

Populating Middle Kingdom Fauna: Inclusion and Exclusion of Zoological Iconographic Motifs in its Material Culture

Gianluca Miniaci

Abstract

The first part of this article aims at discussing an ambiguous contextual synchronism between two categories of artefacts diagnostic of the Middle Kingdom material culture: miniatures made of faience and ivory tusks decorated with carved images. These two types of objects have often been paired together in Egyptological literature, as they were occasionally found in the same archaeological contexts, although their iconographic elements seem to be completely separate: the ivory tusks feature a fauna with particular ferocity and inclination to kill, while the faience figurines are more shifted towards domestic and harmless zoological specimens. The second part of the article aims at dissecting the mechanisms behind the inclusion and exclusion of their zoological (and human) iconographic elements. The fauna related to the ideology of the uppermost levels of society seem to have been almost systematically excluded from the faience figurine corpus, while their focus is arranged around the natural environment of marshes, swamps and farming. The author attempts to reconnect the environment of the faience figurines with a rural social setting, outlined in some literary and folk texts: the 'Tale of the Herdsman', 'The Journey of the Libyan Goddess', and pre-Islamic Berber tales about a being called the *tamza* (Islamic ghoul).

A world in miniature: faience figurines in the Middle Kingdom

Since the Palaeolithic, humans have shaped reduced-scale artefacts in order to interpret – and construct – reality through the dimensions of a medium, engaging the surrounding world in a tactile, sensitive, visual way.¹ In the late fifth – early fourth millennium,² ancient Egyptians started generating reduced-scale objects, more frequently called in Egyptological literature figurines³ or statuettes,⁴ and less frequently models,⁵ miniatures,⁶ or small-scale objects.⁷ In the Naqada III and Early Dynastic Period assemblages of figurines made of different materials, principally ivory, bone, stone and faience, start to appear on a large scale and across the whole country,⁸ where they were mainly included in the votive deposits of early temples at sites such as at Tell el-Farkha, Tell Ibrahim Awad, Abydos, Hierakonpolis, and Elephantine.⁹ From

the late Old Kingdom onwards, figurines and models were included in burials more frequently and on a larger scale.¹⁰ Of these, a diagnostic type of small-scale object made of faience appeared in the material culture around 1800 BC and forms the focus of this study.¹¹ These Middle Kingdom faience figurines include a very broad spectrum of zoological forms taken from the Egyptian natural environment and a limited range of human figures, principally representing so-called "dwarfs"¹² and "truncated-leg ladies",¹³ the latter comprising female beings deprived of their lower legs.¹⁴ The corpus consists also of a few composite creatures and other objects from the vegetal and inanimate worlds, such as models of fruits, vegetables, dishes, jars, cups, bowls and balls.¹⁵

Provinztempel Ägyptens; BUSSMANN, in FRIEDMAN, FISKE (eds.), *Egypt at its Origins 3*; KEMP, *Ancient Egypt*, 116-31.

¹⁰ Peter Ucko listed only 81 anthropomorphic figurines excavated from among an estimated 5000 burials in the Predynastic, UCKO, *Anthropomorphic Figurines*, 69-116.

¹¹ BOURRIAU, *Pharaohs and Mortals*, 112-21; MINIACI, *JEGH* 7/1, 109-42.

¹² DASEN, *Dwarfs*, 279-85.

¹³ PINCH, *Votive Offerings to Hathor*, 198-234; see: TOOLEY, in MINIACI, BETRÒ, QUIRKE (eds.), *Company of Images*, 424-5.

¹⁴ For the interpretation of these figurines as regeneration figures connected with the *khener*-dancers of Hathor, see: MORRIS, *JARCE* 47, 101-3; MORRIS, in MINIACI, BETRÒ, QUIRKE (eds.), *Company of Images*.

¹⁵ For a more complete overview of these iconographic categories, see: MINIACI, *Miniature Forms*. Several examples

¹ MESKELL, *World Archaeology* 47/1, 16; BAILEY, in BOLGER (ed.), *A Companion to Gender Prehistory*, 245.

² PATCH (ed.), *Dawn of Egyptian Art*, 97-104. In the Predynastic Period, a hiatus in our documentation is attested in correspondence with Naqada IIC-D, see: STEVENSON, in INSOLL (ed.), *The Oxford Handbook of Prehistoric Figurines*, 66, 77-8.

³ WARAKSA, in WENDRICH, *UEE*.

⁴ JANES, *Shabtis: A Private View*.

⁵ TOOLEY, *Middle Kingdom Burial Customs*.

⁶ ODLER, DULÍKOVÁ, *World Archaeology* 47/1.

⁷ FOXALL, *World Archaeology* 47/1.

⁸ PATCH (ed.), *Dawn of Egyptian Art*, 171-9.

⁹ MINIACI, "Early Dynastic Votive Offerings"; BUSSMANN, *Die*

This corpus of figurines, although comparable to varying extents with other artefacts produced in earlier¹⁶ and later¹⁷ periods and with contemporaneous models made of different materials,¹⁸ is rather unique both in the range of motifs and in the technique of manufacture used.¹⁹ Also, the archaeological context of Middle Kingdom faience figurines is unlike that of other similar miniature objects found in adjacent time frames, since they are mainly found in funerary contexts, at least in the Nile valley,²⁰ and seem to be especially designed for the post-mortem cult; they are surprisingly absent from cultic environments such as temples and shrines.²¹ Finally, as closely comparable figurine types are absent from archaeological contexts of both earlier and later periods,²² the faience figurines in this study represent a defining moment within the material culture of the Middle Kingdom.

An aseptic epistemology: faience figurines in isolation

The meaning of faience figurines is concealed beneath their silent, lustrous surfaces and obscured by the absence of any written words. Apart from just two instances,²³ any explicit symbolic signs are also entirely absent. This is further compounded by the fact that details of their archaeological context are rarely known, as undisturbed finds are extremely uncommon.²⁴ The only prospect for an etiological analysis of these objects comes from their iconography, *i.e.* the embodiment of

a representation channelled through a medium. Figurines are ‘representations’ and, as pointed out by Douglass Bailey, every act of representation is an interpretation of reality, or, more precisely, a construction of a reality.²⁵ Figurines embody the maker’s²⁶ synthetic consciousness, as s/he manipulates the world through his/her eye, his/her hand, and his/her cognitive knowledge. Therefore, although their iconography does not give access to past reality,²⁷ it does represent the key to the cognitive processes generated by a society: the ‘world’ they wanted to represent/create.

However, when scholars are faced with the iconography of a single Middle Kingdom faience figurine, their explanations vary according to the subject represented and are sometimes divergent within the same subject. For instance, not only is the hippopotamus considered to be one of the fiercest animals inhabiting the Nile and a great danger to people, but at the same time also a benign, protective force (above all in her role as female counterpart).²⁸ Likewise, canid iconography is sometimes associated with the forces inhabiting the dangerous desert or with the tame creature well integrated into domestic family life.²⁹ Similarly, the dwarf symbolism may be easily related to fertility and childbirth, as reported in papyrus Leiden I 348 that recommends a woman to wear a ‘dwarf of clay’ during childbirth,³⁰ but is related also to the ritual dance associated with funeral celebrations and rejuvenating powers,³¹ or used as a catalyst to attract good luck.³² In conclusion, when considered in isolation, faience figurines provide few clues on which a coherent hypothesis on their meaning and their use in ancient Egyptian society could be based: each figure has iconographic peculiarities that contain elements of several symbolic – often contrasting – values.

Statistically, in 48% of the documented archaeological contexts, faience figurines do not occur in isolation, but are often coupled with at least one other element from the same corpus, as for example with tomb G62 at Abydos (vessel, bowl, lion-hippopotamus, lion-maned/-

can be also found in BOURRIAU, *Pharaohs and Mortals*, 112-21.

¹⁶ MINIACI, “Early Dynastic Votive Offerings”.

¹⁷ STEVENS, *Private Religion at Amarna*, 79-120.

¹⁸ Cf. BOURRIAU, *Pharaohs and Mortals*, 111-2 (cat. no. 98: lion-maned human being), 117-8 (cat. no. 109: crocodile), 122-3 (cat. no. 115: dwarf with her child).

¹⁹ MINIACI, in JIMÉNEZ SERRANO, MORALES (eds.), *Palace Culture and its Echoes*.

²⁰ MINIACI, in MINIACI, BETRÒ, QUIRKE (eds.), *Company of Images*, 265-70.

²¹ Senwosret I transformed most of the local temples into state temples, run by the central government; therefore the absence of figurines might have been due to the changing status of temples in Egypt, see: GRAJETZKI, *The Middle Kingdom*, 37-41; BUSSMANN, in MINIACI, BETRÒ, QUIRKE (eds.), *Company of Images*. I am indebted to Wolfram Grajetzki for several observations on this point, cf. MINIACI, *Ä&L* 28.

²² Cf. TRISTANT, in DI BIASE-DYSON, DONOCAN (eds.), *The Cultural Manifestations of Religious Experience*.

²³ E.g. Nilotic decoration including birds and plants on the hippopotamus Louvre E 7709 (Musée du Louvre, Paris), DELANGE, NISOLE, in *Visibilité de la restauration, lisibilité de l'œuvre*, 143-50; the *s3*-sign held by the standing lion, Leiden EG-ZM2364 (Rijksmuseum Van Oudheden, Leiden), SCHNEIDER, *Life and Death*, 105 (no. 166).

²⁴ MINIACI, in MINIACI, BETRÒ, QUIRKE (eds.), *Company of Images*, 238-41.

²⁵ BAILEY, in BOLGER (ed.), *A Companion to Gender Prehistory*, 245.

²⁶ Including the commissioner’s and end-user’s influence.

²⁷ “Making figurines was not a mimetic process”, MESKELL, *World Archaeology* 47/1, 14, and further, “object of material culture demand equal rights with language, not to be turned into language”, MESKELL, *World Archaeology* 47/1, 16.

²⁸ SÄVE-SÖDERBERGH, *On Egyptian Representations of Hippopotamus Hunting*, 46.

²⁹ PATCH, in OPPENHEIM *et al.*, *Ancient Egypt Transformed*, 209-10 (cat. no. 147).

³⁰ Papyrus Leiden I 348, vs. XII.6, BORGHOUTS, *OMRO* 51, 29; cf. THEIS, *Magie und Raum*, 213.

³¹ DASEN, *Dwarfs*, 157.

³² DASEN, *Dwarfs*, 134.



Fig. 1 - The group of figurines from tomb G62 of Abydos (from left to right: lion-hippopotamus, goat/antelope, grotesque creature/‘dwarf’, lion-maned/-eared human creature). British Museum, London, BM EA 37296–99 © Trustees of the British Museum. Photo Gianluca Miniaci

eared human creature, ‘dwarf’, goat or antelope, Fig. 1).³³ Therefore, the most productive way to approach this corpus is to analyse their iconographic value not within the atomic isolation of a single element, but rather under a unitary lens, since they all formed individual parts of a larger, interconnected ensemble. However, although a detailed study on this category of object is lacking,³⁴ scholars have attempted general interpretative explanations for their iconographic selection:

a. as substitutes for painted/relief decorated scenes in funerary chambers (where such scenes are absent), since they often represent creatures of the natural environment;³⁵

b. as symbolic images of the regenerative forces of nature, playing a key role in the cycles of life and death, and, therefore, could have been connected with the critical moment of birth – and rebirth;³⁶

c. as domestic magic items to counter negative aspects of the environment and to direct natural forces to peoples’ advantage;³⁷

d. as votive offerings related to a more intimate piety;³⁸

e. as toys for children.³⁹

Although these figurines could have come from daily life

and temple contexts – notwithstanding their invisibility in domestic and cult contexts of the Nile valley during the Middle Kingdom – their prevalence in funerary contexts of the period has influenced the orientation of the hypotheses towards *a.* and *b.*

Hypothesis *a.* does not take into consideration the fact that the representations on the walls of Old and Middle Kingdom tombs usually depict scenes of daily life, *i.e.* domestic activities, especially focussing on the production of food. Wooden estate and boat models, placed in the tombs of the immediately preceding cultural phase (late Old Kingdom – mid Twelfth Dynasty), may have been used to reconnect the deceased with the living world, as they aim to represent human activities connected with the needs of the deceased such as sustenance or mobility.⁴⁰ This may involve, to a varying extent, a limited number of zoological entities, but not as the main focus; in contrast, faience figurine iconography focusses on the faunal and non-human dimensions (80.9%). In addition, the burial chamber (the non-accessible space) where faience figurines were usually placed – inside the coffin or among the funerary equipment –⁴¹ has no immediate spatial bonds with the two-dimensional scenes usually occupying the upper (and accessible) part of the funerary structure, *i.e.* the chapel.⁴²

In hypothesis *b.*, the idea that faience figurines were used for the protection of the deceased during the critical moment of resurrection to a new and eternal

³³ British Museum, London, BM EA 37294–37299, see: MINIACI, in REGULSKI (ed.), *Abydos: The Sacred Land*.

³⁴ MINIACI, *Miniature Forms*.

³⁵ BOURRIAU, *Pharaohs and Mortals*, 120.

³⁶ MINIACI, *JEGH* 7/1, 121-2.

³⁷ YAMAMOTO, in OPPENHEIM *et al.*, *Ancient Egypt Transformed*, 190.

³⁸ PINCH, *Votive Offerings to Hathor*, 342-6.

³⁹ JANSSEN, JANSSEN, *Growing up*, 46. Discussion in: TOOLEY, *GM* 123, 101-11; QUIRKE, in QUIRKE (ed.), *Lahun Studies*, 141-51.

⁴⁰ ESCHENBRENNER-DIEMER, in MINIACI, BETRÒ, QUIRKE (eds.), *Company of Images*, 171-81.

