



Prifysgol Cymru
Y Drindod Dewi Sant
University of Wales
Trinity Saint David



Catalogue for the Special Exhibition

‘The Materiality of the Ancient Egyptian Afterlife’

University of Wales Trinity Saint David

Lampeter Campus

Roderic Bowen Library and Archives

01 June 2017 –09 June 2017

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

Curator: Katharina Zinn

All catalogue object images © Stephen Thomas, Katharina Zinn

With contributions by

Olivia Berry – Alice Bradley – Jack Elliott – Stephanie Giles
Debbie Louise May – Bethan Phillips – Luke Skinner



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ANCIENT EGYPT COMES TO LAMPETER

EXHIBITION OF
ARTEFACTS FROM CYFARTHFA CASTLE
MUSEUM, MERTHYR TYDFIL

THE MATERIALITY OF THE ANCIENT EGYPTIAN AFTERLIFE

ENTRY FREE

WHERE

Roderic Bowen Library and Archives,
University of Wales Trinity Saint David

WHEN

1st—9th June 2017
Open Mon-Fri 10am - 4pm



Prifysgol Cymru
Y Drindod Dewi Sant
University of Wales
Trinity Saint David



EVENTS:

THU 1ST JUNE 2017 @ 3PM
PUBLIC OPENING -

ALL WELCOME

MON 5TH JUNE 2017 (2-4PM)
WORKSHOP FOR HOME
-SCHOOLED CHILDREN
(AGE 10-16) – RSVL

K.ZINN@UWTS.D.AC.UK

WED 7TH JUNE 2017
WORKSHOP WITH BRO
PEDR, LAMPETER

THU 8TH JUNE 2017 @ 4PM
PUBLIC TALK: THE AD-
VENTURE OF THE EGYP-
TIAN TOMB? DR
KATHARINA ZINN -
ALL WELCOME



Preface

This exhibition is the fifth in line of the collaborative project between the University of Wales Trinity Saint David and Cyfarthfa Castle Museums and Art Gallery, Merthyr Tydfil.

In summer 2011, I was made aware of the Egyptian cases in Cyfarthfa Castle and got in contact with the museum. Being invited to have a look on the objects in storage, I was amazed by the small but excellent collection. Most of the Egyptian objects were given to the museum by the family of the late Major Harry Hartley Southey who was able to bring together a very interesting collection of ancient Egyptian objects (among Roman, Grecian, and Asian Objects as well as high quality 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.

Due to the existing Memorandum of Cooperation between our two institutions, some objects can come on loan to UWTSD every academic year. Centring on the topic of *burial* and *death*, these artefacts form the basis of module assessments of third year undergraduate students, who were introduced to primary research of these otherwise unexplored and unpublished collection. This is a very rare and exciting occasion for the students. Before we started with the module, I asked the students to craft what they would like to take with them into the afterlife using clay. The outcome of this workshop is showcased as well.

The exhibition and the accompanying events will happen outside this compulsory module. Therefore, I have to thank my **student volunteers** who put so much of their effort and spare time into the preparation of this exhibition and

the accompanying workshop with pupils of Ysgol Bro Pedr, Lampeter. Without you we would not be able to see and understand these wonderful and “weird” objects.

Thank you very much for the “science” support given by Dr Ros Coard, Dr Martin Bates and one microscope. Now we know the structure of the linen on the headrest and that the scarab is even more precious as it was carved from bone (maybe even ivory???).



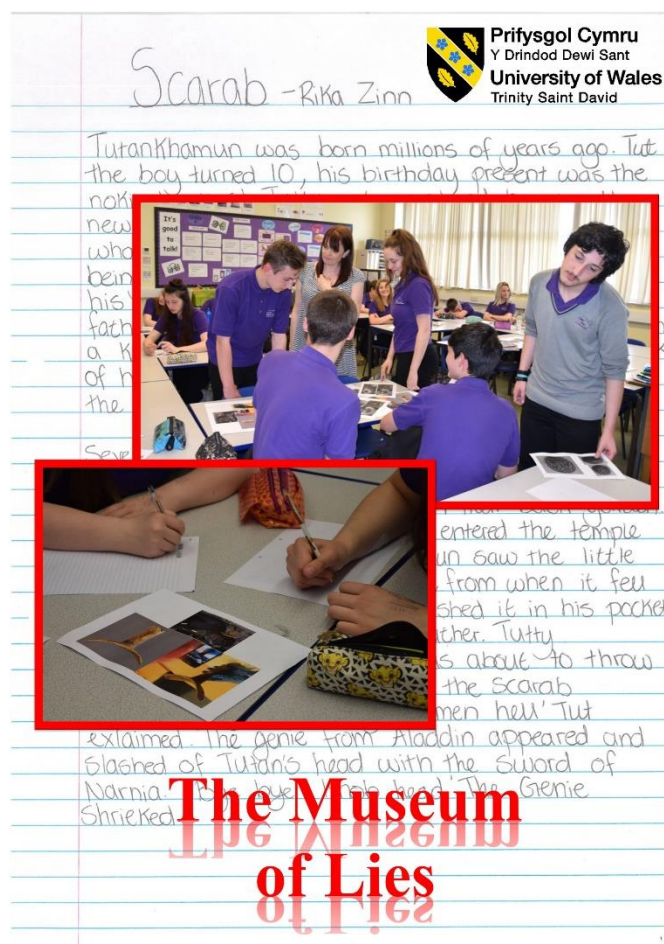
Many thanks as well goes to our story-tellers from **Year 10 English** from **Ysgol Bro Pedr** (with the helping hand of their teacher **Ms Phillips**) who wrote the phenomenal and funny short stories forming the sub-project *The Museum of Lies* which collects fictional, imaginative and deliberately mad stories inspired by the Egyptological items in Cyfarthfa Castle Museum. They created with much fun, enthusiasm, amazement (and shaking of the head about the mad Egyptologist in front of them) incredibly crazy, funny and peculiar stories. If you not yet have read them, get one of the booklets *Museum of Lies*.

I am very grateful to **Sarah Roberts** and **Mark Watkins**, Roderic Bowen Library and Archives, who gave our objects and the exhibition a home in Lampeter and put up with our very lively discussions around the objects and the exhibition.

Last, but definitely not least, special thanks go to **Stephen Thomas**, who professionally photographed the objects and **Adolfo Miguel Martins** who sacrificed a night's sleep when I lost the battle with Adobe Photoshop while coming to my rescue.

Katharina Zinn

Katharina Zinn



Lampeter, 01/06/2017



Headrest

Cyfarthfa Castle, Merthyr Tydfil 189.996

Object type: scarab (medium sized)

Material: wood (Sycomore Fig – *Ficus Sycomorus?*), traces of line

Period: Old Kingdom (5th Dynasty?) or Middle Kingdom

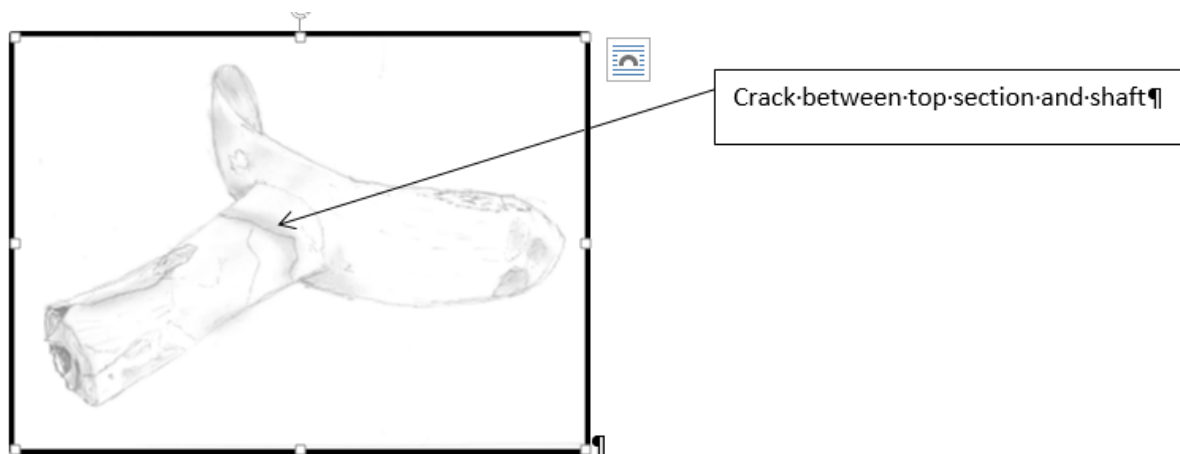
Provenance: Egypt

Dimensions: **Height:** 17cm / **Shaft:** 11cm / **Arc of headrest:** 20cm / **Width of Arc:** 6.6cm / **Width of shaft at bottom** 4.2cm / **Hole in base:** 1.5cm / **Length inside the hole:** 5cm

Object analysis by **Bethan Phillips and Olivia Berry**, sketch by **Leon Collie**

When analysing ancient Egyptian headrests, it is a “necessity to combine daily life with the all-important afterlife” (Summers 2009: 229).

