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(Re)productive Traditions in Ancient Egypt

Todd GILLEN (ed.)



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(Re)productive Traditions in Ancient Egypt

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Table of Contents

Todd GILLEN, Introduction and overview	p. 7–18
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1. *Text*

Jean WINAND, (Re)productive traditions in Ancient Egypt. Some considerations with a particular focus on literature and language(s).....	p. 19–40
Daniel A. WERNING, Inner-Egyptian receptions of a theological book between reproduction, update, and creativity. The Book of Caverns from the 13 th to the 4 th century BCE.....	p. 41–67
Marina SOKOLOVA, The tradition of the Coffin Texts in Hermopolis. Productive or reproductive?	p. 69–93
Chloé C.D. RAGAZZOLI, Beyond authors and copyists. The role of variation in Ancient Egyptian and New Kingdom literary production.....	p. 95–126
Boyo G. OCKINGA, “As god endures, there is no misstatement in my utterance!” The context of the assertions of truthfulness in the biography of Saroy (TT 233)	p. 127–148
Hans-Werner FISCHER-ELFERT, Cross-genre correspondences. Wisdom, medical, mathematical and oneirological compositions from the Middle Kingdom to the late New Kingdom	p. 149–161
Camilla DI-BIASE DYSON, Metaphor in the teaching of Menena. Between rhetorical innovation and tradition	p. 163–179

2. *Art*

Whitney DAVIS, Ancient Egyptian illusions. Pictorial bivirtuality in canonical Egyptian depiction.....	p. 181–201
Vanessa DAVIES, Complications in the stylistic analysis of Egyptian art. A look at the Small Temple of Medinet Habu.....	p. 203–228

Dimitri LABOURY, Tradition and Creativity. Toward a Study of Intericonicity in Ancient Egyptian Art	p. 229–258
Gabriele PIEKE, Lost in transformation. Artistic creation between permanence and change	p. 259–304
Tamás A. BÁCS, Traditions old and new. Artistic production of the late Ramesside period	p. 305–332
Alexis DEN DONCKER, Identifying-copies in the private Theban necropolis. Tradition as reception under the influence of self-fashioning processes	p. 333–370
Lubica HUDÁKOVÁ, Middle Kingdom transformations of an Old Kingdom artistic tradition. The <i>m33</i> -scene.....	p. 371–394
Campbell PRICE, “His image as perfect as the ancestors”. On the transmission of forms in non-royal sculpture during the First Millennium B.C.	p. 395–410

3. *Artefact*

Valérie ANGENOT, Remnants of the past. Skeuomorphic traditions in Ancient Egypt	p. 411–424
Lucie JIRÁSKOVÁ, Abusir miniature and model stone vessels of the Old Kingdom. The Digital Puzzle of the <i>talatat</i> from Karnak.....	p. 425–443
Carlo RINDI NUZZOLO, Tradition and transformation. Retracing Ptah-Sokar-Osiris figures from Akhmim in museums and private collections	p. 445–474

4. *Traditions across media*

Pascal VERNUS, Modelling the relationship between reproduction and production of ‘sacralized’ texts in Pharaonic Egypt.....	p. 475–509
Todd J. GILLEN, Writing productive traditions. The emergence of the monumental Triumph Scene at Thebes	p. 511–536
Hana NAVRATILOVA, Thutmoside graffiti and Thutmoside traditions. A view from Memphis.....	p. 537–561
Éva LIPTAY, From funerary papyrus to tomb wall and vice versa. Innovation and tradition in early Third Intermediate Period funerary art.....	p. 563–592
Andreas DORN, The <i>iri.n</i> Personal-Name-formula in non-royal texts of the New Kingdom. A donation mark or a means of self-presentation?.....	p. 593–621

Introduction and overview

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Tradition is central to Egyptology, yet individual traditions in textual, artistic and material production still await critical treatment, and methodological frameworks for analysis are yet to be elaborated. The conceptual space that tradition occupies is more often than not intuitively divined, and could benefit from explicit discussion and problematisation. This volume is intended as a first step in this direction. It collects a broad survey of approaches to tradition in Egyptology, bringing together work on archaeological, art historical and philological material from the Predynastic to the Late Period in the hope of stimulating exploration of the topic. Certainly it has provoked many different responses and resulted in insights from many different points of view, dealing with largely disparate sets of data. The eclectic mix of material in this volume takes us from New Kingdom artists in the Theban foothills to Old Kingdom Abusir, and from changing ideas about literary texts to the visual effects of archaising statuary. With themes of diachrony persisting at the centre, aspects of tradition are approached from a variety of perspectives: as sets of conventions abstracted from the continuity of artefactual forms; as processes of knowledge (and practice) acquisition and transmission; and as relevant to the individuals and groups involved in artefact production.

The concepts of *productivity* and *reproductivity* that link many of the contributions are inspired by the field of text criticism¹ and are used as reference points for describing cultural change and the (dis)continuity of traditions. Briefly put, productive or open traditions are in a state of flux that stands in dialectic relation to shifting social and historical circumstances, while reproductive or closed traditions are frozen at a particular historical moment and their formulations are thereafter faithfully passed down verbatim. While a narrow binary structure may be a little restrictive, a continuum between the two poles of dynamic productivity and static reproductivity is by all means relevant to and useful for the description of various types of symbolisation, and probably all types of cultural production.

The volume is divided into four main sections, the first three of which attempt to reflect the different material foci of the contributions: text, art, and artefacts. The final section collects papers dealing with traditions which span different media. This is chiefly an organisational principle and facilitates specialists finding their relevant material. In doing so, I hope not to have discouraged a curiosity for reading outside one's field, since every paper sheds light on the themes of cultural transmission and (re)production. There is a general thematic trend that begins at the reproductive end of the spectrum and runs to the productive: the opening contributions in Section 1 discuss

1. For discussion in Egyptology, see Assmann 1995: 6; Quack 1994: 13–23; Kahl 1999: 37–38.

'predominantly reproductive' traditions, and the volume concludes with Section 4, the papers of which address situations of high productivity.

This introduction gives a short, abstract-style overview for each paper, often including comments that localise the paper vis-à-vis the theme of *(re)productivity*. My own editor's comments on the Egyptological approach to tradition close the introduction and I hope inspire some ideas for future directions of study.

Section 1: text

The Egyptological treatment of textual traditions has a long and successful history and follows broader, pan-disciplinary approaches to reproduction. **Jean Winand** gives an introduction to the text critical method for establishing stemmata that describe reproductive traditions, including notes on its history and basic principles. With discussion of the textual traditions of *The Story of Sinuhe* and *The Shipwrecked Sailor*, he both reviews classic cases of reproduction as well as interrogates instances of productivity in such texts. Moving to a consideration of issues of transmission, Winand proposes of a novel way of understanding the transmission history of *Sinuhe*. This new hypothetical stemma challenges established transmission histories of the text and involves a reconceptualisation of the canon as dynamically alive and engaged in a complex literary interplay with the *Teaching of Amenemhet*. Winand closes his introductory paper with an overview and linguistic illustrations of the phenomenon known as *égyptien de tradition*.

Daniel Werning treads similar ground with his meticulous demonstration of the complexities of the 'predominantly reproductive' tradition of the Book of Caverns. He details the evidence that allows us to characterise its different—'reproductive' as well as 'creative'—kinds of reception throughout the centuries: for example, the array of (un)intentional changes that could occur in a text and it still be considered 'reproductive,' including personalising the text or emending it for various reasons—often to improve the reading. The rigor of this analysis enables the differentiation and categorisation of changes made at different stages of the production process: copies made from manuscript or monument sources, and changes made by scribes (as authors) or the artisans who executed the monuments. Werning's very precise work impressively shows at one point (§6.3.2) how the ancient copyists, fully trained in varieties of *égyptien de tradition*, were nonetheless insensitive to the idiosyncratic grammar of the corpus. This contribution is above all significant for its discussion of the means of composition of the texts: Werning has been able to prove certain 'library traditions' and characterises the scribes who entered tombs to copy texts and images as 'archeo-philologists.' This is a rare penetration to the level of everyday practice, a theme that will be taken up again later in the section on art (*cf.* papers of Laboury and esp. Den Doncker).

A focus on the kinds of changes, reworkings, and modifications taking place within the conceptual bounds of a 'predominantly reproductive' tradition is also at the heart of **Marina Sokolova's** analysis of Middle Kingdom Coffin Texts (CT) attested on Hermopolite coffins (modern day Bersheh). She tracks spell sequences ('strings') in order to both determine which are unique to Bersheh, and which are also attested in other regional corpora (*e.g.* Thebes, Assiut, Meir), and also to cross-reference the occurrence of strings with social status, *i.e.* nomarchs *vs.* other high officials *vs.* officials. Based on the results of this thorough analysis, informed attempts are made to reconstruct the nature of the Bersheh tradition and its mode(s) of transmission. Among her numerous detailed conclusions, Sokolova explodes a common misconception, based on weak evidence, that copies of CT spells were stored in

libraries. Rather, most of the evidence from Bersheh suggests the existence of private collections, and that individuals circulated manuscripts privately, mostly within familial, social, or professional milieux. It seems that the CT tradition was introduced to Bersheh and transmitted *reproductively*, where Hermopolitans played the part of “active users, but not generators” of the texts.

These first papers initially begin with cases of reproductivity and problematising them. *Variation* is a key word in this context and it is the interpretive route **Chloé Ragazzoli** takes in exploring transmission and the role of the scribe. Taking the Late Egyptian Miscellanies as a case study, she opens up for study the mind of the scribe by deploying a sensitivity to so-called textual ‘errors’ and viewing them as ‘variants.’ Via diverse analyses she surveys an array of variation—from mechanical faults and the rhythms of reed dipping to compilation and intertextuality—and transforms what is usually considered ‘contamination’ by the text critical approach into a great source of understanding for a corpus often considered unfaithfully reproductive. Drawing on work in textual transmission from classic and medieval studies, Ragazzoli’s work is informed by material philology and collapses the distinction between authors and copyists: she rethinks ‘scribe’ as neither, suggesting instead “textual craftsman.”

Although a focus on reproduction by and large dominates the Egyptological study of text, approaches to productive traditions are nonetheless emerging. There is no standard way of handling such traditions, and ‘productivity’ should be seen as an umbrella term for a variety of kinds of tradition and transmission; the final three papers in this section offer some food for thought in that regard.

Boyo Ockinga’s contribution looks at the textual tradition of the *assertions of truthfulness*, using as a springboard the biography of the Ramesside high official Saroy found in Theban Tomb 233. Ockinga collects a corpus of 41 texts and explores the historical circumstances of such claims, their content, and in particular their characteristic lexical items and phrases. Ockinga observes that the formulation of such claims varies considerably and characterises it as a highly productive tradition, with similarities between instances deriving from common elite repertoires of literary and cultural knowledge. The subsequent thought-provoking discussion implies that the route for cultural transmission does not follow the common top-down direction: Ockinga takes up the idea that the original *Sitz im Leben* of such claims is in “formalised oral boasting,” and the evidence indicates that they found entry into the monumental sphere via the biographical inscriptions of the provincial elite of the First Intermediate Period, perhaps progressing to the royal sphere only afterwards. As to Saroy’s particular reasons for including such assertions in his biography, Ockinga reconstructs plausible motivations based on the facts of the high official’s life, bringing a personal perspective to the deployment of such traditions.

Hans-Werner Fischer-Elfert takes us in a different direction in his discussion of the similarities (syntax, lexicon, argument structure) between many different kinds of textual genres. A comparison of wisdom and medical discourses in particular shows up similar argumentation structures consisting of sequences of conditional statements (*if...then*): the problem or symptom is given in the protasis; the solution or treatment in the apodosis. Such an arrangement never leads to the formulation of a general theory for universal application; rather, representative case studies are intended as points of guidance for the future high official or physician. Fischer-Elfert shrewdly observes that the processes consistently orient around perception and cognition, finding their places in the texts via the lexical items *m33* “see”, *gmi* “find” and *rh* “know.” He comes to similar conclusions about mathematical and oneirological texts and discusses how similar textual forms can nonetheless serve different cultural

functions. In this context of this volume, Fischer-Elfert's wider perspective points out an important limitation to studying text from the perspective of tradition: such correspondences are not simply textual convention, but indicate overarching patterns of thought.

Finally, **Camilla Di-Biase Dyson** takes a fresh interdisciplinary look at the Ramesside *Teaching of Menena* in order to describe a case of maximal productivity in Egyptian literature. That the teaching contains intertextual references to canonical New Kingdom literary texts has for a long while been common knowledge in Egyptology. Di-Biase Dyson extends our understanding of the ways in which the text engages with its textual tradition via a metaphor analysis novel to Egyptology: metaphor usage is analysed at the word level and metaphor distribution at the text level. What initially results is not only the sketch of a method for metaphor analysis, but also a descriptive typology of metaphor patterns. In application, Di-Biase Dyson surveys a number of indirect metaphors in *Menena* that draw on the lexical significations of canonical wisdom texts and create a generic intertextuality. She also identifies text-level patterns of (particularly nautical) imagery used to make analogies for life paths, choices and obstacles. This contribution is a valuable advance in capturing the broad relationships between the expression of ancient Egyptian creativity and literary tradition, and lays the foundation for exciting future results.

Section 2: art

Section 2 of this volume brings together art historical approaches to tradition, and begins with the reflections of **Whitney Davis** on the Egyptological history of tradition vis-à-vis wider art history. It is a general overview as much as a personal account of his significant contribution to the discussion—in Egyptology and elsewhere—and orienting particularly about the issues of style and canonicity. Pulling apart his own previous work, he supplements a past concern for the *visuality* of Egyptian art with a present preoccupation with *virtuality* (“the construction of pictorial spaces that vary with the beholder’s real standpoint”) and *visibility* (“the ways in which pictures become intelligible in visual space.”) In addition to setting up a coherent, sophisticated and very neat terminology for describing these dimensions of art, Davis goes on to show, in a re-analysis of the third dynasty wood reliefs of Hesy at Saqqara, how illusions of depth and effect can be deliberately orchestrated. It is a significant step in understanding how canonical depiction works from a cognitive point of view, as well as a rare glimpse into aspects of Egyptian artistic traditions that are yet to be fully explored.

Vanessa Davies investigates the forms of hieroglyphic signs in 18th dynasty inscriptions at Medinet Habu and Luxor temples in a study that deals with the agentive sources of variation. In this respect it parallels to some extent Chloé Ragazzoli’s contribution for texts and scribes. Her micro-observations of monumental palaeography reveal the extent of variation within tradition: attempts to produce a certain sign yield different final results depending on the artist, and a particular artist can also vary his productions from instance to instance. In addition to her conclusions vis-à-vis work organisation, Davies also touches tantalisingly on topics such as the effect of physical environments or even emotional states on the output of artists, and whether the quality of execution of glyphs can be used as an index for the attribution of workmanship to either masters or apprentices. Unfortunately very few of these enticing speculations are provided with definitive illustrations, leaving us with an array of possibilities that await future substantiation. While her general argument against aesthetic judgements of Egyptian workmanship is sound, it remains up for debate whether or not the

“unintentional factors” that Davies discusses—dealt with in other disciplines as *embodiment*, *artistic gesture*, and other terms—should be explored under the already overloaded term ‘style.’