⁴¹ Cf. BRUNTON, *Matmar*, 56, pl. XLVII.17; FLINDERS PETRIE, WAINWRIGHT, MACKAY, *The Labyrinth, Gerzeh and Mazghuneh*, 35-6, pl. 30. Discussion in: MINIACI, *Miniature Forms*.

⁴² Cf. “secrecy function” against “memory function”, ASSMANN, in STRUDWICK, TAYLOR (eds.), *The Theban Necropolis*, 46-52.

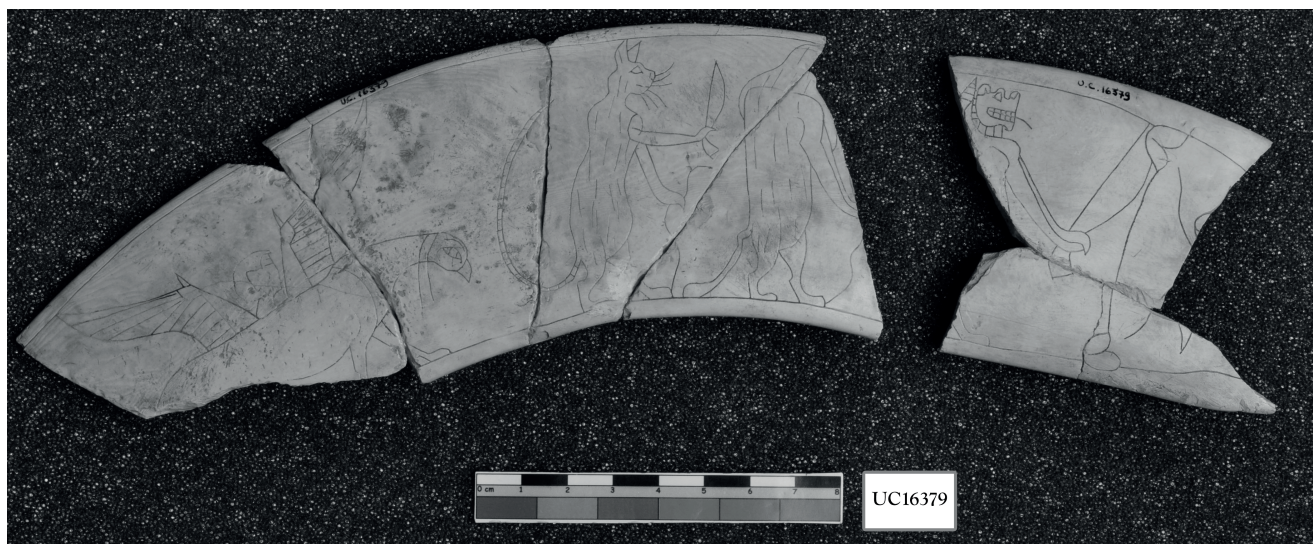


Fig. 2 - Ivory tusk UC 16379 © Photo Gianluca Miniaci, courtesy of the Petrie Museum of Egyptian Archaeology UCL

life has derived mainly from them being perceived as three-dimensional analogues of the iconography carved on ivory tusks. The latter are worked (hippopotamus) ivory tusks decorated with a series of protective figures, and occasionally inscribed. They are usually called magical wands or knives, more commonly known as *Zaubermesser*;⁴³ recently, Stephen Quirke introduced the term “birth tusks”⁴⁴ in order to differentiate them from other ivory wands, for instance clappers or plain uninscribed tusks. The range of imagery reproduced on the surface of the birth tusks had the symbolic purpose of protecting the rise of the sun-god from evil entities (Fig. 2).⁴⁵ The same protection seems to be directly transferred via these tusks onto the human reproductive process, for the mother and the child during the pregnancy and childbirth. Indeed, some of the birth tusks bear short inscriptions explicitly referring to the ‘protection of life’, especially of children and pregnant women. In addition, some painted scenes depicting nurses holding these tusks or tusk-like objects seem to reinforce the idea of birth protection attached to this category of object.⁴⁶ As these tusks are known principally from funerary contexts, the concept of ‘birth protection’ was in turn also extended to the deceased, whose destiny can be assimilated into that of a newly born infant, requiring the same protection (provided by the birth tusks during childbirth) and sharing a common pattern of (re)birth and defence against destructive forces.⁴⁷

⁴³ ALTENMÜLLER, *Die Apotropaia*.

⁴⁴ QUIRKE, *Birth Tusks*.

⁴⁵ WEGNER, in SILVERMAN, SIMPSON, WEGNER (eds.), *Archaism and Innovation*, 458-63.

⁴⁶ QUIRKE, *Birth Tusks*, 576 (social context and function).

⁴⁷ BOURRIAU, in QUIRKE (ed.), *Middle Kingdom Studies*, 14; MINIACI, QUIRKE, *BIFAO* 109, 358-9.

Faience figurines and ivory tusks: an ambiguous contextual synchronism

Although, as explicitly pointed out by Janine Bourriau, faience figurines and birth tusks represent two different categories of objects, each with their own repertoire of protective imagery,⁴⁸ their contextual synchronism has prompted scholars to find close analogies between them. As a result, faience figurines are often interpreted as protective media in rituals connected with childbirth, providing – with their apotropaic forms – defence against the inherent dangers associated with the act.⁴⁹ Sometimes such an analogical bridge connecting the two categories is made explicit by scholars: “[faience figurines are] clearly three-dimensional versions of the protective demons which appear on magic rods and knives”;⁵⁰ “faience figurines and the closely related apotropaic objects [ivory wands, birth bricks, segmented rods]”;⁵¹ “like the so called ‘magic wands’ or ‘birth tusks’, the principal role of these figurines seems to be one of protection in rituals connected with childbirth”.⁵²

The proposed interconnection between faience figurines and birth tusks is based on three (but as will be seen not all valid) reasons: 1. chronological simultaneity; 2. concurrence in the same archaeological context; 3. overlapping of iconographic motifs.

1. *Chronological simultaneity* (validity: 100%). Except for a few doubtful cases which could belong to the early

⁴⁸ BOURRIAU, *Pharaohs and Mortals*, 118.

⁴⁹ BOURRIAU, *Pharaohs and Mortals*, 116; PINCH, *Magic in Ancient Egypt*, 131.

⁵⁰ BOURRIAU, *Pharaohs and Mortals*, 116.

⁵¹ YAMAMOTO, in OPPENHEIM *et al.* (eds.), *Ancient Egypt Transformed*, 190.

⁵² MINIACI, *JEGH* 7/1, 121.

Middle Kingdom (2055–1950 BC),⁵³ a high concentration of faience figurines can be firmly attributed to late Middle Kingdom contexts (1800–1650 BC),⁵⁴ especially those documented in key sites of the late Middle Kingdom such as Lisht (ca. 196 items), Lahun (22 + 15 –?– items)⁵⁵ and Harageh (28 items). A large group (c. 294 items) of faience figurines were found at Byblos in deposit 15121–155667, dated to 1800–1650 BC.⁵⁶ Around the mid-late Second Intermediate Period they suddenly disappear from burial equipment and from the archaeological record.⁵⁷ Outside Egypt, their inclusion in burials seems to extend slightly beyond the limit of the late Middle Kingdom, especially in Nubia. Around 45 faience figurines (excluding vessel fragments) were recorded by George Reisner in the massive circular burial mounds of the Kerma necropolis.⁵⁸ The tumuli date to the Classic Kerma Period, which spans from the mid-Second Intermediate Period to the very early Eighteenth Dynasty, c. 1600–1500 BC.⁵⁹

BC.⁶⁰ A hippopotamus tusk decorated with an animal head at one end, but lacking any incised decoration, was found placed at the wall of the great chapel of general Intef at Deir el-Bahari, a contemporary of king Mentuhotep II Nebhepetra (2055–2004 BC).⁶¹ A few doubtful birth tusks may belong to the early-mid Middle Kingdom (1950–1850 BC).⁶² However, the vast majority come from dated archaeological contexts belonging to the late Middle Kingdom, from the reign of Senwosret III (or later) to the mid-Thirteenth Dynasty (the end of a unified polity). The decorated tusk of king Se(ne)bkay, whose tomb has recently been identified by Josef Wegner at Abydos,⁶³ may extend this time span even later towards 1700–1650 BC.⁶⁴ One tusk from Nubia may testify in favour of the use of this type of object into the Second Intermediate Period outside Egypt; the deposit dates to the Classic Kerma Period, around 1600–1500 BC.⁶⁵ Therefore, the chronological simultaneity of appearance

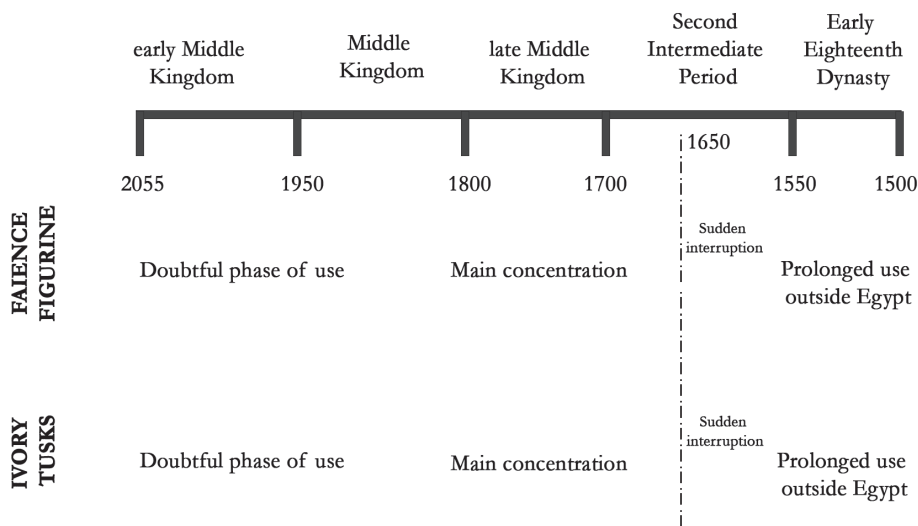


Fig. 3 - Scheme showing the chronological sequences of the faience figurines and ivory tusks in the material culture of the Middle Kingdom. Drawn by Gianluca Miniaci

The chronological sequence of ivory tusks follows a parallel timeline. The earliest depiction of a birth tusk appears in the object frieze on the coffin of the governor Djehutynakht at Dayr al-Barsha dating to about 2000

and disappearance from the archaeological record inside and outside Egypt is totally overlapping (Fig. 3).

2. *Concurrence in the same archaeological context* (validity: 12%). The resonance of some well-known cases such as the Ramesseum group (preserved with an important group of papyri, Fig. 4), that of Renseneb and, more recently, Neferhotep, has influenced the overall

⁵³ MINIACI, in MINIACI, BETRÒ, QUIRKE (eds.), *Company of Images*, 260-3.

⁵⁴ Cf. KEMP, MERRILLEES, *Minoan Pottery*, 165-74.

⁵⁵ MINIACI, in JIMÉNEZ SERRANO, MORALES (eds.), *Palace Culture and its Echoes*.

⁵⁶ DUNAND, *Fouilles de Byblos, Texte*, 741-66; DUNAND, *Fouilles de Byblos, Atlas*, pls. 93-108; reassessed in MINIACI, *A&L* 28.

⁵⁷ MINIACI, in TAYLOR, VANDENBEUSCH (eds.), *Ancient Egyptian Coffins*.

⁵⁸ REISNER, *Excavations at Kerma*, parts IV–V, 173-4.

⁵⁹ LACOVARA, *BzS* 2, 51-74.

⁶⁰ QUIRKE, *Birth Tusks*, 575.

⁶¹ QUIRKE, *Birth Tusks*, 195 (t12).

⁶² QUIRKE, *Birth Tusks*, 231.

⁶³ WEGNER, in MINIACI, BETRÒ, QUIRKE (eds.), *Company of Images*, 479-83.

⁶⁴ QUIRKE, *Birth Tusks*, 231.

⁶⁵ QUIRKE, *Birth Tusks*, 180 (Ke1).

THEBES. XIITH DYNASTY TOMB. RAMESSEUM.

III.

