

Catalogue for the Special Exhibition

HISTORY, POLITICS AND KINGSHIP IN CHINA AND ANCIENT EGYPT ARTEFACTS FROM CYFARTHFA CASTLE MUSEUM, MERTHYR TYDFIL IN LAMPETER

University of Wales Trinity Saint David, Lampeter Campus

Roderic Bowen Library and Archives

8 July 2013 –12 July 2013

All objects on display by courtesy of Cyfarthfa Castle Museum and Art Gallery

Exhibit Curator: Katharina Zinn; Co-curator: Marie Woods

Catalogue: Katharina Zinn, Thomas Jansen

With contributions by

Kathryn M Chalmers, Erin Cole, Catherine Mullenger, Lenitta Evans, Craig O. Lewis

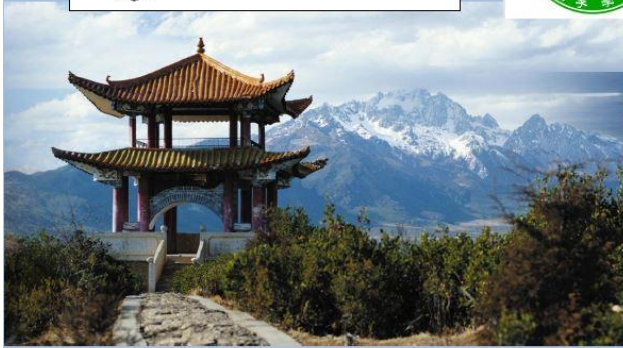
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Trinity Saint David




Cyfarthfa Castle
MUSEUM AND ART GALLERY
AMGUEDDFA CASTELL CYFARTHFA



HISTORY, POLITICS AND KINGSHIP IN CHINA AND ANCIENT EGYPT

ARTEFACTS FROM CYFARTHFA CASTLE MUSEUM,

The Roderic Bowen Library and Archives, UWTSB, Lampeter Campus –
open 08-12/07/2013 during RBLA opening times

- Monday 8th July Opening lecture at 4pm – EVERYBODY WELCOME
- Tuesday 9th July Workshop with Bro Pedr Lampeter (AS level History students in LR7)
- Wednesday 10th July at 10am and 4pm (Guided Tours – EVERYBODY WELCOME)
- Thursday 11th July at 4pm Academic lectures held by participating students (ALL STAFF AND STUDENTS WELCOME)



Contents

	Page
Preface	
Kingship in Ancient Egypt	7
Emperorship in Eighteenth Century China	9



Egyptian Objects

Stelophor of Hwy	(CC 174.996)	11
Alabaster Vessel	(CC 293.004)	14
Vase (W-ware pottery)	(CC 280.004)	16
Steatite Scarab	(CC 1715.004)	19
Clay mould for ring bezel/scarab	(CC 313.004)	20



Chinese Objects

Porcelain bowl	(CC 282.005)	22
Opium Pipe	(CC 580.005)	25
Opium container	(CC 425.004)	29
Chess figurines	(CC 471.004.3; 477.004.3-4)	30
Stone seals	(CC 1890.004.1; 1890.004.4)	31
Roof tile	(CC527.004)	32



Fakes? Modern copies?

Plaque	(CC 194.996)	33
Scribal Palette	(CC 166.996)	36
Statue of Bastet / Sekhmet	(CC 179.996)	39

Preface



This exhibition is again a result of the collaboration between the University of Wales Trinity Saint David and Cyfarthfa Castle Museums and Art Gallery, Merthyr Tydfil.

In summer 2011, I became aware of the Egyptian objects in Cyfarthfa Castle Museum, Merthyr Tydfil and got in contact with the museum. Being invited to have a look on the artifacts in storage, I was amazed by the small but excellent collection, given to the museum by the family of the late Major Harry Hartley Southey. Major Southey's family owned the Merthyr Express newspaper. He pursued a military career in the Merthyr Tydfil's 'Companies of Territorial's' and the 5th Welch Regiment using his commitments to travel the Mediterranean and the Middle East and to collected Egyptian, Roman, Grecian, and Asian Objects. Befriended with the curator of the Egyptian Museum he was able to bring together this very interesting collection of ancient Egyptian objects and high leveled replica which were shipped to Wales in wooden crates. Major Southey was killed in action during the Battle of Gaza in the First World War.

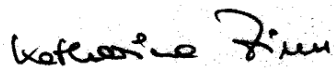
After the success of last year's exhibition and due to the existing Memorandum of Cooperation between our two institutions, several objects of Major Southey's collection could come on loan during the academic year 2012/13. Centering on the topics history, kingship, social hierarchy, these artifacts were the basis of module assessments of third year undergraduate students of the School of Archaeology, History and Anthropology as well as formed the basis of research for the BA dissertations of students of Chinese Studies. Both student groups were introduced to primary research of these otherwise unexplored and unpublished collection. This is a very rare and exciting occasion for the students.

I am indebted to **Dr Thomas Jansen**, Lecturer for Chinese Studies and Director of the Confucius Institute, for all his contributions covering the academic and administrative side of the Chinese input towards our topic as well as **Krystyna Krajewska** for the handling of our funding application for **Hanban/Confucius Institute Headquarters** (public institution affiliated with the Chinese Ministry of Education, committed to providing Chinese language and cultural teaching resources and services worldwide), which granted funds for professional photographs as well as supporting the accompanying events. Further thanks go to the **School of AHA** and the **Faculty of Humanities** who funded other costs connected with the exhibition.

However, all effort would have been useless without the more than generous support of **Cyfarthfa Castle Museums and Art Gallery, Merthyr Tydfil** who provided the objects and were and are very hospitable when I am there for research. Special thanks here go to **Kelly Powell** and **Scott Reid**.

I am very grateful to **Peter Hopkins**, Special Collection Advisor of the Roderic Bowen Library and Archives, who gave our objects and the exhibition a home in Lampeter as well as the staff of the Learning Resource Centre, where the RBLA is situated in, for keeping up with all the disturbances such an exhibition coursed.

Last, but definitely not least, I want and have to mention **Stephen Thomas**, who produced these marvelous images of the objects combining his professional expertise as archaeologist and photographer. Without professional images, the researcher would be unable to do its research.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Katharina Zinn', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Katharina Zinn

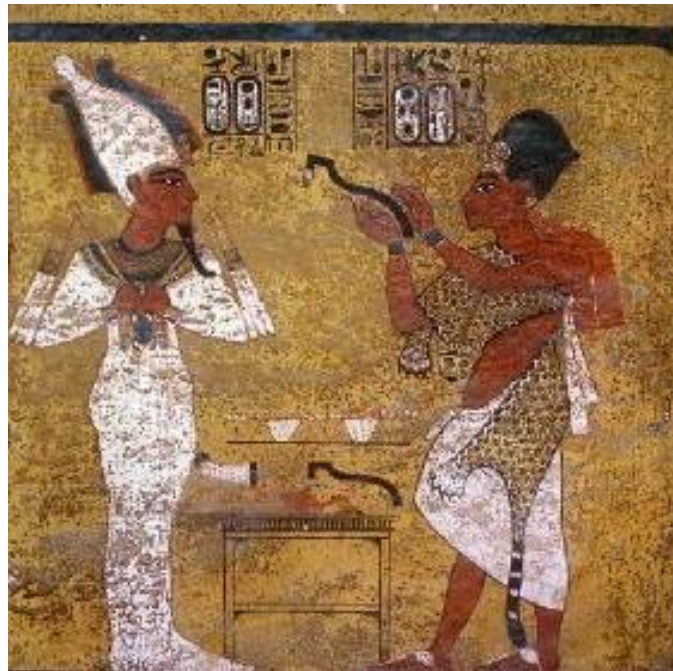
Lampeter, 08/07/2013

Kingship in Ancient Egypt

Katharina Zinn

In ancient Egypt, the king was believed to be a combination of the divine and the mortal. He was the link between the gods and mankind. Only men could be king, and kingship ideally passed from father to son. Rarely a woman, such as Hatshepsut (1479-1457 BC), became king. Little is known about the political environment surrounding the king, but records indicate that a number of rulers were usurped and some, such as Ramesses III, were assassinated.

