



KERMA CERAMICS, COMMENSALITY PRACTICES, AND SENSORY EXPERIENCES IN EGYPT DURING THE LATE MIDDLE BRONZE AGE

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ABSTRACT

This article examines instances of ceramics from the Classic Kerma state in modern-day Sudan found in Egypt during the Middle Bronze Age. Moving beyond traditional colonial and ethnic interpretations of this material, I argue that the inherently sensorial and bodily aspects of these vessels in Kerman eating and drinking practices made these objects appealing for experimentation with Egyptian audiences. Commensality in social reception and hospitality between Kermans and Egyptians is argued to be a primary means through which these objects and practices were exchanged and experimented with. These instances of commensality worked to construct, maintain, and negotiate social bonds and relationships during intercultural encounters and processes such as migration, trade, and diplomacy between Egyptian and Kerman populations.

INTRODUCTION

The dynamics of interaction between Egypt and Kerma during the late Middle Bronze Age (encompassing Middle Kingdom/Second Intermediate Period in Egypt and Middle/Classic Kerma in Nubia) is one that has traditionally been approached through an asymmetrical interaction framework. The clear adoption of certain forms of Egyptian material culture, behaviors, and practices in the royal and elite burials at Kerma documents a heavy Egyptian cultural influence, at least within royal and elite contexts, supporting traditional “Egyptianization” approaches.¹ However, these influences were actually very selective adoptions of Egyptian elite and courtly etiquettes and practices by Kermans, especially in regards to body culture.² These findings highlight that the Egyptianization model applied to Nubian/Egyptian interactions, in which Egyptian cultural practices, material culture, and iconography are adopted and emulated by other societies, has a

tendency to encourage distinct core/periphery interactions in which Egypt is the dominant and monolithic cultural actor.³ Such cultural hegemonic models, such as Minoanization, Mycenaeanization, Egyptianization, and Romanization, have been noted to be highly problematic in discussing intercultural encounters. They often place these interactions in the framework of colonial contexts, overlooking the agency of the ‘peripheral’ societies in acts of adoption, emulation, and rejection, as well as the potential for a more symmetrical series of exchanges.⁴

The legacy of traditional historical models of Nubian/Egyptian interaction, namely military conflict, colonialism, and Egyptianization, has neglected how Nubian societies could have cultural impacts on Egyptian society.⁵ The few instances of suggested cultural exchanges from Kerma coming into Egypt have been tentative, such as the possible transmission of Kerman casemate architecture at late

MBA Deir el-Ballas and the possible Egyptian emulation/modification of Kerman beds during the late MBA/early LBA.⁶ These suggestions are certainly plausible, but there has not been a full exploration into the extent and mechanics of these Kerman cultural transmissions in Egypt.

In this paper I examine a corpus of Classic Kerma ceramics, Black Topped Red Polished Ware (BTRPW) beakers and types of cooking wares, which are found in a variety of social contexts in MBA Egypt. I propose that the presence of these ceramics indicate a short period of Egyptian experimentation with Kerman commensality practices and material equipment. I take an embodied and sensorial theoretical approach in examining these ceramics and suggest that the embedded sensorial and bodily interactions of the vessel designs provided novel cultural practices for Egyptian audiences to experiment with. Using this theoretical framework, I suggest that these vessels and cultural practices were transmitted through instances of gift exchange and commensality between Kermans and Egyptians across social levels, but particularly in elite contexts, that took place in a variety of different social intercultural encounters such as trade, migration, and diplomacy.

KERMA CERAMICS IN EGYPT

The presence of Classic Kerma ceramics in MBA Egypt has been studied in detail through the work of Bourriau, Hein, Gratien, and Fuscaldò.⁷ These works provide a detailed study of the distribution and contexts of these Kerman ceramics, though this corpus is continually in need of revision due to ongoing excavation work. In addition, the reappraisal of Nubian ceramics from older excavations has revealed that Kerman ceramics have often been misidentified as older Egyptian Predynastic ceramics or Nubian C-Group or Pan Grave ceramics.⁸ Nubian cooking wares are often difficult to firmly distinguish from each other, especially in the difference between Kerman and Pan-Grave ceramics, which is in itself more of an issue resulting from scholarly typology categories and distinctions. It is not my intention to provide another updated and detailed list of the Kerma ceramic material in Egypt as examined in detail by the authors above. However, it is necessary to briefly discuss the nature of the archaeological contexts these ceramics, the quantities of this material, and the ceramic typologies. I will then provide an interpretation of this material through a material,

sensorial, and embodied lens focusing on the social and bodily roles and functions of these vessels.

FORMS AND CONTEXTS

The identified Kerma wares and vessel typologies found in Egypt are almost exclusively BTRPW beakers and bowls and “household” cooking wares. BTRPW is a distinctive Kerman fineware, made from fine Nile clay and comprising thin walled bowls, beakers, and spouted serving vessel forms (Figs. 1–2).⁹ The ware is noted for its vibrant color scheme, with a red-orange lower body, black top, and often a white/gray band between the two, though this is more common on the beakers. The surface is often highly burnished giving it a metallic sheen. The “household” cooking wares comprise mostly of globular bowls and hemispherical vessels that are usually made of a coarse fabric but can vary in decoration styles.¹⁰ These comprise linear or hashed patterns that are impressed or incised, as well as varying levels of burnishing.

Kerma ceramic sherds and complete vessels of both these wares have been found in small numbers or isolated contexts at Saqqara, Abydos, Kom Rabi’a, Dashur, Lahun, Lisht, Gurob, Qau, Abideyeh, Edfu, and Dra’ Abu el-Naga’, where they are almost entirely found in graves.¹¹ These burials are dated across the entirety of the Second Intermediate Period (SIP) and the early New Kingdom, with a number (five in total) coming from SIP cemeteries at Abydos. These burials are largely Egyptian in style and lack of any other Kerma material culture or indication of funerary practices. Exceptions to this include a Burial 694 at Abydos, which is oval in shape with semi-contracted bodies and contained a large quantity of Kerma ceramics including 11 BTRPW beakers and a “teapot.”¹² Tomb E2 at Abideyeh might also be a Kerma grave, as might some of the other graves in Cemetery X. These had circular grave shapes, contracted bodies, and an assortment of Nubian material culture, such as cooking vessels, BTRPW beakers, decorated bucrania, sheep, goat, and cattle skulls, and leather shrouds. Petrie identified these as Pan Grave, but they could also be Kerma. However, the presence of Egyptian storage vessels and kohl pots makes any exact identities unclear.¹³ The rest of the SIP burials with Kerma ceramic remains appear to be largely indicative of Egyptian cultural identities, though of course identity is fluid and dynamic and can be expressed in different ways beyond funerary practice. We therefore cannot be certain of the cultural and ethnic



FIGURE 1: Example of a Kerma BTRPW Beaker from the Thirteenth Dynasty Tomb 525 at Abydos. Metropolitan Museum (Accession No. 20.2.45) (CC0 1.0).

FIGURE 2: Example of a Kerma BTRPW bowl from Tomb R2 at Asasif, Thebes. Metropolitan Museum (Accession No. 16.10.227) (CC0 1.0).



identities of the individuals in these burials.