The headrest is made of a wood, light brown in colour, the object is comprised of a crescent shaped arc at the top and a shaft, which together at full length is 11.4 cm. The arc is 18.9 cm in length straight across, and full length is 20 cm, including the curve. The width at the centre of the arc is 6.6 cm, and curves at the edges of the arc. Along the top, the inside of the bend, the wood is delicate and some small cracks can be seen, additionally, there are small, lighter dots of linen, which would have been tightly wrapped around the headrest. Attached to the centre of the bottom of the arc is a cylindrical shaft, which acted as the support, 11 cm in length, its width is 3.4 cm at the centre, growing wider at either end; 4.8 cm at join and 4.4 cm at the end of the shaft. On one side of the shaft is a lighter patch of another type of material which is a small amount of linen that has survived. There is a thin crack running all around the join between the arc and support. There are small marks and splits in the wood along the shaft, on the opposite side to the linen fragment, a crack runs from the bottom approximately half way up, next to this crack is a small hole. At the bottom of the shaft is a hole, 1.4 cm in diameter, which runs through the support. The edges of this hole are jagged, clearly from a break of some kind, which is where the support would have attached to the base.



The purpose of the headrest was to take the weight of the head, the arc being placed above the ear, which is why the arc becomes thinner at the edges, so as to not touch the ear¹. As with most headrests, the arc and supporting shaft have survived, however with the 189.996 headrest the base is missing which would have held the headrest upright. Some headrests e had intricate detail on the base, shaft and underside of the arc². The Cyfarthfa Castle Headrest seemed to have been unmarked. Some of the earliest versions of the headrest are simple, unadorned, with one column³, which shows that this headrest is likely to have come from the Old Kingdom. The headrest (right) from the Petrie Museum Catalogue UC8593⁴, is from the 3rd Dynasty, the object is made of two pieces of wood, the shaft and base and the arc. From this we can see that 189.996 could also have been made of two pieces of wood attached; the arc and shaft in one piece, while the base was attached. However from this



¹ Petrie, 1927, p. 33

² Szpakowska, 2008, p. 164

³ Petrie, 1927, p. 33

⁴ <http://petriecat.museums.ucl.ac.uk/detail.aspx?parentpreref=>

object it is clear how the Cyfarthfa Castle headrest could have been made, from one larger, and one smaller piece of wood attached to one another. Also UC8593 is unadorned, though the wood type is different, the style is clearly similar.

Within the funerary sphere the headrest was thought to ensure resurrection. It the headrest acted as the horizon with interpreting the head as the sun on it⁵. When rising, the dead was resurrected and reborn like the sun at sunrise: “...the headrest made the head rise from the “depths” of the netherworld and caused the deceased to reach heaven.”⁶ Additionally, the headrest was sometimes found above or beside the head, as a protector against decapitation⁷, one of the ways the deceased could suffer their final death. This was often transformed into an amulet version of the headrest, which would be placed on the body or coffin. The amulets could have inscriptions from the Book of the Dead and Coffin texts, symbolising the protection the headrest was thought to bring. Spell 934 of the Coffin Texts refers directly to the use of the headrest in the afterlife:

“O Osiris, this N, your head is supported so that you may live, your ba may live, and you may be a god (wsir N pn Ts n.k tp.k anx.k anx bA.k wnn.k m nTr)”⁸



Most households had headrests, and would take them into the tomb after death⁹, though not the lower class. After being used in life the object would continue its use in the next life, the idea was to protect the dead from unwanted attacks from those who dwelt in the Duat, the realm beneath the living where the afterlife existed, and the home of demons. The headrest was often decorated with spells of protection for the user, some would have figures and spells to protect the owner, which were also found in the Coffin Texts and some texts from the Book of Two ways¹⁰ and later found in the

Book of the Dead¹¹. This was connected with the idea that in life the headrest would protect the owner during sleep as well as death.

The headrest was important during life as well as death, used to “support the head during rest, sleep and death”¹². It was utilised in life as a pillow, the head would be placed on the arc, as the shaft raises the head off the ground. Due to the hot climate of Egypt, a pillow would have been uncomfortable and could lead to overheating. By raising the head above the

⁵ Summers, 2016, p.232

⁶ Hellinckx, 2001, p. 95

⁷ Summers, 2016, p. 231

⁸ Harrington, 2013, p. 55

⁹ Summers, 2016, p. 230

¹⁰ Szpakowska, 2008, p. 164

¹¹ Taylor, 2011, p. 60

¹² Summers, 2016, p. 229

ground air could circulate under the head and neck for much more comfortable sleep¹³. The headrest was also important to keep away unwanted pests during sleep, keeping the head out of reach of spiders, scorpions and other bugs¹⁴.

Often, headrests were carved and decorated with spells and the name of the owner, used as a prayer for a good night's sleep¹⁵. Sleep was thought as a state similar to death: the sleeper was vulnerable to attack by supernatural forces¹⁶. The carvings protected the sleeper from demons from invading dreams. That might be the reason why the Egyptian word for headrest (wrs) is closely related to the word for dream (rs)¹⁷. It was believed that people were less protected in sleep and therefore needed added protection.

The object would have been owned by a person from the lower elite of Egypt. All tomb objects highlight status, as those in the lower classes could not have afforded a tomb. However higher elites had much more durable headrests, often being made of stone and sometimes ivory, rather than the low quality wood as in this case. The wood was locally sourced, despite the scarcity of wood in ancient Egypt. However, no analysis has been made on the object. Acacia was most commonly used for most items of furniture and boatbuilding,¹⁸ followed by Tamarisk, which was not used as much due to knots the timber possessed. Sycamore was also a common choice, found more often during the New Kingdom¹⁹. Throughout the dynastic period headrests were made from different types of wood, but "very little information is known in regards to the types of timber used to make the headrests".²⁰

This headrest is lightweight. From the cracks and holes it is clear that the wood was of low quality. Additionally the Sycomore Fig branches are large and come straight from the trunk, which would fit with how the headrest seems to have been made. The headrest looks as if it were made from one large piece of wood with a long piece coming out, as the base was most likely made of the same piece of wood as the shaft, then the arc was attached to the shaft. Egyptian woodworkers were very talented and would use specialised techniques to use the lower grade different sized pieces as components of items²¹. The headrest is made from two distinct parts, the arc and the supporting shaft, these would have been attached to a base, at the bottom of the shaft.

It is thought that the Headrests were first used in the funerary sphere before the Old Kingdom²². This headrest could be dated to the Old Kingdom, possibly the 5th dynasty, when compared to similar headrests of the same period, as with the headrest (pictured to right) from the Petrie Museum Catalogue, UC8592²³.



¹³ Quirke & Spencer, 1992, p. 185

¹⁴ Szpakowska, 2008, p. 164

¹⁵ Quirke & Spencer, 1992, p. 185

¹⁶ Taylor, 2011, p. 39

¹⁷ Summers, 2016, p. 230

¹⁸ Killen 1994, p. 7

¹⁹ Nicholson and Shaw 2009: 340

²⁰ Giachi et al. 2016, p. 340

²¹ Gale, et al. 2000, p. 334

²² Quirke & Spencer, 1992, p. 103

²³ <http://petriecat.museums.ucl.ac.uk/detail.aspx?parentpreref=#>

This headrest was made of one piece of wood, similar to CCM 189.996, although this is smaller, only 14.6 cm in height, the similarities are clear. Much like the Cyfarthfa Castle headrest, the shaft curves out, toward the arc and base. Unlike many headrests there is no evidence of markings on each of the headrests, either of figures or spells, unadorned versions were common in the Middle Kingdom. The more simplistic, undecorated, columnar style Headrests, as with this one, are a much earlier version, and were often made of Sycomore Fig wood²⁴.



Headrest 189.996 showing traces of linen, after O Berry 2017.

The wood of the headrest is of poor quality, but as it would have been wrapped in linen it proves to a certain extent that the individual possessed some level of status. It is an elaborate process turning flax to linen and took a substantial amount of time to develop.²⁵ Egyptians worked with linen as early as the Predynastic period²⁶, their methods of producing it by the Old Kingdom would have been much improved. As the majority of textiles in ancient Egypt were linen produced from the flax plant, there is a high possibility of the linen from the headrest having originated from flax. Succeeding this, the linen fragments on the headrest show that the fabric was not only thick and of good quality, but also tightly woven, illustrated in the fig. at

the left. Although there is only a small amount of linen that has survived, it can be seen that the linen was of a tight weave, so the item would have been of higher quality, which explains why the owner may have wanted it in their tomb.

Even the object was of lower quality, the linen wrappings for comfort suggest that the headrest was used in life. Deposition in a tomb would have shown that the object was likely important to the owner.

