

W9 (Week 3, Thursday)
**Materiality - Comparing
materiality of civilisations
Ancient Egypt**

HPAR4010

What makes civilisation?

Dr Katharina Zinn / Dr Thomas Jansen

MATERIAL CULTURE

- ❑ Material culture refers to physical
 - Objects
 - Resources
 - Spaces
- ❑ created by people and used to define their culture → =
material manifestations of a culture
 - Homes, tools, amphitheatres, toys etc
- ❑ used as tools to define the self & the community
- ❑ Why do we study this?
 - ❑ Material culture shows what was important to people in the past
 - ❑ Helps to understand how and what they prioritized / valued



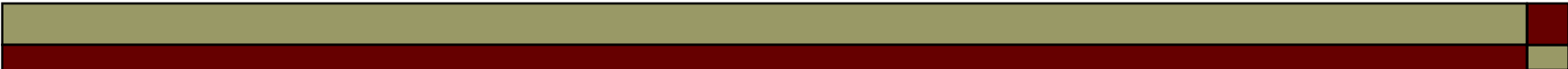
How do we analyse material culture?

- consider the physical composition of the material
- consider how it was made
- consider how humans have interacted with it
- consider how different groups of humans have interacted with the same material
- map these differences and similarities spatially and historically



MATERIALITY

- ☐ People and Things are linked
- ☐ Objects shape the human experience

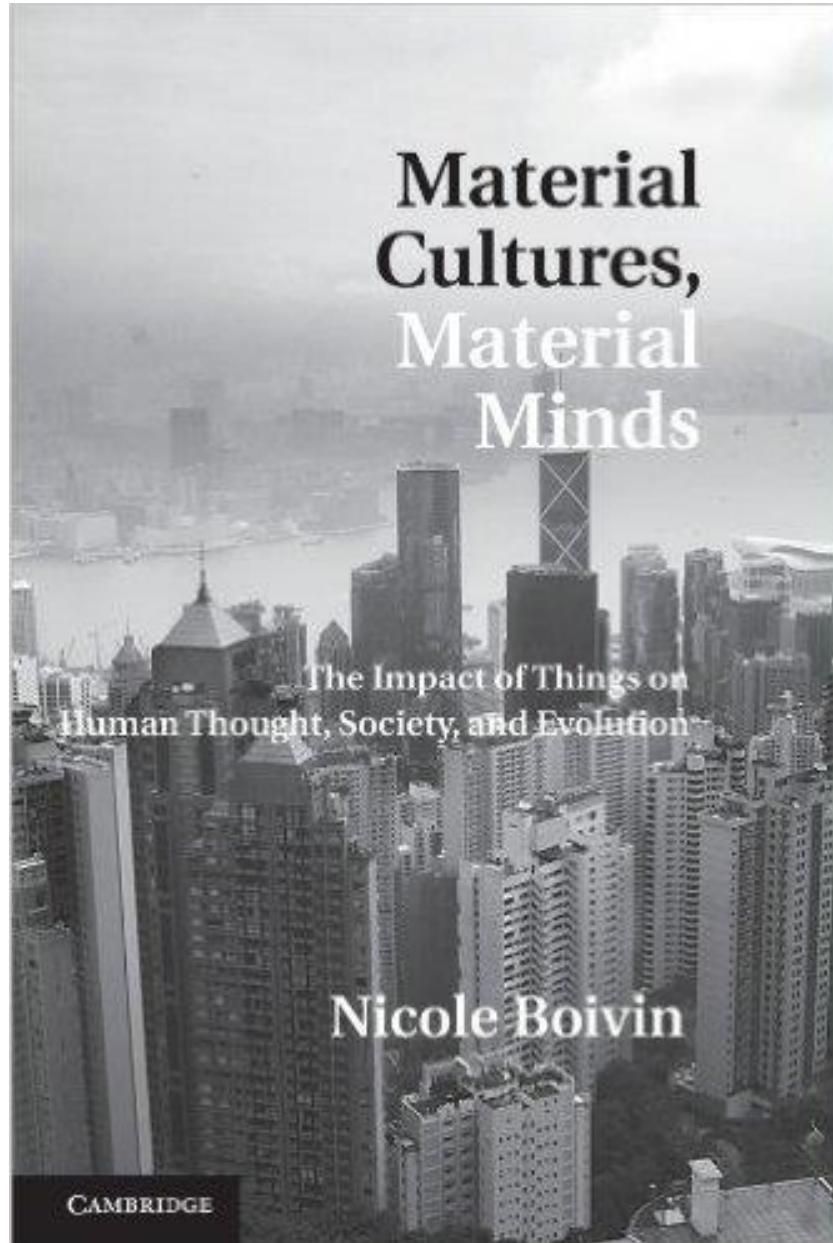


The problem and framework:

- ❑ Knappett 2014, 4000: “Materiality is so enmeshed in our everyday existence that it has a kind of impenetrability. We are in touch with it so intimately that it vanishes.”
- ❑ Miller 1987, 130: “deeply integrated place of the artifact in constituting culture and human relations has made discussion of it one of the most difficult of all areas to include in abstract academic discourse”

Chris Knappett (2014) on the phenomenon MATERIALITY

- Different from *artifacts*, *materials* or *material culture*?
 - More static/categorical definitions with materiality being more relational?
 - Artifacts – only things made by humans?
 - Material culture – includes the cultural component (but often polarised)
 - Materiality – does not make obvious human component – develop sociomateriality?
 - Material world(s) – advantage to be plural (ensemble quality of human-thing relations)
- No term delivers everything → with materiality the closest: conveys process – ongoing dynamic of human-artifactual relations
- We find both reluctance (Miller 2005) and the insistence (Ingold 2007) to define materiality



Many new theoretical approaches

- **The impact of things**
 - **On human thought and mind**
 - **Society**
 - Producing / creating society
 - Receiving / receptive society
 - **Evolution**
- Not easy to understand

Materiality of Egyptian Religion and Life

Material Egypt

To understand “Materialising Cult,” we need...