The burials represent an assortment of social levels, though there is a notable lack of courtly and royal burials with Kerma ceramics. A single burial at Dra Abu el-Nag' at Qurna with Kerma ceramics is unusual, as it appears to have been a courtly or royal burial.¹⁴ It belonged to a female individual and a child who were buried in a rishi coffin along with a rich array of jewelry and other Egyptian objects. The inclusion of six Kerman BTRPW beakers has been used as a possible ethnic marker of Nubian identity, especially as these were stacked in a similar manner to those found in Kerman funerary culture.¹⁵ However, no other Kerman material culture or practices were apparent in the burial, making the identity of the individual and child uncertain. The unusual courtly or royal nature of this burial might also be due to relative lack of excavated royal and court burials from this period. At least some elite and royal consumption of these vessels is likely, due to the palatial contexts of some Kerma ceramics discussed below, which are may have been the result of diplomatic relationships.

An important note is that a number of these burials are also heavily disturbed. This makes the exact quantity and composition of funerary assemblages difficult to ascertain, particularly in how they relate to overall ceramic typologies. In some cases, the Kerma ceramic remains are found in residual or associated contexts to the burials, making it hard to be sure of the nature of their deposition and what other funerary objects were placed in the burials. As a result, we must be careful in making precise identifications of the social status and cultural identities of the grave occupants, as some of the burial assemblages are missing.

The frequency of Classic Kerma ceramics in Egyptian burials is limited, and largely restricted to two vessel forms, BTRPW beakers and cooking wares.¹⁶ Establishing the exact quantities of this material is difficult, given that most of the ceramic remains are body sherds, and are often in disturbed contexts. Further research on wider SIP funerary ceramic assemblages will perhaps help expand the dataset of Kerma ceramics. It is clear from the available evidence that these Kerman vessels were not widely incorporated into Egyptian funerary culture and ceramics.¹⁷ Currently missing is more information on the presence of Classic Kerman ceramics in Egyptian domestic settlements, which

would provide a more nuanced picture of the consumption and distribution of these ceramics. Unfortunately, there is a current dearth of well-excavated settlement contexts for the SIP in both Egypt and Nubia in which this could be further explored. However, two Egyptian settlement sites do provide further evidence of the consumption and use of Kerma ceramics: Tell el-Dab'a and Deir el-Ballas. The unusual nature of these concentrations is significant, as both of these sites are large cosmopolitan palatial centers. I believe this has bearing on considering why these ceramics are appearing in Egypt and as such, these cases deserve a brief examination to determine and compare the nature of consumption of Kerman ceramics at both sites.

TELL EL-DAB'A

The corpus of Kerma ceramic remains from Tell el-Dab'a consist of mostly of body sherds of BTRPW beakers and bowls and possibly "houseware" bowls and cooking ware. The courseware cooking sherds are somewhat difficult to precisely identify, both relating to specific Nubian groups and manufacturing origin.¹⁸ These range in date from late MBA to mid-/late LBA contexts.¹⁹ However, it seems likely that most of the material dates to the late MBA and early LBA and that the post-early LBA sherds are mostly residual.²⁰ They have been found, so far, in the palace district area of Ezbet Helmi in areas H/I-H/VI, with the majority in open contexts of dumps, mud-brick debris, sandy sediments, and pits.²¹ Additional Kerma ceramic sherds, or ambiguous "Nubian" ceramics which may be Kerman, were also found in pits in the Hyksos Khayan palace and in domestic or administrative contexts in Area R/III.²² It is important to highlight that the archaeological contexts of all of these ceramic fragments are very mixed and disturbed, and that their presence within dumps and debris does not illuminate much of their exact use and functions.

Since the ceramic remains are very fragmentary and mostly out of context, it is difficult to get a clear idea of exactly how many vessels are represented at Tell el-Dab'a and at what time they arrived. However, the quantity of sherds that have been identified have allowed some commentary as to the frequency of shapes testified at the site. Cooking pots are the most common, followed by BTRPW bowls,

and then BTRPW beakers.²³

The BTRPW sherds are made from a fine Nile silt and exhibit the typical thin walls, coloration, burnishing, and tulip shape of BTRPW beakers found throughout the Kerma heartland. Cooking ware sherds are made from a coarse fabric.²⁴ They feature typical decoration for this typology, with a red exterior slip, black top, black interior, and varying instances of burnishing and incised or impressed linear or hatched decoration.²⁵

The unfortunate lack of firm contexts of these sherds makes it difficult to say for certain who was using these vessels. The general context within palatial compounds and around these buildings suggests a royal or courtly consumption of these vessels. However, some of the sherds outside the palatial buildings likely represent a wider domestic use in the city. This seems to illustrate that the consumption of these ceramics ranged across social levels at the site. The context of these sherds in dumps and discard contexts in the city indicate that they were certainly being used and were not funerary items or from funerary contexts.

DEIR EL-BALLAS

The Kerma ceramic remains from Deir el-Ballas are better contextualized and identified than those at Tell el-Dab'a. They comprise of body and rim sherds and some larger body fragments. The majority of the remains belong to cooking vessels, with a few sherds and fragments of BTRPW beakers.²⁶ The cooking vessels were found entirely in the settlement areas, alongside Egyptian non-cooking ceramics, while the beaker sherds and fragments were found both in the settlement and in four graves at the site.²⁷

The cooking ware sherds comprise of bowls, often of a globular shape, with a coarse straw tempered fabric and wide mouths.²⁸ They often feature linear and hatched decorations that appear to be made with different techniques and implements such as sticks, netting, and fingers.²⁹ These create a variety of different patterns and textures on the surface, which are often very unique due to the handmade nature of the decoration.

The beaker sherds, which are smaller in number than the cooking wares, show all the typical features of BTRPW beakers. They are made of fine, dense, mud and dung tempered fabric with the characteristic thin walls of Kerma beakers. They also feature the distinct red/orange coloration, often with a grey/white banding, and black top on the exterior,

while the interior is black.³⁰ The surface of the sherds, on both the exterior and interior, are highly burnished, creating a smooth, reflective and somewhat slippery surface.³¹ From the illustrated fragments it appears that the beakers were mostly of the classic tulip shape, and were in the medium/large category.³² However, one of the beakers appears to be a very small vessel, indicating that there were ranges of beaker sizes being used at Deir el-Ballas.

The typology of Kerma vessels found at Deir el-Ballas follows the same pattern found at Tell el-Dab'a, with a specific focus on BTRPW beakers and bowls and cooking wares. The different contexts of the wares also illustrate potentially different patterns of consumption. The funerary context of the BTRPW beakers fits into the wider pattern of mortuary contexts of this ware in SIP cemeteries.³³ In contrast, the cooking ware was found exclusively in the settlement, indicating a contextual value in commensality, identity construction, and status expression within the household.

