

# Aegyptus et Pannonia IX.



Acta Symposii anno 2023

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BUDAPEST

# Aegyptus et Pannonia IX.

Acta Symposii anno 2023

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On the cover: Vase from the Zsolnay factory, © private  
collection (see FULLÉR – FERÓ, fig. 14. )

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# Aegyptus et Pannonia IX.

Objects and Concepts.

Proceedings of the Conference

19<sup>th</sup>-20<sup>th</sup> January, 2023, Budapest, Hungary

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## THE 'OBJECTS AND CONCEPTS' CONFERENCE AND THE HEFS AEC

**DR. HEDVIG GYÓRY, PHD**

HEFS AEC president

The Ancient Egyptian Committee of the Hungarian-Egyptian Friendship Society (HEFS AEC / MEPT ÓEB) organised the 'Objects and Concepts' conference in collaboration with the Semmelweis Medical History Museum of the Hungarian National Museum on 19<sup>th</sup>-20<sup>th</sup> January 2023. Scholars joined the event in person in Budapest and online from around the world.

The conference aimed to provide a platform for presenting ongoing Egyptological and medical historical research projects related to artefacts, as well as results. It also offered the professional community and a broader interested audience the opportunity to become acquainted with new discoveries, as well as theoretical and methodological approaches. A key objective was to initiate dialogue among specialists in Egyptology, archaeology, ancient history, ethnography, cultural anthropology, Oriental studies and African studies. This would broaden professional perspectives, expand and share knowledge, and shape research approaches. This objective was largely achieved during the conference.

From an Egyptological standpoint, 2022 marked a dual jubilee: the 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Jean-François Champollion's decipherment of hieroglyphic writing, and the commemoration of the discovery of Tutankhamun's tomb 100 years earlier. Drawing inspiration from these events, the conference aimed to reconsider what Tutankhamun's artefacts have taught us about ancient Egyptian culture and how the decipherment of hieroglyphs has deepened our understanding of ancient perceptions of artefacts, their meanings and their uses. The presentations focused on research projects exploring the understanding and interpretation of material culture in ancient and modern societies. This was achieved by reconsidering the real or perceived meanings of objects, or by examining their function, use, and social value.

Following the period of disruption caused by the COVID pandemic, this *Aegyptus et Pannonia* conference was announced as an in-person event in the hope that academic life would return to normal. In practice, however, online

participation has become a permanent feature of scholarly communication. There was still strong demand for remote presentations, with several participants requesting the option to attend online. To a limited extent, this was accommodated, and the conference was organised in a hybrid format. In keeping with tradition, the programme included both English- and Hungarian-language sections. Nevertheless, all contributors were asked to submit written versions of their papers in English for the conference volume. The speakers included nearly equal numbers of Hungarian and international scholars. Most of the studies published in the conference volume are revised versions of the presentations and reflect the discussions held during and after the event. A few papers were omitted due to the authors' other commitments. These were replaced by a study of Bes amulets, as a continuation done on the ornamental Bes amulets during the 18<sup>th</sup> Dynasty. Abstracts submitted to the 'Objects and Concepts' conference are available in a separate booklet and on the 'Fáraók Földjén' (In the Land of the Pharaohs / [ibisz.iif.hu/ozirisz](http://ibisz.iif.hu/ozirisz)) website of the HEFS AEC, in both Hungarian and English.

**Thursday, 19 January 2023**

10:00–10:30

Arrival and Greeting

HEFS / MEBT + HNM CCP Semmelweis Medical History Museum (SOM)

10:30–12:00 / EN

Virginia Webb: Reception and alteration: Aegyptiaca in 8<sup>th</sup>- and 7<sup>th</sup>-century East Greece through the lens of sanctuary deposits on Samos and Miletus. Import or local production?

Benedek Varga: Connections in the museum representation of the Seuso Treasure

Urška Furlan: A case study of society through the production, consumption, and circulation of amulets of the Nile Delta in the first millennium BCE

12:30–14:00 / HU

Dóra Bohacsek: „Idézlek téged, démon, bárki vagy is (...)” – Latin nyelvű átoktáblák Észak-Afrikából [“I summon you, demon, whoever you are (...)” – Latin curse tablets from North Africa]

Krisztina Scheffer – Hedvig Győry: Udzsat szem amulettek a SOMban [Wedjat eye amulets in the collection of the HNM Semmelweis Museum for Medical history]

Gabriella Vámos: „Fújtak rá cukrot, hogy ne fájjon annyira...” A cukor mint a népi gyógyászat egyik alapanyaga [“They sprayed sugar on it so it wouldn't hurt so much...” Sugar as one of the ingredients of folk medicine]

**Friday, 20 January 2023**

10:00–11:30 / EN

Rita Simon: The curious history of Tutankhamun's scarab

Afaf Wahba: Objects associated with burials: concept, purpose, and meaning, with examples from recent excavations in Egypt

Esther Pons Mellado: A Predynastic vessel with human and animal representations

12:00–13:00 / HU

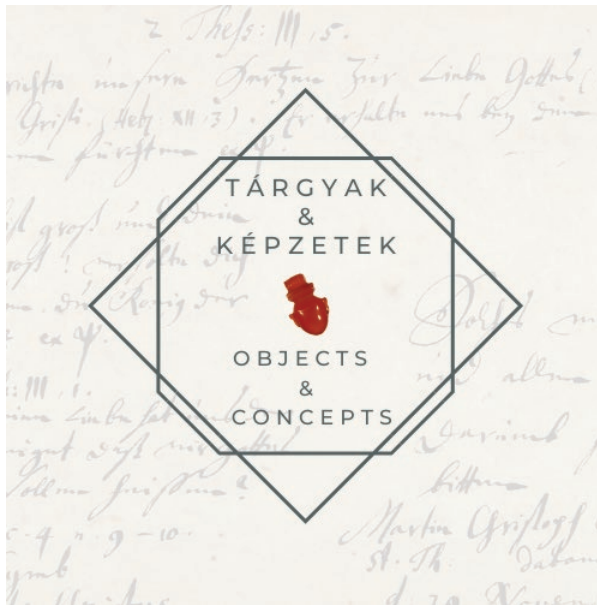
Andrea Fullér – Eszter Ferő: Tutanhamentől a szecesszióig: a Zsolnay gyár egyiptizáló díszműáruja [From Tutankhamun to Art Nouveau: the Zsolnay factory's Egyptionizing decorative goods]

Péter Véninger: Medma és Hipponion, két ókori görög város kerámia emlékei fazekas szemmel [Clay objects of two ancient Greek towns, Medma and Hipponion, with a potter's eye]

Hedvig Győry: Az év ókori egyiptomi emléke: A Thoerisz/Taweret amulettek kérdéséhez [The ancient Egyptian object of the year: To the question of the Thoeris/Taweret amulets]

13:00–13:30

Closing remarks



The title and design of the conference were linked to the double anniversary in 2022. In Hungary, as elsewhere, considerable attention was devoted to Jean-François Champollion, who used the Rosetta Stone to decipher the hieroglyphs, establish their grammatical system and identify their vocabulary. This paved the way for a new understanding of ancient Egyptian culture. Decades of intensive scholarly work have built on his results, enabling

modern audiences to read hieroglyphic texts and gain an understanding – at least in broad outlines – of the thought processes of ancient Egyptians. Nevertheless, further refinement is necessary in this field. One consequence of this breakthrough was that the interpretation of material culture reached a new level: previously uninterpretable or largely speculative assumptions were replaced by interpretations supported by textual sources or more precise approaches to perceived meanings.

The conference logo features a heart-shaped amulet inside a geometric frame, set against a 19<sup>th</sup>-century manuscript. This symbolises the ancient Egyptian belief that the heart was the key to both biological life and emotions and thought.

However, reading ancient Egyptian texts does not mean that all questions have been answered. One such issue concerns the Stela of Djedher<sup>1</sup> in the Museum of Fine Arts. In this stela the adoring official offering to Osiris, Isis, and Nephthys is shown – following New Kingdom models – with a balm cone on his head, yet its design suggests that its original meaning was lost in later periods. It became a cone-shaped element with branching lines emerging from it. This motif also highlights the deteriorated condition of the centuries-old models, later alterations to which were not always distinguished from the original forms by subsequent artists. By contrast, the jackal figure standing on a boat in the upper register of the stela – despite being a rare depiction – clearly symbolises Anubis's role as 'guide of the soul' in the afterlife. This role is explained from multiple perspectives in written Egyptian sources. For this reason, the stela was chosen as the backdrop for the call for papers.

Another significant anniversary in 2022 was the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Howard Carter and Lord Carnarvon's discovery of the treasures in Tutankhamun's tomb. The objects unearthed at that time had an enormous global impact thanks to their breathtaking beauty, unique forms and exquisite craftsmanship. Public interest in ancient Egypt in Hungary has always been intense,<sup>2</sup> as evidenced by numerous Egyptian-style monuments, such as the

1 MEKIS, Tamás, *Quelques données nouvelles sur les stèles Budapest MBA inv. no 51.1928 et Prague MN P 1636, et sur la famille de Iâhmès fils de Smendès, propriétaire de la statue Caire JE 37075*, in Coulon, Laurent, *La Cachette de Karnak Nouvelles perspectives sur les découvertes de Georges Legrain*. Bibliothèque d'Étude 16. Cairo: Egyptian Ministry of Antiquities – Institut Français d'Archéologie Orientale 2016, 383-395.

2 For today's interest see e.g. FERÓ, Eszter, *The Body of Nefertiti: The Curious Incident of the Little Warsawa the Venice Biennial*, in JÚNOVÁ, Adéla Macková – STORCHOVÁ, Lucie – JÚN, Libor (eds.), *Egypt and Austria X – Visualizing the Orient: Central Europe and the Near East in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> Centuries*. Prague: Academy of Performing Arts in Prague 2016, 107-118.

Jewish cemetery in Budapest,<sup>3</sup> the Szivárvány Cinema in Kaposvár,<sup>4</sup> and the monuments in Csákvár and Hédervár,<sup>5</sup> or part of them<sup>6</sup>. Likewise, the Zsolnay Factory's Egyptianising artefacts<sup>7</sup> testify to this enduring popularity. Other Egyptian and Egyptianising artefacts illustrate this phenomenon further, including the wooden stela painted by Blanka Teleki (1806–1862). This was deciphered and published based on her painting by Emil Haeffner (1892–1953).<sup>8</sup> When the stela – long thought lost – was later rediscovered, it emerged that the painting was an almost perfect copy.<sup>9</sup> Further artefacts

3 FULLÉR, Andrea, *Egyiptizáló síremlékek a budapesti zsidó temetőben a 19–20. század fordulóján*. Ókor 18/3, 2019, 96-112; FULLÉR, Andrea, *Egyptianizing Funerary Architecture in Budapest*: Mladen Tomorad (ed.): *Egypt and Austria XII – Egypt and the Orient*, in *The Current Research. Proceedings of the Conference held at the Faculty of Croatian Studies, University of Zagreb* (September 17<sup>th</sup>-22<sup>nd</sup>, 2018). Oxford-Zagreb 2020, 353-373

4 FULLÉR, Andrea, *A kaposvári Szivárvány Kultúrpalota egyiptizáló dekorációja*. Ókor 4/2014, 67-78; FULLÉR, Andrea, *Egyptianizing Decoration of the Szivárvány Cinema in Kaposvár*. in JŰNOVA Macková, Adéla – STORCHOVÁ, Lucie - JŰN, Libor (eds), *Egypt and Austria X. Visualizing the Orient: Central Europe and the Near East in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries*. Prague: Academy of Performing Arts in Prague 2016, 179-191; FULLÉR, Andrea, *A kaposvári Szivárvány Mozi – A húszas évek egyiptomi stílusú mozzijainak hazai példája*, in BÁCS, Tamás – DEZSŐ, Tamás – VÉR, Ádám (eds.) *Aegyptiaca et Assyriaca. Tanulmányok az Eötvös Loránd Tudományegyetem Ókortudományi Intézetéből*. Antiqua et Orientalia 5. Budapest: ELTE Eötvös Kiadó 2015, 76-92.

5 FERŐ, Eszter, *Csákvári piramis és hédervári szfinx: a magyar egyiptománia nyomában*. 4. Ókor 2014, 55-66; FERŐ, Eszter, *Pyramids in the „Back Garden”: Some Remarks on Egyptomania in Hungary*. Lecture at *The Perception of the Orient in Central Europe (1800–1918)*. Conference *Egypt and Austria IX*, 2013. Betliar, Slovakia, 2013. október 21-23; FERŐ, Eszter, *Az egyiptománia jelensége az újkori Magyarországon, avagy hogyan kerül piramis egy Esterházy kastélyparkba?* in BÁCS, Tamás – DEZSŐ, Tamás – VÉR, Ádám (eds.) *Aegyptiaca et Assyriaca. Tanulmányok az Eötvös Loránd Tudományegyetem Ókortudományi Intézetéből*. Antiqua et Orientalia 5. Budapest: ELTE Eötvös Kiadó 2015, 59-76.

6 GULYÁS, András, *A house with winged sundisks in Peterdy street, Budapest*, in *Festschrift Gábor Schreiber*, in print.

