

Journal of the Society for the Study of Egyptian Antiquities

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Studies in Memory of Steven Shubert

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Editorial Forward

We present volume 51 of the *JSSEA* published in honour of the memory of Steven Shubert. The volume has been supported by the generosity of Paul English and by the Toronto Chapter of the Society for the Study of Egyptian Antiquities (SSEA). We thank them for their substantial contributions.

This volume consists of seven articles and two notices in addition to the obituaries of two giants of Egyptology: Kenneth A. Kitchen and Donald B. Redford – both of whom had close ties with the SSEA – as well as an essay on remembrances of Dr. Steven Shubert. There are no book reviews this year. We are very enthusiastic about this volume, which presents innovative research of both established Egyptologists as well as younger scholars covering a large variety of subjects.

The editorial committee with the agreement of the board of trustees of the SSEA have made changes to the authors' guidelines for volume 52 (2026). These changes are noted at the end of this volume. For potential authors, please contact the editors at journalofthessea@gmail.com for any questions or concerns. In addition, going forward, all article and notice abstracts will be posted on the Society for the Study of Egyptian Antiquities website in English, French and Arabic. These abstracts will be available in the near future on the Society's website <https://thessea.org/>

Calls for submissions will be circulated in the near future for volume 52, which will also be a volume dedicated to the contributions and memory of Donald B. Redford.



*Steven Shubert
1953 - 2022
(Photo courtesy of Gayle Gibson)*

Reminiscences of Steven Shubert

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Gayle Gibson

Steven Shubert was as unfailingly kind and gracious as he was scholarly. I had the honour and pleasure of being his friend and colleague for over thirty years.

Steven cut a very dashing figure when he appeared in the Near Eastern Studies Department, seeking Don Redford on a hot summer's morning in the 1980s. He had arrived wearing dig clothes and sporting a moustache, looking like a movie archaeologist. As Dr. Redford's student assistant, I knew he was expected. Though a few years older than Steven, I was quite intimidated by his reputation as a scholar, and as a highly valued member of any team. His kindness soon put me at ease, and it turned out that we knew each other a little, indirectly, through the writings of his friend and my adult student, Harry Cuthbert. Harry had left school early, and decided to pick up his formal education through correspondence courses. I read and commented on his clear and elegant English papers. This connection alone got Steven and me half-way to friendship.

I never stopped marvelling at Steven's deep knowledge of Egyptian grammar and material culture, but I grew to appreciate his kindness and generosity even more. We worked together at the Royal Ontario Museum, he as librarian, me as a teacher and as Associates with Rexine Hummel in the Egyptian storeroom, cataloguing material for publication on the web. Those were very happy days; we laughingly boasted that, among the three of us, we knew 'everything'. Now that Rexine has retired, and Steven is gone, I realize how small was my share in that encyclopedic knowledge.

Through years of SSEA meetings and lectures, and through our time at the Museum, I never once heard a mean or harsh word from Steven, even under circumstances that would have driven anyone else to anger or complaint. His last service for the Museum was characteristic. A Museum member had given a lovely bracelet made of authentic scarabs to the collection. The Museum administration asked us to look it over, and to tell the donor something about the ancient elements. Fortunately, Steven had made a study of scarabs and was willing to examine the piece, to identify the scarabs, and meet with the donor. It was a thrill for the donor to meet a Real Egyptologist who could read all the glyphs and talk about the age and possible original owners of the scarabs. Only a few days later, Steven entered hospice care and soon left us.

Though it was during the academic year, many Egyptologists attended Steven's funeral, either in person or online. A moving, rather old-fashioned religious

service was celebrated in the church where Steven had been a deacon. The congregation and ministers had known and loved him. Family and friends attended a reception held in the church hall, with food made with deep affection by parishioners, and urns of his favourite coffee sent over from the Coffee Shop he used to visit every morning. Lots of tears. Lots of smiles.

Steven Shubert's goodness of heart, his kindness, and generosity, are missed even more than his deep knowledge and fine mind. Bread and beer for your *ka*, Old Friend.

In Memoriam: Donald B. Redford

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Susan Redford

Donald Bruce Redford

September 2, 1934 - October 18, 2024

At the end of the Penn State University's 2024 Spring semester, my dear husband, a dedicated teacher for an incredible 63 years, made the decision to retire. That fall on October 18th, University Emeritus Professor Donald B. Redford, internationally eminent Egyptologist and Biblical scholar, passed away at the age of 90. Don was a proud Torontonionian, born and raised in the suburb of Weston, who lived most of his life in the city.

He began his illustrious academic career as a lecturer in 1961 at the University of Toronto's Department of Near Eastern Studies while earning his PhD. In only eight short years, he attained the well-deserved rank of full professor. Don remained on faculty at the University of Toronto until the summer of 1998. During that time, he educated hundreds of undergraduates in ancient Egyptian history and language, and was thesis supervisor and adviser to 28 graduate students in attaining their master's and doctoral degrees. Outside the classroom, he actively promoted the study of Ancient Egypt to the public, and spearheaded the founding of Toronto's Society for the Study of Egyptian Antiquities (SSEA). Besides serving as president, Don was also editor, for the Society's journal (*JSSEA*) from 1990 to 1994. To further Canadian access to research in Egypt, Don convinced the federal government-sponsored Canadian Mediterranean Institute to encompass Egypt in their sphere of operations and was then appointed Vice-President Egypt, which he held from 1990 until 1997. A year later, the University of Toronto enacted a (short-lived and later rescinded) economic policy of mandatory retirement. At the imminent age of 65, Don, healthy and vibrant and with no thought of quitting, was forced to take a position elsewhere.

The College of Liberal Arts of the Pennsylvania State University, recognizing their good fortune, welcomed him with open arms. For the next 25 years, Prof. Don Redford would teach over four thousand students at Penn State in his undergraduate course of Egyptian Civilization, along with several hundred more in language courses and seminars for the Department of Classics and Ancient Mediterranean Studies. He also was supervisor of more than a dozen students completing their doctorates, master's degree, and honour's undergraduate degree, not only from Penn State but from various American universities. In addition to his tenure at the University of

Toronto and Penn State University, Don enjoyed appointments as ‘Visiting Professor’ at the University of Pennsylvania, Ben Gurion University (Israel), and Middle Tennessee State University.

As everyone in the field of Egyptology should know, Prof. Don Redford’s reputation extends far beyond the classroom: his archaeological career takes equal share in his legacy. His first time engaging in field archaeology came in 1964; a pursuit that would occupy him for the next five decades. Don was very proud of – and recounted often – his excavation training for three seasons under Dame Kathleen Kenyon at Jerusalem, and his digging experience in the harsh environment of Buto under the direction of Veronica Seton-Williams, a former field assistant to William Flinders Petrie. For two seasons (1970-72) Don was the director of the epigraphic survey to the Temple of Osiris-Heqa-Djet, the first Egyptian field concession granted to the SSEA. The remainder of Don’s years in Egypt, would establish him as an acclaimed archaeologist. Due to the accolades given for his doctoral dissertation, *The History and Chronology of the Eighteenth Dynasty of Egypt*, he was appointed director of the University of Pennsylvania’s Akhenaten Temple Project. This art-historical study was carried on in both his lab at U of T and project office in Cairo, and was followed-up with excavations of the pharaoh’s temple at the site of East Karnak. After 15 years of digging at the site, Don ceased excavations at East Karnak to take a concession in the eastern Delta at the site of Mendes. From 1991 for the next 27 years, he conducted The Mendes Expedition with much passion and joy. In spite of his heavy workload, Don was enticed to undertake excavations in at the Sinai site of Tel Kedwa as well, which he did with his usual enthusiasm for three seasons in 1993 through 1996. I would be remiss not to further acknowledge my husband’s indefatigable work in field research by his invaluable expertise as an epigrapher on four field campaigns of my own tomb concession in the Theban necropolis.

The directorship of the Akhenaten Temple Project catapulted Don into the forefront of Amarna studies early in his career. For the rest of his professional life, he would remain a preeminent voice of the widely popular time period. Indeed, his now 40-year-old book, *Akhenaten, The Heretic King*, is a basic and indispensable reference for anyone writing on the subject. Nevertheless, Don would not be pigeonholed to the Amarna Period, as many in the field of Egyptology are. An astoundingly prolific writer, Don’s innumerable books and articles attest to his impressive knowledge not only of the 18th Dynasty but of the entire timeline of Egyptian history. In *A History of Ancient Egypt: Egyptian Civilization in Context*, published in 2006, Don offers readers his unique insights from the Old Kingdom through the Roman Period. His reputation as a respected scholar is not limited to ancient Egyptian studies, but crosses over into the biblical world as well: his exceptional mastery of the latter is reflected in his books, *A Study of the Biblical Joseph Story* and *Egypt, Canaan and Israel in Ancient Times*. His wide range of scholarship was not lost on publishing houses either. Among the many volumes he served as editor, Don was tapped in 2000 to be editor-in-chief of the outstanding *Oxford Encyclopedia of Ancient Egypt*.

Apart from the hours Don spent every day preparing his classes and lecturing, he could often be found at his desk late in the evening researching and writing his next book or article. Articles and book contributions by Don date up until 2022 (thus far), but his last book that saw publication before he passed away would be about the place he loved to be more than at home: *City of the Ram-man. The Story of Ancient Mendes*.

He spent the last few years of his life working on a five-volume set of translations, which he entitled *Pharaoh Speaks..and Is Spoken Of* (soon to be published). This work, for my husband, was a labour of love and will doubtless bear final witness to his proficiency as a linguist and translator of the ancient Egyptian language. Over the years, students of Don's language classes have voiced their amazement with their professor who could spontaneously translate a text with such accuracy and understanding. I recall the words of a newspaper reporter who listened in wonderment at my husband before an inscription on a temple wall: "He reads hieroglyphs as easily as you and I read the newspaper!"

Don Redford's exemplary scholarship has been acknowledged with receipt of many honours over the years, most notably his induction as a Fellow of the Royal Society of Canada. For his achievements in research, he was the recipient of prestigious grants including numerous ones from The Social Sciences & Humanities Research Council of Canada, and the Smithsonian Foreign Currency Fund. His love of Egyptian history and biblical study was seen and heard by audiences in countless public lectures and frequent media interviews in newspapers, such as The New York Times, magazines like Scientific American, on television, in documentaries of National Geographic and The Learning Channel; on various programs on radio and the internet. None were sought, all were requested. A truly selfless educator and scholar, Don indulged in speaking to anyone who was interested in learning more of history and was always happy to impart his encyclopedic knowledge. While I witnessed his enjoyment and passion in so many of these presentations, the one I hold in loving memory in my mind's eye is watching my husband stand before the war annals of Thutmose III on the walls at Karnak. The director of the German series 'Planet Egypt' and I stood smiling behind the camera as Don with delighted excitement in his voice smoothly translated and explained the ancient inscription that so entranced him.

While Don Redford's amazing compendium of academic accomplishments will stand for generations, it does not conjure up the image of the man by those who knew him. His hearty laugh and sense of humour made mealtimes in the unrelenting heat of Egypt's summer around the rustic dining table of the dig house a delight. His 'discriminating taste' in music – a lover of opera and classical music only and taking great pride in being the librettist for Canadian composer, Murray F. Shafer's opera 'Ra'! – reminded my family of TV's 'Frasier' character which they laughingly liked to call him. A die-hard fan of baseball, many of us will remember Don throwing the ball with his sons in the courtyard of the Mendes dig house. Throughout his long life, he never failed to be a loving and devoted husband and father, a mentor to his students and a caring friend to them and his colleagues. We cherish his memory.

In Memoriam: Kenneth A. Kitchen

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Simone Burger Robin

Kenneth A. Kitchen (1932-2025)

With many thanks to Dr Glenn Godenho, Department of Archaeology, Classics and Egyptology at the University of Liverpool.

Kenneth Kitchen was a giant of Egyptology and a permanent fixture at the University of Liverpool as first a student and then a faculty member. He passed away on 6th February, aged 92. Kitchen became a lifelong member of the SSEA in 1977 and published *Pharaoh Triumphant: The Life and Times of Rameses II* with Benben Publications (1982), which was affiliated with the SSEA. Beyond that, he was one of the giants of 20th and 21st century Egyptology. So many Egyptologists stand on his 'academic shoulders' with his contributions to New Kingdom and Third Intermediate Period studies as foundations for our own work.

Professor Kitchen was born in Aberdeen, started studying Egyptology at the University of Liverpool in 1951, and never left, becoming a lecturer and in due course being awarded a Personal Chair and then the title of Brunner Professor of Egyptology.

A prolific scholar, Ken (as he liked to be known), made significant and lasting contributions to our understanding of Egyptian history and chronology. Focusing on the text-rich 16th to 7th centuries BC, he became particularly well known for his multi-volume KRI ('Kitchen's Ramesside Inscriptions') and *The Third Intermediate Period in Egypt, 1100-650BC* (his landmark study on Egypt's famously complicated Third Intermediate Period that followed the New Kingdom). He was also remarkable for another aspect of his research, with major publications on the ancient inscriptions of South Arabia.

Just one small example that reflects the depth of Kitchen's contribution to Egyptology is his chapter on the history of Ramesses III in the volume *Ramesses III: The Life and Times of Egypt's Last Hero* (Eric H. Cline and David O'Connor (Ann Arbor, 2012)). We can appreciate Kitchen's deep understanding of the period, beyond dates and events. He understood the Ramesside period in an exhaustive manner, knitting written accounts, historical events and archaeology together offering an understanding of this very complex reign with absolute clarity – as if speaking of contemporary people and place and not ancient Egypt. His knowledge and presence will be sorely missed.

Archaeology in the Stacks: The Ptolemaic Cartonnage at the Fisher Library*

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Chana Algarvio

Abstract: This paper is an overview of the cartonnage in the Classics Department Papyrus Collection at the Thomas Fisher Rare Book Library (University of Toronto), most of which currently remains unpublished. First, a history of the collection will be presented, along with a brief discussion on additional undocumented boxes that were recently discovered. Second, the iconography and materiality of the cartonnage will be examined to provide information and data on the production practices carried out at the place of origin, el-Hibeh (Ankyronpolis). By comparing geometric designs, colouration, and other material features, the reconstruction of many cartonnage panels was successful and assisted with ascribing provenance to some fragments with a previously unknown origin. Fairly standard iconographic layouts and media were employed at el-Hibeh, as seen from the Toronto fragments. These fragments suggest evidence of a local tradition and corroborate the mass manufacturing of mummy masks and panel coverings in the town when compared further to el-Hibeh material from local and international collections.

Résumé: Cet article vise à donner un aperçu des cartonnages de la collection de papyrus du département des classiques du Thomas Fisher Rare Book Library (Université de Toronto), dont la plupart demeurent inédits. Tout d'abord, un historique de la collection sera présenté, accompagné d'une brève discussion sur d'autres boîtes non documentées récemment découvertes. Ensuite, l'iconographie et la matérialité du cartonnage seront examinées pour approfondir les connaissances sur les pratiques de production mises en œuvre au lieu d'origine du cartonnage, el-Hibeh (Ankyronpolis). En comparant les motifs géométriques, les couleurs et d'autres caractéristiques matérielles, la reconstruction de nombreux panneaux de cartonnage a été réussie et a permis d'attribuer la provenance à certains fragments dont l'origine était jusque-là inconnue. Des dispositions iconographiques et des supports assez standard ont été utilisés à el-Hibeh, comme le montrent les fragments de Toronto, fragments qui suggèrent des preuves d'une tradition locale et corroborent la fabrication en masse des masques des momies et des parures dans la ville lorsqu'ils sont comparés à matériaux Hibeh provenant de collections locales et internationales.

Keywords: Ptolemaic cartonnage; papyri; iconography; materiality; el-Hibeh (Ankyronpolis)

Mots-clés: cartonnage; Ptolémaïque; papyri; iconographie; matérialité; el-Hibeh (Ankyronpolis)

* This article is based on a project, which received funding from the Bibliographical Society of Canada/La Société Bibliographique du Canada through the Federation for the Humanities and Social Sciences. I thank George Boys-Stones, Chair of the Department of Classics at the University of Toronto, for giving permission to publish the fragments, as well as Timothy Perry, Medieval Manuscripts and Early Books Librarian at the Thomas Fisher Rare Book Library, for his continued assistance with coordinating access and information on the collection.

The Classics Department Papyrus Collection (CDPC), currently on long-term deposit at the Thomas Fisher Rare Book Library in the University of Toronto, contains hundreds of papyrus fragments from Egypt in various languages and scripts, dating from the 3rd century BCE to the 9th century CE. Of particular importance and interest is the wide array of iconographic papyri from el-Hibeh (Ankyronpolis), dating to the Ptolemaic Period (305–30 BCE). Notable amounts of surviving gesso and paint indicate that various types of textual papyri were reused for creating cartonnage, a composite material made of layers of linen and/or papyrus.¹ While this collection has been largely catalogued and digitised, with some textual analysis found in scholarship, pictorial and material analysis are completely absent. This discussion, which draws on aspects of my funded research project, aims to identify the iconography of the cartonnage fragments in order to reconstruct their original appearance. The material composition of these fragments is also investigated to gain a deeper understanding of the funerary practices carried out at el-Hibeh during the Greek period. During the duration of the project, seven more boxes of papyri from the collection were discovered in the Fisher Library's stacks. These boxes had not been included in the original unpublished catalogue,² and thus their contents will be reviewed here for the first time. This discussion serves to bring an important collection into focus and lead to further studies that will illuminate cartonnage production at el-Hibeh by engaging in comparative analyses of the Toronto material with other collections.

Overview of the Collection

Alan E. Samuel gradually assembled the CDPC after he arrived at the University of Toronto in 1966, as a professor in the Department of Classics. The collection consists of three main inventory types. The Paper Towel Inventory (PT

¹ For a historical overview on cartonnage production, see E. Casini, 'Remarks on Ancient Egyptian Cartonnage Mummy Masks from the Late Old Kingdom to the End of the New Kingdom', in J.M. Chyla, J. Dębowska-Ludwin, K. Rosińska-Balik and C. Walsh (eds.) *Current Research in Egyptology 2016: Proceedings of the Seventh Annual Symposium; Jagiellonian University, Krakow, Poland, 4–7 May 2016* (Oxford, 2017); K.M. Cooney, 'Coffins, Cartonnage, and Sarcophagi', in M.K. Hartwig (ed.) *A Companion to Ancient Egyptian Art* (Chichester, 2015), 282–88; S. Ikram, *Death and Burial in Ancient Egypt* (Cairo, 2015), 101–25; S. Ikram and A. Dodson, *The Mummy in Ancient Egypt: Equipping the Dead for Eternity* (London, 1998), 166–242; A. Niwiński, 'Sarg NR-SpZt', in W. Helck und E. Otto (eds.) *LÄ 5: Pyramidenbau - Steingefäße* (Wiesbaden, 1984), 438–68; N. Tacke, 'Die Entwicklung der Mumienmaske im Alten Reich', *MDAIK* 52 (1996), 311–36; J. H. Taylor, 'The Development of Cartonnage Cases', in S. D'Auria, P. Lacovara and C.H. Roehrig (eds.) *Mummies and Magic: The Funerary Arts of Ancient Egypt* (Boston, 1988), 166–68; J.H. Taylor, *Egyptian Coffins* (Aylesbury, 1989). For scholarship pertaining to the Ptolemaic Period, see A. Charron (ed.) *La mort n'est pas une fin; pratiques funéraires en Égypte d'Alexandre à Cléopâtre: catalogue de l'exposition, 28 septembre 2002 – 5 janvier 2003, Musée de l'Arles antique* (Arles, 2002), 102, 112–13; J.L. Haynes, 'Mummy Trappings', in S. D'Auria, P. Lacovara and C.H. Roehrig (eds.) *Mummies and Magic: The Funerary Arts of Ancient Egypt* (Boston, 1988), 193–95; G. Schreiber, 'Ptolemaic Cartonnages from Thebes', in H. Györy (ed.) *Aegyptus et Pannonia III: Acta symposii anno 2004* (Budapest, 2006), 227–46; H. Szymanska and K. Babraj (eds.) *Mummy: Results of Interdisciplinary Examination of the Egyptian Mummy of Aset-iri-khet-es from the Archaeological Museum in Cracow* (Cracow, 2001), 191–92.

² Clare E. Barker, 'A Guide to the University of Toronto's Classics Department Papyrus Collection at the Thomas Fisher Rare Book Library' (unpublished paper, July 16 2014), <<https://collections.library.utoronto.ca/view/fisher22:227>> accessed 23.01.2025.

Inv), the Rostovzteff-Welles Inventory (RW Inv), and the Oxford University Gazette Inventory (Gaz Fol/OUG). The PT Inv is the smallest and is named such because it was originally stored in paper towels. It was purchased by Samuel between December 1964 and later on in the spring of 1965 from an unknown dealer in Cairo near the Egyptian Museum.³ This portion of the collection consists of cartonnage and non-cartonnage fragments (the latter of which also includes parchment) with unknown provenance/origin and varying time periods. Some fragments are in Coptic and Arabic, with the inventory number always containing a sub-designation to note the language evident. The Rostovzteff-Welles Inventory (RW Inv) and the Oxford University Gazette Inventory (Gaz Fol/OUG) both appear to come from the same acquisition made by Samuel in 1972 to obtain the unpublished el-Hibeh fragments from the Bernard P. Grenfell and Arthur S. Hunt excavations of 1902 and 1903. Samuel acquired these collections from the British Museum through Theodore Cressy Skeat, Keeper of Manuscripts and Egerton Librarian at the time.⁴ The papyri went to the Rostovzteff-Welles Library, a research collection of Samuel's former professor and colleague, Charles Bradford Welles, and of Welles' former professor and colleague, Michael Ivanovitch Rostovzteff. This library was acquired by Samuel (and through the initiative of other professors in Canada) two years before in 1970 and was housed on campus.⁵ The reason for two different inventory designations given to material from the same acquisition is unknown. One likely explanation is due to the fact that some of the RW Inv papyri had already been published and mounted in glass frames when they arrived in Toronto.⁶ As such, the inventory possibly acted as a separate teaching collection (named after seminal contributors to field of Papyrology and to Samuel's own life) to be consulted easily by students (and researchers). The Gaz Fol/OUG papyri, on the other hand, were completely unpublished and virtually untouched upon their arrival in Toronto as they had been (and for the most part still

³ The collection was originally intended for Yale's papyrus collection, acquired through the funds of Edwin John Beinecke, while Samuel was still teaching at Yale University. However, Samuel took the papyri with him to Toronto to be catalogued (though never done). Most of this acquisition was bought back by Yale from Samuel in 1992, explaining the numerous gaps in the PT Inv sequence. See R.G. Babcock, 'A New Papyrus of Demosthenes' 'Contra Timocratem,' *BASP* 30, no. 1–2 (1993), 19; 'Guide to the Yale Papyrus Collection', Beinecke Rare Book & Manuscript Library (June 3 2022), <<https://beinecke.library.yale.edu/research-teaching/doing-research-beinecke-library/introduction-yale-papyrus-collection/guide-yale>> accessed 23.01.2025; Trismegistos Collection online catalogue, TM Coll 242, <www.trismegistos.org/collection/242> accessed 23.01.2025.

⁴ R.S. Bagnall, 'Alan Edouard Samuel (1932–2008)', *BASP* 46 (2009), 8; G. Fewster, 'More Papyri in Toronto: A Greek Papyrus Collection at the Royal Ontario Museum', in J.-L. Fournet (ed.) *Actes du XXX^e Congrès international de papyrologie (Paris, 25–30 juillet 2022)*. *Studia Papyrologia et Aegyptica Parisina* 7. (Paris, 2025), note 7; 'The Society's Activities', *BASP* 9, no.1–2 (1972), 8; 'Rare Papyri Donated to U of T by the British Museum', *University of Toronto Bulletin* 25, no.24 (April 5, 1972), 3. With thanks to Gregory Peter Fewster (MF Norwegian School of Theology, Religion and Society) for bringing the University of Toronto article to my attention. In addition, the fact that *P.Hib.* II 184 (RW Inv 135C) was mistakenly documented by the Egyptian Exploration Society as being in the collection of the British Museum in a 1974 publication (the preface itself saying that the information on the el-Hibeh material had not been verified), further leads one to believe that the RW Inv material is from the same acquisition as the OUG material. See R.A. Cole, *Location-list of the Oxyrhynchus Papyri and of Other Greek Papyri Published by the Egypt Exploration Society* (London, 1974), i, 7, 50.

⁵ See 'The Society's Activities', 7; 'Annual Report', *BASP* 10, no.1–4 (1973), 3.

⁶ *P.Hib.* II 184 (RW Inv 135C) had already been published on two occasions. See R.S. Brumbaugh, 'Papyrus Hibeh 184: An Early Footnote to Plato', in *Actas: segundo Congreso Extraordinario Interamericano de Filosofia, 22–26 julio 1961* (San José, 1962), 51–53; E.G. Turner, *The Hibeh Papyri, Part II* (London, 1955), 44–49.

are) kept in the original transportation/storage method of Grenfell and Hunt, the *Oxford Gazette*'s newsprints, and hence the reason for the inventory's name.

All the inventory types have either unused numbers in their sequence or duplicates, and in addition to the three main ones, there are other inventory designations. These minor designations include "Unmarked" (Unm), "Miscellaneous" (Misc), and "Unidentified Frame", as well as singular labels, such as "SN 3" and "Folder 38". Information on the acquisition and provenance/origin of these other inventory designations is unknown. Much of the material from these minor designations date to various time periods, and include fragments of parchment and paper, the latter of which could be dated to the 9th or even as late as the 10th century CE. The collection was eventually deposited by the Department of Classics into the Fisher Library in August 2004 to ensure the continued preservation of the materials. In 2014, the CDPC was digitised and described by Clare E. Barker for a graduate research paper, which contained a catalogue that lists the storage method, material type, language(s), proposed date(s), document type(s), number of fragments, dimensions, and notes for each inventory number. While Barker's work is a useful starting point for understanding the collection, there are discrepancies, unaccounted material, and other types of documentary information missing in her research paper (and digitisation)—primarily iconographic information.

Most of the papyrus fragments were reused for cartonnage. The script is predominately Greek, but there is also evidence of Demotic, which will be discussed below. The textual contents are mainly administrative or epistolary,⁷ and can, for the most part, be dated paleographically to the Ptolemaic Period. In addition, some fragments contain a dating formula. It must be stressed that Greek literary texts form part of the corpus, since Barker does not make this explicitly clear in her catalogue. RW Inv 135C has long been identified as a philosophical fragment,⁸ PT Inv Gr.23A contains part of Isocrates' *Philippus*,⁹ and verses from Homer's *Iliad* and Euripides' *Hecuba* are likewise evident.¹⁰ It is important to note, however, that not all fragments contain text as there are examples of what appears to be blank papyrus being used. Moreover, not all fragments in the collection contain remnants of cartonnage (though there is a strong possibility with some that the gesso and/or paint simply disappeared with age and/or archaeological handling). Such papyri will not be addressed—unless containing peculiarities in their materiality which provide new insights into cartonnage production—since they fall outside the project's scope and have already been documented, for the most part, by Barker.

Undocumented Boxes in the Collection

There is a discrepancy between Barker's unpublished catalogue and what can be accessed today. More boxes were found in the stacks of the Fisher Library than had

⁷ The contents of the Demotic texts, however, have yet to be identified. Textual analysis fell outside the scope of the original research project which focused, amongst other things, on materiality.

⁸ Brumbaugh, 'Papyrus Hibeh 184', 51–53; D. Sedley, 'P. Hibeh II 184: Platonist Logic in the Third Century BC?', in L.S. Olschki (ed.) *Papiri filosofici: Miscellanea di studi VI* (Florence, 2011), 227–39; Turner, *The Hibeh Papyri*, 44–49.

⁹ R. Ast and J. Lougovaya, 'An Early Isocrates Papyrus (*Philippus* 1–2)', *Archiv für Papyrusforschung* 54 (2008), 153–60.

¹⁰ With thanks to Mark de Kreij (Radboud University) for making these identifications.

been listed. There are currently seven boxes previously unaccounted: boxes 1–6, constituting the first six boxes of the entire collection (Barker’s catalogue only accounts for box 7 onwards), which contain more OUG material and expand the amount of Demotic papyri in the collection;¹¹ and box 65 (Barker’s catalogue ends at box 64) which contains papyri from a different inventory designation, “P.Tor.Sam” (likely ascribed by one of the professors from the Department of Classics and not of Samuel’s own doing), RW Inv 37, and two Mylar mounts with OUG material. All boxes contain cartonnage fragments, some of which are the most fragile of the entire collection and are also examples of the most vibrant and illustrative fragments.

It is striking to find so much material missing from Barker’s catalogue. Barker did list some of the OUG Unc material, specifically OUG Unc 61–70 in box 12, so it is possible that she was unaware of and did not have access to these boxes. The most probable explanation is that sometime after the collection was deposited in the Fisher Library, the Department of Classics found additional boxes still in their possession and sent them to the library after Barker had finished her project. With the inclusion of undocumented material, the total number of boxes in the collection is now 65 (previously 58), with a total of 443 inventory designations (previously 353).

Iconographic Findings

The pictorial elements from the painted layer of the cartonnage fragments are numerous, diverse and yet seemingly standard (see Table 1), and there are even some examples of duplicate illustrations. The associated colour palette is likewise varied but nonetheless typical, consisting of different shades of blue, red, yellow, white, and black, as well as minor amounts of orange and green.

Iconographic Feature	Instance(s)
Beaded net pattern	2
<i>hkr</i> -frieze	8
<i>wsh</i> -collar	23
Falcon with sun-disc	1
Outstretched wings	11
Winged goddess	5
<i>m3t</i> -feather	1
Four Sons of Horus	12
Mask-like (e.g., wig, face, ear)	56
Hieroglyphs	1

Table 1. Assemblage of symbols and motifs

The table is based on the number of instances per inventory number, meaning if fragments from the same folder match, they are counted as one instance. Fragments

¹¹ These fragments are labelled OUG Unc for ‘uncatalogued’ material as Samuel himself, for reasons unknown, did not provide them an inventory number.

from different folders or mounts that match are treated as separate instances, since there could be more than one possible complement as there is clear evidence of duplicate cartonnage panels. The table also does not account for the variety of geometric designs evident (e.g., bands/stripes, chequered/quilted pattern, array of similar and/or different shapes), as they could form part of the iconographic composition of more than one of the features listed (e.g., bands/stripes can be found on all types of panel coverings; downward-facing triangles can be found on mummy masks and on the chest, apron, or leg panel so as to produce a floral effect or one that evokes emanating rays).

The reason for ‘outstretched wings’ and ‘winged goddess’ listed as two separate entries is due to the fact that the appearance of outstretched wings does not solely indicate an association with a divine female figure, especially when there are no other associated identifiable features. Particularly common for the Ptolemaic Period are also winged scarab beetles¹² and the winged sun-disc with flanking uraei. Vultures and human-headed birds (*bꜣ* birds) with outstretched wings are likewise evident, but less common. While the ‘*mꜣꜥt*-feather’ is characteristically seen held in the hands of a winged goddess in funerary art, it is not exclusive to such a scene and is thus treated here as a separate entry, which only includes instances when it is seen on its own. The ‘four sons of Horus’ is inclusive of fragments that do not contain all sons present since the iconographic layout clearly indicates they originally would have appeared all together on a single panel. The ‘mask-like’ entry refers to features that are associated with mummy masks—e.g., the tripartite wig, ears, eyes, eyebrows, and/or the entire face of the deceased—in contrast to examples when such facial features clearly pertain to a divine figure on a panel covering. The adjoining tripartite wig feature comprises large, elongated fragments with blue-striped patterns, as well as large groupings of fragments with solely blue or dark blue/black pigment. Hieroglyphs are included in iconographic findings since the only example is found on the painted layer of the cartonnage fragment. This is to avoid confusion with the scripts listed in the material/physical findings, which are based on what is evident on the reused textual papyri.

While most of the pictorial elements can be found wholly intact on a single fragment, some required reconstruction within their folder, inventory, and/or across inventories to discern their iconographic features. One such example is Gaz Fol 13. At first glance, it did not appear to be a representation of the Four Sons of Horus motif, but after reconstruction, it became very clear (see Figure 1). After a more complete picture was formed of Gaz Fol 13, it was then possible to identify fragments from that folder as matching with Unm 5, allowing the previously unknown provenance of Unm 5 to now be identified as coming from el-Hibeh. The same findings were made between RW Inv 43 and Misc 5, and between OUG Unc 35 and PT Inv Gr 19B, corroborating that Misc 5 and PT Inv Gr 19B also belong to the el-Hibeh cartonnage corpus.

¹² Evidence of this symbol can be seen in the el-Hibeh material at the Universitätsbibliothek Graz. Universitätsbibliothek Graz online catalogue, Ms 1949, <<https://unipub.uni-graz.at/urn:urn:nbn:at-ubg:2-35347>> accessed 20.06.2025.



Figure 1. Cartonnage fragments from Gaz Fol 13. Left. Initial appearance of fragments in the folder (photo taken by author). Right. Iconographic reconstruction showing evidence of the four sons of Horus motif with *hkr*-frieze above (photo taken by author).

Noteworthy Material and Physical Findings

For the most part, the materiality and physicality¹³ of the cartonnage layers beneath the polychrome paintings is plastered papyri containing Greek script in black ink. There are, however, some note-worthy irregularities (see Table 2).

Material/Physical Feature	Instance(s)
Linen	7
Openwork panel	3
Demotic script	27
Greek script in red ink	2

Table 2. Assemblage of materiality and physicality

Comparable to the iconographic assemblage, this table shows the number of instances per inventory number. Since most fragments within the same folder originate from the same cartonnage panel, one instance could have more than one example (e.g., OUG Unc 18 is one instance of linen, but there are four linen fragments found within the folder). The additional use of linen as part of the substrate layer is occasionally apparent—although it is evident in all three of the main inventories—and its entry in the table includes both entire pieces and singular remnants of its fibres (see Figure 2). No writing has been found on any of the linen fragments. The instances of openwork panels, only seen in Gaz Fol and Unm material, are all tied to the *wsh*-collar iconography and thus the chest and/or torso panel covering. While there are some fragments with a thick layer of gesso, obscuring the text of the waste papyri underneath, much of the surviving papyri is separated from the ground layer (whether purposely done at the time of excavation or by Samuel, or occurring naturally over

¹³ While these terms are often used interchangeably, ‘materiality’ refers specifically to the materials used to create an object (e.g., substrates, pigments, grounds, adhesives), whereas ‘physicality’ refers to the physical properties of an object (e.g., shape, form, layout).



Figure 2. Cartonnage fragment from PT Inv Gr 21C with remnants of linen at the top left corner.
© Thomas Fisher Rare Book Library.

millennia is unknown). Most texts are therefore accessible as they only contain small remnants of gesso and/or pigments. Papyri containing the demotic script are evident, but only with the Gaz Fol and OUG Unc material, and additionally, RW Inv 77. There are also two seemingly rare instances of Greek papyri written solely in red ink—Gaz Fol 30E and OUG Unc 40—which are clearly not examples of rubrication.

Cartonnage Production at el-Hibeh

The iconographic repertoire in the CDPC demonstrates there was a standard pictorial layout, and therefore a local practice, for the cartonnage masks and panels produced in el-Hibeh. Mummy masks primarily consisted of monochromatic tripartite wigs of blue (see Figure 3), or bi-chromatic tripartite wigs of blue stripes alternating with another colour. Red ink was often used to outline the facial features after moulding the materials on a bust. A broad U-shaped collar with rows of colourful geometric designs and floral motifs was placed atop the chest and/or torso to imitate the *wsh*-collar (see Figure 4). Large, outstretched wings, whether belonging to an anthropomorphic or zoomorphic deity, lined various sections of the body of the deceased, along with groups of four mummified deities representing the four sons of Horus. Often, the sons of Horus are found framed within a decorative border surmounted by a row of papyrus or reed-stalks bundled together, commonly known as the *hkr*-frieze (see Figure 1).

At the same time, there are many elements from the CDPC that are seen infrequently or only once. There is a strong possibility that these elements originally existed as common ones, but the evidence has no longer survived. Other possibilities include being examples of more individualistic expression on the part of the artisan, owner (the deceased), or purchaser (likely a family member of the deceased), or being products of workshops located outside of el-Hibeh and thus reflecting an imported tradition rather than a local one.¹⁴ Such infrequent iconography includes: the beaded

¹⁴ See K.A. Kóthay, 'The Gamhud Artisans', in K.A. Kóthay (ed.) *Art and Society: Ancient and Modern Contexts of Egyptian Art: Proceedings of the International Conference Held at Museum of*



Figure 3 (top left). Cartonnage fragments from Gaz Fol 21 belonging to a mummy mask, as noted by the blue colouring and red outline of an ear (photo taken by author). Figure 4 (top right). Cartonnage fragments from Gaz Fol 59 reconstructed to exhibit an openwork panel of the *wsh*-collar (photo taken by author). Figure 5 (bottom left). Cartonnage fragments from OUG Unc 62, one of which is an example of the beadnet pattern (photo taken by author). Figure 6 (bottom right). Cartonnage fragment from RW Inv 37 depicting the winged goddess holding ostrich feathers (photo taken by author).

net pattern, with its rhomboidal shapes constructed of cylinders and circles (see Figure 5); a falcon crowned with a sun-disc, which is only seen in a single instance of the *wsh n bik* ('falcon collar') in RW Inv 35B; the winged goddess, characteristically kneeling, crowned with a sun-disc, and holding an ostrich feather in each hand (see

Fine Arts, Budapest, 13-15 May 2010 (Budapest, 2012), 235–56; K.A. Kóthay, 'The Gamhud Funerary Material in Regional Context', in K.A. Kóthay (ed.) *Burial and Mortuary Practices in Late Period and Graeco-Roman Egypt: Proceedings of the International Conference Held at Museum of Fine Arts, Budapest, 17-19 July 2014* (Budapest, 2017), 267–75.



Figure 7. Cartonnage fragments from Gaz Fol 22 containing partially legible hieroglyphs (photo taken by author).

Figure 6); the symbol of *mꜣt* in the form of an ostrich feather found in Gaz Fol 27; and hieroglyphic text containing funerary spells to assist the deceased (see Figure 7).

The empty rectangular bands flanking the head of the winged goddess figures, an area which normally received text, demonstrate evidence of large-scale manufacturing practices. It was common for these areas to be left empty and filled in later with funerary spells containing the name of the deceased and often invoking Nut.¹⁵ The lack of text in these bands in the CDPC suggests this process could be left unfinished at the time of burial. Certain fragments being exact copies of the same illustration (and others having only slight variations in colouring) are also evidence of a potential, large-scaled production. The design and colour palette of the *wsh*-collar in Gaz Fol 59 and 108, for example, are identical, but they cannot belong to the same panel covering since the areas of missing cartonnage do not match. They therefore are iconographic duplicates of different panels.

Most of the iconography of the cartonnage fragments in the CDPC match el-Hibeh material found in other collections: either directly connected (i.e., belonging originally to the same panel) or indirectly connected (e.g., identical copies or copies of the same panel type with minor stylistic variations). The fairly standardised colouring of the mummy masks in the CDPC can be corroborated by complete examples in Musées royaux d'Art et d'Histoire E.00519 and E.00520.¹⁶ The

¹⁵ See S. Baumann, 'Nesmin, Priest of Akhmim: A Study on His Coffin and Mummy Cartonnage at RISD Museum (RI)', *RdÉ* 72 (2022), 17–9, 57; Szymanska and Babraj, *Mummy: Results of Interdisciplinary Examination*, 35, 40.

¹⁶ Musées royaux d'Art et d'Histoire online catalogue <<https://www.carmentis.be:443/eMP/eMuseumPlus?service=ExternalInterface&module=collection&objectId=75343&viewType=detailView>> accessed 20.06.2025; <<https://www.carmentis.be:443/eMP/eMuseumPlus?service=ExternalInterface&module=collection&objectId=75344&viewType=detailView>> accessed 20.06.2025.

combined motif of the *hkr*-frieze and the four sons of Horus can be seen in British Museum EA76230,¹⁷ and Universitätsbibliothek Graz Ms 1946.¹⁸ This iconographic layout lasted well into the Roman Period (30 BCE–641 CE), as seen with Musées royaux d'Art et d'Histoire E.05957.¹⁹ The same outstretched wings in OUG Unc 60 and Gaz Fol 73 are found in Houghton Library MS Gr SM4375.²⁰ Similar depictions of the winged goddess can be seen with British Museum EA10838.²¹ The beaded net pattern from OUG Unc 62 and P.Tor.Sam 1A matches Penn Museum E3068.²² The patterning of the *wsh*-collar from Gaz Fol 17, 72, 103 and RW Inv 35B are comparable to Universitätsbibliothek Graz Ms 1950 and British Museum EA76230,²³ and the collar's pattern in RW Inv 45 is almost identical to British Museum EA76210.²⁴ The body of one of the sons of Horus in Gaz Fol 53 is related to a head found in British Museum EA76221.²⁵ Even within Toronto, fragments from different collections are either from the same panel or copies of the same panel. P.Hib. 1 54 from the Victoria College Papyrus Collection, also on long-term deposit at the Fisher Library, contains the exact same composition of the four sons of Horus and *hkr*-frieze found in Gaz Fol 10 (see Figures 8 and 9). The noted repetition of identical iconography, as well as similar iconography through shared motifs and layouts but with varying colouration and/or proportions, within and across collections clearly point to a local tradition in el-Hibeh.

Through iconographic reconstruction, provenance can at times be attainable for fragments which possessed an unknown findspot. The fact that fragments from the PT Inv can be identified as el-Hibeh papyri due to matching or being copies of fragments from other inventories in the CDPC demonstrates el-Hibeh material was in the possession of antiquities dealers in Egypt well into the mid-20th century. Not all of the papyri therefore come from the Grenfell and Hunt excavations. Further comparisons with material from other collections will assist with advancing increased knowledge of the provenance of this material.

Regarding materiality and physicality, the artisans working in el-Hibeh had easier access to waste papyri than linen. This reflects that papyrus was a common component of cartonnage from the reign of Ptolemy II Philadelphos (283–246 BCE)

¹⁷ British Museum online catalogue <https://www.britishmuseum.org/collection/object/Y_EA76230> accessed 20.06.2025.

¹⁸ Universitätsbibliothek Graz online catalogue <<https://unipub.uni-graz.at/obvugrpapyri/content/titleinfo/7951240>> accessed 20.06.2025.

¹⁹ Musées royaux d'Art et d'Histoire online catalogue <<https://www.carmentis.be:443/eMP/eMuseumPlus?service=ExternalInterface&module=collection&objectId=82473&viewType=detailView>> accessed 20.06.2025.

²⁰ Houghton Library online catalogue <<https://nrs.lib.harvard.edu/urn-3:fhcl.hough:1180791>> accessed 20.06.2025.

²¹ British Museum online catalogue <https://www.britishmuseum.org/collection/object/Y_EA10838> accessed 20.06.2025.

²² Penn Museum online catalogue <<https://penn.museum/collections/object/294103>> accessed 20.06.2025.

²³ Universitätsbibliothek Graz online catalogue <<https://unipub.uni-graz.at/urn:urn:nbn:at:at-ubg:2-35356>> accessed 20.06.2025; British Museum online catalogue <https://www.britishmuseum.org/collection/object/Y_EA76230> accessed 20.06.2025.

²⁴ British Museum online catalogue <https://www.britishmuseum.org/collection/object/Y_EA76210> accessed 20.06.2025.

²⁵ British Museum online catalogue <https://www.britishmuseum.org/collection/object/Y_EA76221> accessed 20.06.2025.



Figure 8 (left). Cartonnage fragments from Gaz Fol 10 digitally reconstructed to exhibit the *hkr*-frieze frame and the sons of Horus. © Thomas Fisher Rare Book Library. Figure 9 (right). Recto of P.Hib. 1 54 containing the *hkr*-frieze frame and the sons of Horus. © Thomas Fisher Rare Book Library.

onwards²⁶ in places where it was more readily available (e.g., regional capitals, large cities, commercial or administrative centres), since none of the texts in the CDPC appear to predate Ptolemy II's reign according to Barker.²⁷ Waste papyri with Greek script were more abundant in the surrounding area since el-Hibeh was close to a major Greek centre, Oxyrhynchus, and other Greek-dominated towns of the Fayum region. What is surprising is that the CDPC nevertheless has sporadic instances of linen in the substrate layer. Linen was the characteristic layering medium prior to the Ptolemaic Period, and though still heavily relied on during this period, it is not commonly found in cartonnage from the Fayum region.²⁸ Its usage at el-Hibeh can possibly be an example of artisans choosing to combine tradition with contemporary production methods. On a practical level, the medium possibly served as a means of providing more rigidity (i.e., durability) or less rigidity (i.e., flexibility) to a particular panel based on support needs.²⁹

²⁶ R.S. Bagnall (ed.) *The Oxford Handbook of Papyrology* (New York, 2009), 45, 400.

²⁷ Barker, 'University of Toronto's Classics Department Papyrus Collection' <<https://collections.library.utoronto.ca/view/fisher22:227>> accessed 23.01.2025.

²⁸ See R. Cortopassi and S. Pagès-Camagna, 'Les cartonnages du puits F 17 de Saqqâra', *Bulletin de l'Institut Français d'Archéologie Orientale* 108 (2008), 48–50; T. de Alarcon and A. North, 'Layers and Layers: Analysis and Treatment of Egyptian Cartonnage at the Penn Museum', *Journal of the American Institute for Conservation* 64, no. 2 (2024): 91–94; G. Schreiber, Z. Vasáros and A. Almásy, 'Ptolemaic and Roman Burials from Theban Tomb -400-', *MDAIK* 69 (2013), 195–96; A. Schweitzer, 'Étude des parures de cartonnage de momies de la nécropole ouest de Saqqara', in K. Myśliwiec (ed.) *Saqqara III: The Upper Necropolis 2* (Warsaw, 2008), 523–24; A. Schweitzer, 'Les parures de cartonnage des momies de Kom Ombo au Musée Guimet d'Histoire naturelle de Lyon', *La Revue du Louvre et des musées de France* 42, no. 3 (1992), 18–27; M. Vandenbeusch, D. O'Flynn and B. Moreno, 'Layer by Layer: The Manufacture of Graeco-Roman Funerary Masks', *JEA* 107, no.1–2 (2021), 293–94.

²⁹ See de Alarcon and A. North, 'Layers and Layers', 93–94, 113; Vandenbeusch, O'Flynn and Moreno, 'Layer by Layer', 293.

The reuse of papyri with demotic script can be found in other collections with el-Hibeh material, particularly the collection of the British Museum, demonstrating that it was used frequently enough for production—though clearly not nearly as a much as papyri with Greek script. Greek texts written entirely in red ink are very uncommon and such papyri have yet to be found in cartonnage from other collections. Examples of this phenomenon are more commonly authentic copies of official documents (e.g., registers, declarations, wills, notices, tax receipts, contracts, certificates), but they can as well can be magical and literary texts.³⁰ Regardless, they are unique fragments from the archive from which the cartonnage workshop(s) acquired them. Their identification could assist with understanding the provenance of the reused papyri in the CDPC since most (if any) likely did not originate from el-Hibeh proper.

Conclusion

This paper has focused on prioritising iconographic and material examinations of the cartonnage in the CDPC over analysis of textual content as the latter in studies of Ptolemaic cartonnage has traditionally, and often still does today, taken precedence over the former. Although only so much can be understood from this collection due to its fragmented nature, the examinations performed on its artistic and material/physical aspects have nevertheless demonstrated that the el-Hibeh material in Toronto provide a wealth of information on funerary art and the production practices of cartonnage manufacturing at el-Hibeh during the Ptolemaic Period. The town was a local centre for cartonnage production at this time due to the number of copies of the same iconographic layout found within the CDPC and in other collections, in which the town's workshop(s) clearly produced a distinctive local cartonnage tradition. The existence of examples of importation or individuality/agency over the choice of illustrations alongside examples of standardisation is equally indicative of a potentially thriving market present at el-Hibeh. This lasted at least a few centuries and continued into the Roman Period.

One major aspect of the CDPC that remains to be studied, and which should be explored in subsequent work, is chemical analyses of the cartonnage and non-invasive scientific imaging techniques appropriate for its study. Understanding the chemical makeup by means of the ground layer, painted layer, and any binding media used, will further assist with our understanding of the materiality of collection and the methods of production at el-Hibeh, as well as ascertaining appropriate methods for further conservation. Such analyses could additionally assist with attaining a more concrete dating of the fragments through both the painted layer and the ink(s) used on the waste papyri—as successfully accomplished by other projects that engaged in multi-technical and multi-analytical approaches—since most papyri without a dating formula were attributed a standard date range of the 3rd century BCE by Barker. While more work still needs to be conducted comparatively between the CDPC's

³⁰ For scholarship that includes the Ptolemaic Period, see L.H. Blumell, 'Report of Proceedings in Red Ink from Late Second Century AD Oxyrhynchus', *BASP* 46 (2009), 24–25; M.-H. Marganne, 'L'utilisation de l'encre rouge dans les papyrus littéraires grecs et latins', in M. Capasso, P. Davoli and N. Pelle (eds.) *Proceedings of the 29th International Congress of Papyrology* (Lecce, 2021), 700–10; P. Schubert, *Les archives de Marcus Lucretius Diogenes et textes apparentés* (Bonn, 1990), 34–39.

inventories and across other collections containing el-Hibeh material, this research is intended to be a starting point for further dialogue on the Toronto fragments and the Ptolemaic cartonnage from el-Hibeh.

