cm; Ø base: 6.7 cm; Ø max. body: 9 cm; Ø rim: 8 cm,

Composition of the clay: calcareous paste, Tell el Herr fabric C 2, thin and dense; a slightly sandy texture revealing mica, thin limestone particles as well as sandy quartz, in small quantity; are also visible a few red and black mineral inclusions (< 1 mm).

Colour of the section: pink-light brown (*Munsell*: 5YR 7/4).

Colour and surface treatment: whitish (*Munsell*: near 7.5YR 7/2 or 7/3); exterior burnished.

Remarks: brown colour deposits on interior of body.

Dating: end of the 3rd quarter of the 5th century BC (phase VIA).

c) CUP WITH HANDLES (TEH inv. P89/1213), fig. 3.

Context: Tell el-Herr, East sector, house, N 219 (occupation).

Preservation condition: two non joining fragments; lower part of the body missing.

Dimensions: preserved ht.: 4.5 cm; Ø max. body: 8.6 cm; Ø rim: 9 cm.

Composition of the clay: calcareous paste, Tell el Herr fabric C 1 with very thin and dense texture; few mineral inclusions visible to the naked eye, except mica.

Colour of the section: pink (*Munsell*: near 5YR 7/4).

Colour and surface treatment: light orange-beige; visible burnishing marks.

Dating: end of the 5th - 1st quarter of the 4th century BC (phase VA).

d) CUP OR MUG (TEH inv. P03/345), fig. 4.

Context: Tell el-Herr, surface debris.

Preservation condition: two contiguous fragments; lower part of the body missing.

Dimensions: preserved ht.: 5.2 cm; Ø rim: 9.6 cm.

Composition of the clay: ware similar to Tell el Herr fabric C 2, perhaps mixed, based on a mixture of Nile and marl clays; thin, dense, slightly sandy and micaceous texture, composed of fine sandy quartz (of the order of 0.2 to 0.3 mm), with a small quantity of limestone nodules (≤ 1 mm) and of reddish mineral scattered particles; thin voids are visible in the section (0.5 mm).

Colour of the section: reddish yellow/light red (*Munsell*: near 2.5YR 6/6 or 5YR 6/6).

Colour and surface treatment: traces of a red to brown-red slip on exterior and over the rim (*Munsell*: near 10R 4/8); visible burnishing marks.

Dating: 5th century BC

4.2 Other illustrated vases

e) OVOID VASE WITH SHORT NECK (TEH inv. P07/139), fig. 5

Context: Tell el-Herr, West sector, residence space VII, room O 115, N 2 (filling).

Preservation condition: vessel reconstructed from some twenty fragments; 60%-preserved aperture.

Dimensions: ht.: 15.6 cm; Ø max. body: 13.5 cm; Ø rim: 8.8 cm.

Composition of the clay: coarse, alluvial clay, Tell el Herr fabric L 2; numerous organic particles, sandy quartz (diam. ranging between 0.5 and 1 mm) and golden mica clearly visible in the section and surface.

Colour of the section: red core (*Munsell*: 10R 5/8) bordered by thin bands of chamois/light brown (*Munsell*: 7.5YR 6/4).

Colour and surface treatment: inner surface fires chamois, outer surface coated with a red to brown-red thick slip (*Munsell*: near 10R 4/8) carefully burnished horizontally; smoothing marks over the rim.

Remarks: fire traces visible on exterior.

Dating: end of the 5th-1st quarter of the 4th century BC (phase VA).

f) MUG (TEH inv. P03/203), fig. 6.

Context: Tell el-Herr, Southeast sector, room SE 47, N 3.

Preservation condition: profile reconstructed from several fragments.

Dimensions: ht.: 12.5 cm; Ø base: 8.2 cm; Ø max. body: 9.5 cm; Ø rim: 9.5 cm.

Composition of the clay: alluvial clay, Tell el Herr fabric L 2/L3; moderately thin texture revealing a few sandy quartz (0.5 mm) and thin voids (organic particles consumed by firing).

