



# ARCHÉO-NIL

Revue de la société pour l'étude des cultures prépharaoniques de la vallée du Nil

Les manifestations artistiques de l'Égypte prédynastique

numéro  
**22**  
Mai 2012



CYBELE

65 bis, rue Galande 75005 PARIS

#### BUREAU

Président :

Yann Tristant

Présidents d'honneur :

Béatrix Midant-Reynes

Vice-présidente :

Evelyne Faivre-Martin

Secrétaire :

Marie-Noël Bellessort

Secrétaire adjointe :

Cécile Lantrain

Trésorière :

Chantal Alary

#### COMITÉ DE RÉDACTION

Directeur de publication :

Béatrix Midant-Reynes

Rédacteur en chef :

Yann Tristant

#### COMITÉ DE LECTURE

John Baines

Charles Bonnet

Nathalie Buchez

Isabella Caneva

Éric Crubézy

Marc Etienne

Renée Friedman

Brigitte Gratien

Nicolas Grimal

Ulrich Hartung

Stan Hendrickx

Christiana Köhler

Bernard Mathieu

Dimitri Meeks

Catherine Perlès

Dominique Valbelle

Pierre Vermeersch

Pascal Vernus

Fred Wendorf

Dietrich Wildung

#### TRADUCTION ANGLAISE

Jane Smythe

#### SIÈGE SOCIAL

Abs. Cabinet d'égyptologie

Collège de France

Place Marcelin-Berthelot

75005 Paris (France)

#### ADRESSE POSTALE

Archéo-Nil

abs / Marie-Noël Bellessort

7 rue Claude Matrat

92130 Issy-les-Moulineaux

(France)

COURRIEL :

secretariat@archeonil.fr

#### COTISATIONS

Membres titulaires : 35 €

Membres étudiants : 25 €

Membres bienfaiteurs :

40 € et plus

#### MAQUETTE

Anne Toui Aubert

#### PHOTO DE COUVERTURE

Michel Gurfinkel

Tous droits de reproduction réservés.

#### LISTE DES AUTEURS

Krzysztof M. Ciałowicz  
Institute of Archaeology  
Jagiellonian University  
Ul. Gołębia 11  
31-007 Kraków (Pologne)  
cialowicz@farkha.org

Wouter Claes  
Musées Royaux d'Art et  
d'Histoire  
Parc du Cinquantenaire, 10  
1000 Bruxelles (Belgique)  
w.claes@kmg-mrah.be

Merel Eyckerman  
Media, Arts and Design  
Faculty  
Elfde Liniestraat 25  
B-3500 Hasselt (Belgique)  
m@merel-benjamin.be

Stan Hendrickx  
Sint-Jansstraat 44  
B-3118 Werchter (Belgique)  
s.hendrickx@pandora.be

Jean-Claude L'Herbette  
Isabelle L'Herbette-Jaillard  
Chemin des Noyers  
Morgnieu  
01350 Ceyzerieu (France)  
isaki01@free.fr

Béatrix Midant-Reynes  
Institut Français d'Archéologie Orientale  
37 El Cheikh Aly Yussef Street  
Munira, Qasr el Ainy  
BP 11562 Le Caire (Égypte)  
bmidantreynes@ifao.egnet.net

Yann Tristant  
Macquarie University  
Department of Ancient History  
NSW2109 (Australie)  
yann.tristant@mq.edu.au

# Sommaire du n°22

---

- 5 Introduction  
*par Béatrix Midant-Reynes*

## Dossier : Les manifestations artistiques de l'Égypte prédynastique

- 9 Prédynastique et Arts Premiers. Multiples aspects d'une comparaison  
*par Jean-Claude L'Herbette et Isabelle L'Herbette-Jaillard*
- 23 Visual representation and state development in Egypt  
*par Stan Hendrickx et Merel Eyckerman*
- 73 Votive figurines from Tell el-Farkha and their counterparts  
*par Krzysztof M. Ciałowicz*
- 95 Bibliography of the Prehistory and the Early Dynastic Period of Egypt and Northern Sudan. 2012 Addition  
*par Stan Hendrickx et Wouter Claes*

## Lectures

- 115 À propos de Barbara E. Barich, *Antica Africa. Alle origini delle società*, L'Erma di Bretschneider. Rome, 2010.  
*par Yann Tristant*
- 116 À propos de Deirdre Emmons, Merel Eyckerman, Jean-Claude Goyon, Luc Gabolde, Stan Hendrickx, Karine Madrigal, Béatrix Midant-Reynes, *L'Égypte au Musée des Confluences : de la palette à fard au sarcophage*, Silvana Editoriale, Musée des Confluences. Milan, 2010.  
*par Yann Tristant*
- 118 Appel à contribution

# Votive figurines from Tell el-Farkha and their counterparts

*Krzysztof M. Ciałowicz, Institute of Archaeology, Jagiellonian University, Kraków*

*The site of Tell el-Farkha is clearly divided into three zones: an administrative-cultic area at the Western Kom, a rich settlement at the Central Kom, and a poor settlement and cemetery at the Eastern Kom. Two cultic shrines, dated to the Proto- and Early Dynastic Periods, were uncovered at the Western Kom. In both areas votive deposits were discovered. The first includes offerings of figurines, rattles, miniature models of different objects as well as vessels of faience, pottery and stone. The second deposit consisted of a few dozen figurines made mostly of hippopotamus tusks, which depict humans, animals and models of various objects. Human representations are dominant among the votive objects. They can be divided into a number of groups: women (naked or dressed in robes), mothers or nannies/wet nurses with children, men, children, prisoners, dwarves and fantastic creatures. Other spectacular discoveries were excavated from the poorer settlement on the Eastern Kom, such as the remains of two gold figures, two large flint knives and a necklace of 382 beads. These two especially fine gold figures represent a Predynastic ruler and his son, or the same person during his heb-sed. The deposits discovered at Tell el-Farkha are the only ones in Egypt where such precise dating can be made.*

*Many of the figures give clear evidence for the close connection between Tell el-Farkha and the emerging monarchy.*

*Le site de Tell el-Farkha est divisé en trois secteurs distincts: une zone administrative et cultuelle sur le Kôm Occidental; un habitat aristocratique sur le Kôm Central; un secteur domestique et un cimetière de rang inférieur sur le Kôm Oriental. Deux sanctuaires, datés de la période protodynastique, ont été découverts sur le Kôm Occidental. Chacun d'entre eux a livré un dépôt votif. Le premier est constitué par des figurines, des crécelles, des objets miniatures ainsi que des récipients en faïence, en terre cuite et en pierre. Le second dépôt comprend une douzaine de figurines, pour la plupart exécutées à partir de défenses d'hippopotame, figurant des humains, des animaux ou des objets. Les représentations anthropomorphes sont majoritaires. On peut les subdiviser en plusieurs groupes: femmes (nues ou vêtues d'une robe), mères ou nourrices avec des enfants, hommes, enfants, prisonniers, nains et créatures fantastiques. D'autres découvertes spectaculaires ont été réalisées sur l'habitat du Kôm Oriental, où a été mis au jour un trésor constitué de deux*

*statuettes en or, deux grands couteaux en silex ainsi qu'un collier de 382 perles. Les statuettes représentent un souverain prédynastique et son fils, ou la même personne pendant la fête du heb-sed. Les dépôts de Tell el-Farkha sont les seuls aussi précisément datés en Égypte. Beaucoup des figurines montrent des liens très étroits entre Tell el-Farkha et la monarchie naissante.*

The Polish excavations at Tell el-Farkha (Eastern Nile Delta) have been conducted since 1998<sup>1</sup>. The oldest layers, dating to approximately 3700/3600 B.C., are connected to the Lower Egyptian Culture, while the more recent layers can be dated to the beginning of the Old Kingdom (approx. 2600 B.C.). From the beginning of the excavations a clear division of the site into three zones has been visible, each of them covering a particular Kom. These include an administrative-cultic zone at the Western Kom, a rich settlement at the Central Kom and a poor settlement and cemetery at the Eastern Kom (cf. Chłodnicki *et al.* 2002; 2004; 2006; 2008; Ciałowicz 2011).

