



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



Catalogue for the Special Exhibition

"I have flown up in primeval time"

Ancient Egyptian Funerary Beliefs

University of Wales Trinity Saint David

Lampeter Campus

Roderic Bowen Library and Archives

24 May 2018 –01 June 2018

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

Curator: Katharina Zinn

All catalogue object images © Katharina Zinn, Friederike Zinn

With contributions by Margaret Gallagher, Molly Gogh, Tilly Hall, Rachel Hunt, Christine Jackson,
Jack Phillips and Hannah Pickering



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ANCIENT EGYPT COMES TO LAMPETER

EXHIBITION OF
ARTEFACTS FROM CYFARTHFA CASTLE
MUSEUM, MERTHYR TYDFIL

"I HAVE FLOWN UP
IN PRIMEVAL TIME"
ANCIENT EGYPTIAN FUNERARY BELIEFS

ENTRY FREE

WHERE

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

WHEN

24th May—2nd June 2018
Open Mon-Fri 10am - 4pm



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



EVENTS:

THU 24TH MAY 2018 @ 3PM – ALL WELCOME,
ENTRY FREE

PUBLIC OPENING - WITH
PRESENTATIONS GIVEN BY THE
INVOLVED STUDENTS AND RECEPTION,
ALL WELCOME

FRI, 25TH MAY

WORKSHOP DAY WITH YSGOL BRO PEDR
ANCIENT EGYPTIAN AFTERLIFE
BELIEFS

TUES, 29TH MAY

PUBLIC TALK (DR. KATHARINA ZINN) –
ALL WELCOME, ENTRY FREE

DID YOU SLEEP WELL? – THE BODY,
THE SENSES AND ANCIENT
EGYPTIAN HEADRESTS FROM
CYFARTHFA CASTLE MUSEUM,
MERTHYR TYDFIL

THU, 31ST MAY

WORKSHOP FOR HOME-SCHOOLED
CHILDREN (AGE 10-16) – ENTRY FREE
BUT RESERVATION REQUIRED (RVSP
K.ZINN@UWTSO.AC.UK)

Sleep like an ancient Egyptian – hear
about sleep in death, try to lie down on an
Egyptian headrest and make a headrest
amulet



Preface

This exhibition is the sixth 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 UWTSU 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. I asked the students not only to write catalogue entries, but create presentations, posters and scrap books. For the vernissage, I asked Martha Warren (headrest), Tilly Hall (chest), Margaret Gallagher and Ashleigh Harrison (both lamp) to present their object. Jack Phillips (scarab), Molly Gogh (birds), Max Brown (headrest), Victoria Genn and Eleanor Lockwood (both chest) are presenting posters in the exhibition. All scrap books are so marvellous that they all feature in the exhibition. 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.

We are continuing our included *Museum of Lies* sub-project this year. For the first time, we included art in the thought process. **Julie Davis** – a local artist – took on the birds and created a triptych showing her take on ancient Egyptian birds.



Many thanks as well goes to our story-tellers from **Year 9 English** from **Ysgol Bro Pedr** (with the helping hand of their teacher **Ms Phillips**) who wrote the



phenomenal and funny short stories for *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 **Ruth Gooding**, 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. Not to be forgotten: the library staff who bore with use running through and provided extra space in the foyer.

And last but not



least, many thanks to Friederike Zinn for the help with the photographs.

Friederike Zinn

Katharina Zinn
Lampeter, 22/05/2018



Headrest

Cyfarthfa Castle, Merthyr Tydfil 190.996

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 **Rachel Hunt**, sketch by **Max Brown** (scrap book entry)

Description

This headrest is from the collection at Cyfarthfa Castle Museum in Merthyr Tydfil and its object number is 190.006. This item we know comes from Egypt however the exact location within Egypt is



unknown. We can suggest a date for this headrest which is the Old Kingdom specifically the 5th or 6th dynasties. The headrest is made up of three parts which are an upper curved part for which the head would rest on, a middle column and a base for which the headrest stands on. The width of the curve from each tip is 19cm, the width at the base is 20cm and the height of the entire headrest is 20cm. It is likely that it was made to fit an individual's specific requirements although it may have also been passed down through the generations. The headrest is made from wood and has remains of linen which was thought to be wrapped around the headrest to make it more comfortable. The headrest is worn which indicates that it was well used.

How was the headrest used?

We can look at examples of how modern headrests are used to give us ideas of how they were used in the past. One example is the headrest shown in figure 3 which is being used by one of the Karo people of the Omo Valley in Ethiopia who use the headrest to protect the clay head dresses they wear on back of their heads when sleeping and laying down. Also, they use the headrest as a stool. Headrests have also been in use in in Libya from 500 BC to 700 AD and Mali from 11th-14th centuries AD. By looking at the usages of headrests across Northern Africa we can potentially see if there is any continuity or similarities between cultures over time (Fitzwilliam, n.d.).

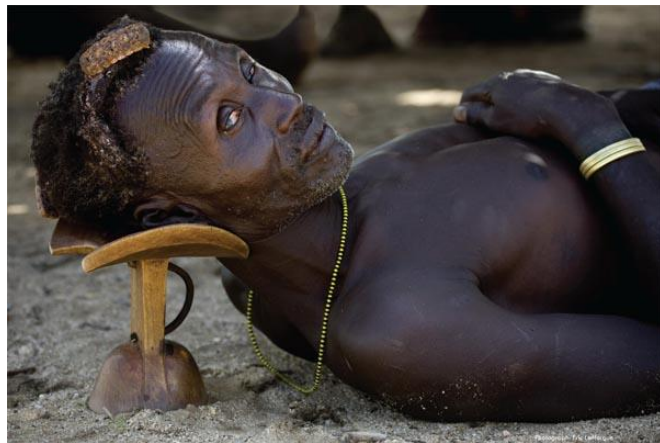


Figure 3: One of the Karo people from Ethiopia using a headrest
(Fitzwilliam Museum, n.d.)