²⁴ Summers, 2016, p. 230

²⁵ Vogelsang-Eastwood in Nicholson and Shaw 2009: 270

²⁶ (Vogelsang-Eastwood, 2000)



Figure 1 = Top and Underside of the Cyfarthfa Castle Scarab. Photo: by author

Scarab with the cartouche of Nebmaatra (Amenhotep III)

Cyfarthfa Castle, Merthyr Tydfil 1717.004

Object type: scarab (medium sized)

Material: animal bone

Period: New Kingdom, 18th Dynasty – Late Period, 26th Dynasty

Provenance: unknown (Egypt or East Mediterranean)

Dimensions: Length 2cm / Width 1.6cm / Height 1cm

Object analysis by **Stephanie Giles**

It is evident from the numerous excavations in Egypt - which have provided an abundance of amuletic scarabs and objects with scarab designs - that the religious and symbolic significance of the scarab beetle (dung beetle) was embedded deeply into Ancient Egyptian ideology, culture and iconography (Wilkinson, 2008, pp.7-23). The actions of the scarab beetle rolling a dung ball across the ground was perceived by the Egyptians as the sun being pushed through the sky which the Egyptians associated with the morning sun god Khepri. The burial of the dung ball, subsequent birth of young from the earth and the flight of the scarab beetle was perceived as a symbol of rebirth, resurrection and the afterlife (Ward, 1994, pp.187-188; Andrews, 1994, pp.50-51).

It has also been suggested that mummification and funerary architecture may have begun from the actions of scarabs. The wings and legs of a scarab pupa are enclosed and appear 'mummy-like'. The layout of the tombs in the Old Kingdom are reminiscent of the structure of the passages and shafts to the scarab beetle's underground chamber, made to hold the buried dung ball of eggs (Andrews, 1994, p.51).

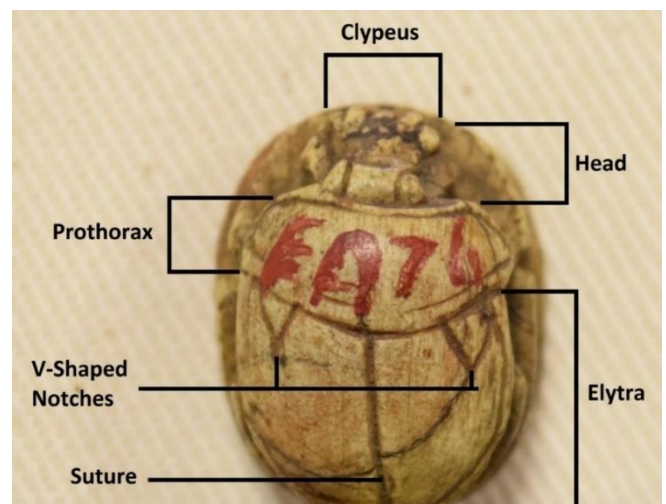
Cyfarthfa Castle Scarab

The Cyfarthfa Castle scarab is small, brown, highly decorative, oval in shape, carved from animal bone and shaped as a scarab beetle (Figure 1). It is possible that this scarab originates from Ancient Egypt, however the location and date of discovery is unknown. This lack of provenance is an issue when attempting to determine the date and country of origin. The scarab is excellently preserved which could suggest it was burial goods in a tomb (Bard, 1999, p.386).

The ridged clypeus is well defined and is prominent within a deeply carved indent from which the neck or cervix of the scarab emerges (Figure 2). Large grooves either side of the head separate the head and prothorax; upon which 'FA76' is handwritten in red. This does not relate to the catalogue entry number. A carved horizontal striation separates the prothorax from the elytra. A vertical suture line is carved from the centre of this striation to the scarab's tail. There are two V-shaped notches on the elytra dropping down from the striation on either side of the suture line. These V-shaped features first appear in the Second Intermediate Period but were more commonly appear in scarabs of the New Kingdom (Wilkinson, 2008, p.18). Therefore, it is possible to conclude that the Cyfarthfa Castle scarab does not predate the Second Intermediate Period. There are other striations on the elytra: one moving diagonally and irregularly downwards from the tip of the right hand V-shaped notch to two thirds of the way down the suture line; another emerging from just below this point and moving around the left hand side of the base of the scarab. These appear to be natural cracks within the bone.

*Figure 2 = Terminology of the Cyfarthfa Castle Scarab.
Photo: by author. Information: Teeter, 2003, p.383*

A small hole running internally from the clypeus to the tail of the scarab is wide enough to hold a chain or hoop (Figure 3). This could suggest that this scarab was used as a jewellery piece (Andrews, 1994, p.52).



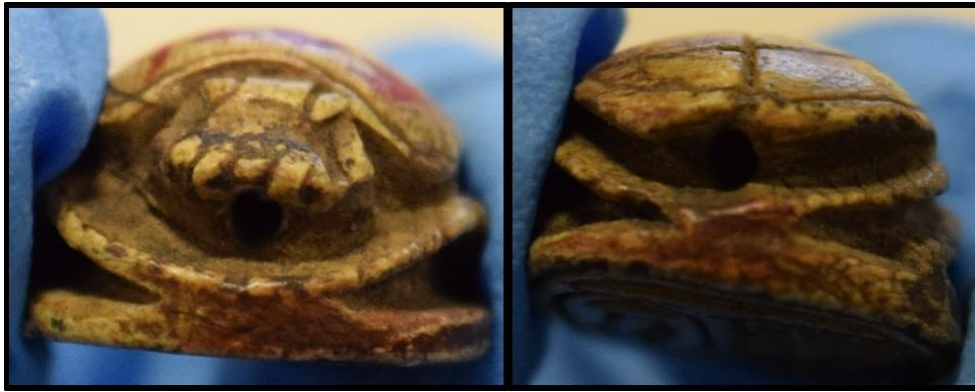


Figure 3 = Holes at the front and tail of the Cyfarthfa Castle Scarab. Photo: by author

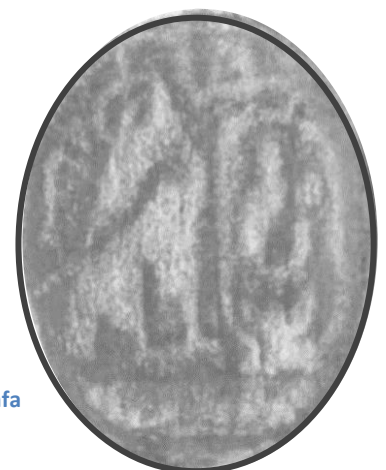
Deep grooves are cut into the sides of the scarab to represent legs (Figure 4). Scorings on the legs imitate hair. This scoring technique, called 'feathering', characteristically appears from the 18th Dynasty onwards (Andrews, 1994, p.52; Brovarski, 1997, p.195). The scarab's legs are pulled into the body. This feature and the finely modelled decoration implies that the origin of the Cyfarthfa Castle scarab is of the late First Intermediate Period onwards (Wilkinson, 2008, pp.16-17).



Figure 4 = Sides of the Cyfarthfa Castle Scarab. Photo: by author

The scarab is standing on a plinth engraved with the hieroglyphs of Amenhotep III (Figures 5 and 6). The hieroglyphs carved into the cartouche on the right-hand underside read 'Neb-Maat-Ra/Re' - the prenomen of Amenhotep III (Liverpool Museum, 2017; Collier & Manley, 2007, p.29). Scarab amulets with the engraving of Amenhotep III have been discovered in Sellopoulo, Crete, and in Tel Beth-Shemesh, Israel (Brandl, et al., 2013, pp.67-68). It is problematic to determine the precise provenance and the year of manufacture of this scarab, but it can be located to the Mediterranean (Wilkinson, 2008, p.46). The engraving of a falcon on the left-hand underside of the scarab is the symbolic representation of the deity Horus - one of the more popular Egyptian deities found on scarabs (Manley, 2013, pp.142-147; Wilkinson, 2008, p.31). Osiris' Flail can be seen emerging from behind the falcon and is often associated with the shepherd's crook (Newberry, 1929, pp.86-87). Above the cartouche and falcon appears to be the hieroglyph of the Red Crown, a symbol of Lower Egypt, associated with ruling the north (Durham University, 2015; National Gallery of Art, 2009, p.7). Below the cartouche and falcon is the

Figure 5 = Rubbing of the Cyfarthfa Castle Scarab Hieroglyphs.
By: Katharina Zinn, 2017



hieroglyph of a basket which translates as 'Lord' (Collier & Manley, 2007, p.29). These hieroglyphs combined could read as 'Lord Horus, ruler of the north'.