To date, two cultic shrines have been uncovered at the Western Kom. The first deposit, discovered in the eastern part of a complex in 2001 (Ciałowicz 2006), yielded a collection of figurines, rattles, miniature models of different objects and vessels of faience, pottery and stone. Among them were two faience baboon figurines (ht. 6.6cm and 5.2cm). A figurine of a prostrate man, also of faience (ht. 6.7cm; l. 7.8cm), undoubtedly depicting a captive, and a figurine of part of a crocodile (l. 8.2cm), are also present. Another group that deserves mention is a set of five egg and barrel-shaped clay rattles with engraved decoration. Other models include piriform mace-heads, miniature vessels made of different materials, a zoomorphic vessel representing a water bird, clay double-vases, faience beads and objects that are, in all likelihood, game pieces.

All the aforementioned artefacts were found in the top layers of the Western Kom, dated to the end of Dynasty 0 and beginning of the 1<sup>st</sup> Dynasty, between thick walls that formed a small shrine (approx. 3 x 4m). In a layer about 1 metre below, but still between the walls, a clay figurine (ht. 11cm) was discovered. It is a depiction of a naked man (**fig. 1**) who has a long beard, big ears and what looks to be long hair. His arms, penis and buttocks are marked by small protuberances. The layer in which the discovery was made can be dated to the beginning of Naqada IIIB and the manner of workmanship of this figurine suggests Predynastic origins. The beginnings of the cultic place at Tell el-Farkha was most likely connected to this period, an assumption that was later confirmed by further discoveries made in 2006-2008.



**Fig. 1** • Figurine of a naked men. Clay.

The second deposit contained a greater variety of material than the first, and was discovered during 2006 season within the second shrine located at the western part of the complex. This deposit consists of a few dozen figurines made mostly of hippopotamus tusk depicting humans, animals

1. The excavations are organized by the Archaeological Museum of Poznań and the Institute of Archaeology of the Jagiellonian University in collaboration with the Centre of Mediterranean Archaeology of Warsaw University and directed by Dr. M. Chłodnicki and the author.

and models of various objects. The majority of these figurines were placed within a small jar hidden near the shrine's eastern wall. Others were scattered throughout the shrine, and a small number were deposited (together with numerous beads, animal bones and cosmetic palettes) in three storage jars hidden under the shrine floor. The whole group, unique in terms of artistic and iconographic qualities, is dated similarly to the first deposit and goes some way to providing evidence for the high status of those living in the Tell el-Farkha settlement during this early period (Chłodnicki *et al.* 2008; Ciałowicz 2009).

Among the votive objects human representations are dominant and can be divided into a number of different groups:

## Representations of Women

This first group can be further divided into six forms of representation, two of which are depicted naked. The better preserved example (8.5cm ht.), was found in 2006 in the above mentioned ceramic jar (**fig. 2**); the other (3cm ht.), with badly destroyed face, broken left hand and lower parts of the legs, was discovered inside the shrine. Both represent women standing with legs together, right arms alongside the body and the right hand, with clearly modelled fingers, rests on the hip. The left arm is bent at the elbow, while the hand, with similarly rendered fingers, is turned up to hold the right breast. The features in the better preserved example are curved in detail: the lips are relatively large and narrow, the nose is large and hooked, the eyes are almond-shaped and the eyebrows are slightly rounded. Her long hair is parted in the middle, reaching down to the waist at the back and falling on the breasts in two separated bands at the front. The two other examples represent women in robes. The first example (8.0cm ht.) is dressed in a long robe reaching down to the middle of her calves and tied with a belt. Although her face is badly damaged, a large hooked nose, almond-shaped eyes,



**Fig. 2**  
Figurine of a  
naked woman.  
Hippopotamus  
ivory.

small and thick lips are still visible. She has long hair that is parted in the middle and reaches down to her shoulders. In her bent upturned hands, the woman holds a vessel, either a bowl or plate that she appears to offer due to her posture, which has her leaning forward slightly. She stands on a round base with her legs together, her toes rendered with fine curved detail. The second example (6.9cm ht.), stands on an oval basis and is dressed in a robe or coat that reaches down to her slightly bent knees. The face is expressive, with large almond-shaped eyes, clearly marked eyebrows and small, relatively thick lips. Her nose is wide and straight and her ears protrude from

the sides, the left ear more so. Her long hair reaches half way down her back, being arranged on top into vertical waves graduating from front to back, while on the back itself the waves progress horizontally. Her arms hang alongside the body and reach the hips, and all fingers are carefully modelled. Her feet are placed together with clearly marked toes.

The representations of women with children are extremely interesting. The first figure (4.7cm ht.) holds a child in her arms while standing on the base. She is dressed in a long robe that reaches to her ankles. The face is not preserved, although it was most certainly schematically curved. Her long hair extends half-way down her back with two separate bands of hair resting on her large breasts. The right arm that hangs alongside the body is only partially preserved, whereas the left hand supports the back of what can be made out to be a naked child sitting on her hip. The child has a round head with protruding ears, its face is not marked in detail and its left hand is bent at the elbow resting on its chest.

The second figure (4.1cm ht.) represents two people sitting in what was probably an oval palanquin made of wood or most probably basketwork, composed of four clearly separated horizontal segments (**fig. 3**). The

woman is represented to her waist wearing a kind of a coat that covers her completely, which is visibly marked at her neck. Although the face is severely damaged, her badly preserved almond-shaped eyes and lips are still visible as is the nose, which is straight and narrow. Her hair is parted in the middle of the head and most probably extended down to her shoulders. The body of the woman is treated very schematically. She is holding a child, who sits sideways upon the knees. The child is also represented schematically with no facial features and is probably dressed in a coat with its hands put together on the chest.

In Pre- and Early Dynastic art there are numerous representations of naked women. They appear as early as the Badarian Culture. One of the finest examples (Brunton & Caton-Thompson 1928: pl. XXIV, 2) is made of ivory, being a woman with a large, bald head. The arms hang alongside her body, hands resting on hips. The face was roughly modelled, with large oval eyes made by incisions. Pupils were marked with round points – like the nipples on her prominent breasts. And although her pubic area is distinctly marked, the rest of the body was treated schematically.

Representations of naked women gained popularity during the Naqada I Period. One of the most significant, though of unknown origin, is held in the British Museum (Donadoni Roveri & Tiradritti 1998: 31; Spencer 1993: frontispiece). The figurine represents a naked woman standing with legs positioned together and hands holding her breasts. The head is oval and very large in contrast to the shoulders. Her nose is prominent and mouth wide with disproportionately large eyes that are inlaid with lapis-lazuli. Her neck is not marked and her hair falls on the both sides of the face in thin plaits. Her nipples and navel are marked with round holes and a wide pubic triangle is created by numerous little punctures. The legs are joined together, with small distinctly modelled feet.