The king was distinguished from ordinary people in several ways. He possessed five names, each introduced by a title defining his relationship to the gods and Egypt. His titles show that he was regarded as the force that held Upper and Lower Egypt together as a unified state. The king is shown in art wearing various crowns and other special items of clothing and regalia.



Espacially the crowns distinguish the king is also distinguished by the crowns he wears: the Double Crown, comprising Red Crown and White Crown - the two crowns seem to be designed to form a unit, the White Crown slotting into the Red Crown and being held in place by its distinctive frontal coil. the headcloth of kingship, in Egyptian 'nemes', an adaptation of a close-fitting cap, the Blue Crown (sometimes called 'War Crown' – see statue above).

Depictions of the king often show a rearing cobra at the brow, which is also able to protect the sun-god, and appears on the solar disk worn by goddesses. This is another feature reinforcing the solar character of Ancient Egyptian kingship.

A major role of the king was to maintain the universal order, called '*maat*'. He was the chief priest of the cult of every god, and the leader of Egypt's army. Temple decoration shows the

king in battle and in cult activities, though the latter were in reality delegated to the priesthood. The king was expected to provide the gods with temples, and endow them with offerings. In return for this service, the gods passed down their favour to Egypt via the king.

There are several Ancient Egyptian words for king: *nswt* and *ity* are perhaps the most common. The Ancient Egyptian word for kingship is *nsyt*. In Ancient Egyptian lists of words, kings are a separate category of beings. The term “pharaoh” is today used as a general term to describe a king of ancient Egypt. The term derives from the Egyptian *pr-ʿ3* (*per-aa*), with the meaning of “great house,” deriving from the word palace, which was transferred on the inhabitant of the palace paralleling “The Sublime Porte” for the Ottoman Sultan, “The White House” for the President of the United States, and “10 Downing Street” for the British Prime Minister. The first such usage that survives dates to the time of Thutmose III (New Kingdom, ca. 1479-1425 BC), but the first known use as an actual title of the king dates much later, to the time of Sheshonq I (ca. 945 BC). The title could be placed in a cartouche (the so called royal ring around the king’s name) and be employed where a specific king could not be mentioned in a temple inscription, particularly during the Roman period eras of rival emperors.



The character of kingship changed over the long time of Egyptian history (nearly 4000 years), but there are some constant features: from the First Dynasty to the Roman Period (about 3000BC-AD300), the king of Egypt is called Horus (god of order and celestial power), and has a separate 'Horus name', identifying him as a unique manifestation of that god. From the Fourth Dynasty to the Roman Period (about 2600BC-AD300), the king of Egypt is called 'son of Ra' - for most of that period, the phrase 'son of Ra' is a prominent title placed before the name that the king was given when he was born. The most common set of five names and titles is to be seen from the Middle Kingdom (about 2025-1700 BC) onwards: Horus name, name '(of) the

Two Goddesses', Gold-Horus name, title *nswt bity* (dual king) with another name taken at accession to the throne (throne name), and son of Ra title with the real birth name. The throne name and birth name were each written in a special motif, an oval with flat end-line - this was called *Sn 'ring'* in Egyptian, and seems to correspond to the description of king and sun-god as ruling all that the sun-disk encircles in hieroglyphic inscriptions - early Egyptologists gave the name 'cartouche' to the motif.

The king is by nature divine - he is Horus, and offspring of Ra. However, he is also inhabiting a human body, and is therefore mortal. This duality of divine character and mortal constraints is the essence of Egyptian kingship.

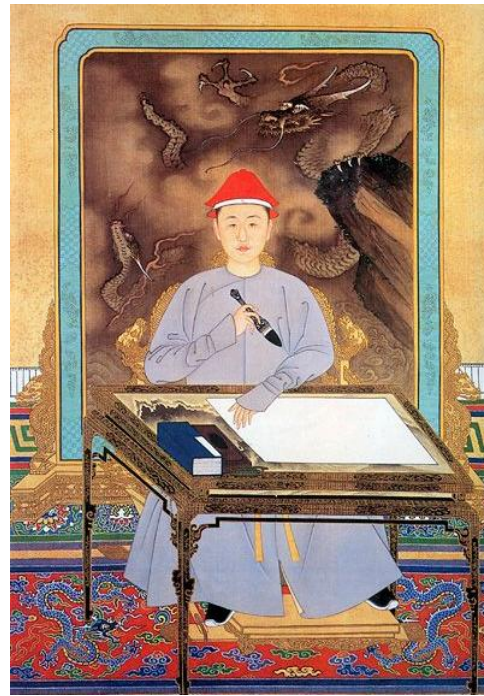
Emperorship in Eighteenth Century China

Thomas Jansen

In the eighteenth century the Manchu Qing dynasty (1644-1911) reached the zenith of its territorial expansion, economic prosperity and political influence. Over the course of their successive reigns, emperors Kangxi (r. 1661-1722), Yongzheng (r. 1723-1736), and Qianlong (r. 1736-1796) incorporated the territories and peoples of Manchuria, Mongolia, Central Asia, Taiwan, and Tibet into their empire. The empire's population, the vast majority of which was Chinese, doubled from circa 150 Mio. in 1650 to approximately 300 Mio. in 1800.

The ethnic, linguistic and cultural diversity of the Qing Empire is reflected in the composite nature of emperorship in the eighteenth century which aimed at the simultaneous representation of the different constituencies within the Qing Empire as well as the inclusion of different local ideologies of rulership. Imperial edicts were published in at least two languages, Chinese and Manchu, but after the middle eighteenth century frequently in Manchu, Chinese, Mongolian, Tibetan, and Arabic. More than a mere practical matter, the use of several languages is evidence of the imperial aspiration to express its intentions in multiple cultural forms. The position of the emperor was thought to resemble that of the hub in a wheel. The spokes begin in different and unique places but all meet in the hub. Placed at the centre, the emperor transcended all other political and cultural authorities in his realm.

The Qing emperors of the eighteenth century deliberately combined several models of emperorship, thus avoiding the limitations of a single historical, religious or ethnic affiliation of their role. To be emperor in eighteenth century China meant to be secular ruler, religious sage/teacher and patron of the arts in one person.



According to classical Chinese political philosophy, the notion of imperial legitimacy was inextricably linked to the idea of a “Heavenly Mandate” (tian ming). The expectation was that an emperor should be a sage king whose right to rule was contingent upon his ability to skilfully mediate between Heaven, Earth, and humans. Political chaos, natural disasters and other irregularities in the cosmic order could hence be interpreted as a sign that a ruler had lost the Mandate of Heaven and should be replaced.

A second model of legitimization utilized by the Qianlong Emperor in particular was the idea of the Emperor as a Buddhist Bodhisattva. A Bodhisattva has vowed to postpone his final enlightenment and entry into the Buddhist nirvana in order to save other beings first. What appears at first sight as a reduction of the imperial authority reveals itself upon closer inspection as a means to establish a direct rule of the monarch over each of his individual subjects. A rule that was mediated neither by the members of the aristocracy, nor by the Buddhist clergy or by the officials. The immediate relationship between the ruler and each of his subjects was further intensified by the transfer of the ‘merit’ (gongde 功德) the emperor had earned through good deeds to his subjects. The individual subject thus stands not only in a personal relationship with the monarch but this relationship resembles that of a creditor to a debtor.

