

Aegyptus et Pannonia IX.



Acta Symposii anno 2023

BUDAPEST

Aegyptus et Pannonia IX.

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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

19th-20th 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 19th-20th 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 200th 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 18th 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) 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 8th- and 7th-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

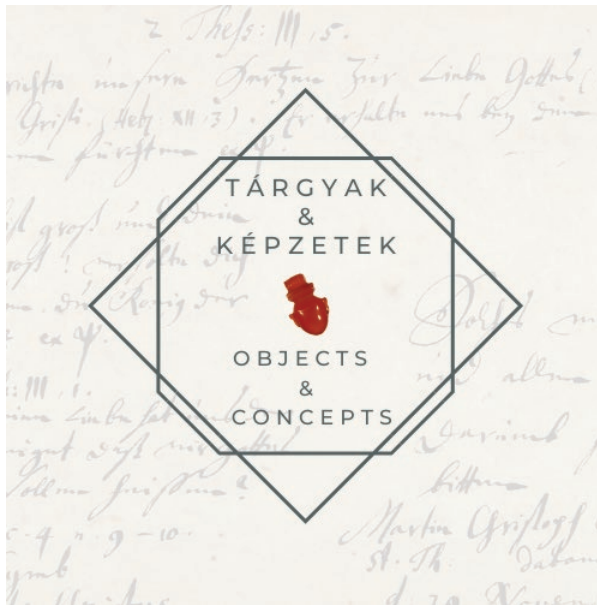
Andrea Fullér – Eszter Ferő: Tutanhamentől a szecesszióig: a Zsolnay gyár egyiptizáló díszműáruja [From Tutankhamun to Art Nouveau: the Zsolnay factory's Egyptionizing decorative goods]

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 19th-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 Djedher¹ 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 100th 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,² 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 19th and 20th Centuries*. Prague: Academy of Performing Arts in Prague 2016, 107-118.

Jewish cemetery in Budapest,³ the Szivárvány Cinema in Kaposvár,⁴ and the monuments in Csákvár and Hédervár,⁵ or part of them⁶. Likewise, the Zsolnay Factory's Egyptianising artefacts⁷ 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).⁸ When the stela – long thought lost – was later rediscovered, it emerged that the painting was an almost perfect copy.⁹ 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 17th-22nd, 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 JÜNOVA Macková, Adéla – STORCHOVÁ, Lucie - JÜN, Libor (eds), *Egypt and Austria X. Visualizing the Orient: Central Europe and the Near East in the 19th and 20th 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 20th to 24th, 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 19th and early 20th 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 Arts¹⁰.

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.

¹⁰ КÓTHAY, 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 envelope¹¹ depicting the famous gold mask and nested coffins. In the background is a gold relief scene from a small shrine (JE 61481¹²) 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)¹³, 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 coin¹⁴ 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 amulets¹⁵ 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, one¹⁶ was deposited in a niche on the southern side of the burial chamber in the western corner and subsequently walled up. Another pillar¹⁷ 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 pectorals¹⁸.

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 18th 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 16th century onwards. Her research shows that, initially, cane sugar was used primarily among aristocratic circles to treat cataracts and trachoma. From the late 18th 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.

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Medma and Hipponion, Terracottas of two ancient Greek cities with a potter's eye*

PÉTER VÉNINGER

Independent scholar, Budapest HU

ABSTRACT

The religious life of the colonies of Lokroi Medma and Hipponion, is very similar, particularly the cults associated with Persephone. The CERCOLOC research group is studying artefacts found at these sites and is creating a scientific database containing descriptions, photographs, drawings and 3D models of them. When examining the production methods of the votive statuettes found in the Calderazzo sanctuary in Medma and its favissa, I noticed phenomena that suggest the terracotta offerers were active participants in the cult. They did not merely offer these objects; they also took part in making them, thereby offering their own labour to Persephone alongside the objects themselves.

KEYWORDS: terracotta, statuette, Greek colony, Magna Graecia, method of production, offering, personal religion

INTRODUCTION

In Calabria, southern Italy, a Hungarian archaeological project is led by the organisation research group CERCOLOC based in the Pázmány Péter Catholic University, Budapest. The project was initiated in 2017 by Ágnes Bencze, Associate Professor of the Pázmány University. It is pursued in close cooperation with the Calabrian archaeological institutions and archaeologists, the École Française de Rome and the Museum of Fine Arts of Budapest, just to mention important participants.