Representations of naked women remain popular into the Proto- and Early Dynastic Periods. We have a number of bone statu-

**Fig. 3**

Figurine of a woman with child on the knees. Hippopotamus ivory.



ettes from Tell Ibrahim Awad (Van Haarlem 2009: pl. 1, 2) depicting naked women with hands falling alongside their bodies and one example of a hand supporting a breast. Two fragments of faience figurines, dating to the Archaic Period, are known from Elephantine (Dreyer 1986: 99-100). Both are preserved from the waist up, representing women with their right hands held alongside the body while the left one supports a breast. Another ivory figurine from the same site (Dreyer 1986: 103) represents a small and very schematic depiction of a naked woman with arms lining each side of her body. She has large eyes and a very wide mouth that particularly draws the viewer's attention with long hair reaching down to the middle of her back. The rest of her anatomical details are shown schematically and conventionally.

A few examples are known from the Hierakonpolis Main Deposit. One large figurine of ivory from Petrie Museum (Adams 1974: 70), presents a standing naked woman. Despite the fact that both her hands are broken off, it can be safely said that the left arm would have been bent at the elbow holding a breasts, while the right one would have been positioned alongside the body; this is evident as the hand with carefully shaped fingers is preserved. The distinctively modelled face with almond-shaped eyes, relatively wide nose and thick lips draw the viewer's attention. Her long hair or wig reaches the figure's waist, with curls represented by horizontal lines. Interestingly, her hair design draws a link to the two figures described earlier from Tell el-Farkha.

The majority of figurines from Hierakonpolis are now housed in the Ashmolean Museum, Oxford. Among them is the one bearing a close resemblance to the Petrie Museum sculpture mentioned above, both in style and condition (Quibell 1900: pl. IX, 1-2). Another figurine from the Main Deposit survives almost intact from the knees up (Quibell 1900: pl. IX, 6-7). Her right arm runs down the side of her body, while the left one supports the breasts. Her hair is identical again to those described above and she has almond-shaped eyes, prominent eyebrows

and small nose with proportionate mouth. The last example is formally the same as the one from Tell el-Farkha.

Also from Hierakonpolis come a number of representations of women dressed in long robes. Among these is a figurine enveloped in a kind of a mantle, reaching down to the middle of her thighs, with a second garment, probably a dress, peaking out from underneath (Whitehouse 2009: 32-33). Her eyes are almond-shaped, the nose wide and mouth narrow. Both ears were left uncovered with the edge of the outer robe creating a sort of a high collar covering the lower part of her hair, which falls down the back. A figurine from the Louvre Museum (Ziegler 1990: 19) represents a woman, covered by a knee-length coat, decorated in the upper part by an ornament made of a few rows of parallel ropes. Again, this outer layer probably overlaid a dress. The head is almost round and squeezed between the shoulders with no visible neck. She has almond-shaped eyes and her eyelids are obviously lengthened with equally broad eyebrows marked by incisions. She sports a small plump nose and narrow mouth. Both cheeks and chin are distinctly modelled. The hair, parted in the middle, falls down her back in parallel strands. The woman's right hand lies alongside the body, reaching down to the middle of her thigh, while the left one, hidden beneath the coat, is bent at the elbow and seems to be holding the garment at chest level. What is visible of her legs is modelled schematically and her feet are missing.

A small, ivory figurine has recently been found in grave U-182 at Abydos, dated to the Naqada IID Phase (Hartung 2000: 63). It depicts a woman with a type of a scarf or mantle covering the head and falling down the shoulders until her feet. A dress was probably worn underneath. The edge of the scarf or mantle is decorated by two stripes; one covered in a delicate cross ornament and the other, scattered with black paste-filled dots. She has oval-shaped eyes that are, like her eyebrows, formed by similarly filled incisions. The nose and badly damaged and the mouth is narrow.

In grave B14 in Abydos, connected to the burial of Aha, was another small figurine. This female wears a sort of a dress (Baumgartel 1968: figs. 1-2) reaching to just above her ankles. Her head is almost completely rounded in shape and disproportionately large in relation to the rest of the body. Her eyes are almond-shaped and she has a prominent nose and wide but thin mouth. Her hair is divided at the top and falls to her shoulders. Both arms are bent at the elbows and settled on her breasts. The style of the figurine places it clearly among the lower quality examples dating to the Early Dynastic period, which is a surprise considering the place of its discovery.

Depictions of women with children are relatively rare, with only three examples known from Elephantine (Dreyer 1986: 103). The first example, dated to the Archaic Period or the beginning of the Old Kingdom, is preserved only from the waist up and is made of faience. The woman supports a child on her back, while it embraces her waist with its legs. Her face is very well modelled with oval eyes that are carefully trimmed and clearly marked lids and brows. The nose is wide but short with a relatively narrow mouth. Her hair falls down her back and seems to be bound at the neck. The child meanwhile is depicted in a very schematic manner. The second example, dating to the same period represents a woman with two children in her arms. This statue is technically of a lower standard than the one mentioned above and depicts a standing woman in what might be a dress, cuddling to her breasts the very roughly modelled figures of children. The head is almost spherical and tilted slightly upwards. Her eyes are almond-shaped, mouth wide and nose small. Her legs are disproportionately fat, with big feet doubling as a base for the statue. The third example of this type is in an even worse condition, only preserved from the knees up and heavily damaged.

A statuette of a mother with children of unknown provenance is also kept in London (Capart 1905: 168). It depicts a woman in a long robe supporting a child on her back with her left hand. Two further exam-

ples of unknown provenance are currently held in Berlin (Grimm & Schoske 2000: 34). Both represent naked women and can be dated to the Naqada III Period. The first figurine supports a child on her hip. Although the surface is badly damaged, her features are unlike any described above. Her eyes are almond-shaped, nose and mouth both wide. The ears are large and distinctly modelled and her hair falls down her back. Her torso is much too big in relation to the legs and her hands are too wide. The face and proportions of the child are almost grotesque, possibly due to the state of preservation. It seems to be raising the mother's left breast to its mouth. The second figurine depicts a woman with a large belly and very large thighs. Her head is flattened at the top with an almost round shaped face. She has small, almond-shaped eyes that seem to disappear between her eyebrows and cheeks. The nose is fairly wide but incomplete, with a very narrow and broad mouth. Her ears are large and stick out from the side of her head. There is a hole located on the back of her head indicating that her hair might have been made of a different material. The child is facing its mother and seems to be supported by her large belly, with a hand reaching for the breasts. The woman holds the child with her disproportionately large hands.

The situation is quite different when discussing representations of women with children sitting inside litters, in that there are no direct parallels of such figurines to be found in early Egyptian art. However, attention should be drawn to a number of representations in relief and small objects. Reliefs of figures in litters can be seen on mace-heads of Scorpion and Narmer (Ciałowicz 2001: 197-206). Small objects depicting covered litters are known from archaeological contexts. One example from Tell Ibrahim Awad has a rectangular base, probably depicting a basket, covered by a light construction with an oval cross section made of mat or fabric (van Haarlem 2009: pl. 13, nos. 293-296). Of particular interest is a limestone model of a litter from Abydos (Schlögl 1978: 27), inside which is a depiction of a human face, possi-

bly that of a woman with cow ears and horns. Underneath ribbons it are woven together to form the *ankh* sign and three hieroglyphs below that form an inscription “*reput*.” Each side of the litter is adorned with a depiction of humanoid figures with the head of a bird and ram’s horns that are covered in a sort of a short coat, decorated to resemble bird’s wings. As these creatures are shown on the sides of the litter, it can be assumed that they were probably its carriers.