Looking at the ancient Egyptian usage of the headrest it is known that headrests were used from the Old Kingdom through to the Ptolemaic period (Fitzwilliam, n.d.). Headrests came in variety of materials and shapes. It seems that more simple headrests were made from wood and more elaborate headrests were made from ivory and stone. It is possible that stone was used mainly for the afterlife and not for domestic purposes. The different types and styles of headrest were based on the individual's status in society as the higher your social standing a more elaborate headrest could be afforded (Fitzwilliam, n.d.).

Headrests are usually found in a burial context such as graves and tombs. However, some have also been found in domestic areas (Fitzwilliam, n.d.). It is thought that when headrests are found in domestic areas that they were used to protect head dresses, for air to circulate around the head when sleeping and to protect from insects (Killen, 2017:31). Also, when put into tombs it could be used to protect the head from decapitation if tomb robberies were to take place (Killen, 2017:32).



Figure 5: Alabaster headrest
Ancient Peoples Tumblr. n.d.)

When found in a burial context it could draw religious notions. The headrest shown in figure 4 was discovered by Howard Carter in tomb KV62 in the Valley of the Kings (Summers, 2016:229)



Figure 4: Headrest from the tomb of Tutankhamun
(Cow of Gold, n.d.)

which belonged to Tutankhamun. Some headrests like this one feature images which include important deities and elaborate text (Fitzwilliam, n.d.). Tutankhamun's headrest shows the deity Shu who was the supporter of the heavens. Another deity that has been depicted on other headrests are Bes who was thought to protect the individual from demons and the supernatural when they are most vulnerable (Killen, 2016:32). Other deities that have been used are Tawaret and Ipet which seemed to be used for the headrests of women and children (Taylor, 2010:39). Text featured on some headrests are linked

to spell 166 from the book of the dead which detail the physical comfort of the deceased and for aiding in stopping decapitation in the afterlife (Egypt Centre, n.d.). Others text used detail the deceased being able to sleep well and raise their head in the afterlife (Summers, 2016:230).

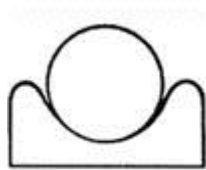


Figure 5:
Akhet
Hieroglyph
Symbol
Dictionary,
n.d

Another idea that can be drawn from the headrest is its possible links to the sun. We know how important the sun came to be for the ancient Egyptians and the shape of the upper section of the headrest could be said to resemble the Akhet hieroglyph which represents the horizon. Also, it could be said

that the afterlife is a sleep state like when the living is asleep and the headrest was used ritually to raise the head in the morning and bow the head at night like sun rising and setting each day. So, it could be said that it elevated the head to aid resurrection as the dead was travelling to

afterlife (Killen, 2017:32). Furthermore, Tutankhamun's headrest features two lions which were said to be for protection of the sun when crossing the sky (Egypt Centre, n.d.).

It could also be said that when the headrest is placed in the coffin that it could elevate the head to be at level with the Wedjet eyes placed on the side of the coffin so that the deceased could see out of the tomb (Egypt Centre, n.d.)



Figure 6: Wedjet eyes
Tour Egypt, n.d.



Figure 7: Headrest Amulet
John Hopkins Archaeological
Museum, n.d.

Headrest amulets appear in the Third Intermediate Period (John Hopkins Archaeological Museum, n.d.) and are shaped in the same way as a headrest. They were placed within the bandages during mummification (Fitzwilliam, n.d.). They helped the deceased take control of environment in the afterlife (Taylor, 2010:175) and could be a substitute for the headrest (Andrews, 1994:95).



Scarab with human decoration

Cyfarthfa Castle, Merthyr Tydfil 1716.004

Object type: scarab

Material: soapstone

Period: unknown

Provenance: unknown (Egypt or East Mediterranean)

Dimensions: Length 19mm / Width 14mm

Object analysis by **Jack Phillips**

Description

Soapstone (?) scarab; the relatively small scarab is a dark shade of brown which suggests that it is made of soapstone, a common material in the craft of scarabs as it is soft and easy to work with. Crudely incised holes on either end of the scarab puts the scarab at an angle when aligned. Carved on the front of the scarab is a figure with a raised arm as well as a sideways 'Z' that cuts through the figure. Surrounding the figure is an engraved line that encircles the whole front of the scarab. Regardless of the size, the legs of the scarab are carefully carved into the stone and are proportional to the rest of the insect. The back of the scarab is smooth with the details of the beetle carefully carved.

Decoration

Figure has a raised arm and cutting through the middle is a sideways 'Z'. Both carvings may have been added on at different times as they appear to be not incorporated with each other. The 'Z' may have been added on at a later date as it cuts over the figure. Reasoning behind this could be to add extra value or to deface the amulet and remove the magical properties of the scarab provided from the figure.

Comments

This scarab is very different from others that have been excavated. The inscription on the base does not resemble that of any other examples and without knowing the exact date or origins of the scarab additional information regarding the figure is difficult to obtain. The only features that suggest a use for this scarab are the incisions on either end.

These incisions could mean multiple things. One is that it was used as a necklace and the scarab was held in a frame which would have then been threaded on a necklace. Another is that it was used as a ring, this would explain the scale of the object. However for both cases there are no markings around the scarab that would suggest that it was laid in a frame of some form. There are no signs of wear around the base which supports this further.