7 See the article in this volume, and FERŐ, Eszter, *In Search of the Orient: The Zsolnay Way*, in CZERNY, Ernst (ed.): *Egypt and Austria XI – In Search of the Orient*. Proceedings of the Symposium held at the Kunsthistorisches Museum Wien (September 20<sup>th</sup> to 24<sup>th</sup>, 2016). Egypt and Austria – Kunsthistorisches Museum, Wien - Kraków 2018, 45–57; FERŐ, Eszter, *Zsolnay-titok másképp: egyiptománia a magyar iparművészetben*. *Zsolnay's secret in a new light: Egyptomania in Hungarian applied arts*. *Belvedere* 31/1, 2019, 166-178 – DOI: <https://doi.org/10.14232/belv.2019.1.11>; FERŐ, E. – FULLÉR, A. *Tűzben született lótuszvirágok*. *Egyiptizáló alkotások a Zsolnay gyárban*. Pécs: Janus Pannonius Múzeum 2023; FERŐ, Eszter – FULLÉR, Andrea, *Eosin Cat and Pyrogranite Sphinx – New Remarks on the Egyptianizing Colours of the Zsolnay Factory*, in HUDAKOVA, Lubica – HUDEC, Josef (eds.), *Egypt and Austria XIII – Between the treaties of Sistova and Lausanne: Contacts between the Orient and Central Europe in the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> Centuries*. Proceedings of the Conference held by the Aigyptos Foundation and the Egypt and Austria Society at Topoľčiansky (October 21st-25th, 2020). In press.

8 HAEFFNER, Emil, *Ein verschollene Stele aus der Sammlung F. Kiss in Buda*. *Oriens Antiquus*, Budapest I, 1945, 59-65.

9 See the latest publication of the Stele at MEKIS, Tamás, *Quelques données nouvelles sur les stèles Budapest MBA inv. no 51.1928 et Prague MN P 1636, et sur la famille de Iâhmés fils de Smedès, propriétaire de la statue Caire JE 37075*, in COULON, Laurent, *La Cachette de Karnak*.



in this field have been brought together in a recently published volume by the Museum of Fine Arts<sup>10</sup>.

*Nouvelles perspectives sur les découvertes de Georges Legrain.* Bibliothèque d'Étude 161. Cairo: Egyptian Ministry of Antiquities and Institut Français d'Archéologie Orientale 2016, 383-398.

<sup>10</sup> KÓTHAY, Katalin Anna – LIPTAY, Éva, *Az ókori Egyiptom Magyarországon. Pillanatképek a magyarországi Egyiptom-képek, egyiptizálás és aegyptiacagyűjtés történetéből a 18. század kezdetétől 1939-ig, az első egyiptomi kiállítás megnyitásáig.* Budapest: Szépművészeti Múzeum 2025, with contributions from András Gulyás, Flóra Kevély, Katalin Kóthay, Éva Liptay and Tamás Mekis.

Motivated by the growing interest in Egyptology, our committee launched the annual 'Ancient Egyptian Object of the Year' initiative. The first object was the lotus flower in 2019; the bee from royal titulary was selected in 2020; Amenhotep, son of Hapu, in 2021; the Thoeris/Taweret amulet, which initiated the Taweret research project, in 2022; a representation of the goddess Seshat in 2023; the figure of the goddess Maat in 2024; and the Middle Kingdom soul house in 2025. These naturally formed part of the research and outreach programme for those years. Alongside this, we continued to deliver our customary public lectures at our headquarters and in schools. Our members pursued their own research, and we continued to hold our scholarly international conferences and annual student drawing competition. Selected submissions from the latter are usually displayed in an exhibition. Just a few days ago, we opened a children's drawing exhibition at the Child Museum in Cairo for the first time in our Society's history. This is the Egyptian presentation of our 2024 exhibition, 'The Holy Family in Egypt', organised jointly with the Deák 17 Gallery. This time, it was organised in Egypt with the support of the Hungarian Liszt Institute in Cairo. In addition to raising awareness, we conducted research largely related to anniversaries that year.

The Tutankhamun jubilee in 2022 was commemorated internationally and aroused widespread interest in Hungary. To mark the occasion, the Hungarian Post issued a commemorative stamp block and matching envelope<sup>11</sup> depicting the famous gold mask and nested coffins. In the background is a gold relief scene from a small shrine (JE 61481<sup>12</sup>) from the tomb depicting Tutankhamun and his wife, Ankhesenamun. Among the finds from this naos was a pendant depicting the standing king being suckled by Weret-hekau, the snake-bodied goddess ("*Great of Magic*"; JE 61952)<sup>13</sup>, suspended from a necklace. As the shrine had been found looted, it is not known whose statue it originally adorned. The Hungarian Minting Company also issued a gold-plated silver coin<sup>14</sup> featuring Tutankhamun's mask on the front and a 3D image of his tomb on the reverse. A documentary presenting the latest research was shown in cinemas – the Italian movie 'The Temples of Art: Tutankhamun – The Latest Exhibition', which was shown from May onwards. All of these events were preceded by the international travelling exhibition 'Tutankhamun: The Pharaoh's Burial Chamber', which ran from 2019 to 2020, but unfortunately closed prematurely due to the COVID pandemic. Although it presented only high-quality replicas, it nevertheless made artefacts that were previously only known through images tangible for many

11 The blocks were printed by Pénzjegynyomda Zrt. based on the designs of the graphic artist György Kara.

12 <http://www.griffith.ox.ac.uk/gri/carter/108.html>

13 <http://www.griffith.ox.ac.uk/gri/carter/108c.html>

14 <https://www.erekmibocsato.hu/webaruhaz/tutanhamon-maszki-100-efordulo>

Hungarian visitors. Since November, the Grand Egyptian Museum (GEM) has presented the assemblage in all its glory.

In addition to our educational outreach work, we continued to conduct research. The jubilee gave us the chance to focus more intensively on our Nephthys Project, which centres on Egyptian mummies. Within this framework, we organised several scholarly events, including a workshop on current issues in mummy research at the Hungarian Natural History Museum, as well as a special programme at the Semmelweis Museum dedicated to Tutankhamun's mummy. The amulets<sup>15</sup> placed on his body in multiple layers played an important role in this programme. According to the Murray-Nuttall Handlist, there were 78 pieces in total. Interestingly, only three of these depict anthropomorphic deities, none of which are in the customary striding pose. Instead, they are all seated with their knees drawn up (Anubis, Thoth and Horus), and all have plain, undecorated backs. Among the animal amulets, in addition to various snake forms, only the vulture is depicted. There are two plant amulets (leaf and double leaf) and the majority are object amulets. Several are specifically royal protective objects, such as the was sceptres, while others are rare or otherwise unknown forms: Y- and T- shapes, knots, a khepesh, a mallet, a knife, a miniature bracelet, and a rhomboid form. Well-known examples include the wadj and the ankh. There is also a striking number of djed pillars and Isis knots, with seven of each. Two amulets stand out due to their material: an iron wedjat eye and an iron headrest amulet. The latter only became common in the Saite period. Carter recorded ten further items, which he simply called "amulets". One of these is a heart bearing a crest relief, and there are several beads inscribed with Tutankhamun's name, as well as a shell. The assemblage is supplemented by two earrings.

The objects around us reflect the era in which we live and our identity, whether our lives are structured according to religious or secular principles. In ancient Egypt, these two aspects were inextricably linked, as is perfectly illustrated by amulets. They were chosen to provide protection and enhance outward appearance. Beyond religious and secular considerations, their protective and aesthetic functions were expanded by elements that shaped identity. From this perspective, fashion and social expectations also played a significant role, sometimes even overriding individual characteristics — particularly in the case of a pharaoh. It is therefore especially interesting to examine the amulets placed on Tutankhamun's body to protect him in the afterlife. Even a young pharaoh was provided with everything necessary, since he was already regarded as a god in life — a status that became even more pronounced after death.

15 <http://www.griffith.ox.ac.uk/perl/gi-ca-qmakeres.pl?sid=41.33.51.9-1766043880&qno=1&sta=0&qtx=amulet>

The exceptionally high quality of the amulets reflects his rank, and the selection clearly reflects the period in which he lived: the transition from the Amarna reform to the Ramesside era, which emphasised individual religiosity.

As a result of the presentation of Tutankhamun's mummy, the HEFS AEC and the Semmelweis Museum have jointly initiated a project aimed at analysing the SOM amulets from historical, medical and religious perspectives. While the SOM amulets cannot rival Tutankhamun's exceptional *wedjat* eye, magnificent divine figures, or elegant papyrus columns, the everyday beauty of the SOM heart amulet likewise merits attention. Although the museum's *wedjat* eye amulets played a central role in the conference presentation, the heart, scarab, *djed* pillar and other amulets received limited attention. Nevertheless, this joint article focuses on the *djed* pillar. From a historical perspective relating to the museum's collections, it occupies a special place alongside the scarab with which it was acquired. As the scarab (*hpr* beetle) from one of Tutankhamun's pectorals is emphasised elsewhere in the volume, we have chosen to focus on the *djed* pillar instead. This symbol also played an important role in Tutankhamun's tomb. In addition to the seven *djed* amulets placed on his body, one<sup>16</sup> was deposited in a niche on the southern side of the burial chamber in the western corner and subsequently walled up. Another pillar<sup>17</sup> was found almost at the centre of the southern side of the fourth, innermost naos, directly in front of the sarcophagus. The solar-lunar form of the *djed* pillar also appears on one of the pharaoh's pectorals<sup>18</sup>.

The first article in the volume summarises the research of Andrea Fullér and Eszter Feró on Zsolnay ceramics, with a particular focus on the Tutankhamun series. Through their meticulous research, the authors were able to ascertain the location of numerous pieces, establish the identities of the artists, trace the origins of the motifs, and determine the sources of the images used. They also demonstrated that works produced prior to the discovery of the tomb were in fact included in the Tutankhamun series.

The author's study categorises 18<sup>th</sup> Dynasty naturalistic Bes amulets according to their iconography. Using excavation finds and museum collections

16 That is beside the head. Carter no. 260, H: JE 61379. <http://www.griffith.ox.ac.uk/perl/gi-ca-qmakesumm.pl?sid=82.131.230.142-1766356119&qno=1&curr=260>

17 Carter no. 250, JE 61785, max. H: 56 cm – <http://www.griffith.ox.ac.uk/perl/gi-ca-qmakesumm.pl?sid=82.131.230.142-1766356119&qno=1&curr=250>

18 Carter no. 261i – M: 12x 16,3 cm. The pectoral is representing the *djed* pillar topped by moon sickle and sun disc between Isis and Nephthys. Another pectoral in the same set has in the middle an Osiris figure, while at the third pectoral the central figure is missing. See <http://www.griffith.ox.ac.uk/perl/gi-ca-qmakesumm.pl?sid=82.131.230.142-1766356119&qno=1&curr=261i>.

as a basis, the study attempts to map the relationships between the resulting groups, as well as their chronological and spatial distribution. The study also highlights new conceptual phenomena present on amulets predating the Amarna period.

The third article, which was also written by the author, focuses on Old Kingdom Taweret amulets. It is primarily based on publications documenting excavations conducted by Guy Brunton in the Qau-Matmar region of Middle Egypt. As well as analysing iconographic groupings, the article examines the usage of Taweret amulets across individual cemeteries, assesses usage patterns and attempts to reconstruct contemporary perceptions of the goddess based on assemblages.

Esther Pons Mellado presents a Naqada II vessel from the Museo Arqueológico Nacional in Madrid, the provenance of which is unknown. The vessel is lavishly embellished with depictions of antelopes, goats, and gazelles, whose parallel depictions are listed on a variety of other vessels. Together, these vessels vividly illustrate how the ‘green desert’ surrounding the Nile — the Sahara of today — was able to sustain such rich wildlife during the Predynastic period.

In their joint study, the author and Krisztina Scheffer trace the acquisition of the djed pillar amulet in the Semmelweis Museum’s collection, explore the possible motivations behind its purchase, and introduce the collector who once owned it. The study also provides an overview of djed pillar representations and variations of the amulet form across periods, alongside an examination of their associated Pharaonic concepts. It also takes a brief look at some modern reinterpretations of the form.

Rita Simon examines one of Tutankhamun’s pectorals, the central feature of which is a scarab crafted from Libyan Desert Glass. She discusses the discovery of this material and considers possible pathways by which it arrived in Egypt, taking into account the contemporary role of the Western Desert. She also provides a theological interpretation of the composition as a whole. Her new interpretation emphasises Tutankhamun’s solar-lunar character.

Gabriella Vámos examines the medicinal use of sugar in eye treatments in Hungary using historical and ethnographic sources, which can be traced back to domestic sources from the 16<sup>th</sup> century onwards. Her research shows that, initially, cane sugar was used primarily among aristocratic circles to treat cataracts and trachoma. From the late 18<sup>th</sup> century onwards, sugar made from sugar beets appeared in peasant eye treatments; the most recent ethnographic source of which dates to 1974.

In his contribution, Péter Véninger discusses a technical phenomenon identified during a joint Hungarian–Italian project on terracottas from the southern Italian cities of Medma and Hipponion. Votive figurines in the

sanctuaries of these cities, founded by the Calabrian Lokroi, were typically produced not by trained craftsmen, but by the dedicators themselves. This meant that, in addition to offering tangible objects, they also offered their own labour to the goddess venerated at the sanctuary.