At the first glance, the figurines of women from Tell el-Farkha can be easily classified as typical examples of early Egyptian art. However, on closer examination one notices vital differences when comparing them to examples known from other sites. Therefore, it seems plausible to state that despite numerous similarities, their creators were given a great deal more freedom and did not have to follow strict patterns. The greatest similarities may be seen in depictions of naked women, where there seems to be a strict deference to a certain pattern. Here the pattern is clear; namely that of a standing woman with arms lining the body or with the left arm bent at the elbow and supporting her breast. Such representations appear already by the early Naqada culture and continue into later periods. Figurines of women with both arms bent at the elbows and placed on the stomach become much rarer by this point. Early depictions of naked women can be compared mainly with later representations of concubines; therefore, one can assume they were produced with similar intention.

Figurines of dressed women make up a more differentiated set. On the one hand, this may be because garments could be treated in a more or less decorative manner. On the other, the artists were given greater opportunities to show that hands that could hang loosely, covered with a dress or a coat, or holding various object. Only members of the elite seem to have been depicted clothed, including those of the highest circles and those from the local social structures. Such representations show a great deal more variety, but like naked figurines, are known throughout the Egyptian territory.

That there is currently no direct parallel for the Tell el-Farkha bowl-carrying figurine should not be a surprise. However, we can draw a link between it and a small figurine from Tell Ibrahim Awad (Van Haarlem 2009: pl. 3, 78), which represents a standing woman in a long robe with her hair falling onto the shoulders and holding a jar in her hands.

Similar conclusions about the lack of clear parallels can be made while analysing the statuettes depicting women with children. In most cases it is impossible to distinguish if they were mothers or nannies/wet nurses. By depicting different types of persons dressed and naked, with children on the back, in their arms, on the breasts etc., the artists clearly had more freedom of expression, which in turn undoubtedly had an influence on individual objects. Without a clear template to follow, the quality of work and the form of the figurines, both naked and dressed, seems to be restricted only by the craftsman’s own talent and imagination.

Of particular importance is the representation of a seated woman with a child on her knees. Both the woman’s dress, a kind of a coat with characteristic high collar, and the fact she sits on the palanquin, imply high social rank. Depictions from the mace-heads and litter models of Abydos mentioned above, may suggest that the example from Tell el-Farkha can be seen in relation to the “*reput*,” recognized as a representation of a mother, a divine pharaoh’s mother, or in a broader sense, women from the royal family (Kaiser 1983: 262; Millet 1990: 53-59). The closest chronological parallel is a depiction of a king on his mother’s knees, though not in the litter, from the famous statuette of Pepy II and Ankhnesmeryre II in the Brooklyn Museum, produced almost eight hundred years after the Tell el-Farkha figurine. Depictions of women in the litters on mace-heads especially that of Narmer, seem to be closely linked with the *sed* festival. Therefore, it is plausible to assume that our figurine represents a young ruler sitting on his mother’s knees connected to a celebration of the royal

jubilee; the king shown as a child emphasises the moment of his rejuvenation. It is worth mentioning that a figure of a walking man in a coat, probably a ruler during the *heb-sed* (cf. below), was also found in the same context.

## Representations of Children

Next group from Tell el-Farkha consists of child representations, of which there are three examples. The first figure, (8.4cm ht.) is slender with a distinctively rendered face (fig. 4). The eyes are large and almond-shaped but not identical with clearly marked pupils. The mouth is relatively wide and thick while the nose is slightly snub. The ears are also large and stick out unnaturally. Above the forehead the hairline is marked down to the ears. The knees are drawn up and spread while the feet, which have clearly modelled toes, are placed together. The left arm is bent at the elbow and the hand, which has dispropor-

tionately long and thin fingers, lies on the knee. The right elbow is placed on the right knee with the hand close to the mouth. Three fingers are together, the thumb is drawn outwards and the index finger (partially preserved) originally would have touched the mouth.

The second figure represents a boy and is more well-built (5.2cm ht.), also with a distinctively modelled face. His eyes are large and almond-shaped with a relatively wide and thick mouth and a large, wide and crooked nose. The ears are large and stick out unnaturally. Above the forehead a hairline is marked out falling down to the ears and also visible on the back of the head. The genitals are plastically rendered and the buttock line is also clearly stressed. His knees are drawn up and spread while the feet, which have plastically modelled toes, are placed together. The left arm is bent at the elbow and his hand, which has disproportionately long and thin fingers, lies on the knee. The right elbow leans against his right knee and the hand is at mouth level. His three fingers are placed together with the partially preserved thumb and index finger that would have originally touched his mouth.

The third figure, most probably a representation of a sitting boy, was found within the same shrine as the others, scattered over a large area and approximately 60cm below the jar with the deposit. It comprises three clay fragments that make up a preserved height of 18cm. Unfortunately only the lower part of the object is preserved, consisting of a fragment of a rectangular base where the feet and prominent heels of a seated figure are visible. Both the toes and ankles have been distinctly modelled. The right leg is bent at the knee and is preserved to mid-thigh level while traces of a hand resting on the knee remain. The left leg is preserved to knee height.

A few dozen figurines, mainly made of faience and representing children with fingers in their mouths, come from Elephantine. This group includes models of girls and boys; the former were always depicted standing, whereas the boys are presented

**Fig. 4**

Figurine of a boy.  
Hippopotamus  
ivory.



in both the standing and sitting positions (Dreyer 1986: pl. 20-23). A typical example sits on the ground with drawn-up knees and the left hand resting on the left knee. In most cases the mouth is touched by the index finger of right hand and the genitals are clearly marked. The facial features, as far as we can determine, are usually expressive, with large almond-shaped eyes, a wide mouth, distinctly marked nose, and large protruding ears.

It is worth noting that most of the described figures were quite broadly dated to a period between the Early Dynastic Period and the beginning of the Old Kingdom. This may clarify why, as most faience works of the time, they are not among the most significant achievements of art at that period. They were most probably mass produced, made of the cheapest materials and available to all members of society. In the case of Elephantine it is also worth stressing that depictions of naked children probably represent the most numerous group discovered on the site.

Figurines depicting naked children are also known from Abydos. The best examples, from an artistic point of view, are statuettes made of stone. One of which, made of limestone is currently held in the Brooklyn Museum (Needler 1984: 347). This statuette represents a child seated on the ground, with the right elbow and left hand resting on its drawn-up knee and its right hand touching the mouth. Finer details, such as the hands, feet and facial features are hard to distinguish; however, it does possess large and unnaturally bulging ears. Among the best examples is also a small stone figurine of a seated boy from the Kofler-Truniger collection (Schlögl 1978: no 89). It is the only one that may be compared artistically to the figurines from Tell el-Farkha. The boy is depicted in a typical position, sitting on the ground with drawn-up knees with the left hand resting on his knee and the right hand touching his mouth. The large almond-shaped eyes are visible, together with a distinctly modelled nose, a wide mouth and large protruding ears.