**AND THE
RESEARCHER’S
EYE**

THE OBJECT



Epigraphy in the chapels of the Divine Adoratrice in Medinet Habu



Work on titles on stela and scarabs in the British Museum

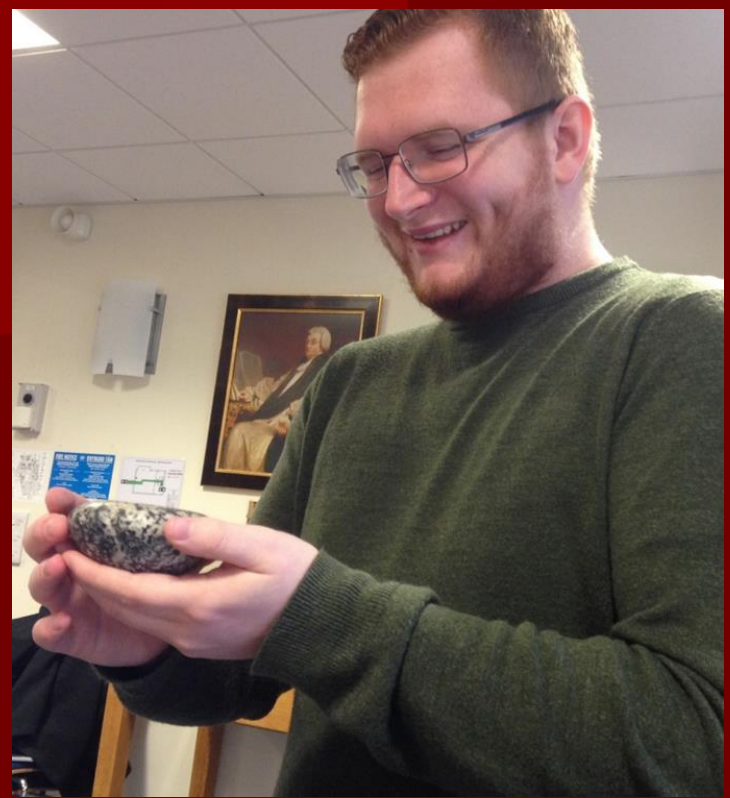


But also



My story

Materialities and senses



Reliefs from pyramid complex SI in Princeton Univ. Art Museum



PUAM 50-128.3



Reliefs from pyramid complex SI in Princeton Univ. Art Museum



Hawk Panels Light South





Materialising Cult: Materiality of Egyptian Religion

THE CASE STUDIES

To understand “Materialising Cult,” we need to ask and comprehend

- Where does it sit in the ancient Egyptian civilisation?
- - Making → Abstracting the worlds
 - Understanding
- Modelling the mind, what is the agency of matter
- The impact of things
 - On human thought and mind
 - Society
 - Producing / creating society
 - Receiving / receptive society
 - Evolution

Isis, Horus and Osiris - a Divine Family in Wales?

An ancient Egyptian Triad as materialisation of
Egyptian Religion?

OR

How to create an object biography of un-
provenanced Egyptian artefacts in Cyfarthfa
Castle Museum, Merthyr Tydfil

THE OBJECT: Triad

**CC 1697.004, 1699.004,
1705.004**

Osiris: h. 6.5cm, w. 2.4cm, th. 0.4cm;

Isis: h: 6.3cm, w. 1.45cm, th. 0.8cm;

Horus: h. 4.7cm, w. 1,3cm, th. 0.5cm



Osiris

Horus



Isis



No provenance,
nothing known
about these
objects

What to do
with this
divine
family?



How to create
the larger (social
and cultural)
narrative?

The Egyptological approach - contextualize

Triads:

Divine families!

=grouping gods by 3:
triad consists of a god,
his spouse and one
child

most popular: Osiris,
Isis and their son Horus

Theban triad: Amun-Re,
wife Mut, son Khonsu

Memphite triad: Ptah,
Sekhmet and Nefertem

Louvre E 6204 (H.: 9 cm, L.:
6,60 cm; gold, obsidian)



Durham: Oriental Museum
EG5214 (4.9 x 6.7 x 1.8 cm)



Louvre E 6204 (H.: 9 cm; L.: 6.6 cm)



The Egyptological approach

THE OBJECT: Triad

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Osiris

Horus



Isis

Museum of Art
and Archaeology,
Missouri 77.184



Lot 25A of LiveAuctions,
started 8:00 AM - Jun
13, 2014 – Artemis
Gallery: Egyptian
Bronze Osiris w/ Cat,
Isis on Reverse