The end of the Qianlong reign was a turning point in Chinese history. The factors that had led to the success of the Qing state began to undermine the dynasty. The population growth pushed against food supply, sophisticated labour organisation made technological improvements unprofitable, and a series of floods, droughts and famines due to bureaucratic mismanagement led to widespread social unrest. This and the increasingly aggressive face of Western imperialism destabilised the country and undermined the imperial institution during the course of the nineteenth century.

Egyptian Objects



Stelophor of Hwy

Cyfarthfa Castle, Merthyr Tydfil 174.996

Object type: Statue

Materials: Limestone

Techniques: Painted, incised

Geography: Egypt

Period: Early Ramesside

Dynasty: 19th Dynasty

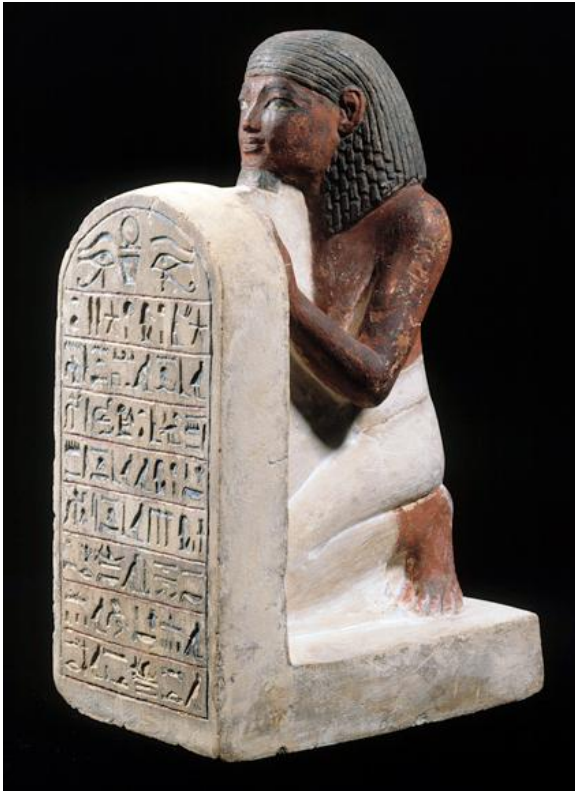
Reign: Seti I or later

Dimensions (at greatest points): height: ~24 cm, width: ~15 cm, depth: ~21 cm

Object analysis by **Kathryn Mary Chalmers**

The artefact being focused on here is a stelophorous type statue, so name from the stela being held up by the kneeling figure. In the majority of cases these figures are male, although there a

minimal few that feature a duo, often relatives; individual women are not featured in this type of sculpture but do rarely appear in pairs (Robins 2000:144).



Stelophor des Sa-Iset

Berlin, Inv.-No. ÄM 2314
Dynasty 18, 1550- 1292 BC
Limestone, painted
30 x 14,5 x 17,5 cm

The hieroglyphic inscription on the stele consists of a prayer or offering. Made from limestone, it is highly damaged and has lost its head, both forearms, and the top of the stele, leaving it currently standing at around 25cm in height. The breakage areas are very crude and it seems likely that it was broken unintentionally. As well as the parts now absent, the statue has evidently undergone a sort of restoration attempt, though obviously in more modern times and with quite crude craftsmanship. It can be seen under both underarms and was probably carried out to prevent the upper section of the more brittle arms from breaking off as the forearms did. The statue is composed of a kneeling figure on a block base, holding a stele inscribed with hieroglyphs.

The remaining colour on the statue indicates parts that would have been red, the hands, feet, neck and face, but there would also have been black pigment used to darken the parts of the statue that were “not there” other than for structural purposes, in this case the wedge underneath the shins of the kneeling figure and the central block between the stela and figure’s chest.

It is worth stating as to where the name of this specific statue comes from. On the front of the statue base, the hieroglyphics on the viewer’s immediate left give the name of the figure kneeling on the base, holding the stele, and can be translated to “Hwy”. As well as a written prayer, the stele often held the biographical accounts about the status of holders, and whilst this particular example separates out the name, and then the title, “Overseer of the Cattle of Thoth”,

of the figure by placing it on the base, other examples of stelophorous statues take a slight variant of the approach in including their titles and names with the prayers on their stela, rather than placing them apart.

The use of statues like these in places such as temples and sanctuaries reflects the ideas of displaying personal piety were becoming common in the New Kingdom, which is likely when the Hwy statue was made.

Based on simple examination, the artistic style of the statue provides multiple pointers as to the period it comes from. The red ochre colouring marking the skin of the stelophorous figure of Hwy is characteristic to the majority of Ancient Egyptian depictions of Egyptian males. High detailing is apparent on the figure of Hwy as allowed for by the use of limestone. This level of care for detail implies an origin in the New Kingdom, 18th to 20th Dynasties, and onwards. The dress of the figure narrows down these expansive possibilities for date as it is a very stereotypical style of the New Kingdom; the linens commonly worn at the time consisted of a light tunic style top layered over a heavier skirt, a floor length kilt with a pleated front, as can be seen over the thighs of the figure. Following the development of the stelophorous statue through the 18th Dynasty, Hwy is kneeling on the block base and supports a stela to the front of him, resting on the ground rather than on his knees as earlier examples had (Stewart 1967:34).

Indeed, religion, politics and kingship were inherently linked, and so when there was any sort of royal upheaval or drastic change in ruling style, the religion and politics of the country were usually affected too, and thus their artistry developed. The stelophorous statue is one type of such that very much marks a grand move away from the traditional religious and ruling ideology of Ancient Egypt (Shaw 2002:266). The personalisation of religion that arose from the pharaoh's losses of connections to the gods during the end of the 18th dynasty was adopted by many, and this can be seen in the stelophorous type states, as well as naophor (the kneeling man holding a shrine – a naos), block statues which have a similar idea behind them. The prayers written on the stelophorous statues allowed people to bring their own prayers directly to the gods, or give offerings in the hope of return.

The styles of the stelophorous statue reflect the transitions of traditional and new art styles, whilst the prayer or offering on the stela is evidence of the new relationships between the gods and the people, as well as the temples, priesthoods and pharaohs. As sacerdotal state, the kings funded the temples but also required their support to rule, and the separation of the kingship from the pressures of being responsible for everyone's afterlives allowed a more innovative rule, less tied down with tradition, and gave the people more power of their own (Shaw 2002:305). The stelophorous state represents all this, the evolution, the innovation, and yet the need to also remain with tradition. The gods and pharaoh were still inherent parts of the people's lives, but not as they once were.



Alabaster Vessel

Cyfarthfa Castle, Merthyr Tydfil 293.004

Material:

Object analysis by **Erin Cole**

This little vessel is made from travertine, sedimentary rock containing mostly calcite (Calcium carbonate CaCO_2)¹. Referring to this material as Egyptian Alabaster is problematic due to its chemical difference to Alabaster. However, Egyptian Alabaster is the most used name for this stone. This vessel is 14.9x4.8cm and the shape shows a rounded base with an elongated body tapering towards the mouth to form a short neck. At the side of the vessel, we have two small lugs, indicating functional handles of the original usage of this kind of vases.

In the catalogue of the museum, this vessel is marked as a fake due to the unusual size and material. Similar vases, different in size, can be found in the Pre- and Early Dynastic time, but not this size.



Figure 1. Egyptian Alabaster vessel.
14.9x4.8 cm
Accession number 293.004

Accession Number: 293.004

Object: Egyptian Alabaster vessel

Description: Egyptian alabaster (travertine) oil vessel with a rounded base and an elongated body which tapers towards the neck and has a rolled lip. There are two lugs on either side for handles.

Dimensions: 14.9 x 4.8 cm

Material: Stone, Travertine (calcite)

Period/dynasty: Late period

Found: (?)

Current Location: Roderic Bowen Center,
University of Wales Trinity Saint David, Lampeter

To show, that we actually have a genuine piece, it is necessary to compare our object with similar pieces.