As the use cannot be determined we cannot rule out the possibility that it is not an authentic scarab. The unusual small scale and the incomparable inscription on the front do raise questions regarding its authenticity. The figure on the front of the scarab is unlike other inscriptions found on other examples, but the pose the figure is making resembles the stereotypical 'Egyptian dance' pose that became a modern perception of the ancient civilisation.

The 'Z' cutting through the figure may have been added as a form of extra decoration thus increasing the value of the scarab. However there is also the possibility that the 'additional decoration' is actually a form of defacement and was an attempt to remove the magical properties of the scarab that were provided from the figure carved on the front. Unfortunately it is difficult to look into this further as the origins of the scarab are unknown and as there are no other examples of this figure being used in Egyptian magic we cannot determine its use.



Description

Full: Back view drawing, Black & White

The back of the scarab is smooth and attention to detail has been taken into much consideration regardless of its small scale.

Courtesy of J. R. Phillips, 2018

Description



Full: Front view drawing, Black & White

The figure on the base of the scarab is shown having one raised arm and having a 'Z' shaped line cutting through. This marking was most likely added on after the figure as it intersects with the carving rather than being incorporated with it.

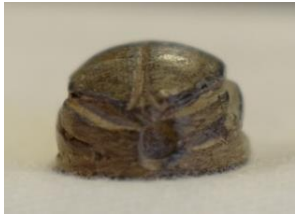
Courtesy of J. R. Phillips, 2018

Description (images Courtesy of C. Jackson, 8/2/18)



Full: Horizontal view, front/head

The scarab sits at an angle which could be down to the small scale craftsman had to work with. The incised hole at the head of the scarab is carefully cut into the stone but still causes the scarab to be positioned at an angle when aligned with the hole on the opposite end.



Full: Horizontal view, back/rear

The scarab sits at an angle which could be down to the small scale craftsman had to work with. The incised hole on the bottom of the scarab is clearly not in centre which causes the object to be at an angle when aligned with the opposite end.



Full: Horizontal view, left side

Regardless of the significantly small scale of the scarab, the legs are still defined and proportional to the rest of the insect showing the care and level of craftsmanship that was applied to this object.



Full: Horizontal view, right side

Regardless of the significantly small scale of the scarab, the legs are still defined and proportional to the rest of the insect showing the care and level of craftsmanship that was applied to this object.



Scarab with lotus decoration

Cyfarthfa Castle, Merthyr Tydfil 1716.004

Object type: scarab

Material: soapstone

Period: unknown

Provenance: unknown (Egypt or East Mediterranean)

Dimensions: Length 19mm / Width 14mm

Object analysis by **Christine Jackson**

Scarabs are one of the most iconic and recognised symbols in Ancient Egyptian culture. This is due to the symbol's prominence in the funerary sphere in the form of amulets which were often carved into the shape of a scarab. This was due to the religious meaning and mythologies that the Egyptians placed in the scarab. The key myth focusing on scarabs is that of the God Khepri, often associated with rebirth, who took the form of a scarab and pushed the sun across the sky, similarly to the action of scarab beetles pushing their balls of dung along (Taylor 2001 and Andrews 1994). Khepri is also associated with one of the central mythologies of Egyptian culture involving the Death and resurrection of Osiris (ancient.eu-Osiris 2016)¹. In this myth Khepri aids the resurrection and rise of the mummified Osiris into in the form of a new born child (Taylor 2001). Taylor explains that this role of Khepri is why he became the symbol of resurrection and rebirth (Taylor 2001).

Scarab CMM1706.004 came into the collection at Cyfarthfa Castle through the help of Major Southey. Southey travelled to Egypt while in the British Army and developed a professional association and friendship curator in a Cairo museum, and this friendship led to the scarabs being sent to Southey's home to Cyfarthfa Castle (masonic Great War project 2003-2016).

Regardless of its provenance, the scarab's authenticity is still questionable. However some conclusions can be drawn from the evidence that we have. The examination of the scarab amulet's base shows a symbol on the base which could be interpreted as papyrus plants, or corn, or rising cobras or even lotus seeds. The lotus symbolism is most applicable as the lotus is often depicted in scenes on funerary reliefs. A possible explanation is that the lotus was used as a method of sustaining the deceased symbolically. (academic.oup 2009) It is also possible that the symbols on the base are nonsensical, or copies of images from an ideology which is not understood by the craftsman. This could imply that the object is a 'fake' as it is not a known hieroglyph symbol and nonsensical hieroglyphs are common on fakes (Andrews 1994). However, similar decoration has been found in other scarabs from the 20th to 22nd Dynasties at Medinet Habu (Teeter 2008 96). If the scarab is genuine then the similar pattern types can be used to date this scarab.

Another possible way to date the scarab is to examine different aspects of the scarab, such as the attention to the detail on the carving of the amulet. As mentioned before the base is a clear method to approach when dating, as it is the base which has developed most throughout time (Wilkinson 2008). However the base is not the only to focus. Amulets were often created to be an accurate representation of life scarab beetles (Andrews 1994; Wilkinson 2008). The development changes of the back and sides of the base can also indicate dating. In cases the scarab has its wings folded up. One clear change that happened as part of the development of making the amulet more realistic



Examples of scarab with details on the legs taken at the British museum by C. Jackson on 03/04/18 (fig.2)



inclusion of Humeral callosity (V mark) which shows the presence of folded up wings (Wilkinson 2008). The main change that can be used to identify the scarab amulets is the style of the legs, both in the detail and the position. In the earlier periods, mainly the Old Kingdom and 1st Intermediate Period, the legs were roughly outlined and unnaturally spread outwards. (see (fig.1) Towards the end of 1st Intermediate Period the legs became bent to the side of the body. (Wilkinson 2008). Throughout the two thousand year period of scarab amulet use, (First Intermediate Period – Greco-Roman period) (Andrews 1994), scarabs always have notches in the legs to make them more realistically like dung beetles (fig.2) (Andrews 1994). Scarab CMM1706.004 does not have very accurate features nor are the notches in a very detailed (fig.3) so it further suggests that the scarab we have is a copy of an original one.