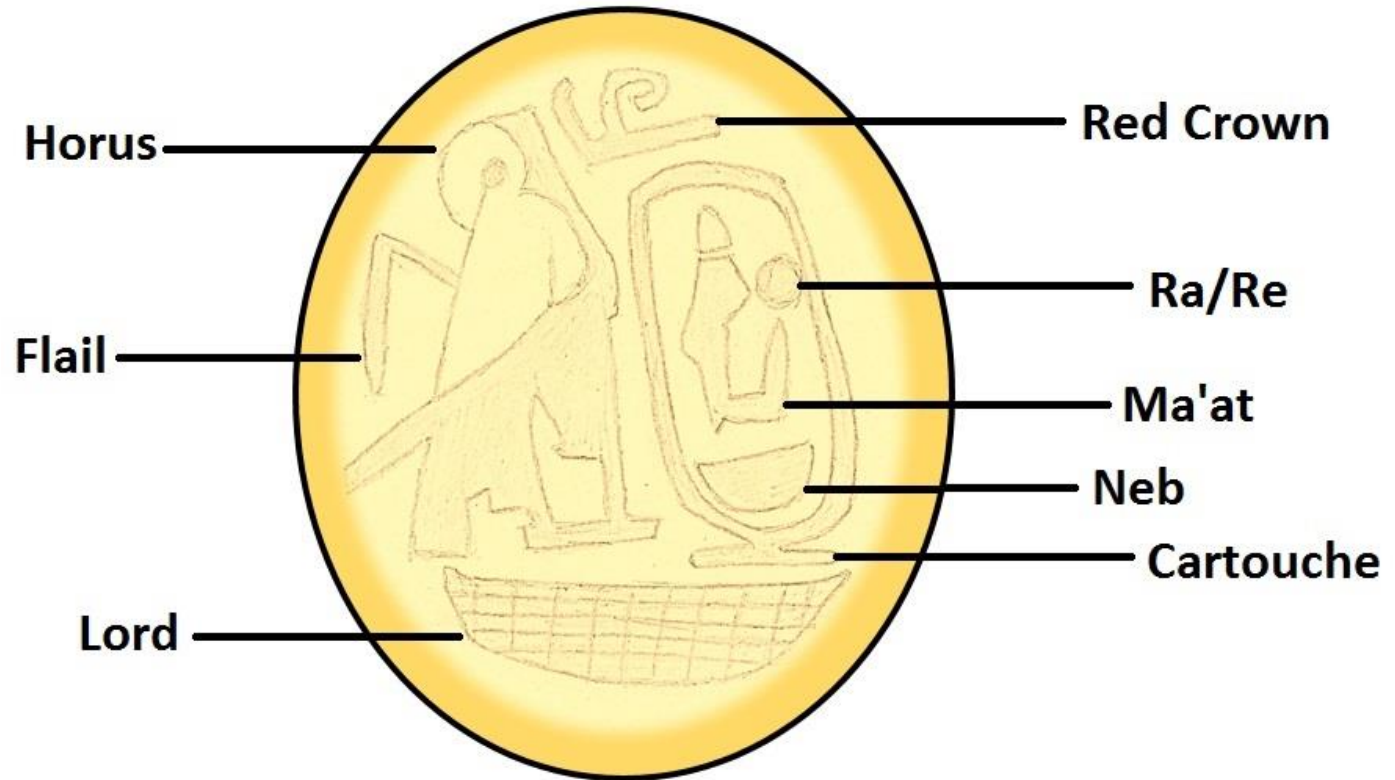


Figure 6 = Cyfarthfa Castle Scarab Hieroglyphs. Drawn: by author. Information: Manley, 2013, p.142-147; Collier & Manley, 2007, pp.20-29; Durham University, 2015; Newberry, 1929, pp.86-87

The addition of a pharaoh's name on the underside of scarabs began in the 12th Dynasty but was becoming rare by the 26th Dynasty. These royal-named scarabs are studied as they were often given as tokens of royal favour. It is now known that these royal-named scarabs were still being produced long after the named pharaoh's reign and death, e.g. scarabs with the royal inscription of Old Kingdom pharaoh Khufu were still being made in the New Kingdom. This adds to the difficulties in dating the item (Andrews, 1994, pp.52-56; Ward, 1994, pp.188-194).

Pharaohs were intermediaries with the deities. Ancient Egyptians believed royal-named scarabs bestowed favour, luck and protection onto the wearer; displayed the wearer's Royal devotion to the deity; acted as a talisman to the wearer in life and in death; and, was potent for attaining the afterlife (Andrews, 1994, p.55; Ward, 1994, pp.189-194; Wilkinson, 2008, p.31).

Specific evidence from the Cyfarthfa Castle scarab, and a comparison with another 18th Dynasty scarab, suggest that it is the ornamental centrepiece of a ring. Red residue on some plinth edges may come from a bezel which held the scarab in place. This red residue can also be seen on the 18th Dynasty scarab ring where the bezel remains are preserved (Figure 7) (Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2017).



Figure 7 = 18th Dynasty Scarab Ring with Bezel, Accession Number: 35.3.105. Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2017

The position of the hieroglyphs on the underside of the scarab, and the internal hole running from the clypeus to the tail of the scarab which may have held a hoop or chain, might suggest that if this scarab was a ring centerpiece it could have flipped over to act as a seal, such as the ones found at Mereret's Cache in Dahshur. Although this is a possibility, scarab seal-rings are very rare because they were inherently not strong enough and solid-metal signet rings became more commonly used (Andrews, 1994, pp.52-53).

Scarab Amulets & Jewellery

Scarab amulets are first recorded as being found in the graves of poor and deprived women and children of Egypt in the Old Kingdom. However, scarabs developed a more universal use and were adopted by all classes and regions of the ancient world. During the Late Period scarab use declined and by the Roman Period scarabs were no longer being made (Ward, 1994, pp.186-187; Taylor, 2010, p.10; Wilkinson, 2008, pp.19-20).

Although some jewellery pieces were used primarily for decoration, using the shape of a scarab meant that the piece had magical and amuletic properties. In Ancient Egyptian culture, scarab amulets provided magical protection from evil in the afterlife. Regardless of the possibility of the Cyfarthfa Castle scarab's use as a seal-ring as discussed above, the provision of hieroglyphs or motifs on the underside, particularly the inclusion of a pharaoh's name, would enhance these properties (Andrews, 1994, pp.51-52; Ward, 1994, pp.189-194). Scarab rings were considered very special and meaningful as they were usually given as gifts, in particular, diplomatic gifts (Brandl, et al., 2013, p.82; Tuplin, 2004, p.11). Therefore, it is possible to suggest that the recipient of the Cyfarthfa Castle scarab ring was of high status.

Scarab rings first appeared in the archaeological record in the 12th Dynasty - over 500 years before Amenhotep III's reign in c.1410-1372 BC (Andrews, 1994, p.52; Wilkinson, 2008, p.40; Taylor, 2010, p.10). Scarabs were mounted as bracelets, necklaces and earrings and were also used as jewellery pieces by the Phoenicians, Greeks and Etruscans (Ward, 1994, p.193). Therefore, the scarab shape does not immediately identify the piece as Egyptian.

Material

Soapstone was the primary material used to create amuletic scarabs because of the soft texture and it was easy to carve. Soapstone hardens when heated and becomes the material known as steatite. Other materials include: faience, resin, glass, stone, ivory and hard woods such as ebony (Wilkinson, 2008, pp.23-25). Microscope analysis was undertaken on the Cyfarthfa Castle scarab on the 3rd March 2017 by Dr Ros Coard of UWTSD, Lampeter. It was difficult to see the cellular structure due to the high degree of polish but it was possible to confirm that this scarab is made from animal bone (species unconfirmed). The polished affect may have been acquired since its discovery, but Ancient Egyptian also polished their items to remove tool marks. Fresh and raw animal bone is ideal to carve and polish as well as being readily available in this region and period. Different bones may have been used dependent on the object being made. Shafts are usually used for decorative pieces, such as rings and amulets, because they are straight and strong (Nicholson & Shaw, 2009, pp.327-329).

Provenance: Date & Location

There are several difficulties with dating the Cyfarthfa Castle scarab: the typological features of scarabs developed gradually and erratically throughout the dynasties; the Cyfarthfa Castle scarab is handmade – therefore not moulded/mass produced; and microscopic tool marks can be seen, the uniqueness of which increases the difficulties in dating (Wilkinson, 2008, p.20; Ward, 1994, p.197). In addition, when scarab amulet designs were created they were used in small numbers to begin with but as soon as they became ‘popular’ their number increased. It is this ‘popular’ phase that is shown in the archaeological record; a scarab design may emerge both before and after this ‘popular’ phase. Furthermore, scarabs may have been inherited as heirlooms or good luck pieces (Ward, 1994, pp.189-196).

Ascertaining the geographical origin of the Cyfarthfa Castle scarab is equally problematic. Scarab amulets were occasionally imported, exported and traded with other Mediterranean countries. Many of these countries produced their own scarabs, some showing Egyptian influence (Wilkinson, 2008, pp.21-48). Emigration resulted in the transfer of culture to other countries and continents, and the cultural and religious significance of a scarab in Egypt could differ from the significance of a scarab elsewhere (Ward, 1997, p.674; Ward, 1994, p.193).