Afaf Wahba presents an Old Kingdom burial assemblage from Saqqara, notable for its reed coffin. Although the owner was not one of the wealthiest individuals, he can still be considered relatively prosperous. His body was wrapped in domestic linen, and he was given a headrest to accompany him into the afterlife. Anthropological analysis suggests that he was a middle-aged man whose skeletal remains show signs of diseases and alterations that may indicate his occupation.

Virginia Webb compares Egyptian and Egyptianising faience objects from the Heraion on Samos and the Sanctuary of Aphrodite at Miletus (Zeytintepe). She discusses these objects in several groups, including scarabs, amulets, falcon and cat figurines, non-suspendable bird, animal and human figurines, and miniature baskets. Her analysis reveals that visitors to the sanctuaries of the two goddesses offered Egyptianising objects that were made outside Egypt and differed from each other in many respects at the two sites.

As this brief overview demonstrates, the studies in this volume examine various aspects of Egypt's material culture, including archaeology, art, craftsmanship, everyday life, religion, and the country's influence on the wider world. A study also presents an example of ethnographic methodology, tracing the origins of the Hungarian use of sugar for medicinal purposes and illustrating how economic changes can lead to significant transformations in the use and interpretation of materials over time. This diversity of examples has enabled us to fulfil our primary objective of examining the historical changes and transformations in the meanings, interpretations and functions of objects.

Unfortunately, the publication of the volume was delayed due to technical and organisational issues, including a damaged hard drive. This resulted in the publication appearing later than planned. Nevertheless, the thorough and professional research conducted by the authors, the support received, and the efforts of the other contributors made the publication possible.

Firstly, we would like to thank the speakers who delivered inspiring lectures and shared insights into their research. We would also like to thank the HNM PCC Semmelweis Museum and its Director General, Benedek Varga; the House of Nations and its President, György Kilián; as the venue providers, and all the collaborators for their hard work on the technical and organisational tasks during the conference.

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Thanks to everyone's devoted efforts, we are once again able to present readers with a high-quality publication in both print and digital formats.

2025, December

## **FROM HISTORICISM TO TUTANKHAMUN: THE EGYPTIANIZING DECORATIVE WARES OF THE ZSOLNAY FACTORY\***

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### **ABSTRACT**

In exploring the Egyptianizing tendencies within Hungarian applied arts, Zsolnay ceramics obviously serve as a starting point particularly with the remarkable Tutankhamun series designed by Teréz Zsolnay. The aim of this study is to demonstrate that this was neither the first nor the sole attempt to incorporate ancient Egyptian motifs. Drawing on the latest discoveries from the Zsolnay Archive, the research reveals a more complex and nuanced picture of Zsolnay's Egyptomania. Contemporary written sources, complemented by design plans and artworks, illustrate how deeply and diversely Egyptian art influenced the creative output of the Zsolnay factory – from its early beginnings through the 1930s. The findings presented here shed new light on the reasons, timing, and methods by which ancient Egyptian motifs inspired Zsolnay's artistic endeavors.

**KEYWORDS:** Egyptomania, Zsolnay, Tutankhamun, cat figurine, Wedgwood

### **INTRODUCTION**

The Zsolnay factory is famous for two Egyptian-inspired series. The earlier lotus series, designed in 1879, remains unmatched in popularity to this day. However, until now, little attention has been paid to the other series – the so-called Tutankhamun<sup>1</sup> vases – and to the broader range of ancient Egyptian-

\* We would like to thank all those who provided professional support and assistance for our research on Zsolnay ceramics and for bringing this study to fruition. Above all, we are grateful to

inspired creations that accompanied the factory's history from 1875 through the 1930s.

At the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> and beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, the influence of ancient Egyptian culture could be felt in nearly all areas of the applied arts. The discovery of Tutankhamun's tomb in 1922 started a new wave of influence, which also left its impression on the ceramics industry. One of the main merits of the Zsolnay factory's Tutankhamun series was that it almost immediately seized on the market opportunity presented by the archaeological discovery. Among its international competitors, two long-established British manufacturers also reacted straight away to the sensational discovery. While Carlton Ware expanded its product range with a brand new Egyptian series (Figure 1), Royal Doulton merely added the inscription "Tutankhamen's Treasures Luxor" to the decoration of its Egyptian-themed products, in production since 1911.<sup>2</sup> In Europe however the Zsolnay factory was the first to react to the discovery at the centre of international attention, and its Egyptian vases, in respect of both technical execution and artistic quality, far surpassed the Egyptianizing products of its foreign contemporaries.

Based on the latest research, this study examines the subject within a

András Nagy, Department Head and Chief Curator (Janus Pannonius Museum (**JPM**), Department of Fine and Applied Arts), without whose support this research would not have been possible. We also extend our thanks to Diána Radványi, Department Head, and Ildikó Kálosi, Chief Curator (Museum of Applied Arts, Ceramics and Glass Collection), whose expert guidance and insights greatly enhanced our understanding of the history of ceramic art. We extend special thanks to Dr. Hilda Horváth, retired Head of the Archives Department at the Museum of Applied Arts, for providing valuable data, sources, and information that aided our work. We are particularly grateful to art historian Éva Csenkey for generously sharing her expertise on Zsolnay ceramics and for supplying key details regarding the factory's history, glaze technology, and ceramic production techniques. Finally, we owe a deep debt of gratitude to Eszter Mattyasovszky Zsolnay, who followed our progress closely, offered unique insights into the family and factory history, and granted us access to indispensable source materials and documents vital to this research.

1 The name of the pharaoh for whom the series is named appears in several variant spellings, e.g. Tutankhamun, Tutankhamen. In the museum's documentation the series is listed under the older spelling "Tutenkámén series," but one also finds the variants "Tut-Ank-Amon series/pattern" and "Tutankhamon series". In this study, we have chosen to use the spelling "Tutankhamun," which is standard in the field.

2 For the Carlton Ware Tutankhamun series, see SERPELL 1999, 14. Royal Doulton's Egyptian products received a short overview from Jean-Marcel Humbert, HUMBERT 2021, 127-131.

broader historical and art-historical context and traces the process that culminated in the creation of the Zsolnay factory's Tutankhamun series.



Figure 1. Vase, Carlton Ware, Tutenkahmen (Tutankhamun) Series, © Auckland Museum ([https://www.aucklandmuseum.com/discover/collections/record/10197?k=ware&f=collection\\_area:Human%20History&pp=100#gallery](https://www.aucklandmuseum.com/discover/collections/record/10197?k=ware&f=collection_area:Human%20History&pp=100#gallery))

### **EGYPTIAN MOTIFS IN THE 18<sup>TH</sup> AND 19<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY CERAMICS AND PORCELAIN INDUSTRY**

The earliest Egyptian-style decorative ceramics were made in England. Josiah Wedgwood began distributing his first Egyptian products in 1769.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>3</sup> Scholarship generally dates the release of Wedgwood's Egyptianizing decorative objects to around 1770, or more broadly, to the 1770s, ESTÈVE ET ALII 1994, 123; HUMBERT – PANTAZZI – ZIEGLER 1994, 173-174; CURL 2005, 194-195. The Britannica entry "Egyptomania: Sphinxes, Obelisks, and Scarabs" cites the date 1768, see FAZZINI – MCKERCHER 2010. However, Robin Reilly and George Savage date the production of the factory's first Egyptian-style objects – black basalt sphinxes – to 1769, see REILLY – SAVAGE 1989, 145, 323; REILLY 1995, 398. It was likely Piranesi's 1769 work, presenting ancient Egyptian art as a part of contemporary interior design that first awakened Wedgwood's interest in Egyptian motifs, see REILLY 1995, 335.

For their design, he drew on publications from his own library, including works such as Bernard de Montfaucon's *L'antiquité expliquée et représentée en figures* (Paris 1719-1724) and the Comte de Caylus's *Recueil d'antiquités égyptiennes, étrusques, grecques, romaines et gauloises* (Paris 1752-1767). Thus, Wedgwood's Egyptian-style decorative items significantly predate Napoleon's campaign in Egypt (1798-99), an event which played an important role in popularizing the style.<sup>4</sup> Among the earliest pieces were statuettes and candleholders depicting sphinxes. Vases in the form of canopic jars were also produced, along with cameos and intaglios decorated with Egyptian deities, small sculptures depicting Cleopatra and tea (Figure 2) and dinner sets adorned with Egyptian motifs.<sup>5</sup> Among the utilitarian objects, one set stands out: the settling pans that Lady Anson commissioned for her dairy in 1807. The rims of these red stoneware pans are adorned with black Egyptian reliefs based on illustrations from Bernard de Montfaucon's encyclopedia of antiquity (*Antiquité expliquée*). Their black-glazed interiors created a vivid contrast with the colour of the milk.<sup>6</sup>

Wedgwood's wares were especially popular among the emerging European middle class. And owing to his notable success, even long-established and prestigious manufacturers, such as Meissen and Sèvres, struggled to compete with him and started to produce their own variations on the Wedgwood style.<sup>7</sup>

4 REILLY – SAVAGE 1989, 80, 130-131, 243, 297, 323; REILLY 1995, 98-99, 284-285, 365. For the resurgence of English interest in Egypt following Admiral Nelson's victory at Abukir (1798), see HUMBERT – PANTAZZI – ZIEGLER 1994, 174.

5 For sphinxes, canopic-jar shaped vases, and depictions of Cleopatra, see REILLY – SAVAGE 1989, 74, 95, 130-131, 145, 323. For Wedgwood's Egyptianizing products, see also HUMBERT – PANTAZZI – ZIEGLER 1994, 176-177, 180-184; 368-369, 466-470; REILLY 1995, 93, 111, 145-147, 294, 329, 373-374, 398-399, 414. For cameos and intaglios decorated with depictions of Egyptian deities, see METEYARD 1875, 74, 77-78, 102-106, 115-120. The table service employed the Isis pattern – a blue lotus border pattern designed by Christopher Dresser around 1875, see REILLY 1995, 234. A plate with this decoration is kept by the Royal Ontario Museum; see PLATE, PATTERN "ISIS". For more on Christopher Dresser, see REILLY 1995, 141, 147.

6 For more on the Egyptian service of the dairy established on the grounds of Shugborough Hall in Staffordshire, England, see REILLY 1995, 42 pl. 29, 128. On the 18<sup>th</sup>-century dairies maintained by the aristocracy, furnished with specially commissioned, high-quality ceramic services, see FERGUSON 2009, 11.

7 For the Sèvres manufactory's Egyptianizing inkstand in the Wedgwood style made in 1802, see



Figure 2. Teapot and stand with Egyptian decoration, Josiah Wedgwood and Sons, 1800-1825, © Victoria and Albert Museum, London. Record URL: <https://collections.vam.ac.uk/item/O77516/teapot-josiah-wedgwood-and/>

Bernard de Montfaucon's work also inspired the Vienna Porcelain Manufactory's Egyptian-style (so-called tête-à-tête) breakfast set for two,<sup>8</sup> designed by Anton Grassi, their creative director.<sup>9</sup> The set consisted of a canopic jar-shaped coffee pot accompanied by two cups with serpent-shaped handles, a sugar bowl topped with a crocodile finial, and a creamer topped with a sphinx.

HUMBERT – PANTAZZI – ZIEGLER 1994, 289-290, cat. 169.

<sup>8</sup> Jean-Marcel Humbert's research indicates that the coffee pot was based on a canopic jar held in the Vatican collections. Its design, however, does not follow the canopic jar illustrated by Montfaucon, see ESTÈVE ET ALII 1994, 198; HUMBERT – PANTAZZI – ZIEGLER 1994, 298. Sheila K. Tabakoff, by contrast, proposes that the decoration of the service derives from ancient amulets reproduced as engravings in Bernard de MONTFAUCON's *Griechische und Römische Altertümer*. Nuremberg 1757. She further suggests that the pseudo-hieroglyphs may have been taken from PIRANESI's *Diverse Maniere d'adornare i cammini ed ogni altra parte degli edifizii desunte dall'architettura Egizia, Etrusca, e Greca con un Ragionamento Apologetico in difesa dell'Architettura Egizia, e Toscana*. Rome 1769. See TABAKOFF 2002, 172.

<sup>9</sup> For a more detailed account of the service, see ESTÈVE ET ALII 1994, 198-199; HUMBERT – PANTAZZI – ZIEGLER 1994, 297-298; ALBAINY 2006, 16-17.

It also included a classicizing oval serving tray, which depicts a sacrifice being presented before an Egyptian statue. The white-coloured set is adorned with pseudo-hieroglyphs, painted on a sand-coloured ground and framed in gold.<sup>10</sup> During his Italian tour presenting his latest works, Grassi gave one such set as a gift to Maria Carolina, Queen of Naples and Sicily, in 1792.<sup>11</sup> This set for two was also produced in a pale blue and gold colour variant, and in a version decorated with portraits and Egyptian-style plant ornamentation. The service includes a spoon and sugar tongs, whose handles are formed by a shabti-shaped porcelain ornament.<sup>12</sup>



Figure 3. Sugar bowl (a) and icecream bucket (b), Sèvres Manufactory, Egyptian Service. © Victoria and Albert Museum, London. Record URL (a): <https://collections.vam.ac.uk/item/O252560/sugar-bowl-sèvres-porcelain-factory/> Record URL (b): <https://collections.vam.ac.uk/item/O301345/pair-of-ice/>,

10 In 2018, Richard Baron Cohen auctioned a set (1799–1802) of this colour variant, as well as several surviving individual pieces, among them a canopic-jar-shaped jug from 1794 and a plate from 1797, see 1125. LEMPertz AUCTION 2018, 58-65.