The Order of Merenptah's Reliefs at the *Cour de la Cachette*, Karnak and Its Implications

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Abstract: This study analyzes the sequence of relief carvings positioned along the transverse axis of the Karnak Temple at Thebes, focusing on the outer western wall of the *Cour de la Cachette*. The reliefs follow a traditional battle narrative structure, beginning with poorly preserved scenes: Amun-Re's directing the King to warfare, his departure for battle, and what appears to be the march to combat. The sequence then continues with four well-documented battle scenes against Canaanite forces, followed by scenes showing the binding and collection of Canaanite prisoners. The narrative progresses to weathered depictions of Canaanite and Shasu captives being led back to Egypt, culminating in their presentation to Amun-Re. A thorough understanding of this sequential narrative would contribute significantly to scholarly debate, as some researchers suggest these vanquished enemies could be linked to the Israelites documented in Merenptah's Victory Stela.

Résumé: Cette étude analyse la séquence des reliefs sculptés le long de l'axe transversal du Temple de Karnak à Thèbes, en se concentrant sur la paroi occidentale extérieure de la *Cour de la Cachette*. Les reliefs suivent une structure narrative de bataille traditionnelle, commençant par des scènes mal conservées: Amon ordonnant au roi de partir en guerre, le départ du roi pour la bataille, et ce qui semble être la marche vers le combat. La séquence se poursuit avec quatre scènes de bataille bien documentées contre les forces cananéennes, suivies de scènes montrant la capture et le rassemblement des prisonniers cananéens. Le récit progresse vers des représentations érodées de captifs cananéens et Shasus conduits vers l'Égypte, culminant avec leur présentation à Amon. Une compréhension approfondie de cette narration séquentielle contribue à un important débat académique, certains chercheurs suggérant que ces ennemis vaincus pourraient être liés aux Israélites mentionnés dans la Stèle de la Victoire de Mérenptah.

Keywords: Merenptah, Israel Stela, Cour de la Cachette, Israel, Shasu, Canaanites.

Mots-clés: Mérenptah, Stèle d'Israël, Cour de la Cachette, Israël, Shasu, Cananéens.

Merenptah's Reliefs at the *Cour de la Cachette*

A sequence of reliefs is located along the transverse axis on the outer western face of the *Cour de la Cachette* of the Temple of Karnak in Thebes, features ten scenes arranged in two registers, one above the other (Figure 1);¹ each intact scene is accompanied by hieroglyphic inscriptions.

Apart from the extreme left (i.e., northern) end, the top of the wall is missing. The upper scenes to the right (i.e., southern) are not preserved. Stones from the destroyed scenes of the wall, belonging to the southern end of the upper register, are

¹ <https://api.nakala.fr/embed/11280%2F598baaac/068d9926f85b286d4a52dde6b4faf3868b93c049> accessed 18/02/2025.

placed on nearby mastabas. Some of these blocks were studied and published by Le Saout² and Yurco.³ As part of the *Anastylose des murs de la cour de la Cachette project of the Centre Franco-Égyptien d'Étude des Temples de Karnak (CFEETK)*, the three southernmost scenes of the Canaanite battle series (scenes 8, 9 and 10) were reconstructed between 2022-2024.⁴ Finally, at the right (south) end of the wall, north of the doorway, large-scale triumphal smiting scene extends from the top to the bottom of the wall.⁵

On the left side of the wall, four battle scenes are depicted, separated by the text of the peace treaty dated to Ramesses II's regnal Year 21 between Ramesses II and Hattusili III, the ruler of Hatti. These four battle scenes, progressing from right to left, enclose the treaty, with two scenes on each side.⁶

The scene located at the lower right of the peace treaty was designated by Yurco as Scene 1.⁷ This scene depicts the conquest of the city of Ashkelon, the only toponym mentioned in the inscription.⁸ The remaining identifications were established based on the sequence of places listed on Merenptah's Israel Stela, which corresponds to the arrangement of scenes on the wall: Yurco labelled the lower register to the left of the peace treaty as Scene 2, Scene 3 was situated in the upper register above it. Both depict fortresses, manned by Canaanite warriors, identified by their long cloaks, bearded faces and headbands and under attack. Unfortunately, their names have not survived. Yurco identified Scene 2 with Gezer, while Scene 3 was associated by him with Yanu'am. Scene 4, in the upper register to the right of the peace treaty, does not depict any surviving fortress and, according to Yurco, might not have presented such a structure in that scene.⁹ Thus he identified the scene as the battle against Israel, that, according to the inscription of that name in the *Triumph-Hymn on the Israel Stela* (ll. 26-28),¹⁰ was not a city-state, but an ethnonym.¹¹

Six additional scenes continue to the right of those above, which progress from left to right, at least on the lower registers. The first depicts the collecting and binding of enemy Shasu prisoners, identified by their appearance, dress, head cover, coiffure and by accompanying epigraphs, labelled by Yurco as Scene 5. The adjacent Scene 7 depicts a procession of Shasu prisoners being led off to Egypt, with the Pharaoh

² F. Le Saout, 'Reconstitution des Murs de la Cour de la Cachette', *Cahiers de Karnak* 7 (1982), 231, pl. 234b.

³ F.J. Yurco, 'Merenptah's Canaanite Campaign', *JARCE* 23 (1986), 189, 191, 196, 197, 201, 205, 207.

⁴ The epigraphic study of the west wall of the Cachette courtyard is ongoing since 2014 (pers. comm., Gabriella Dembitz). <http://www.cfeetk.cnrs.fr/restauration-anastylose/anastylose-des-murs-de-la-cour-de-la-cachette/> accessed 18/02/2025. For the complete epigraphic study of the wall, both inner and outer face, excluding the part up to the Hittite peace treaty on the outer face, see G. Dembitz, *Le mur occidental de la cour de la Cachette*, BiGen, TravCFEETK, IFAO, Cairo, forthcoming.

⁵ Le Saout, 'Reconstitution des Murs', 228–30; Yurco, 'Merenptah's Canaanite Campaign', 190–91.

⁶ Yurco, 'Merenptah's Canaanite Campaign', 190.

⁷ This article maintains his numbering.

⁸ K.A. Kitchen, *Ramesside Inscriptions. Translated and Annotated Translations II: Ramesses II, Royal Inscriptions* (Oxford, 1996), 39 (henceforth *RITA*); <http://sith.huma-num.fr/karnak/5994>, accessed 18/02/2025.

⁹ KIU 5995, CNRS-CFEETK 178845, <http://sith.huma-num.fr/karnak/5995> <https://www.cfeetk.cnrs.fr/archives/?n=178845> accessed 18/02/2025.

¹⁰ K.A. Kitchen, *Ramesside Inscriptions: Historical and Biographical IV* (Oxford, 1982), 19 (henceforth *KRI*).

¹¹ Yurco, 'Merenptah's Canaanite Campaign', 199.

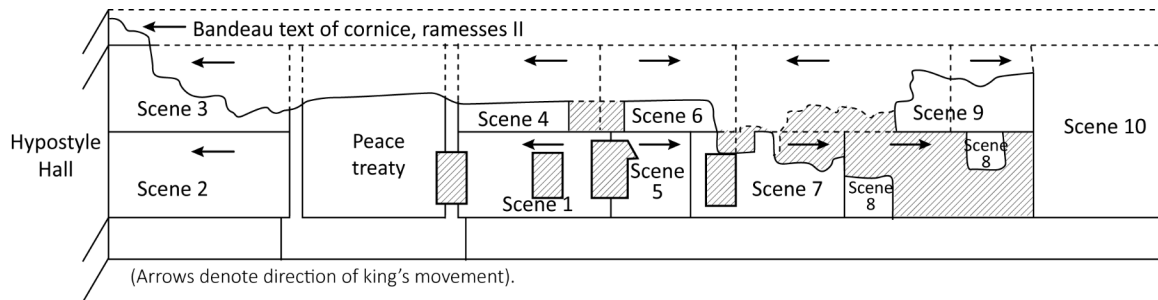


Figure 1: Reconstruction of the scenes (drawn by Noga Yoselevich)

depicted in his chariot overseeing the march. The final Scene 8, in which the prisoners are presented to the god Amun-Re, has been reconstructed based on surviving textual and relief fragments and drawing comparisons to parallel scenes. In Scene 8, two rows of prisoners appear, the upper preserving only traces of Canaanites, whereas the lower one show mainly Shasu prisoners.

Assigning the Reliefs to the Reign of Ramesses II

Redford,¹² followed by scholars such as Sourouzian, Iskander, and Lurson,¹³ have presented multiple lines of evidence to attribute the reliefs to Ramesses II's reign. Their arguments centre on both geographical and architectural evidence, including Ashkelon's mention on a Soleb statue base alongside other locations from Ramesses II's topographic lists, and the presence of Ramesses II's cartouches on the Cour de la Cachette's western wall. The case is strengthened by physical evidence such as Sety II's usurpation of Ramesses II's cartouche, references to the Battle of Kadesh and the Hittite peace treaty, and the naming of Ramesses II's chariot horses in the scenes. Personal connections are established through the depiction of Ramesses II's son Khaemwaset, while architectural analysis reveals consistent stylistic patterns from Ramesses II's reign across the Great Hypostyle Hall's southern wall and the western wall of the north-south axis of pylons.

Assigning the Reliefs to the Reign of Merenptah

Scholars, such as Yurco,¹⁴ Kitchen,¹⁵ and Brand,¹⁶ have all presented compelling evidence to reassign the reliefs to Merenptah's reign through detailed epigraphic and art-historical analyses. Their argument dismantled previous attributions to Ramesses II by demonstrating that the Ashkelon reference at Soleb

¹² D.B. Redford, 'The Ashkelon Relief at Karnak and the Israel Stela', *Israel Exploration Journal* (1986), 188–200.

¹³ H. Sourouzian, *Les Monuments du Roi Merenptah* (Mainz am Rhein, 1989), 150; S. Iskander, 'The Reign of Merenptah' Ph.D. dissertation (New York University, 2002), 316–29; B. Lurson, 'Israël sous Merenptah ou le Sort de l'ennemi dans l'Égypte Ancienne', in J. Riaud (ed.) *Israël sous Merenptah ou le Sort de l'ennemi dans l'Égypte Ancienne* (Angers, 2003), 45–62.

¹⁴ Yurco, 'Merenptah's Canaanite Campaign', 497–506; F.J. Yurco, '3200-Year-Old Picture of Israelites Found in Egypt', *BAR* 16, no. 5 (1990), 20–38; F.J. Yurco, 'Can You Name the Panel with the Israelites? Yurco's Response', *BAR* 17, no. 6 (1991), 61.

¹⁵ K.A. Kitchen, *Ramesside Inscriptions. Translated and Annotated Translations II, Notes & Comments: Ramesses II, Royal Inscriptions* (Oxford, 1999), 72–75 (henceforth *RITANC*).

¹⁶ P.J. Brand, 'The Date of the War Scenes on the South Wall of the Great Hypostyle Hall and the West Wall of the Cour de la Cachette at Karnak and the History of the Late Nineteenth Dynasty', in M. Collier and S. Snape (eds.) *Ramesside studies in honour of K.A. Kitchen* (Bolton, 2011), 51–84.

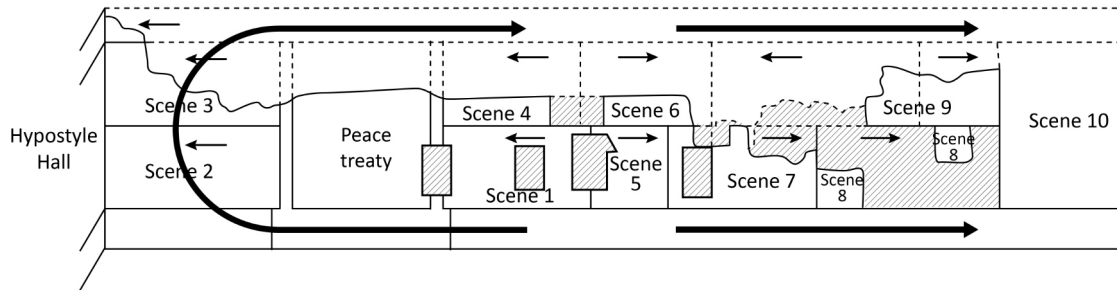


Figure 2: Yurco's Reconstruction of the scenes (drawn by Noga Yoselevich)

actually dates to Amenophis III, not Ramesses II, and aligns with Merenptah's Triumph-Hymn. They noted that Ramesses II only added a bandeau-text before Merenptah's wall decoration, and crucially, all usurped cartouches show Merenptah's name being replaced, not Ramesses II's. The chronology of the wall decoration phases is clarified, showing that Ramesses II was responsible for decorating early Kadesh reliefs on the surface North of the Hittite Treaty of Ramesses II (scenes 2 and 3) in the first phase of decoration of the Great Hypostyle Hall's exterior South Wall, and the adjoining wall of the Cour de la Cachette. Then, in the second phase, Ramesses II redecorated the whole South wall of the Hall with the undated scenes. A fragment of the Kadesh-scenes remained on the North wall of the Cour de la Cachette. In Year 21, the Hittite treaty was carved, leaving the rest of the wall to Pylons VII and VIII blank. Thereafter, Merenptah carved his series of scenes North and South of the Treaty, recarving the previous reliefs of Ramesses II in Scenes 2 and 3.¹⁷

Additional evidence includes the non-exclusive nature of the horse-team names, the possibility that the depicted Prince Khaemwaset was in fact Merenptah's son rather than Ramesses II's, distinctive stylistic differences between the reliefs, and the chronological inconsistency of placing Ramesses II's war scenes after his Year 21, when all his other known war scenes predate this year. Thus, these reliefs will be regarded as belonging to the reign of Merenptah.

Yurco's Reconstruction of the Scenes

Yurco connected Merenptah's reliefs with the Israel Stela and Karnak Inscription on the southeastern inner wall of the Cour de la Cachette, proposing that they tell a unified story of his military campaign (Figure 2).¹⁸ The reliefs follow a clockwise sequence. Scene 1 depicts the conquest of Ashkelon, positioned in the lower register right of the Peace Treaty inscription. Scene 2 shows the conquest of Gezer to the left of the Ashkelon scene. Scene 3, in the upper left corner, portrays the conquest of Yanu'am. Scene 4, though fragmentary, shows a battle against Canaanite charioteers in open country, which Yurco interprets as the confrontation with Israel, notable for its six-spoked chariot wheels. A key aspect of Yurco's interpretation was

¹⁷ Brand, 'The Date of the War Scenes', 53–55.

¹⁸ Yurco, 'Can You Name the Panel', 61; Yurco, '3200-Year-Old Picture', 41; F.J. Yurco, 'Merenptah's Wars, the Sea Peoples, and Israel's Origins', in J. Phillips (ed.) *Ancient Egypt, the Aegean, and the Near East: Studies in Honour of Martha Rhoads Bell: Volume II* (San Antonio, 1997), 497–501; Yurco, 'Merenptah's Canaanite Campaign', 189–215; F.J. Yurco, 'Merenptah's Canaanite Campaign and Israel's Origins', in E.S. Frerichs and L.H. Lesko (eds.) *Exodus—The Egyptian Evidence: Papers Presented at a Conference Held at Brown University in 1992* (Winona Lake, IN, 1997), 28, 29, 38, 41, 42.

his emphasis on Israel as the “main foe” in this campaign, supported by unique classifiers in the Victory Stela and the phrase ‘its grain is not’. He considered the Shasu pastoralists, who appear only in the return scenes, as minor participants who likely harassed Egyptian forces during their northern advance.

Scenes 5–10 on the right side of the wall depict conventional victory imagery, including the binding of Shasu prisoners and processions of captives returning to Egypt. Scenes 5–8 depict prisoner processions: Scene 5 is generic, showing the king rounding up Shasu prisoners, copied from Sety I’s earlier relief. Scene 6 in the upper register shows Canaanite prisoners in long cloaks being led to Egypt. Scene 7 depicts Shasu prisoners in knee-length kilts and turbans marching under the pharaoh’s chariot, with text referring to ‘rebels’. Scene 8 continues the Shasu procession, identified by text as those ‘whom his majesty plundered’.

The debate over the Shasu’s role in Merenptah’s campaign centres on their unique depiction in the Karnak reliefs. Unlike other enemies, Merenptah is never shown fighting the Shasu directly, but only binding them (Scene 5) and leading them as prisoners (Scenes 7, 8).

Yurco downplayed the significance of the scenes depicting Shasu pastoralists in the return-to-Egypt narrative of Merenptah’s campaign, highlighting their absence in the Israel Stela and their secondary portrayal in the Karnak reliefs, where they appear among the captives in a conventional prisoner-binding scene. He interpreted them as minor actors who harassed the Egyptians during their northern advance, evident in their inclusion in various Ramesside battle reliefs.¹⁹ Yurco attempted to explain the absence of a battle depiction against the Shasu by suggesting that Prince Sety, shown in a loose block following his father in battle but absent from the Gezer scene, may have led a separate force against the Shasu via the King’s Highway in Transjordan before rejoining the main army for the Israel battle.²⁰ He further emphasized that in the battle reliefs, the Shasu are consistently labelled as ‘Shasu’, never as ‘Israel’.²¹

The reconstruction of the southern end of the wall relies heavily on fragmentary evidence. Le Saout²² reconstructed Scene 9 from destroyed portions to show a traditional scene of divine legitimation, where the king receives a scimitar from Amun-Re before departing for battle. While Yurco acknowledged this reconstruction, he considered it anomalous and omitted it from his analysis of the sequence. Scene 10 completes the narrative with a conventional large-scale prisoner smiting scene, forming a traditional conclusion that emphasizes both military victory and divine endorsement of the campaign.

Kitchen’s Alternative Reconstruction of the Scenes

Kitchen began by establishing two fundamental patterns in Egyptian war relief sequences:²³ those that progress from one end and those that divide from a midpoint.

¹⁹ Yurco, ‘3200-Year-Old Picture’, 20–38; Yurco, ‘Can You Name the Panel’, 41; Yurco, ‘Merenptah’s Wars, the Sea Peoples, and Israel’s Origins’, 497–506; Kitchen, *RITANC II*, 76. ‘The Shasu were a mere sideshow’.

²⁰ Yurco, ‘Merenptah’s Canaanite Campaign’, 204, 209–11.

²¹ Yurco, ‘Merenptah’s Wars, the Sea Peoples, and Israel’s Origins’, 501. n. 35.

²² Le Saout, ‘Reconstitution Des Murs’, 228–231, scenes 224a–224b and pl. 224.

²³ Kitchen, *RITANC II*, 75.

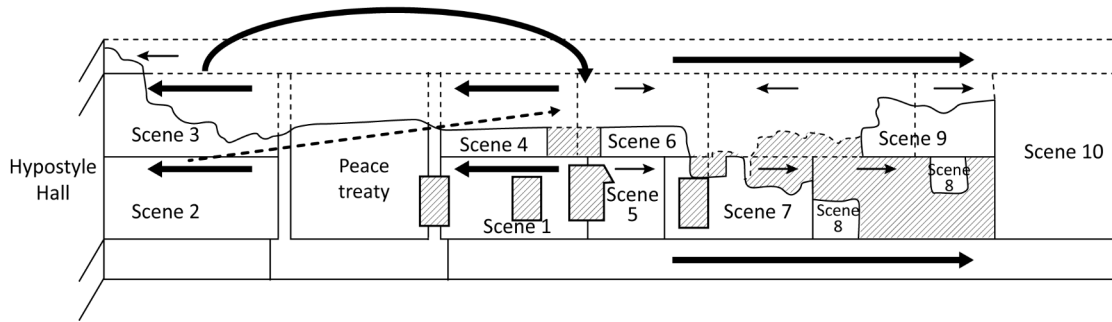


Figure 3: Kitchen's First Reconstruction (drawn by Noga Yoselevich)

While Brand cautions that there is no truly 'standard' arrangement of such scenes, Kitchen used these patterns as the basis for two different reconstructions of the Merenptah reliefs.²⁴

In his first reconstruction (Figure 3), Kitchen proposed a complex arrangement that combine two divided registers. The lower register shows Scenes 1 and 2 moving away from Egypt (left) while Scenes 5, 7, 8 return to Egypt (right). The upper register mirrors this pattern with Scenes 4 and 3 moving outward and Scenes 6 and 9 returning inward, both culminating in Scene 10's triumph scene. This interpretation suggests a campaign route from Ashkelon (Scene 1) to Gezer (Scene 2), through the hill-country (Scene 4), and finally to Yanu'am (Scene 3), with a return journey via the Jezreel Valley. However, this sequence creates a significant problem by placing Israel before Yanu'am, contradicting both the Israel Stela and Kitchen's own established principles of war relief sequences.

Kitchen's second reconstruction adopted Yurco's sequence but interpreted it

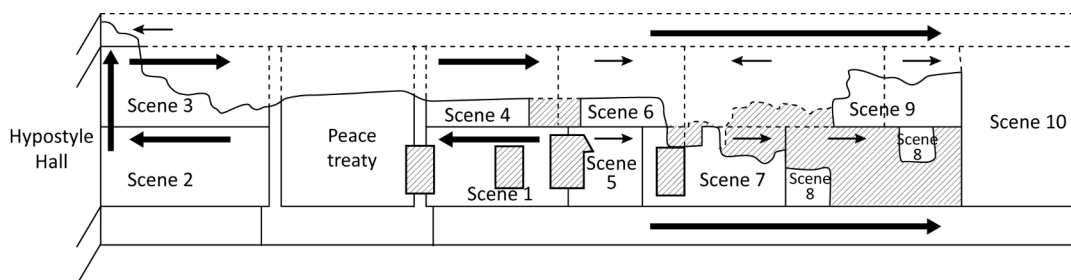


Figure 4: Kitchen's Second Reconstruction (drawn by Noga Yoselevich)

differently (Figure 4). This version starts at the lower register's middle, moving left from Ashkelon (Scene 1) to Gezer (Scene 2), then moves up to the upper register, progressing from Yanu'am (Scene 3) to Israel (Scene 4), before returning via Gezer and Ashkelon to Gaza. However, this reconstruction faces several challenges: there is no evidence in Merenptah's sources for placing Israel in the Central Highlands, the relationship between return scenes in both registers remains unclear, and the three Shasu scenes (5, 7, 8) must be treated as unrelated episodes, contradicting Kitchen's own established patterns of war relief sequences.

The problems inherent in both reconstructions suggest that either Kitchen's

²⁴ P.J. Brand, 'Review of Susanna Constanze Heinz, *Die Feldzugsdarstellungen Des Neuen Reiches: Eine Bildanalyse*', *JARCE* 40 (2003), 187.

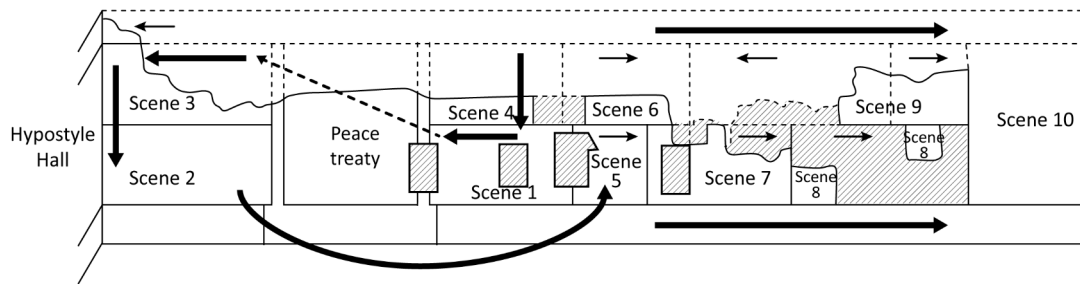


Figure 5: Rainey's Reconstruction of the scenes (drawn by Noga Yoselevich)

narrative analysis or his understanding of war relief sequence patterns were flawed. These difficulties highlight the complexity of interpreting ancient Egyptian battle narratives and the challenges of reconciling artistic conventions with historical geography.

Rainey's Reconstruction of the Scenes and Objections to Yurco's Interpretation

Rainey accepted Yurco's connection between the relief scenes and Merenptah's Israel Stela hymn but proposed a different interpretation of the scenes' sequence and identification.²⁵ He suggested a reordering of the cities: what Yurco identified as Gezer (Scene 2) should be Yanu'am, citing the king's attack on foot as possibly indicating mountainous terrain.²⁶ Correspondingly, he argued that Yurco's Yanu'am (Scene 3) should be identified as Gezer.²⁷ Most significantly, Rainey rejected the identification of Scene 4 as an Israelite battle, instead associating Israel with the Shasu captives shown later in the relief (Figure 5). He argued that Israelites, like their patriarchal ancestors, were pastoralists distinct from Canaanites. He further suggested that Scene 4 likely included a city in its damaged upper portion, possibly representing Pa-Canaan (possibly Gaza), contrary to Yurco's interpretation of it as an open-field battle.²⁸

Rainey's arguments against identifying the warriors in Scene 4 as Israelites focus on both artistic conventions and military practicalities. His challenge of Yurco's interpretation undermines its coherence. Rainey counters Yurco's identification of Israelites in Scene 4 with two key arguments. First, the figures are depicted in typical Canaanite military attire, contrary to Egyptian artistic practices which routinely distinguished between ethnic groups when intended, as evidenced in mixed-group depictions and the different classifiers used for Israel in the Israel Stela.²⁹ Second,

²⁵ A.F. Rainey, 'Can You Name the Panel with the Israelites? Rainey's Challenge', *BAR* 17, no. 6 (1991), 58; A.F. Rainey, 'Israel in Merenptah's Inscription and Reliefs', *Israel Exploration Journal* 51, no. 1 (2001), 60.

²⁶ Though this is complicated by similar depictions at Acco and Yanu'am in other reliefs (G.A. Gaballa, *Narrative in Egyptian Art* (Mainz am Rhein, 1976), 101; S.C. Heinz, *Die Feldzugsdarstellungen Des Neuen Reiches: Eine Bildanalyse* (Wien, 2001), 245, I.6.

²⁷ Rainey, 'Israel in Merenptah's Inscription and Reliefs', 71–72.

²⁸ Rainey, 'Israel in Merenptah's Inscription and Reliefs', 72; Yurco, 'Merenptah's Canaanite Campaign', 90; M.G. Hasel, 'Merneptah's Inscriptions and Reliefs and the Origins of Israel', in B.A. Nakhai (ed.) *Merneptah's Inscriptions and Reliefs and the Origins of Israel* (Boston, 2003), 30; Brand, 'The Date of the War Scenes', 58, n. 45; F.I. De Magistris, 'The Forgotten One: A Reassessment of the So-Called Ways of Horus in Light of the Existence of a Twelfth Fortress in the Karnak Reliefs', *Ägypten und Levante / Egypt and the Levant* 33 (2024), 249, n. 270.

²⁹ Rainey, 'Israel in Merenptah's Inscription and Reliefs', 59, 69–70.

Rainey noted the practical impossibility of Israelite chariot warfare, as chariots were exclusive to the elite Mariyannu warrior class and would have been beyond the military capabilities of Israelite forces during this period.³⁰ The use of chariotry required extensive infrastructure: costs of horses and chariots, logistics for animal care, specialised training grounds, maintenance facilities, and manufacturing capabilities.³¹ Furthermore, chariots would have been ineffective in Israel's mountainous terrain.³²

In addition to Rainey's objections, there is also a directional inconsistency in Scenes 3 and 4. As Scene 4 precedes Scene 3, the king is attacking in Scenes 3 (*Yanu'am) and 4 (*Israel) from right to left, whereas Yurco's proposed a sequence of military advance from the left to the right. Moreover, Yurco's dismissal of the Shasu's importance is contradicted by their significant presence in three scenes (5, 7, and 8), where they appear as numerous as the Canaanite prisoners. Finally, there's a crucial discrepancy between the reliefs and the Israel Stela: if these sources are as closely linked as Yurco and Hasel suggested, the complete absence of Shasu from the stela despite their prominent representation in the reliefs significantly undermines Yurco's interpretation, as noted by Rainey³³ and Uehlinger.³⁴

Objections to Rainey's Reconstruction

In defence of the Israelite identification, Yurco³⁵ and Kitchen³⁶ responded to Rainey's arguments, by raising several explanations. They suggest the possibility of an Israelite-Canaanite alliance and argue that early Hebrews would have adopted Canaanite cultural practices during the Late Bronze to Iron Age transition. Regarding the controversial presence of chariots, they propose various acquisition methods: raids on Canaanites, ambushing lone charioteers (as described in Papyrus Anastasi I), or theft from Egyptians, although Hoffmeier specifically noted that six-spoked chariots might have been stolen from Egyptians during the reigns of Ramesses II and Ramesses III.³⁷ Hasel has challenged Rainey's assumptions about ethnic differentiation, pointing to the stereotypical portrayal of ethnic characteristics in Egyptian art, such as the Sea Peoples' depiction.³⁸ Hasel has further countered Rainey's identification of Israel with the Shasu by noting that no conflict with the Shasu is depicted in Scenes 5–8, which Rainey identifies as Israel. Instead, the Shasu are only taken captive. Hasel states that if the Shasu were Israel, the claim on the stela would seem nonsensical. How is Israel laid waste? How is its seed not? By being taken into captivity? If this were so, we would expect a verb like 'captured' (*ḥzk*),

³⁰ Rainey, 'Israel in Merenptah's Inscription and Reliefs', 70–72.

³¹ D.O.D. Cantrell, *The Horsemen of Israel: Horses and Chariotry in Monarchic Israel (Ninth-Eighth Centuries Bce)* (Winona Lake, IN, 2011), 49, 67–71, 92–99, 110.

³² J.J. Bimson, 'Merenptah's Israel and Recent Theories of Israelite Origins', *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament* 16, no. 49 (1991), 23.

³³ Rainey, 'Israel in Merenptah's Inscription and Reliefs', 73–74.

³⁴ C. Uehlinger, 'Neither Eyewitnesses, nor Windows to the Past, but Valuable Testimony in Its Own Right. Remarks on Iconography, Source Criticism and Ancient Data-Processing', *Proceedings of the British Academy* 143 (2007), 197–201.

³⁵ Yurco, 'Merenptah's Canaanite Campaign', 212; Yurco, 'Can You Name the Panel', 61; Yurco, 'Merenptah's Canaanite Campaign and Israel's Origins', 29–30, 34.

³⁶ Kitchen, *RITANC II*, 75–76.

³⁷ J.K. Hoffmeier, 'Observations on the Evolving Chariot Wheel in the 18th Dynasty', *JARCE* 13 (1976), 44.

³⁸ Hasel, 'Merneptah's Inscriptions and Reliefs', 75.

‘seized’ (*mh*), or ‘plundered’ (*hfr*), which is precisely the terminology used for ‘those of Shasu’.³⁹

Hasel raises six main objections to Rainey’s identification of Israel with the Shasu:

- **Geographic Location:** he argues that the Shasu originated from Transjordan.⁴⁰
- **Names:** The stela never refers to Israel as Shasu or vice versa. While Rainey suggests that references to Israel might have been lost in damaged sections,⁴¹ Hasel argues that Israel might not need to be depicted since the focus was on destroying their grain, not taking prisoners.⁴²
- **Determinatives:** Hasel challenges Rainey’s interpretation of determinatives for Shasu, listing cases where different determinatives were used.⁴³ However, Kitchen notes that Israel’s determinatives indicate it was a tribal group/community, distinct from city-states.⁴⁴
- **Sequence:** Hasel argues that Rainey’s proposed sequence breaks the narrative flow of Egyptian iconography⁴⁵ and deviates from the stela’s poetic structure. The sequence would require traversing Canaan twice before reaching Shasu/Israel.
- **Nature of Pa-Canaan:** Hasel criticizes Rainey’s inconsistent treatment of Pa-Canaan as both a territory and a city-state,⁴⁶ questioning why artists would depict a territory as merely a fortified town.⁴⁷
- **Terminology:** Regarding the stela’s phrase “Israel is laid waste, his seed is not”, Hasel interprets this as indicating an agricultural society.⁴⁸ He argues that if the Shasu were Israel, the stela’s claims would be inconsistent with merely taking captives, as shown in the reliefs.⁴⁹

However, in countering Hasel’s arguments, the following points should be mentioned:

- **Geographic Evidence:** Shasu presence is recorded throughout the Levant, not just in Transjordan as Hasel claims. Documentation places Shasu in the Sharon Plain and Jezreel Valley, at the ‘Aruna Pass according to Papyrus

³⁹ Hasel, ‘Merneptah’s Inscriptions and Reliefs’, 32.

⁴⁰ Hasel, ‘Merneptah’s Inscriptions and Reliefs’, 29; Hasel, ‘Merenptah’s Reference to Israel’, 57; M.G. Hasel, *Domination and Resistance: Egyptian Military Activity in the Southern Levant, Ca. 1300–1185 BC* (Leiden, 1998), 227–31.

⁴¹ Rainey, ‘Israel in Merenptah’s Inscription and Reliefs’, 74.

⁴² Hasel, ‘Merneptah’s Inscriptions and Reliefs’, 32; Hasel, ‘Merenptah’s Reference to Israel’, 57.

⁴³ Hasel, *Domination and Resistance*, 220–21; Hasel, ‘Merneptah’s Inscriptions and Reliefs’, 32–33; Hasel, ‘Merenptah’s Reference to Israel’, 57.

⁴⁴ K.A. Kitchen, ‘The Physical Text of Merenptah’s Victory Hymn (the ‘Israel Stela’),’ *JSSEA* 24 (1994), 75.

⁴⁵ Gaballa, *Narrative in Egyptian Art*, 100–106; Heinz, *Die Feldzugdarstellungen*, 51.

⁴⁶ Rainey, ‘Israel in Merenptah’s Inscription and Reliefs’, 72–73.

⁴⁷ Yurco, ‘Can You Name the Panel’, 61; Hasel, ‘Merneptah’s Inscriptions and Reliefs’, 29–30.

⁴⁸ M.G. Hasel, ‘Israel in the Merneptah Stela’, *BASOR* 296, no. 1 (1994), 52–54; Hasel, ‘Merneptah’s Inscriptions and Reliefs’, 20–26.

⁴⁹ Hasel, ‘Merneptah’s Inscriptions and Reliefs’, 32.

Anastasi I, and in northern Syria during the battle of Kadesh and in topographical lists of Thutmose IV, Amenhotep III and Ramesses II, as well as at ‘Ain Shasu and at the town of [I]birta.⁵⁰ Furthermore, if Merenptah’s campaign progressed from south to north, with Yanu‘am in northern Transjordan,⁵¹ this aligns well with the presence of Shasu in these regions.

- Cultural and Historical Connections: The biblical characterization of Israel and the patriarchs as pastoralists, distinct from Canaanites,⁵² supports their identification with the Shasu. This connection is reinforced by historical precedents: while Moab isn’t specifically termed Shasu in Egyptian sources, its ruler is depicted as a Shasu chief in the Balu‘a Stela.⁵³ Similarly, Edomites are referred to as Shasu in Papyrus Anastasi VI.⁵⁴ The biblical texts (Gen 19:37; 24, 25) describing kinship between Edom, Moab, and Israel further strengthen this association.
- Textual and Artistic Analysis: Rainey’s interpretation accounts for the complexity of determinatives by distinguishing between geographic territory and people, while the name Shasu in Scene 8 is written with the foreign land and throw stick determinatives, which indicates nomads taken from territory that Egyptians considered nomadic land. Additionally, the loss of many descriptive texts from other wall sections means that direct references to Israel may have been present originally.⁵⁵ Kitchen supports this by noting that Israel’s determinatives indicate it was a tribal group/community, distinct from city-states.⁵⁶
- Interpretation of ‘Seed is Not’: Rainey offers a compelling interpretation of the phrase ‘his seed is not’ (*bn pr.t= f*) as referring to offspring⁵⁷ rather than

⁵⁰ P. Der Manuelian, *Studies in the Reign of Amenophis II* (Gerstenberg, 1987), 226; N. Na‘aman, ‘The Town of Ibirta and the Relations of the Apiru and the Shosu’, *GM* 57 (1982), 27–33; H.-W. Fischer-Elfert, *Die Satirische Streitschrift Des Papyrus Anastasi I. Übersetzung Und Kommentar* (Wiesbaden, 1986), 208–21.

⁵¹ N. Na‘aman, ‘Yeno‘am’, *Tel Aviv* 4, no. 3-4 (1977), 3–4.

































⁵² Rainey, ‘Israel in Merenptah’s Inscription and Reliefs’, 69–70.

⁵³ K.A. Kitchen, ‘Moab in Egyptian and Other Sources: Fact & Fantasy’, *GM* 212 (2007), 127; Z. Hawass, ‘A New Colossal Seated Statue of Ramses II from Akhmim’, in E. Czerny, *et al.* (eds.) *A New Colossal Seated Statue of Ramses II from Akhmim* (Leuven, 2006), 137.

⁵⁴ A.H. Gardiner, *Late-Egyptian Miscellanies* (Édition de la Fondation égyptologique Reine Élisabeth, 1937), 76; R.A. Caminos, *Late-Egyptian Miscellanies* (Cumberlege, 1954), 239.

⁵⁵ Rainey, ‘Israel in Merenptah’s Inscription and Reliefs’, 74.

⁵⁶ Kitchen, ‘The Physical Text of Merenptah’s Victory Hymn’, 75.

⁵⁷ See the discussion between Rainey, ‘Israel in Merenptah’s Inscription and Reliefs’, 57–63; and Hasel, ‘Israel in the Merneptah Stela’, 49–54; ‘A Textual and Iconographic Note on *prt*’, 61–72; and ‘Merenptah’s Inscription and Reliefs’, 20–27; and *Domination and Resistance*, 77–80. On p. 79, n. 21 Hasel has collected the instances of the term *prt* with the meaning of *offspring* and using the determinatives U13  ‘plough’, M33  ‘grain’ and/or N33A  ‘grain of sand’ determinatives without the D53  ‘phallus with liquid issuing from it’ determinative. The only example which Hasel, ‘Merenptah’s Inscription and Reliefs’, 24 brings for writing ‘offspring’ with the ‘phallus’ determinative in Kitchen, *KRI V*, 59, 9 in the sentence ‘He [Amun Re] chose a lord, one whom he had created, the seed (*prt*) which issued from his body...’ is actually used as the determinative of the word *mi*  ‘seed’, ‘Same’ (*Wb* I 37, 4), and NOT with the following word *pr*                           

agriculture, supported by parallels from Ancient Near East and Biblical texts.⁵⁸ If the destruction of agriculture were a central theme in Egyptian military narratives, as Hasel argues, one might expect scenes depicting the destruction of orchards and fields as in Neo-Assyrian texts and reliefs. Additionally, if there was a correlation between the alleged destruction of crops in the Israel Stela and the reliefs at the Cour de la Cachette, one might anticipate reference to the spoiling of Shasu or the Canaanites, or a depiction of the destruction of their fields; A relief fragment, which is part of a war scene found in the temple of Ahmose at Abydos, is the only possible attested scene with what may be the cutting (not destroying) of wheat by the Egyptian soldiers.⁵⁹ The depiction of desolation of landscape and cutting down trees is also rare in Egyptian war scenes.⁶⁰ However, neither the term *pr.t* (seed) nor the verb *fk* (be empty, wasted) are used in any of the attested texts.⁶¹ Conversely, the decimation of enemies is prominently shown in the Egyptian war scenes. In the texts cited by Hasel, where the same phrase *nn pr.t=f* describes the fate of the Libyans, and Sea Peoples in the reliefs of Ramesses III, files of prisoners of war are being deported to Egypt,⁶² these files of prisoners are similar to the deportation of the Canaanites and Shasu in Merenptah's relief.

- Nature of Pa-Canaan: In a recent article, the author revisited the use of the terms Canaan, Canaanite, and Pa-Canaan.⁶³ The findings highlight that 'Pa-Canaan' that the article '*p3*' should not be understood as the definite article but as the possessive article/prefix '*p3-(n)*' and should be translated as '(the town) that belongs to Canaan'. The toponym 'Canaan' in topographical lists appears in specific geographical contexts, namely together with Sharuhem and Raphiah on the coastal plain of the southern Levant and seems to refer to a specific place rather than a region or land, identified almost exclusively as Gaza.
- Sequence and Artistic Composition: The supposed disruption in relief sequence that Hasel criticizes isn't as severe as claimed. According to Rainey's interpretation,⁶⁴ the final war scene is Scene 2 (lower left scene), bypassing Scene 1 (Ashkelon), and proceeding to Scene 5. The text in Scene

chiefs of the Libyan coalition with the Sea People: 'namely, - Didi, Mashkanu, Mariyaw, along with Wermaro, and Tjutmaro'.

⁵⁸ J.K. Hoffmeier, *Israel in Egypt: The Evidence for the Authenticity of the Exodus Tradition* (Oxford, 1996), 28; Rainey, 'Israel in Merenptah's Inscription and Reliefs', 57–63.

⁵⁹ Uehlinger, 'Neither Eyewitnesses, nor Windows to the Past', 200; S.P. Harvey, 'Tribute to a Conquering King', *Archaeology* 54, no. 4 (2001), 52; fragment of wheat in context of war scenes of Ahmose I; see: U. Matic, 'Scorched Earth: Violence and Landscape in New Kingdom Egyptian Representations of War', *Istraživanja* 28 (2017), 10, 20, n. 29.

⁶⁰ See: D. Phelps, 'A Devastated Foreign Landscape Depicted in Luxor Temple', *Journal of Ancient Egyptian Interconnections* 1, no. 3 (2009), 37-43; Matic, 'Scorched Earth: Violence and Landscape in New Kingdom Egyptian Representations of War', 7–28.

⁶¹ Matic, 'Scorched Earth, 7–28; contra Hasel, 'Merenptah's Inscriptions and Reliefs', 20–21.

⁶² Hasel, 'Merenptah's Inscriptions and Reliefs', 22-24; Heinz, *Die Feldzugdarstellungen*, 305, I.313; 307, 308, I. 318–21, 325–27, 334–36.

⁶³ D. Kahn, 'Revisiting Egyptian Occurrences of Canaan, Pa-Canaan and Canaanite in Egyptian Sources of the New Kingdom', *JAIE* (2026), in press.

⁶⁴ Rainey, 'Israel in Merenptah's Inscription and Reliefs', 72–73.

5, referring to ‘chiefs of Ḥaru’,⁶⁵ suggests these scenes represent the broader geographic area. Furthermore, the presence of Canaanite prisoners being escorted right by Egyptian captors shows that such interruptions in scene sequence were acceptable in Egyptian artistic convention.

A New Analysis of the Sequence of Reliefs of Merenptah

Egyptian battle narratives, as far as our knowledge extends, evolved into an artistic tradition in the Eighteenth Dynasty.⁶⁶ The extant narratives typically encompass three distinct stages of the battle:

1. Preliminary events leading up to the battle, such as the commissioning of the king by the god Amun-Re and his receipt of the scimitar from Amun-Re, his departure from the temple, the arming and provisioning of troops, and the march to the battlefield, culminating in the king mounting his chariot in preparation for battle.
2. Actual battle scenes and related events during the foreign campaign, including chariot skirmishes against adversaries, the king engaging in individual combat, and the subsequent siege of towns.
3. The aftermath of the battle, depicting the king gathering prisoners, the collection and tallying of severed enemy hands, the presentation of spoils to the king, the return of the king and his army, the procession of captives to Egypt, and the offering of spoils and prisoners to the gods.

In practice, most sets of battle reliefs consist primarily of episodes from the second and third groups, while occurrences from the first group are relatively rare.⁶⁷ Merenptah’s reliefs include all these stages.

According to the principle of ‘*Bezugspunkt der Erzählung*’ (narrative reference point), the orientation of these scenes is organised so that the scenes closest to scene of receiving the order of Amun-Re in his temple to go to war represent events closest to Egypt geographically, while scenes further away depict more distant locations. This spatial organisation governs the narrative flow: battle scenes move away from this reference point, while scenes depicting the aftermath and return to Egypt progress back toward it.⁶⁸

⁶⁵ K.A. Kitchen, *KRI II*, 166–68; Kitchen, *RITANC II*, 40.

⁶⁶ S.P. Harvey, ‘The Cults of King Ahmose at Abydos’, Ph.D dissertation, (University of Pennsylvania, 1998), 303–72; J. Iwaszczuk, ‘Battle Scenes from the Temple of Thutmose I in Qurna’, *Ägypten und Levante/Egypt and the Levant* 31 (2021), 147–62; W.R. Johnson, ‘An Asiatic Battle Scene of Tutankhamun from Thebes: A Late Amarna Antecedent of the Ramesside Battle-Narrative Tradition’ Ph.D dissertation (The University of Chicago, 1992), 92–118; A. Spalinger, ‘Fortresses as Ideological Images of Power’, *JEA* 109, no. 1-2 (2023), 172.

⁶⁷ H.A. Groenewegen-Frankfort, *Arrest and Movement: An Essay on Space and Time in the Representational Art of the Ancient Near East* (London, 1951), 121; Gaballa, *Narrative in Egyptian Art*, 100-101; Johnson, ‘An Asiatic Battle Scene of Tutankhamun’, 53–81, 128–35; Heinz, *Die Feldzugdarstellungen*, 21, 61–202; Brand, ‘Review of Susanna Constanze Heinz’, 187–89; M. Müller, ‘Die Rekonstruktion Zerstörter Schlachtenreliefs’, in Z.A. Hawass (ed.) *Die Rekonstruktion Zerstörter Schlachtenreliefs* vol 3 (Cairo, 2003), 328–36.

⁶⁸ Heinz, *Die Feldzugdarstellungen*, 23; Brand, “Review of Susanna Constanze Heinz”, 187.



Figure 6: Scene 9. Amun-Re commands the King to go to war (Scene 9, right [South] end)
(drawn by Sapir Haad)

1. Preliminary Events Leading Up to the Battle

Amun-Re Commands the King to go to War (Figure 6; Scene 9, right [South] end)

The southern section of the wall has been destroyed, and the scenes adorning it have been reconstructed using scattered blocks, documented on paper by Le Saout.⁶⁹ These blocks depict the events preceding the battle. In the Upper register, Scene 9 depicts the god Amun-Re positioned on the right, facing left, presenting a scimitar to Merenptah, who stands on the left, facing Amun-Re, likely within the temple of Amun-Re at Thebes, holding a scimitar in his right hand and a bow in his left. Amun-Re is instructing him to engage in war.

Yurco⁷⁰ acknowledged Le Saout's restoration of Scene 9 but regarded it as an anomaly. He points out that Scene 6, immediately to its left, as well as Scenes 5, 7, and 8 below, all depict movement to the right and are part of the sequence depicting the return to Egypt. Yurco did not commence the narrative with Scene 9 but instead began with the battle against Ashkelon in Scene 1.⁷¹ Similarly, Kitchen⁷² did not address the loose blocks and overlooks those scenes in his analysis and reconstruction of the narrative. Heinz⁷³ rejected the reconstruction and placement of these themes at

⁶⁹ Le Saout, 'Reconstitution Des Murs', 228-231, scenes 224a-224b and pl. 224; Heinz, *Die Feldzugdarstellungen*, 50-53, 220-21, and 294-97 (illustrations).

⁷⁰ Yurco, 'Merenptah's Canaanite Campaign', 191, 207, notes 122, 124.

⁷¹ Yurco, 'Merenptah's Canaanite Campaign', 207, n. 223.

⁷² Kitchen, *RITA II*, 42, 78.

⁷³ Heinz, *Die Feldzugdarstellungen Des Neuen Reiches*, 52, 221.