The subject matter of the research is the figural terracotta production crafted in two ancient city-states located close to each other: today's Vibo Valentia (ancient Hipponion) and Rosarno (ancient Medma). The two city-states were both founded by Lokroi Epizephyrioi (Magna Graecia's Lokroi) towards the beginning of the 6th century BC, and flourished in the next two centuries. All the finds in these project date from this period. The life, culture and religion of the three cities were closely linked at this time. They seem to

have worshiped the gods in a similar way, largely the same gods, with similar rituals, and had the same artistic culture and taste, even though differences can be perceived among them.¹

In Rosarno, three sacred temenos are known located among the residential area,² and the archaeological remains of the largest sanctuary in Calderazzo,³ probably linked to the cult of Persephone,⁴ are being studied here, i.e. the most popular votive objects found in the largest and oldest known favissa. These are mainly fragments of terracotta statuettes. (Figure 1.)

In Vibo Valentia,⁵ work is being carried out on finds from an early Greek cemetery. One of the most exciting finds from this cemetery is an Orphic lamella or gold plate,⁶ which is on display in the local museum (Museo archeologico statale Vito Capialdi). The find is unique because its inscription gives the most detailed instructions yet known on what exactly to do when we arrive in the afterlife.

Several publications have appeared on the work carried out so far.⁷ The results were presented in a special showcase at the Museum of Fine Arts, Budapest in 2018, and in a multimedial exhibition in Rome in 2022 organised by the L'École Française and by the Hungarian Academy of Rome. The work is not yet finished; it will continue over the next few years. Several requests have already been received from Italian museums for further processing of archaeological material of a similar nature.

* I would like to thank Ágnes Bencze for the collaboration, the opportunity to participate in the Medma project and for her professional advice.

1 BENCZE 2019.

2 LATTANZI 1996; PAOLETTI – SETTIS 1981; PAOLETTI 2014.

3 The sanctuary was found during the excavation in 2018. BENCZE 2019a, 64, fig. 1..

4 Persephone is the queen of the underworld in Greek mythology (as well as the daughter of Demeter, the goddess of fertility and summer, the goddess of spring and rebirth). Wife of Hades, together they rule the dead. The ancient Greeks turned to Persephone rather than Hades in relation to the underworld. According to the Greek mythology, Persephone rises from the underworld at certain times of the year, and these are spring and summer. (The ancient Greeks had three seasons: spring, summer and autumn.) Based on the Locroi pinakes, she was here worshipped as the symbol and protector of the marriage and female fulfillment, and that of the death, the traversing into the underworld, thus the women living in this region performed their rites in the Mannella-mound sanctuary for these reasons – and probably also in Medma.

5 ARSLAN 1986; IANNELLI 2014.

6 The first edition of the text was published by PUGLIESE CARRATELLI – FOTI 1974; most recently by BENCZE 2024.

7 See e.g. ARSLAN 1986, BENCZE 2019, BENCZE – VÉNINGER 2019; BENCZE 2020, BENCZE ET ALII 2024.



Figure 1. Terracotta figurines in the museum's storage room. Rosarno.

In this article, I will first present both the archaeological projects and the historical background, then I will present the topic related to my professional knowledge: the investigations for methods of production and their results so far.

THE MEDMA PROJECT (ROSARNO)

The work, which began in 2017, aims to process the findings of the earliest excavations in the sanctuary, at a site called Calderazzo. It is an archaeologically important site unearthed in 1912-13 by Paolo Orsi,⁸ who began excavating the so-called "great favissa" containing the votive statuettes belonging to the sanctuary. It seems that the statuettes were buried in a special system. Their research is made possible by modern computer technology and teamwork. The result of the work will be a multilingual digitised database. It will contain descriptions of almost 5,000 finds, drawings, high-resolution photographs and 3D models. It will also include the results of investigations for methods of production and archaeometrical analysis. In this database, all information relevant to research will be quickly accessible in one place.

THE HIPPONION PROJECT (VIBO VALENTIA)

The necropolis of Hipponion and its two sanctuaries were discovered in the 1960s. Objects of similar age and style were found in both, the Hipponion site and the favissa belonging to the sanctuary of Medma Calderazzo.

⁸ ORSI 1902, 47-48; ORSI 1913, 55-144; ORSI 1917, 37-67.

Arslan Ermanno excavated 450 burials in the necropolis.⁹ The cemetery was used between 600 and 300 BC. A large number of Greek vases and other grave goods were found in the graves. These are archaeologically processed and catalogued. A significant novelty is that some of the burials contain locally produced black figure vases, which contrasts with the previous belief that only common pottery was produced at the site in the early period.