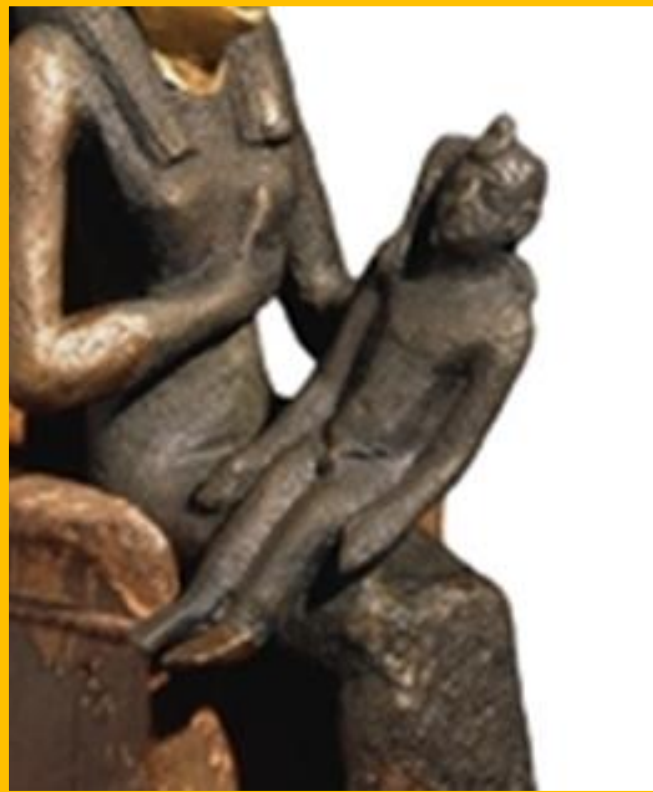


Museo
Archeologico
Nazionale,
Museo Egizio,
Florence 315,
H. 17.0cm



EA 67186

H.: 22.8cm L.:
14.800 cm (plinth)



Are they really representing this triad?



© Stephen Thomas

The Welsh heritage perspective

- **Cyfarthfa Castle
Museums and Art Gallery
Merthyr Tydfil**
- designed by Richard Lugar
for the Merthyr iron master
Richard Crawshay
- built between 1824 and
1825
- family seat up until the early
1900's



SOUTHEY COLLECTION.

THE CONTENTS OF THIS CASE WERE COLLECTED BY THE LATE

MAJOR HARRY HARTLEY SOUTHEY,

1/5TH BATT. WELCH REGT

A PORTION OF THE ARTICLES WAS BEQUEATHED BY HIM TO THE CORPORATION.

THE REMAINDER, INCLUDING THE WHOLE OF THE EGYPTIAN OBJECTS,

AND THIS CASE, WERE PRESENTED BY

H. W. SOUTHEY, ESQ., J. P., AND FAMILY.

*Geology.
Palaeolithic & Neolithic.
Cases.
Southey Collection.*



What do we know about what we know? The museum 'register' as museum object (Geoffrey N. Swinney, 2012)

COUNTY BOROUGH OF
PUBLIC MUSEUM AND
REGISTER OF

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Oil Paintings.
Oriental exhibits.
Water colour drawings
Greek & Roman exhibits
Drawings. Wash, pencil, sepia, wash, crayon.
Egyptian & Assyrian
Miscellaneous exhibits, including "Old Welsh"
Photographs
Medals, Coins, Notes.
Industrial Arts, Sculpture, Furniture, Woodcarving, Embroidery, Pottery
War Relics
Natural History
Geology.
Palaeolithic & Neolithic.
Bones
Society Collections

COUNTY BOROUGH OF
Public Museum
REGISTER

Egyptian & Assyrian

No. of Exhibit	Description	How Acquired
34-39	Mummy Band	Egyptian Presented M ^{rs} D. C. Allen
40	Fragment of inner cartonnage (large piece)	" "
41	Mummy wrapping, embroidered. 23 3/4" x 2"	" "
42	Osiris - bronze figure - on loan	" "
43	Earthenware bottle. (tear or perfume) 1 1/2" x 1 1/2"	" "
44	Scarf	Egyptian
45	Charm. Nubian head	" "
46	Fragment of inner cartonnage (small piece)	" "
47	Shank vase (2)	" J. H. James Esq. The College Vase
48	Plaster Earthenware vessel (2) 1 1/2" x 1 1/2" x 1 1/2" Paddynodier	" "
49	Carved Heads	" "

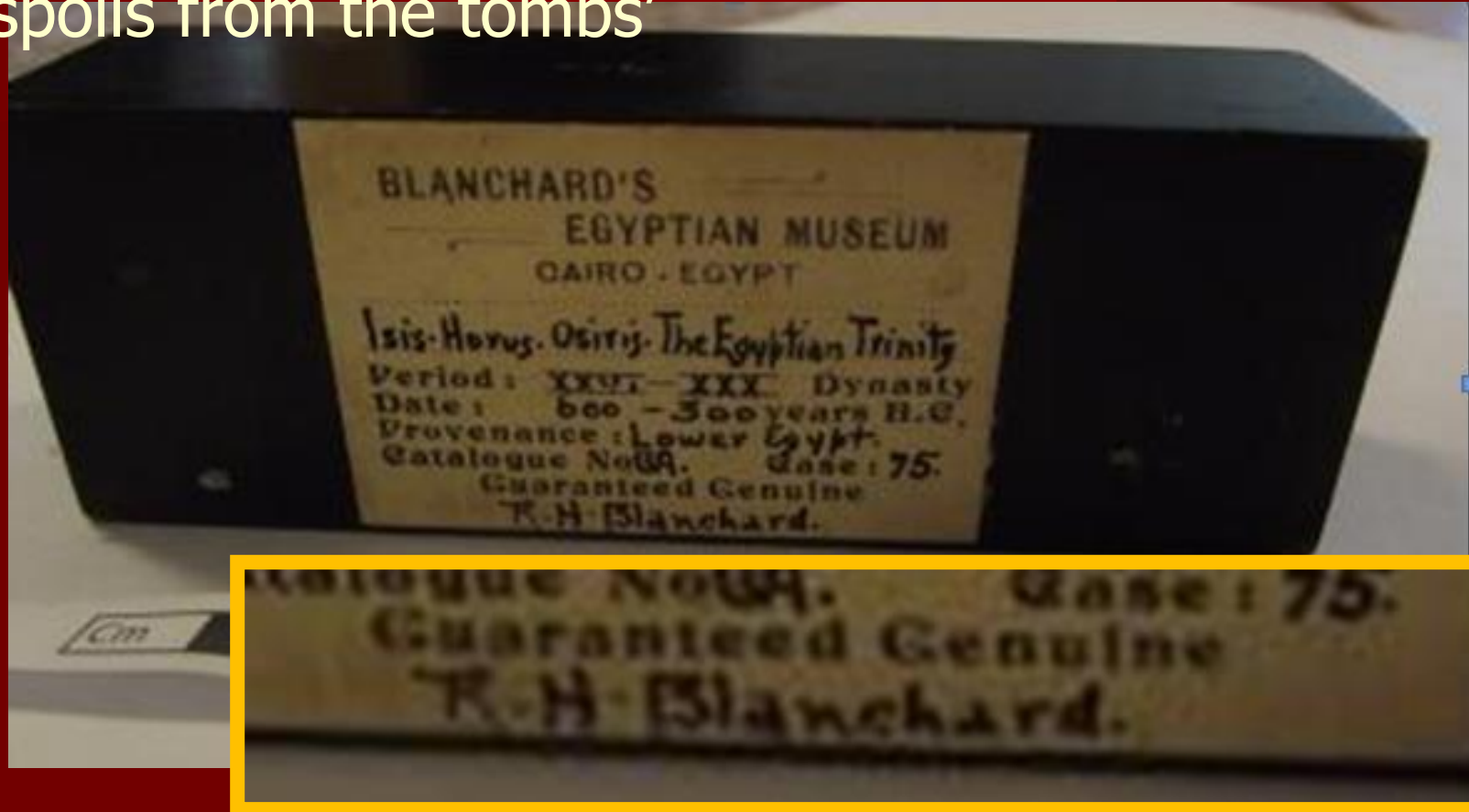
MERTHYR TYDFIL
and Art Gallery.
OF EXHIBITS.