Scarab amulets are found in nearly every archaeological context in Egypt because of their commonplace use in life and in death. However, due to the reuse and plundering of graves and tombs in Ancient Egypt, the deposits from different contexts have intermingled. Items may be older than their archaeological context and it is usually the archaeological context that helps identify the date of an item (Brandl, et al., 2013, p.91; Grajetzki, 2009, p.8; Ward, 1987, pp.508-509; Ben-Tor, 2003, p.239; Ward, 1994, pp.187-193). In addition, it is possible that small objects, such as this scarab, could be relocated through environmental changes or human agency (Ward, 1997, p.678). Therefore, dating the Cyfarthfa Castle scarab is extremely difficult.

Conclusion

Information regarding the provenance and archaeological context of the Cyfarthfa Castle scarab may have provided further evidence to suggest a more accurate period in which the scarab was made (Ben-Tor, 2003, p.239). However, as this information is not available, the dating of this scarab is based on the hieroglyphs of the 18th dynasty Egyptian pharaoh Amenhotep III (Collier & Manley, 2007, p.29; Liverpool Museum, 2017). A comparison with another 18th dynasty scarab suggests that the Cyfarthfa Castle scarab may be the ornamental centrepiece of a ring which may have been given as a gift to somebody of high diplomatic status (Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2017; Brandl, et al., 2013, p.82; Tuplin, 2004, p.11). This ring would have been worn in life but due to the magical and amuletic properties, from the shape of the scarab and the hieroglyphs on the underside of the scarab, the ring may have been placed in the tomb or grave of the deceased, along with other burial goods, to allow these properties to continue in the afterlife (Grajetzki, 2009, p.8; Wilkinson, 2008, pp.10-17; Ward, 1994, p.189).



Pottery Vase (B-ware vessel)

Cyfarthfa Castle, Merthyr Tydfil 323.004

Object type: vessel

Material: pottery (bichrome) - Nile Silt (Nile A)

Period: Naqada I-II

Provenance: Unprovenanced (Egypt)

Condition: chipped at the opening

Dimensions: 11.3cm (length) x 9.2cm (width)

Object analysis by **Luke Skinner**

This object is an 11.3cm x 9.2cm pottery vessel with a 2.5cm flat base which extends into an ovoid – egg-shaped – vessel with a damaged but open rim. Its exterior is visibly scratched and damaged throughout, especially around the rim, with three quarters of the exterior coloured in a brownish red, and the final quarter in a deep black, although this balance is uneven and a paler red zone occurs – with some black-spotted stains visible only within this paler zone – which is most prominent where the black zone is its shortest in vertical length. The interior is blackened

mostly until a quarter of the way down and does not correspond to the length of the exterior black zone. A brownish red is visible on the interior wherever the black does not occur with faint, thin, white lines – possibly a result of firing or scratches from scraping – running throughout the interior which also displays a concentrated cluster of white-dotted residue on one side, and another unidentifiable stain running vertically down the interior like the remnant of a liquid, whose colour blends into the interior.

Our vessel is a member of a wider corpus of pottery called black-topped red ware (B-ware) which is most commonly associated with Predynastic Egypt, and formed part of the wider assemblages of which Petrie based his pioneering chronology of the Predynastic off. Originally appearing around the Badarian period of Egypt, B-ware appears in Egypt throughout Naqada I-IIa-b but slowly disappears over the rest of the Naqada period and is then only found in very rare and strictly ritual and funerary circumstances after Naqada III (Sowada 1999: 85). B-ware was also just as prominent within Nubian contexts well past its disuse in Egypt, surviving until around 1500BCE (Hendrickx, Friedman, Loyens 2000: 171) and is associated with the Kerma culture. Furthermore, B-ware has been found in southern Palestine (Sowada 1999: 86), the pre-Aksumite kingdoms of northern Ethiopia during the mid-1st Millennium BCE (Finneran 2007: 119) as well as the Dakhleh Oasis (Sowada 1999: 86; Nelson, Khalifa 2010: 136) and the site of Nabta Playa (Nelson, Khalifa 2010: 136). B-ware was a highly prized, difficult to manufacture pottery which appears to have been imbued with symbolic and social significance and was used both in life and in the grave for various purposes, including storing liquids or foodstuffs. Since this object is unprovenanced, arriving to the museum from the collection of Major Harry Hartley Southey around WWI, the location of this objects origin is difficult to determine amongst all these possibilities, and consequently so is the dating of this vessel.

B-ware, and our vessel, was commonly made from Nile silt, most commonly Nile A (Hendrickx, Friedman, Loyens 2000: 172) which, because it is rich in iron, fires to a red-brownish colour within an oxidizing atmosphere (Hendrickx, Friedman, Loyens 2000: 172). Nile silt is found throughout the length of the Nile and would have been easily accessible for ancient potters (Bourriau, Nicholson 2000: 122). There is some controversy around the treatment of the clay post-extraction and pre-forming as to whether it was levitated. Levitation is often assumed although evidence for it is not always apparent (Bourriau, Nicholson 2000: 122), however, at Hierakonpolis in Upper Egypt there is evidence that this may have taken place upon some of the pottery produced at this major pottery production centre (Bourriau, Nicholson 2000: 122). B-ware was hand-formed using the coil technique where coils of clay were prepared then stacked upon each other to form the vessel which was then shaped and smoothed by a paddle and anvil to hide the coils (Bourriau, Nicholson 2000: 125) and to create an egg-shell thin vessel, although our vessel does not conform to this commonality since its walls are quite thick. A red ochre slip may be applied after forming but before firing, consequently getting polished by a pebble once dry (Hierakonpolis-online 2017). Lack of archaeological evidence of Predynastic kilns has inhibited our understanding of the firing process and the exact procedure that created the distinctive black-top, although we do know that the vessel can only be fired at a maximum of 1000°C (Hendrickx, Friedman, Loyens, 2000: 178). The lack of evidence of kilns may attest to the predominance of open bonfire type kilns in this period (Hendrickx, Friedman, Loyens, 2000: 184), however, the best evidence available comes from Hierakonpolis where remnants of fifteen kilns have been discovered (Bourriau, Nicholson 2000: 137).

It was Petrie who first made suggestions about the firing process and the creation of the black-top, he put forth the idea that the vessel was placed lip down in some compact material during firing to create a less oxidized atmosphere for the top, and consequently, a lower temperature as compare to the rest of the vessel (Hendrickx, Friedman, Loyens, 2000: 172). Later suggestions from Alfred Lucas point towards a two-step process of firing the vessel then removing it whilst still hot and dipping it in some carbon based material in order to draw oxygen away from the surface (Hendrickx, Friedman, Loyens 2000: 173). This process is called carbon smudging. More recent evidence from the Mossbauer effect spectroscopy alludes to a combination of these processes (Hendrickx, Friedman, Loyens 2000: 174), that it was both the reduced oxygen and the carbon smudging that produced the black-top, although the debate around the exact order of, and number of steps in, the process is still up in the air.

Hendrickx, Friedman and Loyens (2000) have reconstructed the firing process, as have others, with their experiments being informed by the evidence we do have of Predynastic kilns at Hierakonpolis, although we do not have the remains of the kilns that produced B-ware at this site, only other indications B-ware was produced such as rim sherds around kiln sites, it is clear that B-ware could be produced in the same kilns used to fire rough straw-tempered wares, like at HK29 and kiln B1 at HK11c (Baba 2009: 2; Hendrickx, Friedman, Loyens 2000: 177-178), since both types of pottery are made from Nile Silt and can only be fired at the same temperatures. Their tests yielded results that appear analogous to our vessel with the pale red zone appearing on both their test vessels, and ours, because of over-saturation of iron-oxide from very localized bursts of intense heat between the compact material and the oxidized atmosphere, causing this pale tone (Hendrickx, Friedman, Loyens 2000: 183), with some carbon smudging appearing on our vessel – the little dark spots which only appear within the pale red zone where the compact carbon material, likely dung or chopped reeds, were placed. These parallels with the evidence of successful production of B-ware at Hierakonpolis – 18 B-ware sherds out of 612 at HK59/59A (Hendrickx, Friedman, Loyens, 2000: 185) – and the documented occurrence of smaller B-ware vessels within seemingly less elite burials (Hierakonpolis-online 2017) at Hierakonpolis – HK43 'Workers Cemetery' – together with the comparative lesser quality and size of our vessel to other status laden B-ware, suggests our objects origin as being the major Predynastic centre of Hierakonpolis, especially since this site has been known and excavated since F.W. Green's work there during the late 19th century (Cardin 2014: 164). Although we do have to keep an open mind about location Hierakonpolis appears as our best bet. Further, the ovoid shape of our vessel may suggest a date around Naqada Ic-IIa-b since the shape of the vessel became increasingly predominant during this time period (Sowada 1999: 86).