Even we do not understand everything about this scarab, it is possible to determine what the scarab is not. For example on a heart scarab there would be hieroglyphics which could be translated into spells or names to identify the reason for the need to protect the person (Wilkinson 2008). The lack of hieroglyphs can also be used to indicate that scarab is not a commemorative scarab too, as these types of scarabs contains details of significant events of pharaohs



the place real and most is the

The scarab of King Sobekemsaf an example of the earlier period style of leg position taken by C.Jackson on 03/04/18 (fig.1)



Zoomed in Front view of scarab of showing detail taken by C.Jackson on 22/02/18 (fig. 3)

(Wilkinson 2008; Kozoloff 2012). Therefore the lack of hieroglyphs suggests that the scarab is geometric in nature. (Wilkinson 2008).

One indication that brings the authenticity of the scarab into question is the size of scarab CMM1706.004 which does not fit the sizing for the usual of the scarabs. Normally a scarab is between 0.5-2.5 cm (Andrews 1994) and with the exception of heart scarabs being 9-11cm in size (Wilkinson 2008) and commemorative scarabs being 5.2-11 cm (Andrews 1994). All of the scarabs would have followed the size range as they were being mass produced (Wilkinson 2008), this therefore makes it interesting that our scarab varies from the norm.



*Example of Amenhotep
III's marriage
commemorative scarab
from display in the
Metropolitan museum*



Sokar Bird (painted)

Cyfarthfa Castle, Merthyr Tydfil 1694.004

Object type: figurine

Material: wood

Period: Most likely from the Late Period

Provenance: Unprovenanced (Egypt)

Condition: well preserved, paint and plaster flaked off

Dimensions: Height = 7.1 cm; Length = 14.5 cm; Width = 5.6 cm

Object analysis by **Molly Gogh**

The object in question here is a small, wooden and painted bird. At first glance, it could be misidentified as a *Ba* bird, but this object is in fact a Sokar hawk. Sokar hawks were made to attach onto a larger statuette, known as a Ptah-Sokar-Osiris statuette which were placed in tombs. They also could be sit on coffins or canopic chests.

Some *Ba* birds were carved to have bird features, rather than a human head, especially in the later periods. But the shape and size is specifically reminiscent of Late Period Sokar hawks and

the shape of these wooden birds were believed to symbolised a mummified bird (Bunson. 2002: 313). This is because of its relevance to the funerary sphere, its placement and responsibility in the tomb, and the significance of resurrection to the trinity deity the statuette represented.

The wood of the Sokar hawk is a light-medium brown which has likely darkened from age and staining from the paint. Ancient Egyptians typically made their statuettes from woods such as tamarisk, acacia, and sycamore fig as these wood types contained knots and irregular graining, making it easier to carve small statues from the wood (RSC. n.d.: 3). It is likely one of these woods was used to carve the Sokar hawk. After carving, the Sokar hawk was plastered, painted, and then coated in gesso, a type of resin. If statuettes showed signs of high irregular graining, the object would be plastered first, in order to create a smoother surface to set the paint on (RSC. n.d.: 3). In some places, the Sokar hawk is a lighter shade of wood, where the plaster and paint has been peeled off through wear and tear. It is probable, but not definite, that this was the actual colour of the bird, but with any dating techniques, it is impossible to both date the wood or confirm the type of wood this bird was made from. The wood is worn but in a surprisingly adequate condition, as there has been a lack of decay to the wood because of the dry, arid climate Egypt has, allowing objects to preserved better than they would be in humid climates for example (Kibblewhite, *et al.* 2015: 250-251). The bird was likely connected to a statuette of Ptah-Sokar-Osiris through a wooden rod that protruded from the base of the statuette. This is somewhat confirmed by the existence of what looks like a man-made hole on the underside of the bird (see Figure 2). Through this hole, the bird would have slotted



Figure 2: A Ptah-Sokar-Osiris statuette with the Sokar hawk still attached. © Metropolitan Museum.

onto the wooden rod to sit in front of and facing the Ptah-Sokar-Osiris figure. However, on the statuettes without the birds, there seems to be no rod to hold the bird in place. This is odd, as several birds have holes through their bases, which would indicate that was how they were attached. On the other hand, because the statuette as a whole held funerary papyri, corn mummies, and a small part of the deceased (according to Bunson 2002: 313), it has been suggested that the bird could have held another roll of funerary papyrus. This would mean that bird could have been attached with a type of resin-like glue or may have simply rested upon the base of the statuette; possible as the tomb was not supposed to be disturbed after burial.



Figure 1: The underside of the painted Sokar hawk, showing a small hole. © Molly Gough.

The paint still visible on the bird shows a certain significance of colour symbolism for the Ancient Egyptians. The main colour left on the Sokar hawk is a dark red, likely darkened over time. There are the remains of some splashes of blue and white as well but this is minimal. Because the bird is no longer fully painted, it is hard to say whether it was painted in the same fashion to the Sokar hawks of the Late Period. The red on the bird likely represents the Crown of the South, while the white symbolises the Crown of the North. The blue was believed to be the

Crown of War. When paired together, the red and white symbolise unity and wholeness, and when looked at in a funerary context, it is possible that it symbolises the idea of joining the gods in the afterlife, particularly as Ptah-Sokar-Osiris had links to resurrection and rebirth through death (RSC: n.d.: 7).