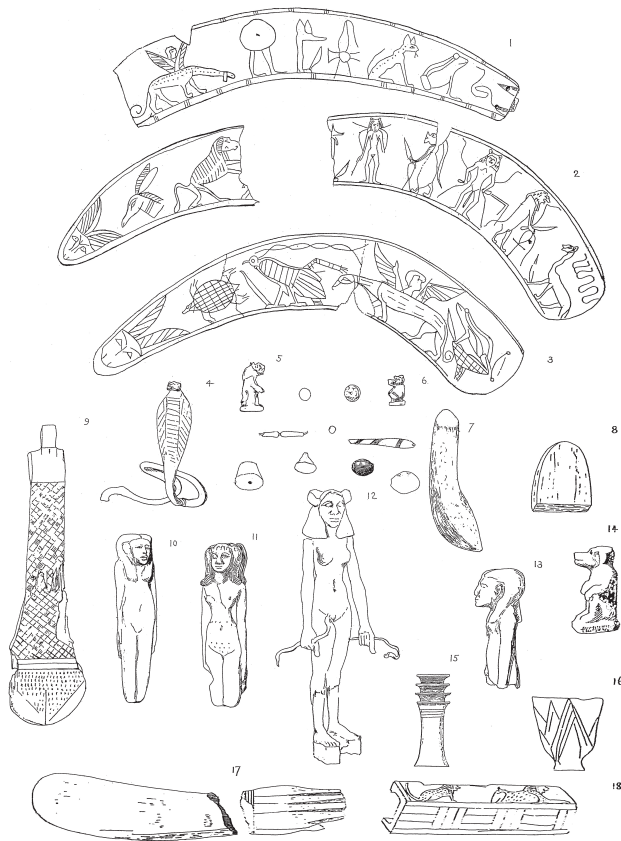


Fig. 4 - The objects from Ramesseum Tomb 5. Published in: QUIBELL, *The Ramesseum*, pl. 3. Courtesy of the Petrie Museum of Egyptian Archaeology, UCL

approach and accepted parameters of the group, although the validity ratio shown by the archaeological evidence is rather antithetical. Faience figurines and ivory tusks are attested in the same archaeological context only 13 (11+2 of doubtful interpretation) times out of 171 archaeological contexts:

Lisht North (7): House Pit 1; Pit 378; Pit 391; Pit 475; Pit 883; Pit 884; Pit 885;⁶⁶

Thebes (4): Ramesseum group (under storeroom no. 5);⁶⁷ tomb of Renseneb (Asasif, tomb C 37/25);⁶⁸ tomb of Neferhotep (Dra Abu el-Naga);⁶⁹ tomb no. XI under the temple of Thutmose III.⁷⁰

Due to the doubtful presence of ivory tusks in the two

contexts below (recorded by excavators, but without picture/drawing or too fragmentary to be certain of identification),⁷¹ these have been separated from the above group:

Esna (1): tombs 256;⁷²

Kerma (1): Tumulus K III.⁷³

It must also be noted that all these groups come from disturbed contexts. Most of the tombs from Lisht located south of the pyramid of Amenemhat I, show a disturbed context (Pit 883), or were used for multiple burials with the subsequent disturbance of material (Pits 378, 391, 883), or appear closely interconnected with later houses built over them (Pit 885).⁷⁴ In addition, since these tombs were excavated by the Metropolitan Museum Expedition at the beginning of the Twentieth Century and still await full publication, any deductions based on the available information should be made with caution. The situation is not dissimilar for the Theban contexts. The group of objects from the tomb under storeroom no. 5 of the Ramesseum was found at the bottom of the shaft, in a heap in the middle c. 60 cm square.⁷⁵ However, with intrusive material of the Third Intermediate Period scattered throughout the shaft and at the end two completely emptied burial chambers, it is doubtful that the group of objects were originally a single set and may have been amassed from different funerary rooms, or even brought there from outside.⁷⁶ The burial equipment of Renseneb shared a comparable fate, as its set of objects was removed from the original burial chamber to make way for some late Second Intermediate Period intrusive burials and was found at the bottom of the shaft. A similar circumstance can be observed with the tomb of Neferhotep, which was excavated by Auguste Mariette in the Nineteenth Century, but who failed to make a detailed record of the archaeological situation. From the inscriptional evidence, all the objects collected and registered under the label “tombeau de Neferhotep” may have come from a single burial that was probably found undisturbed,⁷⁷ but excavations led by Luigi Vassalli on behalf of Mariette testify to the presence of multiple burials in the same area, often labelled under the name of a single occupant (when the name was known).⁷⁸ Finally, it should be noted that the

⁶⁶ QUIRKE, *Birth Tusks*, 140-3 (House Pit 1); 153-6 (Pit 378); 149-52 (Pit 475); 167-71 (Pit 883); 201 (Pit 884); 172-8 (Pit 885).

⁶⁷ QUIBELL, *The Ramesseum*, 3-4.

⁶⁸ CARNARVON, CARTER, *Five Years' Explorations at Thebes*, 54-5; MINIACI, *Rishi Coffins*, 10, 90.

⁶⁹ MINIACI, QUIRKE, *BIFAO* 109.

⁷⁰ MARTÍNEZ BABÓN, in ROSATI, GUIDOTTI (eds.), *Proceedings of the XI International Congress*, 384-6.

⁷¹ QUIRKE, *Birth Tusks*, 204-5.

⁷² DOWNES, *The Excavations at Esna*, 8, 106 (256); 106 (325).

⁷³ REISNER, *Excavations at Kerma*, parts IV-V, 173-4.

⁷⁴ Cf. ARNOLD, in BIETAK (ed.), *Haus und Palast*, 13-21.

⁷⁵ QUIBELL, *The Ramesseum*, 3; BOURRIAU, in QUIRKE (ed.), *Middle Kingdom Studies*, 20.

⁷⁶ QUIRKE, *Birth Tusks*, 98-104.

⁷⁷ MINIACI, QUIRKE, *BIFAO* 109, 341.

⁷⁸ MINIACI, *Rishi Coffins*, 56-63.

archaeological context of tomb XI under the temple of Thutmose III has yet to be discussed in detail.⁷⁹

When the overlapping number cited above (11+2) is compared with all documented cases where faience figurines have been found without a birth tusk, considerable doubt is cast on there being a mutual relationship suggested by their concurrence in the same archaeological context. Nonetheless, even if small, the percentage of overlap remains important evidence (see below).

3. *Overlay of iconographic motifs* (validity: 4.8%). The majority of representations on birth tusks from documented excavations are of composite creatures; lion-hippopotamus, jackal-headed legs, winged-griffin, frontal depiction of a lion-maned human figure, legged disk, long-necked feline, wrapped cow, human-headed cobra, double sphinx, double bull, lion-headed legs, feline with short neck and long legs.⁸⁰ Most of these creatures are missing from the corpus of faience figurines; only the lion-hippopotamus and the lion-maned/-eared human figure (respectively identified by scholars in later sources with Ipy/Taweret and Aha/Bes) occur in a low percentage of all known figurines. Only faience figures of four lion-maned/-eared human creatures (Aha/Bes) and twelve lion-hippopotamus (Ipy/Taweret) are known, which actually correspond to 0.5% and 1.3% respectively of the whole corpus of faience

figurines (Fig. 5). It is noteworthy that all but one of the lion-hippopotamus faience figurines come from a single context: the *pro-cella* deposit of the Obelisk Temple at Byblos.⁸¹ The standing lions, crocodiles, servals/wild cats and baboons may represent other points of contact between the two categories of artefacts. However, they represent a low percentage within the entire animal/human corpus (13.2%). The faunal range of birth tusks evokes the combination of feline predators of the high desert with amphibians, providing protection based on 'killing', centred on the voracious, dangerous, fearful aspects of the high desert, as well as marsh liminal/threshold-crossing creatures. On birth tusks, animals from the flood plain and the human population (except for killed enemies) are absent.⁸² Summing up, the overall percentage of iconographic overlap between faience figurines and the carved figures on ivory tusks is only around 4.5%. Again, as noted for point 2, the percentage of overlap here is also too low to establish a solid correlation between the two categories of objects.

Thus, the focus of faience figurines appears to lean also towards a domestic, harmless, and natural environment. This apparent contrast with birth tusks demands a more accurate analysis of the iconographic corpus of faience figurines in order to understand the frame(s) of reference for their creation.

Dissecting the corpus of faience figurines: separating iconographic clusters

Faience figurines were not meant to interact together realistically as they were predominantly standing alone on an elongated oval base, whose edge is painted in black. Only a few cases of interaction between two beings are shown in the corpus of faience figurines: a human figure carrying a calf (e.g. Brooklyn Museum E. 61.164) or carrying a baby/ies (e.g. Metropolitan Museum, New York, acc. no. 09.180.2271), a child playing with a dog (e.g. Antikenmuseum Basel, LgAe NN 037) and a lion attacking a calf (e.g. British Museum, London, BM EA 22876). Represented as isolated atoms, they are also rarely combined with other faience figurines in a coherent and patterned ensemble; 'hippopotamus + dog'⁸³ and 'hippopotamus + human being' can be considered the most recurrent association, although such combinations seem rather randomly governed. Difficulties in identifying individual iconographic blocks of sequence and association is also increased by the fact that most of these figurines come from sequential multiple burials,⁸³ which contributed to the scattering and mixing of burial

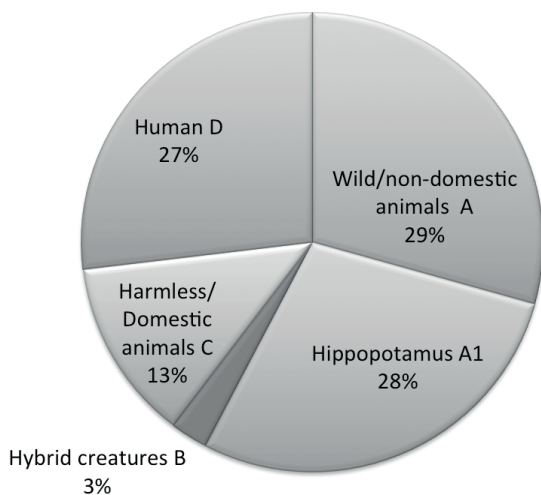


Fig. 5 - Chart showing the distribution of motifs within the corpus of the faience figurines, by Gianluca Miniaci

⁷⁹ MARTÍNEZ BABÓN, in ROSATI, GUIDOTTI (eds.), *Proceedings of the XI International Congress*, 384.

⁸⁰ Arranged in decreasing order of attestation, see: QUIRKE, *Birth Tusks*, 224.

⁸¹ DUNAND, *Fouilles de Byblos, Texte*, 745-6.

⁸² QUIRKE, *Birth Tusks*, 565-6.

⁸³ MINIACI, *CAJ* 2018.

equipment from individual contexts.⁸⁴ In conclusion, based on our current state of knowledge, there is no apparent logic in associating faience elements together in the same context.

The mechanisms behind figurine production involves interpretative patterns of reality, *i.e.* figurines symbolise the relationship between people and their world, as it is seen, evaluated, perceived and communicated.⁸⁵ Therefore, their production requires a process of selection, representation, and prioritisation of elements. The mechanisms of inclusion and exclusion of zoological (and human) elements in the production of faience figurines are clear-cut and evident, and they follow a deliberate logic, as they precisely exclude some elements and encompass others. Therefore faience figurines were assembled into a meta-narrative dialogue, systematically conceived and produced all together under a premeditated logic, and not randomly assembled at the whim of their maker. For this reason, the main aim of this study is to identify the boundaries affecting the choices made by their makers in order to understand the ontology that lies behind the corpus of Middle Kingdom faience figurines.

Inclusion

The known corpus of the faience figurines includes *c.* 773 examples from archaeological contexts⁸⁶ and *c.* 253 acquired through purchase; therefore the provenance of the latter is completely unknown or just assumed and arrived at chiefly on the basis of the place of purchase or



Fig. 6 - Faience hippopotamus from Lisht North, Pit 333, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, acc. no. 15.3.59, Rogers Fund, 1915. Photo © The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York

⁸⁴ MINIACI, in REGULSKI (ed.), *Abydos: The Sacred Land*; MINIACI, in NYORD (ed.), *Concepts in Middle Kingdom Funerary Culture*.

⁸⁵ Answer of Douglass W. Bailey in: HAMILTON, *CAJ* 6/2, 295.

⁸⁶ For the difference in the degree of accuracy in the archaeological documentation, see: MINIACI, *Miniature Forms*.

the dealer's statement, neither of which is reliable in the absence of additional information;⁸⁷ *c.* 52 items recently appeared on the antiquity market and were sold in the most renowned auction houses.⁸⁸ With these, the final corpus of Middle Kingdom faience figurines numbers about 1078 items.

Most of the faience figurines represent zoological entities,⁸⁹ with only 19.1% depicting human beings; unexpectedly, composite images amount to only 2.1%. Mainly due to the disproportionate number of hippopotami (*c.* 196 examples targeted; Fig. 6), the wild component appears as the principal focus of the faience figurine corpus. Lions (Pl. XIV.1) and hippopotami, representing wild and dangerous environments, are not shown as composite beings but in the shape they appear in nature (with the addition of an 'interpretative' decorative pattern). Other animals that may be associated with the chaotic and wild environment of the desert, such as the hedgehog (Pl. XIV.2), wild cat, and jerboa, cannot be directly connected with the same dangerous and voracious facets. In addition, the wild and fierce nature of animals, including the act of killing (e.g. British Museum, London, BM EA 22876), is rarely depicted. Most animals (82%) are simply shown standing, sleeping or crouching and not performing any act to indicate their attitude towards the surrounding world. The corpus also includes a significant number of tame or harmless creatures, taken both from the flood plain and the marshes, and occasionally shown interacting with human activities. Although most of the figurines seem isolated in their own individuality and completely detached from the surrounding environment, there are a few ecological references: hippopotami are decorated with aquatic plants and – less frequently – with insects and birds, all symbolizing their marsh and swamp habitat (e.g. Museum of Fine Arts,

⁸⁷ MINIACI, in JIMÉNEZ SERRANO, MORALES (eds.), *Palace Culture and its Echoes*.

⁸⁸ The data has been drawn from the most accessible auction catalogues such as Christie's, Sotheby's etc. This work was made possible through the support of the Department of Ancient Egypt and Sudan during my period of research fellowship in the British Museum, London.

⁸⁹ Typologically classification of animals into Darwinian species would be an anachronistic application of our categories of thinking for past societies, since anatomical, morphological, and biological categorisation of reality may be a system divergent from ancient Egyptian logic, *cf.* KEIMER, *Université Ibrahim. Annales de la Faculté des Lettres* 2, 121-34. I prefer to keep each division as broad categories, often following an ecological division (*cf.* ARNOLD, *BMMA*, NS 52/4, 5-6), or an anthropological criterion that categorises animals in wild versus domestic, *i.e.* dangerous/harmful versus docile/harmless (= [proximity] intimacy, comfort, control versus [distance] otherness, discomfort, fear), see: SERJEANTSON, in ROWLEY-CONWY (ed.), *Animal Bones*; O'CONNOR, in CAMPANA (ed.), *Anthropological Approaches to Zooarchaeology*.