143

Date	Cost if any £ s d	Condition	Insurance Value £ s d	Remarks
Aug. 1928		unfit for exhibition as badly deteriorated. Burned by order of Committee. June 1947.	- - -	h. S. Taylor
			1 - -	
			- - -	
		Born (2)	1 10 -	
			1 - -	
			- - -	
			- - -	
Feb 1929			6 - -	
			5 - -	

unfit for exhibition as badly deteriorated. Burned
by order of Committee. June 1947. h. S. Taylor.

Cairo: became friendly with a curator of an Egyptian museum who helped him to collect 'spoils from the tombs'



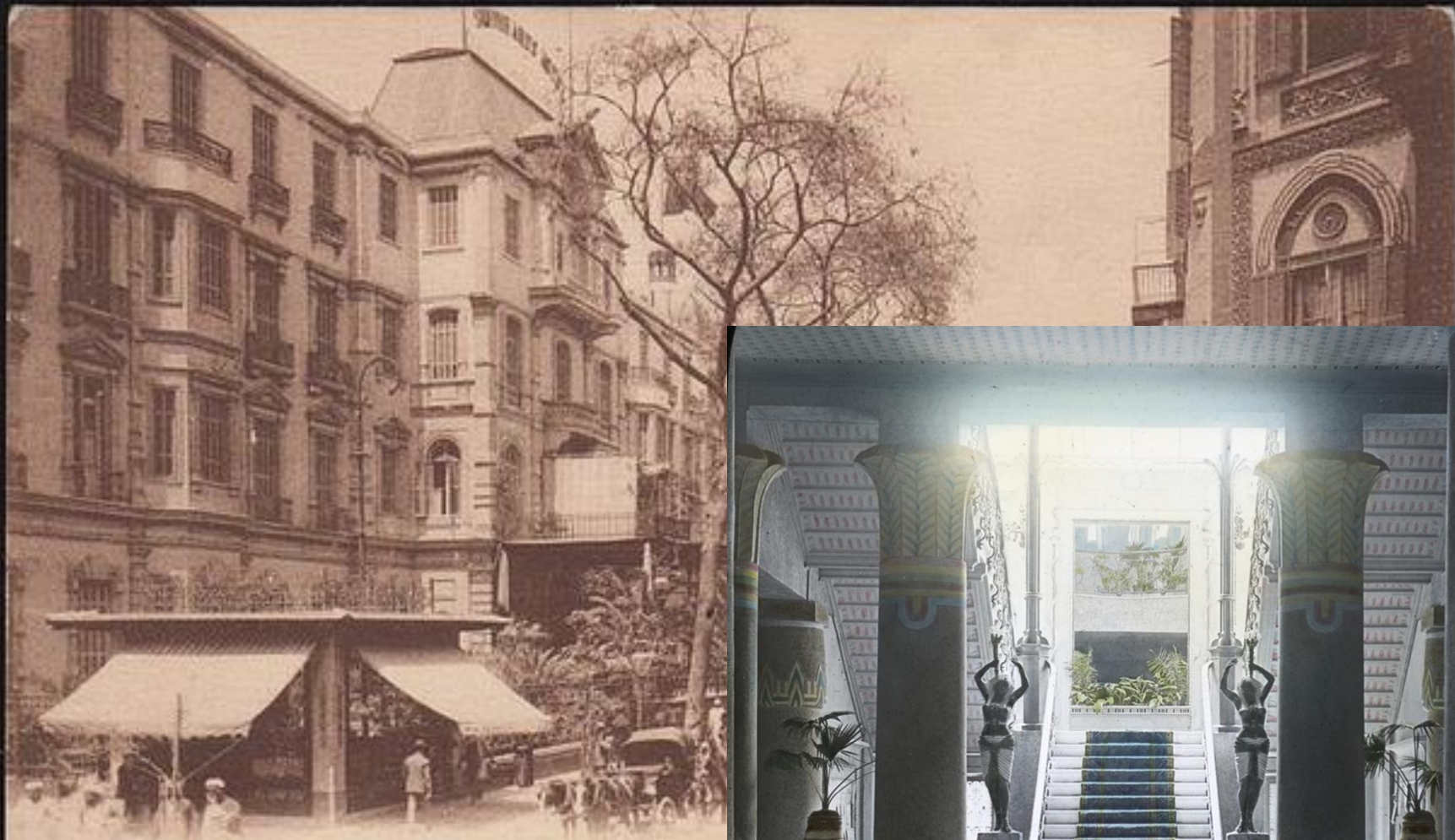
The theoretical approach:

What's Authenticity got to do with it?