The Sokar hawk was accompanied by a smaller, less decorated hawk so it is unlikely that they



Figure 3: The pair of birds (Sokar hawks). © Molly Gough.

were supposed to be a pair (see Figure 4). There is a difference in size and decoration when the birds are studied side by side, making it apparent that although they both had the same purpose, they were not supposed to be a pair. Both Sokar hawks were attached to Ptah-Sokar-Osiris statuettes, although through different methods, (the smaller hawk does not have a hole on its underside) to then be placed in tombs. These statuettes held funerary papyri and corn mummies, the former of which was thought to represent Osiris and the experiences he had of the renewal of life, which the deceased hoped to share (Taylor. 2001: 212).

These statuettes were closely associated with the housing of funerary papyri (Munro. 2010: 61). Reintroduced in the twenty-fifth dynasty, the statuettes represented a deity who embodied the notion of resurrection. The hawk on the base of these statuettes represented Sokar (Taylor. 2001: 212). In the New Kingdom however, the statuettes only represented Osiris and held funerary papyri in the cavities in the base; it was only during the twenty-fifth dynasty that this changed, and the Ptah-Sokar-Osiris statuettes become an integral part of the funerary assemblage (Taylor. 2001: 213). The statuettes were prized for not only their magical powers, but their practical uses as well, meaning they could hold several funerary papyri, corn-mummies, and part of the deceased, covered by the placement of the Sokar hawk (Bunson. 2002: 313).





Sokar Bird (small)

Cyfarthfa Castle, Merthyr Tydfil 1694.004

Object type: figurine

Material: wood

Period: Most likely from the Late Period

Provenance: Unprovenanced (Egypt)

Condition: well preserved, some paint and plaster preserved

Dimensions: Height = 7.1 cm; Length = 14.5 cm; Width = 5.6 cm

Object analysis by **Hannah Pickering**

Object 1681.004 is a small bird carved out of wood. On the body and the head of the object, there are small traces of red, white, and black paint – the rest of the body being bare down to the wood base. The underside appears to be painted with a type of resin, the base being otherwise relatively intact. The carved facial features of the bird still remain, which is rather surprising seeing as the front and rear ends of the birds show a rather large amount of wear and tear through the cracking of the wood. The dimensions of the bird are 7.25cm in height, 10.5cm in length, and 3.45cm in width. Compared to other Sokar Hawks that have been dated, it would be believed that this object is datable to anywhere between the Late and Ptolemaic Periods in Egypt.

The colours on the body of the object have been hypothesised to represent different things. The aspects of red may be a representation of red linen, which was associated with rebirth and the god Osiris.² The black on the Cyfarthafa object is located on the eye, which simply shows the colour used to mark out the eyes of the bird. If this bird can be related to other Sokar Hawks, it

² Bailleul-LeSuer, 2012, 203

may have also been painted with red and green bands which would have represented decorative beads, and any yellow paint would have symbolised gold leaf – a colour of the gods.³

The use of resin on a wooden figure is said to have been as a protective coating.⁴ As for the paint, mineral and lake pigments were used, lake pigments being better when withstanding strong sunlight and fading.⁵ Both small and large objects were painted in the same way, paint being applied to dried plaster.⁶ For small wooden objects, the wood used the most was either tamarisk, sycamore fig, or acacia. If these woods were of a high enough quality, plaster would be skipped and paint could be applied directly to the surface of the wood.⁷



Crouching falcons like the Cyfarthafa object are thought to represent mummification and may have been likened to the image of a god.⁸ Many of the more prominent Gods were represented with a human body and the head of a bird.⁹ The importance of birds to the Egyptian funerary sphere is due to the fact that the protection of the dead was often attributed to vulture goddesses and falcon gods. Falcon gods were especially important as it was these gods that the deceased were more likely to be identified with,¹⁰ as both the *Coffin Texts* and *The Book of the Dead* include spells to allow the dead to be “transformed into a divine falcon”.¹¹ Sokar Hawks could be found placed upon coffins, sarcophagi, canopic chests, and shabti chests, perhaps protecting the mummy or objects below through their process of metamorphosis.¹²

The underworld¹³ god Sokar is shown as a falcon, as are his figurines.¹⁴ He was the god of the necropolis in Memphis and a spirit guardian of the tombs,¹⁵

often being believed to represent darkness and decay.¹⁶ The early dynastic period showed local deities such as Sokar being elevated to a more regional importance; the Palermo Stone gives evidence of Sokar in royal ceremonies.¹⁷ Sokar even had his own festival, it being linked to the

³ Bailleul-LeSuer, 2012, 203

⁴ Royal Society of Chemistry, 2017, 3

⁵ Royal Society of Chemistry, 2017, 2

⁶ Royal Society of Chemistry, 2017, 3

⁷ Royal Society of Chemistry, 2017, 3

⁸ Museums Of The World, 2014

⁹ Okon, 2012, 94

¹⁰ Bailleul-LeSuer, 2012, 201

¹¹ Bailleul-LeSuer, 2012, 204

¹² Bailleul-LeSuer, 2012, 204

¹³ Mackenzie, 2002, 23

¹⁴ Bailleul-LeSuer, 2012, 203

¹⁵ Bunson, 1991, 385

¹⁶ Bunson, 1991, 385

¹⁷ Bunson, 1991, 342

forth month of the floods. This link represents the time where the floodwaters would have pulled back to show the silt covering the fields ready for the sowing season.¹⁸ When worship of the sun reached the Nile Valley, Sokar was identified with the winter sun, as opposed to Horus as the summer sun.¹⁹ By the time of the Middle Kingdom, Sokar is associated with the transfiguration of the dead during the Opening of the Mouth ceremony.²⁰ Both royal and non-royal persons are known to have been represented as mummiform humans with falcon heads, this likely representing the deceased as the god Sokar. Sokar was often related to the *ka*-spirit of the human, his kingdom being a dreary enclosure which holds many tasks for the dead to complete.²¹ In *The Book of Gates*, the “Lake of Fire” was said to be Sokar’s cavern, where damned souls were destined to burn for eternity.²² Sokar’s prominence in certain festivals also presents his importance to the Egyptian funerary sphere. Medinet Habu held Sokar’s *Henu* boat, and on feast days it was known to have been paraded around the capital. This object was laden with ornamentation and had a large amount of esteem within cult circles.²³