Fig. 7 - Three images carved on ivory tusks, from left to right UC 15917, UC 16383, UC 35309. Photo © Gianluca Miniaci, courtesy of the Petrie Museum of Egyptian Archaeology UCL

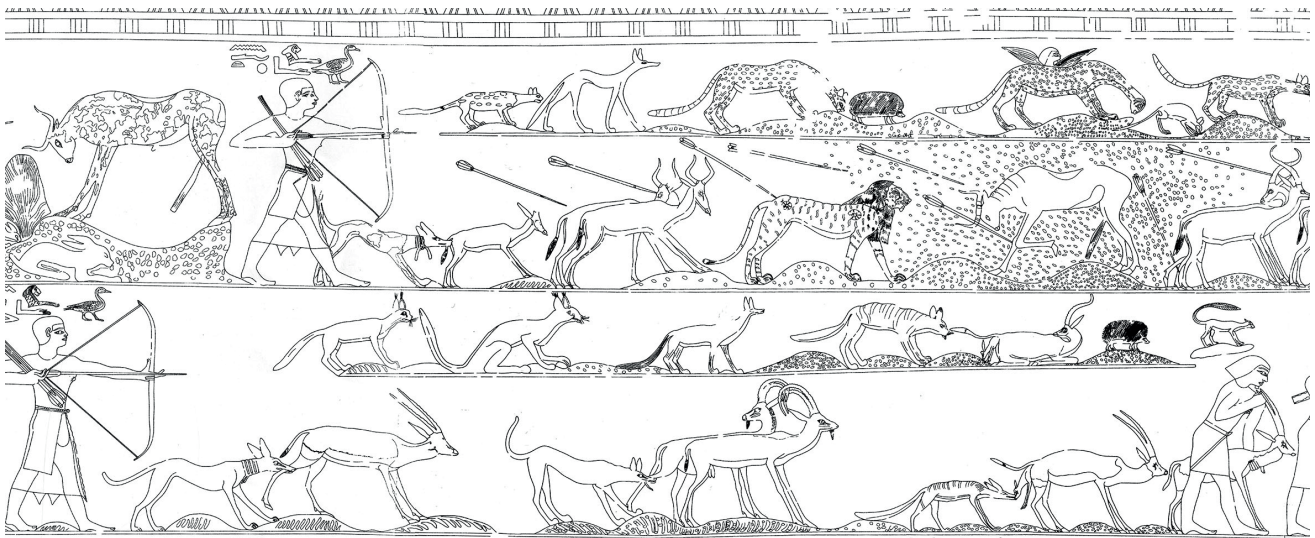


Fig. 8 - Detail from the hunt scene in the chapel of Khnumhotep II, Beni Hasan. Courtesy of Naguib Kanawati; cf. KANAWATI, EVANS, *Beni Hassan*, vol. I, pl. 124

Boston, acc. no. 51.8). Similar images of riverine plants and birds can be found decorating miniature faience jars, cups, bowls and vessels (e.g. Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, acc. no. 20.1303) which are often associated with faience animals. The so-called ‘dwarfs’ carrying calves or small animals (Pl. XIV.3) and children playing with dogs are reminiscent of a pastoral and rural world.

Therefore, the main features represented by birth tusks (killing, voracity, fearful desert forces, and hybridisation, Fig. 7) are rather marginal aspects in faience figurines, given the low number of hybrid creatures and the few examples presenting facets of killing/obvious ferocity. Furthermore, a symbolic reference to protection is almost never explicitly indicated as it is for birth tusks; rather it is the natural world, more frequently aligned to the marsh and swamp, that is preferred to the distant cosmos of the desert. Also symbolism and the use of hieroglyphs, components embedded in birth tusks, are absent or marginal in respect of faience figurines. Conversely, harmless animals and human beings play a much more crucial role with faience figurines than they do with birth tusks, where they are virtually absent.

Exclusion

The relationship between the represented object and its representational subject is based not only on the imaginative forces which lay behind the creation of the miniature figurines but also on the negative (in the sense of subtractive) processes, *i.e.* the isolation/exclusion of specific components.

Horned herbivores inhabiting the desert region are systematically excluded from the corpus of faience figurines: oryx, gazelle, ibex, hartebeest, antelope and wild bull. In the Middle Kingdom, these animals become the main focus of ‘hunting in the desert’ scenes represented in wall-paintings and reliefs found in above-ground tomb chapels of regional governors (Fig. 8). However, more than simply portraying realistic daily events widespread among the population, the ‘hunting in the desert’ environment⁹⁰ encapsulates a message copied from royalty by the regional ruling class.⁹¹ Janice Kamrin has demonstrated that these hunting scenes and the treatment of their prominent figures in Middle

⁹⁰ Cf. ALTENMÜLLER, in *LÄ*, vol. III, 221.

⁹¹ KAMRIN, *The Cosmos of Khnumhotep II*, 83-9.

Kingdom chapels were inspired primarily by similar scenes occurring at royal centres. In Old Kingdom temple scenes, the king is represented as the primary hunter⁹² thus emphasizing his physical domination (= identification with Horus) over the chaotic power of the desert and marshes and their animal dwellers (= identification with evil forces, enemies of the gods).⁹³ The decoration in private tomb chapels of the early-mid Middle Kingdom, depicting provincial nomarchs themselves as the hunter in the desert and marshes, display the same ideology of power.⁹⁴ Moreover, oryx, antelope, gazelle and ibex represented the ideal wild game food source for nobles rather than for wider segments of the population. In the same vein, some of the horned herbivores may have had a strong connection with royalty and also with the goddess Hathor.⁹⁵ The relationship between Hathor and the horned and herbivore animals of the desert is not only explicitly stated in some Late and Roman Period tales: “May she (the deceased) find Hathor who resides in the West [...] while the hartebeests, the gazelles and the deer, the animals of the mountain are on the sand before her”,⁹⁶ but is also present in the iconographic motifs of pharaonic times, such as on the glazed steatite vase found in Abydos tomb D10, which has a Hathor face surrounded by an ibex, a hare, a goat, a feline, and a hunting-dog (Eighteenth Dynasty, Fig. 9).⁹⁷ The wild bull is a symbolic reference to kingship, power, and virility,⁹⁸ the wounding of the wild bull in wall scenes from the tombs of Middle Kingdom nomarchs, as represented on the northern wall of Khnumhotep II’s chapel at Beni Hasan, may be interpreted symbolically as acquiring and usurping royal and divine attributes.⁹⁹ Contrarily, the only horned herbivores appearing in



Fig. 9 - Kohl vase with raised relief series of figures, from tomb D10, Abydos. Published in: RANDALL-MACIVER, MACE, *El Amrah and Abydos*, pl. 38

⁹² BORCHARDT, *Das Grabdenkmal*, vol. II, pl. 17.

⁹³ KAMRIN, *The Cosmos of Khnumhotep II*, 147-8. Cf. for the Ramesside Period: ALLIOT, *RdE* 5.

⁹⁴ KAMRIN, *The Cosmos of Khnumhotep II*, 87-8.

⁹⁵ QUACK, in RIEMER *et al.* (eds.), *Desert Animals in the Eastern Sahara*, 347; QUIRKE, *Birth Tusks*, 566-7.

⁹⁶ CHAUVEAU, *RdE* 41, 3-8.

⁹⁷ RANDALL MACIVER, MACE, *El-Amrah and Abydos*, 97, pl. 38.

⁹⁸ VERNUS, YOYOTTE, *Bestiaire des Pharaons*, 562-3.

⁹⁹ KAMRIN, *The Cosmos of Khnumhotep II*, 86.

the faience figurine corpus are cows, calves, and rams (rare), pointing primarily to domestic, pastoral and rural environments rather than royal/power ideology.

Also, composite images created following the principle of an artificial anatomic reassembly of different parts of various species are deliberately absent from the faience figurine corpus. David Wengrow has demonstrated that the emergence of the first centres of power in the Early Dynastic Period is linked with the rise and spread of composite creatures: serpopards,¹⁰⁰ snake-necked felines,¹⁰¹ griffins,¹⁰² the winged falcon or human-headed lion/panther,¹⁰³ double-headed bulls, female-faced snakes,¹⁰⁴ and anthropomorphised beetles¹⁰⁵ all appear on ceremonial slate palettes, ivory plaques, ivory knife handles, vessels,¹⁰⁶ and on a minority of small (?) objects.¹⁰⁷ The concept lying behind the generative process of composite images was exogenous to Egyptian culture, but was introduced into Egypt from Mesopotamia.¹⁰⁸ During the Predynastic Period, composite images were transmitted to Egypt on engraved seals by the same route from the Near East that brought metals, precious stones and other commodities, deployed locally in legitimisation of power status.¹⁰⁹ Accumulated over the decades, the number of seals bearing hybrid images most likely impacted on ancient Egyptian imagery and became instinctively tied to the social class taking advantage of foreign imports.¹¹⁰ With the rise of a unified territorial state in Egypt, between 3300 and 3000 BC, images of imaginary animal creatures would have been taken as symbols of power and legitimisation of social inequality, before spreading across the country in a more structured and consistent way, tied to the uppermost segments of society;¹¹¹ for all the Old and Middle Kingdoms they remained the prerogative of selected social groups. Therefore, it cannot be accidental that most of the hybrid creatures are missing from the

¹⁰⁰ MEEKS, in REDFORD (ed.), *The Oxford Encyclopedia*, vol. I, 506.

¹⁰¹ FISCHER, in FARKAS, HARPER, HARRISON (eds.), *Monsters and Demons*, 16.

¹⁰² SABBABY, in MINIACI, BETRÒ, QUIRKE (eds.), *Company of Images*.

¹⁰³ MEEKS, in REDFORD (ed.), *The Oxford Encyclopedia*, vol. I, 506.

¹⁰⁴ CIAŁOWICZ, *SAAC* 15, 14-6, figs. 4-6.

¹⁰⁵ ROTH, in PATCH (ed.), *Dawn of Egyptian Art*, 198-9 (cat. no. 180). HENDRICKX, *JEA* 82, 23-28, fig. 1, pl. 31.

¹⁰⁶ PATCH, in PATCH (ed.), *Dawn of Egyptian Art*, 140.

¹⁰⁷ In the Early Dynastic Period plastic focussed on subjects directly inspired from visual (direct or indirect) observation rather than on mental composition; composite creatures were reserved more for two dimensional representations. However, see two examples in: CIAŁOWICZ, *SAAC* 15, 217, figs. 24-5.

¹⁰⁸ WENGROW, *JMC* 16/2.

¹⁰⁹ WENGROW, *The Origins of Monsters*, 62.

¹¹⁰ WENGROW, *The Origins of Monsters*, 110-2.

¹¹¹ WENGROW, *The Origins of Monsters*, 50-73.

corpus of faience figurines, with the exclusion of the lion-maned/-eared human creature (Aha/Bes) + lion-hippopotamus (Ipy/Taweret), which are, however, represented only rarely (Fig. 10). The presence of the lion-maned/-eared human creature (Aha/Bes)¹¹² and lion-hippopotamus (Ipy/Taweret) could be due to the start of the diffusion of their iconography during the late Middle Kingdom.¹¹³ This happened not only on a spatial level,¹¹⁴ but may have occurred also on a wider social level and in domestic contexts.¹¹⁵

Therefore, the fauna related to the palace and temple, *i.e.* those represented in art to express more vigorously the needs and ideology of the uppermost elite, seem to have been systematically excluded from the faience figurine corpus.



Fig. 10 - Faience figurine of a lion-maned/-eared human creature (Aha/Bes). The Walters Art Museum, Baltimore, acc. no. 48.420. Acquired by Henry Walters, 1922. Photo © Courtesy of The Walters Art Museum, Baltimore

Targeting the foci of faience figurine iconography

The hippopotamus is certainly the most popular icon in the corpus of faience figurines, with 196 examples recorded from excavations and among collections. In the ancient Egyptian imagination this animal was usually associated with negative and chaotic forces, as it represented one of their most real and present dangers. It is highly aggressive and known to attack humans without provocation, and renowned also in ancient and modern

times as an unpredictable animal likely to charge and attack boats.¹¹⁶ With its lethal canines and incisors, the noise produced by its jaws, and its incredible turn of speed, *c.* 30 km/h (hence the Greek name, ‘horse of the river’), it is no overstatement to class the hippopotamus as one of the most fearful living creatures. Not surprisingly, therefore, the ancient Egyptians often presented the hippopotamus as a synonym of evil and a destructive force, frequently associated with the god Seth and ritually hunted by pharaoh in order to demonstrate his protective role to the population.¹¹⁷ However, while this evil aspect applies to male animals, the female hippopotamus was perceived as a benign and benevolent creature. Female hippopotami are fiercely protective of their calves and fearless in keeping them from harm. These characteristics were clearly well known to the Egyptians, who created a composite goddess, in later sources called Taweret,¹¹⁸ whose features were based on the hippopotamus (body and head) with the addition of a lion’s legs and mane, and a dorsal ridge sometimes in the form of a (complete) crocodile.¹¹⁹ This theriomorphic deity, with all its hippopotamus-based variants, was connected to fertility, birth (both human and the symbolic solar birth),¹²⁰ child rearing, caretaking (protection of pregnant women and small children) and in general with the same level of protection¹²¹ that the animal’s fearful power and vigilant motherly attitude engendered.¹²²

Due to the high number of occurrences of hippopotami amid the faience figurine corpus, it is tempting to interpret such representations as the personification – in zoological form – of the hippopotamus-based female deity.¹²³ Unfortunately, faience figurines of hippopotami bear no clear indication of their gender through the emphasis of female attributes such as, for instance, the pendulous breasts of the goddess or any explicit connection to the defence of offspring. Therefore, the gender of the hippopotamus was not a main concern during the process of figurine creation. The ink

¹¹⁶ VERNUS, YOYOTTE, *Bestiaire des Pharaons*, 261-2.

¹¹⁷ VERNER, *ZÄS* 96, 53.

¹¹⁸ BEHRMANN, *Das Nilpferd*, vol. II, 78-82; VERNUS, YOYOTTE, *Bestiaire des Pharaons*, 686-97; LOEBEN, in QUERTINMONT (ed.), *Dieux, Génies et Démons*, 46-53.

¹¹⁹ See: CERUTI, in MINIACI, BETRÒ, QUIRKE (eds.), *Company of Images*, 113-4; QUIRKE, *Birth Tusks*, 327.