11 ESTÈVE ET ALII 1994, 198; HUMBERT – PANTAZZI – ZIEGLER 1994, 297; ALBAINY 2006, 17.

12 ESTÈVE ET ALII 1994, 199, no. 129 (figs. 129 / 1-2.); HUMBERT – PANTAZZI – ZIEGLER 1994, 297, no. 175, 298, figs. 181, 183; ALBAINY 2006, 16, fig. 6.

Among the most well-known examples of Egyptianizing wares are the two dessert sets of the Sèvres Porcelain Manufactory. The first set was made for Napoleon (1804-08), who eventually presented it as a diplomatic gift to Tsar Alexander I of Russia in 1807. Today it is kept in the collection of the Russian State Museum of Ceramics in Kuskovo.<sup>13</sup> The second set (1810-12) (Figure 3) was commissioned by Napoleon as a gift for Joséphine upon their divorce. She herself also took part in designing it but eventually lost patience, finding the decoration too austere for her liking. Thus, with the exception of the breakfast set decorated with Egyptian landscapes, she sent the service back to the factory.<sup>14</sup> The part of the service that ended up in storage was eventually given by King Louis XVIII to the Duke of Wellington in 1818. The set remained in the family's possession for a long time before being acquired by the Victoria & Albert Museum in 1979, and since then it has been part of the permanent exhibition at Apsley House.<sup>15</sup> It is less well-known that the monumental table centrepiece for the service, consisting of architectural elements and statues, was made a third time (1934-38) for the Bonaparte Museum in Cairo and was presented to the King of Egypt in 1938. The subsequent fate of the centrepiece is unknown.<sup>16</sup>

The two complete Egyptian services can be divided into three main units, consisting of a dessert set, a coffee and tea service and a monumental table centrepiece.<sup>17</sup> The design and production of both services can, for the most part, be attributed to the same artists. While designing them, they relied

13 On the creation of the first Egyptian service, see HUBERT– PANTAZZI – ZIEGLER 1994, 220-227.

14 For more detail on the second service, see HUBERT– PANTAZZI – ZIEGLER 1994, 227-240.

15 HUBERT– PANTAZZI – ZIEGLER 1994, 234-235.

16 HUBERT– PANTAZZI – ZIEGLER 1994, 225.

17 The impressive dessert service includes seventy-two flat plates and a plate, along with four sugar bowls, two jam pots, two ice cream buckets, four fruit baskets, twelve compote dishes, and four Egyptian figures carrying bowls. The matching coffee and tea services each contain thirty-three pieces. The third and most impressive component of the Egyptian service is a monumental table centrepiece (664 × 46 cm), crafted from white biscuit porcelain. In its centre is a model of the Philae kiosk, framed by four obelisks. This is surrounded by details of the temples of Dendera and Edfu, including a pylon from Edfu; the Colossi of Memnon, and nine pairs of ram-headed sphinxes from Karnak. The first of these centrepieces took nearly five years to produce. The second service features a somewhat reduced version, with only eight pairs of sphinxes. For a comprehensive description of both centrepieces, see HUBERT – PANTAZZI – ZIEGLER 1994, 220-223, 227, 231.

on Denon's work, *Voyage*, and on the drawings from the yet to be completed *Description de l'Égypte*. The pictures made using the grisaille technique were painted by Jacques-François-Joseph Swebach-Desfontaines, who unusually signed the scenes that appear on the plates.<sup>18</sup> The two services can be considered variations of one another. The execution of the identically themed landscapes and their border ornamentation are always distinct.<sup>19</sup>

Among the Egyptianizing products of the Sèvres Porcelain Manufactory, the three Egyptian vases created with the collaboration of Jean-François Champollion stand out for their high-quality craftsmanship.<sup>20</sup> The pieces decorated with gazelles and lotus flowers (Vases B and C), owing to their exciting forms and colour palettes, can be considered genuine rarities within the Sèvres body of work.<sup>21</sup>

Finally, among the antecedents of the Zsolnay Egyptian wares, it is important to mention the Egyptian-style table service made between 1872 and 1875 of the Doccia Ginori Manufactory. This grandiose service was commissioned by Isma'il Pasha<sup>22</sup> (1830-1895), the Khedive (viceroy) of Egypt and designed by Gaetano Lodi, who had travelled to Egypt at Isma'il Pasha's invitation.<sup>23</sup> The forms were created by Jafet Torelli with the help of his assistants,

18 Although it occasionally occurred that porcelain painters signed their works with a monogram, initials, or their full name, this was not considered standard practice. The painters' marks were used primarily for administrative purposes, serving an administrative function – to track work and simplify supervision – not to assert artistic authorship.

19 For the artists involved in the design and production, see HUBERT– PANTAZZI – ZIEGLER 1994, 220-223, 231.

20 For more on the three Egyptian vases, see HUBERT – PANTAZZI – ZIEGLER 1994, 362-366.

21 HUBERT– PANTAZZI – ZIEGLER 1994, 363. For the manufactory's other Egyptianizing products, see HUBERT– PANTAZZI – ZIEGLER 1994, 239-244, 289-290, 471.

22 His reign (1863-1879) marked a turning point in Egypt's history in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century and had a significant impact on the development of modern Egypt. Isma'il Pasha actively promoted the adoption of European practices, but his attempts to win independence from the Ottoman Empire, the foreign loans he contracted to fund public and private projects, and the enormous expense of building and opening the Suez Canal drove Egypt to the verge of bankruptcy. In the end, under Anglo-French pressure, the Sultan deposed him in 1879. VATIKIOTIS 1991, 73-77; GAZDIK 2017, 16-22. The Pasha's indebtedness also affected the later fate of the service; for further detail, see note 26.

23 PIACENTINI 2011a, 90. For more on the talented artist's career, see the latest research by Patrizia Piacentini, PIACENTINI 2011a; PIACENTINI 2011b. See also MIGLIACCIO 2021, 166, note 57.

Vannini and Cesari. The decoration was executed by Leopoldo Nincheri, the younger Lorenzo Becherini and Giuseppe Bendassi.<sup>24</sup> The table service has unfortunately been lost. However, important sources related to the set have survived, such as the twenty-six watercolour design drawings made for its production. These had to be submitted by Lodi to the Khedive for preliminary approval. Furthermore, there is also a series of photographs of the completed table service, as well as published drawings of some of the items and a prototype of the set with the exception of the centrepiece decorated with hippopotamuses.<sup>25</sup> The Ginori Egyptian-style service has retained its timeless beauty just as well as Zsolnay's Egyptian ceramics have.

The ultimate fate of the set could be clarified by further research. According to contemporary press sources, it appears that Isma'il Pasha gifted it to the British heir to the throne, Prince Edward, before it had been paid for in full, and he presumably took it with him to India.<sup>26</sup>

Less well-known is the story of the Egyptian-style samples created based on the Khedive's table service. As a result of private negotiations begun in 1892, the Ginori Manufactory sent several crates of samples to Egypt, which were produced on the initiative of a commercial agent living in Alexandria, Nicola Sabbag. The well-informed merchant wanted to profit this way from the refurbishment of the dining wing of the Khedive's palace. The shipment, however, was posted to the Italian consular office, which was unaware of its designation, and the consignment remained in storage for years. Ultimately, the objects were returned to Ginori in 1894 after it was revealed that Khedive Abbas Hilmi had never commissioned a luxury table service and the prototypes bearing his monogram had arrived in Alexandria through the rogue operation of the cunning Sabbag.<sup>27</sup>

24 PIACENTINI 2011a, 94; PIACENTINI 2011b, 91.

25 PIACENTINI 2011a, 94, 104; PIACENTINI 2011b, 91-92, 94.

26 Based on two articles in *The New Zealand Tablet*, the Marquis Ginori, owner of the Florence porcelain manufactory, filed a lawsuit against Isma'il in a Neapolitan court for failing to pay for the ordered dinner service, which he had given to the Prince of Wales, see PIACENTINI 2011a, 106; PIACENTINI 2011b, 94-95.

27 For a more detailed discussion of the Egyptian-style sample pieces produced by Ginori some twenty years later, see MIGLIACCIO 2021, 167, note 57, as well as the photograph of one plate on p. 159.

In 1907 the Doccia factory made another Egyptian series called Ricordi Faraone, designed by Sem Bini and likewise inspired by Lodi's work.<sup>28</sup>

Among the leading European porcelain manufacturers, a clear exchange of knowledge and a network of technical and artistic connections were demonstrably at work. Napoleon's Egyptian expedition prompted the majority of manufacturers to create forms and decorations in a kind of ancient Egyptian style in which a scientific approach had already taken precedence.<sup>29</sup>

### **THE FIRST EGYPTIAN-STYLE ZSOLNAY CERAMICS**

Based on the experiences of the 1873 Vienna World's Fair and the study tours that followed, the Zsolnay factory produced its first Egyptian-style decorative ceramics between 1875 and 1878.<sup>30</sup> These special and lesser-known wares were among the very first Eastern-style pieces to be integrated into the factory's established repertoire of motifs and forms. The masterfully executed watercolour Pattern Sheet no. 172 (Figure 4) depicts eight different Egyptian-style vert antique objects.<sup>31</sup>

28 For more on the series, see PIACENTINI 2011a, 113; PIACENTINI 2011b, 99. When Ginori and Giulio Richard combined their businesses in 1896, the factory's name became Richard-Ginori.

29 ESTÈVE ET ALII 1994, 198; HUMBERT – PANTAZZI – ZIEGLER 1994, 298; ALBAINY 2006, 17.

30 A close family friend was the lawyer Antal Horváth (1848-1912), also a dedicated art collector and amateur archaeologist. It was Horváth who introduced the Zsolnay sisters to the Austrian art historian Jakob von Falke (1825-1897). In late 1877, ahead of the Paris World's Fair, Teréz and Júlia spent several months in Vienna. Under Falke's guidance, they could study specialist literature on Eastern art and examine, and often copy, objects in the collection of the Austrian Museum of Applied Arts. This initial study trip was followed by others, and in 1879 they were able to visit the studio of the celebrated Austrian painter Hans Makart (1840-1884). See ZSOLNAY ET ALII 1980, 55, 67, 87.

31 Based on the colours of Pattern Sheet no. 172, Teréz Zsolnay's diary description, and the available written sources, the objects were made with vert antique – Egyptian green glaze, see JPM (Janus Pannonius Múzeum), Zs. Ad. (Zsolnay Archives) inv. no. 61.453.22; MATTYASOVSKY ZSOLNAY XIII.15. f-2, IX. Die Jahre 1878/Pariser Ausstellung, 181, 216; ZSOLNAY ET ALII 1980, 71; Façon Book no. 1 (façon 370); the relevant entry from Teréz Zsolnay's notebook, JPM, Zs. Ad. inv. no. 1727-1-4-02, 17 (façon 494). Ceramics made with vert antique glaze were first exhibited in 1876 at a show in Szeged and remained popular until around 1882, after which their production declined significantly, see ZSOLNAY ET ALII 1980, 65, 111.



Figure 4. Pattern Sheet with the earliest vert antique egyptianizing artworks, no. 172. (ca. 1878). Watercolor, tempera, paper, 43 x 58 cm. Pécs, © Janus Pannonius Museum, Ad. inv. no. 61.453.22.

- A large vase and plate – façon (form) numbers 330 and 330/a, as well as a small bowl (façon 370) with a lotus flower motif.
- A shallow bowl with falcon- and vulture-shaped feet (façon 478), as well as a long oval-shaped bowl adorned with an Egyptian bust and hieroglyphic signs (façon 468).
- A stamp moistener adorned with Egyptian friezes and ram-headed falcons (façon 397/13), as well as a jardinière (façon 494) decorated with shabtis and ram-headed falcons.
- The Zsolnay cat placed in the centre of the composition (façon 379).<sup>32</sup>

<sup>32</sup> According to Teréz Zsolnay's German-language diary, the jardinière and the Egyptian cat were made for the 1878 Paris World's Fair, where they were highlights of the Zsolnay exhibition, see

Many of the earliest Egyptianizing ceramics were preserved in the Zsolnay family's factory museum and are now in the collection of the Janus Pannonius Museum. Among them is a vase decorated with incised blue lotus flowers, stylized floral elements, and geometric motifs on a bone-white ground. Based on Pattern Sheet no. 172, the vase was originally made with four spiral handles, of which two remain intact today. The yellow stains of the adhesive material indicate the positions of the two missing handles. In the Zsolnay factory's Façon (Form) Book no. 1, besides the drawing of the vase, the monogram "Z T" for Teréz Zsolnay can be read, which conclusively identifies the designer.<sup>33</sup> Originally, the vase formed a set with the large plate (façon 330/a or 330/2; 330/II), of which six examples – one with gold on a bone-white ground, one with incised gold on a yellow ground, two with incised gold on a green ground, and one with incised black decoration on a green ground – also belong to the collection of the Janus Pannonius Museum. Two of these can be dated to 1875 based on the museum's object cards. The design sheet for the plate, preserved in the archives, bears the date: "November 1875".