Colour of the section: brown reddish (*Munsell*: near 10R 4/4 or 10R 4/8) with grey core.

Colour and surface treatment: matt red slipped surface (*Munsell*: near 10R 4/8); colour of the inner surface in the range of orange-red nuances (*Munsell*: between 7.5YR 6/4 and 2.5YR 6/8).

Dating: end of the 3rd quarter of the 5th century BC (phase VIA).

g) MUG (TEH inv. P08/111), fig. 7.

Context: Tell el-Herr, North sector, zone of the “palace complex”, N 37 street (sounding).

Preservation condition: reconstructed from sixteen fragments.

Dimensions: ht.: 14.9 cm; Ø base: c. 7.8 cm; Ø max. body: 10.5 cm; Ø rim: 10 cm.

Composition of the clay: alluvial clay, Tell el Herr fabric L 4 with rather coarse texture, containing a significant quantity of large sandy quartz (≈ 1 mm); decomposing limestone particles or in the form of nodules, grey mineral inclusions (slightly ashy) and voids left by burn-out straw appearing sparsely, in small quantity.

Colour of the section: orange/light red zones (*Munsell*: near 10R 5/6 or 2.5YR 5/6) on pinkish core (*Munsell*: near 10R 6/6) turning grey, according to the portion of the vessel.

Colour and surface treatment: red to brown-red thick slip (*Munsell*: between 10R 5/6 and 10R 4/8), carefully burnished, covering the whole outer surface, base included; colour of the inner surface varying orange to light red (*Munsell*: between 7.5YR 6/4 and 2.5YR 6/8).

Remarks: traces of a greyish white coating inside the vessel (limestone?).

Dating: last quarter 5th-1st quarter of the 4th century BC (end of phase VB-beginning of phase VA).

h) CUP WITH HANDLES (TEH inv. P98/012), fig. 9, 18.

Context: Tell el-Herr, Northeast sector, room PNE 4, N 1513.

Preservation condition: complete profile restored from eight fragments; parts of the body missing.

Dimensions: ht.: 9.1 cm; Ø base: 4.15 cm; Ø max. body: 9 cm; Ø rim: 8.2 cm (slightly oval).

Composition of the clay: marl, Tell el Herr fabric C 1 whose very thin and dense texture contains few mineral inclusions visible to naked eye: essentially of thin golden mica inclusions, in notable quantity, rare ferriferous black particles (of the order of the tenth to 0.5 mm) and sandy quartz (c. 0.3 mm), unequally distributed; voids left by burn-out straw are visible.

Colour of the section: homogeneous, whitish beige turning pink (*Munsell*: near 5YR 7/3 and 7.5YR 8/4).

Colour and surface treatment: identical to that of the section, whitish; lower part of the body carefully burnished, smoothing marks in the upper half.

Remarks: brown colour deposits on the internal wall.

Dating: 3rd quarter of the 5th century BC (phase VIA); example discovered under an amphora deposit datable to the end of the 3rd quarter-last quarter of the 5th century.

i) CUP (TEH inv. P98/159), fig. 10.

Context: Tell el-Herr, Northeast sector, room PNE 4, N 1513.

Preservation condition: complete profile reconstructed from nineteen fragments; a portion of the base missing.

Dimensions: ht.: 10.2 cm; Ø max. body: 10.4 cm; Ø rim: 10.2 cm.

Composition of the clay: marl, Tell el Herr fabric C 1 extremely thin and dense; few visible mineral inclusions, except for mica and thin black particles (of the order of the tenth to 0.5 mm), sparsely distributed. Occasional thin red inclusions. Section and surface pitted by voids.

Colour of the section: white uniform section turning pink (*Munsell*: 5YR 8/2 or 7.5YR 8/3).

Colour and surface treatment: creamy white (*Munsell*: near 7.5YR 8/2-8/3 or 10YR 8/3). Meticulous burnishing marks on the whole external surface; smoothing grooves on the internal surface.