EXPERIENCING KERMAN CERAMICS

The contexts of the Kerma ceramics at Tell el-Dab'a and Deir el-Ballas, along with the more isolated examples in Egyptian cemeteries, indicate that these specific vessels were of special interest to Egyptian audiences. This raises the question of why these ceramic forms were being selected and consumed? I would suggest the most likely explanation stems from the important functions and roles of both wares in Kerman commensality practices.³⁴ The direct association of these ceramics forms with foodways has been noted before, largely in relation to using the pottery as potential evidence for the presence of settled Kerman populations in Egypt.³⁵ The reason for this is largely based on ethnographic analogy on how foodways are resistant ethnic and cultural markers.³⁶ However, as noted by Bourriau, there is no real indication in many of these settlements and graves of Kerman identities being expressed.³⁷ Notably absent are the contracted Kerman burial positions, placement of the body on beds, any sacrificed animals or people, and the presence of any other Kerman material culture. While some of the graves do seem to exhibit some of these Kerman features, such as burial 694 at Abydos, these are exceptional examples.³⁸ There is also evidence that these ceramic forms may have been locally made in Egypt. Fuscaldo has pointed out that one of the

Nubian ceramics at Tell el-Dab'a appears to be actually Egyptian imitations of Nubian cooking wares.³⁹ Aston and Bietak have also highlighted how some of the Tell el-Dab'a ceramics are locally made.⁴⁰ This indicates Egyptian attempts to replicate Kerman or Nubian ceramics.

It is very unlikely that the contexts of these Kerman ceramics can solely be interpreted as instances of settled Kerman populations. Much of this ceramic material has been interpreted through traditional culture historical models and stereotypes of Nubian/Egyptian relations, particularly through the stereotype of Nubian "mercenaries" and "servants."⁴¹ However, these interpretations limit the diversity of interactions that this material may document, and largely interpret them as ethnic markers. In addition, the archaeological contexts from the burials are not conducive to interpreting all of the burials with Kerma ceramics as ethnic markers. They certainly might indicate blurred cultural identities, but there is a lack of further material and funerary practices that would suggest any strong Kerman cultural identity being expressed. The domestic contexts of the cooking and beaker vessels at Tell el-Dab'a and Deir el-Ballas are clearer indicators of direct interactions between Egyptians and Kermans at these sites, as these have been either found in domestic and discard contexts, indicating a clear use of the vessels. However, the question of who is using these vessels is still unclear. At the least the material suggests a mixed usage by both Kermans and Egyptians. Given these contexts I think it is appropriate and logical to expand our interpretation of this material beyond solely ethnic markers of migrants.

The limited quantities and contexts of the ceramics could be an indication of these being "exotica" used in conspicuous consumption and funerary culture. The concept of "exotica" ascribes the "foreignness" of a material or object as valued qualities that construct symbolic meaning used in status expression and social hierarchies.⁴² This certainly might be the case regarding the Kerma ceramics, and I agree that the vessels were likely used in status expression. However, I find that the concept of "exotica" is often overly simplistic and often focuses on the perceived aesthetic and visual aspects of material culture at the expense of object functions and roles in cultural practices. It also risks transplanting modern concepts of value and aesthetics on past material culture and does not

adequately explain potential variant modalities and agency behind engagement with "foreign" materials and material culture. While I certainly recognize that some aspect of the "foreignness" and visual aspects of the vessels were important in how Egyptians found this material compelling, I don't think the concept adequately explains the focus on these ceramic forms out of the entire Kerman ceramic repertoire. No does it explain the settlement contexts and the apparent use of these ceramics outside of the funerary sphere. This is apparent at Tell el-Dab'a, where the Kerman sherds are found in discard contexts, where they were deposited after breaking from use. To this end I would state that the funerary contexts of the beakers might indeed be tied to ideas of conspicuous consumption and status expression, but that this value would have been generated from a wider array of qualities beyond the visual. Instead, direct Egyptian use and engagement with Kerman practices and foodways should also be considered, expanding on the other sensory qualities of the vessels and how the vessel design interacts with the body and food.

I propose that these Kerman ceramics should be viewed as the results of more expansive culture contact processes and intercultural exchanges between Kermans and Egyptians. I would suggest that the interest in specific vessel forms demonstrates an engagement with Kerman commensality practices, foodways, and material paraphernalia by Egyptians. In order to further examine this idea, I take an embodied, sensorial, and material theoretical approach in examining these Kerma ceramics. I analyze how these vessels, and their contents, could interact with the body, creating specific forms of gesture and distinct bodily/sensory experiences for users in commensality events. These forms of bodily and sensory interaction arise from the body techniques used to handle them and the material design of the objects.⁴³ These body techniques encompass a variety of interactive gestures with objects, including how vessels could be held and passed, drunk and eaten from, or poured or served from. These gestures could be influenced by the variety of design and material factors of objects, such as the vessel material, size, shape, and decoration.⁴⁴ I argue that these bodily and sensorial qualities of the Kerman vessels, in addition to their aesthetic qualities, were part of their perceived value to Egyptian audiences. These aspects would have facilitated the expression of

status and identity in commensality events, helping to explain why these vessels appear in Egyptian contexts.

Before proceeding, it is important to note that this approach is theoretical and proposes a possible interpretation that is intended to stimulate discussion and further exploration of this material. This approach examines a range of possibilities for the experiential aspects of these vessels, highlighting how they could be used in a variety of ways in daily life. It does not attempt to directly dictate and reconstruct the exact sensory and bodily experiences of the vessels, which is difficult to accomplish due to the contextual lived nature of the body.⁴⁵ Instead, it attempts to illustrate some of the potential ways in which these Kerma vessels could enable and facilitate forms of bodily behavior, and how they had important social roles in Kerma society. This works to explain why Egyptian audiences would wish to engage with these Kerma vessels and practices, and how they could be used to express status and identity. In the following analysis I examine the BTRPW beakers and bowls, followed by the cooking wares, focusing on the ways the design and functions of the vessels facilitated forms of gesture and sensory experience. I then proceed to discuss how varied processes of intercultural contacts, such as trade, migration, and diplomacy, could explain the exchange of these vessels, foodways, and behavior between Egypt and the Kerma state.

BTRPW BEAKERS AND BOWLS

The BTRPW forms, largely beakers but also including bowls, have been noted to be distinctive in their shapes, finish, and decoration. The beakers, with their characteristic bell or tulip shape, thin walls, highly burnished surface, and vivid coloration have been the object of particular interest in terms of their aesthetics.⁴⁶ However, they also have distinct bodily and sensory interactions that would have made them engaging and interactive vessels to use in drinking practices.

The surface treatment of the beakers and bowls has distinct haptic qualities, which became immediately clear upon the author's handling of these vessel types.⁴⁷ The finest vessels feature highly burnished surfaces, which makes them very smooth and highly tactile. In some cases, the level of burnishing is so fine that it actually affects the ability

to hold the vessel firmly, resulting in the need to take care in handling. The burnishing on both the exterior and interior would also result in a haptic sensation in drinking from the vessels, which would have been felt on the sensitive area of the lips. This would have been further compounded by the thinness of the flaring rim of the beakers. The clear focus on producing these finishes on the beakers indicates these sensory experiences were primary aspects in their design, working not only to provide the visual aspects of catching the light but also in providing a haptic sensation.