The following five papers are dedicated to the study of private tomb decoration and are particularly interested in describing the mechanisms of productivity. In a well-rounded contribution that situates itself within a larger academic landscape and ranges over a variety of modern and ancient intellectual reference points, **Dimitri Laboury** frames artistic (re)production in terms of creativity. In part 1 he argues that creativity and tradition, rather than representing polar opposites, are codependent aspects of ancient Egyptian artistic practice. With an emphasis on the performative aspects of art, he goes on in part 2 to discuss the much-debated issue of copying. In a series of remarkably precise and systematic analyses of New Kingdom private tomb decoration, Laboury describes the networks of iconographic correspondences between particular scenes and their inspirations. He goes as far as to sketch some of the personal strategies that the artists used in the process of re-composing traditions and concludes that it is here that our search for creativity should take place. Only in part 3 does Laboury reveal *intericonicity* (akin to *intertextuality*) as a conceptual framework “to describe the various possibilities of interrelations between images, taking into account the questions of forms, styles and supports” as well as questions relating to cognitive aspects of artist engagement. In the final part 4, he reflects on emic (ancient Egyptian) concepts of creativity and returns once more to the links between creation and tradition. It is hoped from this contribution that the terminology and the broad approach (cf. Pieke’s contribution on *interpicturality*) will make an impact on and gain a certain momentum in Egyptological art history.

A parallel focus on transfer processes is used by **Gabriele Pieke** in her discussion of *interpicturality*. She highlights the centrality of tradition, reuse and reference as basic to creation and historicises the notions of originality and authenticity, noting that the Egyptian perspective did not put the artist at the centre of things. With foci of appropriation, revitalisation and citation, she focuses on rare elements of Old Kingdom tomb decoration, whose reproductions are easier to trace and whose significations are often easier to apprehend. In case studies of the *bat* pendant and lotus flower motifs, Pieke traces the *demonstration* processes that characterise such traditions, as well their topographic and chronological spread. A final case study of the Teti cemetery at Saqqara demonstrates the complexities of signification in artistic reproduction, and investigates innovations that were too *avant-garde* or “provocative” to be taken up as widespread traditions, so indicating the conservative nature of tomb representation. Nonetheless, within this conservative framework, Pieke observes the attractiveness of fresh motifs for citation and reformulation. In terms of the mechanisms of creativity, we are dealing both with the combination of different motifs as well as the varying of the forms of motifs themselves.

Tamás Bács is invested in resisting entrenched negative judgements of Ramesside art as baroque or mannerist, unoriginal, repetitive, and essentially reproductive. He takes as a case study the chief draughtsman of Deir el-Medina, Amenhotep, son of the famous scribe Amunnakhte. By comparing the compositions of tombs that Amenhotep worked on with those in tombs that he visited (attested by graffiti left there), Bács implies that the artist had more to contribute to the composition than merely style and execution. This upsets the commonly held Egyptological belief that design was the domain of the patron and opens for new discussion composition as an artist-patron collaboration. Detailed observations of the construction of the tomb of Ramses IX (KV 6) also demonstrate how practices of extracting or abridging were often adaptive solutions to physical architectural problems. Hence the

final decoration of a tomb was the result of practical factors as well as innovatory impulses, and Ramesside creativity is much more complex than previously assumed.

Alexis Den Doncker takes up the question of image 'copies', deploying Laboury's concept of *intericonicity* to capture—rather than unidirectional vectors from original to copy—the relationships between the two. Via several case studies of 18th dynasty private tombs, Den Doncker shows in great detail how aspects of copying—particularly the conceptual layout and architectural design—can be motivated by prestige to different ends: some tomb owners present themselves as 'standing in' the socio-professional sphere of a superior or more well respected member of the community in order to maximise social status; others present themselves as 'standing out' in relation to their predecessors in a process Den Doncker characterises, rather than copy, as emulation: "surpassing by means of copying." He shows in the process how ideas—and in particular images—which were originally deployed for a particular purpose (e.g. Amenemheb's images as illustration of actual professional achievements) could be received and repurposed according to different needs (e.g. Pehsukher's redeployment of the images of his superior Amenemheb as illustrations of an idealised profession). Den Doncker's analysis also reveals mechanisms of the *demonstration* of culture: people at each step in the hierarchy have attempted to 'stand in' with their superiors, beginning with royalty and passing traditions progressively, over time, down the line.

In terms of this volume, Den Doncker's work shows how traditions often begin and are continued not out of any abstract sense of tradition, but according to very punctual and social-professional functions/reasons. From this editor's Peircean semiotic perspective, Den Doncker points to the much-neglected (social) indexical layer of signification in tomb decoration, redressing a much-needed imbalance previously favouring the iconic (= the extent to which it re-presents aspects of reality) and symbolic (= conventionalised) aspects of their signification. The inclusion of particular images only makes sense in the context of their webs of associations with and references to other tombs; they are thus subject to an interpretive multivalence. Den Doncker shows an extraordinary degree of understanding of the emic (what the Egyptians themselves intended) appreciation of these tombs.

Lubica Hudáková offers an accurate and comprehensive treatment of the tradition of a particular tomb scene over its life between the Old and Middle Kingdoms: the *m33*-scene, in which the tomb owner is depicted overseeing agricultural or other activities. She presents an exhaustive list of Middle Kingdom *m33*-scenes attested in mostly middle and upper Egypt and gives excellent microanalysis of scenes, tracking the productive nature of the tradition: the Egyptians did not simply reproduce Old Kingdom representations, but 'modernised' hairstyles and clothing, played with variations in combinations of accessories, and introduced new poses. Minor figures in particular were open to creative tinkering, and over time there was a substantial increase in the representation of women among these figures. Regionalism is also apparent, but the evidence is provincial and there is a lack of corresponding evidence from cultural centres, making transmission difficult or impossible to trace accurately. Hudáková wisely leaves open the question of whether changes in artistic representation reflect wider socio-cultural changes.

Rounding off this section, **Campbell Price** examines the motivations for deploying archaistic styles in Egyptian statuary of the 25th and 26th dynasties. He characterises the (Karnak) temple environment in which statues of nobles were erected as competitive for audience engagement (the living, dead, and the gods), and suggests that archaism is effective in this regard because it is ostentatious. Via a case study of the statue of Petamenope, Price observes that the goals of archaism were often to "vaunt access to skilled labour and connoisseurship of past motifs": Petamenope

designed and commissioned his own statues, and had personal knowledge of old repertoires and redeployed them in overt emulations. Price also points out the interpretive multivalence of such archaisms: Petamenope's standing statue recalls Middle Kingdom styles and 18th dynasty emulations of them, and reference could have been intended to similar 18th dynasty statues—for example that of Amenhotep son of Hapu—that were also standing within the Karnak precinct at this time. The conclusions are analogous to those of Den Doncker: Petamenophis' use of archaism can be interpreted as an attempt to both 'stand in' and 'stand out.'

Section 3: artefact

The three papers in this section offer excellent and insightful commentary on traditions with a more material focus. The first treats the concept of a *skeuomorph*, a concept that can be defined in a number of ways, but that usually refers to the transposition of features from one medium to another: where the feature plays a structurally functional role in the original medium, it is carried over to play an aesthetic role in the new medium. Valérie Angenot explores the mechanisms, reasons and purposes for such phenomena via a range of case studies. She looks at the artistic imitation of wood on Ramesside shabti boxes and suggests a range of significations and implications, among them issues of cost (e.g. cheaper to imitate wood rather than acquire the genuine article) and prestige. She also discusses the *petrification* or *statuification* of architectural elements; that they preserve the semiotic features of sacredness of their models, as is the case with much of ancient Egyptian temple and tomb architecture. She goes on to discuss the notion of *simulacrum* as the Egyptians might have conceived of it, concluding that the semiotic status of skeuomorphs was one of bringing to life what was represented: "the simulacrum was as valid as its model." Skeuomorphism is potentially a powerful tool for the description of some of the basic aesthetic principles of ancient Egyptian representation. Angenot has shown how the Egyptians' use of the artistic techniques of reproducing an object in another medium can be interpretively multivalent: as a mark of prestige, of authenticity, to maintain habits of usage, or even, on deeper levels, to "maintain the balance of the universe" by preserving the prototypical forms of the past.

An interest in the study of tradition as convention is the theme of Lucie Jirásková's paper. She focuses on the slow shifts in the forms and meanings of material culture that happen over the *longue durée*, of which the Egyptian practitioners of traditions may themselves have been unaware. Her case study is the production of model stone vessels at Abusir in the Old Kingdom: she introduces the evidence for the royal cemetery and the cemetery of Abusir South, providing detailed representations (photos and line drawings) of the vessel assemblages. In outlining the rise, peak, and fall of the tradition, she discusses: the uses of the sets of vessels (Opening of the Mouth ceremony); changes in the types of vessels included in a set; the workmanship, drawing conclusions about the craftsmen and workshops involved; and the implications for our interpretations of social history. Importantly, Jirásková points out how changes accumulated in the replication of artefacts could result in 'new' artefacts. She concludes that the evidence from the late Old Kingdom—the fact that vessel forms had become indistinct and indistinguishable from each other—indicates that the tradition had departed a long way from its original meaning, and that the significance of the objects no longer held a strong relationship to their material forms. The paper leaves us wondering to what extent the inclusion of these model vessels in burial assemblages was by pure momentum of tradition.

A similar approach characterises **Carlo Rindi Nuzzolo**'s comprehensive treatment of Ptah-Sokar-Osiris figures, a tradition in wood that stretches from the New Kingdom to the Ptolemaic Period and beyond. Rindi Nuzzolo introduces a corpus of 44 figures deriving from Akhmim and currently situated in various museums around the world. He describes the physical morphologies and decoration of the figures, with illustrations and photographs, and documents the different kinds of inscribed texts and their variations. Outlining the main features of the Akhmimic tradition, he ties them to concepts and religious identities specific to that location, linking them also to features of coffin production at that place during the Ptolemaic period. Conclusions are also drawn about their manufacture, for example that they were mass-produced, or at least made in advance and left blank for the names and texts of potential clients. The most significant interpretation of the paper is the addition to existing typologies of the geographic dimension. In terms of (re)production, Rindi Nuzzolo shows how variations can be geographically based, as well as shaped by the concepts and religious identities specific to that location.

Section 4: traditions across media

In this section are collected contributions which discuss traditions that span or traverse different media, with a persistent theme of the monumental. Each makes a very unique and hopefully important contribution to the study of monumental traditions. Although studying monumental texts and images is sometimes seen as Egyptologically passé, it is only now and in studies like those below that we are beginning to see the particular significations of monuments, their resonances in other arts and the interactions in which they participated. This is an especially exciting section in the sense that we are often dealing with particularly creative uses of culture.

Pascal Vernus offers an important contribution in his treatment of sacralised texts, a category that is emically defined, according ancient Egyptian religious ideas, in particular texts which relate to the creation. He differentiates two categories of text: those reflecting the gods' (and hence the creator's) own words, and texts produced by humans that attempt to integrate significant collective events (via royal monuments and inscriptions) and individuals (via tombs and votive monuments) into the "current state of creation." Vernus goes on to discuss how such texts are made sacred/sacralised, primarily focusing on overt marking: stone support, hieroglyphic script, representations of the divine, language of the primordial time (*égyptien de tradition*), and so forth. Via a range of examples, he shows how different combinations of markers lead to varying degrees of sacredness and are thus made "accretions to the creation." In relation to (re)productivity, two trends are outlined: a *reproductive trend*, in which "past basically functions as prototype," but is nonetheless inevitably (albeit secondarily) influenced by contemporary concerns; and a *productive trend*, in which contemporary concerns are the "dominating attractor" and past models are only appealed to secondarily. Vernus goes on to discuss the ancient Egyptian scribal ethic based on analysis of the scribal and linguistic habits of reproductions. He discusses "punctual modernisation" of texts as well as systematic editorial policies and their relation to (re)productive *égyptien de tradition* and concludes that, in some contexts, reproductivity did not involve verbatim copying. For productive texts, he discusses how they may include reproduced elements, and he focuses particularly on what he calls "stage switching or alternation" of language, a situation that plays on a situation of linguistic diglossia. In the context of this volume, Vernus' paper offers excellent food for thought for reflection on the material existence of

ancient Egyptian texts and the semiotic role of the physical support in the interpretation of their significance.

The second paper in this section is my own (**Todd Gillen**), in which I attempt to foreground the processes of productivity: in dealing with the Triumph Scene—the well-known depiction in which an anthropomorphic deity offers the khepesh sword to the king while the latter smites enemies—I focus on its emergence as a strong Ramesside tradition at Thebes. More generally, I use it as a case study for illustrating some principles of the way that traditions are formed and come to be consolidated. I assemble the monumental Theban replications of the tradition and propose a way of diagramming this productive tradition that is analogous to the stemmata produced for reproductive traditions. In particular, I am interested in the *fittingness* to (conforming to or diverging from) a generic norm. In part 2, I identify the Triumph Scene as a *thing* in its various aspects: textual, pictorial, material. I attempt to sketch broadly its conditions of possibility, beginning with notes on its larger semiotic contexts and going on to discuss the socio-cultural practices to which the Triumph Scene refers and on which it relies for its meanings. Part 3 handles conceptual precursors to the Ramesside Tradition, while in part 4 I concentrate on the texts of the Triumph Scene: the speech of the god. I locate the Triumph Scene of Seti I on the North Wall of the Hypostyle Hall (Karnak) at the genesis of the Ramesside tradition, and meticulously trace the various monumental inspirations on which it directly draws for its composition. Reviewing the literature as I go, I not only lay out the material comprehensively for the first time and clear up a number of Egyptological misconceptions, but I also go further in offering suggestions for the suitability of those particular selections. What results is, I hope, a stimulating new ‘take’ on the emergence of traditions and their Egyptological treatment.

Hana Navratilova continues the theme of reception of monumental texts in her discussion of visitors’ graffiti during the 18th dynasty. She reviews the nature of the data, giving as a background the Thutmoside interest in the past (both *Traditions-* and *Geschichtsbewusstsein*), in particular in relation to royal funerary temple architecture. One of the foci of the paper is to determine what we can learn about the motivations for visitors’ graffiti: was it aesthetic appreciation, pure interest in past traditions, or research visits by architects and artists? Her overview of the ways in which knowledge of texts, scenes and architecture was transmitted only concludes that much “remains elusive.” In Navratilova’s more concrete conclusions, she draws fascinating links between the Middle Kingdom and New Kingdom architectural and textual material and attempts to establish whether Theban monuments were inspired by those at Memphis. Matching the dates on Memphite graffiti with known dates of building activity in Thebes results in some interesting correlations that speak in favour of her theory. What is clear is that the observed visits and artistic/architectural borrowings were not opportunistic (*i.e.* whatever was accessible) or coincidental. The Thutmosides had particular interests (*e.g.* Senwosret III) and this emerges in their selections. The work has potential for revealing the transmission of monumental forms across dynasties and the resonance of monumental traditions in creative spheres more generally.