Though Sokar is a god in his own right, he is perhaps the most well known in the tripartite deity of Ptah-Sokar-Osiris.²⁴ This god is presented as a dwarf with a clean-shaven head. Sometimes he is shown to be mummiform with a beard, wearing two feathers, a solar disk, or rams horns on his head.²⁵ This god is said to symbolise the whole cycle of generation after death: Ptah standing for creation, Sokar as death (via metamorphosis), and Osiris representing rebirth. He is the creator, the judge, and the king.²⁶ Sometimes this god is even seen in the hall of Two Truths chairing the judgement of the dead.²⁷ Ptah-Sokar-Osiris had his own cult at Memphis, the Apis bull being the sacred animal of the cult.²⁸ The Sokar Hawk is so directly linked with this god as they are often associated with the Ptah-Sokar-Osiris figurines.²⁹ These figurines were often hollow and have been found to contain certain spells from The Book of the Dead, or corn mummies (The mummies being believed to be able to aid the tomb owner in achieving resurrection).³⁰ These figurines were also believed to have magical properties and potentially used as Shabtis. The Sokar Hawks often sat on the base of these figurines, protecting whatever was concealed by the figurine.³¹

Though it is near impossible to date and pin this object to a specific time and location, it is likely that this Sokar Hawk was a tomb object from the later times in Ancient Egyptian history. It may not be the most significant, but it is a very interesting piece in the understanding of the funerary sphere of Egypt at this time.

¹⁸ Quirke, 2015, 100

¹⁹ Mackenzie, 2002, 53

²⁰ Bailleul-LeSuer, 2012, 204

²¹ Sayce, 2011, 182-183

²² Bunson, 1991, 205

²³ Bunson, 1991, 43

²⁴ Museums Of The World, 2014

²⁵ Shorter, 1937, 138

²⁶ Mackenzie, 2002, 53

²⁷ Pinch, 2002, 182

²⁸ Bunson, 1991, 43

²⁹ Museums, 2014

³⁰ Pinch, 2002, 203

³¹ Bunson, 1991, 313



Saucer Lamp

Cyfarthfa Castle, Merthyr Tydfil 305.004

Object type: Oil lamp - shape variously named saucer, shell or cocked hat

Material: Nile clay, possibly coated with slip

Period: Late Second Intermediate Period or New Kingdom (?)

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

Condition: broken (both ends snapped off)

Dimensions: diameter: 61.5mm side to side, 56.9mm front to back; height: 30.0mm centre front, 25.1mm back.

Object analysis by **Margaret Gallagher**

This tiny, unassuming lamp could easily be dismissed as being of little interest. However, this small item can give us an insight into how ordinary people lit up the darkness in ancient Egypt, as well as connecting us to aspects of Egypt's history, including an historic link to other regions around the eastern and southern Mediterranean. Which means that, along with its original

function as a lamp, it now has a new aspect to its history - that of a teaching aid and cultural representative for an ancient civilisation.

Although wheel-thrown pottery was being produced in Egypt from Old Kingdom times, most pottery lamps used then, and for some time afterwards, were bowl shaped, with one or more floating wicks. Examples have been found in domestic, funereal and ritual contexts, including at Amarna, which indicates bowl type lamps were still in use during the New Kingdom.

The earliest evidence of this pinched-front type of lamp was in Canaan, around 1700BC. They were in common use there for at least 1000 years, eventually extending to Mediterranean locations which had contact with the Canaanites, Hyksos or Phoenicians during that time. This included Egypt, which traded with Canaan during the Middle Kingdom and encompassed Canaan within its territory in the New Kingdom. But the biggest influx of Canaanite culture came after the Hyksos invaded during the 17th century BC - beginning 2nd Intermediate Period. The Hyksos brought with them many new technologies, craft techniques, animals, crops and war-related technology.

Canaanite lamps were mostly larger than our example. Twice the diameter, they developed from the original bowl shape to having one or more channels created in the rim, to hold the wick. These channels helped keep the lit end of the wick above the oil and thus able to burn longer.