In the course of our research, we came across an even more unique piece: the beautiful Zsolnay cat (façon 379) (Figure 5). One can immediately see that the object is clearly a copy of an ancient Egyptian sculpture held in the Egyptian Collection of the Museum of Fine Arts, Budapest.<sup>34</sup> The popularity of the Zsolnay cat is evidenced by the fact that numerous colour and glaze variants were made, five examples of which are held in the Janus Pannonius Museum. We know of a further eight pieces from private collections, as well as a few from the antiques trade. The earliest known pieces were made using

MATTYASOVSKY ZSOLNAY XIII.15. f-2, IX. Die Jahre 1878/Pariser Ausstellung, 216.

<sup>33</sup> Most of the Egyptian-style objects depicted on Pattern Sheet no. 172 can be found in the Zsolnay factory's Façon Book no. 1. For the two bowls (façon 370, 478) the notation "Egipische Schalle" (Egyptian bowl), and above the cat (façon 379) "Egipische Katze" (Egyptian cat), clearly indicate the Egyptian origin of the motifs.

<sup>34</sup> Museum of Fine Arts, Budapest, Egyptian Collection, inv. no. 51.2356. On the bronze figurine, see Nagy 2006, (10); Liptay 2013, 110-111.



Figure 5. Zsolnay cat with gold-green eosin-glazed, 1898-1899. Pécs, Zsolnay Factory, © Janus Pannonius Museum, inv. no. 51.5237.1.

high-fired glaze technique, among which the figures associated with Ármín Klein (1855-1883) are the most notable – decorated with the dripping glaze technique, as seen in the grayish-purple variant (JPM, inv. no. 52.728.1.). The vivid and sometimes surprisingly brilliant-hued pieces, such as the sun-yellow cat (Figure 6), are such that hardly anyone today would guess they were made

almost a hundred and twenty-five years ago. The figures made with iridescent and lustre-effect eosin glazes are also stunning.



Figure 6. Zsolnay cat with yellow glaze, early 1900s.  
Pécs, Zsolnay factory © private collection

The Zsolnay cat's form number (379) shows that it was produced based on an early model. Its design can be placed between 1873 and 1882 according to Façon Book no. 1. At the 1873 Vienna World's Fair, Ferenc Pulszky (1814-1897) exhibited an ancient Egyptian bronze cat sculpture with gold-inlaid eyes, which at that time was one of the most outstanding pieces of his collection. The Zsolnay family, also present among the Hungarian exhibitors at the world exhibition, undoubtedly noticed this sculpture at that time. The

bronze cat, however, changed hands between Ferenc Pulszky and György Ráth (1828-1905) while the Zsolnay cat was being designed (1873-1882), though no data concerning its sale are available. The longstanding assumption has been that the ancient statuette was acquired by György Ráth as part of a lot of three unidentified bronzes purchased in 1879.

A new, previously unknown entry in Teréz Zsolnay's factory museum inventory – found during our research on the Zsolnay cat – sheds new light on this question of provenance. Listed beside the violet cat (no. 343) the entry reads:

"Aegyptische Katze (...). Nach dem aegypt. Original sehr schöne, violette Scharff. Glasūr, (...) 1876 (...) nach dem Orig. in der Georg Ráth Samlung, das uns der Besitzer zur Verfügung stellte." That is, "The Egyptian cat (...). Based on the Egyptian original with a very beautiful violet Scharffeuer [Email] glaze, (...) 1876 (...) based on the original in the Georg Ráth collection, which the owner made available to us."<sup>35</sup>

According to this important information, the violet-coloured, high-fired glazed statuette with the inventory number 51.1476.1 can be identified among the museum pieces as the model for the Zsolnay cat, which is a copy of the ancient artifact. Furthermore, according to the text the Egyptian bronze cat was definitely in György Ráth's possession by 1876. Based on archival photographs, it was once housed in the so-called Gem Room of the villa that contained his art collection. This was György Ráth's reception room, where the most illustrious pieces of his collection were displayed.<sup>36</sup>

A typological study of the Zsolnay cat has also confirmed that the violet cat is its model. During its production, a plaster cast was taken from the ancient Egyptian cat, the end of whose tail is missing. Although the tail was later completed on the copy, the join is easily identifiable. Further typological analysis, based on the posture of the head and neck, the positioning of the forelegs and tail, the left-leaning stance of the body, and the size of the sculpture, indicates that at least three different moulds were used. Presumably, the original mould wore out from heavy use and had to be replaced. This is well

<sup>35</sup> See entry 343 in the factory museum's inventory book, JPM, Zs. Ad. inv. no. 1578-91–1584-91.

<sup>36</sup> Today, it houses material related to Austrian Art Nouveau.

reflected by the fact that the Zsolnay cat remained in production for a long time, certainly through the 1910s. Several pieces are datable to this period, and one example with a labradorite glaze – identified by its framed model number – may be one of the latest known variants.

The Zsolnay cat has two known foreign counterparts, of which the more famous is the cat designed by the French ceramicist Théodore Deck (1823-1891). The other was produced by the Imperial Porcelain Factory (from 1917 the State Porcelain Factory, and from 1925 to 2005 the Lomonosov Porcelain Factory), founded in St. Petersburg in 1744. These foreign parallels were likewise based on ancient Egyptian cat sculptures of the goddess Bastet. Although we now know the design date and production circumstances of the Zsolnay cat, its foreign parallels still require further research.

The stamp moistener adorned with Egyptian busts and ram-headed falcons is already part of the collection of the Museum of Applied Arts, Budapest.<sup>37</sup> The winged motif on its sides was inspired by a ram-headed falcon pectoral of Ramesses II, as illustrated in a lithograph from Albert Racinet's *L'ornement polychrome* (Paris, 1869).<sup>38</sup> The "PATENT" mark pressed into the base indicates that the stamp moistener makes use of the mechanism patented by Vilmos Zsolnay in 1877.<sup>39</sup>

According to Façon Book no. 1 (façon 494) and the entry in Teréz Zsolnay's notebook, the winged decoration of the jardinière (flower or fruit bowl) (Figure 7) is also based on the pectoral of Ramesses II.<sup>40</sup> The shorter sides

37 Museum of Applied Arts (IMM), Budapest, Ceramics and Glass Collection, inv. no. 80.82.1. The object was acquired from György Emőd (1955–2013), an actor, director, translator, and art collector. Our thanks to Diána Radványi, Head of the Ceramics and Glass Collection, for making this information available. Because it was incomplete, the piece was catalogued as an ashtray. Pattern Sheet no. 172, however, clearly shows its true function: it served as the water reservoir for a stamp moistener, into which a cylindrical component was originally fitted. For the object record, see the Museum of Applied Arts website under the heading "ASHTRAY".

38 Musée du Louvre, Département des Antiquités égyptiennes, inv. no. E 80. For the depiction of Ramesses II's pectoral on Racinet's lithograph, see RACINET 1869, pl. III, 2; RACINET, 1885, pl. III, 2. The Racinet volume from the former specialist library is held in the collection of the Janus Pannonius Museum, JPM, Ad. inv. no. 1975.1-05. For its acquisition, see note 77.

39 MATTYASOVSKY ZSOLNAY XIII.15. f-2, VII. Die Jahre 1875-77, 160; ZSOLNAY ET ALII 1980, 69.

40 The relevant entry from Teréz Zsolnay's notebook, JPM, Zs. Ad. inv. no. 1727-1-4-02, 17 (façon 494).

of the ornamental ceramic are adorned with heads of the god Bes. Its corners are framed by shabti figures, modelled on an ancient funerary statuette held in the factory's study collection.<sup>41</sup> The drawing in the Façon Book further confirms that this ushabti was not brought back from Egypt by Miklós Zsolnay, but had been in the family's possession much earlier.<sup>42</sup>



Figure 7. Jardinière with ram-headed falcons, Bes depictions and shabtis. Pécs, Zsolnay factory. © Nagyházi Archive.

The first Egyptianizing wares were put on the market as early as 1876, and according to the factory's ledger, orders were placed both by Zsolnay's own sales representatives and by various museums. Zsolnay Vilmos's Budapest sales representative, Antal Testory – who served a clientele composed largely of aristocrats and the upper middle class – ordered the large lotus-patterned

41 On the surface of the shabti (JPM, inv. no. 51.725.1.) a detail from Chapter 6 of the Book of the Dead is legible. From the shroud tightly wrapping its body, only hands holding tools emerges. Based on its base and back pillar, the inscription arranged in horizontal lines, the plaited false beard, the smiling facial expression, and the type of tools held in the hands, the object can be dated to the 26<sup>th</sup> Dynasty (664–525 BC). A modern plaster base has been attached to the ancient figurine to ensure its stability.

42 On the journey of Miklós Zsolnay to Egypt, see his diary entitled *Zsolnay Miklós keleti utazása 1887-1888*, JPM, Zs. Ad.inv. no. L.52.542.1.

plate and vase on at least four occasions in 1876.<sup>43</sup> At year's end, the Vienna representatives, Albin Deck and Ernst Wahliss, also placed their orders for the plate.<sup>44</sup>

According to the entries, the Imperial and Royal Austrian Museum of Art and Industry<sup>45</sup> in Vienna purchased two Egyptian-style vases in November 1876, and then in 1877, through the agency of Antal Testory, and the Hungarian National Museum also acquired one.<sup>46</sup> The Zsolnay cat first appears in the records in October 1877, listed in a shipment consigned to Deck.<sup>47</sup>

According to Teréz's diary, the jardinière and the Egyptian cat were produced for the 1878 Paris World's Fair, where they featured as the novelties and highlights of the Zsolnay display.<sup>48</sup> The ledger confirms that the Egyptianizing ware was introduced to the public at the 1878 Paris World's Fair. The following pieces were produced in vert antique finish: the jardinière, the bowl adorned with lotus flowers, the shallow bowl with bird-shaped feet, and the Zsolnay cat.<sup>49</sup>

In 1879, the Zsolnay sisters embarked on another study trip, travelling to France, where they visited not only the Sèvres Porcelain Manufactory but also the Louvre in Paris. Their visit to the Egyptian collection had a particularly significant impact on their later design work. Júlia made a copy of "an Egyptian cosmetic spoon depicting a lotus bud with interlaced stem," based on which she designed the first pieces decorated with lotus flowers in 1879.<sup>50</sup>

This marked the birth of the Zsolnay factory's most famous and popular Egyptian-style wares: the Lotus series (Figure 8). After the first ice cream bowls, various products featuring the lotus motif<sup>51</sup> – including tea and coffee sets, lamps, garden seats, and wall tiles – were produced for over a decade.

43 See 100. FACTUREN-BUCH 1876, 264, 275, 307, 321, 343.

44 100. FACTUREN-BUCH 1876, n.p., 354.

45 Das k. k. Österreichische Museum für Kunst und Industrie, nowadays Museum für Angewandte Kunst (MAK).

46 100. FACTUREN-BUCH 1876, 332.; 100. FACTUREN-BUCH 1877, 469.

47 100. FACTUREN-BUCH 1877, 467.

48 See MATTYASOVSKY ZSOLNAY XIII.15. f-2, IX. Die Jahre 1878/Pariser Ausstellung, 216.

49 100. FACTUREN-BUCH 1878, 172, 176, 181, 207, 276.

50 See MATTYASOVSKY ZSOLNAY XIII.15. f-2, X. 1879, 228; ZSOLNAY ET ALII 1980, 90.

51 See MATTYASOVSKY ZSOLNAY – HÁRS 1966, 10.

According to the memoirs of Margit Mattyasovszky Zsolnay, the series was so popular that it was reissued between 1890 and 1891.<sup>52</sup>



Figure 8. Pink Lotus-set: milk-pot, 1882 (from left to right); sugar bowl, 1882; dessert plate, 1881. Designed by Júlia Zsolnay. Pécs, Zsolnay factory © private collection.

## **EGYPTIAN-STYLE DECORATIVE WARES DESIGNED BY ARTISTS OF THE ZSOLNAY FACTORY**

### ***THE ART OF ÁRMIN KLEIN (1855-1883)***

The designs of the first Egyptian-style ceramics at the Zsolnay factory can be attributed to Vilmos Zsolnay's daughters, Teréz and Júlia. The two daughters became involved in design work in the mid-1870s. Spurred by the considerable success achieved at international exhibitions, the factory received a growing number of commissions from abroad and at home. By raising the artistic standard, Vilmos Zsolnay sought to create a competitive yet unique product range that would strengthen his position in the international market. It was therefore of great importance for the factory to employ trained artists. The first of these to arrive at the factory was Ármin Klein in 1876, a graduate

<sup>52</sup> See ZSOLNAY ET ALII 1980, 170.

of the Vienna School of Applied Arts (k. k. Kunstgewerbeschule Wien), who soon became one of the factory's leading designers. Through his studies, the Viennese Neo-Renaissance decorative arts left a significant impression on his work, yet Klein developed a uniquely personal style. In his art, he frequently incorporated motifs derived from antiquity. Among his characteristic works are round plates adorned with portraits.<sup>53</sup>



Figure 9. Ornamental plate depicting a woman wearing Egyptian headdresses, 1879, by Ármin Klein, 3,7 x 29,5 cm. Pécs, Zsolnay factory. © Janus Pannonius Museum, inv. no. 52.522.1.