¹²⁰ NAGY, in LUFT (ed.), *The Intellectual Heritage of Egypt*, 449-56.

¹²¹ Hippopotamus deities were also probably connected with the household, protecting those asleep and the weak or sick, SÄVE-SÖDERBERGH, *On Egyptian Representations of Hippopotamus Hunting*, 46.

¹²² Cf. KEIMER, *Université Ibrahim. Annales de la Faculté des Lettres* 2, 121-34.

¹²³ Cf. LOEBEN, in QUERTINMONT (ed.), *Dieux, Génies et Démons*, 47.

¹¹² VOLOKHINE, *BSEG* 18, 81-95; ROMANO, *BES* 2, 39-56; QUIRKE, *Birth Tusks*, 357.

¹¹³ CERUTI, in MINIACI, BETRÒ, QUIRKE (eds.), *Company of Images*, 98-107.

¹¹⁴ WEINGARTEN, *The Transformation of Egyptian Taweret*.

¹¹⁵ STEVENS, in SEYFRIED (ed.), *In the Light of Amarna*, 92-7.

decoration applied to some examples, depicting Nilotic ornithological fauna and the flora typical of marshes and swamps, seems to shift the focus from the divine to the natural environment. In fact, the hippopotamus is rarely found in deep water, favouring instead rivers, lakes and swamps. In the iconographic clichés evident in ancient Egypt, out of all the creatures inhabiting marshes and swamps the hippopotamus is commonly paired with the crocodile. This is due largely to the fact that as crocodiles and hippopotami occupy the same natural habitat there are often encounters and clashes between them. Considered as two of the most dangerous creatures in ancient Egyptian society, crocodiles and hippopotami are frequently mentioned together in literature as dangers to human life and often represented in art in the same environment (Fig. 11), sometimes fighting each other. The almost total absence of the crocodile from the corpus of faience figurines is, therefore, rather remarkable. Like hippopotami, crocodiles are also amphibious and frequent the same wetlands, river banks, marshes and swamps, and similarly they are a serious threat to people's life. The main difference between the two animals lies in the fact that crocodiles are carnivorous, feeding mostly on vertebrates such as fish, reptiles, birds and mammals, while hippopotami are insatiable (mainly) herbivores. The hippopotamus can spend hours grazing on grass, consuming up to 60–70 kg per day; in addition, at dusk, it may leave the water and travel inland, sometimes up to 10 km, often reaching cultivated lands¹²⁴ where it can devastate entire crops and kill cattle (Fig. 12).¹²⁵ There is a passage in the Coffin Texts explicitly stating that crops are one of the hippopotamus's foods.¹²⁶ Certainly, this aspect of the hippopotamus sets it apart from the crocodile and may have been one of the main concerns of the ancient Egyptians who produced the figurines and who decided to include the hippopotamus but not the crocodile, even though they were two beings from the same environment.¹²⁷

There is another iconographic cluster inside the corpus of faience figurines that is also focused on the natural environment of fields and marshes: the so-called figures of 'dwarfs'. In fact, although improperly labelled as 'dwarfs', these faience figurines do not aim to represent achondroplasia as they do not follow the ancient Egyptian iconographic conventions for this condition. In the Early Dynastic Period and Old Kingdom dwarf representations were characterised by their sense of realism for the physical disproportions of achondroplasia,¹²⁸ with figures displaying shorter

¹²⁴ ESTES, *The Behavior Guide to African Mammals*, 222-6.

¹²⁵ KENDALL, *Oryx* 45/1, 28-34.

¹²⁶ VERNUS, YOYOTTE, *Bestiaire des Pharaons*, 251.

¹²⁷ ARNOLD, *BMMA*, NS 52/4, 24.

¹²⁸ PATCH, in PATCH (ed.), *Dawn of Egyptian Art*, 119-21.

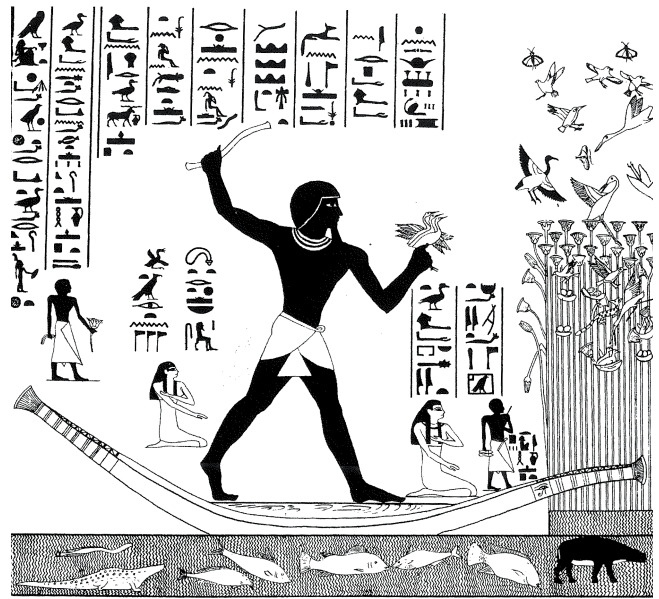


Fig. 11 - Fowling scene in chapel of Khunmhotep, Beni Hasan; noteworthy is the coincidence of hippopotamus and crocodile in the same scene. Published in: NEWBERRY, *Beni Hasan*, pl. 32



Fig. 12 - Hippopotami grazing on the waterbank Photo © Riaan Albrecht, <https://riaanalbrecht.wixsite.com/photography> <accessed 27.09.2017>

arms and legs and a small face on a large head; such features were not exaggeratedly emphasised but most of the time they were intended just to stereotype the representation, as can be seen in the tombs of Ibi (E 62a) and Ptahhotep II (E 34).¹²⁹ Moreover, dwarfs are rarely involved in outdoor activities (except for bird-catching), probably due to their rarity/value, whereas they are often depicted looking after the owner's pet animals, such as dogs and monkeys, *i.e.* they carry out domestic and trivial activities (Fig. 13).¹³⁰ In addition, they are usually represented dressed; nudity is rarely part of their iconography.

Katalin Kóthay has indeed noted that the Middle

¹²⁹ RUPP, *CdE* 40, 280.

¹³⁰ DASEN, *Dwarfs*, 126.

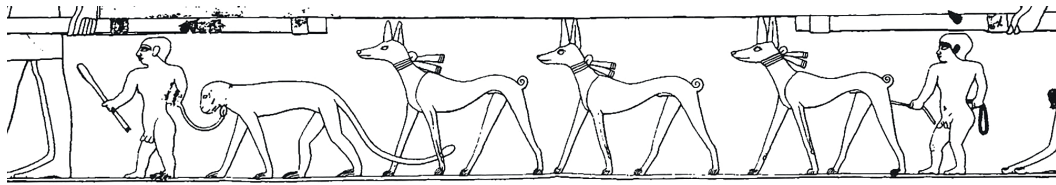


Fig. 13 - Scene from the tomb of Mereruka, Saqqara. Published in: VAN WALSEM, *Iconography*, 116, fig. 9.11

Kingdom faience figurines referred to as ‘dwarfs’ in Egyptological literature thoroughly deviate from the previous canons of representation in two major aspects:¹³¹ 1) a change in the representations of bodily features; 2) the introduction of a variety of new postures and activities.¹³²

The faience figurines (c. 94 examples) represent deformed men rather than dwarfs: most of them are bald, with elongated flat-topped heads; they have extremely prominent bellies, enough to be readily associated with pregnancy, although most figurines with protruding abdomens are depicted with exposed male genitalia (Fig. 14) or represented without female gender characteristics (e.g. breasts are not emphasised); they do not have disproportionate limbs (shorter legs and arms), although their exact length cannot be firmly evaluated given the squatting position assumed by these figurines; they have prominent – and often exaggerated – sexual attributes displaying (probably intentional) blurred boundaries between male and female; also the gender is not clear from their bodily iconography which shows a clear degree of ambiguity; they are often represented completely naked,¹³³ deformities – if present – are shown in an exaggerated way; finally, they are often shown performing actions related to outdoor or rural activities, like carrying calves (Fig. 15).¹³⁴ The definition “figurines grotesques” given by Maurice Dunand is probably more appropriate than ‘dwarfs’.¹³⁵

The closest iconographic parallel for the grotesque human figures included in the faience figurine corpus is represented by the low status men depicted in Old and Middle Kingdom tombs: herdsmen are shown with protruding abdomens, pathological deformities (such as scrotal enlargement), bald or with head completely shaved, with facial and body hair, and naked with fully exposed genitalia. In a tomb at Meir, a herdsman in the act of driving fattened cattle is represented with a wizened



Fig. 14 - Faience figurine of a ‘dwarf’. British Museum, London, BM EA 22882 © Trustees of the British Museum. Photo Gianluca Miniaci



Fig. 15 - Faience figurine of a ‘dwarf’. British Museum, London, BM EA 59397 © Trustees of the British Museum. Photo Gianluca Miniaci

¹³¹ Véronique Dasen already noted how the grotesque features of faience models of ‘dwarfs’ actually contrasts the realism of the few ivory and wooden figurines, such as British Museum, London, BM 58409 and Liverpool Garstang Museum of Archaeology at the University of Liverpool, E.7081, DASEN, *Dwarfs*, 137, pls. 35.1a-b, 34.2.

¹³² KÓTHAY, *BMH* 116-117, 15-6.

¹³³ For this see: KÓTHAY, *BMH* 116-117.

¹³⁴ KÓTHAY, *BMH* 116-117, 16-7.

¹³⁵ DUNAND, *Fouilles de Byblos, Texte*, nos. 15309–15360.

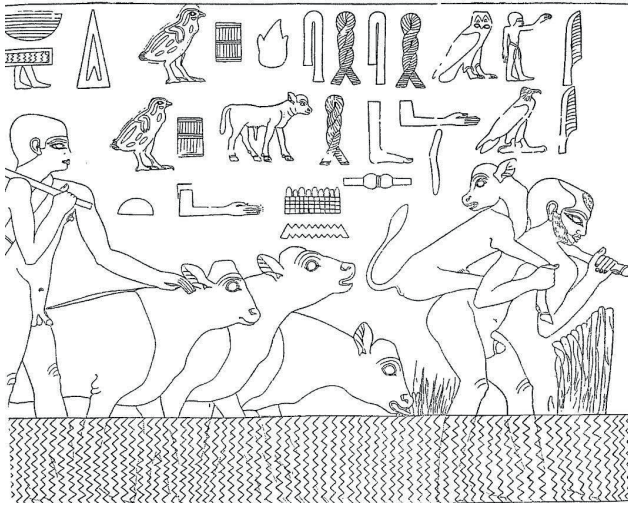


Fig. 16 - Cattle fording scene from the tomb of Ti, Saqqara.
Published in: VAN WALSEM, *Iconography*, 82, fig. 14

body, elderly-looking face and unkempt hair.¹³⁶ Herdsmen are usually associated with cattle and in particular are often represented carrying a calf on their shoulders (Fig. 16). The relevant outdoor occupations of the herdsman were carried out in those territories (pastures, marshes, riverbanks and waters) functioning as liminal zones between the ordered world and the realm of the chaos.¹³⁷ In these settings, herdsman and farmers were likely to occasionally encounter and face dangerous creatures, threatening not only their lives but more importantly the life and survival of the sustenance products destined for the entire local population. In this task, herdsman were often supported by guard dogs (another element well-represented in the corpus of faience figurines). Herdsman and farmers represented the physical protectors of tame harmless creatures from the threats of the wild world. In particular, fording scenes were associated with apotropaic performances of herdsman intended to ward off the threat to their cattle from wild animals when crossing water (symbolizing the concept of malignant forces to be defeated), and the same men were entrusted with the task of performing protection rituals to ward off such dangers. In one scene in the mastaba of Ti a herdsman shown leading a calf into the water in order to induce the remaining cattle to follow is accompanied by the recitation of a ‘water spell’:

*“Crossing the canal by the cattle. Warding off death.
Warding off the crocodile by the herdsman: ‘O herdsman
there! Let your face be watchful for this marsh-dweller
who is in the water; to prevent these here (i.e. the cattle)
falling victim to this marsh-dweller. May he come as a*

sightless one! Let your face be very watchful for him!’”¹³⁸

In conclusion, the linking element in these scenes seems to be the contact zone between one natural yet chaotic realm full of dangerous animals, and another realm featuring the alluvial plain, where domestic creatures required protection. The river was flanked by the floodplain, where cultivated lands and human activities such as agriculture, manufacturing, food preparation and food storage took place. This area needed constant protection not only for the sake of the human population and domestic animals, but also for the crops and fields. The low-lying areas along the margins of the floodplain would often retain water year-round and create a marshy and swampy environment. This is the liminal area where dangerous animals from the desert, probably attracted to the water, ventured beyond into cultivated land where they brought disorder, death and destruction. It is clear why the ancient Egyptians felt compelled to take every measure, whether physical or magical, to protect this liminal zone.

Herdsmen and the environment of the faience figurines: a broader setting

Tantalizingly, one written composition places the environment of the faience figurines into a broader setting. The so-called ‘Tale of the Herdsman’ is a fragmentary story preserved as a single copy in Papyrus Berlin 3024. The text of the tale has survived only by chance, since it is preserved on a papyrus sheet fortuitously glued to a different papyrus roll containing the ‘Dialogue of a Man and his Soul’ in order to strengthen its end. The text, preserved in only 25 short columns, was probably composed during the early Twelfth Dynasty.¹³⁹ Although the story remains controversial and raises several interpretative problems, three focal sections can be understood: *a.* a herdsman meeting with a fearful female being, possibly a goddess; the event happens in the marshes and the female being appears as a predatory creature whose skin is not smooth and has bristles (*i.e.* with fur); *b.* a discussion between the herdsman and his colleagues on the actions to be taken to protect the cattle and the calves they are herding;¹⁴⁰ *c.* the opening section of the recounting of a second meeting between the herdsman and the female creature, who now has a human form.