## Representations of Men

Another category to be considered is depictions of men, of which we have four examples. Firstly within our sample, is a figure of a stepping man (7.5cm ht.) with his left leg forward (fig. 5). The right foot stands on the base and its toes are plastically modeled. The figure is dressed in a coat that reaches down to his knees. His right hand appears underneath the coat and originally held an undefined object, most probably a *heka*-scepter or another form of power insignia. The structure of the coat is emphasized by a horizontal-engraved ornament of. His face is damaged and some details are unclear; however, his eyes are almond-shaped and the eyebrows visibly exaggerated. The nose is relatively small and straight, while his lips are small but thick. Undercutting beneath the lips and on the cheeks suggests that a beard framing the face might have been present. The ears are badly preserved but were large and protruding and his smooth hair reaches down to his neck. Secondly,



**Fig. 5**  
Figurine of  
a king(?).  
Hippopotamus  
ivory.

we have a representation of a naked man (4.8cm ht.), walking in a pose almost identical to later high royal officials. A distinct category is constituted by representations of captives with one or both hands bound on their back. The last example is unfortunately very bad preserved and only a negative of his right hand is visible. These figurines fit well into the very popular theme of victory in ancient Egypt.

Although the figure of a man enveloped within a coat from Tell el-Farkha has no direct counterpart, it is similar to the coat that covers the famous figurine from Abydos (Petrie 1903: 24). The details are badly damaged; however, we can make out that the figure also has one hand showing from under the folds of the coat. What draws the viewer's attention is the very decorative structure of the coat. Identification of the figure is facilitated by the presence of an Upper Egyptian crown on his head; the sculpture from Abydos obviously represents one of the early rulers during his *sed* jubilee. While a similar identification is less certain for the figure from Tell el-Farkha, the representation of the decorated coat is significant. In early Egyptian art these garments are reserved for rulers, as we see in the statues of Nynetjer, Khasekhem and Djoser. In the case of Nynetjer, we see his hand emerging from the folds of the coat holding the royal insignia. The Tell el-Farkha figure could have indeed held a now missing *heka*-scepter and the lack of a crown does not mean that one was not originally there. On his *sed* jubilee representations, Nyusera is shown leading the procession dressed only in an apron and a headscarf (Kaiser 1971). In our case the situation is not identical, but it allows us to speculate that in the early period a ruler could have been shown without his crown. So it may be assumed that the man in the coat from Tell el-Farkha could have represented an anonymous ruler during his *sed* jubilee.

There is no direct parallel to any of the captive figures found at Tell el-Farkha in 2006, although it was a common theme in Pre- and Early Dynastic art. The best examples are those figurines full of expression from

Hierakonpolis (Quibell 1900: pl. XI-XII). Representations of defeated and caught enemies are also known from Abydos (Schlöggl 1978: 29) and Tell Ibrahim Awad (Belova & Sherkova 2002: ph. 106).

## Representations of Dwarves

Thirteen figurines of dwarves were found at Tell el-Farkha, comprising of one man and twelve women, the most numerous set ever discovered in Egypt. Until now only 30 figurines from the Predynastic and Early Dynastic periods were known from different sites (Buszek 2008). The workmanship of the majority of the Tell el-Farkha sample is unique. The realistic manner of their deformed bodies and their facial expressions surpass hitherto known representations of dwarves.

Of particular interest is the realistically modeled figurine of a male dwarf (4.8cm ht.). The man (**fig. 6**) stands on bowed legs with knees drawn aside and is dressed only in a loincloth holding up a penis-sheath, probably made of a single piece of cloth. His head is disproportionately large and round with



**Fig. 6** • Figurine of a dwarf. Hippopotamus ivory.

almond-shaped eyes and visibly marked eyebrows. The nose is large and wide and his mouth is fleshy and thick. His shoulder length hair is centrally parted and particular strands of hair are marked with vertical engravings that end with a curl. The torso muscles are well defined as are his very short arms that reach only to the waist. His fingers and toes are modeled in careful detail.

Equally realistic are some figurines of female dwarfs (fig. 7). One very expressive example (3.4cm ht.) represents a woman standing with her legs bent at the knees. The face is almost triangular and slightly tilted on the left side. Her almond-shaped eyes and eyebrows are carefully modeled as are her small but thick lips and straight nose. The woman is dressed in a long robe and a heavy wig is on her head. The wig is parted in the middle and consists of straight homogeneous hair covering the top of the head with thin plaits appearing from beneath, which fall on the shoulders at the back of the figure and as two locks on the chest. The body is schematically modeled although her short hands are more carefully shaped, pulled aside and bent at the elbows, ending with carefully modeled fingertips. The knees are drawn aside and her feet are placed together.

Another interesting figurine of a naked female dwarf (8.5cm ht.) was found in one of the jars hidden under the floor of the shrine. Her face is carefully modelled and the facial features, such as the eyes, wide nose and mouth are emphasized. The head is disproportionately large with only one ear and vestiges of the hair surviving, which was probably braided. Some of the plaits fall forward onto the breasts, those at the back reach down to the waist. The slightly sagging breasts and skin fold below the neck may point to advanced age. Only the shoulder of the right arm was found intact. The left shoulder contains a hole of 0.5cm in diameter for the attachment of an arm, which was found in two pieces outside the vessel. She is well modelled with clearly drooping breasts and a relatively large belly. She stands with her legs apart and knees bent, with the lower legs intentionally truncated just below the knee to a sharp point.

Thus, the figure could not have stood up without some additional support. The hand, with precisely rendered fingers, is clenched in a fist leaving a space in the middle where a staff or stick was probably held. It was only by leaning on this staff that the figurine could have stood upright.

Among figurines of female dwarfs from Tell el-Farkha are two more schematically rendered types. One example (5.9cm ht.) represents a figure of a woman dressed in a long robe. The face is very simple, only her lips are marked in more detail. Her long hair is parted in the middle and reaches half way down her back. Short arms with gently marked muscles hang along the body with hands that are schematically modeled and fingers not marked at all. Her breasts are marked by a single curve, her legs are bent and knees drawn aside with feet put together. The schematic treatment of this figurine is not a result of a lower level of workmanship by the ancient artist. On the contrary, since the actual craftsmanship is very high, we can suppose that the effect is a result of conscious decision, proving that the early Egyptian artisan was indeed unrestricted in his expression; as was later to become the common practice.

Figurines of dwarfs from the former MacGregor Collection are regarded to be the oldest examples (Steindorff 1946: 19; pl. 1). They present naked women with oversized heads, large eyes and ears and visibly

**Fig. 7**  
Six she-dwarfs  
from Tell el-  
Farkha deposit.  
Hippopotamus  
ivory.



deformed bodies; their legs are short and bent at the knees and their arms do not reach the waist. A faience figurine from Elephantine is also considered to represent a dwarf (Dreyer 1986: 99). This suggestion is based on its very short legs and oversized head when compared with the rest of the body, which seems to be proportional. A number of stone, ivory and faience figurines from Abydos and Hierakonpolis also represented dwarves (Buszek 2008: 38). Some represent female dwarfs with heavy wigs, naked or wearing long robes. Others are males, usually naked. Their state of preservation and artistic craftsmanship is significantly lower than those from Tell el-Farkha.