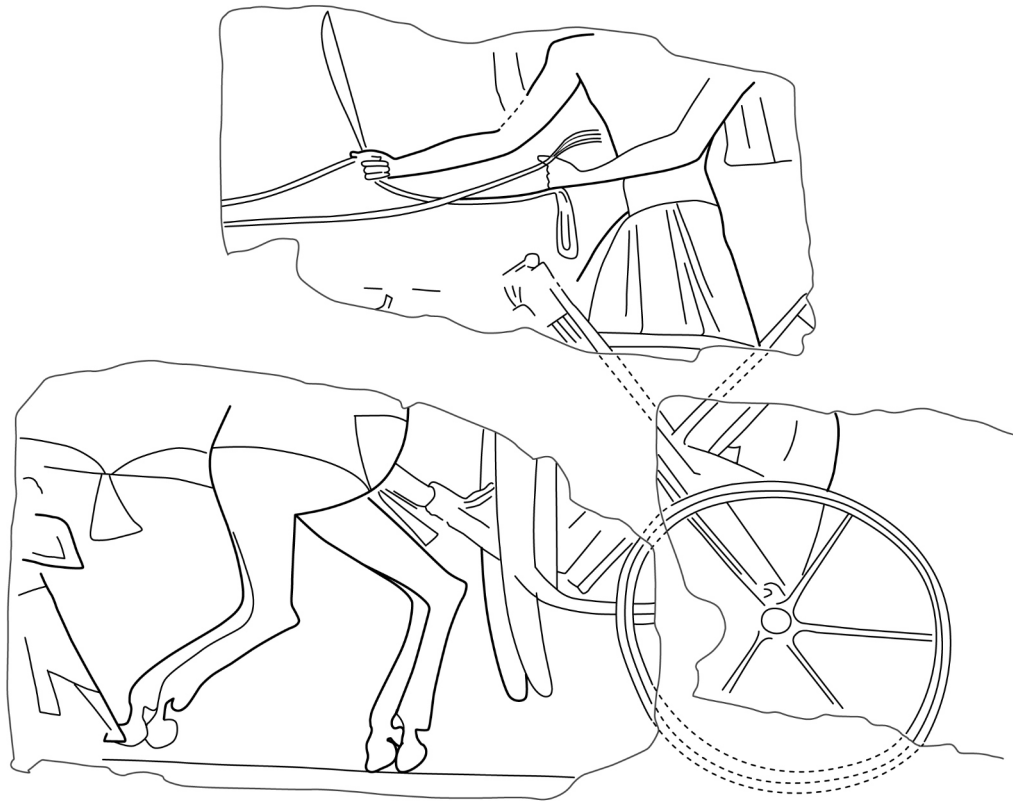


Figure 7: Scene 9 (left). The King's departure to war (drawn by Sapir Haad)

the southern end of the wall, as the narrative sequence would be disrupted twice. She considers this possibility, which lacks documentation elsewhere, and leaves the correct location of the loose blocks in the scenes open. Le Saout's reconstruction of Scene 9 is not even mentioned in Hasel's study of the reliefs.⁷⁴ However, the reconstruction by Le Saout remains undisputed, given the irrefutable connections proposed by the author.⁷⁵ The scene is reconstructed to the North of the doorway CFEETK.⁷⁶

The King's Departure to War (Figure 7; Scene 9, left side)

Three blocks depicting the departure to war have been recovered and reconstructed. The lower block illustrates the king's feet on the right side facing right, while the left side portrays the wheel of his chariot moving leftward, marking the commencement of the subsequent scene, of which only two more blocks survive. One block displays the upper body of Merneptah facing left on his chariot. The king embarks for battle in his chariot, progressing from right to left, clutching the reins, his bow, and presumably a scimitar. These scenes, relatively scarce in Egyptian war narrative representations, inaugurate the entire narrative sequence.⁷⁷ Beneath the horse, a soldier marches.⁷⁸ During the march to the battlefield, the king is

⁷⁴ Hasel, 'Merneptah's Inscriptions and Reliefs', 19–44.

⁷⁵ Lurson, 'Israël Sous Merneptah', 51.

⁷⁶ (KIU 6002; Dembitz, personal communication 16 March, 2024).

⁷⁷ For further discussion on this theme, refer to Heinz, *Die Feldzugdarstellungen*, 61.

⁷⁸ M. Müller, 'Der König als Feldherr. Schlachtenreliefs, Kriegsberichte und Kriegführung im

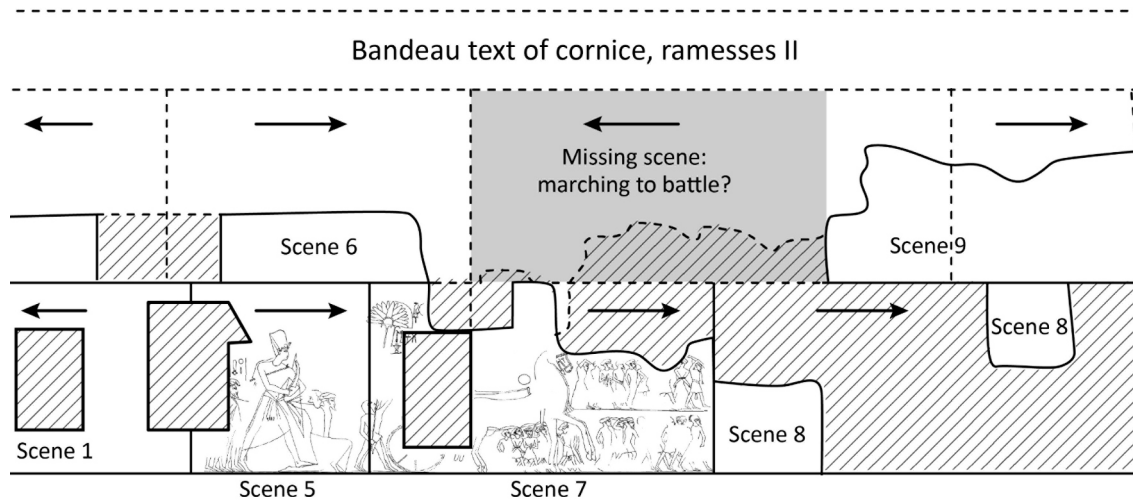


Figure 8 Scene 6, Upper Register. The March to the Battlefield? (drawn by Noga Yoselevich)

accompanied by units of his army. Unfortunately, the following scene has not been preserved.

The March to the Battlefield? (Figure 8; Scene 6, upper register)

The continuation of the Wall has been destroyed, leaving a significant gap between Scene 9 and Scene 6, depicting the return of the king with Canaanite prisoners. Relying on a comparison with the themes of the Merenptah blocks with scenes preceding the battle, it may be cautiously suggested that the narrative in the gap originally depicted the march of the army to the battlefield.⁷⁹ However, none of this scene has survived in situ.

Yurco identified a loose block showing the hereditary prince Sety-Merenptah (with a possible second prince on the left) driving his chariot with a parasol to the left in the outward direction of the war scenes.⁸⁰ He assigned this block to Scene 4, depicting the alleged battle against Israel and comparing it to a war scene at the Beit el-Wali temple, where the king charges in his chariot into a multitude of Kushites, followed by two princes in galloping chariots.⁸¹ Heinz commented that there are no depictions of princes in battle scenes with parasols on their chariot, which are rare even in marching scenes to the battlefield.⁸² Indeed, the horses are walking, not galloping, which would exclude these blocks from being part of the battle in Scene 4. If this block does indeed belong to Merenptah's reliefs, it could possibly fit into the missing scene in the upper register (between Scenes 9 and 6) depicting the proposed march of the army and princes to the battlefield. However, no other depiction of princes riding on a chariot with a parasol is known to the present author.

Mittleren und Neuen Reich', Ph. D. dissertation (Tübingen, 2001), 358.

⁷⁹ Cf. Abydos temple of Ramesses II, and later by Ramesses III at Medinet Habu in the first Libyan campaign; see Heinz, *Die Feldzugdarstellungen*, 65–66, 253, II.251–53, 300–1.

⁸⁰ Yurco, 'Merenptah's Canaanite Campaign', 204–5, figs. 221 and 222; Kitchen, *RITANC II*, 78.

⁸¹ Heinz, *Die Feldzugdarstellungen*, 261, V. 266.

⁸² Heinz, *Die Feldzugdarstellungen*, 53.

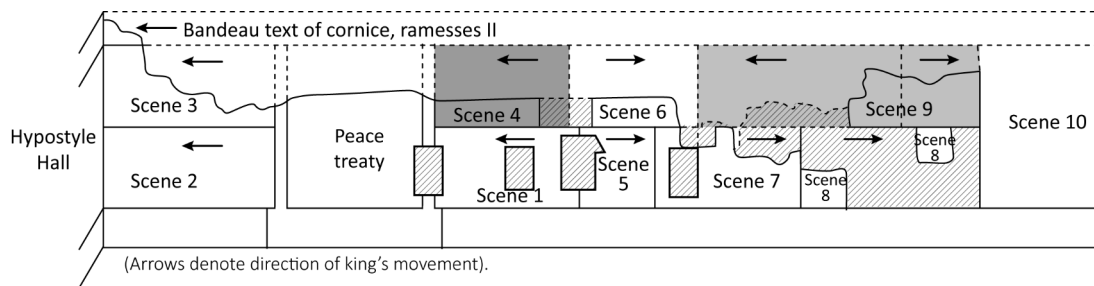


Figure 9: Scene 4 in Plan (drawn by Noga Yoselevich)

2. The Battle Scenes (Scenes 1–4)

Merenptah's battle scenes encompass four depictions of conflict, in which the Pharaoh engages in pitched battles and sieges against Canaanites. Three of these scenes portray a city under siege on the left, while the fourth lacks any traces of a city.

Viewed from an art-historical perspective, it is crucial to recognize that the narrative commences with Scene 9 at the far-right edge of the upper register. Transitioning diagonally to Scene 1 in the middle of the lower register to advance the narrative would represent a major break in the sequence of reliefs, using Hasel's own terminology, and is therefore highly improbable.⁸³ It seems more plausible that a narrative which initiates in the upper register would logically continue within that same register, as demonstrated in Scene 4 (Figure 9). Indeed, Rainey proposed identifying Scene 4 as the beginning of the battle scenes, depicting the conflict against the presumed city of Pa-Canaan/Gaza,⁸⁴ thus creating artistic symmetry between the four siege battles, two on each side of the Hittite peace treaty.⁸⁵

Artistically, scholars noted that in Scene 4 the location of the span of the king's horses would probably not have allowed for the depiction of a town in the scene.⁸⁶

However, as Rainey noted, two thirds of the scene are missing, so it is possible to restore a city,⁸⁷ although a smaller one than the other towns depicted in the neighbouring scenes (Figure 10). Note that the cities are not uniform in size (with Ashkelon being the smallest, the city in Scene 2 being larger, and the city in Scene 3 being the largest, covering almost the entire height of the scene). For comparison, the city of Yanu'am in Sety I's battle reliefs, which clearly inspired Merenptah's artists, is also depicted in relatively small dimensions⁸⁸ which served as model for

⁸³ Hasel, 'Merenptah's Reference to Israel', 57.

⁸⁴ Rainey, 'Can You Name the Panel with the Israelites?', 59; Rainey, 'Israel in Merenptah's Inscription and Reliefs', 72–73.

⁸⁵ Rainey, 'Israel in Merenptah's Inscription and Reliefs', 72–73. According to Rainey this symmetry, however, would spoil the correlation between the wall reliefs and the Triumph-Hymn in the victory inscription, stating that there is no compelling reason why such a correlation should exist.

⁸⁶ Yurco, 'Merenptah's Canaanite Campaign', 90; reconstruction by P.J. King and L.E. Stager, *Life in Biblical Israel* (Louisville, KY., 2001), 270; Hasel, 'Merenptah's Inscriptions and Reliefs', 30, Fig. 4, who reconstructed this possibility in a drawing, although he thinks it unlikely; Hasel, 'Merenptah's Reference to Israel: Critical Issues for the Origin of Israel', 57; Brand, 'The Date of the War Scenes', 58, n. 45.

⁸⁷ Rainey, 'Israel in Merenptah's Inscription and Reliefs', 72–73.

⁸⁸ Cf. *cf. 58332*; <https://www.cfetk.cnrs.fr/archives/?n=58332>, accessed 18/02/2025; Heinz, *Die Feldzugdarstellungen*, 245 I. 246.

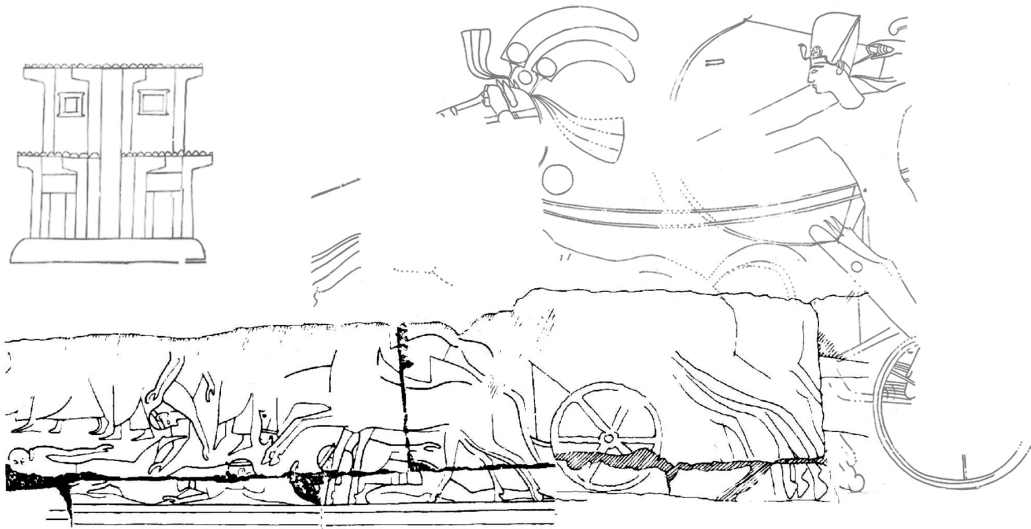


Figure 10: Reconstruction of Scene 4 with King driving chariot attacking small town (drawn by Sapir Haad, based on Wreszinski II, Tafel 58a)

Merenptah's reliefs. If four cities are being conquered, then the entire panorama can be seen to have artistic balance: two conquered cities on each side of the Egyptian-Hittite peace treaty. Moreover, in Scene 4, one of the Canaanite warriors appears to be shown upside down, suggesting a possible fall from the walls of a city.⁸⁹ Consequently, the possibility that a city existed in Scene 4 at the upper left corner



Figure 11: Scene 1. The Conquest of Ashkelon (based on Wreszinski II Tafel 58 and 58a)

cannot be excluded. Thus, it is possible to identify this scene as the conquest of the city of Gaza.

From a geographical perspective, the mention of rebelling toponyms subdued by Merenptah beginning with the southernmost locality and progress northward

⁸⁹ Arlette David and Gabriella Dembitz, personal communication; cf. Heinz, *Die Feldzugdarstellungen*, 114, 197, Abb. 109, 110.

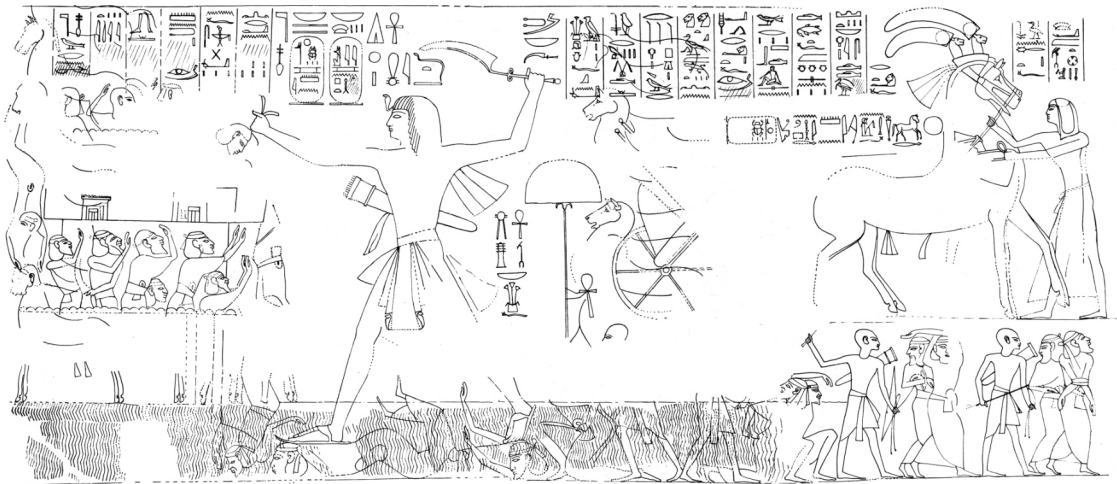


Figure 12: Scene 2. The Conquest of Gezer? Deportation of Canaanites (Wreszinski II Tafel 57a)

would also make sense. If Pa-Canaan would be identified with Gaza, the south to north order remains. It would be unusual for the rebellion to exclude Gaza but instead commence at Ashkelon.

The subsequent scene would naturally extend to the left of Scene 4. However, the presence of the peace treaty might have influenced the artists' choice to progress with the narrative by transitioning to the lower register to Scene 1, depicting the conquest of Ashkelon (Figure 11). This unconventional sequence in the flow of reliefs may be supported by the arrangement of toponyms in the Israel Stela, where Ashkelon is mentioned before Gezer and Yanu'am, as well as by the geographical progression of the campaign from south to north.

The following two battle scenes to the left of the peace treaty are not identified by a surviving epigraph.

If there were indeed a correlation between the "Triumph-Hymn" and the reliefs of Merenptah, these cities attacked by the king can be identified with Gezer and Yanu'am. Based on the order of reliefs and orientation of the king, without a significant marker to identify with certainty, I concur with Yurco that Scene 2 depicts the battle against Gezer (Figure 12).⁹⁰ At the right end of Scene 2 in the lower register, Egyptian soldiers are seen deporting Canaanites from their city at the end of the battle. The convoy of deportees toward Egypt at the right of the scene is discontinued by the presence of the peace treaty.

The battle depicted in Scene 3 (Figure 13) possibly shows the conquest of Yanu'am, although the damaged condition and lack of distinctive identifying features make it impossible to confirm the city's identity with certainty.

3. The Aftermath of the Battle (Scenes 5–9)

Canaanite prisoners are again shown being led away in Scene 6 (Figure 14) in the upper register immediately following Scene 4,⁹¹ possibly also depicting Canaanites being carried away from Scene 3, here identified with Yanu'am. Only the lower row of blocks from this scene remain. The king's chariot is depicted waiting on

⁹⁰ Contra Rainey, 'Israel in Merenptah's Inscription and Reliefs', 73.

⁹¹ Yurco, 'Merenptah's Canaanite Campaign', 194, Fig. 197; CNRS-CFEETK 178842.

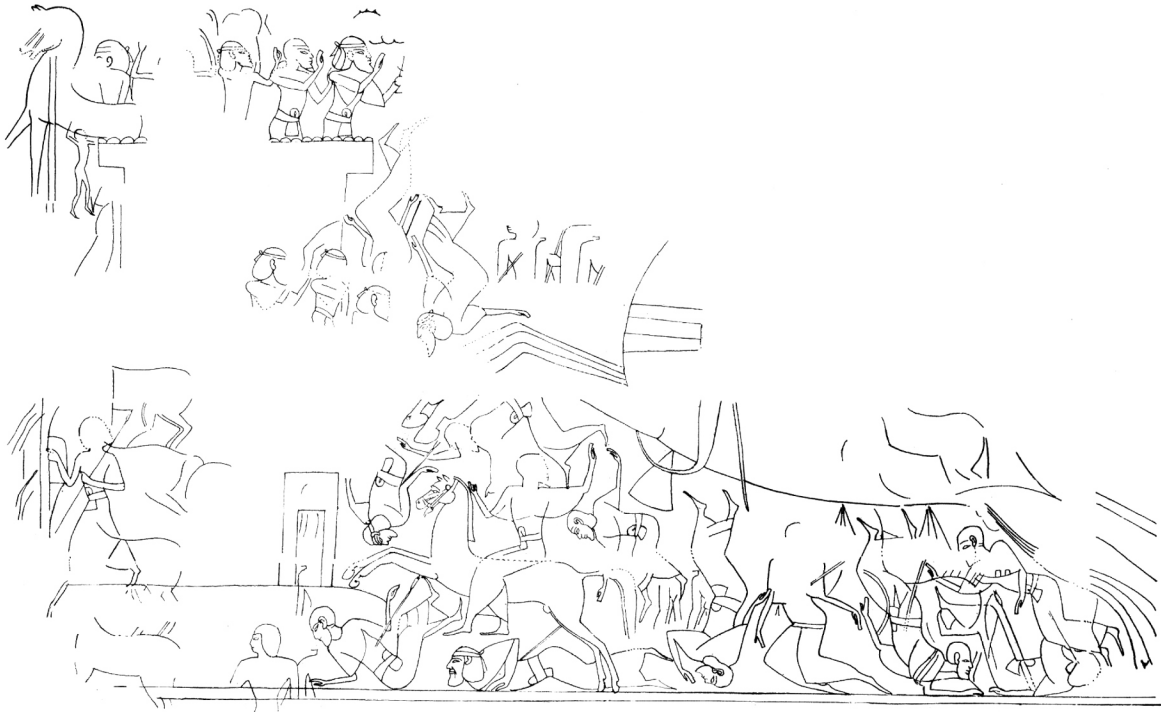


Figure 13: Scene 3. The Conquest of Yanu'am? (Wreszinski II Tafel 57)

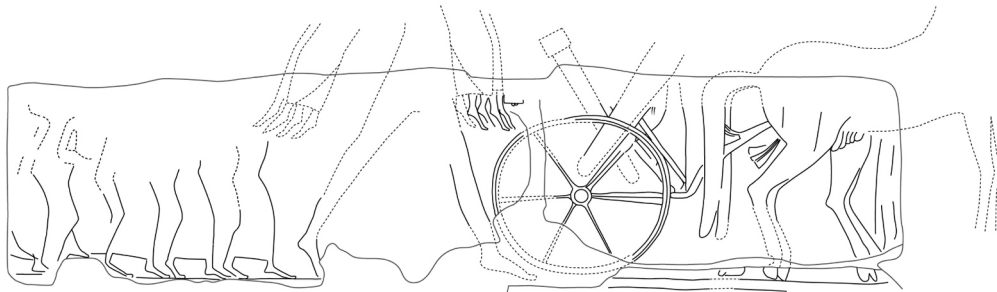


Figure 14: Scene 6. Upper Register. Deportation of Canaanites (drawn by Sapir Haad)

the right. Behind the chariot, traces of both striding legs of Pharaoh can be seen, before he ascends his chariot. Following him is a row of Canaanite prisoners identified by their ankle-long dress. The scene is similar to that of Sety I's triumphal return from his campaign against Yanu'am.⁹² This may strengthen the possibility that Scene 3 depicted Yanu'am. Merenptah, may, as Sety I before him, have carried off prisoners in both his arms. The feet of the enemy carried in his arms appear above knee. An additional row of prisoners should be reconstructed in Scene 6.

There is no campaign against the Shasu depicted on Merenptah's war reliefs. However, in the right side of the lower register (Scenes 5,7 and 8),⁹³ the return to

⁹² Cf. Cfeetk 58334; <https://www.cfeetk.cnrs.fr/archives/?n=58334> accessed 18/02/2025; Yurco, 'Merenptah's Canaanite Campaign', 209, n. 234; W. Wreszinski, *Atlas Zur Altägyptischen Kulturgeschichte 2* (Leipzig, 1935), Tafel 36a. Heinz, *Die Feldzugdarstellungen*, 246, I.249.

⁹³ Wreszinski, *Atlas Zur Altägyptischen Kulturgeschichte 2*, 58b.



Figure 15: Scene 5. Merenptah Binding Shasu Prisoners (Wreszinski II Tafel 58b detail)

Egypt is shown in three phases: the king binds captives, then drives them homewards in triumph, and finally [he leads] two rows of them in, to present them before [the gods].

Scene 5 (Figure 15) shows Merenptah binding two kneeling Shasu nomad prisoners, wearing short kilts and distinctive turban-style headdresses.⁹⁴ The king holds a scimitar in his right hand and a bow, turned backwards in his left. He wears the blue crown and a shawl. The front enemy faces to forward. He treads on the calf of the rear enemy, who turns his face towards the him. His hands are tied behind his back at the elbows. One hand is bent downwards, while there are traces that the other is bent upwards. Behind the king additional enemies are bound. One of them has his hands bound at the elbows in front of him, and is bent forward. This scene is similar (but with some differences) to a damaged scene in Sety I's war reliefs.⁹⁵ The

⁹⁴ [https://api.nakala.fr/embed/11280%2Fb8be087c/9c5c8241aec04b8b25f4d0e528e49edee8295b74Cfeetk 178844](https://api.nakala.fr/embed/11280%2Fb8be087c/9c5c8241aec04b8b25f4d0e528e49edee8295b74Cfeetk%20178844) ; accessed 18/02/2025.

⁹⁵ KIU1010, Cfeetk 58334, <https://www.cfeetk.cnrs.fr/archives/?n=58334>, Accessed 18/02/2025. Heinz, *Die Feldzugdarstellungen*, 245 I.248. at the Yanu'am sequence, outer wall of the Great Hypostyle Hall, East Side, middle register.

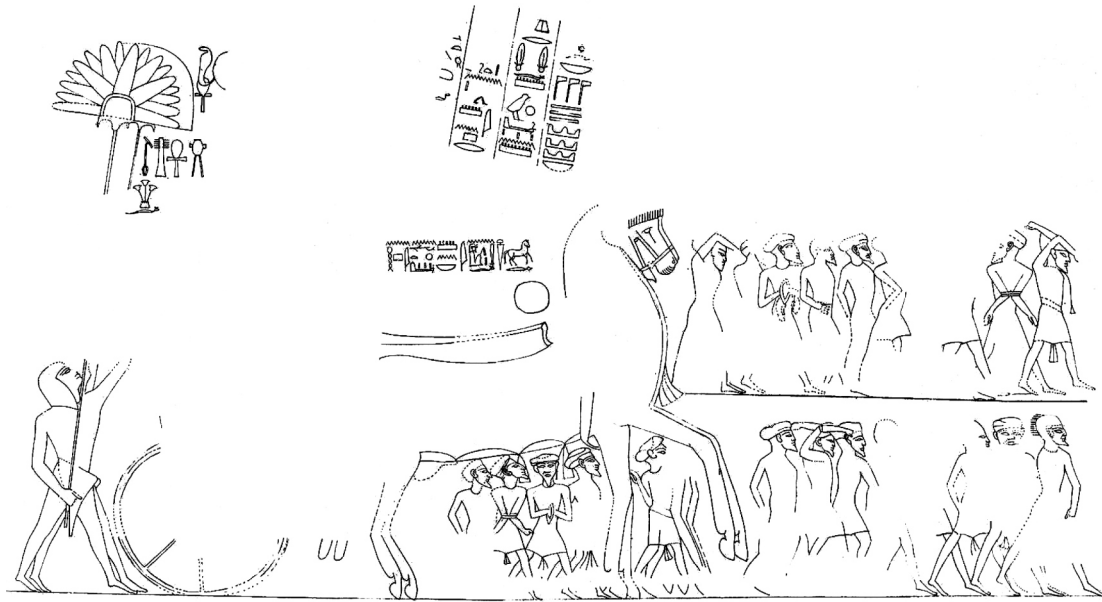


Figure 16: Scene 7. Triumphant return of Merenptah on his chariot (Wreszinski II Tafel 58b detail)

accompanying text is copied from Sety I's inscriptions at Karnak, Campaign from Sile to Pa-Canaan, Year 1.⁹⁶

Scene 7 shows the triumphal return of Merenptah on his chariot (Figure 16). Behind him walk fan bearers.⁹⁷ Shasu prisoners are led before him in two rows, the lower row is also depicted under the horses' bellies. A similar scene can be found in the reliefs depicting the aftermath of the Battle of Kadesh at Luxor where the deportees are Hittites.⁹⁸ Whether the original scene was depicted on Sety I's destroyed battle reliefs on the East side upper register at Karnak can only be speculated (a scene of triumphal return from the Libyan campaign on the west side of the northern wall of the Great Hypostyle Hall does not show captives beneath the horses, the direction is from right to left, and the fan bearers are significantly smaller in size).⁹⁹ The accompanying text was copied from Sety I inscriptions at Karnak, Campaign against the Libyans (outer wall of the Great Hypostyle Hall, West Side, Middle Register).¹⁰⁰

Scene 8 is mostly destroyed.¹⁰¹ Adjacent to Scene 7 two small sized rows of prisoners remain (Figure 17). In the upper row the remains of long dresses of prisoners can be clearly seen. By the dress, the upper row were Canaanites.¹⁰² The Canaanite prisoners are either the Canaanites which are shown led away from Scene 2 (possibly from Gezer; there is no remaining evidence of prisoners being led away from Ashkelon), or a continuation or summary of the Canaanite prisoners from the Upper register, Scenes 3 and 4).

⁹⁶ Outer wall of the Great Hypostyle Hall, East Side, lower register; Kitchen, *KRI I*, 6; Kitchen, *RITA I*, 7-8; Yurco, 'Merenptah's Canaanite Campaign', 209, n. 233.

⁹⁷ Wreszinski, *Atlas Zur Altägyptischen Kulturgeschichte 2*, Tafel 58b Middle.

⁹⁸ Heinz, *Die Feldzugdarstellungen*, 275, VIII.214; Wreszinski, *Atlas Zur Altägyptischen Kulturgeschichte 2*, Tafel 75.

⁹⁹ Heinz, *Die Feldzugdarstellungen*, 249, I. 249. I.19

¹⁰⁰ Kitchen, *KRI I*, 18, 22.

¹⁰¹ Yurco, 'Merenptah's Canaanite Campaign', 195, Fig. 199; Heinz, *Die Feldzugdarstellungen*, 295, I.295.

¹⁰² Kitchen, *RITANC II*, 77.

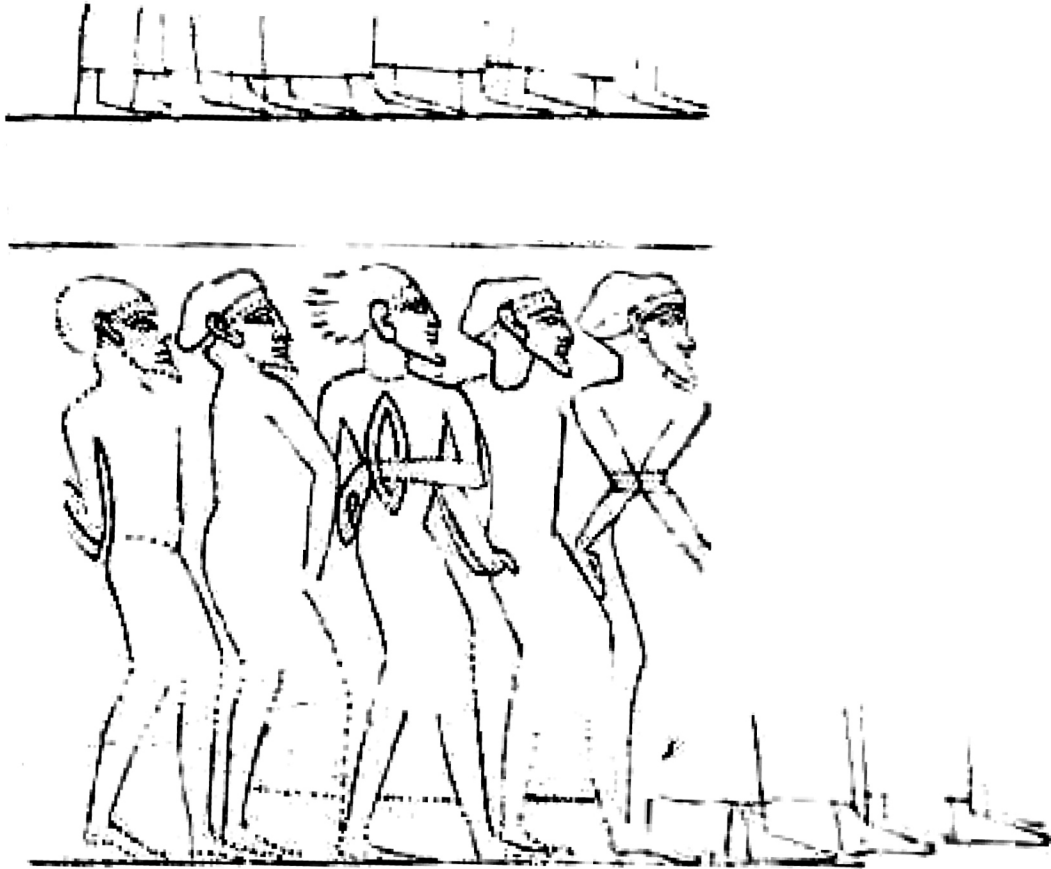


Figure 17: Scene 8. Two lines of Canaanite and Shasu Prisoners (Wreszinski II Tafel 58b detail)

At the end of the lower row, five Shasu prisoners are portrayed. In front of them there are traces of feet of at least three Canaanites with ankle long dresses.¹⁰³ The accompanying text over the lower file of Shasu can be read: [The spoils brought by His Majesty] from the Shasu whom His Majesty had plundered (*hf*).¹⁰⁴ Canaanites may have been mentioned as well.

According to the standard order of scenes, Scene 8 seems to be a scene of presentation of captives to the god Amun-Re, very similar to the presentation scene at the end of the Shasu battle in the reliefs of Sety I.¹⁰⁵ A fragment of Amun-Re's speech was identified on a loose block.¹⁰⁶ The content of the speech and traces of text above the lower row of Shasu prisoners, makes it clear that the text was copied from Sety I's presentation scene.¹⁰⁷ The presentation scene can be compared with the presentation scenes of Sety I in the episodes of the battle against the Shasu, or against Yanu'am.¹⁰⁸ Furthermore, it seems that in front of the Shasu prisoners in the lower register, there were at least the same number of Canaanites. Thus, in Scene 8, two rows of prisoners were depicted, at the end of which five Shasu captives were shown. The same order

¹⁰³ Wreszinski, *Atlas Zur Altägyptischen Kulturgeschichte* 2, Taf. *58b.

¹⁰⁴ Kitchen, *RITANC II*, 41.

¹⁰⁵ Heinz, *Die Feldzugdarstellungen*, 244, I. 245. For a reconstruction of the scene, see: Dembitz, *Le mur occidental de la cour de la Cachette*.

¹⁰⁶ Le Saout, 'Reconstitution Des Murs', 231; Kitchen, *RITANC*, 41.

¹⁰⁷ Kitchen, *KRI I*, 10:15–11:15.

¹⁰⁸ Cf. Heinz, *Die Feldzugdarstellungen*, 244, I.5; 246, II. 10.


and importance as in the battle narrative scenes.

Identification of the Shasu in the Reliefs and Their Relation to Israel in the Stela

The presentation of Shasu and Canaanite captives in Scene 8 raises important questions regarding their identity—particularly in relation to the mention of Israel in the Israel Stela. To better understand the implications of these depictions, it is essential to examine the language and structure of the Triumph-Hymn on the stela and how it may correspond to the visual narrative.


Michael Hasel has argued that neither the stela nor the reliefs depict migrating nomads, asserting instead that Israel represents a settled socio-ethnic group already inhabiting Canaan by the time of Merenptah's fifth year.¹⁰⁹ However, both visual and textual evidence challenge this interpretation. The reliefs unmistakably portray Shasu nomads in Scenes 5, 7, and 8. Additionally, the structure and vocabulary of the stela's Triumph-Hymn suggest a reference to mobile populations alongside references to subdued cities and regions.¹¹⁰

Scholars have identified a concentric literary structure in the Triumph-Hymn, where references to conquered peoples and lands frame the poetic unit. Of particular relevance is the passage following the broader claim:

 *t3.w nb.w dmd st m htp.w* 'All lands together are pacified'.¹¹¹

Hasel regards this verse parallel to the pacifying Hatti and Libya.¹¹²

The following verse and especially the word *šm3* is crucial for our purpose:

 *p3 nty nb m šm3 iw.tw hr w'f.f*
'Everyone who is *šm3*-ing – one (the king) is subduing him”.

Translations of the term *šm3* fall into two main categories. Some scholars, such as Spiegelberg, Rainey, Kitchen, and Spalinger, have interpreted it as referring to physical movement—rendering it as ‘roamed’ or ‘wandered’.¹¹³ Goedicke, in a more nuanced view, suggested that it referred to semi-settled mercenaries operating within assigned territories.¹¹⁴ Others, like Breasted, Ahlström, Edelman, and Hasel,

¹⁰⁹ Hasel, ‘Merenptah's Reference to Israel’, 57.

¹¹⁰ G.W. Ahlström and D. Edelman, ‘Merneptah's Israel’, *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament* 44, no. 1 (1985), 59–61; G.W. Ahlström, ‘The Origin of Israel in Palestine’, *Scandinavian Journal of the Old Testament* 5, no. 2 (1991), 19–34; L. E. Stager, ‘Merenptah, Israel and the Sea Peoples: New Light on an Old Relief’, *Eretz-Israel* 18 (1985), 56*. Yurco, ‘Merenptah's Canaanite Campaign’, 189.

¹¹¹ Kitchen, *KRI IV*, 19,18, l. 38.

¹¹² Hasel, ‘Israel in the Merneptah Stela’, 48, 50–51; M.G. Hasel, ‘The Structure of the Final Hymnic-Poetic Unit on the Merenptah Stela’, *Zeitschrift für die Alttestamentliche Wissenschaft* 116 (2004), 79–80.

¹¹³ W. Spiegelberg, ‘Der Siegeshymnus Des Merneptah Auf Der Flinders Petrie-Stele’, *ZAS* 34 no.1 (1986) 14; Rainey, ‘Israel in Merenptah's Inscription and Reliefs’, 63; Kitchen, *RITA IV*, 15; A. Spalinger, *The Books Behind the Masks: Sources of Warfare Leadership in Ancient Egypt* (Leiden, 2021), 227.

¹¹⁴ H. Goedicke, ‘Remarks on the Israel-Stela’, *Wiener Zeitschrift für die Kunde des Morgenlandes*

understood *šmꜣ* as indicating political disruption—translating it as ‘rebels’ or ‘restless’.¹¹⁵ However, the *Wörterbuch der Ägyptischen Sprache* offers a more direct definition: ‘*Land-Fremder, Wanderer, Nomade*’—a foreigner, wanderer, or nomad.¹¹⁶ This definition aligns precisely with the lifestyle of the Shasu, even if the term itself does not explicitly name them in the Triumph-Hymn.¹¹⁷

Thus, the Triumph-Hymn appears to mirror the relief sequence: it begins with the defeat of geopolitical entities like Libya, Hatti, and city-states such as Ashkelon, Gezer, and Yanu‘am (Scenes 1-3), and ends with the subjugation of a more mobile group—just as the reliefs conclude with the deportation of Shasu captives. This alignment suggests that the defeated ‘Israel’ of the Triumph-Hymn corresponds with the nomadic group depicted visually as the Shasu.

The toponym *pꜣ-Knꜥn* (Pa-Canaan), which likely refers to Gaza, can be identified with the city depicted in Scene 4. This is followed in the reliefs by Ashkelon (Scene 1), Gezer (Scene 2), and Yanu‘am (Scene 3)—exactly mirroring the order in the stela. Then, as in the stela, Israel appears after these cities. In the reliefs, this corresponds to Scenes 5, 7, and 8, where Shasu deportees appear after the conquest scenes and in the same relative sequence, thus reinforcing the identification of Israel with the Shasu.

The question of where to geographically locate this group is also pertinent. Some scholars, myself included in a previous study, have located the entity of Israel to the north of Yanu‘am, following the south-to-north geographic order of toponyms and ethnonyms.¹¹⁸ Other scholars have placed Israel in the Central Highlands.¹¹⁹ However, the depiction of the Shasu’s forced march to Egypt in these scenes suggests a more southern origin. If we accept the identification of Israel with the Shasu depicted in these reliefs, then Merneptah’s ‘Israel’ should be understood as a nomadic or semi-nomadic group situated in the southern regions of Canaan—perhaps closer to the Negev or Transjordan.¹²⁰

94 (2004), 55, 58.

¹¹⁵ J.H. Breasted, ‘The Israel Tablet’, *The Biblical World* 9, no. 1 (1897), 64, 68; Ahlström and Edelman, ‘Merneptah’s Israel’, 60; Bimson, ‘Merneptah’s Israel and Recent Theories of Israelite Origins’, 21; Hasel, ‘Israel in the Merneptah Stela’, 48; I. Hjelm and T.L. Thompson, ‘The Victory Song of Merneptah, Israel and the People of Palestine’, *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament* 27, no. 1 (2002), 10.

¹¹⁶ A. Erman and H. Grapow, *Wörterbuch Der Ägyptischen Sprache*, 4th ed (Berlin, 1992), IV, 470.

¹¹⁷ R. Steiner, ‘Merneptah’s Israel, His Shasu Militiamen, His Copper Caravan Route, and the Watering Stations Bearing His Name at Kadesh-Barnea and Me-Nephtoah: Part One’, in F.D. Scalf and B.P. Muhs, (eds.) *A Master of Secrets in the Chamber of Darkness: Egyptological Studies in Honor of Robert K. Ritner Presented on the Occasion of his Sixty-Eighth Birthday*, (Chicago, 2024), 332.

¹¹⁸ D. Kahn, ‘Merneptah’s Policy in Canaan in a Geo-Political Perspective’, in G. Galil, *et al.* (eds.) *The Ancient Near East in the 12th–10th Centuries BCE: Culture and History: Proceedings of the Conference held at the University of Haifa, 2–5 May 2010* (Münster, 2012), 260.

¹¹⁹ Ahlström and Edelman, ‘Merneptah’s Israel’, 76; Kitchen, *RITANC II*, 76; Hasel, ‘Merneptah’s Reference to Israel’, 52; I. Finkelstein, ‘The Earliest Israel: Territorial History in the Highlands of Canaan’, in A. Azzoni, *et al.* (eds.) *From Mari to Jerusalem. Assyriological and Biblical Studies in Honor of Jack Murad Sasson*, (Winona Lake, IN, 2020), 409, n. 405.

¹²⁰ Steiner, ‘Merneptah’s Israel’, 360–72.

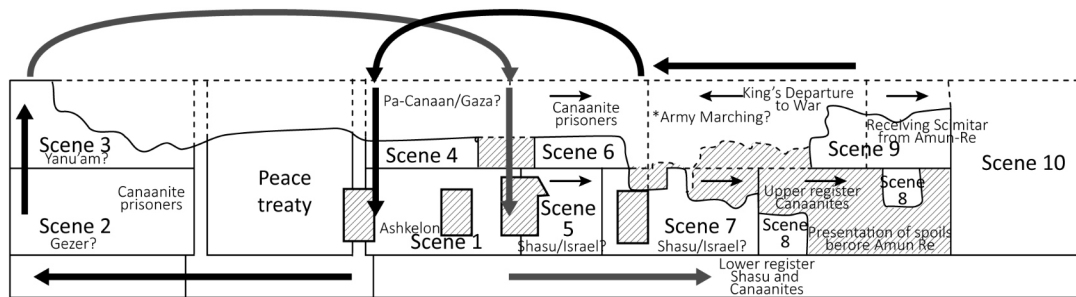


Figure 18: Possible reconstruction of the battle scenes (drawn by Noga Yoselevich)

Reconstruction of the Order of Reliefs

The reconstruction of the battle reliefs reveals a complex narrative sequence that begins at the upper right register with Scene 9, depicting Amun-Re's commanding the king to wage war, followed by the king's departure and a presumed march to battle that is now missing. Scene 4 shows a partially preserved battle, likely against Gaza, after which the narrative takes an unexpected turn. Rather than continuing leftward past the untouched peace treaty between Ramesses II and the Hittites (which remained intact to avoid magically disrupting relations between the kingdoms), the artist moved downward to the lower register to depict the conquest of Ashkelon, the second toponym mentioned in the Triumph-Hymn in the "Israel Stela", following Pa-Canaan, in Scene 1. To accommodate additional conquests, the artist then positioned Scene 2 (probably showing Gezer) to the left of the treaty by erasing earlier Kadesh Reliefs (or filling the space which was already erased by the artists of Ramesses II), while placing the conquest of Yanu'am (Scene 3) in the upper left corner. The deportation of Canaanites from this town appears in Scene 6, deliberately skipping over Scene 4. Since the continuation of the upper register to the right depicts the beginning of the campaign, the narrative moves to the lower register to show Shasu prisoners being transported to Egypt. The sequence concludes with Scene 8, which portrays the presentation of both Canaanite and Shasu captives before Amun-Re at his temple in Thebes.

Conclusions

The sequence of battle reliefs at the *Cour de la Cachette* in Karnak should be attributed to the reign of Merenptah, a position thoroughly demonstrated by Frank J. Yurco. The reliefs show a deliberate correspondence with the poetic structure and geographic order of place names in the Israel Stela. Yurco, supported by scholars such as Kitchen and Hasel, began the sequence with the conquest of Ashkelon, designated as Scene 1, and proceeded in a clockwise order. Within this framework, Scene 4 has been interpreted as a depiction of a pitched battle against Israel.

In contrast, Rainey proposed a different interpretation. He suggested that Scene 4 actually represents the battle against Canaan (possibly Gaza) and identifies the Israelites with the Shasu Bedouins shown in later relief scenes (Scenes 5 to 8), who

are taken prisoner and led to Egypt. This view shifts the identification of Israel from a city-state adversary to a nomadic group represented in the aftermath scenes.

A new analysis proposes that the narrative begins with Scene 9, located at the upper right edge of the register. In this scene, the god Amun-Re is shown commanding the king to embark on a military campaign. This is followed by the king's departure, and presumably, the march to the battlefield depicted on the left side of Scene 9, though this part has not survived *in situ*. The battle narrative then properly begins with Scene 4, situated in the upper register, which appears to depict the siege of the city of Gaza. The sequence continues in a clockwise direction with Scene 1, showing the siege of Ashkelon; Scene 2, likely depicting the siege of Gezer; and Scene 3, representing the siege of Yanu'am, located at the upper left edge of the register. The narrative progresses into Scene 6 in the upper register and then descends to Scenes 5 through 7 in the lower register, illustrating the procession of Shasu Bedouins being led toward Egypt. Finally, in Scene 8, both Canaanites and Shasu Bedouins are presented by the king before the god Amun-Re.

It has been argued that Israel cannot be equated with Canaanites, whether they are settled agrarians as Hasel suggests, or part of an unspecified group of Canaanite foes as posited by Yurco and Kitchen. Instead, Israel, mentioned explicitly in the hymn of the Israel Stela, must be identified with the Shasu nomads shown in the post-battle scenes. Scenes 5, 7, and 8 vividly portray the capture and procession of these Shasu prisoners, providing both artistic and textual evidence for their identity as Israelites.

This new analysis of the relief sequence situates the Israelites—understood here as Shasu nomads—within the southern periphery of Canaan, based on both the geographical logic of the campaign and their representation in the visual narrative. Thus, Israel is not portrayed as a fortified urban polity but as a mobile, possibly pastoral, group within the Egyptian imperial imagination.

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‘Dental Records’: Personal Identification by a Mark on the Tooth in Ptolemaic Papyri

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Abstract: This article examines the identifying mark (*oulē*, literally ‘scar’) recorded “on a tooth” as part of physical descriptions of four men, dated to the 2nd and 1st centuries BC. The investigation assesses possibilities such as dental disease (e.g. decay), intentional dental modification for cosmetic purposes (e.g. tooth filing), and dentistry (e.g. dental appliances). Ultimately, this article concludes that the most likely source of the identifying mark on a tooth as recorded in these descriptions was a manifestation of dental disease or trauma, both of which would have been visible and distinctive.

Résumé: Cet article examine la marque d’identification (*oulē*, littéralement « cicatrice ») mentionnée « sur une dent » dans le cadre des descriptions physiques de quatre hommes, datés du IIe et du Ier siècle av. J.-C. L’article évalue des possibilités telles qu’une maladie dentaire (par exemple une carie), une modification dentaire intentionnelle à des fins esthétiques (par exemple le limage des dents) et des soins dentaires (par exemple des dispositifs prothétiques). En fin de compte, cet article conclut que la source la plus probable de la marque d’identification « sur une dent » telle qu’elle a été documentée dans ces descriptions était une manifestation d’une maladie dentaire ou d’un traumatisme dentaire ; les deux auraient été visibles et distinctifs.

Keywords: Dental pathology, ancient dentistry, Ptolemaic Egypt, personal identification

Mots-clés: Pathologie dentaire, dentisterie ancienne, Égypte ptolémaïque, identification personnelle

Introduction

In the Ptolemaic and Roman periods of Egypt, individuals regularly appeared in documentary contexts accompanied by an *eikōn* (εἰκών): a detailed and standardised description of their physical form which included height, skin colour, hair texture, face shape, and other details.¹ The final notation in the standard order of characteristics was an *oulē* (οὐλή)—ostensibly ‘scar’—and its location on the body. In the Roman period, the detailed *eikōn* was considerably shortened, and the *oulē* became the single identifying mark for an individual. Although the lexical definition of *oulē* is indeed ‘scar’, the evidence suggests that these could take the form of various identifying markers such as moles or an impairment like blindness.²

¹ E. Karev, *Physical Descriptions, Biometrics, and Eikonographia in Graeco-Roman Papyri from Egypt* (Leiden, 2024).

² E. Karev, ‘Impairments as Biometric Modalities in Graeco-Roman Papyri, 241 BCE–299 CE’, in A. Morris and H. Vogel (eds.) *Disability in Ancient Egypt and Egyptology: All Our Yesterdays* (London, 2025), 265.

Generally, *oulai* were most common on the face (including the forehead) and extremities.³ But four *eikones* of the Ptolemaic period, written between 99 and 104 BC, recorded an unusual *oulē* on a tooth (οὐλή ὀδόντι).⁴ Three of these descriptions were written for the same man, Petearsentheus son of Panobchounis, and one was written for a separate individual, Eunous son of Patseous; the *eikōn* for Eunous additionally specified that the *oulē* was ‘above’ (ἄνω) the tooth. The first readings of these unusual *oulai* on the tooth concluded that they must be in reference to damage of some kind, like a broken/cracked tooth,⁵ a scar on the gums,⁶ or a cavity;⁷ nearly three decades after these interpretations, Jean Bingen did not advocate for any particular reading but rather stated that the meaning of ‘this distinctive sign’ (*ce signe distinctif*) is ‘uncertain’.⁸

This article assesses other possibilities for this unusual mark on the tooth, including dental appliances and cosmetic tooth modification. As the *oulē* was intended as an identifier which could last for decades,⁹ this paper argues that any impermanent iteration of disease, treatment, or modification would be unlikely. The assessment of permanent treatments and diseases necessitates the discussion here of their suitability and unsuitability as an *oulē*. Permanent and intentional dental modification such as tooth filing is not archaeologically-attested in Graeco-Roman Egypt.¹⁰ Similar modifications like non-therapeutic extraction (ablation) are archaeologically attested in Meroitic Semna; however, this evidence is likely irrelevant for the men described in the *eikones*, whose title as ‘Persian of the epigone’ suggests that they were Egyptians or Greeks born in Egypt.