¹³⁸ Tomb of Ankhmahor: RITNER, *The Mechanics*, 227.

¹³⁹ VERNUS, *Future at Issue*, 185; PARKINSON, *Poetry and Culture*, 300.

¹⁴⁰ SCHNEIDER, in SCHNEIDER, SZPAKOWSKA (eds.), *Egyptian Stories*, 309.

¹³⁶ BLACKMAN, *The Rock Tombs of Meir*, vol. II, pls. 6, 11.

¹³⁷ ALTENMÜLLER, *BSEG* 13, 9-21; ALTENMÜLLER, *MDAIK* 47, 11-9.

a. “Look, I had descended to the marsh/swamp which is close by this low-lying land/pasture. And I saw a female in it (the marsh) – she was not of the appearances of human beings! My hair stood on end as I could see her bristles – her appearance was not smooth.

b. Never will I do what she said, as dread of her is throughout my limbs! I (want to) say to you: So let us make the bulls go off course, then the calves will cross over so that the herd may spend the night in the area of the paddock (or: pasture). The herdsmen are/ shall be behind them. Our skiff is for leading the bulls away together with the guards placed on its stern. The ritualists among the herdsmen are reciting a water incantation by saying this spell of his (the water’s) – so that my spirits will rejoice, herdsmen and men: ‘There will be no driving me away from this marsh in a year of a high inundation that gives order to the ridges of the hills, so that a lake cannot be told from the river! Go on to the interior of your dwelling, while the guards are firm on their post. Just come! Fear of you has vanished, dread of you is gone away, until the rage of the Mighty Goddess passes and the fear of the Lady of the Two Lands.’

c. When it was getting light, at dawn in the morning, one acted on his instruction. And this goddess approached him – while he had turned the front (bow?) to the lake. She came, stripped naked of her clothes and was disordered, (namely) her hair.”¹⁴¹

The nature of the story is rather unclear as to its purpose – whether it is a kind of folkloristic/pastoral tale¹⁴² or should be understood metaphorically as a religious text, viewing the female character as a Hathor-like deity.¹⁴³

However, the main categories involved in the tale are:

1. a fearful female creature, probably of mutating aspect (animal and human);
2. herdsman/herdsmen (as protectors of domestic animals);
3. marshes and swamps (and their proximity to low-lying land/pasture);
4. domestic animals (cattle and calves).

Thomas Schneider has made an ingenious parallelism between this passage and two other texts: a composition known as ‘The Journey of the Libyan Goddess’ and a folk narrative from the Libyan-Berber region dating to the Islamic Period.

The original text of the tale ‘The Journey of the

¹⁴¹ Translated from: SCHNEIDER, in SCHNEIDER, SZPAKOWSKA (eds.), *Egyptian Stories*, 311-6. The bold is made by the author.

¹⁴² BRUNNER, *Grundzüge einer Geschichte*; KÁKOSY, *JEA* 68, 290-8.

¹⁴³ SCHNEIDER, in SCHNEIDER, SZPAKOWSKA (eds.), *Egyptian Stories*, 315-6; PARKINSON, *Poetry and Culture*, 300, n. 8.



Fig. 17 - Faramarz killing the shah of demons (ghouls), from ‘Shah Namah, the Persian Epic of the Kings’ by Abu al-Qasim Firdawsi of Tus, Tenth Century. Photo © Wellcome Collection, <http://wellcomeimages.org/indexplus/image/L0035191.html> <accessed 27.09.2017>

Libyan Goddess’, although preserved in a Twenty-second Dynasty papyrus from Thebes (pBerlin 3053) and on some re-used blocks from the temple at Elkab (Twenty-sixth Dynasty), most likely dates back to the second millennium BC. It refers to a ferocious Libyan goddess with a dual appearance either as a woman or a lioness, living on Egypt’s western borders and going down to the marshes and meadows, where she meets her believers from the rural population who had come to pacify her. The text does not display the features of a theological composition and may instead be based on more popular beliefs.¹⁴⁴

In ancient Islamic folklore, the ghou, from the Arabic *ghūl*, is a desert demon believed to rob graves and devour men and animals, usually dwelling in burial grounds and other uninhabited places (Fig. 17). In some variants, the ghou is also a desert-dwelling, shape-shifting demon that can assume the guise of a wild animal, especially

¹⁴⁴ VERHOEVEN, DERCHAIN, *Le Voyage de la Déesse Lybique*.

a feline.¹⁴⁵ The Libyan-Berber tradition has preserved a variant of this folk tale, identifying the ghoulish with a similar female being called *tamza*.¹⁴⁶ She appears in the form of a big cat or lioness and also as a woman. Her physical features can include two heavy breasts that she bears on her shoulders, a body covered with fur, a mane, a black face with long teeth or tusks, hands with claws, and almost completely blind. She is considered a threat especially to travellers and herdsman, as she feeds on human flesh and the animals of farmers and herdsman (including calves). Her enemies are barking dogs and running (*i.e.* not stagnant) water. Also linguistically, in the Ghadames Libyan Berber dialect, the word *tamza* means ‘big cat, lioness or hyena’.¹⁴⁷ The widespread geographic distribution of the *tamza* myth, from the western borders of Egypt to the Atlantic coast, seems to indicate that it was based on an old narrative tradition predating the Islamic conquest of North Africa which was later assimilated into the Islamic ghoulish tradition.¹⁴⁸

Both tales – the *tamza* belief and ‘The Journey of the Libyan Goddess’ – seem to echo the fragmentary ‘Tale of the Herdsman’, indicating that in pre-Islamic North Africa there was a particular folkloristic attention to the role played by the herdsman and the liminal zones represented by marshes and swamps. It is in such a folk substratum that faience figurines may have been engendered, as a response to the realities of the liminal zone between the marsh environment with its chaotic forces and the domestic fields inhabited by creatures needing protection from the herdsman, whose role included the defence of his zone from any faunal threat.

The social permeability of images

As we have seen, the isolation of zoological elements in the iconographic motifs displayed by faience figurines is non-random and follows a precise logical process of exclusion. Therefore, with certain exceptions, the world of faience figurines seems to distance itself from the royal and uppermost levels of society and their iconographic repertoire. The reasons for this may be rooted either in the inaccessibility of or indifference to certain motifs, which may be *a.* intentional or *b.* unplanned or unconscious.

a. Intentional: the interest or concern of a certain social segment does not overlap with those of other social segments; therefore, there is no willingness to

acknowledge and/or to reproduce motifs not directly tied to its own social sphere.

b. Unplanned or unconscious: the exclusion of iconographic motifs might be dictated by the absence of knowledge; therefore, there is no possibility for reproducing motifs which are not known to certain social segments.

In fact, in respect of the choice of subject matter, the themes represented in the corpus of faience figurines seem to be drawn from the farming environment interacting with domestic and wild animals, while facing the daily dangers inherent with carrying out rural activities. The zoological species selected, the working class represented (‘dwarfs’ = herdsman), and the action performed point to the direct experiences drawn from daily life, showing an intimate familiarity and knowledge of the farming world. Therefore, the world of faience figurines appears overridingly to belong to ‘folk’, ‘personal’, or ‘popular’ culture.¹⁴⁹

Nonetheless, there are some severe obstacles that prevent us making a complete association with this type of object and the middle or lower segments of society.¹⁵⁰

1. Distribution: faience figurine distribution was especially concentrated in a few key sites, particularly in the cemeteries around Itjtawy, Abydos and Thebes; therefore, their circulation and consumption is in some way linked with economic status, power, and religious centres.¹⁵¹

2. Manufacture: the motifs reproduced were rather limited and show a certain degree of similarity also among objects found in two distant sites (as Thebes and Byblos). Therefore, Middle Kingdom faience figurines were not the instinctive product of a craftsman or a worker, but their production was carried out by specialised or overly skilled artisans, and was most probably intellectually controlled by a narrow segment of society.¹⁵²

3. Contact points with the wealthy: The low percentage of faience figurines appearing in the same context as ivory birth tusks nevertheless reveals a point of contact with a category of objects tied to the uppermost levels of society. In addition, faience figurines are occasionally found in tombs with burial equipment known as ‘court-type burials’.¹⁵³ These tombs contain objects intended to identify the deceased with Osiris and are connected

¹⁴⁵ LEWIS, PELLAT, SCHACHT (eds.), *The Encyclopedia of Islam*, vol. II, 1078-9; PADWICK, *BSOAS* 3, 421-46.

¹⁴⁶ CAMPS, *Encyclopédie Berbère*, 3024-5.

¹⁴⁷ LAOUST, *Hespéris* 34, 253-65.

¹⁴⁸ In Berber lands, local belief in ogres and other fabulous creatures tend to be Islamised, WESTERMARCK, *Ritual and Belief in Morocco*, vol. II; LAOUST, *Hespéris* 34, 253-65; LAOUST, *Contes Berbères du Maroc*, vol. II, 125-6.

¹⁴⁹ Cf. BUSSMANN, in MINIACI, BETRÒ, QUIRKE (eds.), *Company of Images*.

¹⁵⁰ Cf. MAZÉ, *BIFAO* 116.

¹⁵¹ MINIACI, in JIMÉNEZ SERRANO, MORALES (eds.), *Palace Culture and its Echoes*.

¹⁵² MINIACI, in MINIACI *et al.* (eds.), *The Arts of Making in Ancient Egypt*.

¹⁵³ GRAJETZKI, *Tomb Treasures*, 147-54.

with the higher or wealthier levels of society. Also the very few examples of hybrid creatures in the corpus of faience figurines may be taken or borrowed from the iconography connected in earlier periods with the royal and uppermost classes, specifically the lion-maned/-eared human figure (Aha/Bes) and the lion-hippopotamus (Ipy/Taweret). Therefore, the category of faience figurines shows contact points with the wealthy and the contexts of power.

4. *Absence from daily life practice*: Faience figurines are virtually absent from domestic and settlement environments. This may be due to the rarity of preserved Middle Kingdom domestic contexts in the archaeological record. Lahun may be one of the few exceptions in Egypt. However, there, William Matthew Flinders Petrie described only a couple of faience figurines as coming from the settlement; the remainder are only summarily recorded in the published report without any precise location given,¹⁵⁴ therefore it is not certain if they were discovered in the settlement or in the town/pyramid cemeteries. However, the number of faience figurines recorded from Lahun is rather low (16 attestations),¹⁵⁵ above all in comparison with the number of mud figurines found at the site by Flinders Petrie (Fig. 18). In addition, in other settlements of the Middle Kingdom, such as at Buhen, a large number of mud figurines were found,¹⁵⁶ but faience figurines seem to be absent.¹⁵⁷

5. *Prestige*: A large number of faience figurines (294) were found inside a votive deposit in the antechamber of the sanctuary of the Temple of Obelisks at Byblos. The location indicates that these objects held either a strong symbolic or a definite economic value (or both). Based on comparative analysis, it seems that the figurines found at Byblos were imported/brought from Egypt rather than manufactured locally;¹⁵⁸ therefore, they may be connected with the commercial journeys undertaken by the leading economic social classes of Egypt. In conclusion, the figurines may have been considered prestigious items.

The constant danger in archaeological interpretation of societal aspects is to create mono-dimensional blocks which do not interact with others. A clear-cut distinction between segments of society – however we try to partition them: royal, uppermost, upper, mid, lower, lowermost, rich, wealthy, poor, underprivileged etc. – may not have been as clearly defined in past societies as



Fig. 18 - Mud hippopotamus from Lahun. Photo © Gianluca Miniaci, courtesy of the Petrie Museum of Egyptian Archaeology UCL

our theoretical models might lead us to believe. Different social segments interact together, exchange ideas, share needs, and exist together; rarely are the borders of social classes clearly demarcated, and social mobility – to a varying extent – constantly reshapes society. It has been shown through a comparative analysis of items of burial equipment and the titles borne by the deceased that in ancient Egypt, besides the administrative and ruling classes, there was also room for a social level occupied by the wealthy, which accumulated resources but was not directly connected with the ideology of power.¹⁵⁹ The case of faience figurines in the Middle Kingdom perfectly exemplifies the permeability between the uppermost levels of society and a more ‘popular’ culture, whose concerns were more focused upon domestic and rural environments. Points 1–5 make it difficult to imagine faience figurines as the self-portraying products of the lower levels of society, such as farmers and herdsman. Nonetheless, the motifs do not fully mirror those expressed by the high segments of society or embody the ideal concerns of the wealthy class. However, it should be borne in mind that the rural environment was not entirely exogenous to the wealthy and to the power. One of the fundamental elements for the sustenance of ancient Egyptian society relied to a very high degree on the roles played by farmers and herdsman, who were directly involved in food production; the upper levels of society were directly affected by the surrounding natural environment.¹⁶⁰ For instance, if a group of hippopotami devastated entire fields of crops, the effect would be felt not only by the farmers and the

¹⁵⁴ FLINDERS PETRIE, *Kahun, Gurob and Hawara*, 31, pl. 8.

¹⁵⁵ MINIACI, in JIMÉNEZ SERRANO, MORALES (eds.), *Palace Culture and its Echoes*.

¹⁵⁶ Also at Lahun a high number of mud figurines have been documented, MINIACI, *Miniature Forms*.

¹⁵⁷ QUIRKE, in QUIRKE (ed.), *Lahun Studies*; EMERY, SMITH, MILLARD, *The Fortress of Buhen*, pls. 52-4.

¹⁵⁸ MINIACI, *Ä&L* 28.

¹⁵⁹ GRAJETZKI, *The Middle Kingdom*, 149-51; RICHARDS, in LUSTIG (ed.), *Anthropology and Egyptology*, 33-42.

¹⁶⁰ GRAJETZKI, *The Middle Kingdom*, 144.

lower level of population but also by the higher classes.