B-ware was used both in life and in death, they had utilitarian and symbolic function in life and the grave (Sowada 1999: 85). The red and black colours of B-ware is thought to have symbolic connotations, the red representing the death and sterility of the chaotic desert (Sowada 1999: 102; Stanford 2003: 21), and the black symbolic of the dark, fertile deposits of the Nile, during flooding, which enriched the land, bringing and sustaining life to and for the Egyptians (Sowada 1999: 102; Stanford 2003: 21). This interpretation may be anachronistic since our understanding of Predynastic beliefs are not well developed as the evidence is lacking (Snape 2011: 8) as compared to later, literate periods, however, it may be that the stark contrast between the sterile desert and the fertility of the land adjacent to the Nile would be self-evident to an agricultural society who depended upon the land for survival. It is possible, then, that this connection of red-

black, fertility-sterility, and consequently, life-death would, therefore, have been clear long before the appearance of B-ware and may explain why such pottery was so predominant in burials early on in the Predynastic. Its appearance in graves may further be explained by increased social stratification and its embodiment in B-ware as an elite object. Therefore, carrying it into the afterlife would bring you not only sustenance from its likely liquid contents – so that you can survive in the next phase of life like in the present – but also continued social capital in this world – social memory – and easy passage through the next. This presupposes, however, quite a developed notion of an afterlife which we cannot confirm, although further evidence from Predynastic burials may point us towards this direction to some extent.

Within the predominantly oval or circular pit graves of the Predynastic (Taylor 2001: 79; Stevenson 2009: 2) the bodies were most often buried in a contracted fetal position, which Taylor has suggested connotes a concept of rebirth (2001: 79). Furthermore, the bodies were, though with more variance in later Naqadan periods, positioned facing the west (Snape 2011: 7; Stevenson 2009: 4), where the sun sets, which is a direction later to be symbolic of the underworld, the afterlife, and as the place of the dead. The body would be surrounded by any number of items, most commonly pottery, with the number of grave goods rising over time with only 2% of graves in the Badarian period revealing over 10 items, to around 13% in Naqada I-II (Stevenson 2009: 4). In Naqada I, B-ware vessels comprised over 50% of the fine-ware assemblages (Stevenson 2009: 4), although this declined in later periods to make way for the mass-produced pottery that filled elite burials, which may mark a development in the idea of provisioning the dead in the afterlife, and reflect increased social stratification as a method of differentiation. The commonality of the position of the body in the grave, the direction in which it faced, the increase in emphasis upon pottery and provisions in the grave, and the aforementioned symbolic connotations of our object may indicate the emergence of sophisticated concepts of life, death, and rebirth, with our object acting as the embodiment of the symbolic currency of these concepts, as well as being a practical means of providing sustenance for the dead in the afterlife. Since the burial practices changed and developed over time it is reasonable to question why these changes took place, and what explains this, and the occurrence of B-ware in burials and its later replacement with hordes of pottery, is that of the belief systems that underpinned the production of these burials, as utilitarian pragmatism cannot account for everything, therefore, our vessel was a pragmatic consideration in the sense that it fulfilled the needs of the dead, in life and death, in a very tangibly real sense that was informed by the developing funerary beliefs that began to increasingly permeate Egypt.

This vessel, then, may very well be a product of Hierakonpolis, or possibly another Upper Egyptian site, likely dating to Naqada Ic-IIa-b. It was a difficult to produce and rather elite object that also occurred within the cemeteries of less elite individuals, such as HK43 at Hierakonpolis, which could be paralleled with our hand-sized, thick-walled vessel which does not conform to the same quality of the wider B-ware corpus. This vessel was possibly imbued with the developing concepts of life, death, rebirth, and the afterlife through the seemingly self-evident symbolic connotations of red and black to the inhabitants of the fertile lands along the Nile. Finally, our vessel may have been a practical consideration in an individual's grave to provide provisions in the form of some kind of liquid – oil or wine – since concepts of death and the afterlife appear to be developing in this period, and certainly provided the ideas for the forms these burials took.



Miniature Gneiss Vessel

Cyfarthfa Castle, Merthyr Tydfil 300.04

Object type: hard stone vessel

Material: gneiss

Period: Old Kingdom

Provenance: unknown

Dimensions: •3.8cm in height and 9cm in width

Object analysis by **Debbie Louise May**

This miniature vessel is made from gneiss stone, which is an exceptionally hard stone. Only the most highly skilled craftsman worked with gneiss.²⁷ Due to the hardness of the stone it was difficult to work with this stone. Gneiss measures 6 to 6.5 in the Moh's scale which can reveal to us that gneiss is about as hard as granite.²⁸

This vessel in particular is quite small (3.8cm in height and 9cm in width). The rim is 4.1cm with a thickness of 1.5cm. For most people, this vessel would have been easy to fit in their hands and even an adult with a smaller hand size could have been able to hold this vessel comfortably with one hand.

This stone vessel has a slightly rounded base but still seems as though it would have been able to stand without any assistance or support from people if necessary. The vessel has a very smooth texture and has a round shape, the stone is quite thick which would mean that the vessel is quite sturdy and durable, therefore not susceptible to damage. It is well preserved

²⁷ Kozloff, 1986, 329

²⁸ Kozloff 1986, 329

showing very little or no signs of damage. It does not seem as though this vessel was made out of reworked material due the smoothness and how it physically looks as later stone vessels were sometime made out of recycled materials collected from the earlier periods.²⁹ This suggests that this vessel would be dated to the earlier periods in Egyptian history. A variety of stones were used to make vessels, from limestone and granite to alabaster and gneiss.

Gneiss is a very colourful stone, the particular stone that was used to make this vessel appears to be mostly black and grey with splashes of white, making the vessel quite appealing to the eye. This is because for the most part it is believed that the production of vessel made out of gneiss would have been tightly controlled and carefully produced shapes, however it is also thought that the patterning was only partly coincidental³⁰. Artistically these small vessels appear a smaller versions of their full scale counterparts that have been able to maintain the original function of the full scale vessels – a miniature.³¹

Small vessels such as this gneiss miniature vessel were usually made out of the finest materials.³² These miniature stone vessels also seemed to follow similar shapes to that of miniature vessels made out of pottery. These shapes seemed to have derived from the Early Dynastic Period,³³ however it must be noted that these shapes as well as the materials used to make these vessels did change over time.³⁴ Miniature pottery vessels were mass produced therefore, it is possible that these miniature stone vessels were also produced in high quantities, especially since there appears to be a high demand for them in Egyptian society.

Specific quarrying sites for all the varieties of stones used to make vessels have not been identified, only some sources suggest which stones in particular were dug up from which site. Some suggest that the stones used for making vessels were collected as boulders or even loose blocks which were then later carved into vessels.³⁵ Large numbers of colourful vessels or intractable stones do appear in royal and upper elite graves.³⁶ This suggests that these stone vessels were used as a way to show social status and wealth. Therefore, these gneiss vessels were most likely produced for those in the upper classes in ancient Egyptian society. It is unknown what the vessel was directly used for as no traces of residue have been discovered so far. However, it is thought that it is possible that this vessel may have had a lid, unfortunately very few stone lids have been found during the excavations in Egypt³⁷. This vessel having a lid would suggest that the vessel may have been used as some form of storage. Smaller vessels often contained ointments and some are thought to have stored kohl and other substances³⁸ such as perfume oils and possibly but unlikely wine. Using stone for this vessel suggests that this vessel may not have been used for storing common substances such as food.³⁹ Furthermore this vessels' size also suggests that it would have been likely that this vessel in

²⁹ Klemm and Klemm, 2001, 633

³⁰ Kozloff, 1986, 329

³¹ Allen, 2004, 21

³² Lilyquist, 1995, 13

³³ Allen, 2004, 22

³⁴ Duffy, 2012, 45

³⁵ Harrell et al, 2000, 33

³⁶ Bevan, 2007, 64

³⁷ Lilyquist, 1995, 2

³⁸ Lilyquist, 1995, 2

³⁹ Lilyquist, 1995, 12

particular would have not been used to store food as there would not be enough room to store a high amount of food. Miniature vessels were designed to be on the smaller size as it reflected their function, their possible contents as well as their use as a personal item.⁴⁰

Vessels that were made out of stone became a common item seen in funerary equipment in Late Predynastic period tombs through to tombs dating to the Old Kingdom.⁴¹ These miniature stone vessels appear to be closely related to miniature vessels made out of pottery as they were both placed in the tombs of the elite, sometimes these different type of vessel appeared in the same tombs.⁴² Due to the lack of residue having been identified within this stone vessel, as well as the vessel having made for the more elite members of the society it is possible that this vessel had a more decorative than functional use. This is because it seems that stone vessels were used by elite as a way to identify themselves as being a high ranking member of society.