Remarks: exterior smoke-blackened; brown blackish deposits on interior.

Dating: 3rd quarter of the 5th century BC (phase VIA); example discovered under an amphora deposit datable to the end of the 3rd quarter-last quarter of the 5th century BC.

j) CUP (TEH inv. P00/597), fig. 12, 19.

Context: Tell el-Herr, North sector, zone of the “palace complex”, room N 78.

Preservation condition: restored from some thirty fragments.

Dimensions: ht.: 9.1 cm; Ø base: 4 cm; Ø rim: 11 cm.

Composition of the clay: thin, dense and micaceous alluvial paste, Tell el Herr fabric L 3; texture containing, in addition to mica, thinly minced organic elements, limestone particles and small sandy quartz (of the order of 0.5 mm), in small quantities.

Colour of the section: black core bordered by thin bands of chamois-red to orange (*Munsell*: near 10R 5/8).

Colour and surface treatment: red to brown-red thick slip (*Munsell*: between 10R 4/8 and 10R 5/8) carefully burnished on the internal face of the lip and the whole external wall; lighter toned internal wall (*Munsell*: 10R 5/4).

Dating: end of the 5th-1st quarter of the 4th century BC (phase VA).

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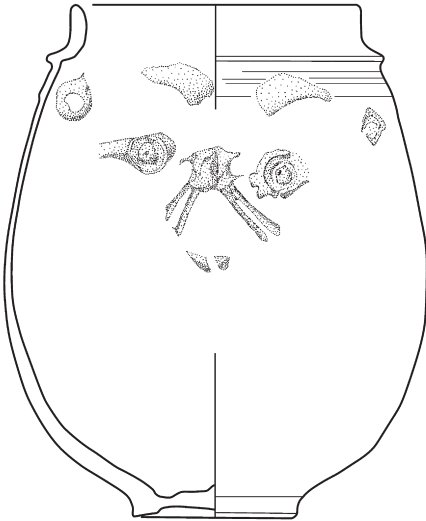


Fig. 1. Marl clay Bes vase
(TEH inv. P98/595).

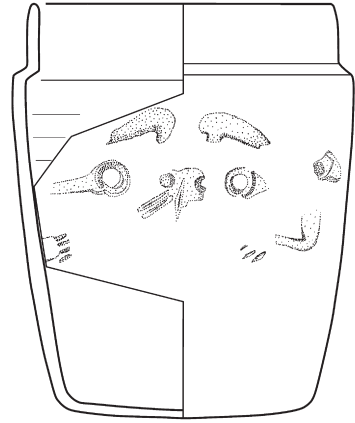


Fig. 2. Marl clay Bes mug
(TEH inv. P05/280).

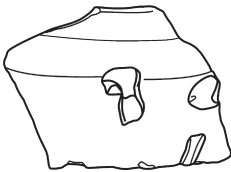
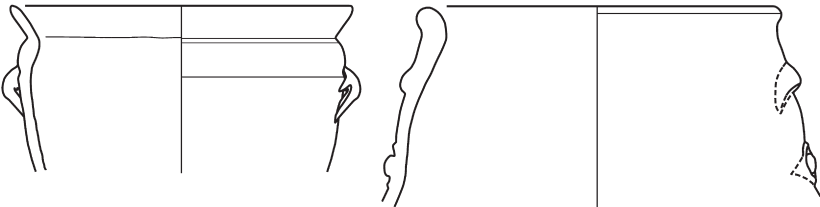


Fig. 3. Marl clay Bes cup
(TEH inv. P89/1213).



Fig. 4. Red slipped Bes-vase
(TEH inv. P03/345).