R. H. Blanchard, Schâri Kâmil, Cairo

- American antiquities dealer with store in the famous Shepherd Hotel





146 CAIRO. — Chareh-el-Kamsi. — LL.



R. H. Blanchard, Schâri Kâmil, Cairo

- ❑ American antiquities dealer with store in the famous Shepherd Hotel
- ❑ Seen as reliable antiquities dealer
- ❑ Customers were:
 - Oslo Papyrus Collection (L. Amundsen acquired various collections during his stay in Egypt 1927-1929)
 - Pitt Rivers Museum (might be donation or buy)
 - Yale Peabody Museum of Natural History



Yale Peabody Museum ANT
264365
Scarab, 19th Dyn. 1200BC.
collector's board. "Blanchard's
Egyptian Museum Cairo, Egypt".
Ram headed sphinx guarded by the
winged Uraeus Serpent.

Are they really representing this
triad? – **NO!**



© Stephen Thomas

Conclusion drawn from the objects

- Single figurines are solitary votive figurines
- still representations of the materiality of ancient Egyptian religion
- As such they are materialising cult
- **BUT:**
- Egyptological value of figurines is not very high in the sense of being spectacular or even illustrative
 - votive offerings are common
 - particular figurines not of high quality



CREATE YOUR NARRATIVE – guided by your **particular** object

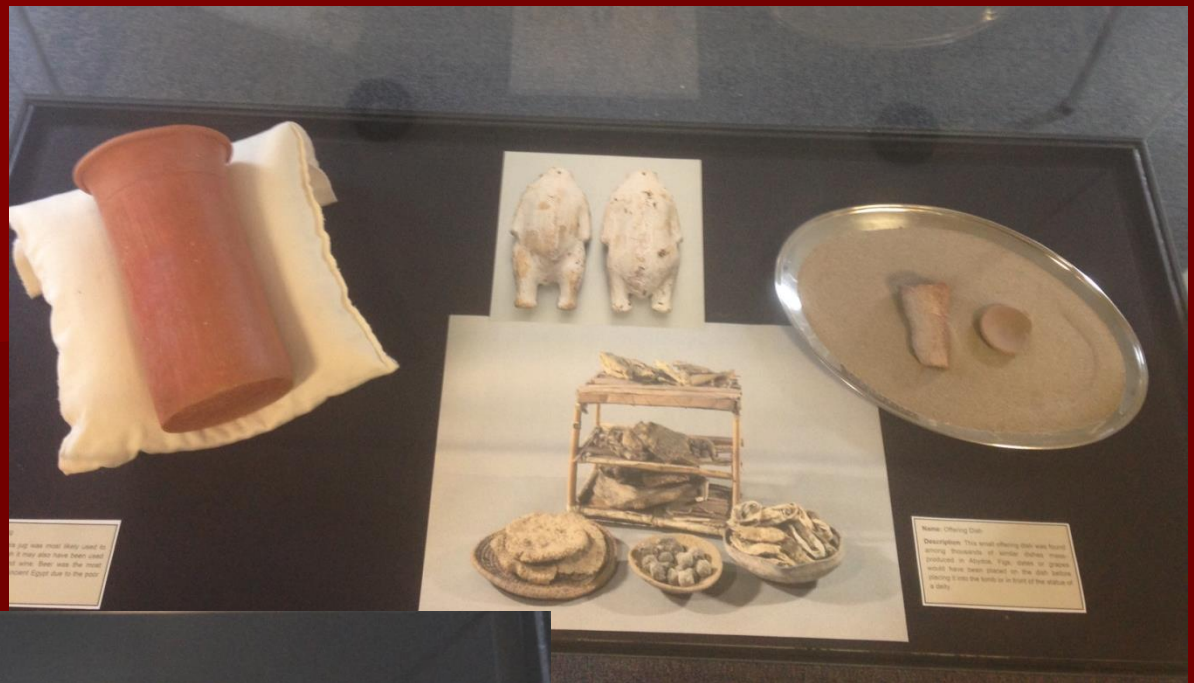
- **Material Culture Studies**
- **Heritage Studies** – Welsh heritage → identity
 - Tangible and intangible
- **(Secondary) Archaeology** – excavation in the museum's storage rooms
- Anthropological and archaeological **theory**
- **Egyptology** – searching for comparative objects
- **Museum Studies** – presenting of objects
- **Memory Studies** – the collector and antiquities dealer

Materialising Cult

The (Non-)Materiality of Ancient
Domestic Cult Practices:
Symbolic food consumption and
embodiment in ancient Egyptian funerary
cult

Offering Plate CC 308.004





Name: Jar
Description: This jar was used to hold water and was found among thousands of similar jars mass-produced in Abydos. Figs, dates or grapes would have been placed in the dish before placing it into the tomb or in front of the statue of a deity.

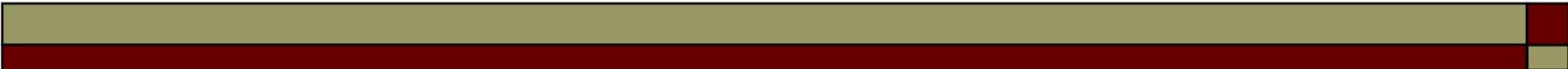
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Description: This small offering dish was found among thousands of similar dishes mass-produced in Abydos. Figs, dates or grapes would have been placed in the dish before placing it into the tomb or in front of the statue of a deity.