Permanent dental prosthetics, such as dental bridges, are archaeologically attested. However, the evidence for the use of these prosthetics over the course of an individual’s life is tenuous, and they were likely installed post-mortem. The more probable option is that the *oulē* on or above the tooth represented a visible and permanent manifestation of dental disease. This study underscores that the *oulē* was largely meant to highlight the most identifiable feature on an individual, regardless of what precisely such an identifiable feature may have been. Nonetheless, a more precise identification of this unusual *oulē* as dental disease provides an additional facet to the discussion surrounding the visibility and perception of dental health and dental maladies in Graeco-Roman Egypt.

³ E. Karev, *Physical Descriptions*, 73, 81–87.

⁴ P. Lips 1.1, 104 BC; P. Grenf. 2.32, 101 BC; SB 20.14393, 100 BC; BGU 3.999, 99 BC.

⁵ A. Caldara, *L’indicazione dei connotati nei documenti papiracei dell’Egitto Greco-Romano* (Milan, 1924), 78 n. 1: ‘con un dente incisive rotto’.

⁶ Caldara, *L’indicazione*, 78 n. 1: ‘cicatrice della genviva’.

⁷ P. Pestman, ‘Les archives privées de Pathyris à l’époque ptolémaïque: La famille de Pétéharsemtheus, fils de Panebkhounis’, in E. Boswinkel, P. Pestman and P. Sijpesteijn (eds.) *Studia Papyrologica Varia conscripserunt Instituti alumni* (Leiden, 1965), 99: ‘un trou dans une dent’.

⁸ J. Bingen, ‘Vente de terre par Pétéharsemtheus (Pathyris, 100 av. J.-C.)’, *Chronique d’Égypte* 64 (1989), 243: ‘sens incertain de cette expression’.

⁹ Karev, *Physical Descriptions*, 75 n. 61, 97–98.

¹⁰ See further discussion below under ‘Artificial Dental Modification’; on the geographical scope specifically of tooth filing, see J. Irish, ‘Knocking, Filing, and Chipping: Dental Modification in Sub-Saharan Africans’, in S. Burnett and J. Irish (eds.) *A World View of Bioculturally Modified Teeth* (Gainesville FL, 2017), 33–47.

Oulē as ‘Mark’ Rather Than ‘Scar’

The term *oulē* (οὐλή) carries the lexical definition of ‘scar’,¹¹ best known as such for its role in the identification of Odysseus by his nurse, specifically due to his distinctive *oulē* (scar), including the description of the wound which ultimately led to the scar he bore (Hom. *Od.* 19.272–508). ‘Scar’ is how the term has conventionally been translated in the context of the *eikones* more broadly,¹² in which a single *oulē* was used as an identifier for as many as thirty or forty years.¹³

In the *eikones*, *oulē* could refer to a scar, as in the handful of translations into Latin and Demotic.¹⁴ However, the larger body of evidence from the *eikones* suggests *oulē* did not necessarily or consistently refer to a scar. In the *eikones*, the word *oulē* was conventionally followed by a body part, i.e. the location of the *oulē* on the body. This use could suggest a reference to a scar; but in a number of instances, the word *oulē* was followed not by a body part but rather by a disability like blindness,¹⁵ a mole,¹⁶ a pierced ear,¹⁷ or the descriptor ‘unmarked’ (*asēmos*).¹⁸ When these possibilities for nuanced *oulai* are paired with the low likelihood that the majority of the population of Roman Egypt bore enduring scars distinct from any other injury,¹⁹ it would appear that *oulē* was used to note a feature that would allow an individual to be easily identified throughout their lifetime, whether that feature was a scar, a disability, or any other permanent and identifying mark. In much the same way that an *oulē* “on the right hand” could theoretically represent any bodily marking (e.g. scar, mole, tattoo, freckle, birthmark), an *oulē* on or above the tooth could have theoretically represented any modification—intentional or otherwise—of an individual’s tooth which allowed them to be identifiable.

An *oulē* on the tooth could therefore be a representation of the results of dental disease (gross caries, tooth loss through extraction²⁰ or attrition), intentional modification (tooth filing, ablation), and dental appliances. After the consideration of the permanence, visibility, and archaeological evidence of and for these options, dental appliances remain an option; however, the flimsy evidence for their antemortem use and the more likely use as post-mortem prosthetics suggest that an *oulē* on the tooth was a representation of a visible manifestation of dental disease or trauma.

¹¹ *LSJ* s.v. οὐλή.

¹² Caldara, *L’indicazione*, 75–89; W. Clarysse, *The Petrie Papyri Second Edition, Volume I: The Wills* (Brussels, 1991), 53; M. Papakostas, N. Litinas, E. Konsolaki and C. Trompoukis, ‘Facial Scars in the Greek Papyri’, *Archiv für Papyrusforschung* 68 (2022), 325–35.

¹³ Karev, *Physical Descriptions*, 75 n. 61.

¹⁴ As *cicatrix* in P. Mich. 7.442 (150–199 AD) and *dn.t* in P. BM. Andrews 33A + B (113 BC) and P. Amherst. Dem. 48 + 52 (136 BC); see also Karev, *Physical Descriptions*, 58, 79–80.

¹⁵ E.g. BGU 3.834: Ἀθηνίῳνι [...] ὠ(ς) (ἐτῶν) λ ο(ὐλή) λεύκωμα ὀφθαλμὸν δεξιὸν.

¹⁶ E.g. P. Mich. 5.247: Παποντῶς Παβελλήους ὠς (ἐτῶν) λθ οὐ(λή) φάκος ὀφρῦει ἀριστερᾶ.

¹⁷ E.g. SB 18.13168: οὐλ(ή) ὠς δεξ(τὸν) τετρη(μένον).

¹⁸ E.g. P. Fay. 98: Νεῖλος Ἡρων[ο]ς [...] Διονυσίου Τόπων [ὠς ἐτ]ῶν εἴκοσι πέντε ἄσημος.

¹⁹ Karev, *Physical Descriptions*, 74–77.

²⁰ On missing teeth more generally, see below under ‘Dental Disease’.

An *oulē* on the Tooth

The earliest of the *eikones* bearing a note on teeth is that of Peteharsemtheus son of Panobchounis (TM Per 502):

Peteharsemtheus, son of Panobchounis, Persian of the epigone, aged about 30, of a good height, honey-coloured (skin), wavy-haired, long-faced, straight-nosed, an *oulē* on the tooth and by the left eye.

Πεταρσεμθεὺς Πανοβχούνιος Πέρσης τῆς ἐπιγονῆς ὡς (ἐτῶν) λ
εὐμεγέθης μελί(χρωσ) ὑπόκλαστος μακροπρ(όσωπος) εὐθύριν οὐλή ὀδόντι
καὶ παρ' ὀφθαλμὸν ἀριστερόν.²¹

This Peteharsemtheus is a well-known individual on the basis of his extensive family archive.²² The appearance of a double *oulē* (in this case, on the tooth as well as the left eye) was not entirely common, but could occur.²³ The family tree of Peteharsemtheus is so well-attested that this individual is almost certainly the same Peteharsemtheus described a few years later with the addition of a parponym and a slightly different description:

Peteharsemtheus, son of Panobchounis son of Totoes, Persian of the epigone, aged about 45, medium height, honey-coloured (skin), wavy-haired, balding, long-faced, straight-nosed, *oulē* on the tooth.

Πεταρσεμθεὺς Πανοβχούνιος τοῦ Τοτοηοῦς Πέρσης τῆς ἐπιγονῆς ὡς
(ἐτῶν) με μέσος μελίχρω(ς) ὑποκλαστὸς ἀναφάλανθος μακροπρόσω(πος)
εὐθύριν οὐλή ὀδόντι.²⁴

Πεταρσεμθεὺς Πανεβχούνιος τοῦ Τοτοέους Πέρσης τ[ῆ]ς ἐπιγονῆς ὡς
(ἐτῶν) με μέσος μελί(χρωσ) ὑποκλαστὸς ἀναφάλανθως μακροπρόσω(πος)
εὐθύριν οὐλή ὀδόντι.²⁵

The *eikones* from 100 and 101 BC maintain the *oulē* on the tooth, but omit the *oulē* on the eye. This was not the only difference: Peteharsemtheus has aged (from thirty to forty-five years old); shrunk in height (from ‘of a good size’ to ‘medium’); and begun to bald (ἀναφάλανθος). The changes in height and hair description were relatively common,²⁶ and the changes in age regularly appear in this specific archive.²⁷ The omission of the *oulē* on the eye can be attributed to the appearance of more than one *oulai*; when the *eikōn* of an individual with numerous *eikones* reappeared over decades, over time one *oulē* would take precedence over others, either by the maintenance of one and the omission of the other²⁸ or the maintenance of one while

²¹ P. Lips 1.1, 104 BC.

²² K. Vandorpe and S. Waebens, *Reconstructing Pathyris' Archives: A Multicultural Community in Hellenistic Egypt* (Brussels, 2009), 163–89.

²³ E.g. P. Lond. 7.2052 (οὐλή μετώπῳι καὶ ῥινί); SB 20.14478 (οὐλή ὑπ' ὀφθαλμὸν καὶ ἄλλη χεῖλει καὶ ἄλλο δεξιῶ τοῦ αὐτοῦ χεῖλεος); P. Köln 4.187 (οὐλή ὀφρύι δεξιῶι καὶ ὑπ' ὀφθαλμὸν ἀριστερόν); PSI 9.1024 (οὐλή ὀφρύι ἀρ(ιστεράι) ἄλλη ῥινί μεση).

²⁴ P. Grenf. 2.32, 101 BC.

²⁵ SB 20.14393, 100 BC.

²⁶ Karev, *Physical Descriptions*, 89.

²⁷ Bingen, ‘Vente de terre’, 243.

²⁸ E.g. Πικῶς Ψεμμίνιος, appearing in PSI 10.1022 (106 BC) with an *oulē* on the left eyebrow, PSI 9.1025 (104 BC) with ‘numerous *oulai* on the face’ (οὐλαὶ προσώπω* πλείους), and again in PSI

the other could slightly change location.²⁹

The *eikōn* belonging to Eunous son of Patseous (TM Per 8170), like that of Peteharsemtheus son of Panobchounis, belonged to an extensive family archive.³⁰ Although it is not certain that Eunous and Peteharsemtheus were familiar with one another, their circles were closely linked: Eunous was a soldier under the command of Lochos (Λόχος),³¹ who also commanded Horus son of Nechoutes (TM Per 352721), who bought property from Taelolous and Siempous (TM Per 406 and 407): Petharsemtheus' aunts, roughly fifteen years his senior.³² A papyrus from the Eunous archive (P. Grenf. 1.27) was found among the Peteharsemtheus archive, though museum archaeology does not clarify whether this was a modern mix-up of papyri or a record of a contemporary transaction.³³ Eunous' *eikōn* differs from the previous three in that it also specifies the location of the *oulē*:

Eunous, also known as Nechoutes, son of Patseous, Persian of the epigone, aged about 50, medium height, honey-coloured (skin), straight-haired, long-faced, *oulē* above the tooth.

Εϋνους ὄς καὶ Νεχούτης Πατσεοῦς Πέρσης τῆς ἐπιγονῆς ὡς (ἐτών) ν μέσος μελίχρω(ς) τετανὸς μακροπρ(όσωπος) εὐθύριν οὐλή ὀδόντι ἄνω.³⁴

In the *eikones*, the body part on which the *oulē* appeared was usually immediately following the word *oulē*; prepositions specifying location (like ἄνω or κάτω), were rare, but not unattested.³⁵ The specification of the location with the preposition ἄνω could initially be read as grammatically incorrect, because ἄνω is generally accompanied by the genitive case (e.g. Thphr. *Char.* 4.4) rather than the dative case, as here (ὀδόντι). The unusual use of the dative may be ascribed to the common use of the dative for the location of *oulai*,³⁶ possibly due to an omission of the preposition ἐπί.³⁷

This discussion is primarily concerned with the identification of what this 'oulē on the tooth' may have represented. In light of the use of the *oulai* in the context of *eikones* and the written evidence above, possibilities for the identification of the *oulē* on the tooth should meet a number of criteria to be considered viable: first and most obviously, this *oulē* would have to be able to be present on the tooth; second, that such

9.1024 (104 BC) with the return of the *oulē* on the left eyebrow.

²⁹ E.g. Ψεμμεγγῆς Πανεχάτου, appearing in BGU 3.997 (103 BC) with a limp in the right foot and an *oulē* on the left eye versus the appearance of the same individual in BGU 3.998 (101 BC) with the same limp but with the *oulē* on the left cheek.

³⁰ Vantorpe and Waebans, *Reconstructing Pathyris' Archives*, 148–58; P. Pestman, 'Nahomsesis, una donna d'affari di Pathyris: l'archivio bilingue di Pelaias, figlio di Eunus', in E. Bresciani (ed.) *Scritti in onore di O. Montevicchi* (Bologna, 1981), 295–315.

³¹ P. Adler dem. 2; P. Ryl. dem. 17; P. Ross. Georg. 2.6; see also Pestman, in Boswinkel, *et al.* (eds.) *Studia Papyrologica Varia* 1965, 48–49.

³² P. Lond. 3.242, 113 BC; at the time of purchase, they were listed as 28 and 30 years old respectively.

³³ Vantorpe and Waebans, *Reconstructing Pathyris' Archives*, 148.

³⁴ BGU 3.999, 99 BC.

³⁵ E.g. P. Lond. 7.2015 (ὕπερ χεῖλος τὸ ἄνω); P. Grenf. 2.15 (οὐλή ἐπὶ χεῖλους τῷ κάτω).

³⁶ E.g. the common incidence of οὐλή μετώπῳ, as in e.g. SB 20.14471 (160 BC).

³⁷ E.g. CPR 18.20 (οὐλή ἐπ[ι] μήλωι ἀριστερῶι); P. Petrie(2) 1.27 (ἐπὶ χεῖλους); P. Cair. Zen. 3.59374 (οὐλήν ἔχοντα ἐπ' ἀριστερᾶι σιαγόνι).

possibility is attested archaeologically; and third, because the *oulē* was a lifelong identifier, any possibility for the tooth *oulē* would have to have been permanent and visible. It is unclear if the *oulē* ‘above’ (ἄνω) the tooth was identical to the *oulē* recorded on the tooth, and the distinction may have represented two different conditions. Possibly, the specification of ‘above’ could have represented either a coronal cavity or a condition affecting the gums (e.g. an abscess).

Dental Disease

As noted above, the meaning behind the *oulē* on the tooth has been generally understood as some kind of ailment such as a cracked tooth or cavity. This is not an unreasonable assumption in the context of preserved remains, which demonstrate severe dental diseases.³⁸ Throughout Egyptian history and across socio-economic classes, the majority of Egyptians suffered from profound tooth wear (e.g. abrasion, attrition, and erosion)³⁹ which could result in abscesses, periodontal disease, and caries. Dental diseases as well as dental trauma could lead to visible damage of the kind characterised by Alessandra Caldara as ‘broken’ (*rotto*) tooth⁴⁰ such as a chipped tooth or cracked enamel; other visible damage could be present in the form of a tooth undergoing necrosis or a missing tooth following extraction or tooth loss.

In ancient and prehistoric osteological contexts, traumatic and chronic chipping of teeth and cracking of tooth enamel follows characteristic patterns, caused by the use of ‘teeth as tools’ whether for subsistence (e.g. a certain type of food) or occupational in nature (e.g. processing leather).⁴¹ The distinction between intentional and unintentional dental modification—the latter resulting from wear on the enamel resulting from use as a tool—is not always clear. To that end, Robert Blakely and Lane Beck developed a model to provide a differential diagnosis, based on criteria such as the symmetry of pattern and the angle of wear.⁴² The abrasion seen in osteological evidence from Egypt is consistent with patterns resulting from the consumption of high-fibre food which contained fragments of inorganic particles.⁴³ This abrasion was apparently consistent across historical periods as well as class divisions.⁴⁴

³⁸ I. Pantazis, E. Tourna, A. Maravelia, K. Kalampoukas, G. Michailidis, K. Kalogerakou, S. Kyriazi, C. Couvaris, S. Geroulanos, N. Bontozoglou, ‘A Ptolemaic Mummy Reveals Evidence of Invasive Dentistry in Ancient Egypt’, *The Anatomical Record* 303 (2020), 3129–35; S. Massingham and R. Power, ‘Interventive Dental Therapy in Ancient Egypt (ca. 2686 BCE – AD 323): A Critical Review’, *International Journal of Palaeopathology* 38 (2022), 64–75.

³⁹ Sources in n. 38, above; on the consistency across periods and class divisions, see n. 44, below.

⁴⁰ Caldara, *L’indicazione*, 78 n. 1.

⁴¹ K. Alt and S. Pichler, ‘Artificial Modifications of Human Teeth’, in K. Alt, F. Rösing and M. Teschler-Nicola (eds.) *Dental Anthropology: Fundamentals, Limits, and Prospects* (Vienna, 1998), 398.

⁴² R. Blakeley and L. Beck, ‘Tooth-tool Use Versus Dental Mutilation: A Case Study from the Prehistoric Southeast’, *Midcontinental Journal of Archaeology* 9 (1984), 269–77.

⁴³ F. Leek, ‘Teeth and Bread in Ancient Egypt’, *Journal of Egyptian Archaeology* 58 (1972), 126–32; F. Leek, ‘Further Studies Concerning Ancient Egyptian Bread’, *Journal of Egyptian Archaeology* 59 (1972), 199–204; R. Forshaw, ‘Dental Health and Disease in Ancient Egypt’, *British Dental Journal* 206 (2009) 421–24.

⁴⁴ As noted succinctly by A. Austin (‘Dental Health and Dentistry in Ancient Egypt: Possible Evidence for Dental Filling and Extraction at Deir el-Medina’, *International Journal of Paleopathology* 38 [2022], 103): ‘a combination of extreme wear, periodontal disease, and/or caries is pervasive in many populations in Egypt’. The analysis by Miller (*An Appraisal of the Skulls*, 71–

There is archaeological evidence for fractured teeth (including a singular cracked tooth), but it is difficult to assess whether such fractures occurred ante-, peri-, or post-mortem.⁴⁵ If a fracture did occur antemortem, the fractured tooth would have been permanent enough to function as an identifying feature, and could theoretically manifest 'above' (ἄνω) the tooth. However, abrasion as a result of subsistence or professional activities generally occurs to more than one tooth;⁴⁶ moreover, since abrasion as a result of subsistence is often culturally homogeneous,⁴⁷ others would have borne similar damage to their teeth, reducing the identifiable element of the *oulē*.

Dental decay (caries) follows a consistent progression, which includes the visibility of the later necrotic stage which presents as dark and eroded regions of tooth enamel.⁴⁸ Archaeological evidence suggests an increase in the prevalence of caries in the Graeco-Roman period in comparison with earlier periods.⁴⁹ The location of coronal caries would allow for the 'above' (ἄνω) specification. Caries are ostensibly impermanent: within weeks or months, a necrotic tooth will eventually fall out.⁵⁰ However, if a grossly carious tooth becomes non-vital, it can cause a chronic infection below the tooth which may manifest few symptoms. As a result, the tooth can then remain *in situ* for a number of years with little trouble to its bearer beyond non-functionality and discomfort.⁵¹ If this non-functional carious tooth was located in the anterior of the mouth, it would be unsightly and certainly distinctive enough to serve as an *oulē*.

Although not raised as a possibility by earlier editors of these *eikones*, another possibility for the *oulai* is a missing tooth, whether as a result of antemortem tooth loss (AMTL) or antemortem extraction. The distinction between tooth loss and tooth extraction is difficult in an archaeological context, as both would allow for the identification of bone remodelling within and around the alveoli. The extraction of teeth for medical purposes is suggested in a child's skull dating to the Graeco-Roman period, likely a result of hyperdontia.⁵² Though known in contemporary medical texts 83) found consistent patterns from the predynastic to the Roman period, albeit with some variations as in e.g. mean number of teeth affected by caries (*An Appraisal of the Skulls*, 77).

⁴⁵ Massingham and Power, 'Interventive Dental Therapy', 68.

⁴⁶ Alt and Pichler, in Alt, Rösing and Teschler-Nicola (eds.) *Dental Anthropology: Fundamentals, Limits, and Prospects*, 390.

⁴⁷ Blakeley and Beck, 'Tooth-tool Use', 273.

⁴⁸ J. Buikstra and D. Ubelaker, *Standards for Data Collection from Human Skeletal Remains* (Little Rock, AR, 1994), 54; R. Kinaston, A. Willis, J. Miszkiewicz, M. Tromp and M. Oxenham, 'The Dentition: Development, Disturbances, Disease, Diet, and Chemistry', in J. Buikstra (ed.) *Ortner's Identification of Pathological Conditions in Human Skeletal Remains* (San Diego, 2019), 749–97; O. Langsjoen, 'Diseases of the Dentition', in A. Aufderheide and C. Rodríguez-Martín (eds.) *The Cambridge Encyclopedia of Human Palaeopathology* (Cambridge, 1998), 402–4; T. Waldron, *Palaeopathology* (Cambridge, 2009), 239–43.

⁴⁹ S. Hillson, 'Diet and Dental Disease', *World Archaeology* 11 (1979), 156; F. Leek, 'Dental Problems During the Old Kingdom - Facts and Legends', in R. David and E. Tapp (eds.) *Evidence Embalmed: Modern Medicine and the Mummies of Ancient Egypt* (Manchester, 1984), 105; R. Forshaw, 'Dental Health and Disease', 423; J. Miller, *An Appraisal of the Skulls and Dentition of Ancient Egyptians, Highlighting the Pathology and Speculating on the Influence of Diet and Environment* (Oxford, 2008), 68.

⁵⁰ On the relationship between abrasive food, dental caries, and tooth attrition in a palaeopathological context, see G. Maat and E. Van der Velde, 'The Caries-Attrition Competition', *International Journal of Anthropology* 2 (1987), 281–92.

⁵¹ For evidence from Deir el-Medina of teeth left *in situ* despite numerous dental health problems, see Austin, 'Dental Health and Dentistry', 100.

⁵² P. Craig and J. Davey, 'Possible Evidence for Ancient Egyptian Orthodontics', *Egyptian*

(e.g. Aristotle),⁵³ tooth extraction is difficult to assess, rarely leaving ‘unambiguous traces to be revealed during later study of skeletons’;⁵⁴ however, as noted by Anne Austin, ‘the absence of positively identifiable extractions should not be taken as the absence of practice, but rather the ambiguity of the bioarchaeological record.’⁵⁵

Non-therapeutic extraction (ablation) is treated below as a method of dental modification. Antemortem tooth loss is attested archaeologically⁵⁶ as well as textually, the latter in medical papyri addressing the treatment of discomfort arising from tooth loss.⁵⁷ The archaeological evidence for AMTL suggests that it was relatively common⁵⁸ and affected specific teeth in a predictable pattern, usually the molars.⁵⁹ Tooth attrition could nonetheless affect the canines and incisors, which would have been visible and distinctive enough to serve as an identifier. Whether as a result of extraction or attrition, tooth loss—though visible and permanent—is not necessarily the obvious explanation for the *oulē* on the tooth. The corpus of *eikones* demonstrates the notation of missing or non-functioning physical features,⁶⁰ and the Greek language was capable of expressing concepts such as ‘toothless’ (νοδός)⁶¹ or ‘extracted tooth’ (using the verb ἐξαιρέω, as in Aristotle).⁶² If the *oulē* were indeed a missing tooth, it seems unusual that such a feature would not be explicitly noted. It would also be unusual to describe a missing tooth as ‘above’ the tooth itself. However, as noted above, the *oulē* ‘above’ the tooth may be representative of a different condition than an *oulē* on the tooth; the latter may well be representative of a visible carious lesion in the anterior part of the mouth or the visible result of an abscess affecting the gums.⁶³

Artificial Dental Modification

Artificial and intentional dental modification performed for ritual, cultural, and cosmetic purposes includes colouring and bleaching, inlaying of ornaments, notching, and ablation.⁶⁴ The practice is best known for its most common iteration, namely tooth

Archaeology Bulletin of the Egypt Exploration Society 18 (2001), 37–39; see also Massingham and Power, ‘Interventive Dental Therapy’, 70–71.

⁵³ On the use of forceps (ὀδοντάγρα) in tooth extraction, see Aristotle’s *Mech.* 854a 16–31; see also D. Koutroumpas and G. Vougiouklakis, ‘Tooth Extraction in Antiquity’, *Journal of the History of Dentistry* 68/3 (2020), 127–44.

⁵⁴ P. Bennike, *Palaeopathology of Danish Skeletons: A Comparative Study of Demography, Disease and Injury* (Copenhagen, 1985), 175.

⁵⁵ Austin, ‘Dental Health and Dentistry’, 103.

⁵⁶ Miller, *An Appraisal of the Skulls*, 50, 72; Forshaw, ‘Dental Health and Disease’, 422.

⁵⁷ Iskander and Harris, ‘A Skull with a Silver Bridge’, 89.

⁵⁸ J. Miller, ‘Dental Health and Disease in Ancient Egypt’, in R. David and P. Lambert-Zazulak (eds.) *Egyptian Mummies and Modern Science* (Cambridge, 2018), 50–72.

⁵⁹ Maat and Van der Velde, ‘The Caries-Attrition’, 284; Austin, ‘Dental Health and Dentistry’, 98.

⁶⁰ E.g. an individual described as ‘one-eyed’ (μονόφθαλμος), P. Brux. 1.10; fingers described as ‘gulped’ (κεκαμμένον), P. Tebt. 2.397 and CPR 1.170; eyes described as ‘afflicted’ (ἀσθενῶν), UPZ 180b; or eyes described as ‘seeing little’ (ὀλίγον βλέπων); P. Oxy. 1.39.

⁶¹ As in e.g. the characterisation of an old man as ‘elderly and toothless’ (γέρων καὶ νοδός) in Ar. *Ach.* 715.

⁶² Aristotle, *Mech.* 854a 16: ‘ἐξαιροῦσι τοὺς ὀδόντας’.

⁶³ For an overview of periapical abscesses (formation, appearance, and progression) in anthropological remains, see K. Alt, J. Türp and R. Wächter, ‘Periapical Lesions – Clinical and Anthropological Aspects’, in K. Alt, F. Rösing and M. Teschler-Nicola (eds.) *Dental Anthropology: Fundamentals, Limits, and Prospects* (Vienna, 1998), 251–53.

⁶⁴ Alt and Pichler, in Alt, Rösing and Teschler-Nicola (eds.) *Dental Anthropology: Fundamentals,*

filing.⁶⁵ Tooth filing has been widely attested archaeologically, but in the 2nd and 1st centuries BC the practice was largely confined to sub-Saharan Africa;⁶⁶ more crucially, the practice is also not attested in archaeological findings from Egypt. Within the model provided by Blakely and Beck defining the difference between intentional and unintentional dental modification (detailed above), there does not appear to be physical evidence for intentional dental filing from Egypt.

Although tooth filing is the most commonly-attested method of dental modification, ablation (antemortem non-therapeutic tooth extraction) could be considered possible in light of the osteological evidence from Meroitic Semna, which suggests intentional ablation of incisors or canines.⁶⁷ However, it is highly unlikely that these men originated from Semna. All four are characterised as 'Persian of the epigone', a socioeconomic status related to familial ties to the Ptolemaic military;⁶⁸ perhaps more importantly, the men under discussion here are also well-known from considerably extensive and detailed family archives, which trace their lineage to be broadly Egyptian and Greeks born in Egypt. If the *oulē* on the tooth as attested here referred to ablation as seen in the archaeological evidence from Nubia, it is doubtful that such ablation could refer to the *oulē* 'above' (ἄνω) the tooth.

Dentistry

Egyptological scholarship of the past century has repeatedly focused on the apparently advanced nature of Egyptian dentistry,⁶⁹ rooted largely in the textual evidence for the amelioration of dental ailments detailed in the Kahun, Hearst, Berlin, and Ebers medical papyri.⁷⁰ However, as noted by Sarah Massingham and Ronika Power, this claim is not entirely supported by the rare incidence of bioarchaeological

Limits, and Prospects, 405.

⁶⁵ Alt and Pichler, in Alt, Rösing and Teschler-Nicola (eds.) *Dental Anthropology: Fundamentals, Limits, and Prospects*, 405–6; S. Burnett and J. Irish, 'Introduction', in S. Burnett and J. Irish (eds.) *A World View of Bioculturally Modified Teeth* (Gainesville FL, 2017), 3–4.

⁶⁶ Irish, 'Knocking, Filing, and Chipping', in Burnett and Irish (eds.) *A World View of Bioculturally Modified Teeth*, 33–47.

⁶⁷ K. Bolhofner, 'Identity Marker or Medicinal Treatment? An Exploration of the Practice and Purpose of Dental Ablation in Ancient Nubia', in S. Burnett and J. Irish (eds.) *A World View of Bioculturally Modified Teeth* (Gainesville FL, 2017), 48–61.

⁶⁸ K. Vandorpe, 'Persian Soldiers and Persians of the Epigone: Social Mobility of Soldiers-herdsmen in Upper Egypt', *Archiv für Papyrusforschung* 54 (2008), 87–108; C. Fischer-Bovet, 'Official Identity and Ethnicity: Comparing Ptolemaic and Early Roman Egypt', *Journal of Egyptian History* 11 (2018), 221; see also Karev, *Physical Descriptions*, 121, 124–25.

⁶⁹ E. Hooton, 'Oral Surgery in Egypt During the Old Empire', in O. Bates and F. Sterns (eds.) *Harvard African Studies* 1 (Cambridge MA, 1917), 29–32; B. Weinberger, 'Further Evidence that Dentistry was Practiced in Ancient Egypt, Phoenicia and Greece', *Bulletin of Medical History* 20 (1940), 188–95; J. Harris, Z. Iskander and S. Farid, 'Restorative Dentistry in Ancient Egypt: An Archaeological Fact!' *Journal of the Michigan Dental Association* 57 (1975), 401–4; A. Chohayeb, 'The Dental Heritage of Ancient Egypt', *Bulletin of Dental History* 39 (1991), 65–69; L. Marion, 'Dentistry of Ancient Egypt', *Journal of Dental History* 44 (1996), 15–17; A. Shafik and W. Elseesy, 'Medicine in Ancient Egypt', in H. Selin (ed.) *Medicine Across Cultures: History and Practice of Medicine in Non-Western Cultures* (London, 2003), 27–47; C. Greeff, 'Dentists and Dentistry in Ancient Egypt', *Journal for Semitics* 23 (2014), 90–113; Pantazis *et al.*, 'A Ptolemaic Mummy', 3132.

⁷⁰ Massingham and Power, 'Interventive Dental Therapy', 64.

evidence of dentistry.⁷¹ The remedies of the medical papyri were non-invasive,⁷² and therefore probably impermanent or not immediately perceptible.⁷³ In other words, it is unlikely that the *oulē* on the tooth reflects one of the medical treatments recorded in the medical papyri.

In contrast, there is some archaeological evidence for permanent dental work⁷⁴ in the form of four dental devices made of wire (bridges) named for their findspot: Giza Bridge,⁷⁵ Tura el-Asmant Bridge,⁷⁶ el-Qatta Bridge,⁷⁷ and Alexandria Bridge.⁷⁸ The bridges were not identical—the Giza and Alexandria Bridges fastened teeth with wire, whereas the Tura el-Asmant and the el-Qatta Bridges passed the wire through perforations in the tooth crowns⁷⁹—but the bridges were identical in that they incorporated a visible wire. The Giza, Tura el-Asmant, and el-Qatta Bridges were decisively permanent; the Alexandria Bridge may have been removable, but the evidence is inconclusive: noted abrasions on the labial and lingual surfaces as well as the enamel suggest that the bridge was used *in vivo*,⁸⁰ but this cannot be verified as the device has been missing since a publication in 1946.⁸¹

The Tura el-Asmant Bridge, dated to the Ptolemaic period, is especially relevant to this discussion as it is contemporary to the *oulai*. The bridge, which stabilised the right maxillary central incisor on an adult individual, involved ‘two perforations drilled in a mesio-distal orientation through the inferior (occlusal) half of the crown’.⁸² More plainly, the installation of the device required drilling holes on each side of the tooth to allow for stabilisation with the extant silver wire. The Tura

⁷¹ Massingham and Power, ‘Interventive Dental Therapy’, 65. I am additionally grateful to a reviewer of this paper who noted that despite the characterisation of Egyptian dentistry as advanced, many of the therapies recorded in medical papyri would be ineffective in ameliorating the conditions they claimed to treat.

⁷² Massingham and Power, ‘Interventive Dental Therapy’, 65.

⁷³ As the linen fillings noted in Pantazis *et al.*, ‘A Ptolemaic Mummy’, 3134; similarly the low-density material used as a filling in A. Wade, J. Hurnanen, B. Lawson, D. Tampieri and A. Nelson, ‘Early Dental Intervention in the Redpath Ptolemaic Theban Male’, *International Journal of Paleopathology* 2 (2012), 217–22.

⁷⁴ Contra the assertion by Becker and MacIntosh Turfa (M.J. Becker and J. MacIntosh Turfa, *The Etruscans and the History of Dentistry* [London, 2017]) that there is ‘no evidence, either physical or textual, for ancient Egyptian dental prostheses’ (67) and the ‘Egyptian non-evidence’ (81); for a summative overview of the Egyptian bridges, see P. Blomstedt, ‘Dental Surgery in Ancient Egypt’, *Journal of the History of Dentistry* 61/3 (2013), 133–37. For a review of the Phoenician Gaillardot dental appliance, see M. Maccheroni and M. Darveniza, ‘Reinterpretation of a Phoenician Dental Appliance’, *British Dental Journal* 226/12 (2019), 985–88; M.J. Becker, ‘Early Dental Appliances in the Eastern Mediterranean’, *Berytus* 42 (1997), 71–102.

⁷⁵ H. Junker, *Giza I: Die Mastabas der IV. Dynastie auf dem Westfriedhof* (Vienna, 1929); image in F. Leek, ‘The Practice of Dentistry in Ancient Egypt’, *Journal of Egyptian Archaeology* 53 (1967), 51–58, pl. X.

⁷⁶ Z. Iskander and J. Harris, ‘A Skull with a Silver Bridge to Replace a Central Incisor’, *Annales du Service des Antiquités de l’Égypte* 62 (1977), 85–90; images in Massingham and Power, ‘Interventive Dental Therapy’, 68–69.

⁷⁷ Harris, Iskander and Farid, ‘Restorative Dentistry’; also known as ‘el Quatta Bridge’, as in R. Forshaw, ‘The Practice of Dentistry in Ancient Egypt’, *British Dental Journal* 206 (2009), 482.

⁷⁸ M. Ruffer and A. Rietti, ‘On Osseous Lesions in Ancient Egyptians’, *The Journal of Pathology and Bacteriology* 16 (1911), 439–65; image in Weinberger, ‘Further Evidence’, 191.

⁷⁹ Massingham and Power, ‘Interventive Dental Therapy’, 66.

⁸⁰ Weinberger, ‘Further Evidence’, 194.

⁸¹ Weinberger, ‘Further Evidence’.

⁸² Massingham and Power, ‘Interventive Dental Therapy’, 68.

el-Asmant Bridge may have possibly been used *in vivo*,⁸³ though this would have presented a significant problem: the bridge likely would have caused the lower teeth to catch during occlusion. The bridge would have caused the catching of the lower teeth when closing the upper and lower teeth together. The exact method of the wire attachment remains unclear, as well as the reasons for the bridge's installation.⁸⁴

There is little evidence that the dental bridges were worn during life,⁸⁵ and indeed more conclusive evidence that they were not: the wire present in the Giza Bridge was too flimsy⁸⁶ to withstand mastication, and installation would have been difficult if not impossible;⁸⁷ the wire of the el-Qatta Bridge was also flimsy, and in addition showed no evidence for gum-fitting⁸⁸ of the prosthetic teeth, which would have caused irritation; the Alexandria Bridge has not been studied since it went missing in 1946; and finally, as noted, the Tura el-Asmant Bridge would have impinged on the closing of the individual's mouth. When compared to functional prosthetics from Egypt such as artificial toes,⁸⁹ these bridges were more likely used as post-mortem prosthetics intended to make the body whole in the afterlife.⁹⁰ As post-mortem prosthetics, these bridges were unlikely to represent the *oulē* of the men: a mark which was used for identification purposes necessarily while the individual was alive.

More Dental Health Problems Possibly Represented by *oulē*

As noted above, the *oulē* could have been representative of coronal caries in the anterior part of the mouth, particularly if the tooth was no longer viable. However,

⁸³ '[...] not possible to determine this with any certainty', Massingham and Power, 'Interventive Dental Therapy', 69; contra Iskander and Harris ('A Skull with a Silver Bridge', 87–88) who argued that the tooth was lost before it was drilled; for the suggestion that the bridge was attached post-mortem, see Langsjoen, in A. Aufderheide and C. Rodríguez-Martín (eds.) *The Cambridge Encyclopedia of Human Palaeopathology*, 411–12.

⁸⁴ Massingham and Power, 'Interventive Dental Therapy', 68–69.

⁸⁵ Noted in F. Leek, 'Reputed Early Egyptian Dental Operation - An Appraisal', in D. Brothwell and A.T. Sandison (eds.) *Diseases in Antiquity* (Springfield, 1967), 702–5; Blomstedt, 'Dental Surgery', 134–37; W. Hoffmann-Axthelm, 'Zahnprothetik im Alten Ägypten: eine Archäologische Tatsache', *Quintessenz* 11 (1976), 155–63; J.J. Quenouille, *La bouche et les dents dans l'antiquité Égyptienne* (Lyon, 1975); M.J. Becker, 'Spurious 'Examples' of Ancient Dental Implants or Appliances: Part Two of a Series', *Dental Anthropology Journal* 9 (1994), 8; M.J. Becker, 'Ancient Dental Implants: A Recently Proposed Example from France Evaluated with Other Spurious Examples', *International Journal of Oral and Maxillofacial Implants* 14 (1999), 22. Massingham and Power ('Interventive Dental Therapy', 67–70) as well as Forshaw ('The Practice of Dentistry', 483) note that antemortem use is possible, but uncertain.

⁸⁶ As noted in Forshaw, 'The Practice of Dentistry', 483: '[...] the 0.35 mm diameter gold tubular wire would unlikely achieve even a short term result due to its insubstantial nature'.

⁸⁷ F. Leek, 'Did a Dental Profession Exist in Ancient Egypt during the 3rd millennium BC?', *Medical History* 16 (1972), 405.

⁸⁸ 'Gum fitting' refers to the modification of a dental prosthesis to avoid impingement on the alveolar ridges as well as ensure comfort and functionality for the wearer of a permanent prosthesis; compare with the fitting evident in the Phoenician dental appliance worn antemortem as presented in Maccheroni and Darveniza, 'Reinterpretation of a Phoenician Dental Appliance', 985, 988.

⁸⁹ See J. Finch, G. Heath, A. David and J. Kulkarni, 'Biomechanical Assessment of Two Artificial Big Toe Restorations from Ancient Egypt and their Significance to the History of Prosthetics', *Journal of Prosthetics and Orthotics* 24/4 (2012), 181–91.

⁹⁰ Finch *et al.*, 'Biomechanical Assessment', 182; Forshaw, 'The Practice of Dentistry', 483.

the *oulē* may have also been representative of other conditions such as abscesses, hyperdontia, or enamel hypoplasia.⁹¹ Lastly, the association of these individuals with the military through socioeconomic title ('Persian of the epigone') leaves open the possibility that their *oulē* was a result of trauma-induced damage to a tooth.

Abscesses can result from an infection following an untreated carious lesion and can be permanent or lasting for years. An abscess located near the incisors or canines would be visible and permanent: an unusually large or visible abscess in this location would be distinctive to the point where it could serve as an identifying feature marked by *oulē*. Notably, if such an abscess were maxillary, it would also warrant the characterization as 'above' the tooth. Periapical abscesses have been noted in the bioarchaeological record from Egypt, both treated⁹² and untreated.⁹³

Hyperdontia (the condition of having supernumerary teeth)⁹⁴ was noted above as the possible motivation for the extraction evident in a Graeco-Roman skull,⁹⁵ and is also a possibility as the condition represented by the *oulē*. As hyperdontia mesiodens, a tooth erupts between the central incisors; this tooth can potentially erupt in the gumline above the teeth in the maxilla and below teeth in the mandible on either the labial or lingual sides.⁹⁶ Unless these supernumerary teeth are extracted, the condition is permanent and highly visible.

Another possibility are enamel hypoplasias, the visible and permanent areas on the crown of the tooth which visibly reveal the underlying dentine.⁹⁷ Enamel hypoplasias, which are well-attested archaeologically,⁹⁸ could result from several causes including malnutrition, infectious diseases, trauma, genetics, toxicity, systemic diseases, and developmental disturbances.⁹⁹ The varying manifestations of enamel hypoplasias—including large areas on incisors or canines and horizontal lines across incisors¹⁰⁰—suggest that one which was particularly severe or visible would sufficiently serve as an identifying marker.

⁹¹ I owe a debt of gratitude to one of the reviewers of this manuscript, who suggested these conditions as the possible identification for the *oulē*.

⁹² Austin, 'Dental Health and Dentistry', 99–100.

⁹³ R. Forshaw, 'The Practice of Dentistry', 485; citing J.E. Harris, A.T. Storey and P.V. Ponitz, 'Dental Disease in the Royal Mummies', in J.E. Harris and E.F. Wente (eds.) *An X-Ray Atlas of the Royal Mummies* (Chicago, 1980), 328–45.

⁹⁴ For an overview of the condition more generally and within the context of anthropological remains, see J.D. Irish, 'Hyperdontia across Sub-Saharan Africa: Prevalence, Patterning, and Implications', *Archives of Oral Biology* 140 (2022), 1–10.

⁹⁵ Craig and Davey, 'Possible Evidence for Ancient Egyptian Orthodontics', 37–39; see also Massingham and Power, 'Interventive Dental Therapy', 70–71.

⁹⁶ Evidence suggests that maxillary eruptions are more common; see F. Ata-Ali, J. Ata-Ali, D. Peñarrocha-Oltra and M. Peñarrocha-Diago, 'Prevalence, Etiology, Diagnosis, Treatment and Complications of Supernumerary teeth', *Journal of Clinical and Experimental Dentistry* 6/4 (2014), 415–16.

⁹⁷ H. Ming Wong, 'Aetiological Factors for Developmental Defects of Enamel', *Journal of Anatomy* 1 (2014), 1003.

⁹⁸ M. Schultz, P. Carli-Thiele, T.H. Schmidt-Schultzf, U. Kierdorf, H. Kierdorf, W. Teegen and K. Kreutz, 'Enamel Hypoplasias in Archaeological Skeletal Remains', in K. Alt, F. Rösing and M. Teschler-Nicola (eds.) *Dental Anthropology: Fundamentals, Limits, and Prospects* (Vienna, 1998), 298–311.

⁹⁹ M. Schultz *et al.*, 'Enamel Hypoplasias', 307.

¹⁰⁰ R.J. Jorgenson and C. Yost, 'Etiology of Enamel Dysplasia', *Journal of Pedodontics* 6/4 (1982), 315–29.

Although the title of 'Persian of the epigone' did not necessarily indicate active service in the military, these individuals were at the very least associated with the military and may well have served as a kind of reserve force.¹⁰¹ As such, the possibility should be raised that the *oulē* may have represented a visible injury to a tooth¹⁰² sustained traumatically during military service: craze lines, cracked teeth, fractured cusps, split teeth, chipped teeth, fractured teeth, and tooth avulsion (i.e. 'knocked out'). The Edwin Smith medical papyrus, broadly known for its focus on the treatment of traumatic injuries and surgical intervention,¹⁰³ only references the mouth in a treatment of a dislocated mandible. Split, fractured, chipped, or avulsed teeth, if a result of blunt- and sharp-force trauma, may not have been notable in a medical context and perhaps warranted no treatment. Nonetheless, any one of these conditions resulting from trauma would have been both visible and permanent. As noted above, tooth abrasion is often culturally homogenous; in contrast, a traumatically injured tooth would have been effective as an identifier.

Conclusions and Implications

The identification of the *oulē* on a tooth, as it appears in four attestations of the Ptolemaic period, should fulfil the criteria noted above: able to appear on the tooth and possibly, if representing the same condition, also 'above' it, supported by the context of these individuals and archaeological evidence, and finally, easily visible, unique, and permanent. Considering the permanence and uniqueness of dental prosthetics, the identification of the tooth *oulē* as a dental prosthetic is tempting. However, the evidence for the use of dental prosthetics *in vivo* is questionable. More importantly, to quote the old adage: 'when you hear hoofbeats, think horses, not zebras'. Dental prosthetics may have been permanent and unique 'zebras'; nonetheless, the visibility and permanence of dental disease or trauma ('horses') are more likely options for the *oulē* noted on the tooth.

Tooth wear, though permanent, is unlikely because the pattern of tooth wear is cross-culturally consistent, and thus a pattern of worn teeth would not have been sufficiently unique for identification. Therapeutic dental extraction is both permanent and unique; however, extraction could not be described as 'above' the tooth, and the evidence for tooth extraction (on the basis of medical texts and archaeological findings) is tenuous. Intentional dental modification, well-attested in archaeological contexts outside of Egypt, would have been visible, permanent, and unique. Dental modification such as inlay or tooth-notching could also be described as 'above' the tooth. However, the only archaeological evidence of intentional dental modification—in the form of ablation, non-therapeutic tooth extraction—is from contemporary Nubia, which is unsuitable for the familial context of these well-documented

¹⁰¹ Vandorpe, 'Persian Soldiers and Persians of the Epigone', 98; on the associations of physical trauma with individuals labelled as 'of the Epigone' in the *eikones*, see E. Karev, 'Identification and Disabilities of Military Personnel in Ptolemaic Egypt', in J. Draycott and G. Zisa (eds.) *Companion to Disability and Warfare* (Leiden, forthcoming).

¹⁰² For the list of conditions noted here, see Alt and Pichler, in Alt, Rösing and Teschler-Nicola (eds.) *Dental Anthropology: Fundamentals, Limits, and Prospects*, 389, 399; see also R.E. Walton, 'Cracked Tooth and Vertical Fracture', in R.W. Walton and M. Torabinejad (eds.) *Principles and Practice of Endodontics* (Philadelphia, 1996), 474–92.

¹⁰³ Austin, 'Dental Health and Dentistry', 103; Leek, 'Did a Dental Profession', 485.

individuals.

Although the methods of and reasons for installation of the dental appliances differed, all four bridges could have served as identifiers—if they were indeed used in life. A device such as the Graeco-Roman Tura el-Asmant Bridge would have been permanent and could be described as both on the tooth and above it. Excepting the Giza Bridge (which wrapped around the second and third molars), a dental device would have been easily visible. However, as noted, the conclusion that the bridges could represent an *oulē* assumes that such bridges would have been used in life; the evidence for antemortem use is insubstantial.

Contrary to the evidence for bridges used antemortem, the evidence from Egypt presents a broad range of dental health problems that may have been expressed as the *oulē* recorded for these men: carious lesions, abscesses, hyperdontia, enamel hypoplasia, and traumatic injury such as tooth avulsion or fracture. Abscesses as well as carious lesions could present in ways which warranted the description of an *oulē* ‘above’ the tooth. Damaged and non-viable teeth could remain *in situ*, visible in their manifestation when an individual opened their mouth to speak. Although bioarchaeological evidence for extraction is inconclusive, it is nonetheless possible that teeth were extracted for medical purposes, which would have also been visible, permanent, and distinctive.

The *oulai* used as identification in the *eikones* were seemingly intentionally vague, employing a word which ostensibly meant ‘scar’ to represent a number of identifying features like blindness or a mole. Regardless of which physical feature an individual’s *oulē* may have represented, this feature was so distinctive and unique that the great majority of *oulai* notations only noted its location on the body; this was apparently sufficient to cause a person to be easily identifiable by the *oulē* for the length of his or her life.

Beyond the assertion that *oulai* could not represent a ‘scar’ in every attestation, the poor preservation of dermatological evidence makes it difficult or impossible to identify whether a certain *oulē* represented one permanent bodily marking or another. In contrast, the rare appearance of the *oulē* on the tooth, paired with the preservation and extensive documentation of intentional and unintentional modification, suggest that the most likely possibility that an *oulē* on or above a tooth represented visible and permanent manifestations of dental health problems, whether traumatic or non-traumatic and whether treated or untreated. Whichever dental health problem affected these men, it affected one anterior tooth in a way that was so visible, permanent, and distinctive that it could serve as their identification for legal purposes.