Éva Liptay’s treatment of Third Intermediate Period traditions traverses royal and non-royal traditions between papyrus and tomb wall. Via three detailed case studies, she gives the impression that each motif of a wall painting, funerary papyrus or sarcophagus has its own unique history, and by tracing the occurrences of each motif we can determine that any entire papyrus or tomb composition is comprised of a myriad of different sources, each with their own significance. Such borrowings are often reinterpreted, and have specific social indexical significations that are contingent on their source. It shows what a period of artistic and conceptual *mélange* the Third Intermediate Period was and gives us some hints as to the complexity of their relationship with their own past. Liptay is also

sensitive to its topographic dependence, with Thebes being a major source, the motifs of particularly its Ramesside tombs reappearing in reinterpreted forms in Tanis and Memphis, among other places. While she traces non-royal borrowings of royal motifs—the sort of social vector of replication that is described as *demo(cra)tisation*—she also gives evidence for the rarer creation of royal motifs based on borrowings from non-royal contexts. Liptay also elucidates the reasons for the shift in supports: the shifting of the focus of ritual space from tomb to coffin; the interconnection and overlapping of temple and funerary rituals and sharing of iconographic and textual material. She locates the source of this creative collage process as originating not among artists or artisans but among “the highest ranking members of the 21st dynasty Theban clergy of Amun.”

The final paper in this section is **Andreas Dorn**’s study of the multivalent *iri.n* formula in the Deir el Medina community of the 19th and 20th dynasties. In this nuanced analysis, Dorn explores the various uses of the formula and traces the expansion of its significations over time. On stelae, he remarks its signature-like character and observes its use as a donation mark, as an acting instruction, and as an image substitute. On other supports (tomb decoration, drawing ostraca, text ostraca and papyri), the uses are even more varied and Dorn highlights the context dependence of its meanings. Of particular interest is its use in graffiti (an appendix gives a full list of attestations of the *iri.n* PN-formula in graffiti of Western Thebes): although its significations become difficult to disentangle clearly, Dorn observes that it is used by village leaders and is often linked with exceptional content or events (e.g. connection with the vizier). In relation to literary texts, its potential scope of reference is especially diverse, and Dorn discusses the complications with particular reference to the debate on pseudepigraphs, authors, copyists and papyrus owners. In the context of (re)production, this paper traces the extension of a tradition which originated in the stela/donation context into an array of increasingly nuanced environments, and so represents the quintessence of what this volume attempts to apprehend.

Final thoughts

If I can field one broad criticism of the volume it is the general dearth of conceptual sophistication. With a few obvious exceptions, there is little mention—or profitable use made—of theoretical, conceptual, or methodological reference points that are central to the study of tradition in other fields. Where, for example, were the citations of art historical takes on survival such as Aby Warburg’s *Nachleben*?² What of significant conceptual frameworks closer to home, such as offered by Whitney Davis’ treatise *Replications: Archaeology, Art History, Psychoanalysis*, in which he tries to account in a sophisticated way for the kinds of reproductions that fill this volume? In the numerous discussions of artists, why wasn’t Ernst Gombrich mentioned, an art historian (among many) who said it all with his famous introduction to *The Story of Art*: “There really is no such thing as Art. There are only artists.”³

In the more general domain of culture, the classic volume edited by Hobsbawm and Granger on the *Invention of Tradition* is only mentioned once (in a footnote) in the whole volume, and the role of memory in our account of traditions—along with Assmann’s influential work on cultural and collective memory—has slipped almost completely off the radar. And what about biological modeling of cultural transmission—cultural phylogenies, reticulation and the like—, and Richard Dawkins’

2. Didi-Huberman 2003.

3. Gombrich 1950.

concept of the *meme*,⁴ which has found the public spotlight and could have been an excellent point of departure for almost any of the contributions in this volume? Related is the very fertile idea from evolution studies—touched on by Valérie Angenot—of cultural *exaptation*: something that originally served a certain function comes over time to be co-opted for another.⁵ We might take our lead from parallel processes in linguistics which have been labelled *refunctionalisation*.⁶ Much could be made of this, with a little work.

For the study of text, I have offered my own adaptation of the stemmatic method tailored to productive traditions and taking into account material aspects of the tradition. Yet the general impression is a lack of Egyptological interest in the emergence of complex cultural forms: take for example the unique glimpses that the evidence from ancient Egypt offers us into the formation of literature, a classic and classical subject of study. I am thinking here of Todorov and the *Origin of Genres*, and of Yuri Lotman and his *Ausgangstyp* (the idea that literature stems from non-literary text types), signalled by Assmann⁷ and not really deeply explored by Egyptologists. Scholars in other fields discussing such 'big' issues seem unaware of the Egyptian evidence,⁸ and it seems to me that it could have a significant impact on the topic. In short, analyses of the emergence of literature in Egypt could historicise the general topic in a unique way, changing the face of literature studies!

I could go on but the main point is this: Egyptologists are not availing themselves of the conceptual richness of a broad academic landscape and as a consequence struggle to frame their topics and their studies in ways relevant to today's academic and social concerns. If, as Egyptologists, we want to be germane to wider academic pursuits, attractive to funding bodies, and interesting to the general public, then we have to engage current issues, interests and problems. We have to read more widely and discover what we can add to the discussion.

It was an aim of the *(Re)productive Traditions* conference and this volume to investigate common parameters for talking about the production of material, artistic and textual culture in ancient Egypt. However, rather than a collaborative meditation on the nature of tradition(s), cultural transmission and historical methodologies, the result is mostly a hotchpotch of conceptually diverse investigations on even more diverse subject matters. I feel that while the volume contains valuable and important individual contributions, little more than the sum of its parts can be gleaned. My suggestion of *(re)production* as a common point of reference—although featuring consistently among the papers—has remained elusively multivalent, and the use of the term in a wide range of senses suggests a kind of conceptual opportunism among contributors. Nonetheless in the time between the conference and this publication, I have noticed the phrase 'reproductive tradition' appear in several papers⁹ as well as woven into the premise of the 5th International Congress for Young Egyptologists (ICYE). I suppose from these small indications that it has found a certain resonance in Egyptology and I hope at the very least that it inspires new ways of thinking about the evidence.

4. Dawkins 1976.

5. Gould & Vrba 1982.

6. For the first application of exaptation in linguistics: Lass 1990.

7. Assmann 1999: 2.

8. Anecdotal, though importantly, I'm sure I'm not the only Egyptologist who is a little tired of hearing the history of nearly everything traced back uniquely to classical (ancient Greek and Roman) cultures.

9. E.g. Vernus 2016.

If there is a flip side to the Egyptological conceptual conservatism, it is the enthusiasm people have demonstrated for this topic. Tradition continues to be a vital point of contact for diverse approaches to the past and a convenient umbrella term for cultural continuity in a variety of domains. Such common reference points are rare in a field increasingly fractured by progressive specialisation, and this volume demonstrates a willingness to collaborate that I hope will persist in future Egyptological endeavours.

Finally, I wish to acknowledge and thank various funding bodies for their financial support: the Fonds National de la Recherche Scientifique (FNRS), the Faculté de Philosophie et Lettres de l'Université de Liège, and the Patrimoine de l'Université de Liège. I also thank warmly Jean Winand, Dimitri Laboury, the members of the Ramsès project, and my many and varied friends in Liège for their academic, administrative, and personal support in the realisation of the conference and this volume. A special thanks goes out to Stéphane Polis, who was and is the go-to man for guidance, for solving logistics problems, for all kinds of intellectual and pop-culture discussions, and—when it's needed—for a Karmeliet.

Melbourne, 29th of September, 2016

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Tradition and transformation

Retracing Ptah-Sokar-Osiris figures from Akhmim in museums and private collections

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1. INTRODUCTION

Tradition and transformation are two particularly important aspects which affect the study of Ptah-Sokar-Osiris figures. Since the introduction of this new funerary custom, these statuettes have been subject to several modifications and re-interpretations involving different chronological and geographic factors. Chronologically, this tradition seems to take its roots from the previous custom of placing wooden funerary figures of the god Osiris in private burials since the New Kingdom, developing further during the Late Period and reaching its peak in the Ptolemaic period. During this time frame Ptah-Sokar-Osiris figures become mass-produced and, like other funerary goods, are often embellished with detailed decorations and a plentiful use of gilding.¹ At the end of the Ptolemaic period the tradition appears to fade out for what concerns both manufacturing and distribution among the burials, probably becoming poorly understood and, at the onset of the Roman period, they are rarely attested. During such a time frame Ptah-Sokar-Osiris figures are subject to substantial changes and paradigm shifts especially concerning style and manufacturing techniques. In particular, they seem increasingly to reflect the stylistic developments of the relative periods and areas of origin.

1.1. *Research context and study aim*

The present study is based upon a wider, large-scale survey, started in 2008 and still in progress, with wooden Osiris² and Ptah-Sokar-Osiris figures as its objects of research. To the present this project, named CALIPSO,³ has allowed the tracing, identification and study of more than 900 specimens in museums and private collections, making it the largest and most comprehensive survey dedicated to these kinds of figures. Within this context, the research has identified a significant number of

1. For observations regarding the use of gilding on Ptah-Sokar-Osiris figures, see §4.

2. Results concerning Osiris figures are not included in the present paper and will be the subject of a separate publication.

3. Computer Aided Library-database for Ptah-Sokar-Osiris figures (www.calipsoproject.net). The aim and full details of the project will be presented by its team members in a future paper which is currently in preparation.

specimens presenting common and very distinctive characteristics that are quite different from those that may be observed on other types of Ptah-Sokar-Osiris figures. The primary aim of this paper is to compare and analyse these figures and their distinctive characteristics, to verify and illustrate degrees of interconnectedness or difference between them. The study will focus on a specific group of figures that share particular characteristics that might be the result of their having a common origin.

A first attempt at typological classification for Ptah-Sokar-Osiris figures has been published by Maarten Raven in 1979,⁴ while a chronological revision of his typology has been discussed by David Aston in 1991.⁵ Both works, though representing two of the fundamental sources for the study of Ptah-Sokar-Osiris figures,⁶ only deal with the general typological and chronological characteristics, but do not take into consideration the geographic peculiarities of these artifacts.⁷ Hence, as a secondary aim, the study wants also to emphasise the ways in which the funerary tradition of Ptah-Sokar-Osiris figures is subject to change in a very specific geographic area, merging with provincial influences and features that match the funerary production of that very region.

The paper, as a third aim, wants also to reflect on the unknown archaeological context of these figures and, subsequently, on the alternative ways to detect their possible provenance using typological, decorative, and paleographic data.

The importance, peculiar characteristics, and frequency⁸ of this particular group of figures make it an ideal case study for this volume.⁹

1.2. *The documents*

The present discussion is based on the following forty-four documents,¹⁰ which have been preliminarily subdivided in two groups, on the basis of their characteristics.

GROUP 1

- A. Jaipur, Central Government Museum, 10718
- B. Rome, Musei Vaticani, 19656
- C. UK Private collection, no inv.
- D. London, British Museum, EA 16784
- E. Bolton, Bolton Museum and Art Gallery, 16871= 1934.23.93
- F. Rome, Musei Vaticani, D6904
- G. Edinburgh, National Museum of Scotland, A.1906.654

4. Raven (1979) subdivides the figures into two main types (III and IV, the latter with six sub-types from IVA to IVF) on the basis of a double criterion considering the colours of body and face.

5. Aston 1991.

6. Other works treating this subject are Lipińska-Boldok 1961, Hope 1983, Schoske 2001.

7. Filling this gap by means of dedicated publications is one of the aims of the CALiPSO Project, see for instance Rindi Nuzzolo 2013, Rindi Nuzzolo 2014.

8. The study will demonstrate that this particular group is represented by many exemplars and that Ptah-Sokar-Osiris figures pertaining to it are frequently found in museums and private collections, as opposed to other regional typologies which appear to be much rarer. See Rindi Nuzzolo 2013, Rindi Nuzzolo 2014.

9. I would like to thank Todd Gillen for his kind availability and assistance during the publishing process as well as the reviewer for their useful suggestions.

10. Forty-three figures and one base.

- H. Cracow, The Princes Czartoryski Foundation, XI-484
- I. Stanford, Cantor Arts Center at Stanford University, JLS.21345
- J. Cairo, Egyptian Museum, JE 28.3.25.7
- K. Budapest, Szépművészeti Múzeum, 51.2098
- L. Domfront, Musée Charles Leandre, no inv.
- M. London, Horniman Museum and Garden, C1728 (nn4247)
- N. Turin, Museo Egizio, S. 270 RCGE 45512
- O. Edinburgh, National Museum of Scotland, A.1906.655
- P. Liverpool, Liverpool Museum, 57.192.1
- Q. London, British Museum, EA 20870
- R. Hildesheim, Roemer und Pelizaeus Museum, 385
- S. Swansea, Egypt Centre, W452
- T. Madrid, Museo Arqueológico Nacional, 15241
- U. Genève, Musées d'Art et d'Histoire de la Ville de Genève, A 2002-0038
- V. Stanford, Cantor Arts Center at Stanford University, JLS.21343
- W. Stanford, Cantor Arts Center at Stanford University, JLS.21344
- X. London, British Museum, EA 32195
- Y. Detroit, Detroit Institute of Arts, DIA 69.5
- Z. Turin, Museo Egizio, S. 272 RCGE 45513
- AA. Rome, Musei Vaticani, D6903
- AB. Columbia, Museum of Art and Archaeology, 61.61
- AC. Barcelona, Museu Egipci de Barcelona, E.206
- AD. Chicago, Oriental Institute Museum, 357
- AE. Stanford, Cantor Arts Center at Stanford University, JLS.21346.1
- AF. Athens, National Archaeological Museum, ex. n. Ξ 5
- AG. Boston, Museum of Fine Arts, MFA 03.1626a-d
- AH. Copenhagen, Ny Carlsberg Glyptotek, ÆIN 0658
- AI. Susa, Museo Civico della città di Susa, AE64-66
- AJ. Genève, Fondation Gandur pour l'Art, FGA-ARCH-EG 193
- AK. Roanne, Musée des Beaux-Arts J. Déchelette, 2300
- AL. London, British Museum, EA 36424 (base only)
- AM. Cahors, Musée Henri-Martin, D.86.1.157
- AN. Swansea, Egypt Centre, W2052
- AO. Swansea, Egypt Centre, W2001a

GROUP 2

- AP. Melbourne, National Gallery of Victoria, D96.a-c-1982
- AQ. Budapest, Szépművészeti Múzeum, 51.244
- AR. Swansea, Egypt Centre, W2051

2. ANALYSIS OF THE SPECIMENS (GROUP 1): SHAPE AND DECORATION

The specimens of the first group share several characteristics which are not typically found on rather common types of Ptah-Sokar-Osiris figures. These features may be subsequently regarded as distinctive of this particular group and it is worthwhile to examine them in detail.

2.1. *Shape of the figures*

For the majority of cases this is quite different from what may be observed on the two major types of Ptah-Sokar-Osiris figures dated to the same period.¹¹ In these specimens, the body is modeled in a slender and elongated shape: unlike other figures (see the specimens in Group 2), this is generally very narrow at shoulder level and the whole body is characterised by a rather cylindrical shape due to the absence of curves, especially in the leg area, where calves, knees and ankles cannot be detected. There is no indication of arms or hands. Average (mean) measurements for the body are 53.6 x 11.8 cm.¹²

2.2. *Decoration*

All the specimens present specific recurring patterns of decoration for every section of body and base, each of which will be analysed in detail.