The first comparative object is a vase from the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston (MFA 20.1078), also made of calcite and dated to the Nubian Napata Period during the reign of Aspelta (539-568 BC). This vessel is 20.9x5.9cm and described as “basg Shaped” with a rounded base and a small handle on either side.

Museum of Fine Arts in Boston (MFA 20.1078)	Museum of Fine Arts in Boston (MFA 20.1079)

A second vessel from the same time, also from the MFA (MFA 20.1079) is taller and wider (20.8x7.1cm), but follows exactly the same elongated shape, even it has a different texture with the differently coloured layers of calcite in the stone.

Both artefacts from the MFA were found in a pyramid of the Napatanean king. We do not know the provenance of our object, unfortunately, so that it would be possible that this was used in daily life, especially as some residue seems to be inside. The similarity is not close enough, to suggest exact time and place, but close enough to assume a dating for the Late Period.

Establishing the object there makes sense and remove this artefact from the idea of being a fake due to the uncommon size for an predynastic object.



Vase (predynastic W-ware pottery, wavy handled)

Cyfarthfa Castle, Merthyr Tydfil 280.004

Material: ceramics

Object analysis by **Katharina Zinn**

This object is a wavy-handled jar with cross-hatched design in the form of a net.

The vessel is a typical example of middle Predynastic Period pottery (around 4000 – 3100 BC, Naqada III), made from marl clay, a harder type of clay than the previously used Nilt silt clay. This type was procured from the desert areas and Nilt silt, which was easily available, was not the main clay type anymore. The usage of this clay type led to the invention of new pottery types which were cylindrical with a stylised wavy rim. This rim is the generalisation of a waved handle of former more globular vessels towards these new cylindrical forms, where the rim is a waved line running around the container.



FIGURE 7.5. Development of Wavy-Handled ware (W-ware). OIM E5816, E26815, E26812, E29255 (photo by Anna Rassman)

The earlier globular form features characteristics from Levantine imports and proving the wide contacts of Egypt with the north-eastern Mediterranean.²

This container of cylindrical form is to be placed at the end of the evolution of vases with wavy handles dating from the Naqada II and Naqada III Periods. The handles have lost all practical function and take the appearance of a wavy line placed under the neck. The painted imitation of a net recalls that the object was destined as a transport vessel. The majority of such vases were found in tombs and were used to contain oils and perfumed unguents.

These pottery type was especially important for the history of archaeology, as the W-ware gave Sir William Flinders Petrie, the father of modern archaeology, the idea, that pottery could be used for dating of artefacts in the sense of relative or sequence dating, where we cannot establish the absolute time when this object was produced or used, but we can say that certain types came earlier than others.³

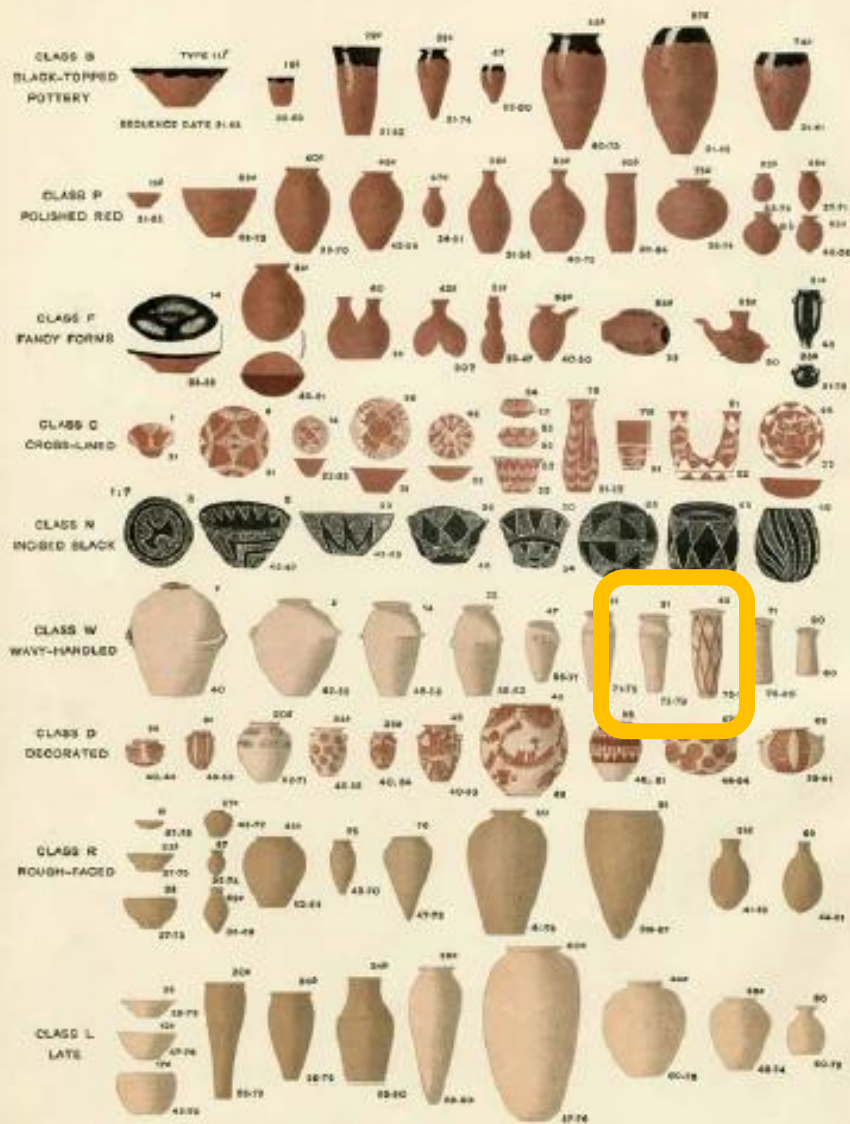


FIGURE 7.2. Frontispiece from Petrie's *Dispositio Parva: The Cemetery of Abadiyeh and Its*, 1895-9 (1903b) illustrating his Predynastic pottery sequence (courtesy of the Egypt Exploration Society)



Steatite Scarab

Cyfarthfa Castle, Merthyr Tydfil 1715.004

Date: Eighteenth Dynasty, Thutmose III and Hatshepsut to Twenty-Fifth Dynasty c.a. 1479-656 BC

Material: Steatite

Dimensions: Length: ~1cm, Width: ~1.3cm, Depth: ~0.9cm

Object analysis by **Catherine Mullenger**

Scarabs are one of the most recognisable and iconic elements of Egyptian culture recognised in today's world. The mythological belief that a scarab was the embodiment of something divine stems from similarities between its habits and Egyptian belief in the movements of the sun. Otherwise known as the dung beetle, this creature gathers up fresh dung/faeces and rolls it into a ball, usually of a substantially bigger size than the creature itself, back to its burrow. This act became associated with how the sun crossed the sky each day. The scarab as an iconographic object is so quintessentially Egyptian, it is instantly recognisable to nearly every member of society. To the Ancient Egyptians, the scarab was a symbol of eternal life and the divine rebirth of the sun, it represented the god Khepri who drive the sun across the sky each day, which they saw in the humble dung beetle rolling its balls of dung across the desert (Dhanjal 2008:173 AND Taylor 2001:28). Scarabs first began to appear in the Sixth Dynasty and were made from glazed steatite. The Sixth Dynasty scarabs had the legs splayed out to the sides, whereas contemporary examples have their legs folded up beneath their body.

So powerful was the symbol of the scarab to the Egyptians that it became one of the most popular forms of amulet, worn by the dead as symbols of rebirth, as when an adult dung beetle is seen as pushing a dung ball in which its young are laid, the event of the infant beetle emerging drew similarities in the Egyptian mind to the rebirth of Khepri every morning at the start of a new cycle. The symbol of a scarab can be seen all across Egyptian art and funerary objects, from mummies-trapping, to coffins, to pectorals, however the most important form of scarab amulet took the form of the heart amulet (Taylor 2001:205). Scarabs were also used as seals. Some of these designs were mounted in a bezel to make a ring (Save-Sonderbergh and Troy 1991:78-79 as cited in Roehrig 2005:195).