Work on the material began in 2021. The result of the processing of the Vibo Valentia cemetery will be a computerised catalogue containing the archaeological description of all the finds from all the tombs and photographs of the objects. An integral part of the work is the restoration of the objects so that they can be photographed or photographed better than before.

BRIEF HISTORY OF THE CITIES MEDMA AND HIPPONION

In southern Italy, Aegean Greeks founded new cities from the second half of the 8th century BC. This is, what the Locrians did, when they founded the colony Lokroi Epizephyrioi in today's Calabria. Both Medma and Hipponion were founded by Lokrians around 600 BC. It is difficult to say how long the original inhabitants lived in the two colonies, because the cities were always inhabited until modern times, so any change was gradual and with an imperceptible transition.

Greek city-states had their own units of measurement, calendars, gods and cults. Colonies adopted the systems of the founding cities, and over time certain things (such as the system of cults) gradually changed. The three Greek cities so important from the point of view of religious history, Medma, Hipponion and the mother city Lokroi, are culturally very similar until at least the middle of the 5th century BC.

The cult of Persephone seems to be very similar in all three cities. As far as votive statuettes are concerned, all we know for sure is that an important part of the worship of the gods was the offering of a gift to the deity. In Greek, they were called "*anathema*", which means "*laid object*" or "*offering*". It is likely that these objects were "*laid down*" by the worshippers during a recurring ritual, such as an annual festival. It cannot be ruled out that the offerers also asked for something in return, or at least trusted in the benevolence of the gifted deity (this is the implicit meaning of "votive" or "ex voto" often used in modern archaeological studies).

The types and style of the votive statuettes made and used in Medma were in the 6th century and in the first half of the 5th century BC very similar to those made in the other two cities, moreover, all types of statuettes made in one of the three cities were also found in the others. (Figure 2.) It is therefore impossible at present to say for certain which were made in the given city and

9 ARSLAN 1986, 1029-1058.

which were transported from any of the three: Medma, Hipponion or Lokroi.¹⁰ We also do not know whether the statuettes were actually made in three different cities. There is also the question of whether or not they were made in the same way (using the same material and firing technique) within one city. For the moment, it seems us,¹¹ however, that the three cities used identical moulds, but worked with different materials – namely three types of clay can be recognized: reddish, grainy is characteristic for Medma, while smoother, pink on the outside, grey on the inside might be of Hipponion, and among the earlier, 6th century pieces a third type of clay, very soft, pale yellow, belongs to Lokroi –, and we can also find differences in the ceramic firing technique. Our theory seems to be confirmed also by the fact, that at the same time, there are types that have special local characteristics that coexist with the above mentioned ones.



Figure 2. Votive statue without arms, Rosarno

10 The two most important theories are published by Rebecca MILLER (1983) and Daphni DOEPNER (2020).

11 VÉNINGER 2019.

STUDY OF THE METHOD OF PRODUCTION

The aim of the project is not to make assumptions, but to systematically separate the forms, materials and other characteristics typical of each city using scientific methods. This will be done by means of investigations for methods of production and archaeometrical analysis. The former is underway, the latter are awaiting approval.

Part of the investigations for methods of production aims at a better understanding of the individual steps of the technical process in production. We sought answers to several questions: What is the relationship between the properties and types of clay used and the technique of making the sculpture? What kind of production problems (pressing into moulds, drying, firing) did they encounter? How long did it take to make the prototype? How long did it take to make a statuette from the moulds? And so on. But these are dry professional details that I do not want to bore the reader with. However, there is one part that I think goes beyond the dry professional interest and may be of interest to other scholars.

We do not have reliable and sound data concerning the cult practice in Locroi and its colonies. Persephone had a mystery cult where it was forbidden to talk about anything that happened during the cultic ceremonies. So the reason for the lack of information is that there is no description, or at least no surviving account of it.

The technical traces of the production visible on the outer surface of the finds do not usually reveal anything about their preparation. Fortunately, in the case of the Medma sanctuary, we can still learn something. We don't know the cult as a whole, but we do have a glimpse of what went on in this sanctuary by studying the objects. In order to make sense of this new information, it is essential to understand, at least in broad terms, how terracotta statuettes are made.