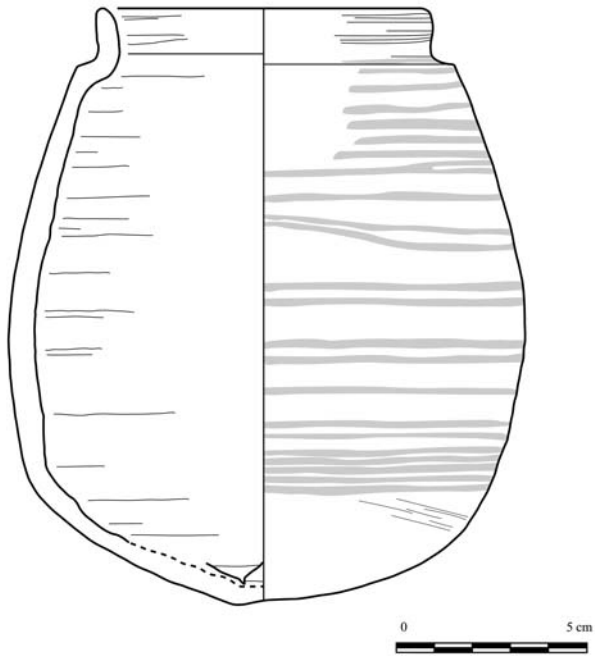


Fig. 5. Red slipped vase (TEH inv. P07/139).

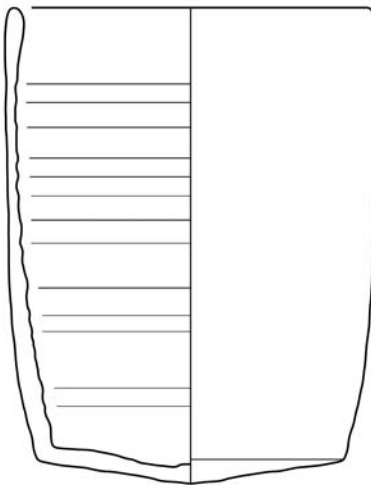


Fig. 6. Red slipped mug
(TEH inv. P03/203).

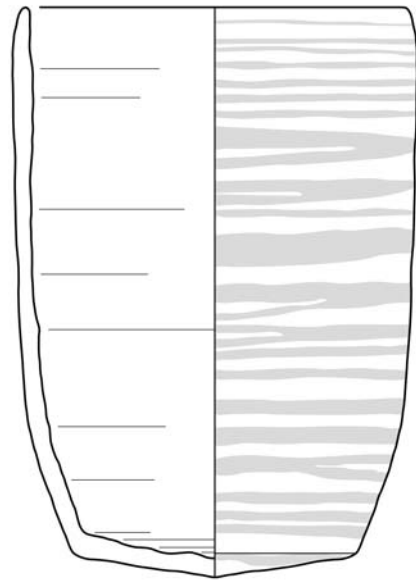


Fig. 7. Red slipped mug
(TEH inv. P08/111).

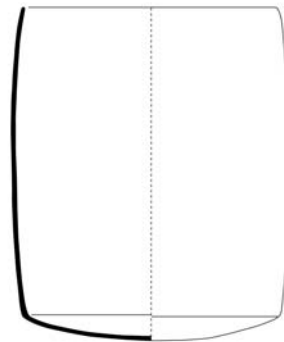
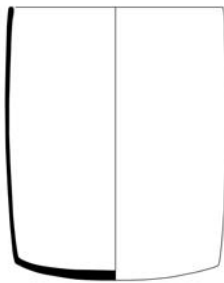


Fig. 8. Bronze mugs from the necropolis of Deve Hüyük
(P.R.S. Mooney, *Cemeteries of the First Millenium B.C. at Deve Hüyük,
near Carchemisch*, British Archaeological Reports, Supplement 87
[London, 1980], 41, fig. 7: 120-121).