Four Newly-Identified N + S-Stem Verbs in the Tale of the Eloquent Peasant and the London-Leiden Magical Papyrus*

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Abstract: A recent theory proposes that Afroasiatic N-stem verbs had a more productive presence in Egyptian than is commonly thought, surviving primarily as the Later Egyptian adjectival verbs. Occasionally, these verbs also included innovative combinations of the N-stem's passive sense with causative S-stem morphology. In line with this latter part of the recent theory, four more possible N + S-stems are identified in two well-known texts. First, a debated stroke in the seventh speech of the *Tale of the Eloquent Peasant* may form the initial prefix of such a verb (B1 317 and B2 46 *n-s-spd-n-k*). Second, a single glossed line of the London-Leiden magical papyrus may conceal three N + S-stem verbal nouns in a sequence of three typically-untranslated *voces magicae* (PDM XIV 401 *nze-sthōm nze-sḏōt nze-shōtb*, glossed roughly as $\text{N}\Delta\text{C}\Theta\text{W}\text{M} \text{N}\Delta\text{C}\chi\text{W}\text{T} \text{N}\Delta\text{C}\varepsilon\text{W}\text{T}\text{B}$). To think more broadly for scholarship at large, this continued work also suggests some general research strategies for finding other potential N-stems and N + S-stems.

Résumé: Une théorie récente propose que les verbes afroasiatiques à préfixe /n-/ avaient une présence plus productive en égyptien que ce qui est communément admis. En général, ils ont survécu à la mort de la langue en tant que verbes adjectivaux à préfixe /n-/. De plus, ces verbes comprenaient parfois des combinaisons innovantes du sens passif du préfixe /n-/ avec la morphologie causative à préfixe /s-/. Conformément à cette dernière partie de la théorie récente, quatre autres verbes à préfixes /n-/ et /s-/ possibles sont identifiés dans deux textes bien connus. Tout d'abord, un trait ambigu dans le septième discours de *l'histoire du paysan éloquent* peut former le préfixe initial d'un tel verbe (B1 317 et B2 46 *n-s-spd-n-k*). Deuxièmement, une ligne glosée du papyrus magique de Londres et de Leyde peut cacher trois noms verbaux à préfixes /n-/ et /s-/ dans une série de trois *voces magicae* (PDM XIV 401 *nze-sthōm nze-sḏōt nze-shōtb*, glossée approximativement comme $\text{N}\Delta\text{C}\Theta\text{W}\text{M} \text{N}\Delta\text{C}\chi\text{W}\text{T} \text{N}\Delta\text{C}\varepsilon\text{W}\text{T}\text{B}$). Pour réfléchir plus largement, ce travail suggère quelques stratégies de recherche générales pour trouver plus de ces verbes.

Keywords: Afroasiatic, Derived Verbs, N-stems, S-stems, *Tale of the Eloquent Peasant*, London-Leiden Magical Papyrus

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Mots-clés: Afroasiatique, verbes dérivés, verbes à préfixe /n-/, verbes à préfixe /s-/, *l'histoire du paysan éloquent*, le papyrus magique de Londres et de Leyde

Egyptian N + S-Stem Verbs as Part of a Productive Survival of Afroasiatic N-Stems.

More than a century of scholarship on Earlier Egyptian has acknowledged the existence of derived verbs containing both N-stem and S-stem prefixes, but only specific S + N-stem verbs with that rigid order of prefixes. Here, a classic example from the Pyramid Texts involves the root *fh* ‘become loose’: reduplication and two prefixes create the related verb *snfhfh* ‘unravel’ (PT 852 e).¹ From such examples, contemporary scholars have theorized that the N-stem prefix must always appear directly next to the verbal root, and then the S-stem prefix on the outermost layer.²

However, the existence of N + S-stem verbs has recently been posited as part of a new theory that Afroasiatic N-stem verbs had a more productive presence in Egyptian than has been previously thought.³

In the key change affecting the bulk of Egyptian N-stems, their known passive sense became reanalyzed as indicating state.⁴ Then, this slight shift in meaning became the basis for producing a larger class of state-indicating verbs best known as the Later Egyptian adjectival verbs. A helpful illustration of this linguistic transformation can be made through what has been perceptively identified as the passive subset of the adjectival verbs – for instance, $\text{NECB}\omega\omega\text{C}$ ‘he is wise’, the core of which lies in the historic root transliterated ʿsb ‘teach’.⁵ If no connection is made

¹ Use of this example includes A. Erman, *Ägyptische Grammatik* (Berlin, 1911), 144–45; E. Edel, *Altägyptische Grammatik* 1 (Rome, 1955), 197; M.T. Derchain-Urtel, ‘Das n-Präfix im Ägyptischen’, *GM* 6 (1973): 49–50; C. Cannuyer, ‘Les formes dérivées du verbe en ancien égyptien: Essai de systématisation’, *GM*, 63 (1983): 30; P. Vernus, ‘Le préformant *n* et la détransitivité: Formation nC_1C_2 versus C_1C_2 , C_1C_2 ’, *Lingua Aegyptia* 17 (2009): 292 (there listed as *snfh*); and J.P. Allen, ‘Old Egyptian’, in J.P. Stauder-Porchet, A. Stauder and W. Wendrich (eds.) *UCLA Encyclopedia of Egyptology* (Los Angeles, 2015), 4, <https://escholarship.org/uc/item/9h74h21k>.

² C. Reintges, ‘Egyptian Root-and-Pattern Morphology’, *Lingua Aegyptia* 4 (1994): 234–35; A. Stauder, *The Earlier Egyptian Passive: Voice and Perspective* (Hamburg, 2014), 219; S. Štubňová, ‘The Semantics of Derived Verbs: A New Look at Old Egyptian Morphology’ (Brown University Ph.D. dissertation, 2020), 375, 377–80; and A. Stauder, ‘Egyptian Morphology in Afroasiatic Perspective’, in M.V. Almansa-Villatoro and S. Štubňová Nigrelli (eds.) *Ancient Egyptian and Afroasiatic: Rethinking the Origins* (University Park, PA, 2023), 87. See also S. Štubňová, ‘Where Syntax and Semantics Meet: A Typological Investigation of Old Egyptian Causatives’, *Lingua Aegyptia* 27 (2019): 202–5.

³ D. Mihalyfy, ‘Three Newly-Identified N-Stem Verbs in the Debate Between a Man and His Soul’, *Journal of the Society for the Study of Egyptian Antiquities* 49 (2022-23): 117–24. See also D. Mihalyfy, ‘A Productive Survival of Afroasiatic N-Stems in Egyptian: Preliminaries for a New Paradigm’ (unpublished manuscript prepared for publication). For a recent example of the standard narrative of the early extinction of Afroasiatic N-stems in Egyptian, see S. Štubňová Nigrelli, ‘Ancient Egyptian Perceptions of the World: The N-Prefix and Its Role in the Pyramid Texts’, in M.V. Almansa-Villatoro, S. Štubňová Nigrelli and M. Lehner (eds.) *In the House of Heqanakht: Text and Context in Ancient Egypt; Studies in Honor of James P. Allen* (Leiden, 2023), 326–40, especially 336 (‘By the time of Old Egyptian, the n-prefix was no longer a productive prefix, gradually becoming obsolete...’).

⁴ For fuller explanations of both this transformation and the following specific examples, see Mihalyfy, ‘N-Stem Verbs’, 118–19. For N-stem senses that include a ‘passive’, see Štubňová Nigrelli, ‘Ancient Egyptian Perceptions’, 328.

⁵ The passive subset of adjectival verbs is perceptively highlighted in J.F. Quack, ‘Über die mit ʿnh

between this passive subset and the earlier passive sense of N-stems – specifically, by advocating for a different origin for the nasal prefix of the adjectival verbs – a very strong and very strange claim is thereby unavoidably implied, that Egyptian somehow evolved a second, etymologically-separate nasal-prefixed passive verb form during the course of its written history.⁶ Conversely, if this connection is made, a compelling and easily-intelligible story of linguistic change can be told. Originally, *sb3* ‘teach’ would have factored into an N-stem with a passive meaning like ‘be educated’. However, the transitive sense of the lexical root could be de-emphasized, shifting attention from the action itself (‘be educated’) to the action’s state-like result (‘be wise’). Crucially, this type of very slight change in meaning-perception then allowed speakers to create state-indicating N-stems from *intransitive* verbs – for example, *naꜣꜣꜣ* ‘it is many’, from the historic root transliterated *ʕ3* ‘be many’. Together, these two verbal subsets of the more-original passives and the subsequent innovations from intransitives caused the Later Egyptian adjectival verbs to blossom. True, they were never very numerous, and even after this shift and minor flowering they suffered a perceptible decline, a decrease that is pointedly visible in how the more than fifty verbs known under Demotic script dwindled into the seven or eight that are customarily taught in Coptic grammars.⁷ Nevertheless, because they encompassed common words like ‘be wise’ and ‘be many’, these Later Egyptian adjectival verbs formed a persistent and unavoidable part of core Egyptian vocabulary through language death. Thus, although relatively few, they constitute a linguistically important ‘rump group’ with many cousins elsewhere in Afroasiatic, including other state-indicating N-stems that have been identified in the Berber language of Tuareg.⁸

Within this larger survival of Egyptian N-stems, the surprising existence of N + S-stems appears as a minor subplot. The telling example is also found among the handful of Later Egyptian adjectival verbs traditionally taught together in Coptic grammars, specifically within the etymology of the lexical item *neꜣꜣꜣ* ‘he is beautiful’.⁹ There, scholarship had already properly identified the historic root transliterated *ʕ3(i)* ‘be great’, as well as the addition of the causative prefix to form

gebildeten Namenstypen und die Vokalisation einiger Verbalformen’, *GM* 123 (1991): 96; and J.F. Quack, *Demotische Grammatik* (Wiesbaden, forthcoming). Note also the similar recognition in J.H. Johnson, *The Demotic Verbal System* (Chicago, 1976), 22, that a subset is formed from ‘transitive’ verbs.

⁶ For one recent example of such an etymological attempt, as well as some others mentioned in its literature review, see C. Peust, ‘Zwei koptische grammatische Morpheme bislang ungeklärten Ursprungs’, *Zeitschrift für Ägyptische Sprache und Altertumskunde* 151, no. 1 (2024): 126–30.

⁷ By far the longest current list of adjectival verbs can be found in Quack’s forthcoming *Demotische Grammatik*. B. Layton, *Coptic in Twenty Lessons: Introduction to Sahidic Coptic with Exercises and Vocabularies* (Leuven, 2007), 109. B. Layton, *A Coptic Grammar*, 3rd ed. (Wiesbaden, 2011), 299–301. J.P. Allen, *Coptic: A Grammar of Its Six Major Dialects* (University Park, PA, 2020), 41. Note also Peust, ‘Morpheme’, 127: ‘Tatsächlich hatten Adjektivverben im Demotischen noch eine wesentlich stärkere Verbreitung’, with its attendant note ‘dass die Bildungsweise produktiv war...’

⁸ For a survey of Afroasiatic N-stems, see S.J. Lieberman, ‘The Afro-Asiatic Background of the Semitic N-Stem: Towards the Origins of the Stem-Affirmatives of the Semitic and Afro-Asiatic Verb’, *Bibliotheca Orientalis* 43, no. 5/6 (September–November 1986): 600–4, which overview should be updated with the important Berber N-stem findings of A. Bedar, ‘Morphophonologie et structure argumentale des verbes anticausatifs en kabyle’ (Nantes Université Ph.D. dissertation, 2022), 38–47, and A. Bedar, S. Bendjaballah and M. Haiden, ‘The verbal *n*-stem in Taqbaylit Berber’, in R. Meyer and C. Reintges (eds.) *Perspectives on Templatic Morphology* (forthcoming). K.-G. Prasse, *Manuel de grammaire touaregue (tāhāggart)* 6-7, *Verbe* (Copenhagen, 1973), 62.

⁹ Mihalyfy, ‘N-Stem Verbs’, 119.

s-ꜥꜣy with the sense ‘make great’ or ‘magnify’.¹⁰ When the outermost layer is also viewed as an N-stem prefix equivalent to that of the other adjectival verbs, the historically-underlying form would be *n-s-ꜥꜣy* with the passive sense ‘be made great’ or ‘be magnified’, which form would have been later reinterpreted as ‘be beautiful’ and thereby forced into a group with other state-indicating N-stems. Consequently, this form’s very existence destabilizes the scholarly consensus about the impossibility of such forms and opens up the prospect of finding other N + S-stems across time. In fact, at least one other possible N + S-stem verb has been identified, in one confusing line of the Soul’s second parable in the *Debate Between a Man and His Soul*.¹¹ In that parable, a root transliterated *st* and meaning ‘flow’ first appears in the eighty-second line within the phrase *r s-st ꜣt* ‘to spend a moment’ (specifically, ‘flow’ forms part of the causative, which can be translated as ‘spend’ in the sense of ‘make flow [away]’). In the subsequent and somewhat confusing eighty-fourth line, positing an N + S-stem around this same root clarifies a troubled area and produces a literary play-on-words, so that the man who had been refused a meal when hungry and so had gone outside ‘to spend a moment’ (*r s-st ꜣt*) does indeed return, but in a changed state, for he ‘had become spent’ (*n-s-st-n-f*, forming a passive from the causative translated ‘spend’, in a sense like ‘had become exhausted’). Cumulatively, this reading involves the passive sense already known for N-stems, and the posited N + S-stem would be in continuity with the historic form visible in *ꜣꜥꜣꜣ* ‘he is beautiful’. So, even if in this particular instance a scholar may prefer another reading on other grounds, this baseline existence of such an N + S-stem should nevertheless be admitted as linguistically plausible.

In this same spirit of identifying a possible N + S-stem in the *Debate Between a Man and His Soul*, four new N + S-stem readings are now proposed: one possible reading in the *Tale of the Eloquent Peasant*, and a new suggestion for three similar-looking and typically-untranslated words found in one short section of the London-Leiden magical papyrus.

New Reading #1: A Possible N + S-Stem in the *Eloquent Peasant* (B1 317 and B2 46).

Towards the close of the *Eloquent Peasant*’s seventh speech, the peasant denounces the high steward by listing a set of six general situations wherein the high steward did not act with propriety and so had failed to address six particular types of shortcomings found among six different groups of people.¹² In the third of these

¹⁰ W. Vycichl, *Dictionnaire étymologique de la langue copte* (Leuven, 1983), 144, 182.

¹¹ Mihalyfy, ‘N-Stem Verbs’, 123–24, which primarily dialogues with the positions outlined across J.P. Allen, *The Debate Between a Man and His Soul: A Masterpiece of Ancient Egyptian Literature* (Leiden, 2011), 75–78 and 288–89.

¹² R.B. Parkinson, *The Tale of the Eloquent Peasant: A Reader’s Commentary* (Hamburg, 2012), 254: ‘These verses comprise *nm*-noun followed by a qualifying phrase [in] a well-attested construction...’ For text, see R.B. Parkinson (ed.) *The Tale of the Eloquent Peasant* (Oxford, 1991), 40–40a. For manuscript images, the best quality ones are the photographs of L. Baylis found in V.M. Lepper (ed.) *Four 12th Dynasty Literary Papyri (Pap. Berlin P. 3022-5): A Photographic Record with DVD* (Berlin, 2012) – namely, the twentieth image for manuscript B1, and the fifth image for manuscript B2. However, it is also possible to consult Tables 16 and 20 of F. Vogelsang and A.H. Gardiner (eds.) *Literarische Texte des Mittleren Reiches 1, Die Klagen des Bauern* (Leipzig, 1908) (= *Hieratische Papyrus aus den königlichen Museen zu Berlin* 4); here, note that an older numbering system is used for manuscript B1, so that B1 286 corresponds to the B1 317 of the present article and the works by

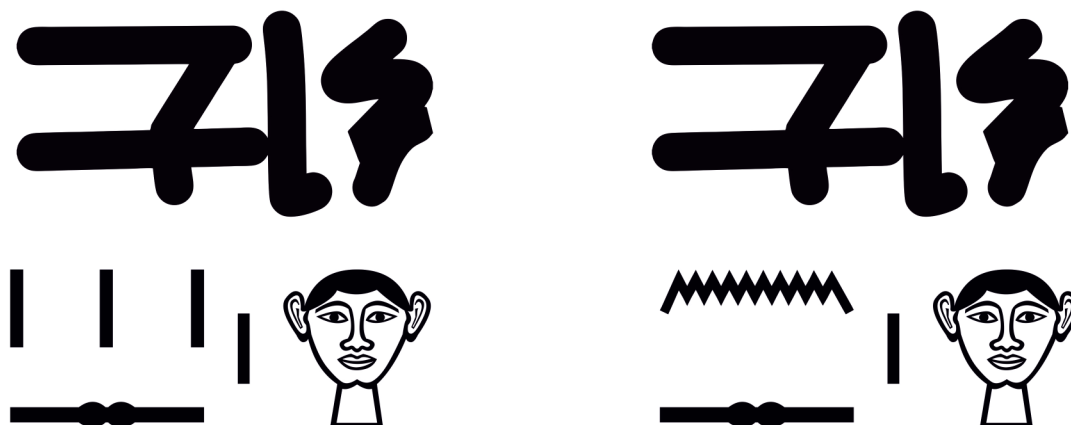


Figure 1. A simple drawing roughly reproducing the ambiguous hieratic stroke of B1 317 and several crucial surrounding signs, above its two typical interpretations (hieroglyphic font courtesy of JSesh)

situations – a line preserved in near-identical form in two of the text’s four known manuscripts – a somewhat ambiguous single stroke forms the major *crux interpretationis* and could very well represent the first prefix of an N + S-stem.¹³

Within two avenues of interpretation factoring into larger readings, this somewhat ambiguous stroke has been plausibly interpreted as equivalent to the plurality-indicating determinative Gardiner Z2 or to the *n* of Gardiner N35 (Figure 1).

Although either interpretation is defensible, the latter interpretation as the *n* of Gardiner N35 seems a little likelier for two reasons. First, the manuscripts B1 and B2 both lack a prominent mid-stroke bump that firmly specifies the plurality-indicating determinative Gardiner Z2 elsewhere in each manuscript (Figure 1).¹⁴ That said, it is certainly within the realm of possibility that this sometimes-faint bump may have been largely elided during the writing of not one but both manuscripts. Second, the horizontal writing of manuscript B1 places this stroke as the *top* half of a grouping that includes the *following* sign (Figure 1); if the stroke forms the plurality-indicating determinative Gardiner Z2, this would contrast with its much more typical placement

Lepper and Parkinson. For one popular translation, see M. Lichtheim, *Ancient Egyptian Literature 1, The Old and Middle Kingdoms* (Berkeley, CA, 1973; 2006 edition with new foreword), 180.

¹³ For the manuscript history, see Parkinson (ed.) *Peasant*, xiii–xxx; Parkinson, *Reader’s Commentary*, 1–3; and R.B. Parkinson, ‘Four 12th Dynasty Literary Papyri’, in Lepper (ed.) *Papyri*, 1–15 and 17–18. The line is nearly identical in both manuscripts, apart from general differences with writing orientation and spacing and a few minor peculiarities of the individual hands. For instance, B2 uses the folded cloth of Gardiner S29 to indicate the first *s* of *s-spd*, while B1 uses the bolt of Gardiner O34 to write *z-spd*, in addition to adding a second determinative to that same word. Regarding the ambiguous stroke as a *crux interpretationis*, the two values are mentioned as possibilities for both manuscripts by Parkinson (ed.) *Peasant*, 40–40a, while both values are considered in possible larger readings by Parkinson, *Reader’s Commentary*, 255.

¹⁴ Unfortunately, permission for manuscript images could not be secured prior to article publication. For B1, compare multiple examples of the plurality-indicating determinative Gardiner Z2 across the same piece of manuscript photographed as the twentieth image of Lepper (ed.) *Papyri*, or in Vogelsang and Gardiner (eds.) *Klagen*, Table 16. For B2, also compare multiple examples of the plurality-indicating determinative Gardiner Z2 across the same piece of manuscript photographed as the fifth image of Lepper (ed.) *Papyri*, or in Vogelsang and Gardiner (eds.) *Klagen*, Table 20. Parkinson (ed.) *Peasant*, 40a, also provides facsimiles of these two individual strokes, in accordance with his stated mission to do so ‘when the reading is uncertain or has been disputed’ ([xlvi]).

as the *bottom* portion of a grouping that includes the *preceding* sign, although do note such strange placements in the nearby lines of B1 326 and B1 334.¹⁵ In sum, though, either value is possible enough, especially if one begins to consider emending the manuscript (e.g. positing that scribes became confused because of the similarity of the strokes and so replaced the plurality-indicating determinative Gardiner Z2 with the *n* of Gardiner N35). Thus, readings dependent on either value should be considered.

In one implausible reading that has already been wisely discarded as ‘unlikely’, the verbal noun is read as an action, while the problematic stroke is read as the *n* of Gardiner N35 as part of ‘an indirect genitive’:¹⁶

The stroke itself is somewhat ambiguous and could bear this value, and this

<i>nn</i>	<i>hbꜣ</i>	<i>hr</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>s-spd-n-k</i>
NEG.EXIST	ravage/ VRBL.NOUN	face	to	SSTEM-ready-PST-2MSG
‘There is no being downcast (lit. ‘ravaging of face’) for him whom you have made ready’ (<i>Peasant</i> B1 317, B2 46)				

interpretation of the verbal noun is possible when narrowly considered. But, this interpretation of the verbal noun would break the six situations’ strong parallelism in which all of the verbal nouns seem to represent human actors, in line with several places where the verbal noun is forced into identification as a human actor by a later third person singular pronoun (e.g. the first situation of *nn gr rd-n-k mdw-f* ‘there is no-one silent whom you made speak’, literally ‘caused that *he* speak’).¹⁷ Thus, this reading indeed does not seem rather likely.

In a very plausible reading that may indeed be true, the problematic stroke is read as the plurality-indicating determinative Gardiner Z2 and grouped with the preceding signs to pluralize a noun in the second part of a compound noun construction:

<i>nn</i>	<i>hbꜣ</i>	<i>hr-w</i>	<i>s-spd-n-k</i>
NEG.EXIST	ravage/ VRBL.NOUN	face-PL	SSTEM-ready-PST-2MSG
‘There is no-one downcast (lit., ‘ravaged of faces’) whom you have made ready’ (<i>Peasant</i> B1 317, B2 46)			

The stroke itself is somewhat ambiguous and could bear this value. However, this interpretation would lead to the mildly odd but not unparalleled sign grouping in the horizontal writing of manuscript B1 (why would a scribe sever the noun and its plurality-indicating determinative and place them in two different groupings?). In terms of meaning, it is very noteworthy that ‘a similar plural compound’ is paralleled elsewhere (*Sasobek* Ci.3 *pgꜣ hr-w* ‘open of faces’).¹⁸ However, although paralleled

¹⁵ Lepper (ed.) *Papyri*, twentieth image for B1. Vogelsang and Gardiner (eds.) *Klagen*, Table 16.

¹⁶ Parkinson, *Reader’s Commentary*, 255.

¹⁷ Parkinson, *Reader’s Commentary*, 254–55.

¹⁸ Parkinson, *Reader’s Commentary*, 255.

elsewhere, this pluralization is not found on an equivalent body part in the very next situation listed in the *Eloquent Peasant* (*tm r3* ‘shut of mouth’).¹⁹ Although that difference is perhaps attributable to phrasing judgments of native speakers, it also produces a slight lack of literary parallelism and raises a mild question about the preferability of this overall very sensible reading (a reading that perhaps becomes even more sensible, if one emends the manuscript so that the plurality-indicating determinative Gardiner Z2 became interpreted as the *n* of Gardiner N35).

In a new reading that deserves consideration, the problematic stroke is read as the *n* of Gardiner N35 and grouped with the following signs to form the first prefix of an N + S-stem verb:

<i>nn</i>	<i>hb3</i>	<i>hr</i>	<i>n-s-spd-n-k</i>
NEG.EXIST	ravage/ VRBL.NOUN	face	NSTEM-SSTEM- ready-PST-2MSG
‘There is no-one downcast (lit., ‘ravaged of face’) where you felt compelled (lit., ‘were made’) to be ready’ (<i>Peasant</i> B1 317, B2 46)			

The stroke itself is somewhat ambiguous and could bear this value, and this value may even be slightly more likely in manuscript B1 because of the sign grouping. Furthermore, the resulting N + S-stem verb would be a linguistically possible form resonant with the later *ncwq* ‘he is beautiful’ and the possible form *n-s-st-n-f* ‘he had become spent’ in the *Debate Between a Man and His Soul*. Grammatically, this particular verb would form part of a relative clause by clausal juxtaposition amidst the absence of explicit subordination, the relationship between clauses then being freely translated into English as ‘where’.²⁰ However, it must be admitted that the resulting translation is slightly askew with the other five situations. In those other situations, the high steward is blamed for not *correcting* the shortcomings (i.e., for not making the silent speak, waking the sleeper, opening the closed mouth, making the ignorant knowledgeable, or teaching the foolish). Instead, with this reading, the high steward would be blamed for not himself undertaking an action and thereby *compensating* for the shortcoming. For, in the implied desirable situation, the high steward himself would be ready, but the downcast individual would still remain downcast and unready. Thus, this new reading would also cause a slight lack of literary parallelism. But, nevertheless, this new reading still seems around as plausible overall as the current dominant reading, and so it should be considered as a possibility by scholars. Although the resulting difference in translation value is negligible – ‘whom you have made ready’ versus ‘where you felt compelled to be ready’ – it must be emphasized that this alternate reading also has not insignificant linguistic interest, because of its claim of the existence of another N + S-stem in Egyptian.

New Readings #2-4: Three N + S-Stem Verbal Nouns in the London-Leiden Magical Papyrus (PDM XIV 401).

In the London-Leiden magical papyrus that is famous for being ‘the largest

¹⁹ Parkinson, *Reader’s Commentary*, 256.

²⁰ A. Gardiner, *Egyptian Grammar*, 3rd ed. (Oxford, 1957), 313. J.E. Hoch, *Middle Egyptian Grammar* (Mississauga, ON, 1997), 118.

surviving magical book-roll from Roman Egypt’, a Demotic sentence bearing a few Old Coptic glosses may contain three more N + S-stems.²¹ Forming part of a command to Anubis to self-reveal, the three words appear in quick succession in the dependent clause of a sentence that is grammatically very simple and otherwise relatively straightforward. In fact, although the glosses are written with ‘Old Coptic’ peculiarities – for example, the use of a sign deriving from the backbone of Gardiner F40 for a vowel – even these peculiarities are relatively unproblematic, and that script can easily be transliterated into more-conventional fonts without any significant betrayal of the source material, at least for present purposes.²²

<i>wnḥ=k</i>			<i>r-īr=y</i>	
IMPTV/reveal-2MSG			to-1SG	
		ⲢⲁⲘⲐⲟⲩⲙ	ⲢⲁⲘⲉⲱⲧ	ⲢⲁⲘⲉⲱⲧⲃ
<i>d</i>	<i>īnk</i>	<i>nze-sthōm</i>	<i>nze-sḍōt</i>	<i>nze-shōtb</i>
for	I	NASTHŌM	NASDJŌT	NASHŌTB
‘Reveal yourself to me, for I am NASTHŌM NASDJŌT NASHŌTB...’ (PDM XIV 401)				

Typically, mainstream translations do not translate these three glossed words:²³

As such, these three glossed words take their place among many other untranslated and likely untranslatable *voces magicae* that dot this and other texts.

Interestingly, however, these three words have also been flagged as potentially related to Egyptian verbs, including with very tentative translation values.²⁴

²¹ K. Dosoo, A. Nodar Dominguez and P. Sarischouli, ‘GEMF 16 (PDM/PGM XIV)’, in C.A. Faraone and S. Torallas Tovar (eds.) *Greek and Egyptian Magical Formularies 1, Text and Translation* (Berkeley, CA, 2022), 135.

²² For text, see Faraone and Torallas Tovar (eds.) *Formularies*, 188; for ease of cross-consultation, the present article follows that Demotic transliteration, rather than innovate an idiosyncratic system consistent with that used for the *Eloquent Peasant*. For a facsimile drawing of the manuscript, see line XIV 7 of F.L. Griffith and H. Thompson (eds.) *The Demotic Magical Papyrus of London and Leiden 2, Hand Copy of the Text* (London, 1905). For an important and compelling re-conceptualization of many aspects of the development and use of ‘Old Coptic’ script, see E.O.D. Love, ‘The Nature of Old Coptic I’, *Journal of Coptic Studies* 23 (2021): 93–117. Also regarding such ‘Old Coptic’ peculiarities, note J.F. Quack, ‘How the Coptic Script Came About’, in E. Grossman, P. Dils, T.S. Richter and W. Schenkel (eds.) *Greek Influence on Egyptian-Coptic: Contact-Induced Change in an Ancient African Language* (Hamburg, 2017), 27–96, especially the noteworthy observation that ‘there was a real possibility of indicating at least most of the vowels by means of signs derived from the traditional Egyptian writing system, if use was made of short Egyptian words which in actual pronunciation were reduced to a vowel’ (39). For another example of transcription of these three glosses into more common fonts, see J.F. Quack, ‘Griechische und andere Dämonen in den spätdemotischen magischen Texten’, in T. Schneider (ed.) *Das Ägyptische und die Sprachen Vorderasiens, Nordafrikas und der Ägäis: Akten des Basler Kolloquiums zum ägyptisch-nichtsemitischen Sprachkontakt, Basel, 9.-11. Juli 2003* (Muenster, 2004), 453–54, 491.

²³ H.D. Betz (ed.) *The Greek Magical Papyri in Translation, Including the Demotic Spells*, 2nd ed. (Chicago, 1992), 218. Faraone and Torallas Tovar (eds.) *Formularies*, 189.

²⁴ Quack, ‘Dämonen’, 453-454, 491, where translation values are essayed but no formal grammatical analysis is provided. Presumably, the past tense translation into German corresponds to grammatical analysis of the three verbs as some vestigial variation of the *sḍm-n-f* or *sḍm-īn-f*.

The concrete identification of two of the three related verbs seems correct – specifically, with the Coptic verbs Ⲡⲱⲧⲉ ‘pierce, penetrate’ and Ⲡⲱⲧⲃ ‘kill’ – and this identification occurs within a correct overall determination that these three words seem to bear some relation to Egyptian.²⁵ However, interpretation of the first word only considers the Coptic verb ⲧⲱⲙ ‘be sharp, sharpen’, neglecting the Coptic verb ⲧⲱⲗⲙ ‘chase, urge, pursue’, and that despite the fact that the consonants visible in both the Demotic and the Old Coptic gloss could be consistent with that trilateral root.²⁶ Furthermore, and more importantly, the resulting sentence still seems odd; although each word narrowly considered could constitute a somewhat understandable proper name or title, the larger sentence would strangely juxtapose the first person singular pronoun with the feminine third person singular, and it would use finite verbs in grammatical slots where nouns would be more appropriate. Accordingly, although very thought-provoking and making progress in several regards, this effort was correct to explicitly flag its very tentative nature.

In the new readings, the strange, recurring portion preceding each verbal root can be identified as the N + S-stem morphology of verbal nouns that form the predicate of the ‘I am’ statement:

		<i>wnḥ=k</i>	<i>r-īr=y</i>	
		IMPTV/reveal-2MSG	to-1SG	
		Ⲣⲁ-Ⲙ-Ⲁⲱⲙ	Ⲣⲁ-Ⲙ-Ⲡⲱⲧ	Ⲣⲁ-Ⲙ-Ⲡⲱⲧⲃ
<i>d</i>	<i>ink</i>	<i>nze-s-thōm</i>	<i>nze-s-dōt</i>	<i>nze-s-hōtb</i>
for	I	PST-3FSG-sharpen (= “‘sie schärfte’?”)	PST-3FSG-pierce (= “‘sie durchbohrte’?”)	PST-3FSG-kill (= “‘sie tötete’?”)
‘Reveal yourself to me, for I am ‘she sharpened (the knife)’ (?), ‘she pierced’ (?), ‘she killed’ (?)...’ (PDM XIV 401)				

Just like with the proposal for the *Eloquent Peasant*, the resulting N + S-stem verbs would be linguistically possible forms resonant with ⲢⲈⲘⲱⲘ ‘he is beautiful’ and the possible form *n-s-st-n-f* ‘he had become spent’ in the *Debate Between a Man and His Soul*. As verbal nouns, they fittingly fill grammatical slots where nouns would

²⁵ W.E. Crum, *A Coptic Dictionary* (Oxford, 1939; reprint Eugene, OR, 2005), 791, 723. Quack, ‘Dämonen’, 453: ‘Eine ganze Folge von Ausdrücken... wirkt sehr nach ägyptischer Sprache’.

²⁶ Crum, *Dictionary*, 413, 459. The lack of consideration of a trilateral root for the first word seems connected to the perception of an aspirated consonant like has been claimed as a feature of what is called the Bohairic dialect of Coptic (Quack, ‘Dämonen’, 448: ‘Zumindest ist bei vielen identifizierbaren ägyptischen Formen eine starke Tendenz zu erkennen, Verschlusslaute aspiriert auszusprechen... -- also ein Bild, das eher dem bohairischen Dialekt entspricht’). For a different evaluation of Bohairic that calls into question this linguistic distinctiveness, see A. Loprieno, *Ancient Egyptian: A Linguistic Introduction* (Cambridge, 1995), 42: ‘[W]e can consider this aspiration graphically rendered only in Bohairic, but phonetically present in Coptic as a whole...’ For a note of caution about the overall state of knowledge around distinctive features of Coptic dialects, see the D. Mihalyfy review of Allen’s *Coptic* in *Ancient Jew Review*’s Book Notes (3 March 2024), <https://www.ancientjewreview.com/read/2023/12/30/coptic-a-grammar-of-its-six-major-dialects>, accessed 29 January 2025.

		<i>wnḥ=k</i>	<i>r-īr=y</i>	
		IMPTV/reveal-2MSG	to-1SG	
		ΝΑ-С-ΘΩΜ	ΝΑ-С-ΔΩΤ	ΝΑ-С-ϷΩΤΒ
<i>d</i>	<i>ink</i>	<i>nze-s-thōm</i>	<i>nze-s-dōt</i>	<i>nze-s-hōtb</i>
for	I	NSTEM-SSTEM-chase [VRBAL.NOUN.MSG]	NSTEM-SSTEM-pierce [VRBAL.NOUN.MSG]	NSTEM-SSTEM-kill [VRBAL.NOUN. MSG]
‘Reveal yourself to me, for I am one who’s being forced to chase, one who’s being forced to stab, one who’s being forced to kill...’ (PDM XIV 401)				

be appropriate. Two of the three verb roots have already been identified in a previous proposal, although the Coptic verb τωἔμ ‘chase, urge, pursue’ may be a better fit for the remaining root because of the radicals perceptible in the Demotic and the Old Coptic gloss. Beyond mere possibility, however, the overall translation makes sense for the genre. ‘I am’ statements are well known in Egyptian magical texts, and here the phrasing places the enunciating magician into the position of threatening a god to achieve results, something also known from Egyptian magical texts.²⁷ Situationally, the magician implicitly blames the god Anubis for his impending violence; if Anubis appears, there will be no problem, but if Anubis stays away, the resulting series of impending acts will be Anubis’s fault, for Anubis is thereby forcing the magician to pursue him and stab him and kill him. Here, too, note another reason to see the first word as related to the Coptic verb τωἔμ ‘chase, urge, pursue’, instead of to τωμ ‘be sharp, sharpen’: if Anubis is keeping his distance and not revealing himself, the magician must first pursue him and close the distance, before inflicting the threatened violence of close-quarters stabbing and killing.

Furthermore, to produce a fairly tight parallel on the two fronts of grammatical form and textual genre, the verbal noun of a Greek participle even fills the same grammatical slot in an ‘I am’ statement found elsewhere in another very similar magical text, where the magician self-identifies as the rebellious god Zeus and threatens his father Kronos.²⁸

Interestingly, both texts threaten gods in a somewhat indirect manner. In the first text, the magician does not directly say ‘I will chase you’, ‘I will stab you’, and ‘I will kill you’, but rather backgrounds himself and shifts attention to Anubis through effectively stating that it is his reluctance to appear that is starting to bring violence

²⁷ H.S. Versnel, *Inconsistencies in Greek and Roman Religion I: Ter Unus; Isis, Dionysos, Hermes; Three Studies in Henotheism* (Leiden, 1990), 43. S. Sauneron, ‘Aspects et sort d’un thème magique égyptien: Les menaces incluant les dieux’, *Bulletin de la société française d’égyptologie* 8 (1951): 11–21. R.K. Ritner, ‘Egyptian Magical Practice under the Roman Empire: The Demotic Spells and their Religious Context’, in W. Haase (ed.) *Aufstieg und Niedergang der römischen Welt*, Part 2 18.5, *Religion, Heidentum: Die religiösen Verhältnisse in den Provinzen* (Berlin, 1995), 3362 and 3370.

²⁸ For text, see K. Preisendanz (ed.) *Papyri Graecae Magicae: Die griechischen Zauberpapyri*, 2nd ed. 1 (Stuttgart, 1973), 174. For translation, see Betz (ed.) *Magical Papyri*, 98. On self-identification with a deity, see F. Lexa, *La magie dans l’Égypte antique de l’ancien empire jusqu’à l’époque copte 1*, *Exposé* (Paris, 1925), 56–58. Note also the further similarity that both texts immediately move from the verbal noun constructions into several truly unintelligible *voces magicae*.

ἐγὼ	γάρ	εἰμι	ὁ	ἀποσταθ-εἰς	σοι
I	for	am	the /MSG.NOM	revolt-PTCP /MSG.NOM	you /DAT.SG
‘...for I am the one who revolted against you...’ (PGM IV 3107-3108)					

upon him. In the second text, the magician does not directly say ‘I will revolt against you’, but rather mentions that he has rebelled against Kronos in the past and implies that he can do so again. Thus, especially in light of this relatively thoroughgoing grammatical and generic parallel across the Egyptian and the Greek, these new readings in the London-Leiden magical papyrus appear to be very strong, and they should probably take their place as the default explanation of at least the historical origin of these three *vores magicae*.

For, indeed, an additional point of linguistic interest is that these words needed glossing in the manuscript – perhaps a sign that such N + S-stems no longer formed a living part of the language, to the point where the readers of the Demotic text could not immediately recognize them and needed additional reading aids. Thus, it remains an open question whether these verb forms were still lexically meaningful as combinations of passives and causatives. For, somewhat like the postulated origin of the Ephesia Grammata in Greek hexameter verses that gradually degenerated but nonetheless retained their overall function, it is also possible that these Egyptian words were only lexically meaningful at an earlier point in time, while living practice simply saw them as powerful but obscure formulas that were fit for certain ritual occasions.²⁹

Two more open questions also lie in the original quality of the prefix vowel, and the vocalism of the root-and-pattern morphology of these particular forms of the verb.³⁰

Research Strategies for Locating Other Potential N-Stems and N + S-Stems.

In general, this research on N-stems and N + S-stems should be on the minds of scholars doing text-work on all phases of the Egyptian language, for such unidentified and misidentified forms may lie in sections of text that are difficult or debatably translated. Since they involve passive forms like have been known for Earlier Egyptian N-stems and since they lasted through language death, the relevant linguistic timespan conceivably encompasses all of Egyptian history. Such forms also arguably lie in at least three well-known texts: *The Debate Between a Man and His Soul*, *The Tale of the Eloquent Peasant*, and the London-Leiden magical papyrus. Thus, although they are relatively rarer and more-marginal forms, the potential does exist for a poorly-understood N-stem or N + S-stem to be hiding in any given Egyptian text of any real length.

Research so far suggests three tendencies at play in texts liable to re-reading

²⁹ R.G. Edmonds III, ‘The Ephesia Grammata: Logos Orphaikos or Apolline Alexima Pharmaka?’, in C.A. Faraone and D. Obbink (eds.) *The Getty Hexameters: Poetry, Magic, and Mystery in Ancient Selinous* (Oxford, 2013), 96–106.

³⁰ See Štubňová Nigrelli, ‘Perceptions’, 327, for some reflections on the vocalism of the N-stem prefix. Note also the laudable attention to prefix and stem vocalism in Peust, ‘Morpheme’, 127 and 128.

for N-stems and N + S-stems. First, these forms particularly seem to appear in lines that scholars are already explicitly marking as difficult or unclear. For example, when interpreting the two textual sections treated here, at least four different scholars have marked their efforts with question marks.³¹ Second, these forms may involve explicitly-noted ambiguities around the interpretation of strokes, particularly debates around other values for an apparent *n* of Gardiner N35. Third, these forms may appear in areas where *n* or *n* and *s* are thought to possibly appear, but sit rather oddly. For example, they could be unexplained (e.g. in the typical presentation of the three *voces magicae* as ‘I am NASTHŌM NASDJŌT NASHŌTB’); or they could figure as other words in debatable translations (e.g. as *nʒ* ‘these’ or *n-s* ‘to her’ in the *Debate Between a Man and His Soul*); or they could somehow be alternately grouped with surrounding material, perhaps in conjunction with interpretation of some strokes as other signs (e.g. the grouping of the seeming plurality-indicating determinative Gardiner Z2 with the preceding word in the *Eloquent Peasant*).³² This does not cover all circumstances; for example, one wonders how many words and phrases beginning with *n* or *n* and *s* could conceal N-stems or N + S-stems, especially proper names and titles. But, particularly when they encounter lines displaying any or all of these three tendencies, scholars should consider the possibility that an unrecognized N-stem or N + S-stem might be lurking in that tangle of Egyptian text.

³¹ Vogelsang and Gardiner (eds.) *Klagen*, Tables 16a and 20a. Parkinson (ed.) *Peasant*, 40–40a. Quack, ‘Dämonen’ 491.

³² Betz (ed.) *Magical Papyri*, 218. Faraone and Torallas Tovar (eds.) *Formularies*, 189. Allen, *Debate*, 25–27 and 77–78, as covered by Mihalyfy, ‘N-Stem Verbs’, 119–20 and 123–24. Parkinson, *Reader’s Commentary*, 255.

Sustaining Each Other: A Psychological and Anthropological Perspective on New Kingdom Iconography of Bereavement Scenes

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Abstract: Despite the plethora of images strictly related to public expressions of mourning after the death of a member of the community, ancient Egyptian iconography crucially lacks scenes pertaining to personal and intimate anguish due to bereavement. Nonetheless, would it be possible to discern how ancient Egyptians used to privately cope with grief, by looking at the images depicted in tombs and funerary contexts? Some gestures that are represented in New Kingdom bereavement scenes appear to have clear contact points to actual human reactions to loss and death, as they are described by psychology and anthropology. In fact, while mourning and grieving expressions may differ from society to society and even from individual to individual, from a psychological point of view grief itself is considered atemporal and universal¹ and, therefore, potentially, it seems possible to compare and contrast images related to funerary contexts in ancient Egypt and in contemporary societies. In particular, the processing of grief seems to be a fundamentally unchanged human experience, and the relevance of physical contact and even actually supporting each other's bodies seems to be an invariant across cultures. What if the analysis of the represented gestures in New Kingdom iconography – which carry important symbolic connotations – could also give us hints on how ancient Egyptians truly reacted after the passing of a member of the community? Starting from the 18th Dynasty, some major changes happened in bereavement scenes: men begun to be vastly more often represented in a grieving attitude (a role played almost exclusively by women before that time) and – also because of the influence of the Amarna style – mourners started to be depicted with a proper contortion of their body, as if their poses somehow reflected the pain they were experiencing because of the death of a member of the community. However, analysing these depictions that are more closely related to the bodily response of each individual, we also find that the act of physically supporting each other serves as a coping mechanism for the bereaved and their community as a whole.

Résumé: Malgré la pléthore d'images strictement liées aux expressions publiques de deuil après la mort d'un membre de la communauté, l'iconographie égyptienne ancienne manque de manière cruciale de scènes concernant l'angoisse personnelle et intime liée à la perte. Néanmoins, serait-il possible de discerner comment les Égyptiens anciens faisaient face au deuil en privé, en examinant les images représentées dans les tombes et les contextes funéraires ? Certains gestes représentés dans les scènes de deuil du Nouvel Empire semblent avoir des points de contact clairs avec les réactions humaines réelles face à la perte et à la mort, telles qu'elles sont décrites par la psychologie et l'anthropologie. En effet, bien que les expressions de deuil et de tristesse puissent varier d'une société à l'autre, voire d'un individu à l'autre, d'un point de vue psychologique, le deuil lui-même est

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¹ I.B. Coreless, R. Limbo, R. Szyllit Bousso, R.L. Wrenn, D. Head, N. Lickiss, H. Wass, 'Languages of Grief: A Model for Understanding the Expressions of the Bereaved', *Health Psychology and Behavioral Medicine* 2, no. 1 (2014): 132; P.C. Rosenblatt, 'Researching Grief: Cultural, Relational, and Individual Possibilities', *Journal of Loss and Trauma* 22, no. 8: 617–30.

considéré comme atemporel et universel² et, par conséquent, il semble potentiellement possible de comparer et de contraster les images liées aux contextes funéraires dans l'Égypte ancienne et dans les sociétés contemporaines. En particulier, le traitement du deuil semble être une expérience humaine fondamentalement inchangée, et l'importance du contact physique et même du soutien physique des corps semble être un invariant à travers les cultures. Et si l'analyse des gestes représentés dans l'iconographie du Nouvel Empire – qui portent des connotations symboliques importantes – pouvait également nous donner des indices sur la manière dont les Égyptiens anciens réagissaient réellement après le décès d'un membre de la communauté ? À partir de la XVIII^e dynastie, certains changements majeurs sont survenus dans les scènes de deuil : les hommes ont commencé à être représentés beaucoup plus fréquemment dans une attitude de deuil (un rôle joué presque exclusivement par les femmes avant cette époque) et – aussi à cause de l'influence du style amarnien – les endeuillés ont commencé à être représentés avec une véritable contorsion de leur corps, comme si leurs postures reflétaient d'une certaine manière la douleur qu'ils ressentaient à cause de la mort d'un membre de la communauté. Cependant, en analysant ces représentations plus étroitement liées à la réponse corporelle de chaque individu, on constate également que l'acte de se soutenir physiquement les uns les autres sert de mécanisme d'adaptation pour les endeuillés et leur communauté dans son ensemble.

Keywords: Grief; Bereavement; New Kingdom; Support; Psychology; Touch

Mots-clés: Chagrin; Deuil; Nouvel Empire; Soutien; Psychologie; Toucher

Introduction

Numerous images related to bereavement in New Kingdom tombs' iconography depict public expressions of mourning, with groups of mourners often shown as a crucial component of funerary scenes.³ Despite the abundance of such images, however, New Kingdom iconography lacks scenes explicitly depicting private grief. Reliefs and paintings, in fact, refer almost solely to the communal experience of bereavement, neglecting its more personal aspects and, *de facto*, depriving us of a crucial element of the human experience of loss and preventing us to clearly understand how ancient Egyptians coped with grief on an individual level.⁴ The research underlying this paper aims to discern possible indications of private reactions to loss in New Kingdom Egypt, by analysing body gestures associated with the public expression of mourning and comparing them to actual human responses to death, as studied in psychology and anthropology. This research does not question the symbolic meaning of these gestures, but rather seeks to understand whether there was a psychological basis behind those specific poses – an innate impulse that made these

² I.B. Coreless, R. Limbo, R. Szylit Bousso, R.L. Wrenn, D. Head, N. Lickiss, H. Wass, 'Languages of Grief: A Model for Understanding the Expressions of the Bereaved', *Health Psychology and Behavioral Medicine* 2, no. 1 (2014): 132; P.C. Rosenblatt, 'Researching Grief: Cultural, Relational, and Individual Possibilities', *Journal of Loss and Trauma* 22, no. 8 (2017): 617–30.

³ I would like to express my gratitude to the editors of the *JSSEA* for giving me the opportunity to publish this aspect of my ongoing PhD research, and to the anonymous reviewer for their precious feedback, advice and suggestions, which have significantly improved and refined this work.

⁴ There are a few pieces of evidence where mourners are represented while grieving the deceased with personal laments (O. Goldwasser, 'Low' and 'High' Dialects in Ramesside Egyptian', in S. Grunert and I. Hafemann (eds.) *Textcorpus und Wörterbuch: Aspekte zur ägyptischen Lexicographie*, (Leiden, 1999), 311–28): see, for instance, the funerary scene in the tomb of Renny at El Khab, where Renny's wife and daughters 'grieve for him in words of universal sorrow' (Goldwasser, 'Low' and 'High' Dialects in Ramesside Egyptian', 321).

particular gestures, rather than others, allegorical.

For this study, the New Kingdom has been chosen as the most suitable time-frame within ancient Egyptian history, due to the significant changes in bereavement iconography that began in the 18th Dynasty.⁵ During this period, scenes of grieving individuals became more realistic, and the gestures performed by mourners appeared increasingly naturalistic.⁶ One of these major changes pertains to the depiction of men. Before the 18th Dynasty, men were included in funerary scenes too, but were represented in a solemn, almost impassable manner, as if unaffected by the pain experienced by female mourners, who were depicted crying and in despair instead.⁷ However, starting from the 18th Dynasty, men began to be shown more explicitly in grieving attitudes, often alongside female mourners, and performing the same gestures that had previously been exclusive to women – at least in iconography.⁸

Another crucial change in New Kingdom bereavement scenes pertains to the style in which mourners were portrayed. In fact, also because of the strong influence of the Amarna Period and its approach to body representation, both male and female mourners began to be depicted with pronounced anatomical contortions, as though their bodies physically expressed their internal anguish. From a psychological perspective, this depiction aligns with natural responses to grief. In moments of intense emotional distress (such as the death of a loved one), an increase in muscular tension is a natural reaction to elevated stress levels.⁹ Therefore, the portrayal of mourners' bodies in these scenes unfolds in a way that is entirely coherent from a psychological viewpoint and, again, may serve as evidence of the fact that, in New Kingdom iconography, bereavement gestures appeared to be more genuine and naturalistic.