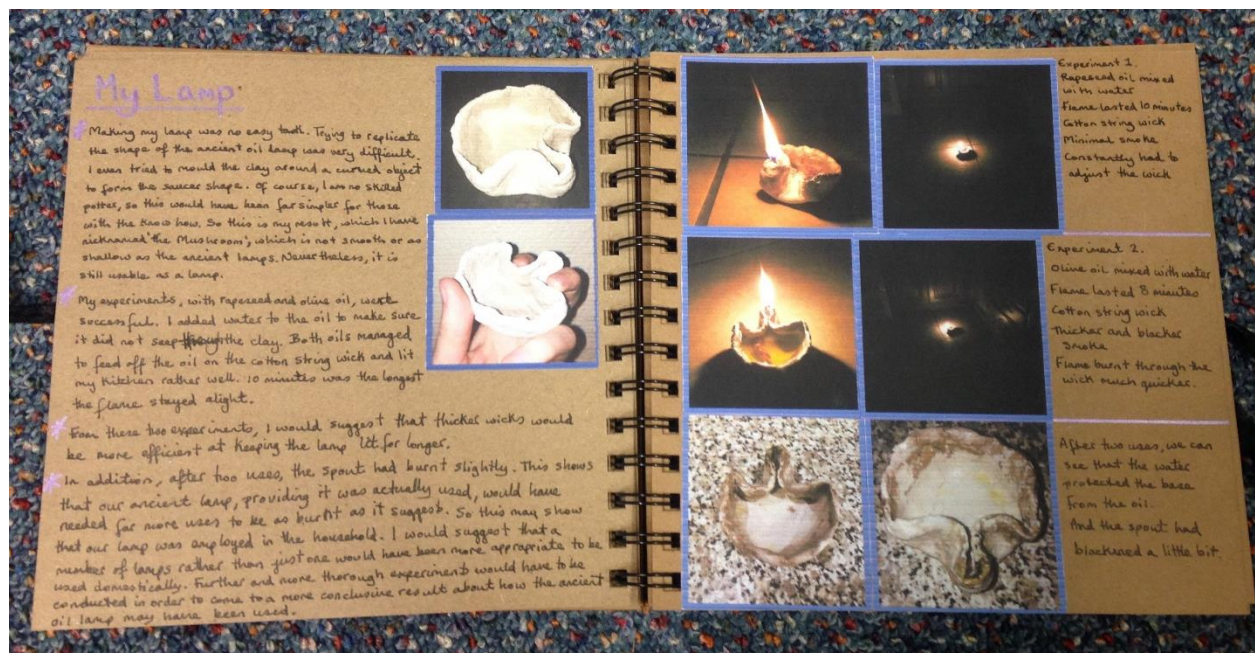
The original models in Egypt were probably imported from Canaan, but the technology caught on locally and they became very popular. This is indicated by our lamp because: 1. it is made from Nile clay - a free, local resource; 2. It is wheel thrown and fired expertly (red colour shows this), which means many would have been made; 3. They were small, also indicating cheapness, but perhaps it also says something about how they were used; 4. They were still being made when the Ptolemies arrived in Egypt in the late 4th Century BC, as indicated by locally made examples found at their city of Naukratis on the Nile delta. More sophisticated, moulded designs evolved after the Macedonian invasion but, for around 1300 years, lamps like this one would have been part of everyday life for ordinary Egyptians. They gave out light equivalent to 1-2 candles, which is not much by our standards but, before electricity, low-level, patchy light in the homes of ordinary working people was normal. So, this kind and size of lamp may have been adequate for at least supplemental domestic use at night, or in darker rooms.

However, providing inexpensive light in the home was not the only function of lamps in Egyptian society. Light was a key feature of many religious and 'magical' rituals (heka) since light, and life, were given by the gods - who were the heart of Egyptian culture. This meant light was important in both state/communal and personal religious practices - physically and symbolically. So, it is quite possible that a small lamp like this one could have been used in a personal ritual or sited within a home altar, perhaps dedicated to a household god. Or it could have been used by an individual within a communal ritual like a public festival of the lamps, similar to one described by Herodotus, and celebrations relating to Isis, Horus and Osiris all involved lamp ceremonies.

A further, and most important use was in a funerary context. Families maintained a close connection with their deceased relatives during and after their journey to the afterlife. They

were sent onwards with all the necessities of daily life, as far as the budget would allow. The greater the expense, the more physically real and extensive the bounty provided. The smaller the budget, the more symbolic and intentional the gifts - given in the knowledge that, in the next world, this was enough to render them as functional in the afterlife as any material provision - whether practically, or as a source of life energy required as sustenance. This provision would have included lamps, oil and lamp wicks - found even in the tomb of Tutankhamun.

There was also a ritual practice of feasting with the ancestors when they were first interred, and regularly thereafter, in the belief it would sustain immortal life and encourage their now divine support from the afterlife. The family would bring food and drink to the tomb and feast in the presence and with the believed participation of their deceased relative/s. Logically this would include bringing lamps into the space in which they feasted, not just for light, but perhaps also as part of the ritual surrounding the activity. And what would be more normal than bringing a lamp from home, perhaps even from a home altar, to enlighten these important festivities?



Ashleigh Harrison: Making of an ancient Egyptian saucer lamp (experimental archaeology project, as evidenced in scrap book)



Canopic Chest (Shabti Box) with Lid

Cyfarthfa Castle, Merthyr Tydfil 1786.004

Object type: chest

Material: Wood, painted on gesso

Period: Ptolemaic Period

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

Condition: well preserved, paint faded on one side

Dimensions: Height – 32.6 - 40cm; Width – 20.4 - 27.4cm; Length – 25.4 - 32.3cm

Object analysis by Tilly Hall

A wooden structure that is cuboid in shape with a wider base and narrower opening at the top. The chest is decorated with rectangular patterns that stretch across three of the sides of the chest, around its lower half. Four painted figures appear on the front and back panels of the chest, these are the Four Sons of Horus; Imseti, Duametef, Qebehsenuf, and Hapi. A depiction of the Djed pillar appears on the left side with the sun of Re and the horns of a ram. Surrounding the Djed pillar are hieroglyphs in cursive script. The sides of the chest's lid feature a similar rectangular pattern as that which surrounds the lower half of the chest, but the top is damaged, and the details are worn. This is also the case around the bottom of the chest. However, on the right side of the chest, there is no detail at all, it is a plain white panel. The four sides sit upon a square, wooden base board that is an average of 3.5 cm wider than the base of the joint four panels. The inside of the chest is bare wood with no marks of painting, inscription, nor markings

to suggest that there were any dividers inside the box, but, there are two holes in the base board.