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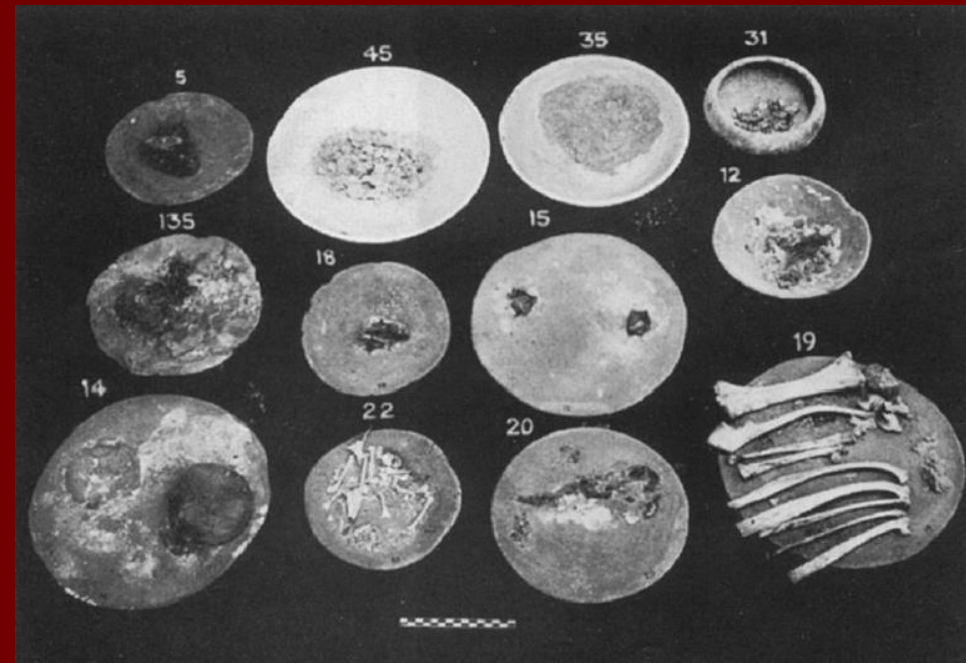
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Intro:

- ❑ funerary beliefs called for preservation of body and provisions for the afterlife (sustaining the spirit aspects of the person)
 - Nourishing with real food offerings (during burial)
 - Magical role of images and models
 - Offering cult
- ❑ = envisaged as continuation of existence before death → crossing boundaries
- ❑ provision for the life in the Next World: according the best as economic abilities would allow

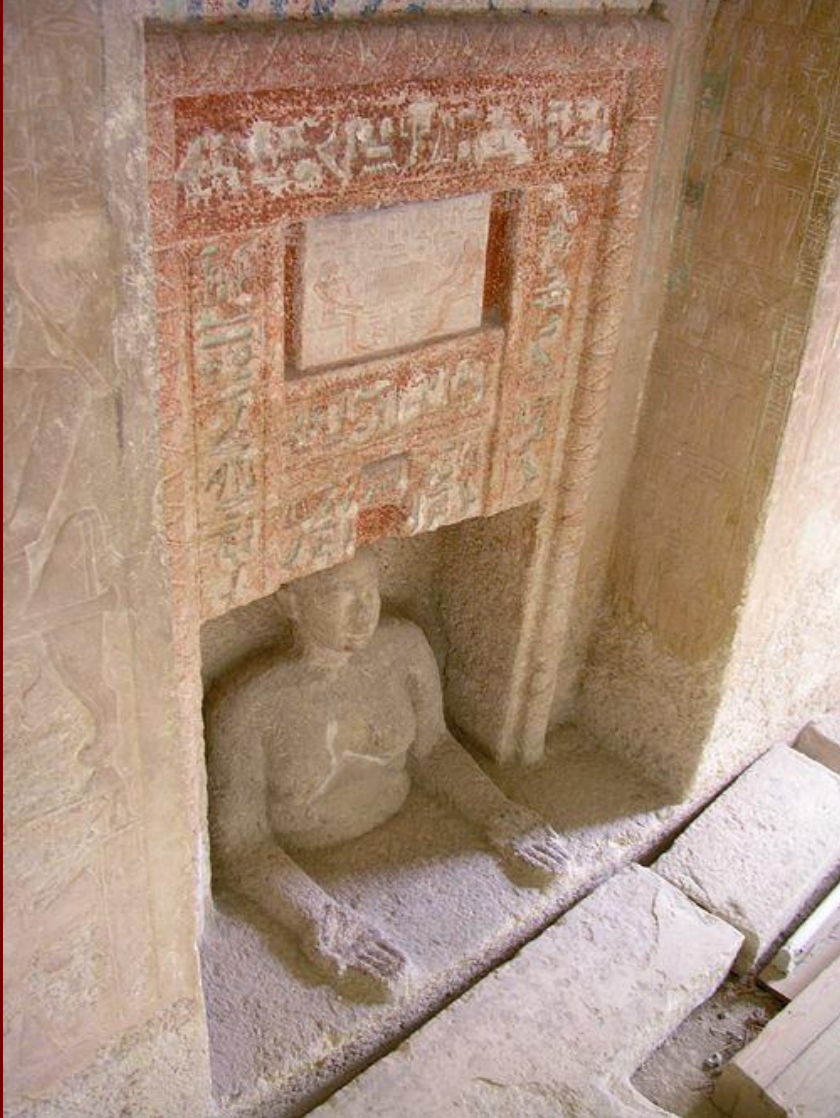
A Funerary Meal (festival meal) in an Egyptian Tomb → served on pottery



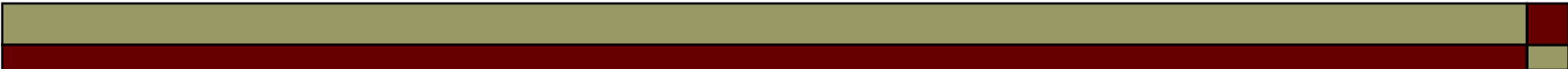
A Funerary Meal (festival meal) in an Egyptian Tomb → served on pottery