Stone vessels were commonly seen in funerary aspects within the tomb, therefore it seems possible that this miniature gneiss vessel was part of a group of vessels and other funerary items. This vessel can give us some information regarding Egyptians ideology and culture. Stone vessels such as the vessel shown here were valued for its durability this is because Egyptians desired long lasting monuments, these monuments came in a variety of items of items, which often came from Egypt's natural resources.⁴³ Some heavy stone material used for making these vessels may have been transported using the river Nile as well as its man-made channels, especially for long distance transportation.⁴⁴

These vessels became a primary mechanism for prestigious displays of wealth.⁴⁵ Therefore this would, in theory, reaffirm an individual's social status even in the afterlife. Stone vessels

⁴⁰ Allen, 2004, 21

⁴¹ Harrell et al, 2000, 33

⁴² Allen, 2004, 22

⁴³ Kozloff, 1986, 327

⁴⁴ Klemm and Klemm, 2001, 631

⁴⁵ Bevan, 2007, 64

appeared to have some significance in ancient Egyptian religious belief as they were thought to remain pure in the afterlife.⁴⁶

These stone vessels mainly appeared among the elite tombs this allows us to see the social hierarchy among Egypt at the time. This is also shown by Bevan who tells us that various stone vessels and items were placed around the body in close proximity⁴⁷ This may reflect the close association between stone and the treatment of the corpse as well as the choreography during the mortuary rituals.⁴⁸ The vast majority of miniature vessels found on Old Kingdom sites seem to derive from the above ground offering rituals, which were conducted in the cult chapel of a private individual or in the mortuary temples of royal complexes.⁴⁹ This also suggests that the owner of this miniature vessel would have been quite high up on the social ladder in Egyptian society. This ability to show a long lasting societal status meant that these stone vessel played a key part in allowing the Egyptians to have some form of lasting monument especially in an period when leaving an ideological legacy was important as it is this legacy that underpinned the Egyptian elite.⁵⁰ Thereby showing that these vessels played a big part in revealing an individuals' identity through the prestigious value of the object, but was also a big part of the religious funerary beliefs in Egypt.

Due to religious offerings being made repeatedly and even daily this meant that a huge number of miniature vessels were used in the offerings and then discarded. This is why they are often found in dump heaps as well as their distribution over pyramid sites.⁵¹ This therefore suggests that some smaller vessels were deliberately deposited due to the high amount that were used in the offerings. This vessel in particular is quite difficult to date but it seems likely that this miniature gneiss vessel was produced during the Old Kingdom period. This is because while stone vessels seem to appear throughout Egyptian history, it was during the Old Kingdom were these vessels were in high demand and were produced more frequently. Which is why, with this information in mind, I believe that this gneiss vessel would date to the Old Kingdom. However, it has to be noted that this vessel could also be dated to the Early Dynastic period between the 1st Dynasty and the 3rd Dynasty.

⁴⁶ Duffy, 2012, 44

⁴⁷ Bevan, 2007, 63

⁴⁸ Bevan, 2007, 63

⁴⁹ Allen, 2004, 22

⁵⁰ Bevan, 2007, 64

⁵¹ Allen, 2004, 22



Upper Part of a Statue (bust)

Cyfarthfa Castle, Merthyr Tydfil 276.004

Object type: Statue (bust as broken off a statue)

Material: Granodiorite

Period: Third Intermediate/ Late (?) c. 700 – 300 BC

Provenance: unknown (Egypt); Collected by Major Harry Hartley Southey. Donated to Cyfarthfa Castle Museum.

Condition: broken (both ends snapped off)

Dimensions: Height: 18.7 cm; Width: 17.3 cm; Depth: 14 cm.

Object analysis by **Jack Elliott**

This remnant of sculpture depicts the head of what was possibly intended as a full-figure statue, rather than a bust. The facial features of the piece are finely carved into the stone, so the details are distinctly visible. The prominent eyes are slightly elongated across the face, but remain at

an adequate distance apart from one another. Looking from a frontal perspective, the nose appears a perfectly symmetrical triangle; at a side view, it is shown to be perfectly straight from bridge to point. The point of the nose is positioned directly in the centre of the face. The lips, centred between the point of the nose and point of the chin, are aesthetically centred to enhance this aspect of symmetry. They mostly retain a flat line in the centre, whilst curving slightly at the ends in a half-smile. Notably, the facial features of eyes, nose and mouth measure equally at roughly 2.9 cm in length.

The brow and cheekbones are not overly prominent, only slightly protruding from the face. Equally the ears are placed, not overly prominent, at the side of the head and do not attract too much attention. Adorned on top of the head, sits a striated wig, which is tucked behind the ears. As far as is discernable, the ends of the wig sit just on the shoulders. The statue head has broken off just below the neck, so it is unknown as to where the wig ends. It appears as though the wig comes forward from beneath the ears, rather than staying to the side of the neck, to form a tripartite wig.

The face in general appears youthful, with no facial hair depicted, and a slightly curved jawline and square chin that appear soft, enhanced by the smooth surface of stone.

The material used for the statue CCM 276.004 is possibly that of a hard stone known as granodiorite. In this material the presence of phenocrysts known as oligoclase, which are a light grey colour, are dispersed amongst the darker coloured rock.⁵² From the perspective of the statue head, we can clearly see large areas of light grey are above and below the left eye, to the right side of the mouth, as well as on the chin and neck, with smaller areas dotted about amongst the darker stone. Sources of this stone have been found, where quarries were in operation from at least as early as the Old Kingdom, in southern Egypt at Gebel Ibrahim Pasha, Aswan.⁵³ Possibly the closest known source of hard stone to the Nile Valley temples⁵⁴ and, probably because of its proximity, quarrying continued into the Roman period.⁵⁵ This close

⁵² Aston et al 2009: 37

⁵³ Klemm and Klemm 2001: 636; Robins 2001: 9; Aston et al 2009: 6

⁵⁴ Zakrzewski et al 2016: 240

⁵⁵ Klemm and Klemm 2001: 636; Aston et al 2009: 37

proximity to the river allowed easy transport cross Egypt. Despite the nature of this artifact there are remaining clues to suggest its original form, and perhaps the context it was used. Looking at the neck, especially the way this has broken off from the missing body, a line is visible where the statue was severed.

As is often the case, protrusions to stone statues lead to breakages depending on the weaker points of the sculpture.⁵⁶ In this instance the neck may have formed a weak spot for the statue, leading to the relatively clean break as shown by the linear edge of the neck. Alternatively, by examining this neckline more closely, it is distinguishable that this ends in a rather abrupt stop with a slightly rougher texture to it than the smooth hard stone surface. In this instance, the statue head may have intentionally been removed from the rest of the body. It is impossible to tell for certain if the transition between neck and torso formed a straight or curved indentation. Possibly the wig ran concurrently with the neck, in the frame-like manner that we see now, leaving the impression of a straighter neckline.

Looking at other examples of statues, we start to see differences in the way the neck is shaped in relation to the rest of the body. Block statue production originated from around the 12th Dynasty, on into the Late Period, and these sculptures became increasingly depicted as one of the most commonly found types of statue.⁵⁷ They went through a shifting style, as the feet were often not depicted in great detail before the 18th Dynasty reign of Amenhotep III.⁵⁸

Figure 2: 67.30.426
Block statue of a priest of
Soped, god of Egypt's eastern
frontier, after the Israel
Museum, Jerusalem n.d.

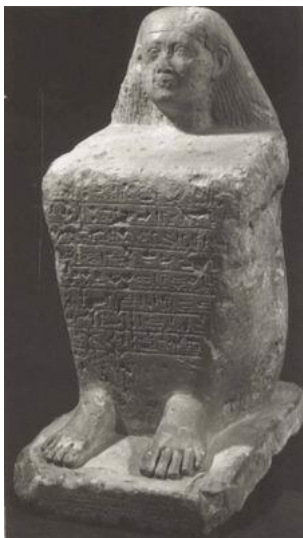


Figure 2 is a block statue, where the head and feet are the only distinguishable features besides the block-shaped body. We can see the neck attached to the block at a sharp angle with a limited curve. If this statue were to break at the same point as figure 1, it is likely the neck, as the weak spot, would leave a horizontal line, where the head and body meet.