On his Egyptian-style plate (Figure 9), a female figure depicted against a gold-brocade background wears a *usekh*-collar and a distinctive combination of a vulture-headdress and a vulture crown. The latter being a particularly

<sup>53</sup> For more on Ármin Klein and his art, see Kovács 1990 and Kovács 1991.

unique and rare motif in ancient Egyptian iconography. Klein's headdress was inspired by the vulture crown worn by goddesses, queen mothers, and god's wives, the earliest known representation of which dates to the 19<sup>th</sup> Dynasty (1295-1186 BC).<sup>54</sup> This crown is made up of two cobras and a vulture perched on a modius, with its wings spread in a protective gesture. In Klein's version, however, the two cobras become bird heads, and he reinterprets the modius as well. The inspiration for this distinctive headdress was the illustration of Queen Tyti (20<sup>th</sup> Dynasty, 1186-1069 BC) from Prisse d'Avennes's work *Histoire de l'art égyptien d'après les monuments* (1878). Prisse d'Avennes's important publication was later also used in the design of the Tutankhamun series.

A female figure wearing a vulture-headdress also appears on a dessert plate made for the 1867 Paris World's Fair, as well as a plate exhibited by Théodore Deck at the 1873 Vienna World's Fair.<sup>55</sup> Deck's female figure was inspired by a depiction of Cleopatra from the Temple of Hathor at Dendera.<sup>56</sup> These foreign plates serve as parallels and perhaps even precursors to Klein's designs and are characteristic works of Egyptomania. The depiction of their female figures adheres almost entirely to the conventions of ancient Egyptian art, departing from them only in the rendering of the eyes. By contrast, Ármín Klein depicted the female figure in three-quarter view and freely altered several elements of the headdress. The remarkably lively composition and high artistic quality of his work reveal extensive knowledge of the specialist literature on Egyptian art.<sup>57</sup>

54 On the vulture crown, see HALLMANN 2016, 215-217.

55 For the dessert plate with black ground made in 1867, see ESTÈVE ET ALII 1994, 242 (162); HUMBERT – PANTAZZI – ZIEGLER 1994, 357 (217). For the plate by Théodore Deck, see FRANCK 1873, 549, fig. 2.

56 The plate is part of the Historical Portraits series (1866-1892) and was produced in collaboration with the Swiss painter Albert Anker (1831-1910). For a detailed discussion of the plate, see ALBERT ANKER (painter), THÉODORE DECK (ceramist): Ornamental Dish "Cleopatra", 1869.

57 For the depiction of Queen Tyti, see the chapter on painting, PRISSE 1878, Portrait de la reine Taia, n.p; cf. PRISSE 2000, 116. The same crown is worn by Ahmose-Nefertari in a depiction from Deir el-Medina (ÄM 2060). The wall painting showing Amenhotep I and Ahmose-Nefertari originates from Tomb TT 359 and can be dated to the 20<sup>th</sup> Dynasty (1186-1069 BC). Today it is part of the collection of the Neues Museum in Berlin, ÄM 2060. For the wall painting (ÄM 2060) see LD Abth. III, Band 5, Bl. 1; cf. BROCKHAUS' KONVERSATIONS = LEXIKON 1892 (Altägyptische Malerei, König Amenophis I. und Gemahlin). For further examples of the vulture crown, see LD



Figure 10. Pattern Sheet for ornamental plate depicting a woman wearing an Egyptian headdresses, no. 477, by Ármin Klein

© Janus Pannonius Museum, Ad. inv. no. 61.453.27

Another copy of Klein's Egyptian plate was displayed at the 1896 Millennium Exhibition and was later donated by Vilmos Zsolnay to the Museum of Applied Arts in 1897. An exciting blue-and-gold colour variant and a tondo with another distinct colour scheme are known from a private collection. A notable detail of these latter two objects is that the pair of birds on the crown has here been reduced to a single bird. A Pattern sheet signed (Figure 10) by Ármin Klein containing instructions for the plate's colours and decoration has

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Abth. III, Band 8, B1. 248g and 250b (depictions of Maatkare in the Khonsu temple at Karnak), 256h (depiction of Karomama).

also survived in the collection of the Janus Pannonius Museum.<sup>58</sup> Its decoration finds the closest parallel in the plate belonging to the same museum's collection, whose pair of birds matches the birds shown on the Pattern sheet. Therefore, this piece can be considered the earliest and, in all likelihood, the one created by Ármin Klein himself. On the remaining three objects, the pair of birds on the crown gradually transformed. Interestingly, in Décor Book no. 2, a "mustachioed" version of the Egyptian female figure appears (décor 935).

In the field of architectural sculpture, two Egyptian-style statue designs (643, 689) can be attributed to Ármin Klein, preserved in Terracotta Façon Book no. 2. The allegorical female figure wearing a *nemes* headdress and a vulture-headdress (643) was originally intended for the University of Technology (1880-1882), better known as the Polytechnicum, designed by Imre Steindl.<sup>59</sup> The design was eventually implemented only after Ármin Klein's death, on the Art Exhibition Hall built for the National General Exhibition, which was designed by Ferenc Pfaff (1883-85).<sup>60</sup> The sculpture was finalized by János Petrides, who took over and completed Klein's works, including the Egyptian female figure placed above the main entrance.<sup>61</sup>

The amateur art collector and presumed freemason, György Vasváry (Traiber) in Pécs, also chose Zsolnay architectural ceramics to decorate his townhouse and both of his villas.<sup>62</sup> The entrance to the Vasváry Villa,<sup>63</sup> built in Kis-Szókó, is guarded by two pyrogranite sphinxes (689) designed by Ármin Klein.<sup>64</sup> In this instance, the sculptures almost certainly cater to the client's

58 Pattern Sheet no. 477, façon 470, décor 935, JPM, Zs. Ad. inv. no. 61.453.27.

59 For reference, see the note by Géza Nikelszky next to drawing no. 643 in Terracotta Façon Book no. 2. The building is now the main facility of the Faculty of Humanities at Eötvös Loránd University (Múzeum körút 6-8). Its original name was the Royal Hungarian Joseph Technical University, commonly called the Joseph Polytechnicum (József Műegyetem). For more on the building, see SISA 2022, 228-229.

60 Later known as the Olof Palme House, now the Millennium House, 1146 Budapest, Olof Palme sétány 1.

61 LEVÁRDY 2014, 121.

62 For more on the buildings, see ROMVÁRY 1988, ROMVÁRY 1990; and ROMVÁRY 2003.

63 Today, it is the seat of the Regional Committee of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences on Jurisics Miklós utca in Pécs.

64 Next to drawing no. 689 in Terracotta Façon Book no. 2, a later note by Géza Nikelszky states that the female sphinx wearing a *nemes* headdress is "probably Klein's model," while the cover

wishes, since the sphinx is a characteristic symbol of Masonic iconography. Their position, flanking the entrance, serves a protective function. This same type of object also appears in György Vasváry's art collection.<sup>65</sup>

For safety reasons, pyrogranite sculptures at the Zsolnay factory were always produced in multiple copies, which were then installed on the factory premises. Consequently, Ármin Klein's magnificent pyrogranite sphinxes became the perfect complement to their English garden. As a result, four pyrogranite sphinxes can still be viewed today within the Zsolnay Quarter.

The continued use of the designs is evidenced by the pair of sphinxes guarding the main entrance of the Semmelweis University Department of Pathology, Forensic and Insurance Medicine, which were created based on the sphinx designed by Ármin Klein, with some alterations to the form.<sup>66</sup>

### ***THE ERA OF ART NOUVEAU AND THE NEXT GENERATION***

The tradition established by the Zsolnay daughters continued, with family members actively participating in the design process across generations. A childhood creation of László Mattyasovszky Zsolnay is the 1899 eosin-glazed small sculpture (façon 5749) depicting an enthroned pharaoh. The simplicity of the piece, inspired by the Colossi of Memnon, stands out strikingly among the Art Nouveau ceramics illustrated alongside the statuette in Façon Book no. 8. An intriguing oxblood-glazed example is also attested from a private collection.

With the advent of the Art Nouveau period, a new generation of young artists arrived at the factory,<sup>67</sup> who not only ushered in Zsolnay's golden age but also continued the tradition of designing Egyptian-style ceramics. The first to join the factory in 1898 was Sándor Apáti Abt, who was soon joined in the

bears the entry "Sphinx Vasváry 689." This indicates that the pyrogranite sculpture was definitely designed for György Vasváry. Since the summer villa was not completed until 1884, after Ármin Klein's death, the statues were made by János Petrides, see ROMVÁRY 1988, 176, 207 (35-36); ROMVÁRY 2003, 35.

65 ROMVÁRY 1988, 217 (796).

66 Formerly the Institute of Forensic Medicine, 1091 Budapest, Üllői út 93. The building (1886-1889) was designed by Alajos Hauszmann. For the sphinx, see MATTYASOVSZKY ZSOLNAY ET ALII 2005, 66.

67 The Zsolnay factory was already preparing for the 1900 Paris World Exhibition in the spirit of Art Nouveau, see, ZSOLNAY ET ALII 1980, 186-188.

design studio by Lajos Mack.<sup>68</sup> Both artists produced several Egyptianizing decorative ceramics made to an outstanding artistic standard. One of their collaborative pieces is a particularly graceful ewer adorned with an Egyptian male figure.<sup>69</sup> The figure serving as the vessel's handle is primarily a decorative element and has no actual function.<sup>70</sup> On the coloured variants, he wears a tight-fitting head covering that matches the colour of its kilt. This feature finds its precedent in ancient Egyptian depictions of pharaohs, the god Ptah, and Imhotep.<sup>71</sup>

The ceramic decorated with a male bust wearing a *nemes* headdress was designed by Lajos Mack.<sup>72</sup> While the Façon Book shows a figure with delicate features, the executed sculpture presents a menacing expression, an effect heightened by the serpent-patterned cloak he wears.<sup>73</sup>

One of Apáti Abt's most distinctive independently made works is the ceramic relief that adorned the entrance of the Zsolnay sample store on Váci Street, Budapest. This store had originally been located on Andrásy Avenue but was relocated by Miklós Zsolnay to a ground-floor retail space in an apartment building on Váci Street – a building commissioned by the merchant Lajos Takáts.<sup>74</sup> The impressive entrance of the newly opened shop was framed by a

68 MENDÖL 1977, 315; ZSOLNAY ET ALII 1980, 186-187.

69 A decorative ceramic dated to 1900 (façon 5988) is accompanied in Façon Book no. 9 by a note attributing the design to Sándor Apáti Abt and the modelling to Lajos Mack. A period photograph of the object can be found in the journal of the Hungarian Society of Applied Arts on the page presenting Zsolnay's eosin wares: Magyar Iparművészet 1901 (4/1), 73. For a detailed description of the ewer belonging to the Rudolf Schmutz (1933-2017) collection, see CSENKEY – STEINERT 2002, 138 (121). Online auction catalogues list the object in several colour variations, see: ZSOLNAY EOSIN GLAZED FIGURAL EWER and Zsolnay Art Nouveau decorative ewer.

70 On the figural vessel handles of Sándor Apáti Abt, see MENDÖL 1977, 317.

71 This headdress is also worn by the famous statuette of Imhotep in the Museum of Fine Arts, Budapest (inv. no. 51.2313). The piece originally formed part of the Fejérváry-Pulszky collection before it was acquired by György Ráth.

72 Façon Book no. 11 (façon 7109).

73 For a photograph of the finished object, see CEFARIELLO GROSSO 2001, 76 (62). We are very grateful to Eszter Mattyasovszky Zsolnay for bringing this publication to our attention and making it available to us.

74 On the Takáts House and the history of the Zsolnay shop that operated there from 1900 to the 1930s, see the excellent study by Gyöngyvér Havas, HAVAS 2016.

pair of pharaohs.<sup>75</sup> One wears a *nemes* headdress, and is flanked by two long feathers placed in vases. Above his head is the inscription “ZSOLNAY”. Below the figure the emblem of the five-church-steeple is depicted – well known as the factory’s trademarks – alluding to the city of Pécs. The other pharaoh figure is framed by wings, wearing on his head a red and white headdress evoking the double crown of Upper and Lower Egypt.<sup>76</sup> What makes these figures, which clearly bear the characteristic features of the Art Nouveau style, interesting is that instead of the traditional Egyptian symbols – the shepherd’s crook and the flail – they hold vessels in their hands, thus clearly alluding to the shop’s profile. The second copies of the ceramic panels were built into the wall of the former painting workshop of the Zsolnay factory.<sup>77</sup> The unique pharaoh pair today adorns the entrance to the Apostle Hall in the Zsolnay Quarter.



Figure 11. Inkwell with offering scene and vultures, Margit Szilágyi. Pécs, Zsolnay factory. © private collection.