⁵ I. Vivas Sainz, 'Sacredness, Gender and Empathy: Amarna and Post-Amarna (18th Dynasty) Mourning Scenes from the Egyptian Memphite Necropolis', *Eikón Imago* 10 (2021): 271–73.

⁶ J. Assmann, *Death and Salvation in Ancient Egypt* (Ithaca, 2005), 309–10; Vivas Sainz, 'Sacredness, Gender and Empathy', 274. However, it is important to underline the fact that even before the New Kingdom occasional representations of manifest grief were depicted in tombs: see, for instance, the decoration in the tomb of Ankhmahor in Saqqara, where a very vivid scene of grief is portrayed, with mourners twisting their bodies and even collapsing for the pain (M. Werbrouck, *Les pleureuses dans l'Égypte Ancienne* (Bruxelles, 1938), 17, fig. 2).

⁷ P. Barthelmess, *Der Übergang ins Jenseits in den thebanischen Beamtengräbern der Ramessidenzeit* (Heidelberg, 1992), 60–67. Moreover, see D. Sweeney, 'Brothers and Sons in Tomb Decoration at Deir el-Medina', in S. Töpfer, P. Del Vesco and F. Poole (eds.) *Deir el-Medina through the Kaleidoscope. Proceedings of the International Workshop, Turin, 8th–10th October 2018*, (Modena, 2022), 215–16, where the scholar remarks the tendency to represent grieving men in an impassible manner also in Ramesside tombs.

⁸ Vivas Sainz, '¿Los hombres también lloran? Representaciones masculinas en actitudes de duelo del Reino Nuevo', in *Actas del V Congreso Ibérico de Egiptología*, ed. L. Burgos et al. (Cuenca, 2017), 1081–96; Sweeney, 'Walking Alone Forever, Following You: Gender and Mourners' Laments from Ancient Egypt', *NIN: Journal of Gender Studies in Antiquity* 2 (2002): 27–48, especially 46.

⁹ E. Greene and B. Goodrich-Dunn, *The Psychology of the Body* (Philadelphia, 2004), 98; D.A. Weinberger, 'The Construct Validity of the Repressive Coping Style', in J.L. Singer (ed.) *Repression and Dissociation*, (Chicago, 1990), 337–86; J.J. Gross and R.W. Levenson, 'Hiding Feelings: The Acute Effects of Inhibiting Positive and Negative Emotions', *Journal of Abnormal Psychology* 106 (1997): 95–103.

Touching

Importance of Touching in Bereavement Contexts

As discussed in the previous paragraph, the standpoints of psychology and anthropology can be applied to ancient Egyptian iconography to provide insight into a highly complex topic. However, these disciplines also offer a broader understanding of the various facets that shape this intricate subject. An example is given by the central focus of this article: the diverse aspects that characterise a series of specific body gestures represented in New Kingdom bereavement scenes, namely mourners' physical expressions of supporting others and receiving support in return.

According to psychology, sensory communication is pivotal for grieving individuals to adjust.¹⁰ Following a traumatic event (such as the death of a loved one, as mentioned), even simple physical touch has been proven to alleviate pain,¹¹ by providing social support,¹² which is a crucial aspect of the healing process. Both psychology and anthropology assert that communal assistance enables the survivor to cope more effectively with bereavement, by allowing them to share the burden of grief with others (family, friends, etc.), who can offer both mental and physical support during the mourner's journey through pain and sorrow.¹³ This fundamental need for communal support – which is common to humankind – also underlies modern social and religious commemorations, such as funerals. Survivors benefit from the presence and sustain of others, also because 'according to social identity theory, our identity not only stems from individual but also from social characteristics'¹⁴ and, therefore, the community plays a crucial role in shaping and reaffirming personal identity, as explored in the following discussion.

In both ancient and modern contexts, someone's identity is the result of a series of social relationships and, consequently, is shaped according to this network: when these connections are perturbed – such as through the loss of a community member – the identities of those within this social web also undergo transformation.¹⁵ While the loss of a member of the society necessarily affects these relationships,¹⁶ the bonds

¹⁰ S.G. Shamay-Tsoory and N.I. Eisenberger, 'Getting in Touch: A Neural Model of Comforting Touch', *Neuroscience and Biobehavioral Reviews* 130 (2021): 263–73; A. Fotopoulou, M. Von Mohr and C. Krahé, 'Affective Regulation Through Touch: Homeostatic and Allostatic Mechanisms', *Current Opinion in Behavioral Sciences* 43 (2022): 80–87.

¹¹ P. Goldstein, I. Weissman-Fogel, G. Dumas, S.G. Shamay-Tsoory, 'Brain-to-Brain Coupling during Handholding Is Associated with Pain Reduction', *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* 115, no. 11 (2018): 2528–37; R.S. Sahi, M.C. Dieffenbach, S. Gan, M. Lee, L.I. Hazlett, S.M. Burns, 'The Comfort in Touch: Immediate and Lasting Effects of Handholding on Emotional Pain', *PLoS ONE* 16, no. 2 (2021): e02467532021; H. Sened, C. Levin, M. Shehab, N. Eisenberger and S. Shamay-Tsoory, 'I Wanna Hold Your Hand: Handholding over Gentle Stroking for Emotion Regulation', *PLoS ONE* 18, no. 4 (2023): e0284161.

¹² A. Dreisoerner, N.M. Junker, W. Schlotz, J. Heimrich, S. Bloemeke, B. Ditzen and R. van Dick., 'Self-Soothing Touch and Being Hugged Reduce Cortisol Responses to Stress: A Randomized Controlled Trial on Stress, Physical Touch, and Social Identity', *Comprehensive Psychoneuroendocrinology* 8 (2021): 100091.

¹³ A. Hooghe, R. Neimeyer and P. Rober, 'Cycling around an Emotional Core of Sadness: Emotion Regulation in a Couple after the Loss of a Child', *Qualitative Health Research* 22 (2012): 1226–28.

¹⁴ Dreisoerner *et al.*, 'Self-Soothing Touch', 2.

¹⁵ N. Jackoby, 'Grief as a Social Emotion: Theoretical Perspectives', *Death Studies* 36, no. 8 (2012): 685; K. Charmaz, *The Social Reality of Death* (Reading, 1980), 297.

¹⁶ C.-B. Arnason, 'Fall Apart and Put Yourself Back Together Again: The Anthropology of Death and

themselves endure – albeit in a modified form – and remain essential in helping survivors maintain their sense of social identity within the community.¹⁷ Touch serves as a physical means of conveying psychological reassurance and fulfils the function of the aforementioned social assistance,¹⁸ which is why it is considered a crucial mechanism for mourners in coping with loss and death. Moreover, touch plays a fundamental role in homeostatic regulation, aiding in the reconstruction of the balance of biological functioning after a stressful event, which, on the contrary, might cause a deep disturbance in someone's biological equilibrium.¹⁹

Homeostasis – the internal process through which an organism maintains stability across its various physical and chemical systems – is opposed to stress, as traumatic events disrupt this equilibrium and, consequently, dismantle the stability that homeostasis provides.²⁰ In moments of extreme distress (such as the death of a community member), homeostasis is inevitably disturbed, leading to physiological and psychological consequences, including illness.²¹ Touch, however, has been proven not only to provide emotional comfort,²² but also to play an active role in restoring homeostasis and reestablishing biological equilibrium, especially – but not necessarily – if the touch comes from a loved person, such as a spouse.²³

On this matter, in New Kingdom iconography numerous bereavement scenes feature depictions of touch as an integral part of mourning rituals. One of the most expressive ones is the portrayal of a husband and wife in the so-called *Death of Meketaten* in the Amarna Royal Tomb (TA26; Figure 1).

Examples from New Kingdom Iconography: Sustaining Each Other

In this scene, Akhenaten and Nefertiti are depicted bending over the lifeless body of one of their daughters, Meketaten.²⁴ The image is particularly poignant, portraying the pharaoh and queen in clear despair.²⁵ Even more noteworthy are the

Bereavement Counseling in Britain', *Mortality* 12 (2007): 58; M. Bradbury, *Representations of Death. A Social Psychological Perspective* (London, 1999), 75; C. Valentine, *Bereavement Narratives: Continuing Bonds in the 21st Century* (Abingdon and New York, 2008), 97.

¹⁷ Dreisoerner *et al.*, 'Self-Soothing Touch'.

¹⁸ 'Affiliative touch like hand-holding or hugging can be perceived as a form of social support', Dreisoerner *et al.*, 'Self-Soothing Touch', 2.

¹⁹ Fotopoulou, Von Mohr and Krahé, 'Affective Regulation'.

²⁰ Sened *et al.*, 'I Wanna Hold Your Hand', 2.

²¹ 'Homeostasis underlies many, if not all, disease processes', S. Libretti and Y. Puckett, 'Physiology, Homeostasis', *StatPearls* (Treasure Island, 2023), <<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK559138/>>.

²² Sahi *et al.*, 'The Comfort in Touch'.

²³ B.K. Jakubiak and B.C. Feeny, 'Affectionate Touch to Promote Relational, Psychological, and Physical Well-Being in Adulthood: A Theoretical Model and Review of the Research', *Personality and Social Psychology Review* 21, no. 3 (2017): 228–52.

²⁴ G.T. Martin, *The Royal Tomb at El-Amarna II: The Reliefs, Inscriptions and Architecture* (London, 1989): pl. 58. For an analysis of this scene, see also A. David, *Renewing Royal Imagery: Akhenaten and Family in the Amarna Tombs* (Leiden, 2021): 439–51, and especially 446–48, where the mourning gesture examined in this paragraph is presented.

²⁵ To learn more about this gesture from a psychological perspective, see Santini, 'Body Language as Expression of Mourning and Grief in New Kingdom Egypt: A Psychological Perspective', O. Kaper (ed.) in *Proceedings of the XIII International Congress of Egyptologists (XIII ICE)*, (Leuven, forthcoming).

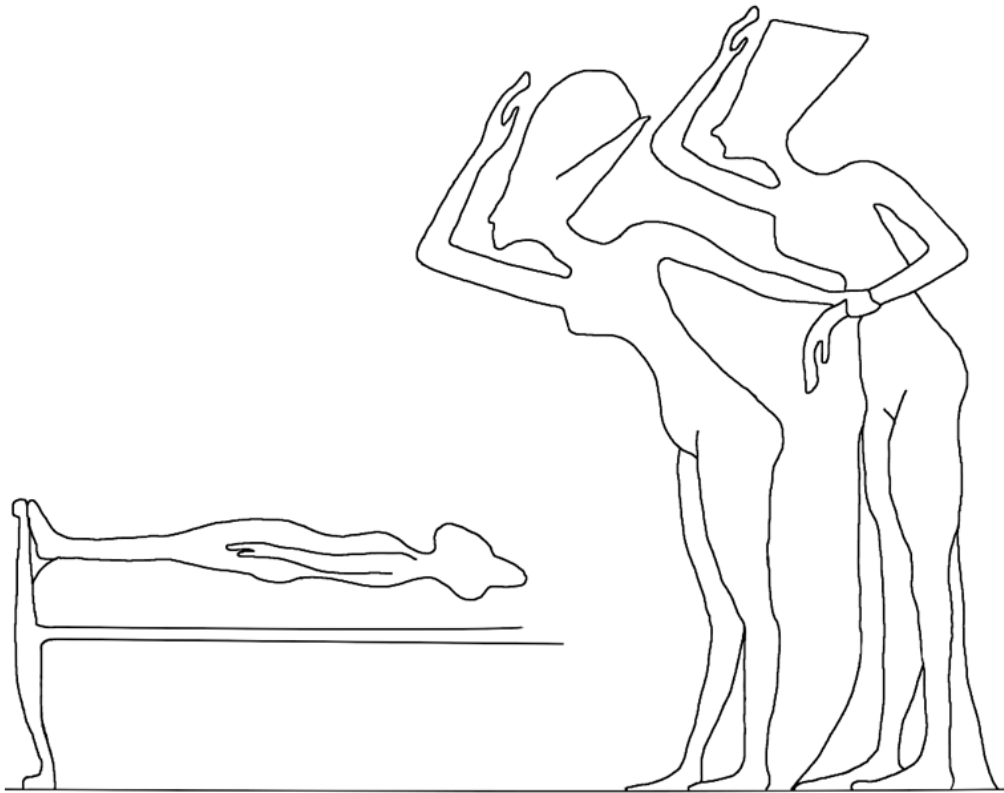


Figure 1 - Drawing of a detail of the Death of Meketaten scene in the Amarna Royal Tomb (TA26), with Akhenaten and Nefertiti in front of the lifeless body of their daughter (drawing by Simone Chiesi, after Martin, *The Royal Tomb at El-'Amarna II*: pl. 58).

body gestures of Akhenaten and Nefertiti, particularly the way the king is shown gripping the queen's arm tightly. From a psychological standpoint, this gesture aligns with the type of body language analysed in the previous paragraph: in moments of profound loss, the necessity to receive help and sustain from others (especially someone trustworthy) is instinctively expressed through this natural touch. In psychology, this gesture is considered a form of two-way sensory communication,²⁶ a type of touch that involves two people who both simultaneously provide and receive feedback, in an homeostatic mechanism which aims to restore equilibrium disrupted by grief.²⁷ Akhenaten and Nefertiti both benefit from this tactile exchange, by creating a sort of *feedback loop*, a dynamic interaction that serves to comfort and alleviate pain.²⁸

The *Death of Meketaten* scene is particularly heartrending; however, it is not an isolated example of touch in bereavement contexts. Similar depictions can be found in the necropolis of Saqqara. For instance, relief 1.1.a 6008, now held at the Pushkin State Museum of Fine Arts in Moscow, portrays a group of mourners in deep sorrow.²⁹ The body language of their movement clearly conveys the pain caused by

²⁶ Goldstein *et al.*, 'Brain-to-Brain Coupling'.

²⁷ Sened *et al.*, 'I Wanna Hold Your Hand', 2.

²⁸ Shamay-Tsoory and Eisenberger, 'Getting in Touch', 268–70.

²⁹ <<https://collection.pushkinmuseum.art/en/entity/OBJECT/138312?query=6008&index=1>>.

the tomb owner's death.³⁰ Some mourners are shown waving their hands in the air in anguish, others are collecting dust from the ground, and some kneel in despair. Among them, two standing mourners clasp hands, a particularly striking pose, given the intensely emotional scene. Once again, touch appears to serve as a means of support and solace between two individuals, facing a traumatic event. As proven by research in psychology and anthropology,³¹ this kind of physical communication is commonly employed by human beings as one of the major components of the healing process because, as mentioned, from a biological perspective, it decreases cortisol levels, thereby lowering stress and promoting emotional recovery.

A similar example of supportive touch in bereavement iconography also comes from the Saqqara necropolis. The relief ÄM 12411, from the tomb of Ptahemhat-Tj and now held at the Ägyptisches Museum und Papyrussammlung in Berlin, features numerous mourners expressing profound grief and sorrow (Figure 2).³² The fragmented scene consists of two registers: while in the upper one each mourner grieves individually, in the lower register eleven mourners are depicted as a collective group. Their body language conveys deep despair: some of them are crying, heads bowed, and a couple of them are touching their hands, as a sign of support. Notably, these mourners appear to be embracing rather than merely holding hands. Hugging, another form of sensory communication, is widely recognised in psychology and anthropology as an essential component of the healing process. This gesture is also frequently represented in New Kingdom bereavement scenes, as discussed in the following paragraph.

Hugging

Importance of Hugging in Bereavement Contexts

From a psychological and anthropological standpoint, hugging represents another crucial component of the bereavement process. Like simple physical touch, hugs provide social support³³ and decrease stress,³⁴ even more effectively than hand-

³⁰ While the exact tomb remains unidentified, the relief has been traced to the Saqqara area. For further details, see Vivas Sainz, 'Sacredness, Gender and Empathy', 227–28; S. Hodjash and O. Berlev, *The Egyptian Reliefs and Stelae in the Pushkin Museum of Fine Arts* (Moscow, 1982), 121–22.

³¹ Sened *et al.*, 'I Wanna Hold Your Hand'; Dreisoerner *et al.*, 'Self-Soothing Touch', 8; S.L. Master, N.I. Eisenberger, S.E. Taylor, B.D. Naliboff, D. Shirinyan and M.D. Lieberman, 'A Picture's Worth: Partner Photographs Reduce Experimentally Induced Pain', *Psychological Science* 20 (2009): 1317–18; B. Ditzen, I.D. Newmann, G. Bodenmann, B. con Dawans, R.A. Turner, U. Ehlert, M. Heinrichs, 'Effects of Different Kinds of Couple Interaction on Cortisol and Heart Rate Responses to Stress in Women', *Psychoneuroendocrinology* 32 (2007): 565–74; K.M. Grewen, B.J. Anderson, S. Girdler and K.C. Light, 'Warm Partner Contact Is Related to Lower Cardiovascular Reactivity', *Behavioral Medicine* 29 (2003): 123–30.

³² C.-B. Arnst, 'Zugeschrieben: zwei weitere Reliefs aus dem Grab des Ptahemhat-Tj in Sakkara', in *Typen, Motive, Stilmittel* (Heidelberg, 2021), 147–73.

³³ S. Cohen, D. Janicki-Deverts, R.B. Turner and W.J. Doyle, 'Does Hugging Provide Stress-Buffering Social Support? A Study of Susceptibility to Upper Respiratory Infection and Illness', *Psychological Science* 26, no. 2 (2014): 125.

³⁴ Ditzen *et al.*, 'Effects of Different Kinds of Couple Interaction'; Grewen *et al.*, 'Warm Partner Contact'; J.A. Coan, H.S. Schaefer and R.J. Davidson, 'Lending a Hand: Social Regulation of the Neural Response to Threat', *Psychological Science* 17 (2006): 1032–39.



Figure 2 - Relief ÄM 12411 (Neues Museum, Berlin) from the tomb of Ptahemhat-Tj at Saqqara (Credits: State Museums of Berlin, Egyptian Museum and Papyrus Collection / Margarete Büsing, <<https://id.smb.museum/object/606948>>).

holding. In fact, it has been proven that non-sexual interpersonal physical interactions, such as hugging, lower cortisol levels while simultaneously increasing oxytocin ones,³⁵ *de facto* reducing both physical and emotional tension.

Skin-to-skin contact and other forms of tactile stimulation improve stress coping in animals and humans. In healthy adults, receiving massages has been associated with lower blood pressure, heart rate, cortisol levels, and decreased anxiety. Likewise, receiving frequent hugs relates to lower blood pressure and heart rate as well as to faster recovery times [...]. Touch improves stress coping through several physiological mechanisms. As touch from others (e.g. grooming) or consoling touch (e.g. stroking, hand-holding, or hugging) communicates proximity, positive affiliation, and might be perceived as a signal of safety, positive effects are likely mediated by increased secretion of the neuropeptide oxytocin.³⁶

In addition to the benefits mentioned above, hugging also provides reassurance and a protective effect, which, especially in highly stressful situations, is perceived as a fundamental part of the healing process. In fact, hugs convey empathy and affection, and, thus, provide an important contribution ‘to the protective influence of perceived support against the pathogenic effects of stress’.³⁷ Numerous studies have been conducted on the beneficial effects of hugs in challenging circumstances,³⁸ such as the

³⁵ M.L.M. Murphy, D. Janicki-Deverts and S. Cohen, ‘Receiving a Hug is Associated with the Attenuation of Negative Mood that Occurs on Days with Interpersonal Conflict’, *PLoS ONE* 13, no. 10 (2018): e0203522; Dreisoerner *et al.*, ‘Self-Soothing Touch’, 2.

³⁶ Dreisoerner *et al.*, ‘Self-Soothing Touch’, 1–2.

³⁷ Cohen *et al.*, ‘Does Hugging Provide Stress-Buffering Social Support?’, 144.

³⁸ H.T. Reis and B.C. Patrick ‘Attachment and Intimacy: Component Processes’, in E.T. Higgins and A.W. Kruglanski (eds.) *Social Psychology: Handbook of Basic Principles*, (New York, 1996), 523–63; M.J. Hertenstein, D. Keltner, B. App, B.A. Buleit and A.R. Jaskolka, ‘Touch Communicates Distinct Emotions’, *Emotion* 6 (2006): 528–33; J. Holt-Lunstad, W.A. Birmingham and K.C. Light, ‘Influence of a ‘Warm Touch’ Support Enhancement Intervention among Married Couples on

death of a loved person, and it has been demonstrated that physical communication plays a critical role in the bereavement process – an aspect that also appears to be depicted in New Kingdom iconography.

Examples from New Kingdom Iconography: Adult and Young Mourners

One of the best examples of hugging as a form of sustenance and support in New Kingdom bereavement scenes can once again be found in the Amarna Royal Tomb (TA26). The previously analysed *Death of Meketaten* scene not only depicts Akhenaten and Nefertiti engaging in this unique bodily expression, but also presents a series of mourners who grieve the young princess with marked intensity, expressing their internal anguish through physical contortions. Among the numerous groups of mourners, some individuals are shown embracing one another, not only as a means of *psychologically* sustaining the burden of Meketaten's death, but also to *physically* support each other. In some cases, mourners appear on the verge of fainting, unable to stand due to their overwhelming sorrow.³⁹ From a psychological and anthropological perspective, these hugs serve not only to provide emotional reassurance and social support, but also to offer literal physical reinforcement, as some grieving individuals are unable to remain upright on their own. Although in TA26 mourners engaging in this sensory communication are adults, there are numerous examples of bereavement scenes in which the embrace occurs between an adult and a child. This paragraph will examine two such case-studies, both from the Theban area.

The first scene is depicted in tomb TT55, the burial place of vizier Ramose, which is located in Sheikh Abd el Qurna (Figure 3).⁴⁰

The two painted registers on the south wall of the tomb hall illustrate the funerary procession for the deceased. In the upper register, the coffin is transported on a sledge by men and animals, while in the lower one the offering procession takes place. In this lower register, numerous mourners – divided into groups – are visible. Notably, a group of twenty-one grieving women is depicted crying, raising their hands, and looking toward the sarcophagus shown in the register above them. These mourners consist of women of various ages, and children are also present among them. While all mourners act as a collective group, they do not physically interact with one another, except for a young grieving girl, who is shown embracing an adult mourner instead. Unfortunately, the hieroglyphic text above this group provides little information about the identity of these people, as it simply states: 'The people of his household say: 'The great shepherd has gone; he passes by us. Come, lead us to pasture''.⁴¹ It has been suggested that the adult mourner whom the young one is embracing may be Ramose's wife, as she is the first adult woman in the group, and is depicted with a sagging bare breast – often an artistic convention indicating advanced

Ambulatory Blood Pressure, Oxytocin, Alpha Amylase, and Cortisol', *Psychosomatic Medicine* 70 (2008): 976–85; Cohen *et al.*, 'Does Hugging Provide Stress-Buffering Social Support?'; Murphy, Janicki-Deverts and Cohen, 'Receiving a Hug'; Dreisoerner *et al.*, 'Self-Soothing Touch'.

³⁹ Martin, *The Royal Tomb at El-Amarna II*: pl. 58.

⁴⁰ B. Porter and R. Moss, *Topographical Bibliography of Ancient Egyptian Hieroglyphic Texts, Reliefs, and Paintings I: The Theban Necropolis. Part I: Private Tombs* (Oxford, 1927), 105–11.

⁴¹ N. de Garis Davies, *The Tomb of the Vizier Ramose* (London, 1941), 25.



Figure 3 - Mourners from the tomb of Ramose, TT55 (credits: Kairoinfo4u, Flickr, "Ramose Theban Tomb TT55" <<https://www.flickr.com/photos/manna4u/11207473833/in/album-72157600225911077>>).

age.⁴² However, this remains purely speculative, as no further evidence clarifies the identities of the mourners. Regardless of their exact relationship, the young grieving girl and the adult mourner appear to share a significant bond, though not necessarily a biological one. The girl clings tightly to the woman's waist, and it is reasonable to assume that the act of hugging serves a dual purpose: helping the older mourner endure her grief, while simultaneously providing the child with comfort through physical closeness. As previously highlighted, this form of sensory communication offers profound social support and, in this case as well, serves as a deeply reassuring and consoling gesture in the face of such a traumatic event.

The second example may carry a different meaning, compared to the previous one, due to the body language of the two mourners involved in the pose. The scene comes from the tomb of the Divine Father of Ptah in the 'Temple of Millions of Years' of Amenhotep III, Amenemnet (TT277, Qurnet Murai)⁴³ and it depicts a group of female mourners as part of the funeral procession. These grieving figures are depicted in the northern wall of the tomb, but their presence is closely connected to the rest of the register, which also extends along the western and eastern walls (even if here the decoration is now partially lost). The group of mourners precedes the barque where the sarcophagus is lying, carried by people and animals, and follows the rest of the funerary procession. Mourners are shown facing the procession, with their backs turned to the sarcophagus. This is true for all the grieving women, except for the very first one who, in fact, is uniquely depicted facing the sarcophagus. In front of her, a

⁴² N. de Garis Davies, *The Tomb of the Vizier Ramose*, 25.

⁴³ PM II, Part 1: 353–55. <<https://www.flickr.com/photos/24729615@N00/31439810198/in/album-72157672061352307>>

young girl clings to her waist, in a pose that might be described as a hug, though it differs significantly from the example in TT55. In this case, the embrace seems less like an expression of comfort and more like an attempt by the young mourner to restrain the adult one, preventing her from moving toward something or someone on the left side of the scene – most likely, the sarcophagus.⁴⁴ Here, the act of hugging appears to take on a different role: beyond providing support and reassurance, it may also serve as an attempt to prevent further distress – in this case, stopping the mourner from reaching the sarcophagus and, in some symbolic way, reliving Amenemnet's death.⁴⁵ As in the previous example, unfortunately, the exact relationship between these mourners and the deceased remains unclear. However, in this case, we are at least able to identify the grieving woman depicted with the young girl, as a hieratic inscription reads: 'For the *ka* of the Chantress of Amun Takheret'.⁴⁶

Conclusions

The research project underlying this paper aims to understand why certain bereavement gestures became symbolic in New Kingdom funerary iconography, rather than others. Given the universality and timeless nature of grief, it is possible that these body language expressions were originally rooted in psychological mechanisms – transforming natural human physical reactions to loss into crystallised poses that took on allegorical meaning over the centuries. Among the numerous examples analysed as case studies for this project, a series of gestures depicted in New Kingdom tomb wall decorations reflect the need to *support* others and *be supported* in turn following the death of a community member. These gestures, performed by both male and female mourners in ancient Egyptian iconography, find parallels in body language examined by psychology and anthropology in response to traumatic events. Numerous studies have demonstrated the beneficial effects of different forms of touch (such as simple contact, hand-holding, and hugging) during particularly stressful situations. The fact that these same gestures appear in New Kingdom tomb scenes suggests their significance not only from a cultural or symbolic perspective but also from a biological standpoint. It stands to reason that mourners depicted engaging in these various forms of physical expression were closely connected to the tomb owner. However, unfortunately, in many cases the lack of inscriptions makes it impossible to determine their exact relationship with the deceased. Nonetheless, their gestures convey profound grief, one that needs the soothing effects of sensory communication, including stress and pain reduction, decrease of cortisol levels and increase of oxytocin ones, and social support.

⁴⁴ J. Vandier d'Abbadie, *Deux tombes Ramessides à Gournet-Mourraï* (Cairo, 1954), 11–12.

⁴⁵ Cohen *et al.*, 'Does Hugging Provide Stress-Buffering Social Support?', 125.

⁴⁶ Vandier d'Abbadie, *Deux tombes Ramessides*, 34.

The Unknown Nebkheperenre: Mariette's Enigmatic Scarab Resolved

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Abstract: In 1880, Auguste Mariette published a scarab bearing the name of an otherwise unknown pharaoh, 'Nebkheperenre', and that of his mother, Meritre. Some Egyptologists have taken this object as evidence for the ancestry of Tutankhamun, whose prenomen was 'Nebkheperure'. Others have regarded it as useless for the subject. In this article, I argue that Mariette made two mistakes copying the scarab, and that it commemorated 'Aakheperure' Amenhotep II and his mother.

Résumé: Auguste Mariette publia en 1880 un scarabée portant le nom d'un pharaon jusque-là inconnu, « Nebkheperenre », et celui de sa mère, Méritre. Certains égyptologues ont pris cet objet comme preuve de l'ascendance de Toutânkhamon, avec le prénom « Nebkheperure ». D'autres ont considéré qu'il n'était pas utile pour le sujet. Dans cet article, je soutiens que Mariette a commis deux erreurs copiant le scarabée et qu'il commémorait « Aakheperure » Amenhotep II et sa mère.

Keywords: Auguste Mariette, Nebkheperenre, Meritre, Tutankhamun, Amenhotep II

Mots-clés: Auguste Mariette, Nebkheperenre, Méritre, Toutânkhamon, Amenhotep II

Among the poorly documented finds of nineteenth century Egyptology is a scarab drawn in Auguste Mariette's *Abydos: descriptions des fouilles* (figure 1A), which is now lost.¹ Mariette did not record its size or material, and only noted that it came from the Abydene Temple of Osiris.² The scarab's significance lay in the fact that it bears a name, 'Nebkheperenre', similar to Tutankhamun's prenomen, 'Nebkheperure', alongside the words 'the king's mother Meritre'. It could therefore add to our knowledge of Dynasty 18 genealogy. In this article, however, I argue that Mariette made two copying errors, and that scarab originally honoured 'Aakheperure' Amenhotep II together with his mother.

We begin by examining the enigmatic scarab's inscription. On the left is 'the perfect god Nebkheperenre' (*ntr nfr nb-hpr-n-r*), a throne name otherwise unattested in the archaeological record. On the right is 'the king's mother Meritre' (*mwt nsw mryt-r*). Not surprisingly, the resemblance between Nebkheperenre and

¹ A. Mariette, *Abydos: description des fouilles, tome deuxième: Temple de Sêti (supplément), Temple de Ramsès, Temple d'Osiris, Petit Temple de l'Ouest, Nécropole* (Paris, 1880), pl. 40n. For another misplaced discovery of Mariette's, see S. Pasquali, 'The Lost 'Linant de Bellefonds Stela' of the Chief-Treasurer Maya and its Hymn and Prayer to the Sun-God', *ZÄS* 151, no. 1 (2024): 110–25. I would like to thank Daniel Warne and Kathleen O'Rourke for commenting on a draft of this article.

² In his table of contents, Mariette merely recorded 'Scarabées portant des noms divers et des légendes royale' *Abydos*, 54.



Figure 1. Small Objects with Royal Names.
A, Scarab from A. Mariette, *Abydos: description des fouilles, tome deuxième: Temple de Sêti (supplément), Temple de Ramsès, Temple d'Osiris, Petit Temple de l'Ouest, Nécropole*. (Paris: Imprimerie nationale, 1880), pl. 40n.

B, Signet Ring with Tutankhamun's Prenomen, ca. 1336-1327 BCE, gold, bezel: w. 2.9 cm; h. 1.9 cm, Metropolitan Museum of Art 22.9.3, accessed July 23, 2024, <https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/549200>.

C, Cat Design Amulet Inscribed with the Cartouche of Aakheperkare (Thutmose I), ca. 1504-1492 BCE, green glazed steatite, l. 1.45 cm, Metropolitan Museum of Art 26.7.148, accessed July 23, 2024, <https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/545552>.

D, Plaque: Amenhotep II Offers Incense, ca. 1427-1400 BCE, steatite, 1.3 × 1 × 0.5 cm, Chicago Art Institute 1894.1337, recto, accessed July 23, 2024, <https://www.artic.edu/artworks/133861/plaque-amenhotep-ii-offers-incense-amun-re-seated-on-throne>.

Tutankhamun's prenomen, Nebkheperure (*nb-hprw-rꜥ*), led some scholars to draw conclusions about the boy pharaoh's ancestry. Citing Mariette's publication, Alfred Wiedemann gave the name of Tutankhamun's mother as 'Ra-Meri-t',³ while Wallis Budge said it was 'Merit-Rā'.⁴ Christiane Desroches-Noblecourt was more reserved, making Meritre one of several maternal candidates.⁵

Evidently, in order to identify Nebkheperenre as Nebkheperure, we must presume that Mariette mistook plural strokes | | | (*w*) at the end of the prenomen for three waves of a water glyph ~~~~~ (*n*). Yet, despite the simplicity of this emendation, many later Egyptologists have dismissed the scarab as worthless for investigating Dynasty 18 ancestry. Otto Schaden stated that it 'offers no solution to the question of Tutankhamun's origins'.⁶ Ute and Andreas Effland have remarked that the scarab only contributes to confusion on the subject,⁷ while Marianne Eaton-Krauss has accepted Mariette's drawing as accurate and ruled out Meritre as Tutankhamun's mother.⁸ Most recently, Aidan Dodson has hypothesized that Nebkheperenre is an 'otherwise unknown' ruler, 'probably to be dated to the Second Intermediate Period'.⁹

For my part, I am confident that Mariette misread the scarab's inscription, but I am equally convinced that it never referred to Tutankhamun. Regarding the latter point, even if we restore the plural strokes at the bottom of the first cartouche, we are

³ A. Wiedemann, *Ägyptische Geschichte, Band 2: Von dem Tode Tutmes' III. bis auf Alexander den Großen* (Gotha, 1884), 404.

⁴ E.A.W. Budge, *Tutankhamen: Amenism, Atenism and Egyptian Monotheism* (London, 1923), 1.


⁵ C. Desroches-Noblecourt, *Tutankhamen: Life and Death of a Pharaoh* (1st ed. 1963; London, 1989), 133, cf. 291.



⁶ O.J. Schaden, *The God's Father Ay* (Ph.D. diss., University of Minnesota, 1977), 152. Schaden inaccurately added a fourth wave to the water sign in his copy of Mariette's drawing.

⁷ U. and A. Effland, *Abydos: Tor zur ägyptischen Unterwelt* (Darmstadt/Mainz, 2013), 31.



⁸ M. Eaton-Krauss, *The Unknown Tutankhamun* (London, 2016), 130 n. 1.

⁹ A. Dodson, *Tutankhamun, King of Egypt: His Life and Afterlife* (Cairo: American University in Cairo Press, 2023), 143. Cf. A. Weigall, *A History of the Pharaohs, Volume 2: From the Accession of Amenemhet I of the Twelfth Dynasty to the Death of Thutmose III of the Eighteenth Dynasty, 2111 to 1441 B.C.* (London, 1927), 208–9.

left with an unconventional vertical writing of Nebkheperure in which the basket sign  (*nb*) appears in the second place. From Tutankhamun's Golden Throne (JE 62028, 62046) to the gold signet ring in the Metropolitan Museum of Art (22.9.3) (figure 1B), the basket usually sits at the bottom of the group and the other glyphs rest


upon it. The arrangement makes the beetle  (*hpr*) appear to roll the sun  (*r^c*) – as the *Scarabaeus sacer* rolls a dung ball – and exhibits the characteristic balance of Egyptian orthography.¹⁰ Regarding the former point, however, we should only posit a new pharaoh as a last resort. This is not to say that our knowledge of Egyptian history, particularly the Second Intermediate Period, is comprehensive, but that we ought to exhaust other reasonable possibilities before adding to the king lists.



In fact, our difficulties with this scarab can be overcome if we presume that Mariette made not one, but two errors. Such misinterpretations might seem unlikely for an archaeologist who was both an able draftsman and the founder of the Service des Antiquités de l'Égypte, but signs on small objects can be ambiguous, particularly

simple ones like the wood column  (*ʿz*).¹¹ Compare the base of a green glazed steatite cat amulet in the Metropolitan Museum of Art (26.7.148) bearing the prenomen of Thutmose I, 'Aakheperkare' (*ʿz-hpr-kz-r^c*) (figure 1C). Before recognizing the throne name, we might mistakenly interpret the second sign as a platform  (*mz^c*) or even water.¹²

What if the basket on Mariette's scarab was really the wood column? Then, after correcting the water glyph to the plural strokes, we would have 'Aakheperure' (*ʿz-hprw-r^c*), the prenomen of Amenhotep II, who reigned a century before Tutankhamun. Sceptics of this restoration might examine the recto of a steatite plaque of the same pharaoh in the Chicago Art Institute (1894.1337), which features a wood column sign that looks like a basket as well as plural strokes which resemble three waves of water (figure 1D).¹³

Lest there be any doubt that Mariette's scarab referred to Amenhotep II, we observe that the name of this pharaoh's mother was 'Meritre-Hatshepsut' (*mryt-r^c hzt-špswt*), sometimes just 'Meritre', as on our object.¹⁴ Meritre-Hatshepsut was a commoner by birth and became Thutmose III's queen probably during the fifth decade

¹⁰ Exceptions seem largely confined to cases of limited space. E.g., P. Newberry recorded a scarab from the Petrie Collection at University College, London, where the sun and the basket are squeezed to the right of the beetle, above the hoe  (*mr*) in the title 'beloved of Ptah, lord of the sky' (*mry pth nb pt*). *Ancient Egyptian Scarabs: An Introduction to Egyptian Seals and Signet Rings* (1st ed. 1906; Chicago, 1975), pl. XXXI, 32.

¹¹ Such misreadings are not uncommon. E.g., on a gold signet ring of Akhenaten, Newberry mistook the harpoon  (*w^c*) for the adze and block of wood  (*stp*), incorrectly giving the second part of the pharaoh's prenomen as 'Setepenre', *Ancient Egyptian Scarabs*, 104, pl. I.

¹² The water glyph was sometimes inscribed as straight line. Cf. the lapis lazuli scarab from the tomb of Sithathoryunet (BSA Tomb 8), which bears Amenemhet III's prenomen, 'Nimaatre' (*ni-mz^ct-r^c*), in the Metropolitan Museum of Art (16.1.22). Accessed July 23, 2024, <https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/545529>.

¹³ This plaque's inscription is not the only instance of the wood column resembling the basket. Cf. the steatite scarab of Amenhotep II in the Israel Museum in Jerusalem (76.31.2166). Accessed July 26, 2024, <https://www.imj.org.il/en/collections/598640-0>.

¹⁴ E.g., she is called simply Meritre on the north face of pillar 1 in her husband's burial chamber. C. H. Roehrig, 'The Building Activities of Thutmose III in the Valley of the Kings', in E.H. Cline and D. O'Connor (eds.) *Thutmose III: A New Biography* (Ann Arbor, 2006), fig. 6.19.

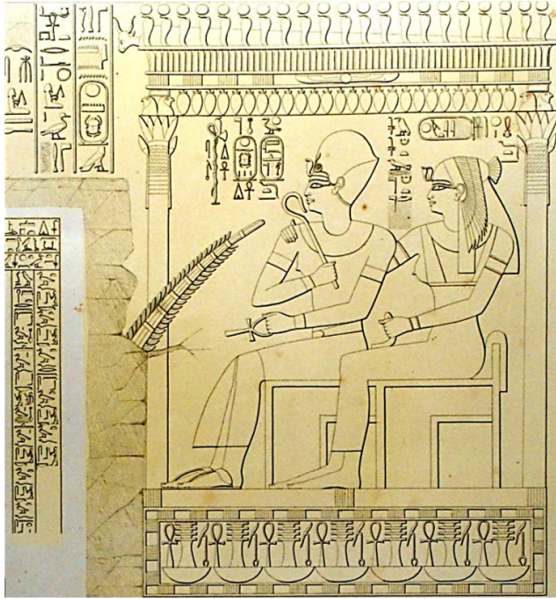


Figure 2. Scene Depicting Amenhotep II and His Mother Meritre-Hatshepsut in the Transverse Hall of the Tomb of Re at Sheikh ‘Abd el-Qurna (TT 72) from C. R. Lepsius, *Denkmaeler aus Aegypten und Aethiopien, Band V, enthaltend Abtheilung III Blatt I-XC* (Berlin: Nicolaische Buchhandlung, 1849-1858), pl. LXII.



Figure 3. Juxtaposition of ‘Nebkheperrenre’ from Mariette’s Scarab with ‘Aakheperure’ from the Transverse Hall of the Tomb of Re at Sheikh ‘Abd el-Qurna (TT 72).

of his reign.¹⁵ Catharine Roehrig has noted that as the mother of the young heir apparent, she received great honours, appearing three times in her husband’s tomb (KV 34) and having her own tomb (KV 42) cut nearby.¹⁶ Indeed, some scholars believe that at the end of his reign, Thutmose III feared relatives of his late stepmother Hatshepsut would try to alter the succession, and thus began the vandalism of her monuments as well as a co-regency with his son.¹⁷ Such a crisis, if it occurred, could only magnify Meritre-Hatshepsut’s importance.

In a now heavily damaged relief from Transverse Hall in the tomb of Re at Sheikh ‘Abd el-Qurna (TT 72), the owner and three ‘brothers’ present offerings to Amenhotep II and ‘the king’s mother’ Meritre-Hatshepsut, who are seated under a canopy (figure 2).¹⁸ On a grander scale, this scene reduplicates the original message of Mariette’s scarab. As we have seen, the object provides no evidence for Tutankhamun’s ancestry, and its Nebkheperrenre is nothing but a phantasm. On the contrary, it adds to the evidence for the importance of Meritre in Amenhotep II’s

¹⁵ D. O’Connor, ‘Thutmose III: An Enigmatic Pharaoh’, in E.H. Cline and D. O’Connor (eds.) *Thutmose III: A New Biography* (Ann Arbor, 2006), 34.

¹⁶ Roehrig, ‘Building Activities of Thutmose III’, 248-250. Meritre-Hatshepsut was never buried in KV 42, however. Cf. *PM I*, part II, , 559.

¹⁷ E.g., K. Cooney, *The Woman Who Would Be King* (New York, 2014), 221–22. Cf. B.M. Bryan, ‘The 18th Dynasty Before the Amarna Period’, in I. Shaw (ed.) *The Oxford History of Ancient Egypt* (Oxford, 2000), 243; D. O’Connor, ‘Thutmose III: An Enigmatic Pharaoh’, 34.

¹⁸ *PM I*, part I, 142. The ‘brothers’ are probably Re’s colleagues in the Theban priesthood. Based on a reference to both Thutmose III and Amenhotep II as ‘Horus’ in the accompanying inscription, P.A. Piccione has dated this scene to the co-regency period. ‘A Family of Priests in the Theban Tombs of Ahmose and R’a (TT 121 and 72)’, in R.K. Ritner (ed.) *Essays for the Library of Seshat: Studies Presented to Janet H. Johnson on the Occasion of Her 70th Birthday* (Chicago, 2017), 272–75.

succession.¹⁹

As a final aid to comprehension, Mariette's erroneous transcription of 'Nebkheperenre' may be juxtaposed with 'Aakheperure' from the tomb of Re (Figure 3).

¹⁹ For more on Amenhotep II's family and succession, see P. Der Manuelian, *Studies in the Reign of Amenophis II* (Hildesheim: Gerstenberg, 1987), esp. 19ff., 172ff.

Blue-Painted Pottery in the Royal Ontario Museum*

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Abstract: The blue-painted pottery corpus at the Royal Ontario Museum (ROM) comprises seven whole or restored jars and eight sherds, representing a significant yet short-lived phenomenon in New Kingdom Egyptian material culture. Manufactured between the mid-Eighteenth and Twentieth Dynasties, this pottery is distinguished by a vibrant blue colour and a broad range of decorative motifs, primarily floral and linear patterns, often outlined with black or red lines. Modelled decoration featuring the head of the goddess Hathor is also a notable feature. While four of the complete jars have been previously published, the remaining items have yet to appear in academic literature. The three unpublished whole jars are of particular interest due to their uncertain acquisition history, having been obtained before the ROM's formal establishment. Through a comparative analysis of typology and stylistic parallels with similar vessels in other collections, this article proposes plausible sites of origin, contributing to ongoing discussions regarding the production and distribution of blue-painted pottery across Egypt. A key objective of this paper is to situate all vessels within an established typological framework, facilitating classification based on decorative techniques, motifs, and vessel forms. The publication and analysis of these previously unpublished vessels aim to foster further scholarly engagement and provide crucial data for comparative research across museum collections.

Résumé: Le corpus de poterie peint en bleu du Musée royal de l'Ontario (ROM) comprend sept jarres entières ou restaurées et huit fragments, représentant un phénomène significatif mais de courte durée dans la culture matérielle égyptienne du Nouvel Empire. Fabriquée entre la dix-huitième et la vingtième dynastie, cette poterie se distingue par une couleur bleue vibrante et une large gamme de motifs décoratifs, principalement des motifs floraux et linéaires, souvent délimités par des lignes noires ou rouges. La décoration modelée représentant la tête de la déesse Hathor est également un élément notable. Bien que quatre des jarres complètes aient déjà été publiées, les objets restants n'ont pas encore été présentés dans la littérature académique. Les trois jarres entières non publiées suscitent un intérêt particulier en raison de leur histoire d'acquisition incertaine, ayant été obtenues avant l'établissement officiel du ROM. Par une analyse comparative de la typologie et des parallèles stylistiques avec des vaisseaux similaires dans d'autres collections, cet article propose des sites d'origine plausibles, contribuant aux discussions en cours concernant la production et la distribution de la poterie peinte en bleu à travers l'Égypte. Un objectif clé de cet article est de situer tous les vaisseaux dans un cadre typologique établi, facilitant leur classification en fonction des techniques décoratives, des motifs et des formes de vaisseaux. La publication et l'analyse de ces vaisseaux auparavant inédits visent à encourager un engagement académique plus poussé et à fournir des données cruciales pour la recherche comparative à travers les collections de musées.

* This project is based on the invaluable legacy data originally collected by the late Dr. Steven Shubert, with the assistance of Dr. Rexine Hummel. An earlier version of their work was intended to be presented at the ARCE 2020 Annual Meeting, which was ultimately cancelled due to the COVID-19 pandemic. This paper is a direct continuation of their initial research and remains largely true to the objectives they set out, now being developed into an article for publication.

Key words: Royal Ontario Museum, Blue-painted pottery, New Kingdom, Ceramic Analysis, Amarna

Mots-clés: Musée royal de l'Ontario, Poterie peinte en bleu, Nouvel Empire, Analyse de la céramique, Amarna

Introduction:

One of the most prominent features of the ceramic corpus from the Egyptian New Kingdom (c. 1550 to 1070 BCE) is blue-painted pottery, which emerged around the middle of the Eighteenth Dynasty, becoming particularly widespread during the reigns of Amenhotep III and Akhenaten and continued through the Twentieth Dynasty. The demand for such pottery was likely driven by the increasing desire for luxurious and ornate items and communal feasting during this period.¹ The Royal Ontario Museum (ROM) holds a notable collection of blue-painted pottery, comprising seven complete or restored jars and eight sherds.² While four of these jars have already been published,³ the remaining objects have not yet been included in academic literature. Of particular interest are the three unpublished whole jars, as their acquisition history remains uncertain. Through a comparative analysis of typology and stylistic parallels with similar vessels in other collections, this paper seeks to propose plausible sites of origin, contributing to ongoing discussions about the production and distribution of blue-painted pottery across Egypt. A central goal of this paper is to situate all vessels within a well-established typological framework, facilitating classification based on decorative techniques, motifs, and vessel forms. By publishing and analyzing these previously unpublished vessels and reanalyzing the ones that have already been published, this article aims to encourage further scholarly engagement and provide valuable data for comparative research across museum collections.

The origin of blue-painted pottery is rooted in the Egyptian tradition of decorating vessels with floral garlands or collars for festive occasions.⁴ The painted motifs on the pottery likely drew inspiration from these garlands, and often included the backing strips that secured the petals in place.⁵ Blue-painted pottery is characterized by a vibrant blue colour and wide array of decorative floral and linear motifs, often outlined in black or red. Additionally, moulded decorations are frequently incorporated, particularly the heads of the goddess Hathor or the god Bes. While visually striking, the decorative style lacks any sense of movement with the exception of marsh scenes.⁶ The vessel shapes were largely drawn from the standard repertoire of New Kingdom ceramics, although a few are specific to decorated pottery.⁷ The decorative schemes of blue-painted pottery seem standardized, with little variation across different vessels, as though assigned from a pattern book of

¹ C. Hope, 'Blue-Painted Pottery', in E. Brovarski, S.K. Doll and R.E. Freed (eds.) *Egypt's Golden Age: The Art of Living in the New Kingdom: Exhibition Catalogue* (Boston, 1982), 88.

² Refer to Appendix 1.

³ C. Hope, 'Blue-Painted and Polychrome Decorated Pottery from Amarna: A Preliminary Corpus', *Cahiers de la céramique égyptienne* 2 (1991), 25–55.

⁴ Hope, 'Blue-Painted Pottery', 88.

⁵ D. Arnold, 'Techniques and Traditions of Manufacture in the Pottery of Ancient Egypt', in D. Arnold and J. Bourriau (eds.) *An Introduction to Ancient Egyptian Pottery* (Frankfort am Main, 1993), 100.

⁶ Hope, 'Blue-Painted Pottery', 88.