Another example is shown in figure 3, depicting Senenmut and Neferure, the daughter of Queen Hatshepsut of the 18th Dynasty. the striated wig is evident, it ends just at the shoulders, thus leaving neck exposed and not forming the style. This length was considered prestigious for men, at least in New Kingdom.⁵⁹ It was once the striated wig was limited to the



Figure 3: ÄM2296
Senenmut with Neferure,
the daughter of Queen
Hatshepsut, after K.
Schengili-Roberts 2006

also
head
by figure
Again
although
rather
more
tripartite
highly
the early
thought
25th and

⁵⁶ Robins, 2001: 12

⁵⁷ Bothmer et al 1960: xxvi; Silverman 1997: 132; Robins 2001: 28; Schulz 2011: 1

⁵⁸ Ruffle 1967: 45

⁵⁹ Robins 1999: 58

early 26th Dynasties,⁶⁰ however they have been present at least since the 13th Dynasty,⁶¹ as represented by figure 4. This trend, like the block statue, once thought to be limited to the Late Period, had been around since at least the Middle Kingdom and evidently continued. Figure 4, similarly to figure 1, is a statue head without a body. Also noticeable is the horizontal line at the base of the neck, where the wig ends. The wig comes forward from beneath the ears, so the side of the neck is hidden. With the state of this statue, we are equally limited in the knowledge of its original depiction. The style depicted was thought to be of an official, and although the overall style is different, the attributes are not dis-similar; leading to the



Figure 4: EA71645 Head of a black steatite figure of an official wearing a striated wig, after the British Museum n.d



Figure 5: Limestone block statue of the Transport Official, Karo, after Sotheby's n.d.

possibility that figure 1 also represents an official. This would be understandable, seeing as this individual was able to afford having a statue produced. It also suggests that the statue depicts a male, as this was a male-oriented profession.⁶² Figure 5 shows the block statue of another official, Karo, from the 20th Dynasty reign of Ramesses III,⁶³ with a decidedly different style of wig, which is not striated. However, similar to figure 1 is the way it falls to the side of the neck, showing that it would not have been unprecedented to depict a block statue in this way. In this instance, Karo is depicted with a beard, so evidence of this would remain, were the state of the statue to be the same as figures 1 and 4. Aside from this, there appears to be a horizontal line where the neck transitions into the torso.

Examples of block statues exist depicting distinct features, such as shoulders, legs, hands and feet. A statue attributed to a general, Nes-Montu of the 12th Dynasty⁶⁴ (figure 6), has all of these features, one of the pre-Amenhotep III exceptions to show detail of the feet, as well as only a slight curve to the line where the neck and torso meet. At the ends of the wig of the Cyfarthfa shoulders were is visible. arms may have folded above the model. the shape they had been before represented a sense of power, space available on a block statue carved into the sculpture, as can Figure 2, originally placed in a the purpose of reassuring the living of the continuation of life in the afterlife, alongside an offering formula.⁶⁶ A notable attribute to



Figure 6: Anorthosite block statue of general Nes-Montu, Thebes, now in the State Museum of Egyptian Art, Munich, after Amin 2015

⁶⁰ Russman 1973: 33 n.5

⁶¹ The British Museum, n.d.

⁶² Robins 1999: 56-57

⁶³ Sotheby's 1998; Eisenberg 1998: 40, fig. 12; Malek et al 2000: 622, no. 801-643-665

⁶⁴ Ancient History Encyclopedia; Amin 2015

⁶⁵ Robins 2001: 12

⁶⁶ Givon 1975: 20

the block statue is that they were normally reserved for people of the non-royal elites, rather than depictions of gods or royals.⁶⁷ Assuming the statue head was once part of a block statue then the person would represent an elite figure, such as an official. Certainly, those who were able to commission a statue would have a substantial amount of wealth to do so; they were seen as status symbols highlighting your standing within society.⁶⁸

Regarding when the statue head is dated, it is difficult to distinguish specific periods, due to the recycling of styles in various dynasties; the 25th Dynasty of foreign Kushites preferred to legitimise their position by depicting attributes from the Middle Kingdom, whilst the succeeding pharaohs of the indigenous Saite or 26th Dynasty used artforms from the Old Kingdom to do so, albeit with hard polished stone.⁶⁹ The style of the wig could also be one recycled from an earlier time, with the types of tripartite wigs, often striated, taken in the Late Period from designs of the Middle Kingdom, and frequently used in depictions of women, similar to the 'Hathor wig'.⁷⁰ At least in a mid-18th Dynasty context, only deceased men tended to be depicted with the tripartite wig on their coffins – a style also attributed to deities of both gender.⁷¹

The features of the Cyfarthfa Castle model bear similarities to statues of various periods. This is known as 'archaism' whereby styles of a preceding era are utilised much later; in this instance perhaps we have a late 25th or early 26th Dynasty piece, adapting those of the Middle and New Kingdoms, although pinpointing specific inspiration is difficult.⁷² Preceding the Late Period was the Third Intermediate Period, in which stone carving for funerary monuments had reduced substantially; this meant that sculptors had to draw on much older styles and tailor them to their personalised tastes.⁷³ As a result we have a blending of characteristics, creating a new style.



Figure 7: A94 Statue of Nakhthorheb kneeling in prayer, after Musée du Louvre. C. Décamps 2008

The face bears a likeness to the kneeling statue (figure 7), with elongated eyes, eyebrows curving sharply at the ends, the mostly horizontal mouth curving upwards at the edges, and a square-shaped chin; Nakhthorheb, at least, mostly conformed to a style around in the 26th Dynasty reigns of Psamtik II and Apries.⁷⁴ Other similarities are drawn to figure 8, Nespakashuty, a 'Vizier' and 'Overseer of the Priests of Amun' in the reign of Psamtik I in the 26th

Dynasty.⁷⁵ It is not a block statue, the facial features resonate strongly with figure 1, including the elongated eyes, curved jawline, similar shaped chin, although the is more obvious. The wide striated bears similarities to Senenmut (figure 3), and the official (figure Certainly a familiar theme is

occurring across different periods whereby men of rank obtain certain attributes as symbols of their status.



Figure 8: JE36665 Statue of Nespakashuty, after Egyptian Museum, Cairo n.d.

but
and
smile
wig
4).

⁶⁷ Robins 2001: 29

⁶⁸ Robins 2001: 42

⁶⁹ Levin 1964: 14-15

⁷⁰ Levin 1964: 25

⁷¹ Robins 1999: 68

⁷² Kahl 2010: 6; Pischikova 1998: 57

⁷³ Pischikova 1998: 58

⁷⁴ Levin 1964: 22-23

⁷⁵ Pischikova 1998: 57

The statue head, with the striated tripartite wig, may or may not have been part of a block statue. However it is not beyond the realms of possibility, as a result of the individual styles we see in later periods. The wealth of statuary in various forms, and from previous ages, offered a broad archive for which the elites could draw inspiration from. Following the Third Intermediate Period, there became a freedom to create this new style; and although this freedom made it easier for the elites of the Late Period to adapt their sculptures based on their own tastes, it becomes difficult for us to distinguish the type of sculpture represented, in this fragmentary state.

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Upper Part of a Statue (bust)

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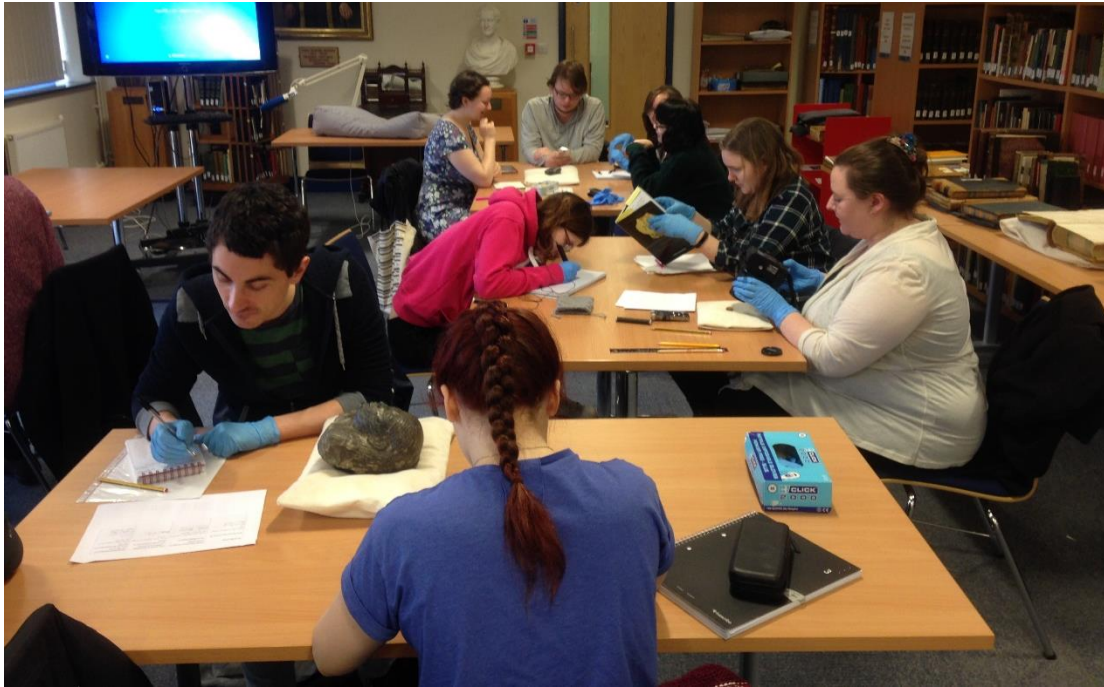
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