75 For a contemporary photograph of the shopfront, see HÁRS 1996, 44.

76 Once again, the source of inspiration for the depiction was a lithograph by Racinet, RACINET 1888, n.p. 14.

77 For one of the pharaoh depictions built into the wall of the painting workshop, see KOVÁCS 2009, 3.

The series of Egyptian-style ceramics designed by artists employed by the Zsolnay factory concludes with a work by Margit Szilágyi (1894-1982). This work, a grandiose inkwell (Figure 11), depicts a group of vultures perched on a fragmented Egyptian stele. The stele is decorated with columns of hieroglyphic signs, a winged sun disk, and a detail of an offering scene. The composition is completed by an additional vulture figure. The vessel for storing ink is recessed into the part in front of the stele. In *Façon Book* no. 14, alongside the object's design drawing (*façon* 8800), the entry "victory stele – vulture group" and the design date of 1914 are recorded. Margit Szilágyi studied at the London College of Art, at the school of Cope and Nicholls, and later specialized in animal sculpture and painting under the guidance of William Frank Calderon. After returning to Hungary, she took up a position at the Zsolnay factory. From the 1930s onward, she reconstructed scientifically based representations of prehistoric animals for the Hungarian Natural History Museum in Budapest as an internationally recognized paleo-artist.<sup>78</sup>

#### **TERÉZ ZSOLNAY AND TUTANKHAMUN**

After the First World War, the loss of raw material sources and markets, coupled with widespread impoverishment, plunged the factory into a severe crisis. But despite this, the Zsolnay family made it a priority to restore their reputation, resuming high-quality ceramic production where Egyptian-style decorative objects also found an important place.

Teréz Zsolnay (1854-1944) together with her son, László Mattyasovszky Zsolnay (1885-1935) designed a splendid series of Egyptian vases. The more than fifty objects decorated with ancient Egyptian scenes and motifs held in the Zsolnay collection of the Janus Pannonius Museum, together with their associated design sheets, offer a glimpse into a creative process founded on Teréz Zsolnay's personal affinity for ancient Egypt.

<sup>78</sup> MARGIT SZILÁGYI'S obituary was previously available on Artportal, the contemporary art news and database site: <https://artportal.hu/lexikon-muvesz/szilagyi-margit-6461/> (accessed 02. 09. 2023). Since the portal ceased operation in 2024, the link is unfortunately no longer accessible. Her obituary is available on the Darabanth auction house website: MARGIT SZILÁGYI (1894-1892), see Internet resources.



Figure 12. Design sheet of a vase decorated with the Zsolnay cat.  
Pécs, © Janus Pannonius Museum, Ad. inv. no. 61.430.18

The surviving design sheets make it possible to trace the entire creative process and the evolution of the decorative motifs. In a finely detailed vase design (Figure 12), the charming figure of the Zsolnay cat, first created in 1876, makes reappearance.<sup>79</sup> A particular strength of the series lies in its

<sup>79</sup> On the design sheet, the cat was again depicted in green, accompanied by rosettes, papyrus

elegant floral motifs. While preserving a distinctly ancient Egyptian character, these designs differ markedly from other modern Egyptian-inspired representations. As a result, the fresh, contemporary look of the floral elements on Zsolnay vases made them an ideal fit for the interior design of the era. Another notable feature of the vases is how naturally and directly they depict nudity. The museum's collection contains at least nineteen design sheets which were based on ancient Egyptian scenes. What makes them exceptional is the sensitive way they blend imagery from temple reliefs and tombs, creating a refined balance between the decoration and the ceramic forms themselves. The designers drew on the publications in the factory's well-stocked reference library. A close analysis of the scenes makes it evident that they followed contemporary Egyptological scholarship closely. This is supported by, among other evidence, the presence of Richard Lepsius's book *Auswahl der wichtigsten Urkunden des ägyptischen Alterthums* (1842) in the Janus Pannonius Museum's own collection. Their work was based on current publications, with the most frequently used sources including Émile Prisse d'Avennes's *Histoire de l'art égyptien d'après les monuments* (1878) and Albert Racinet's *Le costume historique* (1888).<sup>80</sup> Additionally, they were familiar with and consulted the works of leading contemporary scholars, including Adolf Erman and Hermann Ranke (*Aegypten und Aegyptisches Leben im Altertum*, 1923) and Walter Wreszinski (*Atlas zur altägyptischen Kulturgeschichte I-III*, 1923-36). The Egyptian scenes on the vases are not merely copies from a single source. Their designers combined motifs from different sites and publications into unified compositions with a great sense of style and artistic freedom. A distinct subgroup within the series

plants, and a scarab, see JPM, Zs. Ad. inv. no. 61.430.18. Further distinctive examples of the later reuse of early Egyptianizing patterns are the glass bowls made by Ferenc Csihalek (JPM, inv. no. 51.5802.1; 51.5803.1.) from the 1920s. The glass bowls – decorated with the same lotus-flower motifs as the earliest Egyptian-style ceramics – resulted from experiments connected to eosin-decorated glassware. However, the idea which came from Vilmos Zsolnay, proved too costly and therefore never entered commercial production.

<sup>80</sup> Based on the *Eingangs Facturen-Buch*, which lists acquisitions between 1884 and 1894, the factory's library was enriched with foundational works such as RACINET's *L'ornement polychrome* and, in 1886, a collection of Piranesi engravings. RACINET's *Geschichte des Costumes* was ordered directly from the Ernst Wasmuth publishing house in Berlin in 1888. On the development of the factory library, see MENDÖL 2007, 228-237.

features a colour palette that imitates the yellowish-brown tones of contemporary facsimile publications, such as Lepsius's *Denkmaeler (LD)*.<sup>81</sup> By this time, the factory had access to both the necessary source material and the technical means to execute the designs. The series – which encompasses nine distinct ancient Egyptian scene types and numerous variations in colour, glaze, size, and form – stands as a high point of ceramic design.



Figure 13. Design sheet with Egyptian banquet scene. Pécs, © Janus Pannonius Museum, Ad. inv. no. 61.430.75

81 Karl Richard Lepsius, *Denkmaeler aus Aegypten und Aethiopen*. Berlin: Nicolaische Buchhandlung 1849-1859.

The banquet scene decorating the vase (Figure 13) is a composite, assembled from scenes from four separate tombs.<sup>82</sup> The female figures on the left and the harpist can be easily identified with the banquet scene from the tomb of Nakht (TT 52), while the two dancing girls are borrowed from Nebamun's tomb in Thebes.<sup>83</sup> On the right, the depiction of the barefoot women, with a figure behind them holding a lotus flower, finds its closest parallel in the tomb of Nebseny (TT 108).<sup>84</sup> Interestingly, the depiction of the lotus-bearing woman can be definitively traced to a lithograph by Albert Racinet, whose own source was a scene from an El-Kab tomb. In this way, the Zsolnay vase's decoration not only blends artistic sources but also bridges a geographical gap by combining imagery from tombs in El-Kab and Thebes.<sup>85</sup> The related design sheets show two colour schemes for the vase, of which the Janus Pannonius Museum holds the version with a gray ground, while a red-ground variant is known from a private collection.

The vase decorated with a seated female figure and a male figure kneeling on one knee (Figure 14 a-c) combines the female lotus-bearer from the previously described banquet scene with a depiction of a defeated enemy, a motif characteristic of ancient Egypt.<sup>86</sup> The latter was based on a relief from the temple built by Ramesses II at Beit el-Wali.<sup>87</sup> The composition depicted on

82 The design sheets for the vase: JPM, Zs. Ad. inv. no. 61.430.57; 61.430.75; 61.430.78. For this decoration, WRESZINSKI 1923 offered the best and most comprehensive overview of ancient Egyptian scenes available in a single publication. It is thus a plausible source for the vase's decoration.

83 For the scene from the tomb of Nakht, see: WRESZINSKI 1923, pl. 175A; for the two dancers from the tomb of Nebamun (British Museum, London, EA 37984), see WRESZINSKI 1923, pl. 91a. For the depiction of the two dancers, see also: CAPART 1911, pl. 177. For the colour lithograph of the seated female figure on the right holding a lotus flower, see: RACINET 1888, pl. 3.

84 For the banquet scene from the tomb of Nebseny, see WRESZINSKI 1923, pl. 339 similar scenes can be seen, pls. 122, 169, 254. An additional parallel for the two barefoot female figures is the group of three singers depicted in the tomb of Djoserkareseneb or Djoserka (TT 38), see WRESZINSKI 1923, pl. 144.

85 For the depiction of the female figure from El-Kab holding a lotus flower, see RACINET 1888, pl. 3 (5). For more on the female figure, see note 87.

86 Design sheet for the vase: JPM, Zs. Ad. inv. no. 61.430.68.

87 For the relief, see: LD Abth. III, Band 7, B1. 176d. For the colour lithograph of the defeated enemy, see RACINET 1888, pl. 2. (20), For the female figure holding a lotus flower, see RACINET

the vase successfully adapts the monumental scene to the surface of the small (8,8 cm tall) vase.



Figure 14a-c. Vase depicting the defeated enemy and a lady holding a lotus flower, with lotus flower and geometric decoration, 8,8 cm. Pécs, Zsolnay factory, © private collection

The design sheet for the vase decorated with a husband and wife<sup>88</sup> shows two married couples facing each other, with a detail of an offering table between them. Here, because of the detailed depiction of ancient furniture, the visual influence of ancient Egyptian art is most pronounced. The composition, which merges scenes from two tombs at El-Kab, is based on a lithograph by Racinet.<sup>89</sup> The couple on the left, together with the offering-table detail, comes from the tomb of Setau (EK 4), while the depiction of the other couple can be found in the tomb of Paheri (EK 3).<sup>90</sup> Above the depiction of the couples in colour, a pencil drawing of the female lotus-bearer already known from earlier vase decorations appears. The two depictions also appear side by side on Racinet's lithograph, so the pencil drawing corroborates the use of Racinet's publication.<sup>91</sup> On the vase that was actually produced, however, only the couple on the right was depicted.<sup>92</sup>

The design sheets depicting harpists<sup>93</sup> were based on scenes from the tomb of Ramesses III (KV 11). The designers worked from lithographs by Prisse and Racinet, which is also evident from the design sheet's faithful reproduction of the original colours.<sup>94</sup> On the black-and-white version of the design, the figures of the harpists were joined by a depiction of a female musician from the tomb of Kenamun (TT 93).<sup>95</sup>

88 JPM, Zs. Ad. inv. no. 61.430.76.

89 In RACINET's *Le costume historique* (1888), only El-Kab is cited as the source of the depictions, see RACINET 1888, pl. 3 (1-4). However, the figures of the couples can be clearly identified based on Racinet's lithograph. The depiction of a female guest holding a lotus flower – a standard, generic figure representing the assembled company – is present in both tombs at El-Kab.

90 The scene on the south wall of the Tomb of Setau (20<sup>th</sup> Dynasty, 1186-1069 BC), to the right of the entrance, can be viewed on the Osirisnet website under the chapter Tombs of El-Kab, listed as Setau. The scene on the middle section of the east wall in the Tomb of Pahery (18<sup>th</sup> Dynasty, reign of Thutmose III, c. 1450 BC) is also available on the same site under the heading Pahery.

91 RACINET 1888, pl. 3 (1-5).

92 Museum of Applied Arts (IMM), Budapest, Ceramics and Glass Collection, inv. no. 52.349.1.

93 JPM, Zs. Ad. inv. no. 61.430.77; 61.430.80.

94 For the colour lithographs, see Bardes de Ramesses III, PRISSE 1878, the chapter on painting, n. p; cf. PRISSE 2000, 134; see also RACINET 1888, pl. 6. (26-27).

95 JPM, Zs. Ad. inv. no. 61.430.80. For the depiction of the female musician, see Jouseuse de mandore, PRISSE 1878, chapter on painting, n.p; cf. PRISSE 2000, 124; and RACINET 1888, pl. 3; WRESZINSKI 1923, pl. 299; ERMAN – RANKE 1923, pl. 34.



Figure 15. Design sheet of a vase with acrobatic dance scene. On the left corner with a note: "Ermann Ranke Aegypten".

Pécs, © Janus Pannonius Museum, Ad. inv. no. 61.430.15.

The decoration of this vase is based on a scene of acrobatic dance, a common subject in ancient Egyptian tombs.<sup>96</sup> As with other pieces in the series, the composition again demonstrates an excellent sense of style and artistic freedom in blending depictions from various scholarly publications, merging them with individual creative solutions. On the design sheet for one such vase (Figure 15), the marginal note “Ermann [sic] Ranke Aegypten” refers to the publication used as the source.<sup>97</sup> This confirms that the designers definitely knew and consulted the monograph by Adolf Erman and Hermann Ranke (*Aegypten und Aegyptisches Leben im Altertum*, 1923). It is also possible that they consulted works by Jean Capart (*Une rue de tombeaux à Saqqarah*, 1907) and Gaston Maspero (*Art in Egypt*, 1912), since these volumes contained high-quality illustrations. Its decoration was based on a relief from the mastaba performed in honour of the goddess Hathor (Figure 16).<sup>98</sup> Both the design



Figure 16. Acrobatic dance performed to honor Hathor in the mastaba of Ankhmahor. Old Kingdom, 6<sup>th</sup> Dynasty (2345-2181 BC), Saqqara. Photo by the authors.