⁷ Hope, 'Blue-Painted Pottery', 88.

designs.⁸ This consistency suggests that blue-painted pottery was likely produced by a select group of skilled ceramic artists working in major production centres, rather than by any single, individual potter.⁹ Over time, noticeable chronological changes can be observed in the decorative motifs between the Eighteenth and Twentieth Dynasties.¹⁰ Floral motifs, common in earlier examples, gradually gave way to simpler colour bands, while more linear and abstract patterns became prevalent.¹¹ Because these decorative schemes are consistently applied to specific vessel locations, and the number of decorative registers correlates with vessel size, it is possible to infer the part of the vessel from which a fragment originates and its approximate time period.

Production and Manufacture:

It was once believed that blue-painted pottery was exclusively produced in Thebes, Amarna and Memphis.¹² Due to its prevalence at palatial sites like Malqata and Amarna, it was often labelled as ‘palace pottery’,¹³ leading to unsubstantiated interpretation of original provenance and context for artifacts without known provenience. The blue-painted pottery at the ROM was treated this way, with unprovenanced vessels and sherds being recorded as likely originating from Amarna. However, current research indicates that while the manufacturing of blue-painted pottery appears concentrated in royal centres such as Memphis, Gurob, Amarna, and Malqata, its distribution was far broader.¹⁴ During the Eighteenth Dynasty, the largest deposits were found in Thebes (particularly Malqata¹⁵ and Karnak¹⁶), Amarna,¹⁷ and

⁸ Hope, ‘Blue-Painted Pottery’, 88; P. Rose, *The Eighteenth Dynasty Pottery Corpus from Amarna*, (Excavation Memoir 83; London, 2007); C. Hope, *Pottery of the New Kingdom: Three Studies*. Victoria College, Archaeology Research Unit, Occasional Paper No. 2 (Victoria, 1989).

⁹ Hope, ‘Blue-Painted Pottery’, 88; Hope, *Pottery of the New Kingdom: Three Studies*, 16; Hope, ‘Blue-Painted and Polychrome Decorated Pottery from Amarna: A Preliminary Corpus’, 18.

¹⁰ Hope, *Pottery of the New Kingdom: Three Studies*, 56.

¹¹ Hope, *Pottery of the New Kingdom: Three Studies*, 56; J. Bourriau and D. Aston, ‘The Pottery’, in G.T. Martin (ed.) *The Tomb-Chapels of Paser and Ra’ia at Saqqara* (London, 1985), 32–55; K. Takahashi, ‘Simplification in Production Technology of Blue-Painted Pottery in New Kingdom Egypt’, *Bulletin de liaison de la céramique égyptienne* 30 (2021), 5–33.

¹² Hope, *Pottery of the New Kingdom: Three Studies*, 16–17.

¹³ W.C. Hayes, *The Scepter of Egypt: A Background for the Study of the Egyptian Antiquities in the Metropolitan Museum of Art. Part II: The Hyksos Period and the New Kingdom (1675–1080 B.C.)* (Cambridge, 1959), 247.

¹⁴ This is especially true during the Ramesside Period. See K.C. Nataf, ‘Egyptian-Style Pottery Dated to the 13th Century BCE at Hazor, Megiddo and Lachish: Corpus, Ware Fabrics and Typology’, *Journal of Ancient Egyptian Interconnections* 6, no. 3 (2014), 22–36.

¹⁵ Hope, *Pottery of the New Kingdom: Three Studies*, 1–110. Note that many blue-painted vessels were also found at the newly discovered ‘Golden City,’ the ‘City of the Dazzling Aten,’ by an Egyptian team led by Zahi Hawass, although a detailed report has yet to be published. See Z. Hawass and A. Ibrahim Ahmed, ‘Unique Pottery from the City of Dazzling Aten’, *MDAIK* 78 (2022), 75–88.

¹⁶ C. Hope, ‘New Kingdom Painted Pottery from Karnak North’, *Bulletin de liaison du groupe international d’étude de la céramique égyptienne* 19 (1996), 31–33.

¹⁷ Hope, ‘Blue-Painted and Polychrome Decorated Pottery from Amarna: A Preliminary Corpus’; Rose, *The Eighteenth Dynasty Pottery Corpus from Amarna*.

the Memphite region (including Saqqara¹⁸ and Memphis¹⁹). In the Nineteenth Dynasty, substantial quantities were discovered at Qantir,²⁰ Memphis and its surrounding areas, the Fayum, and Thebes (including Deir el-Medineh²¹). The latest well-dated examples from the Twentieth Dynasty come from Thebes, particularly the Valley of the Kings.²² Smaller quantities of blue-painted pottery have also been found at sites such as Abydos,²³ Elephantine,²⁴ and even Nubia,²⁵ spanning both the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Dynasties.

Blue-painted pottery was wheel-made, primarily from Nile silt clay²⁶ and marl clay.²⁷ Marl clays were fired at higher temperatures (800–1050°C) and for longer

¹⁸ B. Aston and D. Aston, *The Tomb of Maya and Meryt III: The New Kingdom Pottery* (Excavation Memoir 117; London, 2023); D. Aston, 'The Pottery', in G.T. Martin (ed.) *The Tomb of Tia and Tia: A Royal Monument of the Ramesside Period in the Memphite Necropolis* (London, 1997), 83–103; D. Aston, 'Blue-Painted Pottery of The Late Eighteenth Dynasty: The Material from the Tomb of Maya and Merit at Saqqara', *Cahiers de la céramique égyptienne* 9 (2011), 1–36; J. Bourriau and D. Aston, 'The Pottery', in G.T. Martin (ed.) *The Tomb-Chapels of Paser and Ra'ia at Saqqara* (London, 1985), 32–55; K. Takahashi, 'Blue-Painted Pottery with Intentional Holes and/or Breakages after Firing in North-West Saqqara', *Bulletin de liaison de la céramique égyptienne* 29 (2019), 85–99; K. Takahashi, 'Blue-Painted Pottery Production System in Northwest Saqqara and Dahshur North from the Amarna Period to the Reign of Ramesses II', in M. Bárta, F. Coppens and J. Krejčí (eds.) *Abusir and Saqqara in the Year 2020* (Prague, 2021), 285–92.

¹⁹ C. Hope, 'Some Memphite Blue Painted Pottery of the Mid-18th Dynasty', in J. Phillips (ed.) *Studies in Honour of Martha Rhoads Bell* (San Antonio, 1997), 249–86; C. Hope, *The Survey of Memphis; Volume X: Kom Rabia: The Blue Painted Pottery* (Excavation Memoir 116; London, 2016).

²⁰ D. Aston, *Die Keramik des Grabungsplatzes QI: Corpus of Fabrics, Wares and Shapes* (Mainz, 1998).

²¹ G. Nagel, *La Céramique du Nouvel Empire à Deir el-Médineh, Tome 1* (Cairo, 1938); M.C. Guidotti, 'Blue-Painted Pottery from Deir el-Medina in the Museo Egizio of Turin', in S. Töpfer, P. Del Vesco and F. Poole (eds.) *Deir el-Medina: Through the Kaleidoscope. Proceedings of the International Workshop, Turin 8th–10th October 2018* (Torino, 2022), 451–61. For Deir el-Bahari, see A. Weźranowska and A. Wodzińska, 'Pottery from Tomb MMA 28 at Deir el Bahari: Preliminary Remarks', *Polish Archaeology in the Mediterranean* 30, no. 1 (Deir el-Bahari Studies 3; 2021), 79–104.

²² D. Aston, B. Aston and E. Brock, 'Pottery from the Valley of the Kings—Tombs of Merenptah, Ramesses III, Ramesses IV, Ramesses VI, and Ramesses VII', *Ägypten und Levante* 7 (1998), 137–214.

²³ J. Budka, 'Festival pottery from New Kingdom Egypt: Three Case Studies', in B. Bader and M. Ownby (eds.) *Functional Aspects of Egyptian Ceramics in Their Archaeological Context: Proceedings of a Conference Held at the McDonald Institute for Archaeological Research, Cambridge, July 24-25, 2009* (Leuven, 2013), 195–201.

²⁴ Budka, 'Festival Pottery from New Kingdom Egypt: Three Case Studies', 188–95; J. Budka, 'Festival Pottery of the New Kingdom: The Case of Elephantine', in P. Kousoulis and N. Lazaridis (eds.) *Proceedings of the Tenth International Congress of Egyptologists, University of the Aegean, Rhodes, 22-29 May 2008 (Orientalia Lovaniensia Analecta 241; Leuven, 2015), 131–45.*

²⁵ J. Budka, 'The Early New Kingdom at Sai Island: Preliminary Results based on the Pottery Analysis (4th Season 2010)', *Sudan and Nubia* 15 (2011), 23–33.

²⁶ Nile alluvial (or silt) clays are rich in iron oxides and organic impurities and are deposited in the floodplains. The clay colour turns reddish-brown or dark brown when the firing temperature reaches a range of 1000 and 1100°C. For a more detailed description of Nile alluvial clays, see H.-Å., Nordström and J. Bourriau, 'Ceramic Technology: Clays and fabrics', in D. Arnold and J. Bourriau (eds.) *An Introduction to Ancient Egyptian Pottery* (Mainz, 1993), 143–200.

²⁷ Marl clays (calceo-ferruginous) contain a high content of calcium carbonate and finely disseminated iron oxides. The clay colour turns a pale grey or greenish-grey when the firing temperature reaches a range of 1000 and 1100°C. Marl clay softens and melts in temperatures just



Figure 1: Slip applied haphazardly (927.75.1). Courtesy of ROM (Royal Ontario Museum), Toronto, Canada. © ROM.

Nile Valley and the necessary raw materials would not have always been readily accessible. The use of cobalt aluminate pigment reflects a high degree of technical expertise by the Egyptian potter of the period.³²

Blue-painted pottery vessels were produced using a consistent method. After the vessel dried, a cream or pink slip was applied by hand, often with minimal precision (Figure 1). The decoration was then added with a brush as the vessel rotated on a wheel.³³ The first decorative elements to be applied were broad horizontal blue bands, typically added with little precision as the vessel spun.³⁴ Narrower black or red stripes were also applied during this phase, though some were reserved for later

durations of time compared to Nile silt clays.²⁸ The black or brown centres seen in Nile silt clay sections suggest that they were fired for a shorter period at lower temperatures (600–800°C), with a brief oxidation phase.²⁹ Due to the easy availability of Nile silts and their ability to be fired for shorter durations, they quickly became the preferred material for producing blue-painted pottery. The use of blue pigments on pottery was exceptionally rare in the ancient world.³⁰ Chemical analysis of the blue pigment found on blue-painted pottery revealed high concentrations of aluminium, magnesium, nickel, zinc, iron, and manganese, consistent with cobaltiferous alums from the Dakhla and Kharga Oases.³¹ The specialization of blue-painted pottery can therefore be partly attributed to technical factors, as the Oases were remote from the

above 1100°C. This type of clay is typically found along the river valley between Esna and Cairo region. See Nordström and Bourriau, 'Ceramic Technology: Clays and fabrics', 157, 160.

²⁸ Nordström and Bourriau, 'Ceramic Technology: Clays and fabrics', 160.

²⁹ Nordström and Bourriau, 'Ceramic Technology: Clays and fabrics', 160.

³⁰ Arnold, 'Techniques and Traditions of Manufacture in the Pottery of Ancient Egypt', 101.

³¹ A. Shortland, C. Hope and M.S. Tite, 'Cobalt Blue Painted Pottery from 18th Dynasty Egypt', *Geological Society Special Publication* 257, no.1 (2006), 91–99. Hope also notes that the use of cobalt aluminate spinel as a colorant in the production of glass and faience suggests that blue-painted pottery may have been made near these materials, possibly within the royal workshops (*Pottery of the New Kingdom: Three Studies*, 17).

³² Hope, *Pottery of the New Kingdom: Three Studies*, 8.

³³ Hope, 'Blue-Painted Pottery', 89; Rose, *The Eighteenth Dynasty Pottery Corpus from Amarna*, 19; Hope, *Pottery of the New Kingdom: Three Studies*, 8.

³⁴ Rose, *The Eighteenth Dynasty Pottery Corpus from Amarna*, 19; Takahashi, 'Simplification in Production Technology', 14.



Figure 2: Imprecision of painted lines (910.2.45).
Courtesy of ROM (Royal Ontario Museum), Toronto,
Canada. © ROM.



Figure 3: Blue paint spilling out of petal outlines
(933.11.2). Courtesy of ROM (Royal Ontario
Museum), Toronto, Canada. © ROM.

detailing.³⁵ Imprecision in application sometimes caused separate bands to merge, or a single wide band to split into multiple stripes (Figure 2). Next, rough blue streaks were added to form vertical petal shapes, though they rarely achieved the intended pointed form (Figure 3). The final detailing involved outlining and refining these elements, with black lines loosely tracing the blue areas.³⁶ These defining lines began vertically but gradually sloped as they wrapped around the vessel, suggesting they were applied while the vessel was rotating.³⁷ This lack of precision suggests that the vessels were produced in significant quantities.³⁸ On red-slipped vessels, decoration followed a similar process, although there was more variation in surface preparation. Decoration could be applied directly to the red slip, areas could be left unpainted before a cream band was added, or a cream background could be applied over the red slip, though this often resulted in poor adhesion and loss of decoration (Figure 4).³⁹

Typological and Stylistic Analysis of the ROM Blue-Painted Pottery:

Small-Medium Neckless Ovoid Jars with Rounded Bases

The ROM corpus contains two ovoid neckless jars with rounded bases.⁴⁰ They are small to medium in size and are one of the most common form types during the Eighteenth Dynasty.⁴¹ Early examples of these ovoid jars tend to have a proportionally smaller mouth and slightly more out-turned rim.⁴² A restricted range of decorative motifs featured prominently on these closed forms organized into two or three

³⁵ Rose, *The Eighteenth Dynasty Pottery Corpus from Amarna*, 19; Arnold, 'Techniques and Traditions of Manufacture in the Pottery of Ancient Egypt', 95; Takahashi, 'Simplification in Production Technology', 14.

³⁶ Rose, *The Eighteenth Dynasty Pottery Corpus from Amarna*, 19; Takahashi, 'Simplification in Production Technology', 14.

³⁷ Rose, *The Eighteenth Dynasty Pottery Corpus from Amarna*, 19.

³⁸ Rose, *The Eighteenth Dynasty Pottery Corpus from Amarna*, 19.

³⁹ Rose, *The Eighteenth Dynasty Pottery Corpus from Amarna*, 19.

⁴⁰ Type SF4.2 in Rose, *The Eighteenth Dynasty Pottery Corpus from Amarna*, 84.

⁴¹ Hope, *Pottery of the New Kingdom: Three Studies*, 15.

⁴² Aston and Aston, *The Tomb of Maya and Meryt III: The New Kingdom Pottery*, 59. Note that by the Nineteenth Dynasty, this vessel type evolves towards a slender drop beaker. By the second half of Ramses II's reign, it no longer looks like the Eighteenth Dynasty shape.



Figure 4: Red-slipped and burnished vessel with blue paint flaking off (933.11.1). Courtesy of ROM (Royal Ontario Museum), Toronto, Canada. © ROM

registers depending on the size of the vessel. The overlapping petals motif always appeared at top of the vessel below the rim and separate petal bands with petals tapering downwards usually formed the lower register(s).⁴³ These vessels may have been used for drinking.⁴⁴

The first jar of this form type, made from Nile D fabric⁴⁵ with a pink slip (Munsell 5YR 7/3), originates from Amarna (Figure 5.1).⁴⁶ This vessel was initially published by Hope, though he assigned it an incorrect accession number.⁴⁷ The vessel is decorated with three registers. The first register, located just beneath the rim, features a horizontal blue delineating band outlined in black, with a central red line.⁴⁸ Below this, overlapping petals with a central red line are depicted.⁴⁹ The black vertical lines outlining the overlapping petals are sometimes incomplete, and the blue paint does not

reach the end of the outline. The second register showcases blue lotus petals⁵⁰,

⁴³ Rose, *The Eighteenth Dynasty Pottery Corpus from Amarna*, 21.

⁴⁴ Rose, *The Eighteenth Dynasty Pottery Corpus from Amarna*, 84.

⁴⁵ The assessment of all fabrics in this study is the author's using a handheld microscope. The fabric types are in accordance with the Vienna System published in Nordström and Bourriau, 'Ceramic Technology: Clays and fabrics', 168–82.

⁴⁶ This vessel is notably marked with an Egypt Exploration Society stamp, indicating it was excavated at Amarna during the 1926–27 excavation season. The mark also includes the number XXV, which corresponds to the type of form it represents in the Amarna corpus. Peet and Woolley describe it as 'Tall jars with ovoid body and very variable neck, sometimes very pronounced, sometimes indistinguishable. These vases often have a good pink slip and a design of horizontal bands of blue lotus petals, with details in red and black.' T.E. Peet and C.L. Woolley, *The City of Akhenaten Part I, Excavations of 1921 and 1922 at El-Amarnah* (Egypt Exploration Society, Excavation Memoir 38; 1923), 138.

⁴⁷ Hope, 'Blue-Painted and Polychrome Decorated Pottery from Amarna: A Preliminary Corpus', 32, fig. 4g. Note that Hope's line drawing of the vessel greatly exaggerates the flaring out of the neck and this has been corrected in the current figure.

⁴⁸ Motif AVb.22 in Hope, 'Blue-Painted and Polychrome Decorated Pottery from Amarna: A Preliminary Corpus', 80.

⁴⁹ Motif A1o.2 in Hope, 'Blue-Painted and Polychrome Decorated Pottery from Amarna: A Preliminary Corpus', 76.

⁵⁰ For the significance of the blue lotus in association with drinking and religious festivities, see R. Price, 'Stop and Smell the Flowers: A Re-Assessment of the Ancient Egyptian "Blue Lotus"', in D. Candelora, N. Ben-Marzouk and K. Cooney (eds.) *Ancient Egyptian Society: Challenging Assumptions, Exploring Approaches* (London-New York, 2023), 325–35; J. Budka, 'Bedeutung in Kobalt: Überlegungen zu den blaubemalten Gefäßen des Neuen Reiches', in K. Gabler, R. Gautschy, L. Bohnenkämper, H. Jenni, C. Reymond, R. Zillhardt, A. Loprieno-Gnirs and H.H. Münch (eds.) *Text-Bild-Objekte im archäologischen Kontext: Festschrift für Susanne Bickel* (Hamburg, 2020), 41–

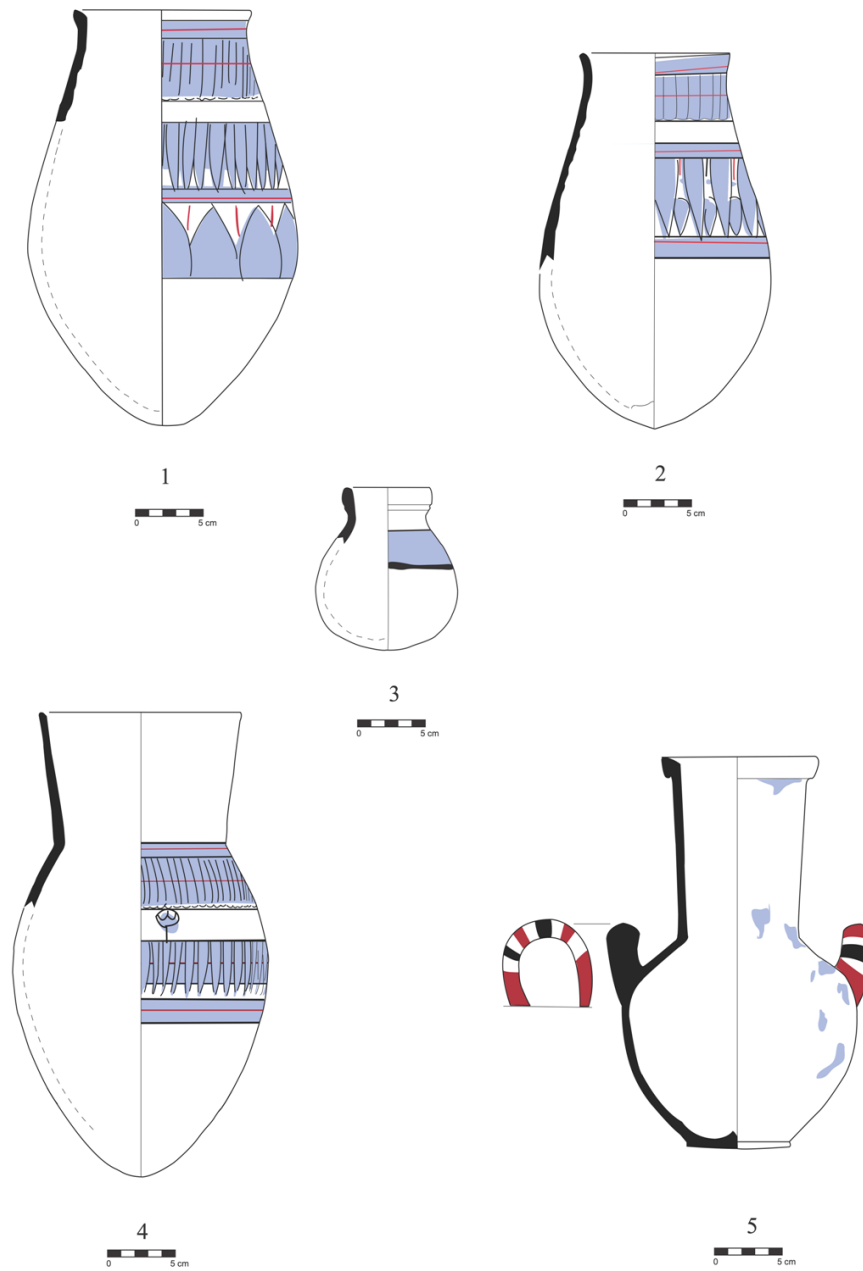


Figure 5: Whole jars (1: 927.75.1; 2: 910.2.45; 3: 927.75.2; 4: 948.34.55; 5: 910.2.53) (Drawn by R. Aicher/R. Hummel/L. Sternklar).

tapering downward with outlined edges, and is bordered at the bottom by the same type of delineating band.⁵¹ A thick blue band was initially painted on the vessel, followed by the vertical strokes of the petals, which were then outlined in black. The blue strokes frequently spill outside the outlines or fail to completely fill them. The third register displays much broader upward-tapering petals, separated by red stamens.⁵² This motif represents the white lotus, although it is rendered in blue.⁵³

The second jar of this form type (Figure 5.2) is made of Nile D fabric with a cream slip (Munsell 7.5YR 8/2), but it has a less certain acquisition history and an unknown provenance. Amarna is not listed as the provenance on the Museum's old catalogue cards, and the piece was not included in Hope's study of blue-painted pottery from Amarna. It was likely acquired by Charles T. Currelly between 1907 and 1910, before the ROM officially opened in 1914, since its accession number begins with 910. Currelly, the founder of the ROM, most likely purchased the jar in Luxor while he was excavating at Deir el-Bahri. According to his autobiography, he was very active in buying and collecting antiquities during his time in Egypt to build a collection for his future museum.⁵⁴

This vessel features two registers and is smaller than the previous example. The first register, located just beneath the rim, includes a horizontal blue delineating band outlined in black lines, with a central red line. Below this is a band of overlapping petals with a medial red line. The second register contains another blue delineating band, followed by blue lotus petals that taper downward with outlined edges, alternating with outlined buds. Two dots flank a daub, placed vertically; the dots are blue, while the daubs alternate between red and black. However, the buds are not directly connected to the dots or daubs.⁵⁵ The register ends with another horizontal blue delineating band. The painting was possibly executed on a wobbly wheel that was not properly centred, as evidenced by the black and red lines that swoop downwards along the circumference.⁵⁶

A parallel example of this motif combination can be found on a neckless ovoid jar at the Metropolitan Museum of Art (MMA), which was excavated from Amenhotep III's palatial complex at Malqata during the 1910–11 excavation season.⁵⁷ I propose that, based on the striking typological and stylistic similarities, the ROM vessel dates to the reign of Amenhotep III and could also have originated from Malqata. The MMA jar shares almost identical dimensions with the ROM jar and displays two distinct registers. The top register features a horizontal blue delineating

56; W.B. Harer, 'Narcotic of the Nile: The Blue Lotus in Ancient Egypt Religious Activities', in J. Kamrin, M. Bárta, S. Ikram, M. Lehner and M. Magahed (eds.) *Guardian of Ancient Egypt: Studies in Honor of Zahi Hawass* (Prague, 2020), 551–64.

⁵¹ Motif AId.2 in Hope, 'Blue-Painted and Polychrome Decorated Pottery from Amarna: A Preliminary Corpus', 68.

⁵² Motif A1a.2 in Hope, 'Blue-Painted and Polychrome Decorated Pottery from Amarna: A Preliminary Corpus', 66.

⁵³ Hope, 'Blue-Painted and Polychrome Decorated Pottery from Amarna: A Preliminary Corpus', 66.

⁵⁴ C.T. Currelly, *I Brought the Ages Home* (Toronto, 1956); See also R. L. Shaw, '100 Years of Collecting for Toronto', in M. Eldamaty and M. Trad (eds.) *Egyptian Museum Collections Around the World 2* (Cairo, 2002), 1091–99.

⁵⁵ Motif AId.17 in Hope, 'Blue-Painted and Polychrome Decorated Pottery from Amarna: A Preliminary Corpus', 68.

⁵⁶ Refer to the discussion of Figure 2. Notice that the ends of the line do not meet perfectly and overlap.

⁵⁷ MMA object number: 11.215.469. Dimensions: 27x16.7 cm, rim diam.: 12.2 cm.

band, followed by the overlapping petal motif, while the second register showcases blue lotus petals tapering downward with outlined edges, alternating with outlined buds and separated by dots and daubs that do not connect. A second parallel example from Malqata, with a short neck and ovoid body, presents a variation of this motif combination.⁵⁸ The second register features blue lotus petals with outlined edges, tapering downward above an upper blue band, alternating with outlined buds beneath a daub of paint.⁵⁹

During Amenhotep III's reign, outlined petals made with two long strokes curving at the tip were typically spaced apart, often alternating with buds or red stamens.⁶⁰ By contrast, the Amarna period saw blue petals that often touched each other, with red stamens more commonly appearing between the petals rather than intervening buds.⁶¹ In the reign of Horemheb, neither buds nor stamens appeared between the blue lotus petals, and the petals themselves were usually drawn with both long and short strokes, rather than the traditional two long strokes.⁶² The distinctive style of the ROM vessel is typical of jars from the reign of Amenhotep III, with a particularly large number found at Malqata. Given the specialized ceramic production and shared artistic traditions of the time, it is reasonable to suggest that the ROM vessel was produced in the Theban area and likely utilized at Malqata.⁶³

Large Ovoid Biconical Jars

The ROM's two large ovoid biconical jars were gifted by the British Museum in 1933 and originate from the Egypt Exploration Society's excavations at Amarna.⁶⁴ These vessels could either be decorated or undecorated. Undecorated jars were likely used for temporarily storing water and dry foods, while the decorated versions were probably intended for serving wine and beer at banquets.⁶⁵ The present study describes large ovoid biconical jars as 'storage jars', whether or not they bear decoration. The wide mouth of these vessels were essential for this purpose, and the burnished slip would help reduce their permeability.⁶⁶ Over the course of the late Eighteenth Dynasty, the shape of these jars underwent some chronological changes, particularly in the neck design. The neck profile shifted from concave to straight-sided to convex, and the neck became progressively wider and taller.⁶⁷ During the Amarna

⁵⁸ Hope, *Pottery of the New Kingdom: Three Studies*, 30, fig. 10b. An additional vessel is published in Takahashi, 'Simplification in Production Technology of Blue-Painted Pottery in New Kingdom Egypt', 24, fig. 3.2 from the tomb of Amenhotep III. However, these vessels are a funnel-neck jar precursor. See discussion below on funnel-neck jars.

⁵⁹ A mix of motif AId.7 and AId.15 in in Hope, 'Blue-Painted and Polychrome Decorated Pottery from Amarna: A Preliminary Corpus', 68. This same combination of decoration is present on ROM 2010X2.12, and it is possible that this sherd belonged to a type of ovoid jar from Malqata as well. See also the discussion of ROM 2010X2.10 in Figure 10.5.

⁶⁰ Aston and Aston, *The Tomb of Maya and Meryt III: The New Kingdom Pottery*, 48.

⁶¹ Aston and Aston, *The Tomb of Maya and Meryt III: The New Kingdom Pottery*, 48.

⁶² Aston and Aston, *The Tomb of Maya and Meryt III: The New Kingdom Pottery*, 48.

⁶³ To date, no kilns or facilities associated with ceramic decoration have been identified at Malqata. While numerous blue-painted vessels have been found in use at Malqata, evidence suggests they were likely manufactured outside the site.

⁶⁴ Type SH11 in Rose, *The Eighteenth Dynasty Pottery Corpus from Amarna*, 104-105. Part of the rims were reconstructed before the jars arrived at the ROM, likely during their time at the British Museum.

⁶⁵ Hope, 'Blue-Painted Pottery', 99.

⁶⁶ Hope, 'Blue-Painted Pottery', 99.

⁶⁷ Aston and Aston, *The Tomb of Maya and Meryt III: The New Kingdom Pottery*, 59.

period, some jars featured a distinctly biconical form, while others developed a broader neck.⁶⁸ Under Horemheb, the neck became significantly taller in proportion to the body.⁶⁹ Stylistically, storage jars often featured a band of separate blue petals tapering upwards on the neck, while the body displayed two or more registers of design, typically consisting of an overlapping petal band and a separate petal band below.⁷⁰ This is the only vessel form that includes petals tapering upwards on the neck. While these jars are usually found with a cream or pink slip, red-slipped and burnished versions are rare, and they tend to exhibit a more simplified range of designs.⁷¹

The first storage jar (Figure 6.1) is made from Nile C/D fabric with a pink slip (Munsell 5YR 7/3)⁷² and was originally published by Hope.⁷³ The jar features five registers of decoration. The first register starts with a blue delineating band under the rim, followed by blue lotus petals tapering upwards. These are tall petals outlined in black, separated by shorter petals outlined in red.⁷⁴ The second register begins with another blue delineating band, then displays overlapping petals with a medial red line. The third register starts with a plain blue delineating band (without the red medial line) followed by a line of red dots between black lines, and then petals tapering downward with outlines.⁷⁵ This is followed by another plain blue delineating band. The fourth register consists of petals over a wide blue band, accompanied by three lines and a thin blue band flanked by black lines.⁷⁶ This is followed by a blue delineating band with a black medial line. In the fifth register, petals are drawn in outline over an upper blue band,⁷⁷ followed by a plain blue delineating band. The lower body was left undecorated.

The second storage jar is more unusual (Figure 6.2).⁷⁸ Originally published by Hope, it features a deep red slip (Munsell 7.5 4/6) and burnishing.⁷⁹ The decoration on this vessel is poorly preserved and very simple. Since the blue paint does not stand out against the red slip and burnished surface, bands of cream were applied beneath it,

⁶⁸ Aston and Aston, *The Tomb of Maya and Meryt III: The New Kingdom Pottery*, 59.

⁶⁹ Aston and Aston, *The Tomb of Maya and Meryt III: The New Kingdom Pottery*, 59.

⁷⁰ Rose, *The Eighteenth Dynasty Pottery Corpus from Amarna*, 21.

⁷¹ Rose, *The Eighteenth Dynasty Pottery Corpus from Amarna*, 23. Rose also suggests that these vessels may have been made in different workshops.

⁷² Unfortunately, there was no break in the vessel to distinguish definitively between Nile C and D fabrics. This vessel is marked with an Egypt Exploration Society stamp, indicating it was excavated at Amarna in 1923. It belongs to type XXIII: 'Large jars with tall narrow neck, carinated body and rounded base' in Peet and Woolley, *The City of Akhenaten, Part I*, 138.

⁷³ Hope, 'Blue-Painted and Polychrome Decorated Pottery from Amarna: A Preliminary Corpus', 42, fig. 8e. Note that Aston and Aston cite this vessel incorrectly as fig. 8c in *The Tomb of Maya and Meryt III: The New Kingdom Pottery*, 61, fig. 32.2.

⁷⁴ Motif A1c.5 in Hope, 'Blue-Painted and Polychrome Decorated Pottery from Amarna: A Preliminary Corpus', 68.

⁷⁵ Motif AVa.7 in Hope, 'Blue-Painted and Polychrome Decorated Pottery from Amarna: A Preliminary Corpus', 68.

⁷⁶ Motif A1d.57 in Hope, 'Blue-Painted and Polychrome Decorated Pottery from Amarna: A Preliminary Corpus', 69.

⁷⁷ Motif A1d.37 in Hope, 'Blue-Painted and Polychrome Decorated Pottery from Amarna: A Preliminary Corpus', 69.

⁷⁸ See also Figure 10.6. This storage jar is marked with the same Egypt Exploration Society stamp as the previous jar (see footnote 72).

⁷⁹ Hope, 'Blue-Painted and Polychrome Decorated Pottery from Amarna: A Preliminary Corpus', 43, fig. 9b.

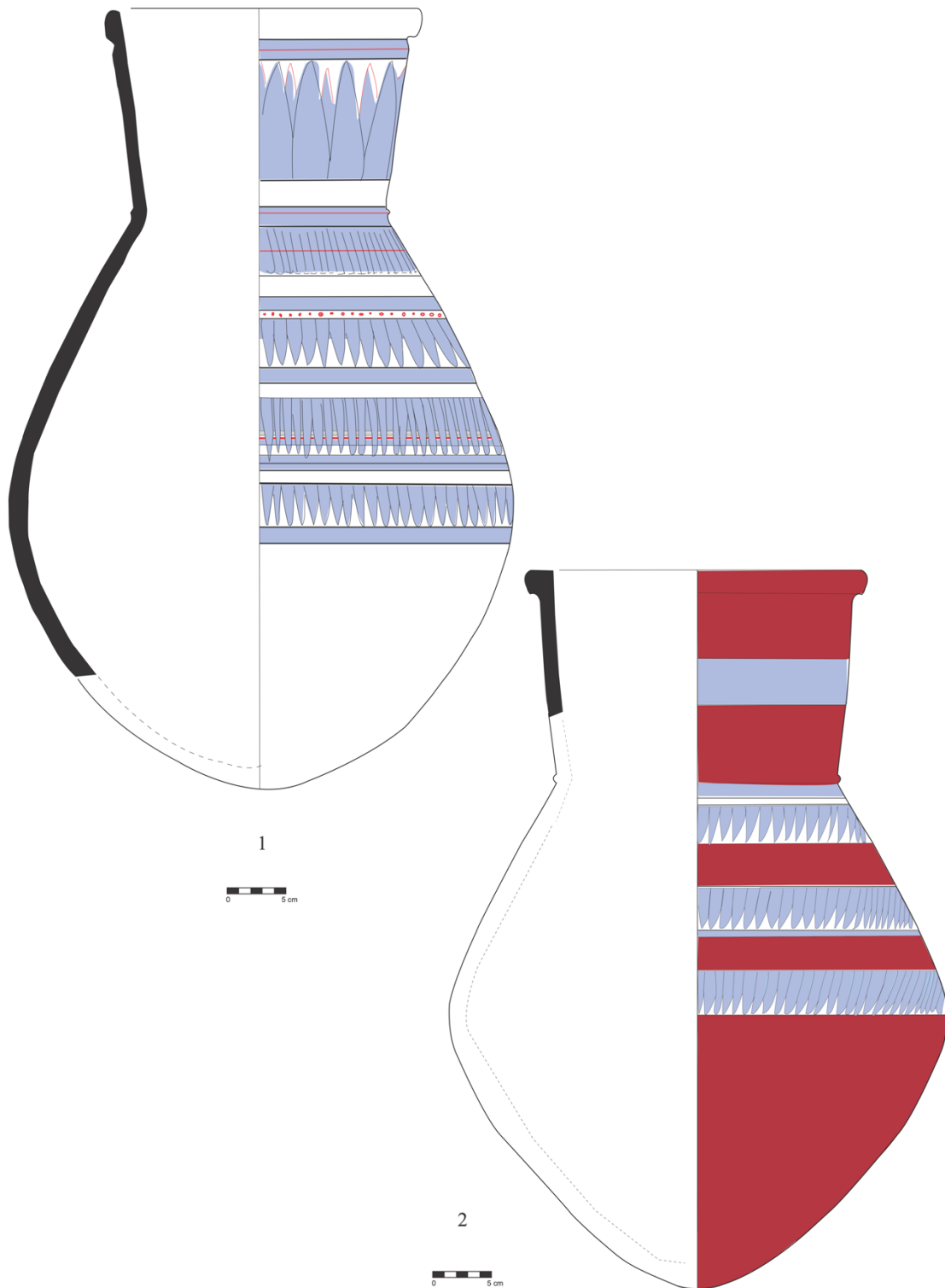


Figure 6: Large storage jars (1: 933.11.2; 2: 933.11.1) (Drawn by R. Aicher/R. Hummel/L. Sternklar).

allowing the blue paint to sit on top. However, this cream coating did not adhere well to the vessel's surface, causing most of the decoration to flake off over time. Additionally, the rim and much of the neck were entirely reconstructed at the British Museum before the jar arrived at the ROM. Currently, only remnants of a thick blue band remain visible on the neck.⁸⁰ The body of the jar features three registers of decoration, with blue lotus petals tapering downward and outlined.⁸¹

Small Globular Jar

The corpus includes a small globular jar (Figure 5.3) featuring a cream slip (Munsell 7.5YR 8/2) and a simple blue painted band outlined by black lines on the shoulder.⁸² The jar has a short neck, a modelled rim, and a round base. It was excavated at Amarna in 1927.⁸³ Interestingly, this vessel was excluded from Hope's corpus of pottery from Amarna, despite its clear provenance.⁸⁴

Medium Funnel-Neck Jar

The ROM corpus contains one funnel-neck jar (Figure 5.4) featuring a pink slip (Munsell 5YR 7/3).⁸⁵ It was first published by Hope as likely originating from Amarna, although no records from the museum catalogue confirm this ascribed provenance.⁸⁶ Early funnel-neck jars featured short necks and gradually evolved into fully developed funnel-necked jars in which the rim and neck accounted for at least a quarter of the body's height.⁸⁷ Post-Amarna, jars typically had proportionally wider bodies with large, wide rims and necks, often with diameters exceeding half the body height.⁸⁸ During the Nineteenth Dynasty, the rims and necks were usually shorter, either straight-sided or, more commonly, convex in profile.⁸⁹ Smaller-sized jars became more prevalent, and the rims and neck began to flare less, with some appearing more vertical.⁹⁰ A new jar type also emerged with slender proportions and tall, narrow necks.⁹¹ In the Twentieth Dynasty, this jar type became large and slender, characterized by tall, narrow, convex-sided necks, modelled rims, and drop-shaped

⁸⁰ A useful comparison to see how the rim and neck may have looked like is a jar from the MMA (55.92.2). The neck contains a blue band with wavy lines imitating water. See Hayes, *The Scepter of Egypt: A Background for the Study of the Egyptian Antiquities in the Metropolitan Museum of Art*, 323, fig. 205.

⁸¹ Hope cites the motif AVa.7 (red dots between black lines) where the neck meets the body, but this was not visible to me when examining the vessel.

⁸² This vessel is a smaller version of type SI2.1 in Rose, *The Eighteenth Dynasty Pottery Corpus from Amarna*, 112. No exact comparisons were found in published scholarship.

⁸³ The vessel bears the Egypt Exploration Fund stamp, which identifies it as type xix – a category described as 'large jars with narrow neck, body globular or carinated' in Peet and Woolley, *The City of Akhenaten, Part I*, 138. While the type matches, the size does not, which likely explains the question mark following xix.

⁸⁴ Its omission may be due to its simple design or lack of exact comparisons.

⁸⁵ This vessel corresponds to type SH9.3 in Rose, *The Eighteenth Dynasty Pottery Corpus from Amarna*, 102.

⁸⁶ Hope, 'Blue-Painted and Polychrome Decorated Pottery from Amarna: A Preliminary Corpus', 38, fig. 6e.

⁸⁷ Aston and Aston, *The Tomb of Maya and Meryt III: The New Kingdom Pottery*, 35.

⁸⁸ Aston and Aston, *The Tomb of Maya and Meryt III: The New Kingdom Pottery*, 35.

⁸⁹ Aston and Aston, *The Tomb of Maya and Meryt III: The New Kingdom Pottery*, 35–36.

⁹⁰ Aston and Aston, *The Tomb of Maya and Meryt III: The New Kingdom Pottery*, 36.

⁹¹ Aston and Aston, *The Tomb of Maya and Meryt III: The New Kingdom Pottery*, 36.



Figure 7: Potmark (948.34.55). Courtesy of ROM (Royal Ontario Museum), Toronto, Canada. © ROM.

bodies.⁹² Stylistically, this type of jar features two registers: an overlapping petal band below a blue delineating band which runs from the neck-shoulder junction onto the upper shoulder, and a separate petal band that tapers downward, reaching the area of the maximum diameter, with a plain blue delineating band beneath it.⁹³

The first register of the ROM vessel features a horizontal blue delineating band outlined in black, with a central red line. Beneath this, a band of overlapping petals is displayed, again with a central red line. The second register shows blue petals over a medial blue band flanked by a red and black line, followed by a final blue delineating band.⁹⁴ The petals appear to have been painted with a quick flick of the wrist, as some of the outlines are thin and seem hastily applied. Some petals do not even meet at the tip to form a point. The area from the rim to the neck, as well as the

lower body of the vessel, remains undecorated.

The most notable feature of this jar is the painted potmark (Figure 7) located between the two registers, which Hope identifies as the mandrake fruit in his study of potmarks from North Karnak.⁹⁵ The funnel-neck jar is one of only two form types at Karnak that feature potmarks, and it is the only type to display a mandrake fruit potmark or one resembling it.⁹⁶ The practice of marking vessels is uncommon and likely specialized. The only other known instance of the mandrake sign on a funnel-neck jar comes from the tomb of Horemheb at Saqqara.⁹⁷ Potmarks are recorded in limited quantities at Amarna and Malqata, but none correspond to the form type or the

⁹² Aston and Aston, *The Tomb of Maya and Meryt III: The New Kingdom Pottery*, 36.

⁹³ Rose, *The Eighteenth Dynasty Pottery Corpus from Amarna*, 21.

⁹⁴ Motif AId.42/43 in Hope, 'Blue-Painted and Polychrome Decorated Pottery from Amarna: A Preliminary Corpus', 69.

⁹⁵ C. Hope, 'Some Remarks on Potmarks of the late Eighteenth Dynasty', in A. Leahy and J. Tait (eds.) *Studies on Ancient Egypt in Honour of H. S. Smith* (London, 1999), 121–46. At this moment, it is unclear what the potmark is intended to represent or convey.

⁹⁶ There are 28 known examples of mandrake fruit potmarks on type KN 2206 at Karnak in Hope, 'Potmarks', 126.

⁹⁷ A very similar example dates to the reign of Tutankhamun (248, no. 219) from the tomb of Horemheb in B. Aston, 'The Pottery', in M.J. Raven, V. Verschoor, M. Vugts and R. van Walsem (eds.) *The Memphite Tomb of Horemheb, Commander-in-chief of Tutankhamun, V: the Forecourt and the Area South of the Tomb with Some Notes on the Tomb of Tia* (Turnhout, 2011), 191–303. Five additional examples from the tomb of Horemheb (49, no. 134) are published in J. Bourriau, D. Aston, J. Raven and R. van Walsem, *The Memphite Tomb of Horemheb, Commander-in-Chief of Tutankhamun, III: The New Kingdom Pottery* (Egypt Exploration Society, Excavation Memoir 71; London, 2005). Note that they refer to the potmark as a cornflower rather than the mandrake.

mandrake fruit mark.⁹⁸ The vessel type, in its blue-painted form, does not appear at Deir el-Medineh; however, a similar shape with post-firing decoration has been found there.⁹⁹ Neither of these types is found at Qantir nor in materials associated with the Twentieth Dynasty.¹⁰⁰

Aside from Hope's assumption that the vessel in the ROM collection originated from Amarna, there is currently no concrete evidence to support this claim. It bears no stamp typical of Amarna finds. The jar was bequeathed to the museum by Sir Robert L. Mond, a prominent figure in the Egyptian Exploration Society who later served as its president and privately funded many of its excavations. Mond was an active excavator and antiquities collector. Upon his death in 1938, most of his personal collection went to the British Museum, but this jar was designated to the ROM. It is difficult to determine the provenance of this vessel because it came from a personal collection. Given Mond's extensive work in the Theban region between 1902 and 1926, it is plausible that he acquired the vessel through the antiquities market during his time there or through other means. Typologically, the vessel shape and its dimensions correspond to the reign of Akhenaten.¹⁰¹ Based on stylistic comparisons, I suggest that the vessel is more likely to have originated from Karnak. Notably, Akhenaten is recorded as having celebrated his *heb-sed* festival at Karnak during the early years of his reign.¹⁰²

Tall-Necked Amphora/Flask with Polychrome Decoration

The final complete vessel from the ROM collection is a tall-necked amphora, sometimes called a flask, with polychrome decoration (Figure 5.5).¹⁰³ Polychrome-decorated vessels represent a distinct, yet related, form of blue-painted pottery, making them significant to this discussion. This particular vessel is made from Marl D fabric and features a modelled rim, a globular body with two horizontal handles, and a disc base. Like the ovoid jar, it has an accession number starting with 910 and was likely acquired by Currelly before the museum officially opened.

Marl D amphorae come in two distinct types: shorter ones with a globular body and disc base, and taller ones with a shouldered body and carinated base.¹⁰⁴ Amphorae from the time of Akhenaten were relatively large, featuring slightly concave-sided necks.¹⁰⁵ By the end of Tutankhamun's reign and into that of Horemheb, the amphorae had become somewhat smaller, with longer necks that are either straight-sided or slightly convex.¹⁰⁶

The vessel's painted decoration is in a very deteriorated condition. Only small remnants of blue paint are visible on parts of the body and neck, with faint traces of red and black stripes on the handles. There may also be some faint indication of stripes on the neck. On polychrome decorated vessels, the painted decoration is

⁹⁸ Hope, 'Potmarks', 128, 130.

⁹⁹ Hope, 'Potmarks', 127.

¹⁰⁰ Hope, 'Potmarks', 127.

¹⁰¹ Based on the dimensions of a funnel-neck vessel from Amarna (no potmark) in Rose, *The Eighteenth Dynasty Pottery Corpus from Amarna*, 102, no. 425.

¹⁰² Hope, 'Potmarks', 128.

¹⁰³ Type MF 9.3/9.6 in Rose, *The Eighteenth Dynasty Pottery Corpus from Amarna*, 134.

¹⁰⁴ Aston and Aston, *The Tomb of Maya and Meryt III: The New Kingdom Pottery*, 59.

¹⁰⁵ Aston and Aston, *The Tomb of Maya and Meryt III: The New Kingdom Pottery*, 59.

¹⁰⁶ Aston and Aston, *The Tomb of Maya and Meryt III: The New Kingdom Pottery*, 59.

applied post-firing, which contributes to its eventual poor preservation.¹⁰⁷ Additionally, the ROM vessel also has a polished exterior which further adds to the poor adhesion of the post-firing paint. The blue pigment used, blue frit, differs from that of pre-firing paint, and it has a thicker, more granular texture and tends to flake easily.¹⁰⁸ Polychrome vessels feature a broader colour range, including yellow, green, and white, alongside the blue, black, and red commonly found on blue-painted pottery.¹⁰⁹ While petal patterns remain the dominant design, they usually appear as floral garlands around the vessel's shoulder or neck, accompanied by more elaborate designs that extend over the entire body of the vessel.¹¹⁰

It is difficult to suggest the provenance and date of this vessel due to the poor preservation of its decoration. Typologically, it is most certainly a post-Amarna shape. The 'Two-Handled Jar from Tutankhamun's Embalming Cache' is the closest match in form, with nearly identical dimensions, although it lacks the painted decoration.¹¹¹ Stylistically, the vessel bears a resemblance to an amphora from the tomb of Sennedjem at Deir el-Medineh, dated to the Nineteenth Dynasty.¹¹² This vessel features alternating black, red, and blue stripes on the neck, along with a pendent floral garland on the front of the body. However, unlike the ROM amphora, the Sennedjem vessel does not have red and black stripes on the handle, and its form is more consistent with the Nineteenth Dynasty style, with an elongated convex neck and an ovoid body with a pointed base. The combination of a decorative garland on a Marl amphora is mainly known from Deir el-Medineh.¹¹³ If the original decoration of the ROM vessel was similar to this, it would seem likely that it originated from Deir el-Medineh. Given Currelly's interest in antiquities and his acquisition of many artifacts from the antiquities market in Luxor during his excavations at Deir el-Bahri, this connection could be plausible.

Hathor-Head Jars

The ROM holds several fragments of Hathor-head jars, where the goddess's face serves as the central decorative element on the vessel's neck. The neck is characterized by an everted rim at the top and a concave section at the bottom, which connects the neck to the body of the vessel. The body is typically almost spherical, giving the vessel a broad appearance. Due to its shape, many of these vessels are primarily identified by fragments of the Hathor head, as they often break at the junction between the neck and body and the body is indistinguishable from other vessel forms. These vessels are wheel-made, with the face and wig of the goddess moulded directly from the vessel wall and then painted.¹¹⁴ The potter pushed out the interior surface to cause a subtle projection of the nose and mouth.