2.2.1. *The body*

Of all the analysed specimens, twenty-eight (A, C-E, H-L, O, P, V-AE) are painted in a uniform red colour, while the other twelve (B, F, G, M, N, Q-U, AF, AM) are painted black instead; both colours cover the body in its entirety, serving as background for additional decoration and line-work. Rarely, specimens presenting a different colour (usually red or black) on the upper shoulder area above the collar have been recorded: for instance, figure I has a uniform red body but with a black background on the shoulder section immediately above the collar; this section is identical to the one present on Q, which shows a uniform black body with no variations whatsoever. Figures G, R and U, on the other hand, present exactly the opposite decoration: the body is black, but the ground colour on the shoulder section above the collar is red. A bead net wrapping the body—an element commonly found on other types of Ptah-Sokar-Osiris figures—seems to be a rare feature in this group as it is shown only on A and AN (remnants).

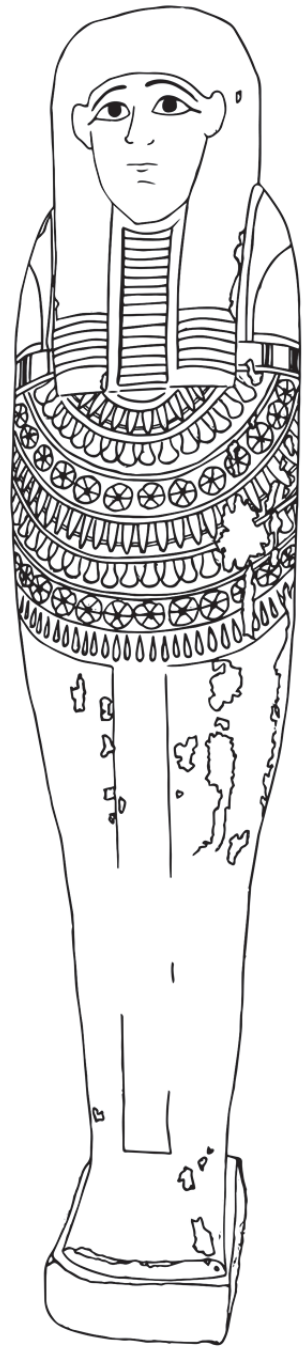


Fig. 1. Front view of specimen Q.

11. See, for instance, types IVC and IVF of Raven's typology.

12. Forty specimens between 42.5 and 63.6 cm (height), and 8.1 and 15.8 cm (width).

2.2.2. The face

This is covered by a gold-foiled layer—which also covers the ears—in all cases¹³ except on six specimens where it is painted in clear colours which imitate gilding as yellow (K, AI) or white (P, R, X, AA); Z and AO are the only specimens to show a face painted in a reddish tonality. The structure of the face is a peculiar feature of these specimens, particularly concerning eyes and eyebrows: these are quite large with a well-defined iris and a long cosmetic line that elongates towards the temples. The nose is relatively thin, but well-defined, and the mouth is usually easily distinguishable, generally shaped as an upward curve. The divine beard is a very rare feature, as this is only visible on figure W and none of the specimens appear to have been originally provided with it except H, AG and AJ, which preserve a hole under the chin. Beard on the two sides of the face is an extremely rare feature as well, as this is only present on A where it is painted black and rendered with thick lines tapering downwards.

2.2.3. The divine wig

This is painted blue (lighter or darker) in all cases and it is very frequently (A–E, J–L, N–P, W, X, AA, AD–AF) equipped with a red head band encircling its upper section and which is tied at the back of the head in a long, descending bow.¹⁴ This band is often bordered in white or cream (A, B, D, E, J, K, O, P, W, X, AA, AF), colour which seems to mimic the rarely-found gold foil (C, L, N). Figure AG is the only one that shows a white band. The two wig lappets on the front of the figure, on twenty-one specimens (B–D, H, J–N, P, Q, S, W, Y–AG, AI), terminate with a white or light-cream section which may be decorated with one, two, or three stripes; the latter are alternately painted in red and blue when numbering two or more (B–D, K, M, N, P, Q, Y, AB, AD–AG), while the single stripe is usually painted red (H, J, L, S, W, Z, AA, AC, AI). Moreover, in almost all examples the wig is bordered in clear colours such as white, light-cream or yellow all around its contours.

2.2.4. The collar

This is omnipresent and it is always fastened to the shoulders by a pair of falcon-headed terminals; it is very broad in all cases, but specimens where it appears to be particularly broad (A–H, J, N–P, R, AF) or slightly more shallow (V, W, Y, Z) have been observed. In certain specimens it seems to begin rather low on the chest, thus leaving more empty space in the upper

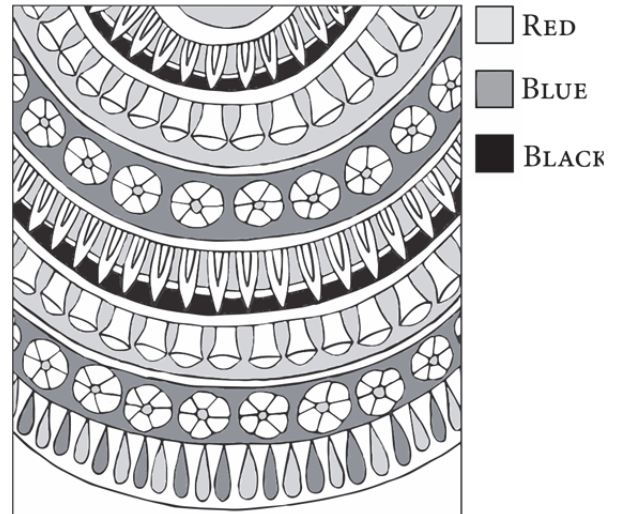


Fig. 2. Detail showing the typical decoration (*chrysanthemums, campanulae, leaves*) and the colour scheme of the *wsh* collar.

13. The face of specimen F appears almost entirely effaced, but traces of gilding are visible between the final section of the left eye and ear. The face of figure AK was cut off with the intent of removing the gold-foiled layer, AN is totally effaced.

14. Figure W shows a gilded *uraeus* on the forehead over the sash, a very rare characteristic to be found on Ptah-Sokar-Osiris figures.

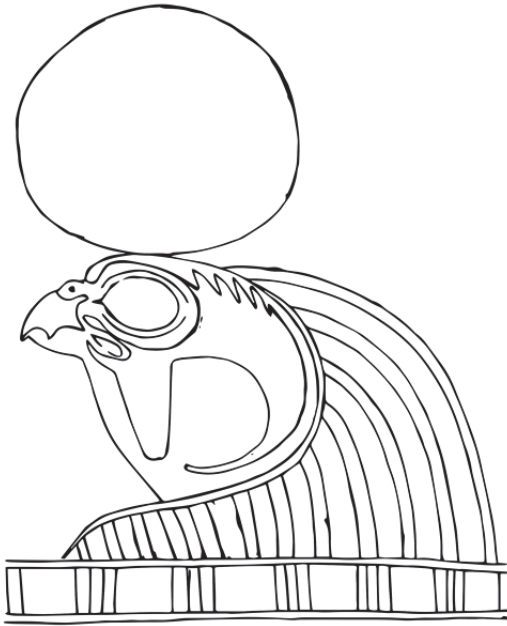


Fig. 3. One of the hypertrophic falcon-headed terminals (right side) of the specimen D.

shoulder area where the falcon-heads are located.¹⁵ The total rows of the collar vary in number: from nine to eleven in fifteen specimens (A–F, H, J, L, N, O, R, T, U, AH) and from five to eight in the other twenty-four (G, I, K, M, P, Q, S, V–AG, AI–AK, AM, AO). AL is a base only and AN is badly damaged.

The collar is always realised and painted in a very detailed way, its particular decorative motifs constantly recurring and mainly consisting of floral elements: bell flowers (*campanulae*), prevalently rendered in white, light-cream or light-blue over red ground, and *chrysanthemums*, whose petals are usually painted white around a red centre, all over a blue background. Leaves (occasionally rendered as geometrical) and drop-shaped elements—which might represent poppy petals—may be present as well: the former almost always in white or light-cream over a blue and red background, while the latter—when present—is often coloured red or blue and

positioned on a white ground at the very end of the collar, as closing element. The whole ensemble seems to copy the actual floral garlands worn on festive occasions, and also the collar of justification. Moreover, the particular order in which these elements are disposed is consistently the same in the majority of the cases and one of the main characteristics of this type of figure: the row decorated with *chrysanthemums* always follows the *campanulae* and precedes the leaf-shaped geometrical elements on a red-blue background; these, in turn, always follow the *chrysanthemums* and precede the row decorated with *campanulae*, and so forth.¹⁶ In several cases, the *chrysanthemums* are the second last row, right before the closing drop-shaped elements.¹⁷ K and P are the only two specimens showing a slightly different layout for the collar, with a preponderance for geometrical motifs.

The collar, as already mentioned, is always fastened to the shoulders by two falcon-heads¹⁸ which, probably due to the low positioning of the collar, appear hypertrophic in the majority of the cases; these may be decorated with additional details or simply rendered in their basic outline (I, Q–S, X). The collar proper is almost always preceded by a smaller collar located between the two frontal lappets of the wig; its decorative motif usually comprises horizontal rows alternately painted red and blue¹⁹

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15. See for instance figures I and Q, which are provided with a shorter collar compared to other specimens, but this is positioned very low on the chest and thus reaches the lower waist.
 16. Of a total of forty specimens, the only exceptions are figures B and E, where *campanulae* and geometrical elements are inverted. The resulting order of the rows in this case is *chrysanthemums*, *campanulae*, geometrical elements.
 17. In a few specimens (A, B, D, N) the closing drop-elements are missing and the last row is intentionally left undecorated if not for the yellow background colour of the collar. Two more specimens (T, U) show the same phenomenon but the final undecorated row is gilded in this case. Nonetheless, in all these examples the *chrysanthemums* are still the second last element of the collar. For figure A see Betrò and Bresciani 2004: 105.
 18. Figure U represents the only exception: on the area usually occupied by the falcon-heads it shows the continuation of the collar; this ends likewise with the solar disk.
 19. Figures G, R, and AI are just painted white in this section; T, U, AH, and AJ are completely gilded; F, AK and AN are damaged; AG is in red, blue and green; AO continues the typical motifs of the collar.

and standing on a white or light-cream ground. The number of these rows comprises between eight and fifteen in nineteen specimens (A–E, H, I, L–O, Q, S, U, AA, AF, AG, AM)²⁰ and between four and six in eight specimens (K, V, X–Z, AC, AE, AO). The *wsḥ* collar is decorated with a further horizontal chequered frieze positioned just under the two falcon heads on the majority of the specimens (A, C, D, G, H, L–R, U–AK, AM, AO); this is always painted in alternate red and blue except on three figures which show the common decorative colours red, blue and green (D, AE, AG).

2.2.5. The lower chest: additional elements of decoration

Some specimens show an additional decorative element positioned immediately under the collar's last row, and always above the column of inscription; this may be constituted by a goddess with outstretched wings bearing a sun-disc over the head (B–E, AJ) or by a naos (J–M, U–AE, AG, AI, AK, AO). The former is always turned to the left of the figure and in three cases out of five (C–E, AJ) has the hair—which is painted blue (C–E, AJ) or yellow (B)—tied by a white band which forms a knot on the back of the head. She often wears a collar (B–D) and holds a *maat*-feather in each hand on B and D; the dress covers her body only from the waist to the ankles, showing the bare breast, and it is connected to the shoulders by two straps on B and D. The dress is decorated with a chequered motif²¹ in three examples (B–D); E shows a partially effaced figure which is difficult to interpret;

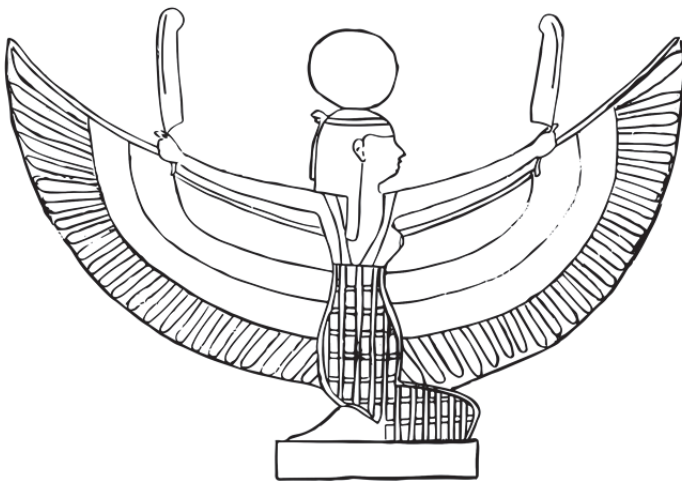


Fig. 4. Detail showing the winged goddess interposed between collar and inscription on the specimen D.

AJ is green. The second decorative element, much more common than the first one, consists of a pectoral in the form of the facade of a naos which can be attached directly under the collar (L, U, W, AB,²² AC, AG, AI, AO) or actually suspended upon by means of a chain coming out from beneath the collar itself; this can be rather elongated (J, X, Y, AA, AD, AE, AK) or much shorter, with the result that it is hardly visible (K, M, V, Z, AG, AI, AO). The internal part of the naos may be decorated with additional details such as mummiform figures or protective elements.²³

2.2.6. The plinth

This element is always present on all the specimens analysed: positioned under the figure's feet it is provided with a wooden tenon which connects it to the base by means of a mortise. Its average height is usually less in these examples than in other types of Ptah-Sokar-Osiris figures.²⁴ The background

20. P must have been originally provided with a small collar but this is too dark to be seen.

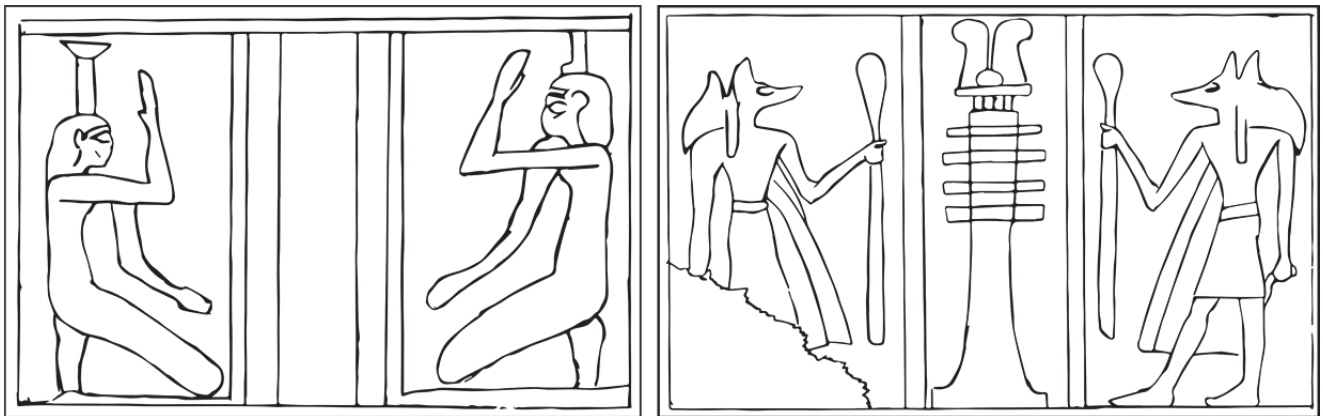
21. This is painted in red and blue in two cases (B, C) and red, blue and green in the other (D).