The size of the beakers is quite variable, indicating an underlying design choice for manufacturing these vessels. I suggest that this might be due to two interwoven reasons. First, the variation in beaker sizes could be due to differences in the contents of the vessels. Minor has recently noted that some large ceramic jars found in court burials at Kerma contain large quantities of what appears to be plant residue still in them, and which often had large beakers in close proximity.⁴⁸ This may indicate that large beakers were used for drinking a processed beverage, as their larger volume size would allow more drinkable liquid and accommodate potential suspended material. However, the small beakers have very limited volume capacities, making them rather unsuited in containing anything unfiltered or unrefined, even if used in conjunction with a filtration device such as a straw.⁴⁹ Even small amounts of suspended material in the liquid would limit the volume of drinkable liquid in the smallest vessels. This could suggest that these small vessels were used for a different type of beverage, perhaps a type of wine, juice, tea, or, given the importance of cattle in Kerma society, milk or blood.⁵⁰ The design of the small beakers to have a restricted volume capacity suggests that their contents might have had special significance and been highly valued. The sizes might also imply different functional roles associated with specific beverage types and volumes, which is also reflected in the different sized pouring vessels found at Kerma. This is aptly demonstrated in the distinctions between large zoomorphic jugs and smaller BTRPW "teapots."⁵¹ Interestingly, there is little evidence that either of these pouring forms were part of the Kerma ceramics being used in Egypt, though this might be due to issues of preservation, or that they might be represented in unidentifiable body sherds.

The different sizes also facilitated different techniques for holding vessels. The difference between the smallest and largest beaker types at Kerma is quite dramatic, from 6–20 cm in height.⁵² These differences in size were also documented at Deir el-Ballas, indicating similar consumption of different beaker sizes in Egypt.⁵³ Holding techniques would vary between a two-handed technique for the large beakers and a single-handed technique for the smaller beakers, which may have even just involved fingers.⁵⁴ In addition, a number of distinct conical lids were found in association with some beaker forms, particularly rilled beakers, of the black polished ware type found at Kerma.⁵⁵ This indicates that lids might have been used in conjunction with some beaker forms, adding another gestural element to using the vessels. However, the exact relationship between these lids and beakers has not been technically studied and may need to be reassessed, given that it is based on Reisner's very limited remarks and categorization. In addition, no definite remains of these lids have been found in Egypt, though they may be present in the corpus of numerous unidentifiable Kerman body sherds.

The bowls also have a similar degree of variation in size from contemporary examples from Kerma, but not quite to the same degree as the beakers. These size variations would result in participants in commensality events using different vessels and techniques for handling them. It seems likely that a combination of these two reasons, contents and holding techniques, would facilitate contextually specific ways of drinking and eating in order to express different social roles and identity.

The contents of the vessels also provided distinct tastes, odors, and perhaps the bodily effects of substances like alcohol. This is relevant in thinking about how the vessels were cognitively tied to bodily and sensory experiences of consumption and foodways. Minor has suggested that the beakers were likely used for beer drinking, noting significant mash remains in some large jars associated with beakers in burials at Kerma.⁵⁶ Further scientific analysis of these plant residues will hopefully lead to a better understanding of the beaker's contents. However, archaeobotanical analysis and identification of beer is currently highly debated, and it is unclear to what degree of certainty we can firmly identify specific beverages like beer at all from residues and macro remains.⁵⁷ Still, it is a distinct possibility that the vessels were used for the

consumption of some type of alcoholic beverage and that the beakers would facilitate distinct altered sensory experiences, mood, and behavior through varying levels of consumption and drunkenness.⁵⁸ These altered sensory experiences would be intimately intertwined with these vessels, in the same manner that specific vessel forms for alcohol today are designed for and intimately associated with alcohol consumption.⁵⁹ These build into processes of memory, working to invoke both past and possible future sensations of taste and drunkenness in relation to these vessels.⁶⁰ In this manner, the beaker forms themselves could be intimately associated with the consumption of types of beverages and their subsequent bodily and sensory experiences.

COOKING WARES

Unlike the BTRPW beakers, Kerman cooking wares have a much higher degree of variability in their physical attributes. The varieties of decoration, color, size, fabric composition, wall thickness, and shapes provide them with a number of different possible functions, roles, body interactions, and sensory experiences. In this manner, the qualities I discuss below are by no means exhaustive but provide a starting point in discussing the sensorial dimensions of the vessels.

The cooking vessel shapes and sizes are typically globular and hemispherical, which allow them to be comfortably held with one or two hands, depending on the size. Some larger sizes may have had a fixed position and were not directly handled after cooking began. Most of these pots had rounded bottoms, making their placement on a flat surface unlikely. It may be that they were either placed on a stone circle/hearth, a stand, were suspended somehow, placed in a depression, or on a granular material such as sand. Some examples of this cooking ware have rough reinforcements on the base with silt, perhaps to improve stability when placed on a flat surface.⁶¹ Temperature would be a vital deciding factor in considering the timing and method through which these vessels, which would largely mediated through the thickness of the walls, the size, and the use of lids. Through phases of heating and cooling, they would allow very different sensations when handled at different stages of commensality events, though this could be circumvented through the use of insulating materials.

The bodily techniques for serving food are

indicated by the material features and design of the cooking vessels. The wide mouths of the vessels allowed hands and food such as meat to be dipped into the contents or perhaps help tipping contents into bowls. Perhaps a specialized implement could have been used, though no evidence for any forms of eating utensils have been found at any Kerma sites. This suggests that the hands were primary tools in the techniques of serving and consumption. The clear burnishing on the interior of the vessels could also aid in the extraction of food with the hands, while also ease in cleaning.⁶² The variety of different mouth sizes would facilitate different techniques for accessing their contents. Larger vessels would allow more than one hand and individual to use the pot at the same time, while smaller vessels would only allow a single hand and individual to use them. The larger pots may have had a fixed position, around which participants would be sat to access the contents, or perhaps moved to a different location for consumption after serving. In contrast, the smaller vessels could be carried to new locations and also passed around, perhaps using insulating materials such as cloth for handling. These variations in the size of the vessels therefore facilitated distinct body techniques for serving and eating, while also impacting the potential spatial orientations of the body in commensality events.

The different decoration styles of the vessels also facilitate quite different tactile sensations. In the case of the incised and impressed linear and hatched decorations these create very distinct textures on the surface of the vessels, which would create tactile sensations when holding them. Given the variety and handmade nature of these decorations, these could create quite different ways of experiencing holding the vessels. The patterns and style are also distinctly Kerma in style, indicative of Kerma cultural identities and experiences, which Gratien suggests are also likely the product of local Kerma identities.⁶³ This could indicate potential regional preferences and traditions for how the decoration interplays with the surface of the skin. The vessels also have some instances of exterior burnishing, although not to the degree of the BTRPW vessels. This burnishing and its resulting tactile sensations appear to be part of the vessel's design and function. Therefore, these decorative elements would have quite distinct implications in the experiences in holding the vessels.