- ❑ triangular loaf of bread - made from emmer wheat, small circular cakes
- ❑ form of porridge - made from ground barley
- ❑ cooked fish - cleaned and dressed with the head removed
- ❑ pigeon stew, a cooked quail (cleaned and dressed with the head tucked under one wing)
- ❑ two cooked kidneys, ribs and legs of beef , stew? (containing ribs of beef)
- ❑ stewed fruit probably fig
- ❑ fresh nabk berries
- ❑ small jars containing some form of cheese
- ❑ grape wine in a large jar

G7102: Idu



- Consumption
- AND
- Symbolic consumption as embodied magical consumption



Supplies

- Food provided
 - Real food (offerings)
 - depicted on the walls (magically transformed to supply if expected regular offerings would cease): items which the tomb owner would have eaten in his lifetime and hoped to eat in the after-life
- representations of food, along with the accompanying prayers were thought to supply the tomb owner once the actual food offerings stopped

Magical role of images and models – Symbolic consumption



Magic

- ❑ Magic was inherent to overall Egyptian thinking and a regular part of religion at all levels of Egyptian society
- ❑ Magic played the primary role in countering ANY kind of threats from outside; various evil spirits needed to be warned off, and deities invoked to protect the vulnerable
- ❑ Magic enabled an eternal steady supply of food for the afterlife
- ❑ Described by the term *heka*

Models of offerings (from a 6th dyn. mastaba in Giza)

Meat (MMA 64.66.6)



Beer (MMA 64.66.4b)



Model of Brewers, Bakers, and Butchers (MK, MMA 11.150.12)



- Right: butchers preparing meat
- Left: making bread and beer

- composite model symbolically provides everything a tomb owner needed to eat and drink

Book of the Dead of Ankh-Hapi, son of Pa-Khered-en-Min and Ta-di-Aset (Egypt Centre Swansea W867)

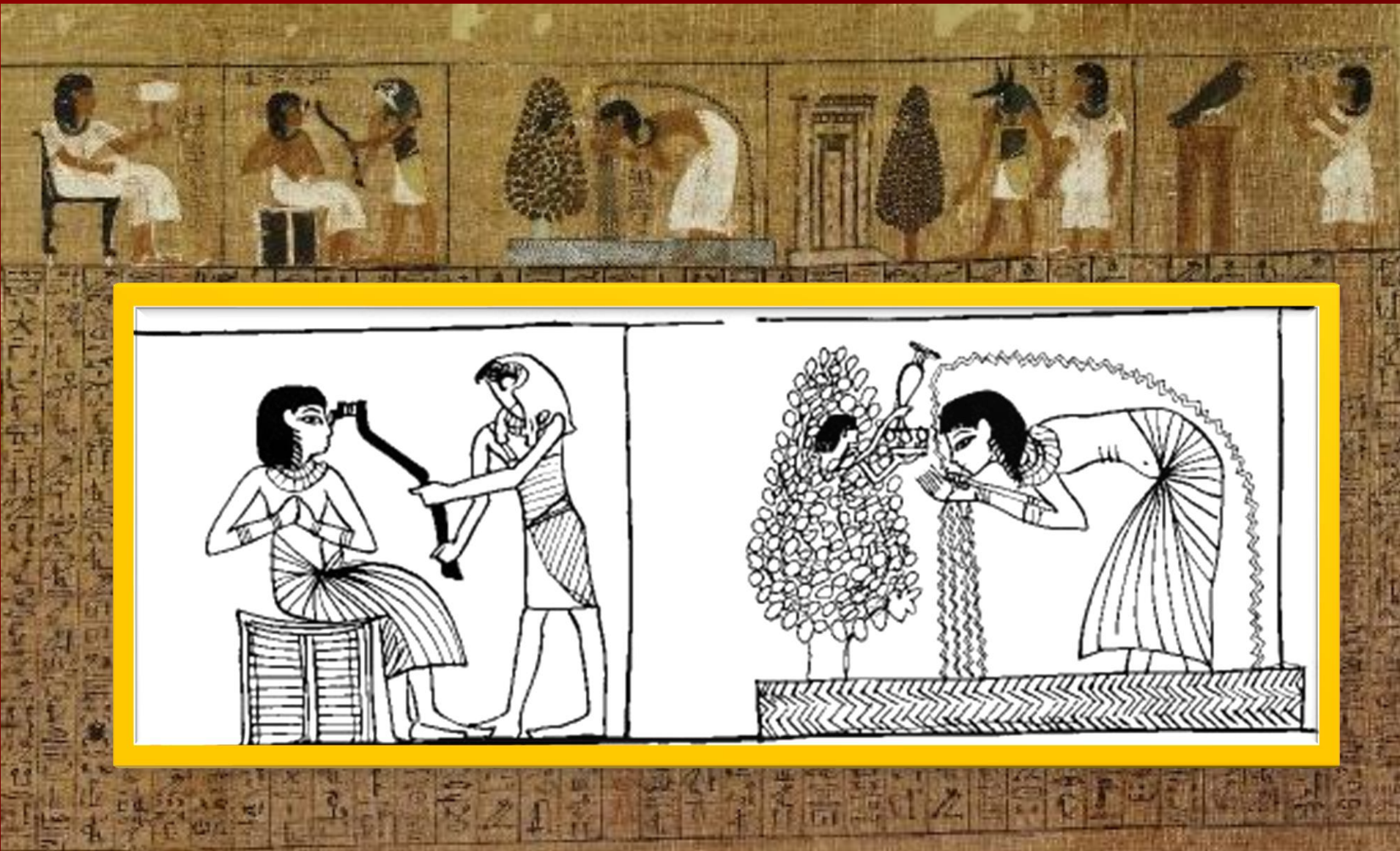


Funerary texts as description of sensory embodiments

□ *BoD, chapter 1, 7:*

- *You tested me by many mouths. (My) soul has been confronted by (my) heart, which has been found that my speech on earth was sound. Behold, I am in the presence, lord [= god Osiris]. **I smell the food of the Ennead**; I sit with them. The ritual priest invokes for me the coffin; I hear the offering list.*