22. Possibly; the figure is rather blackened and effaced in this area and most of the details are missing.

23. See §3 below.


24. Average measurements are 7.1 x 8.3 x 2.0 cm.

colour is white or a light-cream tending to yellow on all specimens except on E, O,²⁵ AH, AJ where it is painted in a uniform light blue tonality. Like E, several other examples (G, M, N, R, Q, Y, AM) show a uniform colouration without further decorative elements. Some kinds of decoration are often present and these can be subdivided into three types which constitute the most common patterns: one geometrical element, two geometrical elements, and a false door motif. The first is very frequent (J, K, L, V–X, Z, AA–AE, AG, AI, AK) and it is represented by a square in the centre of each of the four faces; this is always painted light-blue or blue²⁶ in its entirety except on AE, which shows only a blue outline and AG, on which it is green. The second type is rarer (C, D, F, I, T, U, AO) than the first and is constituted by two square elements one inside the other; the outside square is painted black or blue, while the inner element is always painted in red, except for AO which is inversed. The third type of decoration is the false door motif; this is the rarest one as it only occurs on A.



Figs 5 and 6. Two of the complex scenes represented on the base (left: top side; right: front side) of figure G.

2.2.7. The base

This is missing on a few specimens (D–F, M, Q, S, U, AA, AK, AN). When present, it may be decorated with two distinct motifs for the lateral faces and with two motifs for the top-side as well. The lateral faces are sometimes decorated with the repetition of the group  (K, L, N, R, V, X, AC, AG, AI, AJ, AL), formed by two *was*-sceptres standing either side of and facing towards an *ankh*-sign in the centre, all standing on the sign for *nb*; the latter can be decorated with a chequered motif (K, L, V, AC, AG, AI, AJ, AL) or uniformly coloured (N, R, X).

The second type of decoration appears to be much more frequent (A–C, G, I, O, T, W, Y, Z, AB, AD–AF, AH, AO) among the analysed samples, and it is represented by a false-door motif repeated along the four sides;²⁷ the most common colours for its single elements are generally blue and red. Figure G is the only one to show unusual decorative elements on the four sides of the base.

The back, left and right sides are decorated with a false-door motif where a standing figure of a genius is interposed between each single element and the next one; a total of twelve genii are present. On the front side, on the other hand, the false-door pattern is interrupted and the entire side is decorated with two standing figures with jackal heads facing towards a *djed*-pillar occupying the

25. Possibly. The area is almost entirely effaced and faded.

26. I is the only specimen showing a black colour.

27. AM shows the second type of decoration which is found on the plinth: two square geometrical elements, one inside the other.

centre of the scene. There is no specimen yet known that bears an inscription on the sides of the base.²⁸ Unlike the lateral faces, the top side of the base may be fully inscribed (G, R,²⁹ X, AG) or may be frequently decorated with two motifs of its own: a chequered pattern (A, C, J, O, V, W, Y, Z, AB–AE, AH) or, rarely (B, I), a geometric element similar to the one used for the false-door motif on the base, representing a ‘niche.’

Exceptional decorative motifs on the top of the base have also been recorded. Specimen J shows a scene depicting four *ba*-birds—two with human heads, the others with a snake and falcon head respectively—holding a flail in adoration at each corner of a central square pool of water. The latter is surrounded by a *heset*-vase on each side with water flowing out from both sides of the vases onto the ground (fig. 7). The top side of the base AL has a central scene representing a blue lake, the rectangular shape of which follows the contour of the base; waves, painted blue on a light-blue ground, are visible in the lower portion of the lake. Lotuses and flower buds, painted white and light-blue, are depicted on top of the water. Figure G is decorated with two remarkable scenes on the top of the base: the first (fig. 5) depicts the kneeling figures of Isis and Nephtys, lifting one arm in the act of lament and facing towards the centre, which is occupied by the name of the deceased; the second scene represents a recumbent jackal on a shrine holding a flail and surrounded by four *ba*-birds—one in each corner—also holding a flail. Average dimensions for the base are 44.3 x 12.8 x 7.5 cm.³⁰

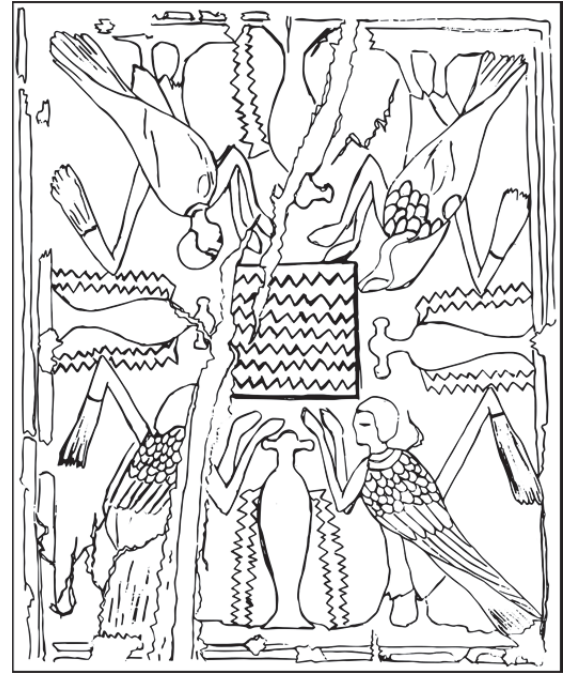


Fig. 7. Scene represented on the base (top side) of specimen J.

2.2.8. Columns of inscription

Except for AK (which presents three columns) all the figures are provided with a single column of text on the front side,³¹ which always runs down to the ankle-area and usually never reaches the upper part of the feet.³² While a single column of inscription is very frequent on Ptah-Sokar-Osiris figures,³³ it is also common that, in those cases where an additional decorative element is interposed between collar and inscription, the lack of available space causes the column to be shortened to form three smaller

28. A very common phenomenon on other types of Ptah-Sokar-Osiris figures, especially IVB and IVE. See for instance Rindi 2012b.

29. The top of the base is effaced for the most part.

30. Thirty-one specimens between 35.9 and 52.8 (length), 7.8 and 16.6 (width), 5.2 and 9.6 (height).

31. Hilton Price (1897: 224) mentions a figure (cat. n. 2063) coming from Akhmim and with “two vertical columns of hieroglyphics, black upon a yellow ground.” At the moment, I am not aware of any museum – or private collection – which may hold this specimen.

32. AC and AG represent the only exception.

33. Especially on types III, IVB and IVD.

columns.³⁴ This is not the case on these particular specimens, which retain the single column layout even in the presence of additional decorative elements.



Fig. 8. Rear view of specimen Q, showing the cavity in the back of the head.

2.3. Cavities: presence and typological examination

These are a peculiar characteristic of these specimens and of Ptah-Sokar-Osiris figures in general.³⁵ Only one specimen (AE) out of forty is completely solid without any cavity whatsoever. When a cavity is found to be present, two types can be delineated on the basis of their position: on the base and on the back side of the head.

2.3.1. Cavity in the back of the head: structure and impact on the style of the figures

This is extremely common and constitutes one of the characteristic features of these specimens: thirty-four figures (A–X, Z–AD, AG, AH, AK, AN, AO)³⁶ out of forty are provided with this type of cavity and it always shows the same characteristics. The cavity opens on the back of the head, it generally covers the wig in all its height (ranging from the top level to the beginning of the inscription or the back-pillar, when present) but it is very narrow. The resulting shape of the cavity is therefore a very elongated rectangle which is placed in vertical position on the back side of the head. Its measurements are quite similar on the majority of specimens and average dimensions are 10.9 x 2.6 x 2.5 cm.³⁷ Generally, the internal shape and dimensions (height, width) of the cavity correspond to those of the aperture which gives access to it, but in some cases the internal recess has been observed to go below the mouth of the cavity and to reach the upper torso. This recess is always covered by a lid which has the same shape as the cavity, and which can be slid in place from the top side or pushed into the cavity's mouth; it is sometimes held in place by a very small peg. As far as decoration is concerned, the lid continues the same decorative pattern that is present on the wig. The characteristic form

and position of this particular type of cavity is an important element which affects to a great extent the upper body shape of these Ptah-Sokar-Osiris figures. In fact, it is the need to accommodate such a hollow that causes the head to be visibly larger and elongated compared with other typologies of

34. For instance, the winged scarab on AMSTERDAM APM 20, LJUBLJANA SEM Sok.1, ST. PETERSBURG SHM JB-8734.

35. A separate contribution focusing on the cavities and their typologies is currently in preparation.

36. AE and AJ do not have a cavity in the head. In some cases (Y, AF, AI, AM) it was not possible to examine the rear side of the figures because, at the time of viewing, they were located in the exhibition galleries. Concerning the specimen Y, the author would like to acknowledge the kind assistance and availability of Iva Lisikewycz (Detroit Institute of Arts, Detroit) for having later provided valuable information concerning the back side of the figure.

37. Thirty-three specimens between 9.8 and 14.6 (height), 1.7 and 3.9 (width), 1.6 and 3.8 (depth).

figures.³⁸ It is difficult to establish what might have occupied this cavity for the time being, as none of them have retained their original contents.³⁹

2.3.2. Cavity on the base

This is extremely rare (N, P, T, Y, AJ). As it has been observed so far, the majority of the specimens are provided with a cavity in the back of the head and, since a double cavity is usually a very rare phenomenon,⁴⁰ the number of figures showing a cavity on the base is subsequently rare. Such rarity is a very peculiar characteristic, since in other types of Ptah-Sokar-Osiris figures a cavity in the base is usually the most common feature.⁴¹ When a cavity of this type is present, this is always located on the frontal area of the top of the base.

3. TYPOLOGICAL ANALYSIS OF GROUP 1

As already mentioned, Raven's typology provided the general method for the classification of Ptah-Sokar-Osiris figures. The types defined by Raven, however, due to the scale of his study, are heterogeneous and do not take into account distinct geographic productions and their relative decorative programs. Thus, within Raven's classification, a further typological subdivision is necessary when examining local variations.⁴²

The survey and the subsequent analysis of the specimens studied here, outlined their specific common patterns of decoration. Among these general patterns, shared by all the figures, the recurrence of distinctive types of decoration has been classified further: figures where the collar is immediately followed by the column of inscription and others showing an interposed element of decoration on the lower waist or the chest.

Type A1. (Fig. 9: left). Figures with no interposed element of decoration on the lower waist; the *wsḥ*-collar is here followed just by a single column of text running down to ankle-level. The specimens A, F–I, N, O, Q–T, AF, AH, AM are examples of this type. More in detail, A, N, O and AF present a red band on area 1 which is tied at the back of the head; R is the only figure that shows a white layer of paint covering both the face and area 2, probably imitating the gilding which T and AH show in the very same position; N and O present a partial gilding in this area as well.

38. See the figures of Group 2, which have a different type of cavity and therefore a different body shape.

39. Figure I seems to be still closed but, judging from the condition of the plaster, it may have been previously opened and then sealed again to be sold, as often happens with Ptah-Sokar-Osiris figures. Compare on this Schoske 2001: 183.

40. Also for Ptah-Sokar-Osiris figures in general. In this case only T is provided with two cavities (top side of the base, back side of the head).

41. Source: CALiPSO Project survey.

42. On this particular issue, see also Rindi Nuzzolo 2013.

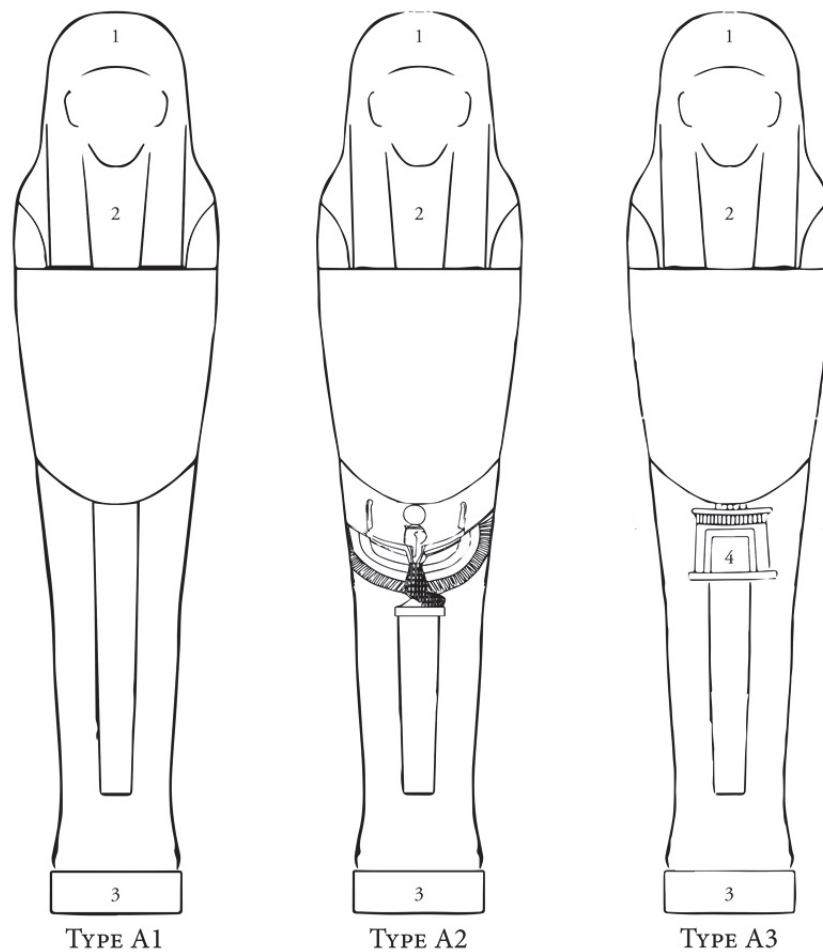


Fig. 9. Typological subdivision of the specimens of Group 1.

From left to right: figures with no interposed elements of decoration (A1), figures decorated with a winged goddess (A2) and figures with a shrine-shaped pendant (A3).

Type A2. (Fig. 9: centre). Figures showing a goddess with outstretched wings and holding a *maat*-feather in each hand, positioned just below the collar and kneeling over a column of inscription. Due to the slender shape of these specimens, the goddess' wings are visible from the back as well. The figures B–E, AJ are examples of this type. Three specimens (B–D) present exceptionally similar features in relation to the goddess' decoration, in particular the dress (the rendering of the chequered pattern, the straps connecting the vest to the shoulders) and other attributes (profile of the face, general shape of the body and wings) show similarities that cannot be fortuitous. Only B presents the name *Isis* written in the solar disc borne on the goddess' head.