It is possible that this scarab was worn by an Egyptian as a symbol of protection and power, invoking the dead (or ruling) king's name as a method of communication and transference of abilities.



Clay mould for ring bezel/scarab

Cyfarthfa Castle, Merthyr Tydfil 313.004

Material: clay

Object analysis by **Katharina Zinn**

Such clay moulds were used to produce faience amulets, pendants or ring bezels, the front side of what we now would call signet ring (see figure 1).



Figure 1:⁴ Mould for Cartouche of Akhenaten, New York, MMA 21.9.192

The bezel or ring plate would have been nearly rectangular or slightly oval and seems to be able to be used as seal. Such rings exist in metal (mostly gold) with nearly rectangular ring plates. Faience as material would not be strong enough to be used as seal, therefore we can assume amulet character. Many of these amulets are known from moulds, representing fertility or guarantee the support of gods/goddesses. Such amulets could be worn as pendants, beads (strung to necklaces) or been bound into mummy wrappings.

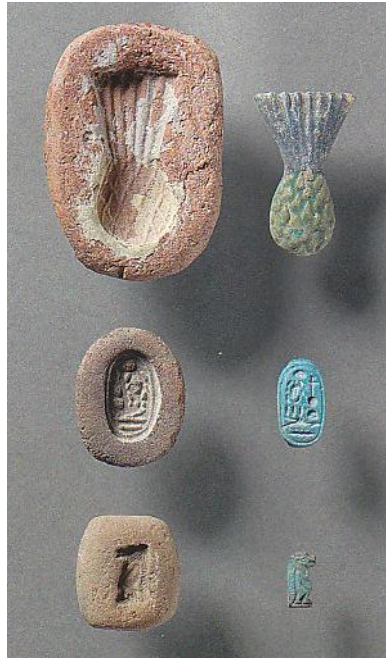


Figure 2:⁵ Clay mould of a cornflower (with a faience cornflower), a clay model of a ring bezel with cartouche (name ring) of Akhenaten and similar faience ring bezel (upper part of a ring), clay model of Thoeris (goddess of pregnant women, as figurative protective amulet)

Such moulds are similar to seal impressions. The best way to differentiate them is the preservation of the clay. Seal impressions show crumpling clay other layer, as their usage was different. Not having locks and keys, the ancient Egyptians secured a chest or other container with a piece of knotted cord. A lump of clay was put over the knot and a seal was pressed into the clay. The cord would have to be cut, or the seal broken in order to open the container and remove the contents. The latter makes it clear why the clay seems always be broken or of poor quality. Another usage is the sealing of a vessel with a lid mad from clay, which then was sealed.



Fig. 3:⁶ New York, MMA 10.130.1556

Our mould seems to be used to produce rings. There were two categories of rings in Ancient Egypt: decorative function due to the purely decorative/amulet character motives or signet rings, which could be worn on the finger as well as around the neck. These were mostly produced from more durable material like metal or stone. Faience rings were produced in large factories, as we know from Amarna, the capital of Akhentaten.⁷

Chinese Objects



Porcelain Bowl

Cyfarthfa Castle, Merthyr Tydfil 313.004

Material: porcelain (bone china)

Object analysis by **Lenitta Evans**

The item is a large and heavy ceramic bowl in the “*Famille Rose Medallion*” style. *Famille Rose* literally means “The Pink Family”. I would date it between the end of the 18th century and the first half of the 19th, more specifically I believe it to have been produced between 1820 and 1860. However, one cannot be absolutely sure due to a lack of an imperial reign mark (see *Figure 3*). Introduced to the porcelain scene at the end of the 1720’s during the

Yongzheng period (1723-36), the *Rose Medallion* style was particularly popular as export ware for the European market from 1830 to the 1930s. It possibly took its influence from the European fondness for soft colours and was originally called *ruancai* (软彩 - soft colours). Later it was also referred to as *yangcai* (洋彩) style, meaning “foreign colours”.⁸ It was considered to be one of the last technological innovations of the imperial *Jingdezhen* kilns. The style itself is fashioned firstly by sketching the desired design onto the formed clay; which the artisan then coats with an opaque white enamel which is made from lead arsenate; the ware is then intricately painted using different pigmented enamels and oil and then fired accordingly⁹.

The bowl is adorned with painted panels, both on the inside and outside, revolving around a central circular panel, depicting a variety of scenes featuring male and female figures going about their daily courtly lives within a dense pictorial background surrounded by a variety of flora and fauna as well as animals.



Figure 1

The fauna and flora includes pink peonies, while mythical dragons appear to be grasping a *yin yang* symbol within a pearl and auspicious 祥吉 (*xiangji*) symbols painted in gold which one has to tilt the bowl to see. This piece is very intricately and exquisitely decorated using a vast and highly vivid spectrum of coloured enamels that are as bright as they were the day they were first set onto the piece. The upper rim is decorated inside and out with a green scrolling diaper pattern featuring pink peonies trailing between an iron red and gold banding. The most commonly used motif is “double happiness” (喜喜 pinyin: *xǐxǐ*). Composed of two “xǐ” (joy) characters and is often referred to as the “*shuanxi*” symbol. This symbol is used to convey wedded bliss.

The use of auspicious symbols of fertility, longevity and conjugal felicity, along with the lotus, which is emblematic of purity and faithfulness between a married couple, point to the bowl's potential use as a wedding gift.

This bowl could have been custom ordered, though, I believe it more likely to have been ordered from a catalogue in the UK. The English East India Company (E.E.I.C) would have sent copies over to China for artisans to replicate from wooden, stoneware glass or silver prototypes into the desired porcelain.¹⁰ The procurer would, after placing the order have a lengthy wait from anywhere between 16 to 29 months, depending on various conditions. Undoubtedly, this bowl, along with many other Chinese wares imported at the time have left their mark on British aesthetics in more ways than one which can still be seen today, such as the Royal Brighton Pavilion, along with many old stately homes possessing a Chinese themed room bursting at the seams with all things Chinese. This fashion is also referred to as 'Chinoiserie'.

Sadly, however, the bowl also boasts a fair few signs of its age and use, or lack of care (See *figure 2*). There are numerous areas where the fine gold enamel detailing has been rubbed off; this is apparent when you look at the hair and its ornate gold detailing of the hair clips. There are also several areas which have been painted to mimic the look of marble that suffered damage; areas appear to have flaked off. This is possibly due to rough handling of the bowl. Also, on the outside of the bowl, there are what appear to be finger smudge marks. It has a hairline fracture which has not been repaired or stapled, and two large chips on the rim of the bowl that somebody has made a rather crude attempt to repair. There are two other smaller chips which do not appear to have been repaired; these reveal the true white colour of the porcelain underneath. Moreover, if one runs ones finger across the base of the bowl, a slight raised bump can be felt telling us that it has been made on a pottery wheel and not cast from a solid mould; this last point is crucial in ascertaining how the bowl was produced.