BM EA10471,8 (BoD, Nakht)



**False Door of Mehu at
Saqqara, 6th Dynasty**



**Rare Wooden False Door
of Ika, 5th Dynasty**



Offering Formula



An offering given by the king (to) Osiris, the lord of Busiris, the great god, the lord of Abydos." "That he may give a voice-offering of bread, beer, oxen, birds, alabaster, clothing, and every good and pure thing upon which a god lives." "For the ka of the revered Senwosret, True of Voice."

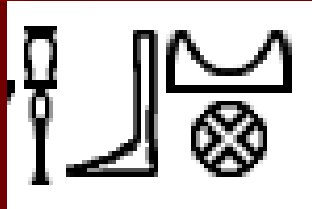
With this knowledge – how to place Offering Plate CC 308.004?

- How might it have been used?
- Where could it have come from?
- Would funerary consumption be the only appropriate setting?



Abydos

(3500 BC – 500AD) –

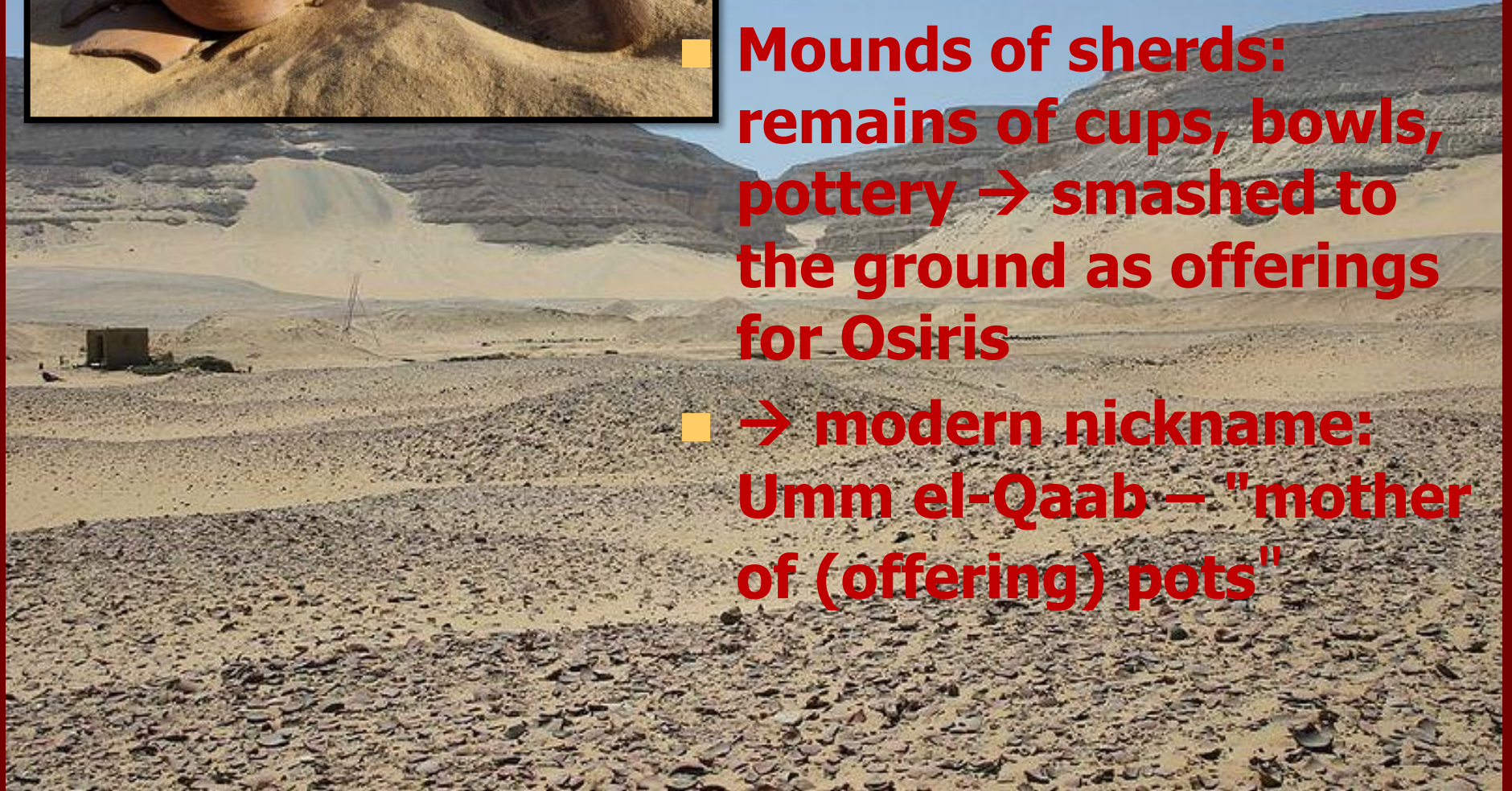


Terrace of the Great God in Abydos – processional route





- **Abydos = important pilgrimage center**
- **Mounds of sherds: remains of cups, bowls, pottery → smashed to the ground as offerings for Osiris**
- **→ modern nickname: Umm el-Qaab – "mother of (offering) pots"**



Temple / chapel setting

Funerary setting (tomb)



***I smell the
food of the
Ennead; I sit
with them.***