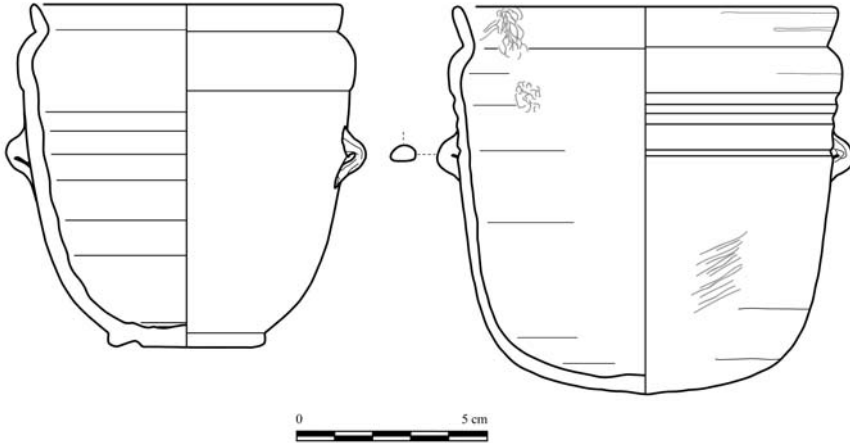


Fig. 9. Marl clay cup
(TEH inv. P98/012).

Fig. 10. Marl clay cup
(TEH inv. P98/159).



Fig. 11. Silver cup (M. Pfrommer, *Metalwork from the Hellenized East. Catalogue of the Collections* [Malibu, 1993], 181, no. 67).

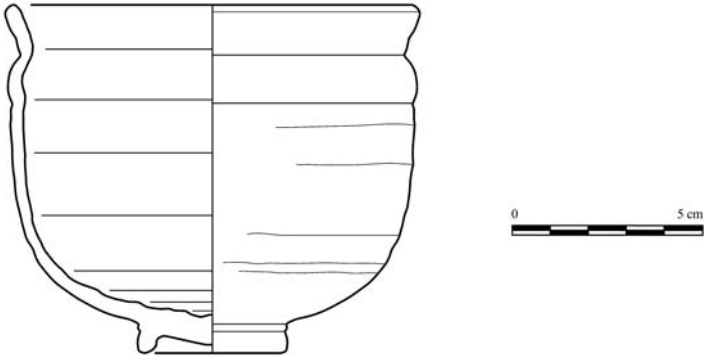


Fig. 12. Red slipped cup (TEH inv. P00/597).



Fig. 13. Silver cup (A. Oliver, Jr., *Silver for the Gods: 800 Years of Greek and Roman Silver* [Toledo, 1977], 66, no. 33).

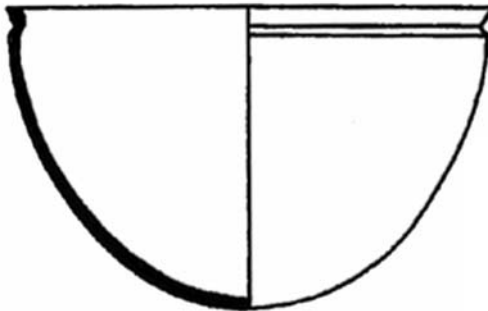


Fig. 14. "Eggshell" ware discovered at Ur (C.L. Woolley, M.E.L. Mallowan, *Ur Excavations IX. The neo-Babylonian and Persian Periods* [London, 1962], pl. 38: 6).



Fig. 15. Silver *situla*-vase (M.Yu. Treister, 'Metal Vessels from Zelenskoya Gora Barrow and Related Finds from Karagodenashkh', *Ancient West & East* 2/1 [2003], 59-60, figs. 8-9, Ermitage Museum, inv. Zel. 34).



Fig. 16. Marl clay Bes-vase
(TEH inv. P98/595 -
© J.-Fr. Gout).



Fig. 17. Marl clay mug
(TEH inv. P05/280 -
© J.-M. Yoyotte).



Fig. 18. Marl clay cup
(TEH inv. P98/012 - © J.-Fr. Gout).



Fig. 19. Red slipped cup
(TEH inv. P00/597 - © J.-M. Yoyotte).

TABLE 1.
Evolution of the Bes vases (© C. Defoemez).