Fig. 1

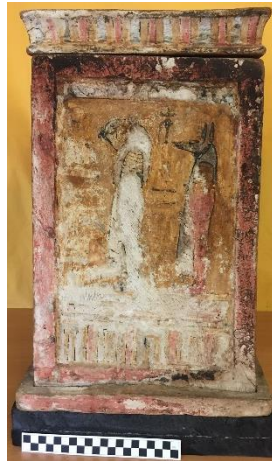


Fig. 2



Fig. 3



Fig. 4

Canopic chests and shabti shrines are important within the funerary sphere as they are used to protect their contents. From the fourth dynasty³² to the Second Intermediate Period there is



Fig. 5. – Sycamore fig tree wood, Canopic Chest, the British Museum. (EA8535)

evidence that mummified organs of the deceased would be placed into canopic jars and then into a wooden chest. The chests were divided into four compartments so that the jars fit safely inside. The Cyfarthfa chest however, does not have this feature, possibly due to the early Ptolemaic period having symbolic canopic chests (as the organs were placed back into the body out of fear that the two would be separated), and how they cease to form part of the funerary equipment from the late Ptolemaic period.³³ On the other hand, if this chest were a shabti shrine, it would be used to hold an abundance of small shabti statuettes;³⁴ the New Kingdom saw an increase of shabtis in funerary equipment, as many as 365 would appear in one tomb.³⁵ However, the use of shabtis died out during the Ptolemaic period which means that this chest is more symbolic than practical.

Therefore, it is reasonable to suggest that the Cyfarthfa chest was more symbolic than practical, whether a shabti shrine or canopic chest, due to the dying out of shabtis and the returning of the visceral organs into the mummified corpse.

³² Ikram 2015: 127; the earliest canopic chest and canopic jars found, contained the mummified organs of Queen Hetepheres, the chest was stone and divided into four compartments.

³³ Ikram 2015: 128

³⁴ Milde 2012: 9

³⁵ Ikram 2015: 130

It is definite that the Cyfarthfa chest was made specifically for a burial as it is decorated, where as a plain chest indicated everyday use.³⁶ On the front and back panels of the chest, the Four Sons of Horus are depicted. These Four Sons were the protective deities over the extracted and embalmed organs of the deceased, and from the New Kingdom onwards, the canopic jars began to feature the heads;³⁷ Imseti appears with the head of a man and protects over the liver, next to him is Hapi shown with the head of a baboon guarding the lungs.³⁸ On the opposite panel, the jackal headed Duametef who protects the stomach is pictured next to Qebehseneuf, who has the head of a falcon and protects the intestines.³⁹ The significance of the inclusion of these gods in relation to identifying what the chest is, is that these gods often appear on canopic chests⁴⁰ and also as the heads on canopic jars, which could possibly be the contents of this chest. Furthermore, the Djed pillar, by the New Kingdom, represented the spine of Osiris, judge of the dead,⁴¹ and is associated with his resurrection as well as the stability of the monarchy.⁴² The restorative power of the Djed pillar and its inclusion in the funerary art ensured that, like Osiris in mythology, the dead would come back to live on in the Afterlife.⁴³ There is no direct mention of the deceased, so the owner of the chest remains unknown, this information could have been on the right side of the chest, where the gesso base is all that is left. The art found on funerary equipment often didn't include any reference to the deceased directly, though they did depict the deceased's intimacy with certain deities.⁴⁴ This is telling of Ancient Egyptian ideology as it shows how people of the Ptolemaic period wished to be presented, whether realistically or idealistically.⁴⁵

It is important to date an object as it shows the development of trends.⁴⁶ However, dating can be an issue with Ancient Egyptian objects; tomb robberies, termites, and wear and tear erase information that could be used to identify telling techniques specific to certain time periods. There are

similarities in the Cyfarthfa chest and the canopic chest seen above (fig. 5) such as the structure and the style. The colours used and the patterns surrounding the lower half of the chest are nearly identical to those seen on the Cyfarthfa chest. The canopic chest (fig. 5) is in the shape of a shrine, which is the same as the Cyfarthfa chest, they also share the same cursive script. Both chests also feature the Sirius Star constellation at the very top representing Sopdet, the brightest star in the sky.⁴⁷ Furthermore, the Shabti box (fig. 6) also shows some similarities as it features the same pattern around the lower half of the box. The Four Sons of Horus can also be



Fig. 6 – Wooden shabti box, The Fitzwilliam Museum. (E.10.1887)

³⁶ Killen 2017: 130

³⁷ Ikram 2015: 127

³⁸ Taylor 2001: 65

³⁹ Taylor 2001: 65

⁴⁰ Pinch 2002: 204

⁴¹ Pinch 2002: 127-28

⁴² Ikram 2015: 97

⁴³ Oakes and Gahlin 2005: 165

⁴⁴ Riggs 2002: 95

⁴⁵ Riggs 2002: 99

⁴⁶ Riggs 2002: 93

⁴⁷ Shaw 2014: 71

seen on the shabti box, the box does however, look plain compared to the Cyfarthfa chest and the canopic Chest (fig. 5). With these comparisons, it is reasonable to suggest that the dating of the Cyfarthfa Chest is Ptolemaic.



The Museum of Lies

Artwork



'Into the Light'...?

Triptych: oil/acrylic on wooden panels

Artist: Julie Davis



As well as her role as a Specialist Support / Study Skills Tutor at UWTSD, Julie Davis is also a practising artist, having completed a Masters in Art and Art History at Aberystwyth. She regularly exhibits in Wales and beyond, and has painted a number of notable portrait commissions.

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