Type A3. (Fig. 9: right). Figures provided with a shrine-shaped pendant below the collar representing the frontal facade of a naos; the strings attaching it to the collar may be more or less visible, depending on the case. The figures J–M, P, U–AE, AG, AI, AK, AO are specimens of this type. P may represent a particular case, as the naos is here positioned in the centre of the collar; T is the only specimen to show a slightly different shape for the shrine. With the exception of U, that presents a damaged section under the collar which is difficult to interpret, the shrine-shaped element may contain the following elements in area 3. One mummiform figure: seated on K, W (holding a *maat*-feather), Y, Z, AB, AK (holding crook, flail and ankh),

AO; standing on T. Two mummiform figures: seated on L (holding a *maat*-feather), V (holding a *was*-sceptre), AA (the head is damaged), AI. Three mummiform figures: seated on AE, AG (two human-headed, one falcon-headed). Four mummiform figures: seated on M, AP (Osiris, Anubis, Isis and Nephtys). A *djed*-pillar: P, X, AD.

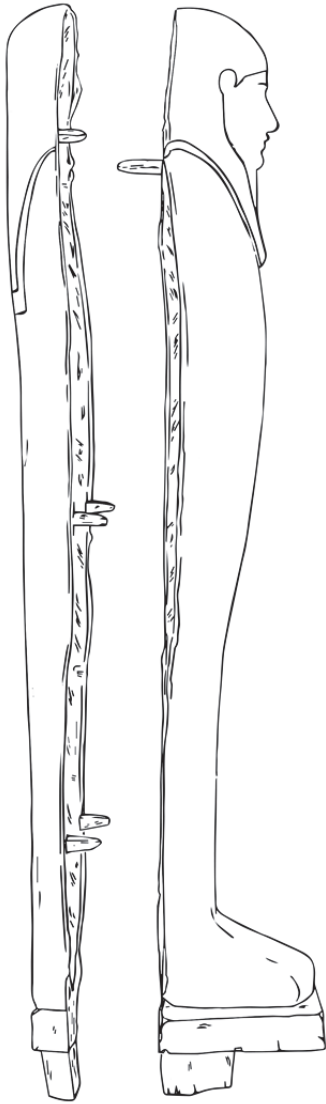


Fig. 10. The structure of the mummiform cavity on figures of the second group.

4. ANALYSIS OF THE SPECIMENS (GROUP 2): SHAPE AND DECORATION

The second group of figures includes the specimens AP–AR. These show certain characteristics that for the major part are similar to those present on the figures of the first group but, simultaneously, they are also provided with different and important features. These particular characteristics are only distinctive of this second group and they will be examined in detail.⁴³

4.1. Shape of the figures

This is very different from what can be observed on the specimens pertaining to the first group and all the figures show exactly the same shape. The general body outline is larger, particularly in the region of the head and the shoulders. The latter are much more round in this case and they tend to enlarge corresponding with the falcon terminals; the shape then tapers gradually until it reaches the knee level, then it enlarges and tapers once more to shape the contour of the last section of the legs. It is important to stress the fact that this particular outline, unlike the one that characterises the specimens of the first group, allows us to perceive the natural curves of the figure such as knees, calves, and ankles. Average measurements for the figures are 57.1 x 13.2 cm.

4.2. Decoration and cavity

This follows the main principles explained for the first group; however, some differences must be observed. So far, all the specimens show a black body, a prerogative of the general Type IVF defined by Raven;⁴⁴ also, there are always two columns of inscription—painted black on yellow or cream ground—on the back side. On these specimens the cavity (fig. 10) is always produced by manufacturing the body in two separate sections (front and back side); each of these parts is then hollowed out following the contour of the body and,

43. The specimens of Group 2 identified during the survey are very rare and subsequently relatively few at the moment. Nonetheless—due to the aforementioned distinctive characteristics—it was considered appropriate to ascribe these figures to a group of their own rather than considering them as a mere variant of the first. It is, however, much too early to propose a dedicated typology as more specimens are needed to establish the precise features of the group. Therefore, what follows represents just a preliminary overview of the main characteristics.

44. Raven 1979: 268.

for this reason, the resulting cavity has a mummiform shape. It is this particular kind of cavity that affects the particular outline of these figures. The two halves are then joined together by means of a certain number of wooden pegs (usually between six and eight) that are positioned all around the border of the cavity. An extensive use of gilding on the figure AP must be pointed out: with the sole exception of the wig, the specimen is completely covered by gold foil on the front, including the falcon-headed terminals. Two of the specimens (AQ, AR) are fragmentary (AR is also broken off below waist level) and only the back side of the figure has been preserved.⁴⁵ AP shows a shrine-shaped element below the collar just like the figures in the first group and bears a silver layer on the base (Type A3).

5. ANALYSIS OF THE INSCRIPTIONS

Within the two groups of figures that have been examined above it is possible to identify three specific types of inscription which are present on the majority of specimens.

5.1. *Inscriptions of the first type*

Among the first group of inscriptions, two distinct sub-types can be identified: formulas beginning respectively with the words *dd mdw* (A–C, E, I, R, AC–AD, AF–AH, AM, AQ–AR) and *hṭp di nsw* (D, F–H, J, L, Q, S, AN–AO).⁴⁶ In two cases (K, N) the inscription is damaged, while one figure (O) presents sections of both formulas.

- A. Front and back side: *dd mdw in Wsir hnty-imntt ntr ʕ3 nb 3bdw Pth-Skr-Wsir ntr ʕ3 hry-ib kṛst 3st wrt mwt ntr hry-ib Ipw Inpw nb t3 dṣr ir s3 Wsir N.*
- B. Front and back side: *dd mdw in Wsir hnty-imntt ntr ʕ3 nb 3bdw Pth-Skr-Wsir ntr ʕ3 hry-ib kṛs.t 3st wrt mwt ntr hry-ib Ipw Inpw nb [t3 dṣr] ir s3 Wsir N.*
- C. Front and back side: *dd mdw in Wsir hnty-imntt ntr ʕ3 nb 3bdw Pth-Skr-Wsir ntr ʕ3 hry-ib kṛst 3st wrt mwt ntr hry-ib Ipw Inpw nb t3 dṣr ir s3 Wsir N.*
- D. Back side: *hṭp di nsw Wsir hnty-imntt ntr ʕ3 nb 3bdw Skr-Wsir hry-ib Ipw di.sn m3ʕ.*
- E. Front and back side: *dd mdw in Wsir hnty-imntt ntr ʕ3 nb 3bdw Skr-Wsir hry-ib Ipw 3st wrt mwt ntr hry-ib Ipw Inpw nb t3 dṣr ir s3 Wsir N.*
- F. Front and back side: *hṭp di nsw Wsir hnty-imntt ntr ʕ3 nb 3bdw Pth[-Skr-Wsir ntr ʕ3 hry-ib] kṛst 3st wrt mwt ntr [...] Wsir hnty-hṭy Mnw Imsty Hpy Dw3-mwt.f Qbh-snw.f di.sn prt-hrw t3.w hnḳ.t k3.w 3pd.w sn-ntr mnḥt ht nbt nfrt wʕbt.*
- G. Front side and base: *hṭp di nsw Wsir hnty-imnt ntr ʕ3 nb 3bdw Skr-Wsir ntr ʕ3 hry-ib kṛst [3st wrt mwt ntr hry-ib Ipw Inpw nb] t3 dṣr di.sn ht nbt nfrt wʕbt n k3 (n) Wsir N m3ʕ-hrw.*
- H. Front and back side: *hṭp di nsw Wsir hnty-imnt ntr ʕ3 nb 3bdw Pth-Skr-Wsir [ntr] nfr hry-ib kṛst Inpw nb t3 dṣr [...] 3st wrt mwt ntr [n] k3 Wsir N.*
- I. Front side: *dd mdw in Wsir hnty-imntt ntr ʕ3 nb r-st3w* // Back side: *hṭp di nsw Skr[-Wsir hry-ib] Ipw.*
- J. Base: *hṭp di nsw Wsir hnty-imntt ntr ʕ3 nb 3bdw Skr-Wsir ntr ʕ3 hry-ib kṛst 3st wrt mwt ntr Nbt-hwt snt ntr Imsty Hpy Dw3-mwt.f Qbh-snw.f Inpw nb t3 dṣr Inpw tp dw.f Wsir nb Ddw Wn-nfr.*

45. A few specimens lack one of the sides, while there is some evidence of figures having been intentionally damaged, or cut, with the evident purpose of removing the gilded areas. Compare, for instance, specimen AK, the face of which has been clearly chopped off starting from the bottom of the chin in an upward movement, as indicated by the cuts in the wood, particularly in the left area of the wig. The topic will be dealt with by the author in a forthcoming publication.

46. The letters in the following list refer to the specimen list at the beginning of the article.

- K. Front and back side: [...] *3bdw Skr-Wsir hry-ib kṛst 3st wrt mwt ntr Nbt-ḥwt [snt] ntr dt.*
- L. Back side: *ḥtp w^cb di nsw Wsir ḥnty-imnt ntr ʕ nb 3bdw Skr-Wsir ntr ʕ 3st wrt mwt ntr Nbt-ḥwt snt ntr [Inpw] nb t3 dsr Inpw sh-ntr Imsty Hpy Dw3-mwt.f Qbh-snw.f.*
- N. Back side: [...] *Wsir ḥnty-imnt ntr ʕ nb 3bdw Pth-Skr-Wsir ntr ʕ hry-ib kṛst Inpw nb t3 dsr.*
- O. Back side: *dd mdw in Wsir ḥnty-imntt ntr ʕ [...] ḥtp di nsw n Wsir nb r-st3w nb 3bdw Skr-Wsir hry-ib Ipw Pth-Skr-Wsir ntr ʕ hry-ib kṛst Inpw nb t3 dsr Inpw sh-ntr di.sn [...] Inpw nb t3 dsr Inpw sh-ntr Wsir nb rdw Imsty Hpy Dw3-mwt.f Qbh-snw.f ir s3 Wsir N.*
- Q. Back side: *ḥtp di nsw Wsir ḥnty-imnt ntr ʕ nb 3bdw Pth-Skr-Wsir hry-ib kṛst 3st wrt mwt ntr.*
- R. Front side: *dd mdw in Wsir ḥnty-imntt ntr ʕ nb 3bdw ir s3 Wsir N.*
- S. Front side: [...] *Wsir ḥnty-imntt ntr ʕ nb 3bdw Skr-Wsir hry-ib kṛst*
Back side: *ḥtp di nsw Wsir ḥnty-imntt ntr ʕ nb 3bdw Pth-Skr-Wsir Wsir hry-ib kṛst 3st wrt mwt Imsty Hpy Dw3-mwt.f Qbh-snw.f.*
- U. Back side: *Wsir ḥnty-imnt ntr ʕ [...] Wsir-Skr hry-ib kṛst Wsir nb ddw ir s3 Wsir N.*
- AC. Front side: *dd mdw in Wsir ḥnty-imntt ntr ʕ nb 3bdw Skr-Wsir [...].*
- AD. Front side: *dd mdw in Wsir ḥnty-imntt ntr ʕ nb 3bdw Skr-Wsir ntr ʕ hry-ib kṛst.*
- AF. Front side: *dd mdw in Wsir ḥnty-imntt ntr ʕ nb 3bdw Pth-Skr-[Wsir].*
- AG. Front and back side: *dd mdw in Wsir ḥnty-imntt Pth-Skr-Wsir ntr ʕ hry-ib kṛst Inpw nb t3 dsr 3st wrt mwt ntr.*
- AH. Front and back side: *dd mdw in Wsir ḥnty-imnt ntr ʕ nb 3bdw [...] 3st wrt mwt ntr [...] hry-ib kṛst ir s3 Wsir N.*
- AM. Front side: *dd mdw in Wsir ḥnty-imntt ntr ʕ nb 3bdw.*
- AN. Back side: *ḥtp di nsw Wsir ḥnty-imntt ntr ʕ nb 3bdw Pth-Skr-Wsir hry-ib kṛst 3st wrt mwt ntr.*
- AO. Front and back side: *ḥtp di nsw Wsir ḥnty-imntt ntr ʕ Skr-Wsir hry-ib Ipw di.sn prt-hrw*
- AQ. Back side: *dd mdw in Wsir ḥnty-imntt ntr ʕ nb 3bdw 3st wrt mwt ntr hry-ib ipw Skr-Wsir hry-ib kṛst Inpw nb t3 dsr Inpw Imiwt Imsty Hpy Dw3-mwt.f Qbh-snw.f di.sn prt-hrw t3.w ḥnkt k3.w 3pd.w sn-ntr mnht ht nbt nfrt w^cbt ir s3 Wsir N.*
- AR. Back side: *dd mdw in Wsir ḥnty-imntt ntr ʕ nb 3bdw Skr-Wsir hry-ib ipw 3st wrt*

5.1.1. Structure and translation

The first type of inscription is the most common of the three and it is characterised by a particular structure that is constantly repeated in all the specimens. From the analysis of the texts it is possible to notice the recurrence of nine specific sections which allow the identification of a general standardised pattern. This is organised as follows:



Fig. 11. The inscription on specimen AQ.

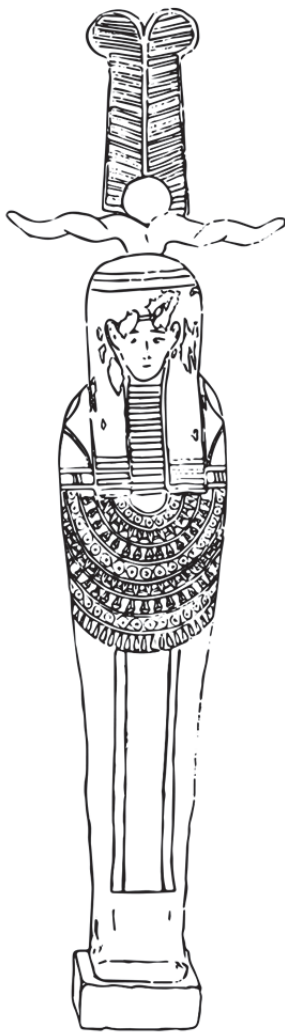


Fig. 12. Specimen AF
bearing an inscription
of Type 1.

1. *dd mdw // htp di nsw*
2. *in Wsir hnty-imnt.t ntr ʕ3 nb 3bdw*
3. *Pth-Skr-Wsir ntr ʕ3 hry-ib krs.t // Skr-Wsir hry-ib ipw // Skr-Wsir hry-ib krs.t*
4. *3st wr.t mw.t ntr hry-ib Ipw*
5. *Nb.t-hw.t sn.t ntr*
6. *Inpw nb t3 dsr*
7. *Inpw sh-ntr // Inpw Imiw.t*
8. *Imsty Hpy Dw3-mwt.f Qbh-snw.f*
9. *di.sn (list of offerings) n k3 n Wsir N m3c-hrw // n k3 n Wsir N m3c-hrw // ir s3 Wsir špsy N m3c-hrw*

TRANSLATION: ¹ | “Words to be spoken by (variant: An offering which the king gives to) ² | Osiris, foremost of the westerners, great god, Lord of Abydos, ³ | Ptah-Sokar-Osiris (variant: Sokar-Osiris), great god, who resides in the burial (variant: Sokar-Osiris, who resides in Akhmim), ⁴ | Isis the great, mother of the god, who resides in Akhmim, ⁵ | Nephtys, sister of the god, ⁶ | Anubis Lord of the Necropolis, ⁷ | Anubis of the Divine Pavillion (variant: Anubis Imiwt), ⁸ | Amset, Hapi, Duamutef, Qebesenuf, ⁹ | may they give (list of offerings) for the Ka of the Osiris N (variant: protect for eternity this noble Osiris N justified).”