The corpus of faience figurines can be seen as an example of the influence that concepts/culture unfettered from the ideology of power had on iconography, and one that served also as a conduit for social relationships (exchanges, teaching, negotiations, and rituals).¹⁶¹ As has been seen above, one of the central themes revolves around the marsh environment as a liminal zone between the desert and the flood plain, and centred on the figure of the herdsman as one able to exert control over these environments. Other features of these faience figurines extend beyond the distinct natural settings with the probable intention of assembling both the dangerous and pacific attitudes of natural forces embodied by animals, *i.e.* defence and attack, fear and protection, adult and youthful innocence. Thus the production of faience figurines appears to have been an attempt to straddle different worlds, which were – more often than we think – in contact.

Acknowledgment

I would like to thank Peter Jánosi, Lubica Hudáková, Claus Jurman, Uta Siffert for organising such an inspiring study day and for their kind invitation. I am very grateful to Stephen Quirke and Wolfram Grajetzki for their continuous suggestions and Paul Whelan for reading my text. I would like to thank Naguib Kanawati for his kind permission to reproduce an image from his work.

Bibliography

- ALLIOT, M., “Les Rites de la Chasse au Filet, aux Temples de Karnak, d’Edfou et d’Esneh”, *RdE* 5 (1946), 57-118.
- ALTENMÜLLER, H., *Die Apotropaia und die Götter Mittelägyptens: Eine typologische und religionsgeschichtliche Untersuchung der sogenannten ‘Zaubermesser’ des Mittleren Reichs*, 2 vols. (PhD dissertation: Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität München, 1965).
- ALTENMÜLLER, H., “Jagd”, in *LÄ*, vol. III (Mainz, 1980), 221-4.
- ALTENMÜLLER, H., “Nilpferd und Papyrusdickicht in den Gräbern des Alten Reiches”, *BSEG* 13 (1989), 9-21.
- ALTENMÜLLER, H., “Papyrusdickicht und Wüste: Überlegungen zu zwei Statuenensembles des Tutanchamun”, *MDAIK* 47 (1991), 11-9.
- ARNOLD, D., “An Egyptian Bestiary”, *BMMA, NS* 52/4 (1994–1995), 7-64.
- ARNOLD, F., “Settlement Remains at Lisht-North”, in M. BIETAK (ed.), *Haus und Palast im Alten Ägypten / House and Palace in Ancient Egypt* (Wien: UZK 14; DGÖAW 14, 1996), 13-21.
- ASSMANN, J., “The Ramesside Tomb and the Construction of Sacred Space”, in N. STRUDWICK, J.H. TAYLOR (eds.), *The Theban Necropolis: Past, Present and Future* (London, 2003), 46-52.
- BAILEY, D.W., *Prehistoric Figurines. Representation and Corporeality in the Neolithic* (London, New York, 2005).
- BAILEY, D.W., “Figurines, Corporeality, and the Origins of the Gendered Body”, in D. BOLGER (ed.), *A Companion to Gender Prehistory* (Chichester, 2013), 244-64.
- BEHRMANN, A., *Das Nilpferd in der Vorstellungswelt der Alten Ägypter*, vol. I: *Katalog*, vol. II: *Textband* (Frankfurt am Main: Europäische Hochschulschriften 38/62, 1996).
- BLACKMAN, A.M., *The Rock Tombs of Meir*, vol. II (London: ASE 23, 1915).
- BORCHARDT, L., *Das Grabdenkmal des Königs S’ahure*, vol. II (Leipzig: Ausgrabungen der Deutschen Orient-Gesellschaft in Abusir 1902–1908; Wissenschaftliche Veröffentlichungen der Deutschen Orient-Gesellschaft 26, 1913).
- BORGHOUTS, J.B., “The Magical Texts of Papyrus Leiden I 348”, *OMRO* 51 (1971), 1-248.
- BOURRIAU, J., *Pharaohs and Mortals: Egyptian Art in the Middle Kingdom: Exhibition organised by the Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge, 19 April to 26 June, Liverpool, 18 July to 4 September 1988* (Cambridge, 1988).
- BOURRIAU, J., “Patterns of Change in Burial Customs during the Middle Kingdom”, in S. QUIRKE (ed.), *Middle Kingdom Studies* (New Malden, 1991), 3-20.
- BRUNNER, H., *Grundzüge einer Geschichte der altägyptischen Literatur*, fourth revised and extended edition (Darmstadt: Grundzüge 8, 1986).
- BRUNTON, G., *Matmar* (London, 1948).
- BUSSMANN, R., *Die Provinztempel Ägyptens von der 0. bis zur 11. Dynastie* (Leiden: PdÄ 30, 2010).
- BUSSMANN, R., “Local Traditions in Early Egyptian Temples”, in R.F. FRIEDMAN, P.N. FISKE (eds.), *Egypt at its Origins 3: Proceedings of the Third International Conference ‘Origin of the State: Predynastic and Early Dynastic Egypt’, London, 27th July–1st August 2008* (Leuven, Paris, New Malden: OLA 205, 2011), 747-62.
- BUSSMANN, R., “Personal Piety: An Archaeological Response”, in G. MINIACI, M. BETRÒ, S. QUIRKE (eds.), *Company of Images: Modelling the Imaginary World of Middle Kingdom Egypt (2000–1500 BC). Proceedings of the International Conference of the EPOCHS Project held 18th–20th September 2014 at UCL, London* (Leuven, Paris, New Malden: OLA 262, 2017), 71-91.

¹⁶¹ MESKELL, *World Archaeology* 47/1, 15.

- CAMPS, G., *Encyclopédie Berbère*, vol. XX, Gauda-Girrei (Aix-en-Provence, 1998).
- CARNARVON, THE EARL OF, H. CARTER, *Five Years' Explorations at Thebes: A Record of Work Done 1907–1911* (London, 1912).
- CERUTI, S., “The hippopotamus Goddess Carrying a Crocodile on Her Back: An Iconographical Motif Distinctive of the Late Middle Kingdom”, in G. MINIACI, M. BETRÒ, S. QUIRKE (eds.), *Company of Images: Modelling the Imaginary World of Middle Kingdom Egypt (2000–1500 BC): Proceedings of the International Conference of the EPOCHs Project held 18th–20th September 2014 at UCL, London* (Leuven, Paris, New Malden: OLA 262, 2017), 93-123.
- CHAUVEAU, M., “Glorification d’une Morte Anonyme (P. dém. Louvre N2420c)”, *RdE* 41 (1990), 3-8.
- CIAŁOWICZ, K. M. “Fantastic Creatures and Cobras from Tell el-Farkha”, *SAAC* 15 (2011), 11-27.
- DASEN, V., *Dwarfs in Ancient Egypt and Greece* (Oxford, 1993).
- DELANGE, E., S. NISOLE, “Lisibilité d’une Restauration à Propos des Hippopotames Bleus”, in *Association des Restaurateurs d’Art et d’Archéologie de Formation Universitaire. Visibilité de la Restauration, Lisibilité de l’Œuvre, Paris, 13–14 et 15 juin 2002: Actes du 5^{ème} Colloque International sur la Conservation Restauration des Biens Culturels* (Paris, 2002), 143-50.
- DOWNES, D., *The Excavations at Esna, 1905–1906* (Warminster, 1974).
- DUNAND, M., *Fouilles de Byblos*, vol. II: 1933–1938: *Atlas* (Paris, 1950).
- DUNAND, M., *Fouilles de Byblos*, vol. II: 1933–1938: *Texte* (Paris, 1958).
- EMERY, W.B., H.S. SMITH, A. MILLARD, *The Fortress of Buhen: The Archaeological Report* (London: EES, Excavation Memoir 49, 1979).
- ESCHENBRENNER-DIEMER, G., “From the Workshop to the Grave: The Case of Wooden Funerary Models”, in G. MINIACI, M. BETRÒ, S. QUIRKE (eds.), *Company of Images: Modelling the Imaginary World of Middle Kingdom Egypt (2000–1500 BC): Proceedings of the International Conference of the EPOCHs Project held 18th–20th September 2014 at UCL, London* (Leuven, Paris, New Malden: OLA 262, 2017), 133-91.
- ESTES, R., *The Behavior Guide to African Mammals: Including Hoofed Mammals, Carnivores, Primates* (Los Angeles, 1992).
- FISCHER, H.G., “The Ancient Egyptian Attitude Towards the Monstrous”, in A.E. FARKAS, P.O. HARPER, E.B. HARRISON (eds.), *Monsters and Demons in the Ancient and Medieval Worlds: Papers Presented in Honor of Edith Porada* (Mainz am Rhein, 1987), 13-26.
- FLINDERS PETRIE, W.M., *Kahun, Gurob and Hawara* (London, 1890).
- FLINDERS PETRIE, W.M., G. WAINWRIGHT, E. MACKEY, *The Labyrinth, Gerzeh and Mazghuneh* (London: BSAE 21, 1912).
- FOXALL, L., “Introduction: Miniaturization”, *World Archaeology* 47/1 (2015), 1-5.
- GRAJETZKI, W., *The Middle Kingdom of Ancient Egypt: History, Archaeology and Society* (London, 2006).
- GRAJETZKI, W., *Tomb Treasures of the Late Middle Kingdom: The Archaeology of Female Burials* (Philadelphia, 2014).
- HAMILTON, N., “Can We Interpret Figurines?”, *CAJ* 6/2 (1996), 281-307.
- HENDRICKX, S., “Two Protodynastic objects in Brussels and the Origin of the Bilobate cult-sign of Neith”, *JEA* 82 (1996), 23-42.
- JANES, G., *Shabtis: A Private View. Ancient Egyptian Funerary Statuettes in European Private Collections* (Paris, 2002).
- JANSEN, J.J., R.M. JANSEN, *Growing up in Ancient Egypt* (London, 1990).
- KÁKOSY, L., “The Nile, Euthenia, and the Nymphs”, *JEA* 68 (1982), 290-8.
- KAMRIN, J., *The Cosmos of Khnumhotep II at Beni Hasan* (London, New York: SIE, 1999).
- KANAWATI, N., L. EVANS, *Beni Hassan I*, vol. I: *The Tomb of Khnumhotep II* (Oxford: ACER 36, 2014).
- KEIMER, L., “Les Limites de l’Observation Naturaliste Dans Quelques Représentations Animales de l’Égypte Antique, Première Partie”, *Université Ibrahim. Annales de la Faculté des Lettres* 2 (1953), 121-34.
- KEMP, B.J., *Ancient Egypt: Anatomy of a Civilization*, second revised edition (London, 2006).
- KEMP, B.J., R.S. MERRILLEES, *Minoan Pottery in Second Millennium Egypt* (Mainz am Rhein: SDAIK 7, 1980).
- KENDALL, C.J., “The Spatial and Agricultural Basis of Crop Raiding by the Vulnerable Common Hippopotamus *Hippopotamus amphibius* around Ruaha National Park, Tanzania”, *Oryx* 45/1 (2011), 28-34.
- KÓTHAY, K.A., “A Dwarfish Figure Carrying a Dog: Some Thoughts on the Representation of Bodies and the Migration of Iconographic Themes and Motifs in Egyptian Art”, *BMH* 116-117 (2012), 9-32.
- LACOVARA, P., “The Internal Chronology of Kerma”, *BzS* 2 (1987), 51-74.
- LAOUST, É., “Des Noms Berbères de l’Ogre et de l’Ogresse”, *Hespéris* 34 (1947), 253-65.
- LAOUST, É., *Contes Berbères du Maroc*, vol. II (Paris, 1949–1950).
- LEWIS, B., CH. PELLAT, J. SCHACHT (eds.), *The*