## Representations of Fantastic Creatures

Also present in the Tell el-Farkha collection are two important representations of fantastic creatures. The first example (7.2cm ht.) is a bird-headed figure with a feline body

and two human hands, sitting on a flat base (fig. 8). The head is clearly birdlike with a modelled raptor beak, probably a representation of a falcon, with pointed ears that are less well preserved. Its eyes are almond-shaped with a clear swelling of the eyelids. There are human breasts visibly modelled on the body and small incisions presumably imitating feathers on the back. A clear bulge in the lower part of the figure is most probably a tail. Its arms are bent at the elbows with hands ending with distinctive human fingers. There are however, no toes visible and its feet are more like feline paws. This griffin holds a tall (wine?) jar in its hands and between its knees.

The second example is a small figurine (2.4cm ht.) standing on a rectangular basis representing a figure with a serpentine body and a woman's face (fig. 9). It has almond-shaped eyes, distinctive eyebrows, a relatively wide nose and small lips. The hair is indicated by a visible line on the forehead and is parted at the top of head falling probably to the neck of the figure where a rather distinct curving suggests transition into the snake's body. At the back of the figure a double shape protrudes from the basis, possibly signifying the tail of the snake or the bottom part of its hood. Each side of the base is decorated with an ornament of oblique net pattern and a dot in the centre.

**Fig. 8**  
Figurine of  
a griffin.  
Hippopotamus  
ivory.



**Fig. 9** • Figurine of a snake with woman face.  
Hippopotamus ivory.

Neither of the aforementioned fantastic creatures have any counterpart among the hitherto discovered small objects of art. Of the two, it is the figure of a griffin that is most interesting. In the Ashmolean Museum there is a small limestone figurine from grave 721 at Naqada, dated to *Stufe* IIc (Payne 1993: 15). It portrays a recumbent animal, probably feline, with a bird-like (?) head. Unfortunately, the separately modelled ears and tail are not preserved. The figurine is interpreted as a representation of a Seth animal (Payne 1993: 15; Whitehouse 2009:13-14). However, it should be stressed that the oldest representations of the Seth animal are in fact, canine rather than feline. This can be seen in representations on King's Scorpion mace-head (Whitehouse 2009: 19-25) or reliefs dating to the time of Peribsen and Khasekhemwy (Vercoutter 1992: figs. 37 & 39). The Oxford figurine's body shape is stockier and its rendering closer to typical representations of large felines. Also, in the case of the Tell el-Farkha figurine, the head ends with a large, sharp beak of a bird of prey not with an elongated and rounded muzzle, known from representations of the Seth animal. To sum up, it may be accepted that despite the lack of traces of wings or feathers, the discussed figurine was meant to depict a griffin. It is worth mentioning that in the same grave a stone figurine of a lion was discovered (Payne 1993: 15), which body was shaped very similarly to the described griffin and also a more schematic representation of a falcon made of limestone (Payne 1993: 16). In the same grave another fragmentary preserved falcon representation was registered, too. The latter object, produced of lead, was hollow inside and thus was probably a cover for the stone falcon (Payne 1993: 14). Accepting this interpretation, it may be assumed that in the Naqada grave were found three representations: a lion, a falcon and a fantastic creature consisting of a form part way between a bird and a feline. Although it is difficult to draw more categorical conclusions from only a single grouping, it may be assumed that this combination was not an accidental one.

Another mysterious depiction is the basalt model of a boat (?) from Abydos (Schlögl 1978: 21), upon the prow of which is shown an animal's head that terminates with a beak. Hair falls from the head to the neck in straight ringlets similar to those known from representations of prostrate captives (Ciałowicz 2006: fig. 18). A lion's mane is also depicted in a schematic manner (Needler 1984: 354-356). Although a hypothesis, the creator might have been attempting to depict a griffin in this case.

There are no such doubts however in the case of relief representations. Griffins represented with leonine body and avian head and wings appear in late Predynastic reliefs from the Main Deposit at Hierakonpolis (Adams & Ciałowicz 1997: fig. 35), on the golden knife-handle from Gebel Tarif (Ciałowicz 1992: fig. 9), the Two Dogs Palette from Oxford (Whitehouse 2009: 28-32), and on the more recently discovered dagger-handle from grave U-127 at Abydos (Dreyer 1999: 209).

The relief from the Main Deposit is decorated with an animal frieze, in which a quadruped with a long, down falling tail is visible. Its head is undoubtedly bird-like and from its back grows a pair of wings. They are very characteristically depicted just as the artist would look at them from above, when the whole animal silhouette was shown in full profile. Such representation is nothing unusual for Egyptian art of the period, the oldest examples of a presentation of various points of view on a single figure may be observed as early as Amratian pottery paintings. The object is severely damaged and it is difficult to define what was depicted at the front of the griffin. However, it seems that the creature held an oblong and twisted shape in its beak, perhaps a snake. Birds holding snakes in their beaks appear on some decorated knife handles, while lions on the same objects were usually presented with lowered tails (Ciałowicz 1992). Hence, it is possible that the combination of those two motives is recreated in our griffin with a snake in its beak.

The Gebel Tarif knife handle depicts another griffin situated at the end of the animal frieze decorating along one side of the knife. Here also, there is no doubt that the animal is a quadruped predator with a bird head. Wings grow from its back in the same manner as the previous example. The body of this fantastic creature is shaped identically to a lion that sits two rows above. The difference is visible in the representation of the tails; the lion has it raised, the griffin lowered. However, as mentioned above, lion tails could be depicted in various positions. Of more significance is the difference in how the paws are positioned. The hind paws of both animals are identical; however, the front paws of the griffin are more like bird talons than typical feline paws.

One of the best depictions of a griffin comes from the reverse of the Oxford Two Dogs palette. There, the griffin is clearly attacking a large herbivore. The manner in which the griffin's body and paws are shaped is again identical to the panther and lions depicted above it. The tail is lowered; the wings are presented similar to the griffin from the previously mentioned Hierakonpolis fragment. Its head ends with the slightly bent beak of a bird of prey. It is also worth noticing that the griffin is depicted as just another animal playing the obvious role of the ruler's helper, not dissimilar to the one of domestic dogs on the palette's averse. Both depictions are concerned with herbivore-hunting; the hunted animals representing chaos and disorder. Catching the animals is the task of a ruler, who is probably depicted as a lion in the upper part of the palette reverse (cf. Ciałowicz 2001: 191-194).

Two griffins also appear on the partially preserved dagger handle from tomb U-127 (Dreyer 1999: fig. 11d). Both stride after a row of birds with long necks, perhaps ostriches. Unfortunately, the fragment is very badly preserved with only the two wings, a piece of the first griffin's back, and a wing segment of the second griffin surviving. It is therefore, difficult to reconstruct the precise shape of the fantastic creatures. It should be noted that the wings are depicted identically to the aforementioned examples.

Griffin representations shown in a quite similar convention also occur on seal impressions from the Elam (ex. Smith 1992: 14-15); particularly notable is the almost identical way in which the wings are rendered. The griffin motif underlines the far from solved issue with regard to what possible influence Elamite art might have had on Egyptian art. As in case of *Serpopards* or "Lord of Animals," the question of whether influence did actually occur or in what manner the eventual influence actually spread cannot be answered presently. The lack of reliable and common chronologies for both regions does not allow for any clear statement on where the motifs originally appeared or which of them might have been introduced independently.