It is clear that we have here a formula that lists a large cluster of gods. Its opening section may be represented either by *dd mdw* or *htp di nsw*, depending on the case. The second section is always present and the same in all the figures and it names Osiris as great god and Lord of Abydos. The third section is one of those most subject to change and it may include either Ptah-Sokar-Osiris⁴⁷ or Sokar-Osiris; they are always followed by the words *hry-ib* and it is very interesting to notice that, while Sokar-Osiris may be followed by *hry-ib ipw* or *hry-ib krs.t*, Ptah-Sokar-Osiris is never addressed as *(he) who resides in Ipw*.

Another remarkable detail concerns the fact that, of the two gods, only Ptah-Sokar-Osiris is always followed by the appellative *ntr ʕ3*, while Sokar-

Osiris is very rarely mentioned as *great god* (only on G, L and AD). The fourth and fifth sections name Isis and Nephtys as mother and sister of the god respectively. The sixth and seventh parts are dedicated only to Anubis, while the eighth names the four sons of Horus always in the same order. Min is named only on F. Anubis, on the other hand, is often named more than once and he clearly must have occupied a prominent position among these deities; the front column of figure G begins with the name of Anubis. Finally, the formula may end with a list of offerings for the ka of the deceased or with the granting of eternal protection.

This particular type of inscription, which—with the exception of the specimens G and J (where the text is found on the base)—is always written on the body of the figure (front or back), is evidently a characteristic typical of this group of specimens and is never found on other types of Ptah-Sokar-

47. According to Loffet 2007: 27, note 4: “Pour celles (figures) provenant de la région d’Akhmîm [...] l’invocation au dieu Ptah est systématiquement omise.” From the inscriptions studied so far, this does not seem to be the case here, as both the gods Sokar-Osiris and Ptah-Sokar-Osiris are largely present in this particular type of text.

Osiris figures.⁴⁸ Nine gods (Osiris, Ptah-Sokar-Osiris / Sokar-Osiris, Isis, Nephtys, Anubis and the four sons of Horus) are systematically mentioned⁴⁹ in the complete version of the text,⁵⁰ and this is related to the strong conception that “the site had its own funerary ennead, linked to that of Abydos, but with its own divine manifestations. [...] The geographic determinant *hry-ib Ipw* creates the sense that even deities originating elsewhere have a greater presence in Akhmim, and therefore burial in Akhmim would carry with it certain advantages to the deceased.”⁵¹ Furthermore, when the recurrence of this specific type of invocation is compared with the presence of the cavity behind the head, the resulting data is extremely interesting. In fact, all the figures that bear some form—even a small section—of this formula are provided with a cavity in the back of the head. Such a result cannot be fortuitous and indeed show a strong connection between the manufacturing process and the religious significance of these specimens.

5.2. *Inscriptions of the second type*

Not all the specimens are provided with an inscription of the first type; a lesser number of figures has been recorded with a hymn that is much more commonly to be found on Ptah-Sokar-Osiris statuettes.

- P. Front side: *ind hr.k* [...].⁵²
- R. Back side: *[ind] hr.k iw^cw pr m ntr pn nhh pr m Tm dt ntr ii* [...] *ii.n ntr 3 pr m hbbt hk3.n.f pr im.fpsd.f m Nwt m* [...].
- V. Back side: *ind hr.k iw^cw pr m ntr pn nhh pr m Tm dt ntr ii.ti m whm ntr 3 hk3 T3-wr* [...] *m ihhw ii.n ntr 3 pr m hbbt hk3.n.f pr im.fpsd.f m Nwt m S3h šmsw[f n3] Hm(.w)-wrđ* [...] [*hr nb=s imy.w*] *m hy s3-t3 Wsir N*.
- W. Back side: *ind hr.k iw^cw pr m ntr pn nhh pr m Tm dt ntr ii.tw m whm*.
- X. Back side: *ind hr.k iw^cw pr m ntr pn nhh pr m Tm dt ntr ii.ti m whm ntr 3 hk3 T3-wr h^c m i3dt m i3bt hk3 igr m ihhw ii.n ntr 3 pr m hbbt dt*.
- AA. Back side: *ind hr.k iw^cw pr m ntr pn nhh pr m Tm dt ntr ii.ti m whm ntr 3 hk3 T3-[wr]*.
- AB. Back side: *ind hr.k iw^cw pr m ntr pn nhh pr m Tm* [...] *hbbt hk3.n.f pr im.fpsd.f m Nwt m S3h šmsw.f[n3] Hm(.w)-wrđ* [...].
- AC. Back side: *ind hr.k iw^cw pr m ntr pn nhh pr m Tm dt ntr ii.ti m whm ntr 3 hk3 T3-wrt h^c m i3dt m i3bt hk3 igr m [ihhw] ii.n ntr 3 pr m hbbt hk3.n.f pr im.fpsd.f m Nwt m S3h šmsw.f ihm[.w]-wrđ h^c[.ti ...] nb.s*.
- AE. Back side: *ind hr.k iw^cw pr m ntr pn nhh pr m Tm dt ntr ii.tw m whm ntr 3 hk3 [T3-wr]*.

48. Source: estimate of more than 900 specimens investigated by the CALiPSO Project so far.

49. Only F mentions Osiris Khenty-khety and Min.

50. A base from Akhmim listed in Hilton Price (1897: 225-226, cat. n. 2065) is currently the only example I know which has the full hymn plus the presence of Horus, who is addressed as “the avenger of his father.”

51. Jonathan Elias, personal communication.

52. Effaced.

- AG. Back side: (corrupted and preceded by hymn n. 1) *ḥ^c.tw rmn.f pt ḥr nb.s Wsir* [?] *ii.n ntr ʕ pr m Tm N*.
- AJ. Back side: (Partly corrupted) [*ind ḥr.k iw^cw [...]* *whm ntr ʕ ḥk3 [T3]-wr ḥ^c m i3dt m i3bt ḥk3 [igrt] m ihḥw ii.n ntr ʕ pr m ḥbbt ḥk3.n.f pr im.f psd.f m Nwt m S3ḥ šmsw.f n3 m Nwt m S3ḥ* (sic) *šmsw.f n3 iḥm.w-wrd ḥ^c [...]*.
- AK. Back side: *ind ḥr.k iw^cw pr m ntr pn nhḥ pr m Tm dt ntr ii.tw m whm ntr ʕ ḥk3 T3-wr ḥ^c m i3dt m i3bt ḥk3 igrt m ihḥw ii.n ntr ʕ pr m ḥbbt ḥk3.n.f pr im.f psd.f m Nwt m S3ḥ šmsw[.f] Ḥm.w [wrđ] ḥ^c[.ti] rmn.f pt hy s3-t3 Wsir N*.
- AP. Back side: *ind ḥr.k iw^cw pr m ntr pn nhḥ pr m Tm dt ntr ii.tw m whm ntr ʕ ḥk3 T3-wr ḥ^c m i3dt m i3bt ḥk3 igrt m ihḥw ii.n ntr ʕ pr m ḥbbt ḥk3.n.f pr im.f psd.f m Nwt m S3ḥ šmsw[.f] Ḥm.w wrđ ḥ^c[.ti] rmn.f pt*.
- AR. Back side: *ind ḥr.k iw^cw pr m ntr pn nhḥ pr m Tm dt ntr ii*

5.2.1. Translation

This particular type of hymn and its interpretation were partially published for the first time by Budge in 1925,⁵³ while a first complete critical edition with translation and commentary was made by Maarten Raven in 1979.⁵⁴ The complete translation, for reasons of convenience, is reproduced here:

Greetings to you, heir who originated from this god, spittle that originated from Atum, divine body that returns again, great god, ruler of the Thinite nome, who comes from the dew out of the left eye, ruler of the realm of the dead in the twilight.

The great god has returned coming forth from the primaeval water. He has been ruling when he came forth from it. He is shining in the sky as Orion, the unwearied stars follow him. He supports the heaven which is rejoicing under her master. The inhabitants are in jubilation for the ka of the Osiris N. Every protection is his protection, and vice-versa.⁵⁵

It can be seen, however, that no figure in this corpus bears the complete version of the hymn⁵⁶ and that, in some cases (AG, AJ), this appears to be corrupted or highly fragmentary.

5.3. Inscriptions of the third type

- C. Base: *ḥtp di nsw w^cb.k Wsir kbḥw n.k mw m pr n 3bw irtt m i3dt inw n.k m [sbḥ mḥ m wdḥ] kbḥ m pr [R^c šsp.]k ḥtpw t3 ḥnpw ʕ n pr b3.k rsy nn šn^ct.tw.k nt pt t3 ʕnh.(w) b3.k rwđ prt.k [rnpy.k] [...]*.



Fig. 13. The text on base AL.

53. Budge 1925: 384.

54. Raven 1979: 276-281.

55. The final words of the hymn (*ts phr*) are not included in Raven's translation of the text (1979: 277), but have been added because their presence has been observed during the survey made by the CALiPSO Project on a consistent number of specimens. This phenomenon is limited to Ptah-Sokar-Osiris figures of types IVC-E-F. See Rindi 2012a: 50.

56. Which is very common on Ptah-Sokar-Osiris figures of type IV (especially IVC-E-F). See Raven 1979: 276, Rindi 2012a: 47-53.

- G. Base: *ḥtp di nsw w^cb.k Wsir ḳbh^w n.k mw pr m 3bw irt.t m i3d.t inw n.k m sbḥ mḥ m wdḥ ḳbh m pr R^c šsp.k ḥtpw t3 ḥnpw špsy Wsir N.*
- K. Base: Almost completely effaced.
- U. Back side: *ḥtp di nsw w^cb(.k) Wsir ḳbh^w n.k mw pr m 3bw irtt m i3dt inw n.k m sbḥ mḥ m wdḥ ḳbh m pr R^c šsp[.k] ḥtpw t3.*
- V. Base: [...] *m wdḥ ḳbh m pr R^c šsp.k ḥtpw t3 ḥnpw ʿḳ n pr b3.k rsy nn šn^ct.tw.k nt pt t3 ʿnh b3.k rwd prt.k rnpy.k m ḥḳ3 ʿnhw.*
- W. Base: (Badly effaced) [*ḥtp di nsw w^cb.k Wsir ḳbh^w n.k mw pr m 3bw [...] inw n.k m sbḥ mḥ m wdḥ ḳbh [...] pr b3.k rsy nn šn^ct.tw.k nt pt t3.*]
- X. Base: *ḥtp di nsw w^cb.k Wsir ḳbh^w n.k mw pr m 3bw irtt m i3dt inw n.k m [sbḥ] [...] ḳbh m pr [R^c] šsp.k šsp.k ḥtpw n t3 ḥnpw ʿḳ n [...] pr [b3].k nn šn^ct.tw.k nt pt t3 ʿnh.(w) [b3.k] rwd prt[.k] [...].*
- AC. Base: *ḥtp di nsw [...] Wsir ḳbh^w n.k mw pr m 3bw irtt m [...] inw n.k m sbḥ mḥ m wdḥ ḳbh [...] šsp.k ḥtpw t3 ḥnpw ʿḳ [...] dt.*
- AE. Base: (Badly effaced) [*ḥtp di nsw w^cb.k Wsir ḳbh^w n.k mw pr m 3bw.*]
- AG. Base: (Darkened and effaced) [...] *prt.k rnpy.k m ḥḳ3 ʿnhw.*
- AL. Base: *ḥtp di nsw w^cb.k Wsir ḳbh^w n.k mw m pr n 3bw irtt m i3dt inw n.k m sbḥ mḥ m wdḥ ḳbh m pr R^c šsp.k ḥtpw t3 ḥnpw ʿḳ n pr b3.k rsy nn šn^ct.tw.k nt pt t3 ʿnh.(w) b3.k rwd prt.k rnpy.k m ḥḳ3 ʿnhw.*

5.3.1. Structure and translation

Only Budge has given this type of text scholarly attention,⁵⁷ primarily publishing its first section, as he also did for the second hymn. Unfortunately, Budge's interesting example has been long overlooked because, unlike the second hymn, this text had not been identified on any other Ptah-Sokar-Osiris figure until now, thus hampering the possibilities for study and comparison with other copies of the inscription.

When multiple instances of this formula were found and studied by the CALiPSO Project, it soon became clear that a regular pattern was present and that the inscription was always the same on all the figures. So far, the complete—and the best preserved—copy is found on the base of AL. The remaining specimens only bear incomplete forms of the hymn or the inscription is too damaged to be read. The text reads as follows:⁵⁸

An offering which the king gives, you are pure Osiris, the waters that come from Elephantine are fresh for you. Milk from the (heavenly) cow ^A is brought to you in a jar ^B which fills by pouring out cool water ^C in the House of Ra. You receive offerings (upon) earth, cake is presented, and your soul goes forth vigilant; you shall not be repulsed (from) heaven and earth. Your soul lives, your seed germinates, you rejuvenate as the ruler of the Living Ones.

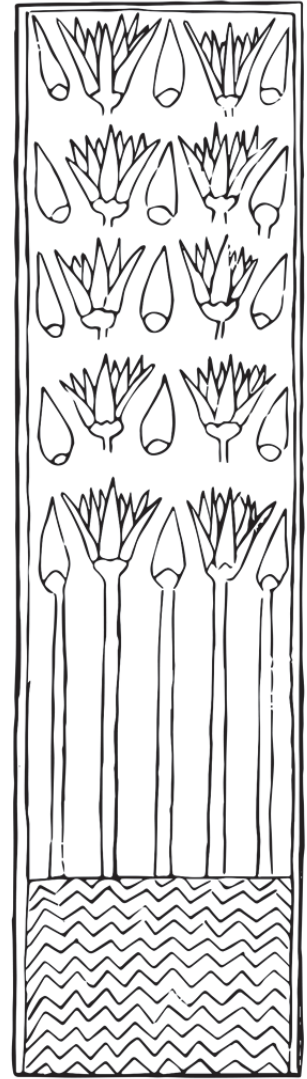


Fig. 14. Above: the lake motif on base AL.

Below: detail of the stylised waves, centre of base W.



57. Budge 1925: 384-385.

58. I am grateful to Jonathan Elias (Akhmim Mummies Study Consortium) for his valuable suggestions in the interpretation of the text and for his kind availability to share his experience in discussing with me its religious significance.

NOTES. A: Spelling with the standard-glyph (Gardiner R12). The sense of *i3dt* being a form of the heavenly cow is based on the similarity of the determinative with Gardiner E4, but without the diadem. B: Some kind of milk jar is clearly intended. C: The jar is filled by the act of pouring out the contents; the sense seems to be that the jar is continually refilled.