- Encyclopedia of Islam*, vol. II: C-G (Leiden, Boston, 1991).
- LOEBEN, CH., “Thouéris et Bès: Déesse Démoniaque et Démon Divin?”, in A. QUERTINMONT (ed.), *Dieux, Génies et Démons en Égypte Ancienne: À la Rencontre d’Osiris, Anubis, Isis, Hathor, Rê et les Autres* (Paris, 2016), 47-53.
- MARTÍNEZ BABÓN, J., “Objets Découverts dans des Tombes Thébaines Situées sous le Temple de Millions d’Années de Thoutmosis III à l’Ouest de Louxor”, in G. ROSATI, M.C. GUIDOTTI (eds.), *Proceedings of the XI International Congress of Egyptologists, Florence Egyptian Museum, Florence, 23–30 August 2015* (Oxford, 2017), 384-8.
- MAZÉ, C., “À la Recherche des « Classes Moyennes ». Les Espaces de la Différenciation Sociale dans l’Égypte du III^e Millénaire av. J.-C.”, *BIFAO* 116 (2016), 123-75.
- MEEKS, D., “Fantastic Animals”, in D.B. REDFORD (ed.), *The Oxford Encyclopedia of Ancient Egypt*, vol. I (Oxford, 2001), 504-7.
- MESKELL, L., “A Society of Things: Animal Figurines and Material Scales at Neolithic Çatalhöyük”, *World Archaeology* 47/1 (2015), 6-19.
- MINIACI, G., *Rishi Coffins and the Funerary Culture of Second Intermediate Period Egypt* (London: GHP Egyptology 17, 2011).
- MINIACI, G., “The Collapse of Faience Figurine Production at the End of the Middle Kingdom: Reading the History of an Epoch between Postmodernism and Grand Narrative”, *JEGH* 7/1 (2014), 109-42.
- MINIACI, G., “Unbroken Stories: Middle Kingdom Faience Figurines in Their Archaeological Context”, in G. MINIACI, M. BETRÒ, S. QUIRKE (eds.), *Company of Images: Modelling the Imaginary World of Middle Kingdom Egypt (2000–1500 BC): Proceedings of the International Conference of the EPOCHs Project held 18th–20th September 2014 at UCL, London* (Leuven, Paris, New Malden: OLA 262, 2017), 235-84.
- MINIACI, G., “Burial Equipment of Rishi Coffins and the Osmosis of the ‘Rebirth Machine’ at the End of the Middle Kingdom”, in J.H. TAYLOR, M. VANDENBEUSCH (eds.), *Ancient Egyptian Coffins: Craft Traditions and Functionality: Proceedings of the Annual Egyptology Colloquium at the British Museum, 28 July–29 July 2014* (Leuven, Paris, New Malden: BMPES 4, 2018), 247-73.
- MINIACI, G., “Faience Craftsmanship in the Middle Kingdom. A Market Paradox: Inexpensive Materials for Prestige Goods”, in G. MINIACI, J.-C. MORENO GARCÍA, S. QUIRKE, A. STAUDER (eds.), *The Arts of Making in Ancient Egypt: Voices, Images, and Objects of Material Producers 2000–1550 BC* (Leiden, 2018), 139-58.
- MINIACI, G., “Multiple burials in ancient societies: theory and methods from Egyptian archaeology”, *CAJ* (2018), <http://dx.doi.org/10.1017/S095977431800046X>.
- MINIACI, G., “Deposit f (Nos. 15121–15567) in the Obelisk Temple at Byblos: Artefact Mobility in the Middle Bronze Age I–II (1850–1650 BC) between Egypt and the Levant”, *Ä&L* 28 (2018).
- MINIACI, G., “Burial Demography in the Late Middle Kingdom: A Social Perspective”, in R. NYORD (ed.), *Concepts in Middle Kingdom Funerary Culture* (Cambridge, 2019, in press).
- MINIACI, G., *Miniature Forms as Transformative Thresholds: Faience Figurines in Middle Bronze Age Egypt (1800 BC–1650 BC)* (Leuven, Paris, New Malden: BMPES 7, 2019, in press).
- MINIACI, G., “The Craft of the Non-mechanically Reproducible: Targeting Centres of Faience Figurine Production in 1800–1650 BC Egypt”, in J.A. JIMÉNEZ SERRANO, A.J. MORALES (eds.), *Palace Culture and Its Echoes in the Provinces in the Middle Kingdom of Egypt. Jaén, 2nd and 3rd June 2016* (Boston, 2019, in press).
- MINIACI, G., “The Late Middle Kingdom Burial Assemblage from the Tomb G62 at Abydos (BM EA 37286-37320)”, in I. REGULSKI (ed.), *Abydos: The Sacred Land at the Western Horizon: Proceedings of the Annual Egyptology Colloquium at the British Museum, 9–10 July 2015* (Leuven, Paris, New Malden: BMPES 5, in press).
- MINIACI, G., “Early Dynastic Votive Offerings and Their Influence over the Middle Kingdom: An Unusual Group of Human Figures from Harageh Tomb 112” (in preparation).
- MINIACI, G., S. QUIRKE, “Reconceiving the Tomb in the Late Middle Kingdom. The Burial of the Accountant of the Main Enclosure Neferhotep at Dra Abu al-Naga”, *BIFAO* 109 (2009), 339-83.
- MORRIS, E.F., “Paddle Dolls and Performance”, *JARCE* 47 (2011), 71-103.
- MORRIS, E.F., “Middle Kingdom Clappers, Dancers, Birth Magic, and the Reinvention of Ritual”, in G. MINIACI, M. BETRÒ, S. QUIRKE (eds.), *Company of Images: Modelling the Imaginary World of Middle Kingdom Egypt (2000–1500 BC): Proceedings of the International Conference of the EPOCHs Project held 18th–20th September 2014 at UCL, London* (Leuven, Paris, New Malden: OLA 262, 2017), 285-335.
- NAGY, I., “La Statue de Thouéris au Caire (CG 39145) et la Légende de la Déesse Lointaine”, in U. LUFT (ed.), *The Intellectual Heritage of Egypt: Studies presented to László Kákosy by Friends and Colleagues on the Occasion of his 60th Birthday* (Budapest, 1992), 449-56.

- O'CONNOR, T., "Making Themselves at Home: The Archaeology of Commensal Vertebrates", in D. CAMPANA, P. CRABTREE, S.D. DEFRANCE, J. LEV-TOV, A.M. CHOYKE (eds.), *Anthropological Approaches to Zooarchaeology: Colonialism, Complexity and Animal Transformations* (Oxford, Oakville, 2010), 270-74.
- ODLER, M., V. DULÍKOVÁ, "Social Context of the Old Kingdom Copper Model Tools", *World Archaeology* 47/1 (2015), 94-116.
- PADWICK, C.E., "Notes on the Jinn and the Ghoul in the Peasant Mind of Lower Egypt", *BSOAS* 3 (1923-5), 421-46.
- PARKINSON, R.B. *Poetry and Culture in Middle Kingdom Egypt: A Dark Side to Perfection* (London, New York, 2002).
- PATCH, D.C. (ed.), *Dawn of Egyptian Art* (New York, New Haven, CT, London, 2011).
- PATCH, D.C., "The Human Figure", in D.C. PATCH (ed.), *Dawn of Egyptian Art* (New York, New Haven, CT, London, 2011), 97-135.
- PATCH, D.C., "Early Dynastic Art", in D.C. PATCH (ed.), *Dawn of Egyptian Art* (New York, New Haven, CT, London, 2011), 136-79.
- PATCH, D.C., "Wildcat Stalking", in A. OPPENHEIM, DI. ARNOLD, DO. ARNOLD, K. YAMAMOTO (eds.), *Ancient Egypt Transformed: The Middle Kingdom* (New York, 2015), 209-10 (cat. no. 147).
- PINCH, G., *Votive Offerings to Hathor* (Oxford, 1993).
- PINCH, G., *Magic in Ancient Egypt* (London, 1994).
- QUACK, J.F., "The Animals of the Desert and the Return of the Goddess", in H. RIEMER, F. FÖRSTER, M. HERB, N. PÖLLATH (eds.), *Desert Animals in the Eastern Sahara: Status, Economic Significance, and Cultural Reflection in Antiquity. Proceedings of an Interdisciplinary ACACIA Workshop held at the University of Cologne, December 14–15, 2007* (Cologne, 2009), 341-61.
- QUIBELL, J.E., *The Ramesseum / The tomb of Ptah-Hetep* (London: BSAE 2, 1898).
- QUIRKE, S., "Figures of Clay: Toys or Ritual Objects", in S. QUIRKE (ed.), *Lahun Studies* (Reigate, 1998), 141-51.
- QUIRKE, S., *Birth Tusks: The Armoury of Health in Context – Egypt 1800 BC. Including Publication of Petrie Museum Examples Photographed by Gianluca Miniaci, and Drawn from the Photographs by Andrew Boyce* (London: MKS 3, 2016).
- RANDALL MACIVER, D., A. MACE, *El-Amrah and Abydos 1899–1901* (London, 1902).
- REISNER, G.A., *Excavations at Kerma*, parts IV-V (Cambridge: Harvard African Studies 6, 1923).
- RICHARDS, J.E., "Ancient Egyptian Mortuary Practice and the Study of Socioeconomic Differentiation", in J. LUSTIG (ed.), *Anthropology and Egyptology: A Developing Dialogue* (Sheffield, 1997), 33-42.
- RITNER, R.K., *The Mechanics of Ancient Egyptian Magical Practice* (Chicago: SAOC 54, 1993).
- ROMANO, J.F., "The Origin of the Bes-Image", *BES* 2 (1980), 39-56.
- ROTH, A.M., "Objects, Animals, Humans, and Hybrids: The Evolution of Early Egyptian Representations of the Divine", in D.C. PATCH (ed.), *Dawn of Egyptian Art* (New York, New Haven, CT, London, 2011), 194-201.
- RUPP, A., "Der Zwerg in der ägyptischen Gemeinschaft: Studien zur ägyptischen Anthropologie", *CdE* 40 (1965), 260-309.
- SABBAHY, L., "The Middle Bronze Age Egyptian griffon: whence and whither?", in G. MINIACI, M. BETRÒ, S. QUIRKE (eds.), *Company of Images: Modelling the Imaginary World of Middle Kingdom Egypt (2000–1500 BC): Proceedings of the International Conference of the EPOCHS Project held 18th–20th September 2014 at UCL, London* (Leuven, Paris, New Malden: OLA 262, 2017), 395-420.
- SÄVE-SÖDERBERGH, T., *On Egyptian Representations of Hippopotamus Hunting as a Religious Motive* (Uppsala: Horae Soederblomianae 3, 1953).
- SCHNEIDER, H.D., *Life and Death under the Pharaohs* (Perth, 1997).
- SCHNEIDER, T., "Contextualising the Tale of the Herdsman", in T. SCHNEIDER, K. SZPAKOWSKA (eds.), *Egyptian Stories: A British Egyptological Tribute to Alan B. Lloyd on the Occasion of his Retirement* (Münster, 2007), 309-18.
- SERIEANTSON, D., "Good to Eat and Good to Think with: Classifying Animals from Complex Sites", in P. ROWLEY-CONWY (ed.), *Animal Bones, Human Societies* (Oxford, 2000), 179-89.
- STEVENS, A., *Private Religion at Amarna: The Material Evidence* (Oxford: BAR IS 1587, 2006).
- STEVENS, A., "Private Religion in the Amarna Suburbs", in F. SEYFRIED (ed.), *In the Light of Amarna: 100 Years of the Nefertiti Discovery* (Petersberg, 2012), 92-7.
- STEVENSON, A., "Predynastic Egyptian Figurines", in T. INSOLL (ed.), *The Oxford Handbook of Prehistoric Figurines* (Oxford, New York, 2015), 63-83.
- THEIS, C., *Magie und Raum: Der magische Schutz ausgewählter Räume im alten Ägypten nebst einem Vergleich zu angrenzenden Kulturbereichen* (Tübingen: Orientalische Religionen in der Antike 13, 2014).
- TOOLEY, A.M.J., *Middle Kingdom Burial Customs: A Study of Wooden Models and Related Material* (PhD dissertation: University of Liverpool, 1989).
- TOOLEY, A.M.J., "Child's Toy or Ritual Object?", *GM*

- 123 (1991), 101-11.
- TOOLEY, A.M.J., “Notes on Type I Truncated Figurines: the Ramesseum Ladies”, in G. MINIACI, M. BETRÒ, S. QUIRKE (eds.), *Company of Images: Modelling the Imaginary World of Middle Kingdom Egypt (2000–1500 BC): Proceedings of the International Conference of the EPOCHs Project held 18th–20th September 2014 at UCL, London* (Leuven, Paris, New Malden: OLA 262, 2017), 421-56.
- TRISTANT, Y., “Two Early Middle Kingdom Hippopotamus Figurines from Dendera”, in C. DI BIASE-DYSON, L. DONOCAN (eds.), *The Cultural Manifestations of Religious Experience: Studies in Honour of Boyo G. Ockinga* (Münster: ÄAT 85, 2017), 53-69.
- UCKO, P.J., *Anthropomorphic Figurines of Predynastic Egypt and Neolithic Crete with Comparative Material from the Prehistoric Near East and Mainland Greece* (London: Royal Anthropological Institute Occasional Papers 24, 1968).
- VERHOEVEN, U., P. DERCHAIN, *Le Voyage de la Déesse Libyque: Ein Text aus dem “Mutritual” des Pap. Berlin 3053* (Brussels: RitesEg 5, 1985).
- VERNER, M., “A Statue of Tawēret (Cairo Museum no. 39145) Dedicated by Pabēsi and Several Remarks on the Role of the Hippopotamus Goddess”, *ZÄS* 96 (1969), 52-63.
- VERNUS, P., *Future at Issue: Tense, Mood and Aspect in Middle Egyptian: Studies in Syntax and Semantics* (New Haven: YES 4, 1990).
- VERNUS, P., J. YOYOTTE, *Bestiaire des Pharaons* (Paris, 2005).
- VOLOKHINE, Y., “Dieux, Masques et Hommes: à Propos de la Formation de l’Iconographie de Bès”, *BSEG* 18 (1994), 81-95.
- VAN WALSEM, R., *Iconography of Old Kingdom Elite Tombs: Analysis & Interpretation, Theoretical and Methodological Aspects* (Leuven, 2005).
- WARAKSA, E.A., “Female Figurines (Pharaonic Period)”, in W. WENDRICH (ed.), *UCLA Encyclopedia of Egyptology* (Los Angeles, 2008), 1-6, <http://digital2.library.ucla.edu/viewItem.do?ark=21198/zz000s3mm6> <accessed 12.04.2018>.
- WEGNER, J., “A Decorated Birth-brick from South Abydos: New Evidence on Childbirth and Birth Magic in the Middle Kingdom”, in D.P. SILVERMAN, W.K. SIMPSON, J. WEGNER (eds.), *Archaism and Innovation: Studies in the Culture of Middle Kingdom Egypt* (New Haven, CT, Philadelphia, PA, 2009), 447-96.
- WEINGARTEN, J., *The Transformation of Egyptian Taweret into the Minoan Genius: A Study in Cultural Transmission in the Middle Bronze Age* (Partille: SMA 88, 1991).
- WENGROW, D., “Cognition, Materiality and Monsters: The Cultural Transmission of Counterintuitive Forms in Bronze Age Societies”, *JMC* 16/2 (2011), 131-49.
- WENGROW, D., *The Origins of Monsters: Image and Cognition in the First Age of Mechanical Reproduction* (Princeton, Woodstock: Rostovtzeff Lectures, 2014).
- WESTERMARCK, E., *Ritual and Belief in Morocco*, vol. II (Cleveland, 1968).
- YAMAMOTO, K., “Comprehending Life: Community, Environment, and the Supernatural”, in A. OPPENHEIM, DI. ARNOLD, DO. ARNOLD, K. YAMAMOTO (eds.), *Ancient Egypt Transformed: The Middle Kingdom* (New York, 2015), 188-91.