¹⁰⁷ Rose, *The Eighteenth Dynasty Pottery Corpus from Amarna*, 31.

¹⁰⁸ Rose, *The Eighteenth Dynasty Pottery Corpus from Amarna*, 31; Hope, 'Blue-Painted Pottery', 88–89. See G.D. Hatton, A.J. Shortland and M.S. Tite, 'The Production Technology of Egyptian Blue and Green Frits from Second Millennium BC Egypt and Mesopotamia', *Journal of Archaeological Science* 35, no. 6 (2008), 1591–1604.

¹⁰⁹ Hope, 'Blue-Painted Pottery', 88–89.

¹¹⁰ Rose, *The Eighteenth Dynasty Pottery Corpus from Amarna*, 31.

¹¹¹ MMA 09.184.79. Dimensions: 33.6 x 20 cm, rim diam.: 10.5 cm.

¹¹² MMA 86.1.10. Dimensions: 30.5 x 16 cm.

¹¹³ See M. R. Bell, 'Regional Variation in Polychrome Pottery of the 19th Dynasty', *Cahiers de la céramique égyptienne* 1 (1987), 49–76.

¹¹⁴ Hope, 'Blue-Painted Pottery', 99.

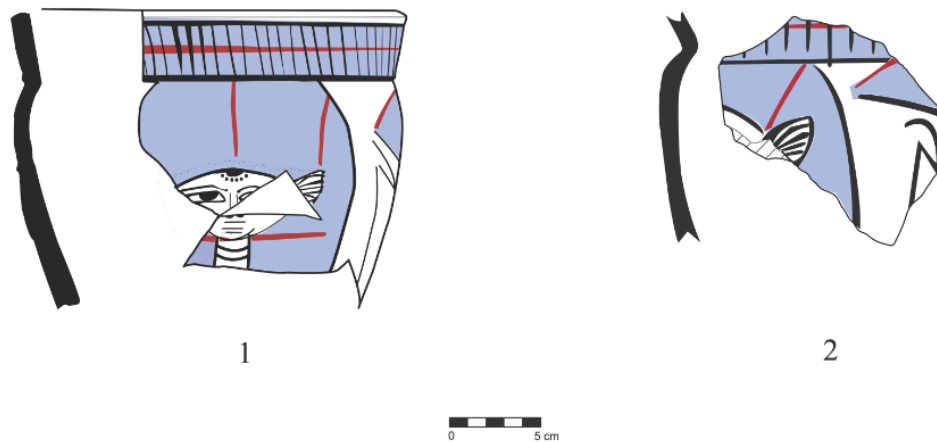


Figure 8: Hathor jars (1: 2010X2.8.1; 2: 2010X2.11) (Drawn by R. Aicher/R. Hummel/L. Sternklar).

The first Hathor jar consists of two fragments that do not join but likely belong to the same vessel, based on their matching fabric, inclusions, and rim diameter (Figure 8.1).¹¹⁵ These fragments are made from Nile B2 clay with a cream slip (Munsell 7.5YR 7/4). The decoration begins just below the everted rim, with a horizontal blue band flanked by two black lines, a central red line, and vertical lines encircling the vessel's circumference. The moulded Hathor head is mostly intact, though the left ear is missing, and a triangular section from the right side of the face, including most of the right eye, is also absent. The hair is painted light blue, extending down to the bottom of the fragment, with a vertical red line running through the middle of the hair and another above the right ear. Horizontal red lines run along either side of the wig beneath the chin. A red line defines the edge of the moulded face. The forehead is marked with a small black disc at the centre, with six dots below it. The eyebrows, eye outlines, and pupils are depicted in black paint. The right ear is outlined in black, with five black horizontal stripes on the interior. Between the wig lappets beneath the chin, two slightly curved black horizontal lines are painted across the neck. To the right of the Hathor head is a blue-painted papyrus umbel, with the top outlined in red and the calyx indicated in red paint.¹¹⁶ The stem and lower part of the open umbel are outlined in black. Below the papyrus umbel, the top of a *was*-sceptre, facing inward, is also painted in black. The interior of both fragments are coated with a thin, grey layer, which is unusual.¹¹⁷ Three additional jar fragments also display this inner grey coating, suggesting that they may belong to the same vessel.¹¹⁸

A restored vessel of this type from Malqata, dated to the reign of Amenhotep III, features two moulded Hathor heads on the neck, alternating with lotus blossoms flanked by lotus buds.¹¹⁹ Also from Malqata, Hope has published a similar type of

¹¹⁵ The second fragment of this vessel (ROM 2010X2.8.2) has the exact same decorative motif and is not drawn.

¹¹⁶ Motif A1f in Hope, 'Blue-Painted and Polychrome Decorated Pottery from Amarna: A Preliminary Corpus', 70. The motif on the ROM vessel does not exactly match any of Hope's definitions.

¹¹⁷ A similar lining appears on biconical jars and beer jars at Amarna (personal communication between Pamela Rose and Rexine Hummel, June 1, 2012).

¹¹⁸ See discussion below of sherds in Figures 10.3–5.

¹¹⁹ MMA 12.180.31. See also fig. 18 in M.C. Guidotti, 'A proposito dei vasi con decorazione hathorica', *EVO* 1 (1978), 105–18.



Figure 9: Hathor bowl (2010X2.1) Courtesy of ROM (Royal Ontario Museum), Toronto, Canada. © ROM.

decoration, where moulded Hathor heads are flanked by a papyrus column and *was*-sceptres.¹²⁰ Given the strong similarity in iconography between the ROM vessel and those published from Malqata, it is likely that the ROM vessel also originated from Malqata. Currelly must have purchased these fragments while in the Theban region.

The second Hathor jar (Figure 8.2) is made of Nile B2 clay and coated with a cream slip on the exterior (Munsell 7.5 YR 7/3). Only the upper right portion of the moulded Hathor head is preserved, with the right ear being the only part remaining. Below the rim is a horizontal blue band flanked by two black lines, with a medial red line and vertical lines encircling the

circumference. The hair of the Hathor head is painted in light blue, with a diagonal red line above the right ear. The right ear is outlined in black with five black diagonal stripes inside it. To the right of the Hathor head is a portion of a blue-painted papyrus umbel, with the top of the open blossom indicated in red paint. Between the Hathor head and the papyrus umbel, the top of a *was*-sceptre is rendered in black paint. The pattern closely resembles the one above, suggesting it may have originated from the same workshop.

Hathor Bowl

The ROM has a fragment of a Hathor bowl but all that remains is a rim sherd with the face of the goddess (Figure 9).¹²¹ It is made from Nile B2 clay with a cream slip (Munsell 7.5YR 8/2) inside and outside. The nose, mouth and right wig lappet area are very worn and abraded. The top of the head features traces of vertical red lines above each characteristically bovine ear. Below the chin are horizontal red paint lines on each side of the wig. A black line delineates the edge of the moulded face, although the blue paint extends within the line. The top of the forehead is marked with a small black disc (?) in the centre. Below this, the eyebrows and eyes with cosmetic line extensions are drawn in black paint. Black dots at the top of the eyes indicate the pupils. The ears are also outlined in black with vertical interior stripes.

Bowls with Hathor heads were made differently from Hathor jars. The potter moulded the face separately and then applied it onto the leather-hard vessel wall.¹²² As the mould was pressed onto the leather-hard vessel, the potter's other hand supported

¹²⁰ Hope, *Pottery of the New Kingdom: Three Studies*, 30, fig. 10e. See also MMA 11.215.472, 473, which originates from Malqata.

¹²¹ Motif BIIIa.1 in Hope, 'Blue-Painted and Polychrome Decorated Pottery from Amarna: A Preliminary Corpus', 81.

¹²² Arnold, 'Techniques and Traditions of Manufacture in the Pottery of Ancient Egypt', 88–89.

the inside of the wall, leaving finger impressions inside many vessels featuring Hathor's face.¹²³ The use of applied Hathor heads is limited to specific bowls and tall-necked jars. The vessel from the ROM is certainly a bowl type based on its large rim diameter.

A few parallel examples from museum collections around the world provide a clearer picture of how the Hathor bowl may have looked. The most complete example is a carinated bowl in the University of Chicago's ISAC Museum, excavated at Malqata.¹²⁴ This bowl is wheel-made with slightly concave sides and a cream slip on both the interior and exterior, though the decoration is only on the exterior.¹²⁵ The main feature of the bowl is the two applied heads of Hathor. Similar bowls have also been found at Amarna¹²⁶ and Deir el-Medineh.¹²⁷ These vessels were not considered cult objects.¹²⁸

Jar Fragments

The ROM collection includes several blue-painted fragments, which are most likely from jar forms based on their shape and decoration. At this stage, it is impossible to make further determinations about their specific form type. These fragments were discovered in the ROM's archival storage room in a box in 2010 and were subsequently assigned an accession number. No museum documentation accompanies them, and it can only be inferred that they were purchased by Currelly during his time in Egypt.

The first fragment (Figure 10.1) is made from Nile B2 clay with a pink slip (Munsell 5YR 7/3) and is decorated with a wide vertical band of blue paint. The sherd extends to the right, where the edge of the blue paint is marked by a black vertical line. Four horizontal black lines form bands, with the middle band likely intended to remain free of blue paint. However, blue paint covers the lower half of this band and spills over the entire band for about 2 cm to the left of the vertical line. The most intriguing feature of this sherd is a piece of blue pigment or frit mixed into the clay paste, visible in the cross-section (Figure 11). It seems unlikely that the pottery was intentionally incorporating blue pigment into the clay; rather, it is more probable that the pigment accidentally mixed in during the clay processing stage.¹²⁹

The second sherd (Figure 10.2) is made from Marl A4 clay with a pinky cream slip (Munsell 10R 8/2). Based on its stance, it likely comes from the shoulder of a jar. In terms of decoration, first there is a cream band flanked by two black lines with small red vertical lines surrounding the circumference of the vessel. Below this is a band of overlapping petals with two red lines and then three blue lotus petals tapered downwards on top. Below this, there appears to be inverted flowers without stamens separated by mandrakes.¹³⁰

¹²³ Arnold, 'Techniques and Traditions of Manufacture in the Pottery of Ancient Egypt', 88–89.

¹²⁴ Object number: 1978.1.8; Dimensions: height 10.2 cm, rim diameter 42 cm.

¹²⁵ Hope, 'Blue-Painted Pottery', 99.

¹²⁶ University of Sydney Nicholson Collection, Antiquities and Archaeology, object number: NM62.1004.

¹²⁷ Pl. V, no. k.2.110 in Nagel, *La Céramique du Nouvel Empire à Deir el-Médineh Tome 1*.

¹²⁸ Hope, 'Blue-Painted Pottery', 99.

¹²⁹ A possible similar example may be found in the Ashmolean Museum (AN1893.1-41.399). Unfortunately, no photo of the sherd was able to be accessed but it is described as a sherd with frit adhering to edge on the museum's website.

¹³⁰ Motif A1b.31 in Hope, 'Blue-Painted and Polychrome Decorated Pottery from Amarna: A

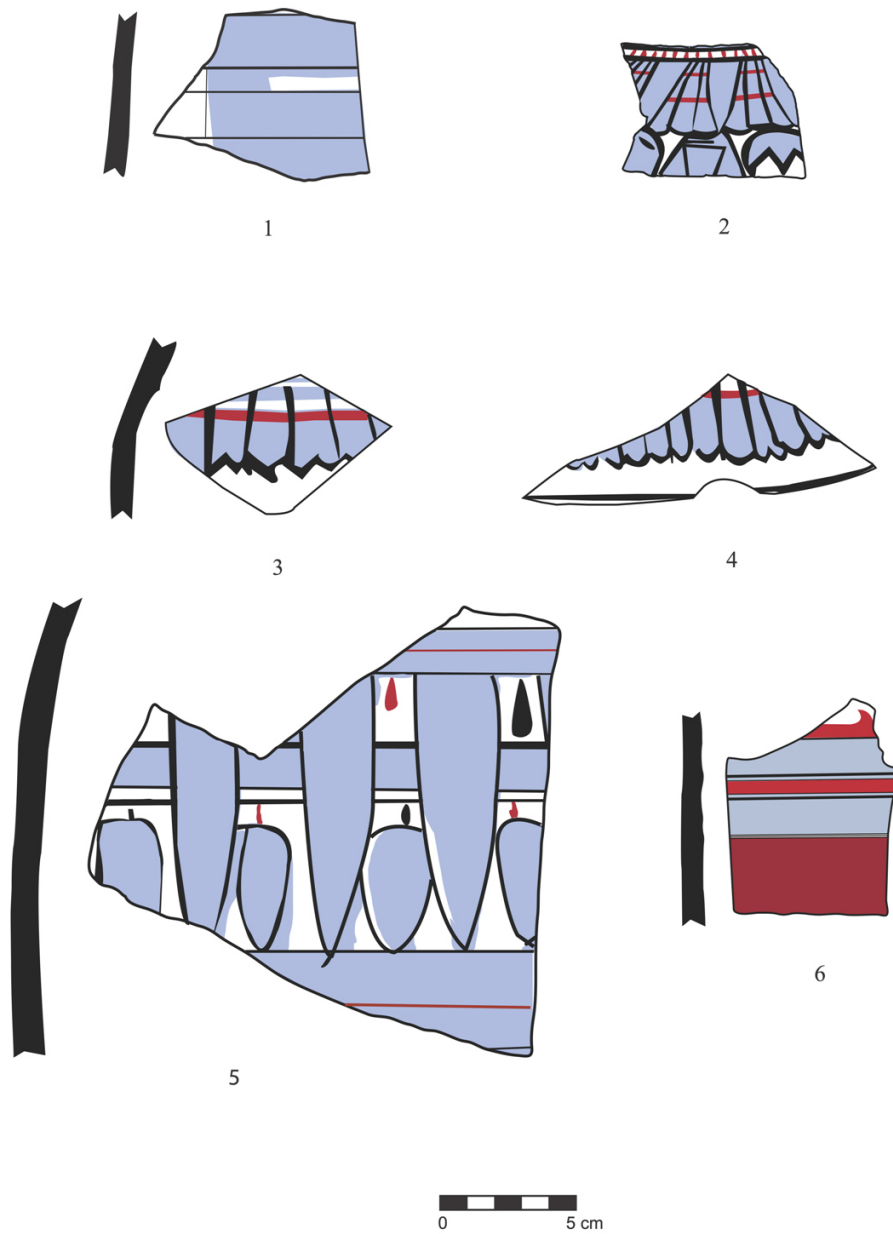


Figure 10: Jar fragments (1: 2010X2.5; 2: 2010X2.7; 3: 2010X2.9.1; 4: 2010X2.9.2; 5: 2010X2.10; 6: 2010X2.15) (Drawn by R. Aicher/R. Hummel/L. Sternklar).

Two separate sherds (Figures 10.3-4), although not mended, come from the same vessel and display an overlapping pedal motif with a red medial line, likely forming part of the shoulder of a jar.¹³¹ These two sherds likely belong to the same vessel as a larger fragment in the collection (Figure 10.5),¹³² which displays a register of blue lotus petals with outlined edges, tapering downward above an upper blue band, alternating with outlined buds beneath a daub of paint.¹³³ All three fragments are made of Nile B2 clay with a cream slip (Munsell 7.5YR 8/3). The interior of these fragments also bears the same grey coating as the Hathor jar fragments discussed above. It seems plausible that these three pieces contributed to the body decoration of the Hathor jar (Figure 8.1) and were all purchased by Currelly at the same time. When reconstructed, the vessel would feature the face of the goddess Hathor on the neck, a first register of overlapping petals, and a second, larger register with alternating blue lotus flowers and buds. Stylistically, the decorative motif of the third large fragment places the date of the Hathor jar and the other two fragments within the reign of Amenhotep III, likely originating from Malqata.

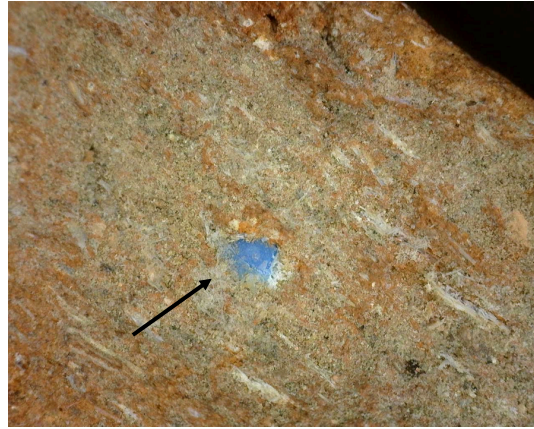


Figure 11: Blue frit (2010x2.5) (Photo taken by the author).

The final jar fragment in the ROM collection (Figure 10.6) is made of Nile B2 clay with a red slip (Munsell 10R 4/6) and burnished surface. It features two blue bands outlined in black, painted over the red surface. Due to the fragment's small size, it is impossible to determine the specific jar form it may have belonged to.¹³⁴

Conclusion:

The blue-painted pottery in the Royal Ontario Museum's collection provides valuable insight into the craftsmanship, stylistic evolution, and distribution of this distinctive ceramic tradition during the New Kingdom. The vessels, ranging from complete jars to fragments, exhibit characteristic decorative motifs, such as floral patterns, linear bands, and moulded figures of deities like Hathor. These motifs, although standardized in their application, show subtle variations over time, between the Eighteenth and Twentieth Dynasties, reflecting shifts in decorative preferences. The technological expertise required for their production—particularly the use of cobalt aluminate pigment—underscores the skill of the Egyptian potters who created them, indicating a high level of specialization in royal workshops and major production centres like Memphis and Thebes. While early scholarship often linked blue-painted pottery exclusively with the palatial contexts of sites like Malqata and

Preliminary Corpus', 67. For an example of how this motif may have looked like, see AN1926.109 in the Ashmolean Museum.

¹³¹ While the two sherds do not join, the decoration does line up, which suggests they likely belong together as if they joined.

¹³² Note that this larger fragment is made up of three smaller fragments that were mended together.

¹³³ Refer to Figure 5.2 for a discussion of this motif.

¹³⁴ Refer to the discussion of Figure 6.2.

Amarna, current research has expanded our understanding of its broader distribution, reaching as far as Qantir, the Fayum, and even Nubia. By examining the stylistic and typological parallels between the ROM vessels and other known examples, it is possible to identify likely places of origin and better understand the role these objects played in both royal and domestic contexts. Most of the ROM's collection seems to originate from the Theban region and dates between the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Dynasties. Through the publication of these previously unpublished vessels, this study contributes to the ongoing scholarship surrounding blue-painted pottery and shows that comparative research across museum collections is possible.

Acknowledgements:

I would like to express my heartfelt thanks to Mark Trumpour and the SSEA for giving me the opportunity to undertake this project, as well as for organizing and facilitating my visits to the ROM. I am grateful to Laura Fox and the ROM Images Department for granting me access to study the materials and for arranging the photographs. My sincere appreciation goes to Rexine Hummel for providing the original drawings of the pottery and the digitized versions. Lastly, I wish to extend my deepest gratitude to Dr. Mary-Ann Pouls Wegner, Dr. Oren Siegel, and Stanley Klassen for their invaluable support and guidance throughout this endeavour.

Appendix 1

Object Number	Form Type	Dimensions	Fabric Type	Slip
910.2.45	Small-medium neckless ovoid jar with rounded base	27.95 x 17.75 cm Rim Diam.: 11.3 cm	Nile D	Cream
910.2.53	Tall-necked amphora/flask with polychrome decoration	29.8 x 19 cm Rim Diam.: 11 cm	Marl D	Cream
927.75.1	Small-medium neckless ovoid jar with rounded base	30.5 x 18.3 cm Rim Diam.: 13.3 cm	Nile D	Pink
927.75.2	Small globular jar	12.06 x 10.57 cm Rim Diam.: 6.5 cm	Nile D	Cream
933.11.1	Large ovoid biconical jar	61 x 42 cm Rim Diam.: 29 cm	Nile C/D	Red (*burnished)
933.11.2	Large ovoid biconical jar	66.3 x 42.2 cm Rim Diam.: 26 cm	Nile C/D	Pink
948.34.55	Medium funnel-neck jar	34.5 x 20 cm Rim Diam.: 15 cm	Nile B2	Pink
2010X2.1	Hathor bowl	5.2 x 7.1 cm Rim Diam.: 30 cm	Nile B2	Cream
2010X2.5	Jar, body fragment	5.8 x 8.5 cm	Nile B2	Cream
2010X2.7	Jar, shoulder fragment	8.5 x 7 cm	Marl A4	Cream
2010X2.8.1/ 2010X2.8.2	Hathor jar	21 x 20 cm; 18.6 x 19.5 cm Rim Diam.: 22 cm	Nile B2	Cream
2010X2.9.1/ 2010X2.9.2/ 2010X2.10	Jar, body fragments	6.4 x 8.8 cm; 4.8 x 13 cm; 16.5 x 15.5 cm	Nile B2	Cream
2010X2.11	Hathor jar	13 x 12.5 cm	Nile B2	Cream
2010X2.12	Jar, body fragment	12.5 x 25 cm	Nile B2	Pink
2010X2.15	Jar, body fragment	8 x 5.8 cm	Nile B2	Red (*burnished)

Cairo, The Egyptian Museum JE 49111 An Ancient Egyptian Pocket Book / Livre de poche

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Robert Steven Bianchi*

Abstract: This short note suggests that a figured ostrakon in Cairo (JE 49111) is neither a simple sketch nor an example of a so-called ‘disposable medium’. It served a practical function as a palm card for an individual, holding it in the left hand, during an oral presentation in front of an audience.

Resumé: Cette essai suggère qu'un ostrakon figuratif au Cairo (JE 49111) n'est ni une simple esquisse ni un exemple de support jetable. Il doit être compris comme un outil didactique, fonctionnant comme in aide mémoire, pour une personne qui le tenait dans la main gauche lors d'une présentation orale devant un auditoire.

In 2022 as I waited to board my very early morning flight from Cairo to Paris in Terminal 3 of Cairo’s International Airport, I decided to check out what was reported to be a ‘museum’ of antiquities located there. It took some effort. There were no signs indicating its existence and there was not another person in sight who I might have asked for directions. After some searching, I located the museum, a large, single room housed in a box-like structure with a single attendant serving as ticket agent and, as I imagined, guard. Photography was not an issue, as long as no flash was used, but the lighting of the objects was so bright that no flash was required. I took photos of almost every antiquity on view. The museum has since been completely renovated and now has its own on-line presence.¹ However, several of the objects I saw that morning no longer appear to be on view.

One of those objects was the figured ostrakon (Figure 1),² about which this is a brief note. The principal figure is identified as Hatshepsut, captioned by the single line of hieroglyphs across the top of the ostrakon and the cartouche containing her praenomen in the field in front of her face,

mrj wsir m3ꜥ.t k3 rꜥ, the one beloved of Osiris, Hatshepsut

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¹ <https://egymonuments.gov.eg/en/museums/cairo-international-airport-museum-terminal-3> (viewed 03 July 2024).

² Cairo, The Egyptian Museum JE 49111 [SR 7/ 20443; SR 1/ 11371]: height: 15 cm, width: 9 cm, depth: 3.5 cm, found in 1925, Thebes west, Sheikh Abd El Qurna. I thank Yasmeeen Adel, Ali Abdelhalim Ali, and Marwa Abdel Razek for their assistance in providing the data. This ostrakon should be added to the corpus of other, contemporary figured ostraca with the same provenance: Gemma Menendez, ‘Figured ostraca from Dra Abu el-Naga (TT 11 - 12)’, *SAK* 37 (2008), 259–75.



Figure 1: Cairo, The Egyptian Museum JE 49111 (ALEA, Archive of Late Egyptian Art, a photographic and bibliographic archive)

The skin tones of her kneeling image are painted a deep, brick red colour.³ She is depicted bare-chested⁴ and bare-footed, but wears a blue crown⁵ and broad collar, its alternating ‘strands’ painted black, white, and red, and an un-striated white kilt, belted at the waist, its attached bull’s tail, painted white,⁶ arched over the knee and resting on the ground line. Hatshepsut holds a *nw*-pot⁷ in each of the upraised hands as she offers wine (*rdi.t irp*) and makes libations (*kbh*). There was an additional inscription of perhaps as many as four signs in the now damaged, and illegible column behind Hatshepsut’s back.

Although C. Roehrig offers a succinct overview of early Dynasty XVIII painting,⁸ whose comments are furthered by N. Cherpion,⁹ the style of this ostracon is exceptional. Unlike the majority of figured ostraca of New Kingdom date which depict pharaohs,¹⁰ the inscriptions and figure on this ostracon were created free-

hand without recourse to a grid. Furthermore, the figure of Hatshepsut is fully painted in contrast to virtually every other figured ostracon, each of which is designed as a line-drawing, recalling images in a child’s colouring book awaiting the application of colour. The brick red colour of the body of Hatshepsut appears to have painted on the ostracon before the thick, black contour line was added, as evidence by that contour’s overlapping of the red colour in the (spectator’s right) forearm. These characteristics suggest that this ostracon was created by a competent outline scribe.¹¹

Although Hatshepsut is often represented in monumental sculpture performing the same rituals, the back of the palms of her hands holding the *nw*-pots that habitually rest on her thighs and she is never depicted wearing the blue crown in such statues.¹²

³ R.S. Bianchi, review of M.A. Eaverly, *Tan Men / Pale Women. Color and Gender in Archaic Greece and Egypt, a Comparative Approach* (Ann Arbor, 2013), in *JARCE* 50 (2014), 233–35.

⁴ A.M. Roth, in C.H. Roehrig, R. Dreyfus and C.A. Keller (eds.) *Hatshepsut: from Queen to Pharaoh*. (New York, New Haven and London, 2005), 9–14.

⁵ B.M. Bryan, in A.P. Kozloff and B.M. Bryan (eds.) *Egypt’s Dazzling Sun: Amenhotep III and His World* (Cleveland, 1992), 162.

⁶ J. Quaegebeur, ‘Ptolémée II en adoration devant Arsinoé II divinisée’, *BIFAO* 69 (1971), 194 and note 3; and M.J. LeBlanc, ‘The Zoomorphic Transformation of the King in early Egyptian Royal Military Victory Rituals and its Relationship to the Sed Festival’, in M. Massiera, B. Mathieu and F. Rouffet (eds.) *Apprivoiser le sauvage / Taming the Wild*, (Montpellier, 2015), 229–43.

⁷ M. Hill and D. Schorsch (eds.) *Offrandes aux dieux d’Égypte* (Translated by François Boisivon), (Martigny, Switzerland, 2008), 24; and E.L. Ertman, ‘Unique offering to the god Min in the Open Air Museum at Karnak’, *KMT* 23 (2012), 52–58.

⁸ C.H. Roehrig, in Roehrig, Dreyfus and Keller 2005, 44–48.

⁹ N. Cherpion, *Les peintres de l’Égypte ancienne: leur langage, leurs palettes, leurs styles*, photographs by J.-F. Gout *Connaissance de l’Égypte ancienne* 21, (Brussels, 2022), 80–98.

¹⁰ G. Daressy, ‘Ostraca: N^{os} 25001-25385’, *Catalogue général des antiquités égyptiennes du Musée du Caire* II, (Cairo, 1901).

¹¹ G. Andreu-Lanoë (ed.) *L’art du contour: le dessin dans l’Égypte ancienne* (Paris, 2013), 8–25.

¹² C.A. Keller, in Roehrig, Dreyfus and Keller 2005, 168–69.

Those differences, particularly in the position of her hands, deserve comment, since this ostrakon cannot be considered to be either a preliminary sketch for or an evocation / copy of that sculptural typology.

J.M. Babcock¹³ in her treatment of figured ostraca depicting ‘animal fables’, and N. Braun’s¹⁴ somewhat earlier and broader treatment of figured ostraca in general, offer some interesting observations with regard to figured ostraca as a whole. Both scholars suggest that members of that typology are inherently possessed of a narrative characteristic to greater or lesser degrees. Braun goes so far as to suggest that even a single vignette,¹⁵ as depicted in the ostrakon under discussion, is possessed of ‘tellability’,¹⁶ the ability to record a story, to pass it on, to preserve it in an entertaining, delightful manner which might be presented in an aesthetically pleasing manner.¹⁷ The viewer, Babcock suggests, might even be able to fill-in the blanks,¹⁸ an observation which is furthered by Moers.¹⁹

The views of Babcock and Braun are, therefore, worth applying to this figured ostrakon in light of the emerging consensus that ancient Egyptian texts were not simply intended to be silently read but were in fact agents of performative recitals, as seen for example, in the suggestions that *The Prebend of Amun* served a libretto for performers,²⁰ and that mortuary texts in tombs at Saqqara were employed in oral performances.²¹ In a similar manner, it has been suggested that the Ashmolean ostrakon of Sinuhe was used as an ancient Egyptian blackboard for student instruction because of its extraordinarily large dimensions.²² It served as a performative and didactic tool.

Accordingly, we suggest that this figured ostrakon in Cairo might be regarded as a pocket book, following the interpretation of a figured ostrakon from Saqqara which features a figure armed with shield and spear which is suggested to have served the same function.²³ Such a suggestion may be confirmed by its materiality. Its dimensions correspond to the dimensions of many others in the typology suggesting,

¹³ J.M. Babcock, *Ancient Egyptian Animal Fables: Tree Climbing Hippos and Ennobled mice*, Culture and History of the Ancient Near East 128, (Leiden and Boston, 2022).

¹⁴ N.S. Braun, *Bilder erzählen: visuelle Narrativität im alten Ägypten. Ägyptologische Studien Leipzig 2*. (Heidelberg, 2020).

¹⁵ Braun 2020, 30.

¹⁶ Braun 2020, 13, *passim*.

¹⁷ Braun 2020, 375.

¹⁸ Babcock 2022, 64.

¹⁹ G. Moers, ‘Egyptological Narratology as Historical Narratology: a Brief History and Some (Im-)possibilities’, in G. Moers, (ed.) *Narrative and Narrativity in Ancient Egypt: Case Studies on Narrative Difference in Various Media* (Hamburg, 2023), 1-25.

²⁰ J. Cross, ‘Mouvance and the art of fiction in performance in manuscripts of a Demotic Egyptian novella’, *Manuscript and Text Cultures 2* (2023), 168-200.

²¹ L. Weiss, *The Walking Dead at Saqqara: Strategies of Social and Religious Interaction in Practice*, Religionsgeschichtliche Versuche und Vorarbeiten 7, (Berlin and Boston, 2022).

²² O. Goelet Jr., ‘Observations on copying and the hieroglyphic tradition in the production of the *Book of the Dead*’, in S.H. D’Auria (ed.) *Offerings to the Discerning Eye: an Egyptological Medley in Honor of Jack A. Josephson* (Leiden and Boston, 2010), 121-132; following J. Kahl, ‘Es ist vom Anfang bis zum Ende so gekommen’, in M. Dietrich and I. Kottsieper (eds.) ‘*Und Mose schrieb dieses Lied auf*’: Studien zum Alten Testament und zum Alten Orient. Festschrift für Oswald Loretz zur Vollendung seines 70. Lebensjahres mit Beiträgen von Freunden, Schülern und Kollegen (Münster, 1998), 383-400.

²³ W.P. van Pelt and N. Staring, ‘Interpreting graffiti in the Saqqara New Kingdom Necropolis as Expressions of Popular Customs and Beliefs’, *Rivista del Museo Egizio 3* (2019), 17, for which see

as has been observed for pot sherds repurposed as ostraca,²⁴ that its size and shape were purposefully chosen,²⁵ or manufactured,²⁶ so that it could conveniently be manipulated by the hands of the draughtsman. Moreover, it would readily support the planned text and/or figure which were to be drawn on it, although there are exceptions.²⁷ Assuming that most ancient Egyptians were right-handed,²⁸ such figured ostraca were presumably held in the left hand while being created and likewise held in the left hand when being read. Repeated contact with the fingers of the left hand would then explain the damage to the inscription in the area of the cartouche and *nw*-pot, and the clenching hold of the left thumb may have resulted in the loss of the ostrakon's left-hand edge. A very similar figured ostrakon in Stockholm would have served the same purpose.²⁹

I conclude therefore, that such objects can no longer be regarded either as 'simple sketches'³⁰ or as 'disposable media'.³¹ On the contrary, these figured ostraca must be understood within the greater context of ancient Egyptian literature. One should, therefore, set aside the commonly held notion that their function is a technical expedient serving the mechanical needs of a craft workshop.

Acknowledgement: I acknowledge the editorial assistance of Caroline Delucé

M.J. Raven, J. Maarten and J. van Dijk 2005, 'The reliefs, paintings, and inscriptions', in M.J. Raven (ed.) *The tomb of Pay and Raia at Saqqara*, (Leiden and London, 2005), pl. 103, 81.

²⁴ C. Caputo, 'Pottery sherds for writing: an overview of the practice', in C. Caputo and J. Lougovaya (eds.) *Using Ostraca in the Ancient World: New Discoveries and Methodologies* 31 (Berlin, 2020), 31–58.

²⁵ Caputo 2020, 31–58.

²⁶ J. Pelegrin, G. Andreu-Lanoë and C. Pariselle, 'La production des ostraca en calcaire dans la nécropole thébaine: étude préliminaire', *BIFAO* 115 (2016), 325–52.

²⁷ N. Sojic, 'Editing Letters from Deir el-Medina: a Preliminary Report', in S. Töpfer, P. Del Vesco and F. Poole (eds.) *Deir el-Medina: Through the Kaleidoscope. Proceedings of the International Workshop, Turin 8th-10th October 2018* (Turin, 2022), 385–410.

²⁸ V. Angenot, 'Eating in ancient Egypt: semiotics of an iconographic absence'. *JSSEA* 47 (2020-2021), 6; and N. Reeves, 'Left-handed Kings? Observations on a Fragmentary Egyptian Sculpture' in A. Leahy and J. Tait (eds.), *Studies on Ancient Egypt in Honour of H. S. Smith* (London, 1999), 249–54.

²⁹ Stockholm, Medelhavsmuseet MM 14 117: B.E.J. Peterson, 'Zeichnungen aus einer Totenstadt: Bildostraka aus Theben-West, ihre Fundplätze, Themata und Zweckbereiche, mitsamt einem Katalog der Gayer-Anderson-Sammlung in Stockholm', *Medelhavsmuseet Bulletin* 7-8 (1973), 71, pl. 10, fig. 7.

³⁰ A.F. Arico and K.E. Davis, 'An Ostrakon Depicting a King at the Art Institute of Chicago (AIC 1920.255)'. *JARCE*, 56 (2020), 35–46.

³¹ K.M. Cooney, 'Apprenticeship and Figured Ostraca from the Ancient Egyptian Village of Deir el-Medina', in W. Wendrich (ed.) *Archaeology and Apprenticeship: Body Knowledge, Identity, and Communities of Practice* (Tucson, 2012), 145; already challenged by Babcock 2022, 33.

Stefan Bojowald

Abstract: This article focuses on the dog's sexual behaviour according to Egyptian text sources. The topic has not yet been comprehensively addressed in the past. The basis is formed by four text examples that are relatively recent in age. The Egyptian's gift for precise observation of nature is beautifully expressed.

Resumé: Cet article se concentre sur le comportement sexuel du chien selon les sources textuelles égyptiennes. Ce sujet n'a pas encore été traité de manière exhaustive jusqu'à présent. L'analyse repose sur quatre exemples textuels relativement récents. Le don des Égyptiens pour l'observation précise de la nature y est magnifiquement exprimé.

In diesem Beitrag wird ein Blick auf ägyptische Nachrichten zum Sexualverhalten des Hundes geworfen. Die einschlägigen Quellen beginnen erst relativ spät zu fließen. Im letzten Abschnitt wird Näheres zu diesem Punkt gesagt. Die Diskussionsgrundlage setzt sich aus insgesamt vier Beispielen zusammen, die durchaus repräsentativ sein dürften. Der Vergleich wird hier m.W. zum ersten Mal unternommen. Die Stellen lohnen sich aber durchaus im Gesamtzusammenhang zu betrachten. In methodischer Hinsicht scheint jedenfalls nichts gegen diesen Ansatz zu sprechen. Die folgende Anordnung folgt einem chronologisches Schema.

Der erste wichtige locus classicus ist in pJumilhac XVI, 15-17 zu finden. Der Papyrus selbst stellt eine religiöse Monographie über die Mythen und Riten des 17. und 18. oberägyptischen Gaus dar und kann in frühptolemäische Zeit datiert werden¹. Der Inhalt teilt u.a. Informationen zu Göttern, heiligen Orten, Tieren, Pflanzen und Festen² mit. Die engste Parallele bildet das Buch vom Fayum. Im dortigen Zusammenhang ist von einem Konflikt zwischen dem hundegestaltigen Baba und Thot die Rede. Die Hundegestalt des Baba wurde jüngst von Teotino³ behandelt. Die Hintergrundgeschichte der Streiterei tut hier nichts zur Sache und kann ausser Acht gelassen werden. In diesem Rahmen kommt es einzig und allein auf die oben erwähnte Einzelheit an. Die zentralen Worte finden sich an der folgenden Stelle:

¹ J. Fr. Quack, *Corpus oder membra diesiecta? Zur Sprach- und Redaktionskritik des Papyrus Jumilhac*, in: W. Waitkus (Hrsg.), *Diener des Horus, Festschrift für Dieter Kurth zum 65. Geburtstag*, AegHam Band 1, Gladbeck 2008, 206.

² U. Köhler, *Pap. Jumilhac*, LÄ IV, sp. 708–12.

³ C. Teotino, *Der Schutz des Osiris, Eine Studie zu den apotropäischen Gottheiten auf den Kairener Sarkophagen des Djedher (CG 29304) und Anchhapi (CG 29303), Teil 1*, Studien zur spätantiken Religion 35, Wiesbaden 2022, 92.

„Das Kennen des Kopulierens des iwiw-Hundes...Baba sagte von Neuem Schlechtes gegen Thot. Daraufhin ging Thot gegen ihn vor, als er sich mit einem Weibchen paarte und schlief. Er bestrich sein Glied mit seiner Schreibbinse und er sprach seine Zaubersprüche gegen ihn. Er füllte sein Glied in der Scheide des Weibchens, so dass er es nicht herausziehen konnte...“⁴

Die letzten Worte spielen die entscheidende Rolle, da in ihnen die Kopulation der Hunde detailliert beschrieben wird. Die Vermutung liegt nahe, dass hier auf das sog. „Hängen“ angespielt wird. Die richtige Erklärung geht bereits auf Derchain⁵ und Leitz⁶ zurück. In inhaltlicher Hinsicht ist dem nichts hinzuzufügen. Der zoologische Fachausdruck bezieht sich auf ein bestimmtes Paarungsverhalten, das gerade für Caniden charakteristisch ist. Der Hintergrund besteht darin, dass die Genitalien der Tiere während des Zeugungsaktes massiv anschwellen und dadurch nicht mehr voneinander zu lösen sind. Die Tiere bleiben so zwischen mehreren Minuten und fast einer Stunde miteinander verbunden. Daher rührt der Name dieses Phänomens. Der erste Rüde kann so ungestört seinem Trieb folgen, ohne die Konkurrenz durch Nebenbuhler fürchten zu müssen.

Die eben zitierte Stelle stand im ägyptischen Schrifttum lange ohne Parallele da. Im Akkadischen sieht die Sache ganz anders aus, wo die betreffende Vorstellung gut dokumentiert ist⁷. In letzter Zeit ist allerdings etwas Bewegung in die gesamte Angelegenheit gekommen. Die neue Situation hat erfreulicherweise dazu geführt, dass die Sexualität der Hunde nun auch im Demotischen und Koptischen belegt werden kann. Das einschlägige Material soll in den nächsten Zeilen präsentiert werden. Die Vollständigkeit wird angestrebt, ist aber möglicherweise nicht erreicht worden.

Der Blick richtet sich als erstes auf das demotische Material. Die Basis besteht dort nach der jetzigen Kenntnis des Verf. aus einem einzigen Beispiel. In GEMF 16 (PDM/PGM XIV) = Magischer Papyrus London-Leiden, einer Art Liebesbeschwörung aus dem späten 2. Jhdt. n. Chr., tauchen folgende Worte auf:

„*ḥ3.t=y pḏ p3y(=y) ḥ3.t mr. p3 (?) wh3e iw ḥr ire im(y).t iy=f r im(y)-mw, wh3e iw ḥr ire wnše.t iy r wnše, wh3e iw ḥr ire whr.t iy.t=f r whr...my ire mn r.mš mn iy=f r mn r-mš mn*“⁸

⁴ Übersetzung nach J. Vandier, *Le Papyrus Jumilhac*, XVI, Paris, 15–17.

⁵ Ph. Derchain, L’auteur du Papyrus Jumilhac, in: *RdE* 41, 1990, 24d.

⁶ Chr. Leitz, Auseinandersetzungen zwischen Baba und Thot, in: H. Behlmer (Hrsg.), ...*Quaerentes Scientiam, Festschrift für Wolfhart Westendorf zu seinem 70. Geburtstag, überreicht von seinen Schülern*, Göttingen 1994, 105–6.

⁷ Cl. Wilcke, Liebesbeschwörungen aus Isin, in: *ZA* 75, 1985, 201; CT 23 10f. III 26ff.//4: 9ff (mir nicht zugänglich!), zitiert nach J. S. Cooper, Magic and M(is)use: Poetic Promiscuity in Mesopotamian Ritual, in: M. E. Vogelzang/H. L. J. Vanstiphout (ed.) *Mesopotamian Poetic Language: Sumerian and Akkadian*, Proceedings of the Groningen Group for the Study of Mesopotamian Literature, Cuneiform Monographs 6, Groningen 1996, 50-51; R. D. Biggs, *ŠA.ZI.GA, Ancient Mesopotamian potency incantations, Texts from Cuneiform Sources*, New York 1967, 33; G. Zisa, *The Loss of Male Sexual Desire in Ancient Mesopotamia, Niš libbi-Therapies*, Medical Traditions 5, Berlin-Boston 2021, 328.

⁸ Chr. A. Faraone/S. Torallas Tovar (eds.) *Greek and Egyptian Magical Formularies, Text and Translation, Volume I*, California Classical Studies Number 9, Berkeley 2022, 260.

Der Sprecher wendet sich mit diesen Worten an eine weibliche Person. Die Sexualität der Tiere wird wieder als Analogie zum menschlichen Liebesleben bemüht, deren Wirkung durch die drei prägnanten Vergleiche gesteigert wird. Der Schwerpunkt ruht für die aktuellen Zwecke auf dem Hundegleichnis. Das Paarungsverhalten des Tieres wird auch hier zwar kurz, aber treffend zur Sprache gebracht. Die Bedeutung der seltenen Wörter „ΜΟΥΤΣΕ“ „Kätzin“ und „ΙΕΥ“ „Kater“ wurde von Drescher¹¹ wahrscheinlich gemacht.

Das zweite koptische Beispiel ist in PCMI 32=P. Bad. V. 131 zu beobachten, bei dem man es ebenfalls mit einem Liebeszauber zu tun hat. Die Provenienz deutet wieder ins Fayum, die Datierung spricht für das 10. Jhd. n. Chr. Das Manuskript ist ein Palimpsest, der ursprüngliche Text lässt sich teilweise als Jer. 41 (34), 8 identifizieren. Die Originalhandschrift lässt sich wohl dem 6. Jhd. n. Chr. zuweisen. Der Text ist mehrheitlich in Standardsahidisch abgefasst, die Anleitungen nach dem ersten Rezept zeigen aber einen starken mittelägyptischen Einfluss. Die Seite 2, 16-19 ist hier von besonderem Interesse, die eine Anrufung an den Erzengel Michael enthält. Der Erzengel Michael kehrt in vielen koptischen Anrufungen als Hauptadressat wieder. Die volle Aufmerksamkeit gilt folgenden Worten:

„ΝΤΟΚ ΠΕΝΤΑΚΤΡΕΝΑ ΑΦ ΕΙ ΒΕ ΑΚΤΡΕΝΒΑΜΟΥΛ ΒΑΚΒΕΚ. ΑΚΤΡΕΝΕΖΟΥΟΡ ΕΙ
ΖΑ ΠΕΖΟΥΟΡ. ΑΚΤΡΕΝ...ΥΣ .. ΖΑ ΠΧΕΥ“¹²

Die Übersetzung:

„Du bist es, der die Bienen (?) kommen lässt. Du hast die Kamele kauen lassen. Du hast die Hündinnen unter den Hund gehen lassen. Du hast ...unter den Kater“

scheint am wörtlichsten zu sein. Der zerstörte hintere Teil lässt sich wohl als Abschnitt über Katzen rekonstruieren. Der vordere Teil über die Bienen – wenn sie denn gemeint sind – bleibt eher unklar. Die Bienen werden in koptischen Texten normalerweise unter dem Aspekt der Arbeit genannt. Ob dies auch hier der Fall ist, lässt sich nur bedingt sagen. Das Verb „ΒΑΚΒΕΚ“ „kauen“ stellt die fayumische Nebenform zu sahidischem „ΟΥΟΚΟΥΕΚ“ gleicher Bedeutung dar¹³. Der Lautwandel „ou“-„b“ ist durchaus geläufig. In dessen Fall scheint es sich um ein sprachübergreifendes Phänomen zu handeln, die gleiche Erscheinung kehrt z. B. im Tchadischen und Aramäischen wieder. Das Wort „ΟΥΟΚΟΥΕΚ“ verfügt mit „wgʒ“ „kauen“ über eine gute ägyptische Etymologie.

In der Auswertung lässt sich folgendes Fazit ziehen. Die obigen Ausführungen helfen dabei, das ägyptische Wissen vom Sexualverhalten des Hundes in einen größeren Zusammenhang einzuordnen. Das Verständnis kann dadurch weiter verbessert werden. Das Thema lässt sich so diachron verfolgen. Die Tradition setzt nach den bisherigen Quellen verhältnismäßig spät ein. Das momentane Alter der

¹¹ J. Drescher, *The Coptic Dictionary: Additions and Corrections*, in: *BSAC 16, 1961-1962*, 288.

¹² K. Dosoo/M. Preininger, *Papyri Copticae Magicae, Coptic Magical Texts, Volume 1: Formularies, In Collaboration with Roxanne Bélanger Sarrazin, Edward O. D. Love, Selina Schuster and Julia Schwarzer*, AfP Beiheft 48, Berlin-Boston 2023, 428.

¹³ W. Westendorf, *Koptisches Handwörterbuch*, Heidelberg 1965/1977, 288.

Vorstellung reicht von der frühptolemäischen Zeit bis in die christliche Spätantike. Die Spätantike lässt man bekanntlich nach neueren Maßstäben vom 3.-10. Jhd. n. Chr. dauern. Die jüngeren Zeugen bleiben, was die Details angeht, weit hinter pJumilhac zurück. Das Motiv scheint sich in den Liebestexten irgendwie verselbstständigt zu haben. Die Parallele verliert dadurch nicht an Wert. Das Motiv war vielmehr so flexibel, dass es mühelos eng definierte Gattungsgrenzen überwinden konnte. Ob dem Mangel an älteren Zeugnissen der Überlieferungszufall zugrunde liegt, ist immerhin möglich. Der Anblick kopulierender Hunde muss jedenfalls auch schon zuvor zum Alltag gehört haben. In Anbetracht dessen wäre es nicht ungewöhnlich, wenn früher oder später ältere Belege entdeckt werden. Das Interesse des Ägypters am Sexualleben der Caniden hat auch literarische Früchte getragen, wie die bekannte Episode um jene beiden liebestollen Schakale zeigt. Der Charakter des sonderbaren kleinen Textes hütet noch manche Geheimnisse, die zu lüften hier nicht der richtige Ort ist. In der Forschung hat er noch nicht die Aufmerksamkeit gefunden, die ihm eigentlich gebührt. Der Autor hofft, bei passender Gelegenheit auf diese Fragen zurückzukommen.

Die obigen Beispiele legen einmal mehr Zeugnis von der Gabe des Ägypters zur exakten Naturbeobachtung ab. Die moderne Forschung ist schon mehrfach auf diese besonders ausgeprägte Fähigkeit der Bewohner des Niltales gestoßen. Die altorientalischen Völker haben auf diesem Gebiet allgemein beachtliche Leistungen vollbracht. Die dabei erzielten Ergebnisse brauchen den Vergleich mit den Errungenschaften der modernen Naturwissenschaften nicht zu scheuen. Das positive Urteil trifft dabei nicht allein auf die literarischen Zeugnisse zu. Die bildende Kunst macht hiervon keine Ausnahme, was nur am Rande erwähnt sei. Das Material wird nun durch das hier untersuchte Beispiel zusätzlich ergänzt.

Addenda and Corrigenda

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JSSEA 2025, 51, pp 123 - 124

A number of errors were included in the Table of Contents, paper by Anca Seculin and Valérie Angenot and its headers in the printed and PDF versions of volume 50 (pages 17 to 42).

Table of Contents (page v): *for* La Vectorialité Complexe des Scènes Agricoles de la Tombe de Khâemhat (TT57) *read* La vectorialité complexe des scènes agricoles de la tombe de Khâemhat (TT57)

Abstract (page 17): *for* vectoriality *read* vectoriality

Odd Page Headers (pages 17 to 41): *for* Vectoriality *read* Vectoriality

Figure 8. a-b-c (page 28): *for* dessin de photographie *read* dessin et photographie

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