Analyzing the described representations, it is worth noting that the griffin from Tell el-Farkha has human hands for front paws and clear thickening in the lower body suggesting a tail, probably hanging down in a manner similar to the griffin relief representations. As previously mentioned, the front paws of the griffin from the knife handle of Gebel Tarif recalls birds' talons, while in others they represent the paws of predatory quadrupeds. It is possible that artists chose the front paws of the animal to represent the action of the fantastic creature. If the creature is attacking other animals, as with the Oxford Palette and the relief from UCL, the paws end with animal claws; if it holds a vessel, the arms end with human hands, such as the figurine from Tell el-Farkha. Therefore, it may be assumed that such iconographic details are dependent on a specific situation. In summing up, it may be acknowledged that the motif of the griffin is fairly well-known in early Egyptian art; however, until now has it been shown as it appears in the Tell el-Farkha figurine.

It is difficult to assess whether or not the small figurine from Tell el-Farkha depicting a snake with a female face can be connected with the goddess *Wadjet*. The base upon which the figure stands is decorated with cross-hatching at the sides, from which the tip of a tail emerges, suggesting that the artist meant to represent a basket, perhaps specifically a *neb* basket.

In this context, it is worth mentioning another object from Tell el-Farkha. A few years ago, a large cylindrical seal was discovered at the Central Kom, dating to the beginning of Naqada IIIB (Chłodnicki & Ciałowicz 2007: 149). It is made from ordinary clay in a fairly rudimentary manner, incised with marks resembling hieroglyphs. Especially interesting are the signs possibly connected to the royal titulary. In the upper register is the representation of a *serekh* surmounted by a falcon and in the lower register a simple shape is visible, plausibly a representation of a basket. Also represented are two other figures, the first is a very schematic depiction of a bird, and the second is probably a rearing snake. It is possible therefore, that the Tell el-Farkha seal depicts a *nebti* name.

The occurrence of a representation showing a female-faced snake emerging from a basket among objects dated to the turn of Dynasties 0 and 1 is then no surprise. In summing up, it may be accepted that the little figurine from Tell el-Farkha is one of the first preserved representations of a cobra-*Wadjet* for a royal titular.

## Representations of Animals

Also within the Tell el-Farkha corpus, four uraei are preserved (6.1-7.3cm ht.). All represent a figure of a rearing cobra with modelled head and round eyes marked with incised curving lines (fig. 10). In place of



Fig. 10 • Figurine of a cobra-uraeus. Hippopotamus ivory.



Fig. 11  
Spoon with  
a crocodile –  
shaped handle.  
Greywacke.

jaws are holes where the snakes' tongues were fixed, obviously made of different material. Other holes at the end of snakes' tails probably served as points of attachment; therefore, they were parts of a larger whole. The oldest representations of uraei on royal crowns known thus far can be seen on a number of objects from the reign of king Den (Godron 1990: pl. III-IV). The cobras from Tell el-Farkha are earlier than the reign of Den; however, their proposed attachment to royal crowns or sculptures depicting rulers at this early period remains speculative.

One of the most valuable finds from Tell el-Farkha is a greywacke spoon (10.5cm long) with a crocodile-shaped handle (fig. 11). It is very carefully modelled with features such as teeth and segments of the body are emphasized with incisions. Its eyes are almond-shaped and its legs are marked with small, oval knobs.

Representations of animals such as lions, dogs, scorpions, fish and falcons form another group from Tell el-Farkha. Most examples are known from Hierakonpolis, although they are also represented at other sites including Elephantine, Abydos, Saqqara and Tell Ibrahim Awad. A significant numbers are scattered throughout various collections and in many cases their origin and date are not precisely defined. Animal figurines are made of various materials including clay, faience, ivory, bone and stone. Although much of the wider corpus of animal representation differs in detail and workmanship from the Tell el-Farkha figurines, what must be noted is the need to

represent specific species rather than standardization of their stylistic features. Moreover, this diversity provides solid evidence to scholars that art of this early period is neither monotonous nor schematic.

## Models of Objects and miniature Vessels

As discussed above in relation to the representation of animals, the same argument can be made with regard to models of different objects and miniature vessels. It is worth noting that in the Tell el-Farkha corpus three different models of boats are present: although most curious is an exceedingly well executed ivory model of *Aspatharia*-shell (7.6cm length). Many shells of this type are found at Tell el-Farkha, including the twenty *Aspatharia*-shells collected in a single storage jar, discovered during the 2000 season in the Phase 2 layer (Ciałowicz & Jucha 2003). This extraordinary collection suggests that they were prepared for trading purposes. The inclusion of a model *Aspatharia* amongst the cultic deposit suggests that this type of shell was of great importance to the inhabitants of Tell el-Farkha.

## Two Gold Figurines

During the 2006 campaign a spectacular discovery was made in the poor settlement on the Eastern Kom, namely the remains of two gold figures. Along with the figures, two large flint knives as well as a necklace of 382 beads – comprising of 326 ostrich egg shells and 56 carnelian beads – was recovered. The poor archaeological context suggests that these objects were hidden in the structure where they were found rather than where they had been originally stored or exhibited. Ceramic evidence from directly above the golden statuettes and in adjacent rooms dates the deposit to the middle of the Naqada IIIB Period, i.e. phase 4 at Tell el-Farkha.

The statuettes depict standing naked males, one measuring approx. 60cm in height (fig. 12), and the other approx. 30cm. Both



**Fig. 12**

Figure of a  
Predynastic ruler.  
Gold and lapis-  
lazuli.

consisted of a core made of an unpreserved material (probably wood), no traces of which are distinguishable. The core was later covered with sheets of thin gold foil, which were fastened by golden rivets, of which 140 are preserved, each measuring 4mm in length and 1mm in diameter. The rivets alone prove that the ability of goldsmiths at that time was remarkable. Both of the figures were bald with lean faces, distinctively shaped noses and mouths, bearing no signs of facial hair. The lapis-lazuli eyes of both figures are preserved and their eyebrows must have been encrusted with some other unpreserved material. Their protruding ears were constructed from separate pieces of metal. The comparatively short torsos of both figures were shaped with accompanying arms. Their hands fall alongside the body to the length of their shins, ending with large palms with clearly marked fingers and nails. Considerably large phallus sheaths were placed sticking upwards between their long legs. The larger of the two is decorated with a carved band running around its circumference. The feet of both figures were fitted with plastically modelled toes and toenails and both characters were depicted standing. A necklace adorned the first of the figures; however, it is hard to define whether it was wrapped a couple of times around its neck or was hanging from its shoulder, which seems to be indicated by the position of the beads at the time of deposition.

The style of the figures and the way some of the details were accented, such as the large protruding ears, unnaturally large phalluses and meticulously carved nails of the hands and feet neatly fit into the conventions of Predynastic Egyptian art. A good parallel for illustrating this convention is the ivory statuette from Mahasna which depicts a naked male with small but visibly protruding ears and a large phallus, discovered in a grave dating to the Amratian Period (Ayrton & Loat 1911: pl. XI,1). Another important parallel is a statuette from the former

collection of MacGregor, currently held in the Ashmolean Museum (Payne 1993: 13). The basalt sculpture depicts a standing male wearing a penis sheath. His head seems to be covered with a soft, tightly adhering cover reaching to his cheeks and chin, as well as the conventional depiction of hair and pointy beard that reaches almost down to his waist. His eyes are almond shaped and large, with bulging eyelids, the eyebrows repeating the line of the eyes. His mouth, with the upper lip pushed forward is relatively narrow and the badly preserved nose was probably wide. His ears are large and protruding and his fingernails are carved with great precision.