Odor and taste would be inherent embodied aspects of using these ceramics, through their inherent processual and functional relationships with foodstuffs and cuisine practices. Processes of food preparation and cooking, which in themselves involve embodied procedural and performative elements, result in inherent bodily and sensory interactions with the foodstuffs and cooking vessels. The process of cooking with these ceramics would produce scents that directly stimulated the body, through processes like salivation, while also evoking memory of past and future taste and consumption.⁶⁴ This sensory information would be embedded in the materiality of the cooking pots, forming distinct olfactory associations with the vessels. Taste would also be an important embedded experiential aspect to the vessels during and after cooking. Their contents could be tested from the pots during the cooking process to achieve the desired flavor and then subsequently served from or consumed out of in the resulting meal. The actual process of cooking within ceramics often directly impacts the resulting flavor of the food, highlighting the direct relationships between the vessel's materiality, design, and sensory consumption.⁶⁵ These types of bodily responses and sensory elements would also produce memory, in which the tastes and odors of food would be intimately associated with the physical vessels themselves, even at times when the vessels themselves did not have contents.⁶⁶ These would in effect act as embodied pneumatic devices of consumption and foodways. Currently little is known of the exact contents of these vessels, as no comprehensive scientific analysis has been performed. However, there has been some discussion of evidence for Kerma and larger Nubian cultural cuisine, which may have utilized broomcorn millet (*Panicum miliaecum*), caprids (*Ovis/Capra* spp.), and cattle (*Bos* sp.), based on archaeobotanical and zooarchaeological remains found at Kerma sites, such as Kerma and Ukma West.⁶⁷ The nature of these vessels as cooking pots makes them intimately associated with Kerma/Nubian cuisine practices. As Fuller has noted, the actual design and materiality of ceramic vessels can be extremely useful in reconstructing foodways.⁶⁸ In the case of these ceramics, the globular shape and wide, open mouths would be best suited in for the preparation of stews and porridges, perhaps using broomcorn millet, milk, and meat (goat and beef) based dishes. Such

foodways are important in contemporary Sudanese and East African societies, based on ethnographic studies.⁶⁹ Further scientific analysis will hopefully shed more light on this in future research, bringing a better idea of the concept of taste and associated foodways with these vessels.

This examination has illustrated how these Kerman cooking vessels, which are often overlooked as utilitarian due to their ceramic material and function for cooking, were actually carefully crafted objects that would be intimately connected to food consumption. Their materiality and design were likely embedded with bodily and sensory aspects, underlining an agency in facilitating different embodied experiences. These features would have been highly valued in the social contexts of commensality, helping to create performative cuisine practices. This could be expressed through potential forms of etiquette surrounding commensality events, including who is a server, who is being served, acts of passing and sharing, and order and timings of serving, passing, and consumption. Certainly, some aspects of the cooking wares indicate ways in which they interacted with the body and built space. These would be valuable opportunities in which social relationships could be expressed and negotiated within such activities and events.

EGYPTIAN EXPERIMENTATION WITH KERMAN COMMENSALITY

The Kerman ceramics that appear in Egypt are forms that had important roles in eating and drinking practices in contemporary Kerman society. The widespread finding of these ceramics across social levels points to these commensality practices being key material constructions of Kerma cultural identity.⁷⁰ However, they also had key roles in the expression of power and negotiation of social hierarchy in Kerma society.⁷¹ This is demonstrated by the proliferation of drinking and cooking forms in the Classic Kerma period and the provisioning of these forms in large quantities in royal and elite burials.⁷² Minor's recent study of the ceramic assemblages in the Classic Kerma royal tumuli has also suggested this.⁷³ She noted that elite burials are well equipped with drinking equipment such as beakers, possible filtration drinking straws, and large jars, which were placed in close proximity to human bodies. In some cases, the large jars were centrally placed in burials, around which bodies of

the primary deceased and human sacrifices were placed. She suggests these assemblages of drinking equipment, beakers, drinking straws, and large jars, were indicative of communal banqueting practices. The spatial positioning and provisioning of the burials reflects etiquettes used in life for commensality, such as spatial positioning around beer jars, and who was afforded which types of vessels and equipment. These practices are argued to have been used to create social bonds of indebtedness and obligation between individuals across social levels of Kerma society. This was ultimately expressed through the carefully choreographed positioning of sacrificed individuals through the framework of commemorative feasting in Classic Kerma burials at Kerma. Minor's study highlights that these ceramics and commensality practices were highly important dimensions of Kerman cultural identity, social hierarchy negotiation, and status expression.

The above analysis of the ceramic evidence indicates that these vessels facilitated the construction of a range of bodily behaviors and experiences around commensality events. Additionally, these body behaviors and sensorial aspects would have been important in negotiating and expressing social roles and status throughout the different layers of Kerma society, as suggested by Minor. But how does this help us understand how and why these Kerman ceramics are appearing in Egypt in funerary and settlement contexts?

The selective consumption of BTRPW beakers and cooking vessels, which relate to preparing, serving, and consuming Kerman cuisine, indicate that Egyptians were specifically interested in Kerman foodways and commensality practices. The material and embodied qualities of these vessels involved specific gestural forms and sensorial experiences that differed from traditional Egyptian ceramic drinking, eating, and cooking forms.⁷⁴ This is immediately apparent in the different forms and nature of these Kerma ceramics when compared them with contemporary Middle Kingdom and SIP ceramic assemblages.⁷⁵ The inherently different nature of the Kerman ceramics is most likely based on different types of foodways and commensality practice which these ceramics were used for. These differences in foodways would be important ways of expressing status and negotiating social positions, particularly in the construction of complex etiquettes around commensality for Egyptians.⁷⁶ Etiquettes, as

ritualized and codified forms of behavior, offer a variety of different ways of incorporating these body/material interactions, such as considering who is allocated certain vessels of differing size, material, and decoration, who acts as server, who is served, timings and order of servings, toasting, and sharing/passing.⁷⁷ The etiquettes that Kermans utilized in their own cultural practices would be intimately tied to the embodied and sensory aspects of these vessels, as suggested by Minor's study. It is logical to extrapolate that part of the appeal of these ceramics would be in the inherent foodways and behaviors they enabled and mediated. In this manner, the exchange of Kerma ceramics could involve the transmission of their embedded practices, though these of course could be adapted into new forms or rejected entirely. Egyptian experimentation with these Kerma ceramics and function in status expression would explain the unusual distribution of Kerma vessels within Egypt in both funerary and settlement contexts, as well as the possible production of imitation Kerma wares.