5.3.2. The third type of inscription and its connections with the concept of water

So far, the investigation not only allowed the discovery and comparison of more copies of the text, but its preliminary results also clarify that its presence is deeply connected with two additional important factors. The first is that it is written always on the base (C, G, K, V, W, X, AC, AE, AG, AL) except for one case (U) where it is placed on the back of the figure.⁵⁹ The second detail which makes this particular text extremely significant is the fact that it is often (V, W, AC, AE, AL) accompanied, on the base, by a rectangular scene representing a water-related motif such as a pool or a lake. This may be represented in a naturalistic way (fig. 14 above) or it may be rather stylised, representing the waves just by the use of a chequered motif where two or three different colours—usually blue and red, but green is also found—have been used (fig. 14 below). Many of the specimens examined have lost their bases but, from what we can observe on the remaining ones, these representations are extremely common on these groups of Ptah-Sokar-Osiris figures, even in those figures that do not bear a copy of the formula (A, L, O, J, Y, Z, AB, AD, AF, AH, AI). This should give an idea of the importance of the connection between the text and water. Furthermore, if we consider carefully the actual words of the formula and the fact that it was inscribed on Ptah-Sokar-Osiris figures, its sense and purpose soon become clear. The inscription invokes Osiris and he is addressed as a *pure* being, bathed by the fresh waters coming from Elephantine. These, together with the milk of the heavenly cow and other offerings will cause the *ba* (of the deceased/Osirian) to be rejuvenated and to live forever like Osiris himself. The presence of Elephantine itself in the text is an extremely important detail that should not be overlooked. The waters coming from there clearly represent the Nile inundation that brought renewed life to the land of Egypt. According to Egyptian belief, “Elephantine, the region of the First Cataract, was the place where the Nile flowed out from the netherworld.”⁶⁰ The Nile water itself is the discharge of Osiris⁶¹ that he will take back in a neverending cycle similar to that of the jar mentioned in the text, which is continuously filled by pouring out the water. This water pouring out from the vessel in the House of Ra seems, on the other hand, to be a reference to the setting up of the mummies before the sun god:

May you stand up on the sand of Rasetau, may you be greeted when the sun shines on you, and may your purification be carried out for you as a daily performance. May Nun purify you, may cool water come forth for you from Elephantine, may you be greeted with the *nemset*-jar. May you renew yourself daily and assume any form you wish. May you emerge as a living *ba*.⁶²

The important theme of waters coming from Elephantine recurs often in other funerary texts and some of them are strikingly similar to the one inscribed on these Ptah-Sokar-Osiris figures. It is worth examining briefly one of these texts by quoting a translation by Jan Assmann once more:

59. The figure lacks a base and the text on the back side is truncated, so there is the possibility that it may have continued on this base as well.

60. Assmann 2005: 361.

61. Originating from a wound inflicted by Seth on Osiris' left leg, which was traditionally connected to Elephantine.

62. *Ibid.*, 323.

To be spoken by Nut: O Osiris N., take the libation from my own arms! I am your effective mother, and I bring you a vessel containing much water to satisfy your heart with libation. [...] take this libation that comes from Elephantine, this discharge that comes from Osiris. [...] A great Nile inundation has come to you, its arms filled with rejuvenated water, [...] your body will live by means of the libation, it being rejuvenated in your mystery.⁶³

We are, thus, dealing with a hymn which is specifically inscribed on these specimens of Ptah-Sokar-Osiris to put into action the process of rejuvenation for the deceased-Osirian whom, sharing the fate of the *foremost of the Westerners*, will live forever by means of the libations; he will not age, nor be kept out from heaven and earth. This process is as everlasting as the continuous and uninterrupted filling of the jar *which fills by pouring out cool water*.⁶⁴

The latter, as ‘repeater of life,’⁶⁵ is undoubtedly the primary force acting in this text which, functioning as a spell, had the purpose of activating this powerful and primaeval element to allow the rejuvenation of the Osirian. The fact that this type of hymn is present exclusively on this group of specimens is another significant proof of strong local influences that affected the production of these figures in a very specific way.



Figs 15A-C. Comparison of details. Macro pictures showing stunning similarities in the decoration of the collar and in the order of its elements on the Ptah-Sokar-Osiris figures Q (left), W (right) and on the coffin of Mehit-em-wesekheth in Wellington (middle).

63. *Ibid.*, 359-360.

64. See image n. 7, where the decoration represents a remarkable scene with four jars pouring out water. The specimen presenting this type of decoration (J) is among the ones provided with this very same ‘water-related’ inscription.

65. *Ibid.*, 361.

6. SIMILARITIES WITH COFFINS: DECORATION AND INSCRIPTIONS

In order to ascertain better the provenance of the specimens here presented, it is necessary to analyse them in the context of the funerary production of this specific geographic area and, more specifically, with one of the distinctive products of the Akhmimic style: coffins. Both of the groups of Ptah-Sokar-Osiris figures examined here indeed share several characteristics with coffins produced in Akhmim in the Ptolemaic period.⁶⁶ More in detail, the general decorative programme is always very similar as well as the colour pattern.



Figs 16A–E. Comparison of details. Above: the three winged goddesses kneeling below the collar on the Ptah-Sokar-Osiris figures B (left), D (middle) and on the coffin of *Wsir-wr* in Parma (right).

Below: two standing genii, on the figure G (left) and on the coffin of *Wsir-wr* (right).



66. In particular with type E defined in Brech-Nelder 2008: 172-279.

In relation to the latter, a vivid shade of red constitutes more often than not the ground colour for the body on both Ptah-Sokar-Osiris figures and coffins from this area;⁶⁷ black is found as well but, nonetheless, it appears to be much rarer.

The decorative programme is another important aspect worth examining in detail. Although Ptah-Sokar-Osiris figures of both groups lack the general organisation in multiple registers that is regularly found on coffins, a striking resemblance can be soon noticed when comparing the decoration of these two types of object. The divine wig is always very large and elongated; it is often decorated with blue and red horizontal stripes (on a clear ground) at the bottom of the lappets. However, for the moment no specimen of Ptah-Sokar-Osiris shows the winged *scarabeus sacer* pushing the sun disc that frequently adorns the wig of coffins,⁶⁸ probably due to the presence of the mortise to attach the headdress on the top of the head. A gilded face is hardly ever absent, but is characterised by full cheeks, big eyes and eyebrows which usually elongate toward the temples with long cosmetic lines, a well-defined nose and a mouth often curved upwards. The latter may be painted red on coffins, but this seems not to be the case for Ptah-Sokar-Osiris figures as no specimen has been found to show this detail so far. In almost all cases, both statuettes and coffins show an identical decoration for the *wsh* collar (fig. 15): this is composed primarily by floral motifs such as *campanulae* (usually on red ground), *chrysanthemums* with or without a red centre (on blue ground), leaves on a bicoloured ground and drop-shaped pendants generally painted in red, blue and green (occasionally clear colours like yellow, white or cream may be added). Some of these elements may be frequently stylised or represented with a lesser degree of detail: leaves and *campanulae*, for instance, are often devoid of internal elements and are sometimes represented in a slightly geometrical fashion;⁶⁹ nevertheless, the main decoration remains fairly consistent. Moreover, the order in which these particular elements are usually disposed is basically the same (figs 2 and 15).⁷⁰ The falcon-head terminals securing the collar on the shoulders are almost always hypertrophic. Next to these, between the two frontal lappets of the wig, a smaller collar is almost always visible.⁷¹ On coffins, this element is usually decorated with the same motifs which embellish the collar,⁷² but in some cases it may be rather simplified as well.⁷³ Ptah-Sokar-Osiris figures of both groups follow this last example, as the elements of the smaller collar have been reduced to simple horizontal lines painted on clear ground.⁷⁴

Below the collar, coffins are usually decorated with several registers while Ptah-Sokar-Osiris figures show a much simpler layout that may be characterised by the specific elements presented in §3.

67. On this particular topic, see also Budge 1925: 384: “the body of the figure is painted the deep red colour that is a characteristic of all funerary objects from Åpu (Akhmim).” For instance, compare also the coffins PARMA MAN 101A (of *Wsir-wr*), LONDON BM EA 29776 (of *Djeho*), WELLINGTON TPM FE003200 (of *Mehit-em-wesekhet*). PARMA MAN 101A is said to be from Zagazig in Botti (1964: 82), but the coffin is clearly provided with several typological and palaeographical features that are distinctive of the specimens coming from Akhmim.

68. For instance, HANNOVER KM LMH 7849.

69. On specimen P, for instance.

70. The last row is decorated with drop-shaped pendants, then *chrysanthemums* (or circular elements), *campanulae* and leaves are repeated continuously in the same order.

71. Some rare cases occur where this element is absent, for instance J, R; AD is painted yellow in clear imitation of gilding, which is instead present on T, AB and AH in this specific area.

72. MILWAUKEE MPM 10265, PARMA MAN 101A, WELLINGTON TPM FE003200.

73. LONDON BM EA 29776, YVERDON LES BAINS MY 3775.23.

74. Figure AO is the only exception.

In particular, the winged goddess is frequently distinguished by a stunning degree of similarity (fig. 16 above) in all its details: body, dress, head and colours as well.⁷⁵ This particular element is omnipresent on the coffin production, while on Ptah-Sokar-Osiris figures it seems to be rather rare;⁷⁶ several figures, on the other hand, show a naos-shaped element in the same position which, in turn, seems to be found less frequently on coffins, where it is usually positioned in the centre of the collar (fig. 17).

Other less frequent elements may present a certain degree of similarity, like seated or standing genii⁷⁷ (fig. 16 below), recumbent jackals, processions of figures headed towards a *djed*-pillar,⁷⁸ as well as other complex scenes like those that have been presented in §2.2.5. Moreover, Ptah-Sokar-Osiris figures frequently feature certain motifs⁷⁹ that are often represented on the podium of the coffins. But the similarities are not limited to the decorative program: some coffins from Akhmim also show consistent resemblances with the texts found on the two groups of Ptah-Sokar-Osiris figures. Furthermore, the presence of the first type among the inscriptions investigated in §5 can be frequently observed. For instance, the coffins HANNOVER KM LMH 7849, PARMA MAN 101A and WELLINGTON TPM FE003200 contain the very same pattern⁸⁰ which is also shown on the Ptah-Sokar-Osiris figures.



Fig. 17. The naos-shaped element (containing five seated figures) in the centre of the collar on the coffin PARMA MAN 101A.

7. PROVENANCE OF THE SPECIMENS, DATING AND FINAL CONCLUSIONS

It is often difficult to establish the possible provenance of Ptah-Sokar-Osiris figures due to the almost systematic lack of excavation data. However, the preliminary results of the investigation demonstrate that, for these figures, this is not the case and thanks to the comparison of a significant number of specimens it is possible to finally reconnect them to their place of origin.

Budge was the first to notice a particular recurrence of details in the Ptah-Sokar-Osiris figures from Akhmim, stating that these “are differently fashioned and ornamented”⁸¹ if compared to other examples. As it has been seen, the figures are indeed characterised by the presence of several specific patterns that are their exclusive prerogative in relation to typology (general decorative programme,

75. Compare also the winged goddess on the coffin HANNOVER KM LMH 7849.

76. Only five specimens of a total of forty-two investigated.

77. Figure G and PARMA MAN 101A.

78. WELLINGTON TPM FE003200 and on the base of the figure G.

79. See §2.2.7.

80. Frequently naming Min in the cluster of gods as well, following the pattern of figure F.

81. Budge 1925: 383.

rendering of certain particular protective elements), manufacturing (the peculiar type of cavity, structure and proportions), religious and paleographic details (specific types of inscription).

The peculiar type of cavity present on these Ptah-Sokar-Osiris figures merits a special mention. Of a total of forty specimens (Group 1), just three (Y, AE, AJ) do not present this type of recess and three more (AF, AI, AM), of which it was not possible to examine the back, may be fashioned with this cavity as well. Even if we exclude these six figures, the result is extremely remarkable, as thirty-six specimens out of forty show this specific type of cavity in the back of the head. The latter, to my knowledge, is another exclusive prerogative of figures coming from Akhmim and, on the basis of nearly a thousand specimens examined so far by the CALiPSO Project, I am aware of just a single exception to this rule;⁸² while for the figure AK, described as being from the Asasif according to the label of the donor,⁸³ there is no doubt of it being included amongst the group discussed here on the basis of the characteristics identified above.

As demonstrated in §5.1, the recurrence of the geographic determinant *ḥry ib Ipw* is almost constant on figures with this type of head cavity and, in fact, “il est [...] frappant que, dans les inscriptions des statues pourvues d’une cavité de ce type, on rencontre presque toujours le toponyme *Jpw*.”⁸⁴ All these figures can be dated to the Ptolemaic period due to the above mentioned specific characteristic⁸⁵ that—as has been seen—are also paralleled, and more often than not in an identical fashion, by the features which define the coffin production of Akhmim. The striking resemblance and proportions of some of these figures and their characteristics may incline one to think that in this period these were mass-produced; this could be partially demonstrated by figure M, which is provided with columns that were never inscribed.

From this brief study we can observe that the custom (*i.e.* the main tradition) of placing Ptah-Sokar-Osiris figures in the burials undergoes a profound evolution, a change which alters the features of the specimens to a great extent, causing them to assume a different style and a particular religious significance, carefully adapted to the place of manufacturing. These alterations are the result of the strong provincial influences present in Akhmim that reflect the local identity.

The results of the survey show the necessity to investigate these artifacts by going beyond the basic typological classification, studying them as part of a circumscribed funerary context, characteristic of a specific place of origin.

82. Theban figure LEIDEN Wijngaarden 1932 n. 1, *cf.* Raven 1979: 270. This figure presents a structure and a general decorative program which are completely different from the characteristics of the specimens here presented.

83. Ph. Whiteway (the figure was donated in 1925).

84. Varga 1993: 191.

85. Very few examples of Ptah-Sokar-Osiris figures coming from Akhmim and dating to previous periods have been preserved and it is not possible, at the present moment, to compare the decorative programs of these different periods.

PTAH-SOKAR-OSIRIS FIGURES OF GROUP 1



Fig. O (Type A1)



Fig. A (Type A1)



Fig. G (Type A1)



Fig. D (Type A2)



Fig. E (Type A2)



Fig. F (Type A1)

PTAH-SOKAR-OSIRIS FIGURES OF GROUP 1



Fig. AG (Type A3)



Fig. M (Type A3)



Fig. AE (Type A3)



Fig. W (Type A3)



Fig. U (Type A3)



Fig. V (Type A3)

PTAH-SOKAR-OSIRIS FIGURES OF GROUP 1 (CAVITIES)



Fig. AC (Type A3)



Fig. G (Type A1)

PTAH-SOKAR-OSIRIS FIGURES OF GROUP 2



Fig. AQ



Fig. AR

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La collection *Ægyptiaca Leodiensia* — dirigée par Dimitri Laboury, Stéphane Polis et Jean Winand — a pour vocation de publier des travaux d'égyptologie dans les domaines les plus divers. Elle accueille en son sein des monographies ainsi que des volumes collectifs thématiques.

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discussing disparate kinds of data. Briefly put, productive or open traditions are in a state of flux that stands in dialectic relation to shifting social and historical circumstances, while reproductive or closed traditions are frozen at a particular historical moment and their formulations are thereafter faithfully passed down verbatim. The scholars in this volume agree that a binary categorisation is restrictive, and that a continuum between the two poles of dynamic productivity and static reproductivity is by all means relevant to and useful for the description of various types of cultural production.

This volume represents an interdisciplinary collaboration around a topic of perennial interest, a rarity in a field increasingly fractured by progressive specialisation.

Todd GILLEN earned his PhD in Egyptology from Macquarie University, Sydney, and worked as a postdoctoral fellow for the Ramses project at the University of Liège. He has published on a variety of topics relating to ancient Egyptian text and culture of the New Kingdom. He is currently pursuing a career in psychology and counselling.

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