96 Two design sheets can be linked to the decoration depicting dancers: JPM, Zs. Ad. inv. no. 61.430.15; 61.430.61.

97 For the design sheet with the note, see JPM, Zs. Ad. inv. no. 61.430.15; cf. the illustration used during the design process, ERMAN – RANKE 1923, 281, fig. 121. The source for fig. 121 is a publication by Capart, which they likely also had access to. For a photograph of the dancers, see CAPART 1907, pl. LXVIII-LXIX (“Tombeau de Ankh-ma-hor”).

98 For more on the topic, see MEYER-DIETRICH 2009, 6-7.

sheet and the vases feature the hieroglyphic word *iba* ("dance"), which also appears in the ancient scene. On the Zsolnay vases, however, the designer occasionally supplemented the word's Egyptian orthography with additional signs – such as the basket-shaped *neb*-sign and/or a depiction of a two-eared vessel – reflecting the same inventive variation seen in the decorative patterns of the vases themselves. The frieze depicting the dancers is sometimes framed by a decoration composed of either geometric patterns of the designer's own invention, or motifs borrowed from ancient offering scenes – for example, baskets filled with figs and stylized plant ornaments. The dance-scene vases were produced on a matt white or red ground, with variations in yellow, brown, eosin or coloured luster glazes.

The vases decorated with military scenes (Figure 17) were inspired by a relief from the temple of Ramesses II at Abu Simbel and by lithographs published in the works of Prisse and Racinet.<sup>99</sup> This particular decoration has the greatest number of surviving design variations,<sup>100</sup> a fact corroborated by the large number of extant vases related to this design.<sup>101</sup>

99 See the drawing of the relief above: *Fragments de bas-reliefs militaires*, PRISSE 1878, chapter on reliefs, n. p; cf. Prisse 2000, 108. For a colour lithograph of the scene, see RACINET 1888, pl. 1. (above).

100 JPM, Zs. Ad. inv. no.61.430.16; 61.430.69; 61.430.74; 61.430.81.

101 Seven vases with this decoration are in the Janus Pannonius Museum's collection. The Museum of Applied Arts holds two further examples, and vases decorated with military scenes are also known from private collections.



Figure 17. Vase decorated with a military scene of a relief from the temple of Ramesses II (1279-1213 BC) at Abu Simbel. Pécs, Zsolnay factory, © private collection

A particularly charming scene decorates the surface of a cylindrical vase (Figure 18 a-b), depicting a naked young girl with jewellery and a *usekh*-collar. Her figure is framed by papyrus plants and a Nile marsh scene with

cranes and a mongoose catching its prey.<sup>102</sup> The decoration was inspired by the inlaid ornamentation of a mirror case<sup>103</sup> belonging to Queen Henuttai (21<sup>st</sup> Dynasty, 1068-945 BC) that comes from the famous “Royal Cache” discovered at Deir el-Bahari in 1881 (DB 320). This discovery of more than fifty mummies, including pharaohs and their family members, as well as other high-ranking officials, caused a worldwide sensation at the time. The mirror case was part of the queen’s burial equipment.



Figure 18 a-b. Cylindrical vase depicting a young girl surrounded by papyrus plants, cranes and mongooses, 18,5 x 7,5 cm. Pécs, Zsolnay factory. © Janus Pannonius Museum, Ad. inv. no. 51.5211.1.

A scene depicting a marsh hunt from the mastaba tomb of Mereruka at Saqqara (6<sup>th</sup> Dynasty, 2345-2323 BC) (Figure 19) decorates one side of a large

102 JPM, Zs. Ad. inv. no. 61.430.96; JPM, inv. no. 51.5211.1; 52.747.1. For the depiction of the three cranes surrounding the young girl, from the mastaba tomb of Ti, see the upper drawing “Troupeau de grues & basse-cour des domaines de Tei”, PRISSE 1878, chapter on reliefs, n.p; cf. PRISSE 2000, 75.

103 Egyptian Museum, Cairo, JE 26278 = CG 44101.



Figure 19. Marsh-hunting scene from the tomb of vizier Mereruka (No. 30). Old Kingdom, 6<sup>th</sup> Dynasty, Reign of Teti (2345-2323 BC), Saqqara. © Photo by the authors

vase.<sup>104</sup> Marsh hunting was a commonly depicted scene in ancient Egyptian tombs, as it symbolized rebirth and victory over chaos. The first photograph of this scene was published by Walter Wreszinski in 1936, meaning the design sheet (Figure 20) and vase were created later, in the 1930s.<sup>105</sup>

Another interesting feature of the decoration is that it merges a female figure from the 21<sup>st</sup> Dynasty with Mereruka's Old Kingdom scene into a single composition.<sup>106</sup> The decorative bands framing the marsh hunt scene, com-

104 The design sheets belonging to the vase with JPM inventory number 51.5210.1 are as follows: JPM, Zs. Ad. inv. no. 61.430.55; 61.430.60.

105 See WRESZINSKI 1936, pl. 107. The first comprehensive publication on the tomb was issued by Prentice Duell in 1938, see DUELL 1938. Georges Daressy's earlier publication from 1900 contains no illustrations of the tomb, see DARESSY 1900.

106 For the decoration featuring a young female figure on the previously mentioned vases and

posed of papyrus thickets and water birds, also derive from the mirror case of Henuttaui. The two ancient depictions are separated by over a thousand years.



Figure 20. Design sheet of the vase with depiction of a marsh-hunting scene and a young girl, 45 x 18 cm. Pécs, © Janus Pannonius Museum, Ad. inv. no. 61.430.60.

### **SIKORSKI DESIGNS**

Recent research has identified additional contributors to the series. A design sheet is signed by Miklós Sikorski (1888-1973), a decor plan was created by Júlia Zsolnay (1856-1950), and a Pattern sheet was prepared by Tádé Sikorski (1852-1940), all of whom participated in the project.<sup>107</sup> Miklós Sikorski's name is on a design sheet that shows four women playing different instruments, accompanied by a dancing girl.<sup>108</sup> The drawing is a composite of

design sheet, see JPM, Zs. Ad. inv. no. 61.430.96; JPM, inv. no. 51.5211.1; 52.747.1.

<sup>107</sup> For the design sheet with Miklós Sikorski's signature, see JPM, Zs. Ad. inv. no. 61.430.3. Júlia Zsolnay's decor plan and Tádé Sikorski's Pattern sheet: JPM, Zs. Ad. inv. no. 61.292.35; 61.297.8.

<sup>108</sup> JPM, Zs. Ad. inv. no. 61.430.3.

two different tomb scenes, a fact further indicated by the distinct hairstyles of the women. The three musician figures on the left are borrowed from the tomb of Rekhmire (TT 100).<sup>109</sup> However, the two female figures on the right were inspired by a drawing in the Prisse publication based on a scene from one of the tombs of Mery.<sup>110</sup>

The newly discovered decor plan<sup>111</sup> by Júlia Zsolnay shows a close similarity to the aforementioned Pattern sheet by Tádé Sikorski; previously, only a detail of her design, recorded in *Décor Book* no. 8, was known.<sup>112</sup> Of the three female musicians depicted here, the harpist from the tomb of Rekhmire (TT 100) is the same figure that appears in Miklós Sikorski's drawing. The two women playing lutes, however, are taken from the tomb of Nebamun.<sup>113</sup> Júlia Zsolnay's design has survived independently from the "Tutankhamun" series design sheets – for it was preserved among the materials of Tádé Sikorski.

A vase produced from Tádé Sikorski's design (Figure 21) has been found in a private collection. One side is decorated with a winged sun disk; the other depicts a scene with the pharaoh offering incense and libation to Ptah-Sokar-Osiris, with Isis spreading her wings in a protective gesture behind him. This New Kingdom scene is taken from the tomb of Ramesses III (KV 11) (Figure 22).<sup>114</sup> The central scene is framed by a decorative frieze consisting of eyes, geometric patterns, and floral motifs.

109 In the tomb of Rekhmire (TT 100) the scene depicts the figures in a different order. For the three musician girls, see WRESZINSKI 1923, 10(a), 332. Prisse also published scenes from this tomb, but the depiction of the three female musicians is not among them.

110 For the drawing of the scene from Mery's tomb, see "Musiciennes & danseuses", PRISSE 1878, in the chapter on drawings, n.p.; see also Olaf E. Kaper's note, PRISSE 2000, 69. The drawing was made by George Lloyd, who was travelling with Prisse. The tomb's location is still unknown today; we only know that its owner was Mery, the First Prophet of Amun during the reign of Amenhotep II, see PRISSE 2000, 69.

111 JPM, Zs. Ad. inv. no. 61.292.35.

112 *Décor Book* no. 8, décor 6332. We cannot currently link any object to this decoration, but the drawing in the *Décor Book* is accompanied by the vase with form number 8189.

113 The inspiration for the two female figures can again be traced to Wreszinski's publication, see WRESZINSKI 1923, pl. 91(c) 9. The scene also appears in other contemporary publications, see e.g. WILKINSON 1847, 236 no. 188 (1-2).

114 The decoration was likely based on a lithograph published by Rosellini, see ROSELLINI 1832 (145).



Figure 21. Pattern sheet with offering scene and winged sun-disc. Tádé Sikorski. Pécs, © Janus Pannonius Museum, Ad. inv. no. 61.297.8



his throne and Isis, behind him, with her wings spread protectively. 20<sup>th</sup> Dynasty, reign of Ramesses III (1184-1153 BC). Thebes, Valley of the Kings, tomb of Ramesses III (KV 11). © The New York Public Library (<https://digitalcollections.nypl.org/items/c7d374b0-c603-012f-dfb9-58d385a7bc34?canvasIndex=0> ).

A decorative band of vultures with spread wings runs around the neck of the vessel. The discovery of this piece and its associated Pattern sheet is highly significant, as the vase – previously known only from publications – stylistically differs so much from the other design sheets and vases that it was earlier considered to be from an earlier design.<sup>115</sup> Its drawing is missing from

115 A copy of the Pattern sheet was provided to us by Eszter Mattyasovszky Zsolnay. This copy

Décor Book no. 8.<sup>116</sup> The date on the Pattern sheet, however, places it in 1924, and the reason for the significant difference in style is that it was designed by a different family member. When compared with the complete “Tutankhamun” material, the three Sikorski designs clearly represent a distinct style.

### **SUMMARY**

This study encompasses the holdings of two major museums – the Zsolnay collections of the Janus Pannonius Museum and the Museum of Applied Arts – and also includes the analysis of pieces known from the antiquities trade and private collections. The vases comprising the so-called Tutankhamun series have been dated by scholarship to 1924-26 up to the present. The inventory compiled by Teréz Zsolnay for the factory museum (1930) makes no mention of the Egyptian vases, a fact that conflicts with the evidence from other sources. Based on the recollections of Margit Mattyasovszky Zsolnay and her description of the factory museum material, the vases can be dated to the early 1920s. However, in the inventory prepared with the assistance of Géza Nikelszky upon the transfer of the factory museum material to the Janus Pannonius Museum, several pieces of the “Tutankhamun” series bear the date 1913. According to the serial numbers noted alongside the objects, these pieces may have been produced around the same time, which is also supported by their glaze technique.

The detailed analysis of the Egyptian decoration of the “Tutankhamun” series has revealed that most of the publications used in the design process were already known to the family and available in the factory’s excellently equipped specialist library long before the discovery of Tutankhamun’s tomb. The research also establishes that, throughout the examined period, Egyptian-style objects were continuously present and did not appear in the

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led to the location of the original in the Janus Pannonius Museum archives. For the design sheet bearing Miklós Sikorski’s signature, see JPM, Zs. Ad. inv. no. 61.430.3. Júlia Zsolnay’s decor plan and Tádé Sikorski’s Pattern sheet: JPM, Zs. Ad. inv. no. 61.292.35; 61.297.8, both bear the date 1924.

116 The Décor Books themselves are incomplete, with numerous pages missing. The section containing the Tutankhamun designs, however, is an unbroken sequence, unaffected by gaps. This very continuity also led us to believe the vase was produced earlier.

Zsolnay factory's product range only as a sudden result of the archaeological sensation. Thus, thanks to Teréz Zsolnay, the factory likely already possessed new Egyptian-style designs, or perhaps even completed pieces, as early as the 1910s. Consequently, following the publicity surrounding the discovery, the Zsolnay factory was able to turn this to its own advantage in a short time and could begin series production based on already existing designs.

The highly varied evidence from the base marks also supports the case for a more extended production period. The question of the Egyptian vases' chronology could be resolved by studying their glaze techniques and by analyzing the production and exhibition records in the Pécs archives.

The Zsolnay ceramics and design sheets featured in this study are elegant, distinctive examples of the Egyptian style in Hungarian decorative arts. From the beginning, the factory's designers drew on a range of sources to incorporate Egyptian motifs into their work. Zsolnay consciously pursued a new direction, distinct from the prevailing styles of Western and Central Europe. For these Egyptian-inspired pieces, the goal was to create a unique artistic identity, one that balanced consumer tastes with international trends. The outcome was a body of work whose superior craftsmanship and artistic quality continue to distinguish Zsolnay's Egyptian ceramics from the Egyptianizing products of its contemporaries on an international level.

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