The concept of experimentation with foreign foodways has been the subject of a number of studies.⁷⁸ These studies have highlighted how these types of intercultural encounters were commonplace in processes of culture contact. Exposures to new foodways, through the engagement with food harvesting, processing, preparation, cooking, serving, and consumption, often resulted in complicated reactions involving short term and long-term adoptions, rejections, and resistances against such practices.⁷⁹ Differing cultural foodway practices and gastropolitics were engaging and status enhancing aspects while at the same time disruptive and potentially risky endeavors. Hastorf has noted intercultural encounters with different foodways and commensality practices are powerful events in which participants have to decide to engage with or resist against profoundly different ways of experiencing consumption.⁸⁰ Even within colonial contexts, there is distinct agency and decisions made in willingly engaging in foreign and different foodways. They also involve deliberate decisions in which to implement and expose others to different practices and foods, which can then be engaged with or rejected by others. The result of these encounters can lead to shifts in social status and relationships, and how individuals identify themselves and with their community. In short, commensality events can act as catalysts for cultural

change or a means to maintain cultural norms.⁸¹

Egyptian experimentation with Kerma foodways is indicated by the fact that the Kerma ceramics found in Egyptian burials are very different from the Egyptian ceramic forms, but also assemblages in general. While many of the contexts the vessels are found in are disturbed or out of context, a number of them were found in context. In these instances, they appear as the sole representative of drinking or cooking forms. For example, in the case of the Dra Abu el-Naga burial, the BTRPW beakers were the sole drinking forms in the burial, alongside Egyptian storage jars and vessels.⁸² This was also the case in tomb E2 at Abideyeh, where BTRPW beakers were found alongside Egyptian storage vessels.⁸³ This suggests that in the funerary contexts these vessels are filling distinct roles in the funerary assemblages, as an overall hybridized ceramic repertoire. These amalgamation of Kerma and Egyptian objects and practices were likely used in conjunction with one another, as an overarching assemblage of material objects and drinking and eating practices.⁸⁴ These assemblages possibly demonstrate that there were varying degrees of experimentation and hybridization of these Kerma foodways and commensality practices. This interplay between the two ceramic traditions and their cultural commensality practices could explain why some common Kerma forms like the "teapots" are not present in these Egyptian assemblages. However, other cases and contexts point to these Kerma vessels being used as a distinct assemblage. The cooking assemblages found at Deir el-Ballas indicate that the Kerma cooking wares were also used as an assemblage relating to engagement with Kerma foodways. This illustrates a mix of different practices and different levels of use and hybridization according to specific contexts and intents.

The idea of experimentation and hybridized commensality practices can also be seen in ceramic assemblages in the MBA Egyptian colonial settlement and fortress at Askut in Lower Nubia. Egyptians living at the town appear to be using both Kerma/Lower Nubian cooking wares and drinking forms in conjunction with Egyptian ceramic wares.⁸⁵ Smith has even suggested that there appear to be distinct differences in experimentation and adoption of Nubian ceramics according to social status, with Nubian drinking forms being found in elite contexts and cooking wares in non-elite contexts.⁸⁶ The ceramic assemblages at Askut provide a clear

illustration that Egyptians were engaging with Nubian commensality practices and material culture, and were using them in conjunction with Egyptian practices. This not only demonstrates distinct Kerman/Nubian influences on Egyptian cultural practices, but also that these practices and material culture were being used in expressing Egyptian social identities and hierarchy. This is unsurprising given that Egyptians and Nubians were living alongside one another in these contexts, as an organic and living community, involving the formation of social and kinship relationships through marriage and having children. This resulted in communities in which there was a distinct blurring of cultural and social identities, in which foodways and commensality practices and material culture would play an important part.

The selective consumption of these Kerman ceramics indicates a specific engagement with Kerman cultural practices, which were likely used in conjunction or hybridized with local Egyptian commensality practices. But how exactly how would this esoteric information regarding the use of these Kerman ceramics be communicated and transmitted? These transmissions required interactions with Kermans, who would be able to demonstrate and explain these practices involving the ceramics. Intercultural interactions such as migration, trade, and diplomacy are the most likely mechanisms that facilitated such exchanges and transmissions. These forms of interaction have often quite different agendas and roles in society, but all involve direct social and communicative encounters between different peoples, societies, and cultures. I would suggest that a combination of all three processes is likely, given the different physical and social contexts of the Kerma ceramics in Egypt.⁸⁷ This would help to explain why large cosmopolitan palatial centers like Tell el-Dab'a and Deir el-Ballas, which were the political centers of their respective Egyptian polities, have concentrations of these ceramics in both domestic and funerary contexts.⁸⁸ These sites were important hubs of intercultural contacts in Egypt and would have attracted Kerman migrants, traders, and diplomatic embassies. The presence of a Kerman grave at Abydos, and other graves containing Kerman ceramic remains, might also be explained through the recent discovery of royal tombs at Abydos.⁸⁹ This illustrates that Abydos was likely another important regional and palatial

center in the SIP, which would have also functioned as an intercultural hub for migration, trade, and diplomacy.

I would suggest that diplomacy was a particularly suitable mechanism in which some of these ceramics and commensality practices would be transmitted, given the courtly and elite associations of some of this material. This is indicated by the palatial contexts of the ceramics at the Khayan palace at Tell el-Dab'a, the presence of the ceramics in the courtly or royal burial at Dra Abu el-Naga, and the royal and courtly contexts of BTRPW in the royal and courtly burials at Kerma. Diplomacy is also suitable mechanism in providing contexts in which social reception, hospitality, and commensality were essential in helping to maintain social relationships.⁹⁰ Bronze Age diplomatic archives place emphasis on how acts of court hospitality and commensality, along with gift giving, were vital processes in forming, maintaining, and negotiating social relationships between royal courts.⁹¹ The importance of gift giving in diplomacy also provides a mechanism in which Kerma ceramics could be exchanged and gifted, and actually used in the preparation, serving, and consumption of diplomatic meals. Diplomatic embassies would have required cooks and food specialists in order to provide meals for the long journeys between royal courts. In addition, these specialists would also be able to prepare meals and exhibit foreign cuisine in the contexts of diplomatic receptions. The presence and exchange of such types of specialists is also documented in Bronze Age archives, though not explicitly in reference to cooks.⁹² Evidence for Kerman participation in diplomacy with Egypt can be seen through a number of sources besides those of the ceramics, such as the record of a diplomatic letter sent from the Hyksos king Apophis to a Kerman king on the Second Kamose Stele, the presence of Egyptian kohl pots and furniture in court burials at Kerma, and even through apparent transmission of Egyptian palatial architecture at Kerma.⁹³ In the context of this wider evidence, diplomacy is a particularly suitable process for the transmission of Kerman ceramics and commensality practices. However, other processes like trade, gifting, and migration might also have been mechanisms responsible for the presence of these ceramics in wider social contexts.