Figure 2



Figure 3



Opium Pipe

Cyfarthfa Castle, Merthyr Tydfil 580.005

Material: Ivory/Bone, Coconut Fibre, Lead/Pewter

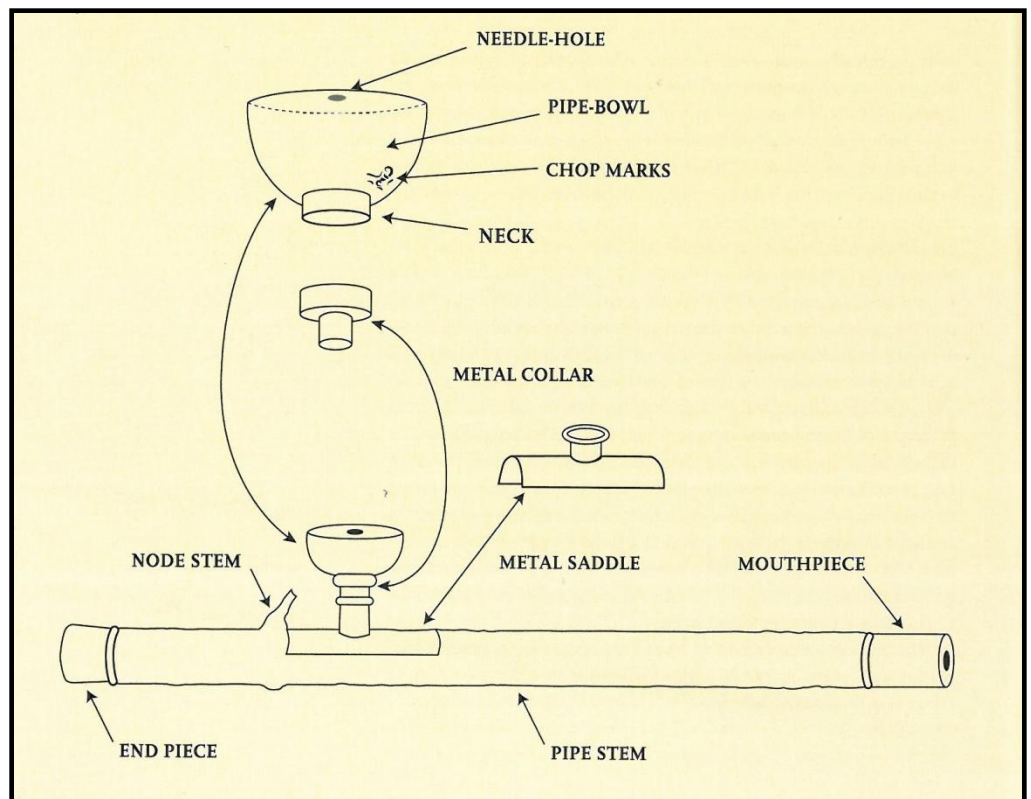
Object analysis by **Craig Owen Lewis**

It is impossible to study a modern history of China without coming across the period of history referred to as the Opium Wars of 1839-42 and 1856-60 which climaxed in the Treaty of Nanjing and the Treaty of Tianjin, respectively. Through both these wars, China was forced to hand over large parts of its coastal territories to foreign powers, swinging the doors open to trade in what had otherwise been a relatively closed and private nation. This object is a classic example of a pre Opium War smoking pipe. It measures approximately 50cm in length and is possibly made from either ivory or bone mimicking the style of bamboo, which is cased over a hollow fibrous centre made from compacted coconut fibres. Engraved and inked onto the surface of the pipe are various Chinoiserie scenes such as Daoist immortals, tea paraphernalia and images of a botanical nature.

The surface of the pipe is in poor condition, with a major crack of approximately 10cm to the short end of the pipe as well as a minor crack on the longer end. This damage has possibly been caused by the absence of a mouth piece and end piece, which would have held together the fragile areas of the end of the pipe.

Fig: Diagram of Opium Pipe Components; Steven Martin, *The Art of Opium Antiques*, (Chiang Mai: Silkworm Books, 2007), p.34.

These mouth and end pieces were made from a variety of materials such as jade, copper, bone, lacquer and silver to name but a few. It is no longer certain which material would have adorned the ends of this particular pipe, although it is likely to be of a less valuable material than silver or jade. This is pure speculation. However, the fact that the saddle of the pipe is made from a less luxurious pewter or lead would suggest that the same material would have been used to fashion both the mouth and end pieces also.



Various opium smoking bowls;
Peter Lee, *Opium Culture: The Art & Ritual of the Chinese Tradition* (Vermont: Park Street Press, 2006), p.136.

The saddle of this particular pipe, despite being made of a lower quality metal which isn't commonly seen on opium pipes, is surprisingly well detailed and decorative. It is embossed with the Chinese characters 此煙留美味, 適口有清香; *cǐ yān liú měiwèi, shìkǒu yǒu qīngxiāng*; this smoke leaves a delicious flavour, [with] each mouthful there is a sweet odour. Illustrated between the Chinese characters are wisps of clouds, possibly smoke, with eight individuals seated amongst the clouds; this is possibly a direct reference to the eight immortals which are revered in Daoism.

As well as the opium pipe and bowl, there were also a number of other accessories which were considered necessary for the smoking of opium, with the most obvious being the lamp used to heat the opium. It is no surprise, given the variation in quality of pipes and bowls, these lamps

also came in similar varying quality. To ensure that the life of your pipe was extended as long as possible, a number of tools were developed to carry out maintenance to the pipe and pipe bowls. These included scraping tools to clean the barrel of the pipe and bowl, as well as wick trimmers for the lamps, and needles on which the opium would be baked in preparation for smoking. The wealthier smokers could even afford to carry their habit with them wherever they went, as travelling opium kits were created for the mobile smoker.



Fig.: Image of saddle with Chinese characters (taken by COL)

The very connotation of the words 'Opium Den' brings to mind a dark hovel, dimly lit with a few loungers for the dope fiends to feed their habit upon. The place is possibly filled with beggars, criminals and vagrants. Indeed, this can be said to be true of some opium dens. However, to associate the smoking of opium with such establishments is to neglect a large proportion of the reality of opium establishments. When imagining an opium den in the west, it easy to associate them with descriptions such as this:

The narrow streets and passages, so narrow that there was just room for two people to pass each other, were full of beggars with hideous mutilations, and distorted limbs, and lepers, who were hardly recognisable as human beings, might frequently be seen...Mr. Wong, the old man, led the way up some stairs, which were somewhat like a wide ladder, into a room above. When my eyes became accustomed to the dim light of the place, I saw that we were in a large room entirely bare of furniture. On the boards of the floor were stretched, alongside of each other, about a dozen grass mats, and on most of them there was a Chinese coolie. Some of them were already lying insensible like dead bodies, while others were still smoking opium. Some were filthy and in rags, and I noticed that some were quite young boys, although there were old men too.¹¹

This account of an opium den is indeed accurate of some of the establishments that would have been in operation at the time. However, opium was in fact for many centuries a luxury affordable only to the rich. This previous account is of an opium 'den'; however, there were varying degrees of smoking establishments catering for all degrees of smokers, regardless of their wealth, as the next statement shows.

I expected Te I Lou to be a sort of chamber of horrors, but I cannot honestly say that the atmosphere we found there was vicious. While searching for the Singing Master, we entered a number of rooms each furnished with padded divans and the six to eight lamps necessary to accommodate about thirty smokers per room per day. At that time of night, they were crowded to capacity with people who, judging from their dress and appearance came from every sort of social background except the richest...Those not ready yet for a smoke were seated at square tables playing mah-jong or bending over delicious snacks brought in by hawkers or ordered from neighbouring restaurants. We saw very few people asleep or sleepy looking; and only two or three elderly and undernourished men resembled my pervious conception of "dope fiends". In fact I was disappointed to discover that, if the sour smell of beer could have been substituted for the sweet and all pervading fragrance of opium, the atmosphere would have been very much indeed like that of a London pub on a Saturday night. This was nothing like the sort of hell I had pictured.¹²



Opium Container

Cyfarthfa Castle, Merthyr Tydfil 425.004

Material: Coconut shell

Object analysis by **Thomas Jansen**

Opium containers (or other smoke paraphernalia) come in all sort of shapes, materials, and styles depending on the wealth, profession, and location of the owner.¹³



This small container made from coconut shell has two holes at the top and would have been suspended from the wearer's belt. Because of its small size and shape, it was most likely used as an opium container. It resembles similar containers from Oceania and could have been brought to China by one of the many Chinese who worked in the gold mines of Australia and the Coromandel Peninsula in New Zealand in the late eighteenth century.