These objects were not made by individual modelling, but they were reproduced by using one or several moulds, as a rather large quantity was required. A kind of multiplications process was used: the clay was pressed into negative earthenware moulds. The pieces made in this way were fitted and pasted to each other to form a complete statuette. The result is a hollow statuette. (Figure 3.) The objects often show that certain details of the statuette were altered while the clay was still soft and malleable. For example, the hair of the female figure depicted may have been changed by modelling, or smaller parts may have been added, such as hair ornaments, which were made and pasted to the statuette.



Figure 3. Fragment of a votive statuette with traces of the production on its inner surface.

When I study the methods of production of archaeological finds, I am always impressed by the practical thinking of the ancient craftsmen and the fantastic routine with which they created their objects.

However, looking through the terracotta fragments of Medma, I noticed a very unusual phenomenon: I had the impression that the statuettes mostly looked good from the outside, but the traces visible inside (traces of pressing into shape, pasting) and modifications to the finished pieces were often the kind that could only have been made by an inexperienced hand. Looking at the statuette fragments from the sanctuary, I had the feeling that I was looking at the objects of the enthusiastic but inexperienced members of a modern artisan circle. These marks are very different from those found on the work of skilled sculptors or potters. The marks on the sculptures showed mistakes common to beginners:

- Aimless, searching, uncertain, indecisive and unreasonably cautious motions.
- The clay used to make certain pieces was not in the proper condition. Sometimes it was softer than necessary and sometimes it was too hard.
- Another common mistake made by today's beginners is not pressing the clay hard enough into the mould. As a result, prominent parts of the sculpture (e.g. the nose) are not formed or are only partially formed. If this mistake is small, the craftsman will try to correct it later by modelling. Such features were also found in the pit of the sanctuary.
- If too little clay was pressed into the mould and it was left to dry during the work, the pieces might not join together properly. Such faulty

sculptures did not survive, however, because the clay was kneaded again and then reused: the creator would make another statuette from this kneaded clay. In some finished pieces, due to fear of the aforementioned mistake traces of overcompensation are visible. And certain statuettes show this characteristic: Based on the traces, the maker “overkneaded” the clay, and this gave the inner surface of the statue a “tormented” appearance.

Earlier, I held several workshops and craft camps at the Museum of Fine Arts in Budapest, which were open to anyone. It was extremely interesting to see the same mistakes in archaeological finds that I was used to with novice course participants doing similar work.

From what is written here, I get the impression that the persons presenting the offering did not simply buy prefabricated statuettes and then offer them to Persephone, but they were involved in the production of the statuettes, i.e. they personally contributed to their creation. The offering was not only the object itself, but also the work put into it, by the hand of the offerer. As is the case today, it is clear that not everyone in ancient times had exceptional manual dexterity. It is possible that there were some who were able to make the entire statuette (under the supervision of an expert). Others may have simply only modified it, which is an easier task.

CONCLUSION

From the sculptures I get the impression that it must have been important for the participants to make at least part of the terracottas themselves. I think there was probably some sort of magical connection between the participant and the statuette, which could facilitate the development of a relationship between the deity and the worshipper.

We have thus gained an insight into the practical implementation of the belief system of a once-practised religious act and, at the same time, probably an important detail of the sacrificial ceremony, which brings us closer to its former adherents.

The investigations of production methods applied for these statuettes proves that technical studies can add a great deal of detail to incomplete historical backgrounds, even when no other sources are available.

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Figure 3. The coffin outer length side, manufacturing technique. Photo by the author.

Coffins of the same type and style (Figures 4a-b) were uncovered during the work of the Polish mission's work in the Upper Cemetery in North Saqqara,¹⁰ which also dates back to the Late Old Kingdom. Myśliwiec¹¹ mentions six cases, and says that the reed coffin in shaft 83 was wrapped three times, and that the broad white tapes, tied on top were cut and replaced by tomb robbers. Unfortunately, they took each grave good with them and left only two pieces of bone. Moreover, other reed coffins were found in this area.¹²

An intact female burial in the Abusir tomb (AS65), dated to the Late Old Kingdom, also had a reed coffin. The lower part, measuring 165 × 55-60 cm, was probably made from *Arundo donax*, as was the lid, which appears to be a simple mat. This technology seems similar to that used in the present Saqqara tomb. The bundles on the long sides were bent at right angles to shape the

10 Thanks to Salima Ikram, for her personal communication.

11 MYŚLIWIEC 2008a, 159.

12 MYŚLIWIEC 2008b, 58-62; RADOMSKA 2013, 93 also mentions 18 reed coffins.