These forms of intercultural encounters operate

within physical and social contexts. Palaces, houses, temples, courtyards, plazas, markets, and a variety of other spaces would be key arenas for such encounters and exposure to foreign foodways, objects, practices, and experiences to take place.⁹⁴ Reception and hospitality were vital in creating welcoming and inclusive social environments in which to establish, maintain, and negotiate social relationships.⁹⁵ The sharing and consumption of food and drink, from simple meals to extravagant feasts, are powerful social lubricants.⁹⁶ Commensality provides a dynamic social arena in which many social agendas and intents can be simultaneously implemented, including status expression and negotiation, inclusion and exclusion, and expressing community and personal identity.⁹⁷ These agendas can be structured and mediated through the implementation of etiquettes regarding access to specific food types and material equipment, the timings/order of actions/actors at events, degrees of sensory experience, and the spatial positioning and gestures of participants.⁹⁸

I suggest that Kerma/Egyptian intercultural encounters would likely have been mediated through commensality events. This is logical, considering the possible evidence for the communal nature of Kerma commensality practices and their role in the formation and negotiation of social relationships in Kerma society. Communal drinking in particular could have been an important method for forming social bonds for Kerma elite and courtiers participating in intercultural encounters like diplomacy. Such a framework would also help to explain why Kerma cooking wares and BTRPW beakers are found in both Egyptian domestic and funerary contexts, as evidence of use in life and as possible gifts from such encounters. These commensality events provided social contexts in which Kerma foodways and commensality practices could be observed and experienced by Egyptian audiences. Egyptians would be active participants in these events, acquiring direct knowledge of the embodied use of the ceramics and foodways within their contextual social settings. Kerma ceramic vessels and foods could be exchanged or gifted. Gift giving is itself another powerful social lubricant used in the formation of social bonds and relationships and would have naturally fit into these social scenarios.⁹⁹ Having been exposed to these commensality practices,

Egyptian participants had to decide whether they wished to engage with these practices fully or partially, or to reject/resist them. These decisions to engage or direct would explain why only a specific range of Kerma ceramics was being consumed, and why specific drinking and eating forms such as the elaborate teapots, zoomorphic jugs, or rilled beakers are not apparent in Egypt. These vessels, and perhaps their contents and specific foodways, may have been rejected by Egyptian audiences and were not subsequently experimented with. The aforementioned hybrid nature of the ceramic assemblages within Egypt might further reflect these decisions to engage, reject or adapt Kerma commensality practices.

The sporadic and relatively short-term nature of these experimentations in the Egyptian archaeological record indicates that these engagements were probably contextual and not widespread cultural phenomena. This is not unexpected given precedents for Egyptian experimentations with foreign drinking and eating practices. A comparable example from the earlier MBA can be seen in the instances of Cretan Kamares Ware found in Egypt. These polychrome drinking vessels also have sporadic and unusual contexts in both settlements and cemeteries across social levels.¹⁰⁰ They have often been interpreted as being evidence for contacts with Aegean peoples, with their appearance in “middle class” Egyptian burials and limited attempts at imitation being suggestive of an experimentation of aspiring low-level elites in status expression through the exotic qualities of the polychrome ceramics.¹⁰¹ However, I have argued that these instances of Kamares ware seem to be indicative of larger patterns across social levels of experimentation with Aegean and Anatolian drinking practices, techniques, and sensorial experiences.¹⁰² In these cases, I have moved away from traditional views of the vessels as being purely visual exotica and have focused on how their forms are very different from Egyptian drinking vessel forms across various material mediums. These foreign forms facilitated distinct ways of holding, passing, and drinking from the vessels and had important embodied and sensorial roles in expressing status and identity. These various body/material interactions document decisions by Egyptians to experiment, adopt, and potentially hybridize foreign commensality material culture,

practices, and etiquettes.

Ultimately, this sporadic experimentation with Kerma commensality practices was short lived, given the timeframe of Kerma ceramics appearing in Egypt. However, this example aptly demonstrates that the multiethnic and multicultural composition of Egyptian society, with its extensive interactions with African, Mediterranean, and Near Eastern societies, would facilitate exposure and interactions with many different cultural practices. These practices could be experimented with, adopted, resisted and rejected. Given the universal human need for eating and drinking, it is not surprising that commensality would act as an important social lubricant and mediator for intercultural encounters. As continuing excavations continue to expand our knowledge of Kerma ceramics in Egypt, this phenomenon can perhaps be further studied, and the theoretical interpretation laid out here refined and further tested. A further aspect to consider, and which we are notably missing much evidence for, is the production and consumption of Kerma metal vessels and their relationship with ceramic assemblages. Metal vessels are conspicuously absent at Kerma sites, but two instances of finely made copper beakers and a copper and gold bowl were found at Kerma. This indicates that they were being manufactured and used at the site.¹⁰³ Likely their absence in the record is largely due to looting, given the clear disturbed nature of the burials at Kerma and other Kerma sites like Sai and Ukma West.¹⁰⁴ However, the surviving metal vessel forms demonstrate that there was overlap and interplay between the metal and ceramic typologies, and that they were likely used in conjunction in Kerma commensality practices and etiquettes.¹⁰⁵ The question then is where these metal vessels also being exchanged in Egypt? In my opinion, this seems quite likely and should be considered as a potential area to expand this picture of Kerma cultural transmissions in Egypt during the MBA.

CONCLUSIONS

This article has provided a theoretical framework and interpretation in which to reassess how Kerma and Nubian cultural practices could have dynamic impacts on Egyptian society and culture. The examination of Kerma ceramics highlighted how Kerma material culture could have engaging embodied and sensory experiences for Egyptian audiences. This interpretation will hopefully

stimulate further discussion to address the asymmetrical and colonial models of Egyptianization that have been so entrenched in Egyptology.¹⁰⁶ Increasingly, these have begun to be more firmly questioned, particularly regarding concepts of “cultural entanglement” in colonial situations in Late Bronze Age Nubia and even later in the Iron Age Napatan Empire.¹⁰⁷ In the case of New Kingdom Nubia, there are even similar situations of mixed Egyptian and Nubian ceramics assemblages, such as at the Egyptian colonial settlement of Amara West.¹⁰⁸ These mixed assemblages have been recognized as being indicators of hybridized foodways, commensality, and identities in these intercultural settlements.¹⁰⁹ These shifts to models of “cultural entanglement” indicate that Egyptologists need to be more open to the possibilities of Nubian cultural transmissions within Egypt, and move away from traditional models of Egyptianization. However, this idea of Nubian cultural influences should also be examined beyond colonial contexts within Nubia itself, and include other liminal social and material contexts such as large palatial centers within Egypt. These centers acted as intercultural hubs in which culture contact would have been an everyday occurrence.