		Opium Container Lacquer Box¹⁴ • Authentic Old Hand Made Lacquer Opium Box, meant to hang from the waist • measures approx. 4" tall by approx. 2 1/2" wide and is approx. 2 1/8" thick • dates back to around late 1800's to early 1900's • Opium Container Boxes such as this were used to hold small chunks of Raw Tar Opium and also used to hold Tobacco. This container.
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Chess Figurines

Cyfarthfa Castle, Merthyr Tydfil 471.004.3; 477.004.3-4

Material: bone?/ivory?

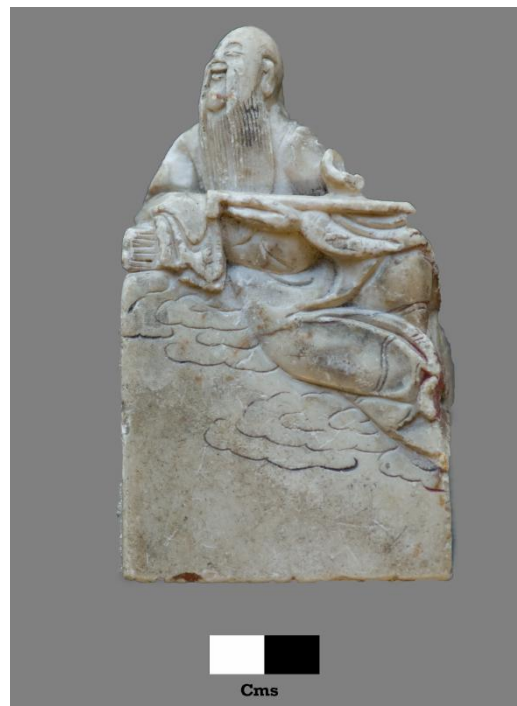
Time: Mid 19th century?

Object analysis by **Thomas Jansen**

Chess originated in India around the 7th century, became popular in Persia (now Iran) soon afterwards and made its way to Europe in the 10th century. The European form of Chess was only introduced in China during the 19th century but has never been as popular as the Chinese forms, called Weiqi or Xiangqi.



On display in the exhibition is a set of carved ivory chess pieces made in China in the mid-19th century, between 1830 and 1869. The maker and the exact place of origin are unknown. The set is likely to have been produced for the European market to satisfy a craze for all things Chinese in the nineteenth century.





Stone Seals

Cyfarthfa Castle, Merthyr Tydfil 1890.004.1; 1890.004.4

Object analysis by **Thomas Jansen**

Seals appeared in fairly large numbers during the last centuries B.C. in China. Mostly rectangular or square, they were made of bronze or jade, and used make impressions in soft material or later on paper. Name seals were, and still are, used in East Asia to guarantee the identity of the owner and to authenticate that person's actions. A seal fulfils the same function as handwritten signatures do in modern Western societies, with a significant difference. While the signature of a person is believed to possess the unique and inimitable characteristics of the writer, the Chinese seal's power to authenticate does not rest in the assumed unchanging identity of its owner, but rather in the solidity and permanence of its material. Each impression of the seal is meant to look exactly alike, which makes it suitable for legal purposes and most welcome in religious practice. Spells, charms, and invocations must be written without variation, lest they lose their efficacy. A seal ensures that this does not happen. Seals are therefore stamped on the bodies of sick people to save them from evil spirits and protect them from further harm.



Roof Tile

Cyfarthfa Castle, Merthyr Tydfil 527.004

Object analysis by **Thomas Jansen**

Chinese builders used glazed roof tiles to protect the wooden structure of a building from rain and snow. The dead load of Chinese roof tiles is much higher than that of their Western counterparts. Their weight ranges from 280 kilograms per square meter in small structures to 400 kilograms in large ones. Western tile roofs weigh only about 100 kilograms per square meter. The weight of the roof is needed to add stability to a building. A Chinese post and beam structure is lighter than a typical Western stone structure and not anchored in the ground. A heavy roof enables the building to withstand gusty winds.

The colour of roof tiles, the number and type of roof decorations as well as other decorative features are indicative of the social status of the inhabitant of the house, palace or temple. Roof tiles are uniform, modular and mass-produced objects that can easily be replicated and replaced. As such they are testimony not only to the high quality and sophisticated organization of serial production in traditional China, but also to the aim of imposing a unified political and cultural system onto a complex society.

Fakes? Modern Copies?



Plaque

Cyfarthfa Castle, Merthyr Tydfil 194.996

Date: New Kingdom?

Location: An outer province of Egypt? Fake?

Material: Steatite

Dimensions: Length: ~320mm, Width: ~250mm, Depth: ~ 70mm

Object analysis by **Judith Horspole**

This small plaque consists of two sides, the first depicts a seated king on the left, a worshipper on the right and between them an offering table. Above the offering table is a cartouche bearing the name of Thutmose III. The second side portrays the same cartouche in the centre but this time with a man either side, both facing the right of the plaque and both in a strange pose.

Due to the fact that it bears the throne name of Thutmose III, we can safely say that it was made during the reign of Thutmose III. The plaque may have been made after the reign of Thutmose III as his throne name was made up of three of the most powerful hieroglyphs connected to the notions of rebirth; this had a magical aspect to it and therefore his name was used even after his reign had come to an end. This is shown in an amulet from the Petrie Museum dated to the Late Period which bears Thutmose's throne name (Petrie Museum UC63889).

The crudeness of the carvings is similar to that of a plaque held by the National Museum of Ireland which dates back to the New Kingdom (National Museum of Ireland 30/002/1704). The cartouche on the plaque in Ireland is much clearer than that of the one we have on display, and it is clear to see that the hieroglyphs are that of Thutmose III throne name; whereas we can only assume that the hieroglyphs depicted in the cartouche on the plaque in our collection is that of Thutmose III. The two cartouches are depicted in the same way, with the hieroglyphs in a vertical row; the scarab below the reeds, which in turn is below the sun. On both sides of our plaque, the bottom hieroglyph which is a scarab is difficult to make out.

There is a second plaque in the National Museum of Ireland (National Museum of Ireland 30/002/1713) that is just a crudely carved. This second plaque depicts a lion, baboon and sphinx, all of which are difficult to see, the lion most of all.

The scene on the first side of the plaque is a typical offering scene, such as those depicted on Egyptian tomb walls. Here, the king in his crown is either making offerings to the gods or accepting the offerings made to him by the man on the right, presumably a priest, due to what he is holding. The scene on the second side is not a typical scene; the figures are not in a position which is characteristic to any of those found within the archaeological record in Egypt. This might suggest that the plaque is a fake, but a more likely assumption would be that it was made outside of Egypt, in a place with connections to Egypt with trade or military activity. In this case, the craftsman must have seen Egyptian plaques and scarabs and has depicted from memory the type of etchings or carvings upon them. The craftsman would have inevitably been influenced by the art styles of his own culture, which in turn would have a bearing on the way in which he designed the pose of the two people in this particular scene. The positioning of the arms are different to that in the traditional Egyptian art form.



National Museum of Ireland 30/002/1713



National Museum of Ireland 30/002/1704



Merthyr Tydfil plaque 194.996, Front view



Merthyr Tydfil plaque 194.996, Back view

Both plaques in the National Museum of Ireland have one side that is more typically Egyptian looking than the other, For example the second plaque (ibid) has a characteristically Egyptian udjat-eye on one side and a not so typical Egyptian scene of three animals on top of one another on the remaining side. This format is the same as the one on display in the collection and shows that the plaque is not unique in having a non-typical Egyptian scene. Although, the non-Egyptian faces of these plaques do not have a cartouche present on both sides whereas the plaque on display does contain a cartouches on both surfaces.