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NOTES

- 1 Reisner 1910, 340–341.
- 2 Walsh 2016, 232–6, 240–243.
- 3 van Pelt 2013, 531–533.
- 4 Broodbank, 2004; Gardner 2007, 15–34; Gorogianni et al 2016; Pitts 2007; van Pelt 2013; Smith and Buzon 2014.
- 5 Smith and Buzon 2014, 1.
- 6 Lacovara 2006, 192–193; Dreyfus 2005, 257–258.
- 7 Bourriau 1981; 1990; 1991, Hein 2001; Gratien 2006, and Fuscaldo 2002; 2004; 2008.
- 8 Gratien 2006, 119.
- 9 Reisner 1923, 328–329; Gratien 1978, 226–227; Walsh in press.
- 10 Gratien 2006, 126.
- 11 Bourriau 1981; Gratien 2006.
- 12 Bourriau 1981, 33; Gratien 2006, 126.
- 13 Petrie and Mace 1901, 45–49, pl. 38. Petrie identified this grave and the cemetery X as Pan Grave, but this is unclear, as the BTRPW beakers found in these graves are of Classic Kerma type.
- 14 Petrie 1909.
- 15 Petrie 1909; Ryholt 1997, 180. Veldmeijter and Bourriau 2009 recently suggested that the netting containing some of the Egyptian and Kerman vessels may have been Kerman in style, but this is style unclear.
- 16 There is also limited evidence of Kerman BTRPW jars in Egyptian burials, and these might also be represented in the body of sherds. Such jars might have been used to store beer. See Gratien 2006 and Minor 2018.
- 17 Bourriau 1997.
- 18 Forstner-Müller and Rose 2012, 200.
- 19 Fuscaldo 2002, 107; 2004 113; 2008, 109.
- 20 Fuscaldo 2008, 109–10. For a detailed discussion of the chronology and context of this pottery see also Matic 2014. However, the chronology of Tell el-Dab’a is highly debated between the low and high chronology, making the exact dating and phasing of the pottery at the site contentious. See Cohen 2017 and Höflmayer 2017 for recent discussion.
- 21 Fuscaldo 2002, 111.
- 22 Forstner-Müller and Rose 2012; Aston and Bietak 2017, 497–501.
- 23 Fuscaldo 2008, table 7.
- 24 Fuscaldo 2008 108–109.
- 25 Fuscaldo 2002, 112.
- 26 Bourriau 1990, 17–18.
- 27 Bourriau 1990, 17.
- 28 Bourriau 1990, 18.
- 29 Bourriau 1990, 18, 54–55.
- 30 Reisner 1923, 328–330.
- 31 Bourriau 1990, 18.
- 32 Bourriau 1990, 54–55.
- 33 Bourriau 1990, 17; Gratien 2006, 125–127.
- 34 Minor 2018.
- 35 Bourriau 1981; Gratien 2006.
- 36 Appadurai 1981; Dietler 2007, 223–224; Geertz 1960; Goody 1982, 150–153; Smith 2003, 189–193; Yoffee and Kamp 1980.
- 37 Bourriau 1990, 16.
- 38 Bourriau 1981, 31–33.
- 39 Fuscaldo 2002, 169–170.
- 40 Aston and Bietak 2017.
- 41 Matic 2014.
- 42 Vianello 2011, viii; Heymans and van Wijngaarden 2011, 125.
- 43 Mauss 1935; Walsh 2013; 2016.
- 44 Gibson 1979, 119–136; Walsh in press.
- 45 Hamilakis 2011, 20–29.
- 46 Kendall 1997, 83; Knoblauch and Lacovara 2012, 204.

- 47 For a detailed discussion of the haptic qualities of these vessels based on actual handling of the material, see Walsh in press.
- 48 Minor 2018.
- 49 Minor 2018.
- 50 Chaix 2017.
- 51 Reisner 1923, 364; Gratien 1978, 213; Walsh in press.
- 52 Reisner 1923, 331–342.
- 53 Bourriau 1990, 55.
- 54 Walsh in press.
- 55 Reisner 1923, 375, 378.
- 56 Minor 2018.
- 57 For discussion of the extents and limits of using organic residue analysis to determine contents see Evershed 2008; Roffet-Salque et al. 2017.
- 58 Heath 2000, 169–172.
- 59 Heath 2000, 116–119.
- 60 Hamilakis 2013, 59–60.
- 61 Gratien 2006, 121.
- 62 Gratien 2006, 122.
- 63 Gratien 2006, 122.
- 64 Castro and Seely 2014, 1.
- 65 Smith 2003b, 54.
- 66 Hamilakis 2013, 59–60; 2017, 177.
- 67 Chaix 2017; Chaix and Grant 1987; 1993; Haaland 2012; Van Zeist 1987.
- 68 Fuller 2005.
- 69 Haaland 2007.
- 70 Gratien 1978, 226.
- 71 Smith 2003b, 49.
- 72 Reisner 1923; Gratien 1978; Haaland 2012.
- 73 Minor 2018.
- 74 Smith 2003b, 49. Smith makes particular note on how the Kerma ceramics, both BTRPW beakers and cooking wares would have highly construed with Egyptian finewares, which were significantly less fine than the handmade and decorated Kerma ceramics.
- 75 This can be particularly seen in the Bourriau’s discussion of regional SIP ceramic assemblages. See Bourriau 1997. Bourriau also notes that these ceramic forms are found in both funerary contexts and settlement contexts. However, I would also note Allen’s recent study on Middle Kingdom funerary ceramics and her conclusion that the tomb ceramic assemblages were almost entirely funerary in nature and not used in daily life. See Allen 2013. However, in both Middle Kingdom and SIP assemblages, it is notable that drinking and cooking forms are very limited.
- 76 Heath 2000, 111–116; Smith 2003b, 47–48.
- 77 Walsh 2013; 2016.
- 78 Beaudry 2013; Cool 2006; Dietler 2007; Hastorf 2012; Hawkes 2001; Twiss 2012, 271–273; Walshaw 2010.
- 79 Goody 1982; Twiss 2012, 368.
- 80 Hastorf 2016, 245–246.
- 81 Dietler 2007, 226.
- 82 Bourriau 1997, 168, 176–177.
- 83 Petrie and Mace 1901, 47–48.
- 84 Hamilakis 2017, 177–180.
- 85 Smith 2003a, 113–119; 2003b.
- 86 Smith 2003, 117.
- 87 Forstner-Müller and Rose 2012, 200.
- 88 Aston and Bietak 2017, 507–509.
- 89 Wegner 2015.
- 90 This is explicitly mentioned in the Mari archives, where diplomatic meals were highly political and performative events, in which commensality etiquette was a point of contention. See Charpin 2010.
- 91 Charpin 2010; Holmes 1975; Feldman 2006; Zaccagnini 1987.
- 92 For examples of requested specialists in the Amarna archive see EA35 (Moran 1992, 107–109) and EA49 (Moran 1992, 120–121); in the Hattuša archives, see KUB III 66 (Edel 1976, 46–50), and KUB III 72 (Beckman 1999, 138–143). For discussion of the requesting of court specialists

- and craftsmen as a form of gift exchange see Zaccagnini 1983; Moorey 2001; Caramello 2018.
- ⁹³ For discussion of all of these aspects, see Walsh 2016.
- ⁹⁴ Smith 2003b.
- ⁹⁵ Dietler 1989.
- ⁹⁶ Appudurai 1981; Dietler 2007; Dietler and Hayden 2001; Douglas 1972; 1984; Hastorf 2016, 223–272; Hamilakis 1999.
- ⁹⁷ Dietler 1996; 2001; 2007.
- ⁹⁸ Beaudry 201, 287–288.
- ⁹⁹ Mauss, 1990 [1925]; Komter 2005; Berking 1999.
- ¹⁰⁰ Kemp and Merrilles 1980.
- ¹⁰¹ Kemp and Merrilles 1980, 70.
- ¹⁰² Walsh 2016, 248–250.
- ¹⁰³ Reisner 1923, 284.
- ¹⁰⁴ Gratien 1986; Vila 1987.
- ¹⁰⁵ Walsh in press.
- ¹⁰⁶ Smith and Buzon 2014, 431; van Pelt 2013.
- ¹⁰⁷ Buzon et al 2016; Howley 2018; Spencer et al 2017; Smith 2003; Smith and Buzon 2014; van Pelt 2013.
- ¹⁰⁸ Garnett 2014, 62–63.
- ¹⁰⁹ Smith 2003, 113–124.