The crudeness could also be due to the fact that plaques of this nature were mass produced, and would have been sold at temples to pilgrims and temple goers, as either offerings or as souvenirs. A foreign craftsman could have seen such a plaque and taken the crudeness of the carvings as the style of Egyptian plaques and reproduced his plaque to the same standard.

The plaque dates back to somewhere between the New Kingdom and the Late Period and it is most likely to have been an amulet intended to be included in the wrappings of a mummy, though this is mere speculation as we do not know the context in which this plaque was found.



Scribal / Painters Palette

Cyfarthfa Castle, Merthyr Tydfil 166.996

Object analysis by **Daniel L. Goodwin**

Item

Wooden palette

Period:

n/a (unknown)

Date:

n/a (unknown)

Geography:

Egypt

Medium:

Wood/paint pigment

Dimensions:

Length: 35cm

Width: 6cm

Depth: 2cm

Classification:

Wood

Credit Line:

Donation to Merthyr Tydfilin Museum,
1910.

Object Number:

166.996

Item belonging to collection of Cyfarthfa Castle
Museum and Art Gallery, Merthyr Tydfil.



Plate 1. Top-left and bottom-right: close-ups of the pigment niches/holes. Note the ten possible places for paints, rather than the average two. Traces of red and black/a dark pigment.
Right: overhead view of artefact. Note the central reservoir for storing reed brushes.

The palette is an example of a scribal writing implement with its own set of problems in regards to its archaeological context and historical authenticity. The artefact is a wooden palette, relatively simple and without any decoration. It has, like most scribal palettes, a central reservoir which would have been a repository for reed brushes. It lacks a sliding lid over this central reservoir, unlike more elaborate examples. Where it differs from most others, and a characteristic which has drawn doubt towards the item's authenticity, is that it has more than two holes for paint pigment. This difference in number of places for pigment also suggests that the palette was possibly the tool of a painter, rather than a scribe. This also has added to the suspicion that this piece could well be a fake.



The successes enjoyed by ancient Egypt throughout its long history would not have been possible if not for its complex state administrative system. In turn, the state would not have been able to provide such a bureaucracy without the scribe and his tools, a member of a well-trained workforce and skilled social class. Therefore the tools of this literate class are found from the beginning of organised administration within Egypt, the key one being the scribal palette. One of the earliest mentions of the scribe and his palette is within a spell in the Pyramid texts, telling the scribe to break his palette and his other writing tools (Williams 1972:214). Placing the scribe and his tools within the spell, one aimed at placing the deceased King in the place of Re, indicates the importance of literacy early on. Ramesside miscellany of Papyrus Lansing praises the scribe and his implements above the other craftsmen – “Befriend the scroll, the palette... writing for him who knows it is better than all other professions” (Lazaridis 2010:6).

Only a small percentage of the population would have been literate and of those few would have been completely literate. R.J. Williams (1972:215) notes that, even during the late Old Kingdom, the Pharaoh's literacy was highlighted in text, suggesting that this was something to boast. If it was the Pharaoh, the head of the state, was not necessarily literate, then the scribal profession and the tools that went with it would have held yet more status in Egyptian society. However, the variety of a scribe's placement in society through most of ancient Egypt's history means that this simple, unadorned palette could have come from near any period and a scribe low in rank. The scribe played an important role throughout Egyptian history; he and his peers worked to maintain the vast administrative workings of the royal holdings and huge temple estates to the smaller domestic workings of households. The poor construction from cheaper, less well-crafted

materials and its lack of adornment or lid can be seen as evidence that the palette belonged to a scribe at the lower end of the social spectrum. Scribes worked in an administrative workforce that oversaw operations from the vast temple estates to smaller agricultural based rural settlements. With such a range of employment across Egypt and the economic spectrum, it makes sense that there would be differing levels of prosperity within the scribes, reflected in their tools.

The unusually high number of paint niches, can both be explained with a likely possibility; that this palette belonged to a painter, and not a scribe. A painter would be a valued craftsman, but not of the same value as a literate scribe, and this would reflect in the tools of lesser craftsmanship and with the option for more pigments.

The credibility of the artefact is a major issue, although there is not enough evidence for it to be judged authentic or not. The doubt comes from the oddities in the item's physical characteristics. The lack of decoration and adornment and it is larger than average size, when compared to similar objects, mark it as different. Similarly, the lack of a sliding lid over the central reservoir, hieratic jottings or hieroglyphic inscription takes it further from the normal model of palette. The final trait to cast suspicion on the palette's origins is the number of niches for paint pigments, the palette holding room for ten pigments rather than the tradition two for scribes.

The scribal palette cannot be determined to be authentic and, without chemical analysis on the pigment or an attempt at carbon dating the material, this will remain so. Although the usual number of paint niches does cast doubt on whether the artefact is genuine, the possibility that the palette was created for a painter rather than a scribe is a possibility. If authentic the artefact demonstrates how the scribal class had a role which stretched from the bottom rungs of rural administration to the higher echelons of elite bureaucracy.



Statue of Bastet/Sekhmet

Cyfarthfa Castle, Merthyr Tydfil 179.996

Object analysis by **Daniel Fox**

This small statue of Bastet is a figurine of a feline-headed goddess, seated in a pleated skirt or robe. The figurine appears to be constructed from clay and then coated to give it the appearance of granite or a similar material. As a result of the feline-head, the figurine could represent one of two significant Egyptian deities. The first being Sekhmet, the lion-headed goddess of war and the second being Bastet, whose cult was centred in Bubastis, a town which took its very name from the same deity.

Various statues of Sekhmet have been found which correlate to a degree with the figurine in question showing clearly the throne-like positioning of the artefact. This is a rather common position in which to depict gods and goddesses and beyond this similarity the commonalities between the figurine and the Sekhmet statues of Karnak. The distinctive depictions of Sekhmet are conspicuously lacking in the figurine on display, along with the Ankh which is borne in the left hand.

The comparison between the figurine and examples of statues and figurines representing Bastet are a little more rewarding. Bastet is represented more often than not as what looks to our modern perception like a domestic cat, rather than a lion (Scott 1958:1).

Although there are summary similarities between the figurines and examples of other figurines, depicting both Sekhmet and Bastet, the evidence in favour of the figurine representing Bastet seems more plentiful.

One of the stylistic elements of the figurine which requires consideration is the curious pleated skirt or robe which is the best surviving patterned engraving on the artefact. This distinctive style of clothing can be found on various different statuettes and figurines. Pleated skirts and robes of one sort or another were part of ancient Egyptian fashion from as far back as the Old Kingdom so the appearance of pleated robes in this figurine may not seem that unexpected. However, it is curious and interesting to note that none of the examples of statuettes depicting either Sekhmet or Bastet featured a pleated shirt or robe.

The next feature of the figurine which calls to question the authenticity of the artefact is the structure of the piece as a whole. Normally this solid structuring, combined with the backing around the head area of the statue, would imply a back pillar of some description. However, on the closer inspection it becomes clear that no back pillar has ever been incorporated into the figurine's design. This can be explained in one of two ways; firstly, the obvious possibility is that the "forgers" if artefacts in the antiquities market designed the piece to look authentic, not fully taking into account the reasons for certain stereotypical statue designs, e.g. the presence of a back pillar in the past resulting in the solid backing of the head on authentic pieces may lead these "artisans" to create fakes with solid backings for the heads of their statues without any evidence of previous back pillars.

Labelling an artefact as a fake is a significant decision to make, and such a decision cannot be guaranteed validity without the aid of carbon dating and other quantifying methods of dating and chemical analysis, but in this case it seems likely, that we have a fake.

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¹ Nicholson and Shaw. 2009.p. 59.

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