A more enigmatic representation is the small figure (approx. 22cm) that was bought by Ch. T. Currelly from two villagers in the vicinity of Thebes during 1907-09<sup>2</sup>. The statuette is currently in the collection of the Royal Ontario Museum, where it is exhibited as probably originating from Syria. It is made of a partially preserved core covered with sheets of gold foil. The figure is damaged and when relying upon the evidence of a photograph only it is hard to define to what degree it has been reconstructed. It was formed of one piece of gold foil, together with the ears, which are large, but not protruding. Visible holes from rivets prove that the foil was fixed, at least in some parts, to the core. The carefully crafted head is the best preserved part of the figurine. The almond shaped eyes were encrusted with some other unpreserved material, as were the eyebrows. The nose and lips are distinctly marked and the face is surrounded by a short beard, emphasised by undercutting, and the facial hair is marked by engraving. The hands are long and drop down alongside the body; he has large palms from which the fingernails are meticulously rendered, similar to the figures from Tell el-Farkha. The figure wears a belt suspending a phallus sheath, which seems to be modelled in front of the silhouette. The legs

2. The author would like to thank Dr Roberta Shaw and Dr Krzysztof Grzymski for providing access to illustrations and descriptions of the figure in the collection of the Royal Museum of Toronto.

of the figurine have been visibly repaired. It is hard to judge whether the length of the legs have been properly reconstructed as they seem too short; or whether both legs were in fact made of one piece of gold foil and joined. The feet are most probably original and seem to be joined together.

The provenance of the figure described above – as well as the Oxford statuette – is unknown and it is hard to precisely define when they might have been manufactured. However, both have certain stylistic features characteristic to the late Predynastic and Early Dynastic Periods. Most of the figures depicting men that clearly date to this period depicting men are characterised by penis sheaths, large, almond shaped, encrusted eyes, large and protruding ears and carefully modelled fingers and toes with well rendered nails. They are most often depicted standing or walking. Although some of these traits (large ears, encrusted eyes and penis sheaths) are also characteristic for figurines of an earlier period, such meticulous depiction of fingers, as in the case of the aforementioned statues does not appear. Beards also only became popular during the late Predynastic and Early Dynastic Periods. They may be shown as either long and pointy (Quibell 1900: pl. VI, 2) as well as short, surrounding the chin and cheeks as known from statuettes found at Hierakonpolis (Quibell 1900: VI, 1) and the above mentioned king from Tell el-Farkha. In the case of the Royal Ontario Museum statue, the situation is complicated by the fact that it has been assigned to the Sumerian culture and thus regarded as an import from Syria or Mesopotamia. Such facts as its discovery in an Egyptian context and the characteristics nature of its stylistic traits within the tradition of late Predynastic and early Dynastic art, does indeed allow us to regard it as the work of an Egyptian artist, or at the very least as an Egyptian creation. It is worth remembering at this point the famous knife from Gebel Arak, the creation and connections of which to Egypt are obvious, yet the origin of its creator remains the subject of lively discussions (Ciałowicz 1997).

As mentioned above, the eyes of the figures from Tell el-Farkha were made of

lapis-lazuli, a material imported during that period from the area of modern-day Afghanistan. The eyebrows of our figures were also inlaid with a material different than gold. Because it was not preserved, we can only assume that it may have been bitumen or ebony. Both of these materials must have also been imported to Egypt, bitumen from the Near East and ebony from Nubia. The beads – or at least the materials – used to produce the necklace also originated outside the Delta area, perhaps the Eastern Desert and Upper Egypt. The technique used to make flint knives is characteristic for the Naqada culture. Ripple flake knives, such as the knife from Tell el-Farkha, are especially characteristic for the Naqada IID Period (Midant-Reynes 1987), whereas the execution of the larger knife may point both to the close of the Gerzean and the early Naqada III Phase.

Because the two golden figurines were discovered in a poor settlement context (Eastern Kom), it is difficult to determine or not it is proof that they had been hidden by its inhabitants due to impending danger or, quite the opposite, that they had been stolen by the inhabitants from another competing city. The fact that the treasure had not been dug out in the past seems to point to the first possibility, where those who hid the pieces never returned to Tell el-Farkha. Otherwise the treasure, especially the gold, would have been utilised in some way instead of having to wait 5000 years to be discovered. The Eastern Kom at Tell el-Farkha has a complicated stratigraphic situation in that subsequent phases of the cemetery and settlement overlap one another. This situation appears to point to a process conflicting with the usual theory of how the Delta was overtaken by Naqadians and the rivalry between various power centres in Upper Egypt (Ciałowicz 2008). Public anxieties and military skirmishes between important centres of power situated along trade routes must have taken place until the country was finally unified under the rule of the 1<sup>st</sup> Dynasty. Tell el-Farkha must have been a tremendously important and high ranking centre between Naqada IIIA and the

first half of the 1<sup>st</sup> Dynasty. It is difficult to evaluate the role and significance of Tell el-Farkha, mainly due to the lack of sufficient information from other sites. However, we may suppose that it was one of the most important, if not the most important centre in the eastern Delta. If we assume that the Tell el-Farkha deposit was hidden by the inhabitants of the settlement, we may wonder where its original location might have been. The most probable location is the Western Kom where, according to the excavation results, an administrative and later administrative-cultic centre was located, dating to at least Naqada IIIA. This hypothesis is verified not only by the impressive buildings discovered there, but also the previously mentioned cultic deposits. It is therefore possible that the golden statuettes, most probably depicting representations of a Predynastic ruler and his son and heir, were kept in some early shrine that stood at this spot. It is the first known depiction of this type; more famously represented about a thousand years later by the Pepi I and Merenre statues. According to another hypothesis, both Old Kingdom statues depict Pepi I during his *sed* festival (Rummel 2007: 169). Accepting either hypothesis makes it possible to recognise the golden figures from Tell el-Farkha as representing a Predynastic ruler during his *heb-sed*. Origins of this jubilee date well before the golden statues, as noted in the representations in Tomb 100 from Hierakonpolis (Ciałowicz 2001: 161). Evidence for the *sed* festival is also found in votive deposits from Tell el-Farkha (cf. above). Figurines depicting children might have been intended to express a wish to have children, to be reborn after death (Schlögl 1978: 27), or in the case of the Tell el-Farkha golden statues, as the regeneration of vital forces for a ruling king.

It is hard to estimate the exact period in which the Tell el-Farkha figures may have been manufactured. Taking into consideration the stylistic traits employed during the Naqada Period, and emphasising the details that have already been mentioned such as the lack of facial hair and associated ripple flake knife find, we may assume

that the figures were created earlier than the archaeological context in which they were discovered. The context only provides us with a *terminus ante quem*. The most important examples of art flourishing during the Naqada III Period, in relief and sculpture alike, are also dated with little precision. The majority of artefacts known to us today either come from purchases or were discovered in conditions that hindered a precise chronological definition. Stylistic analysis of such items usually only allows them to be roughly dated. We may assume however, that the figurines from Tell el-Farkha were not hidden right after they had been made, but rather had been created a few dozen years before they were concealed in the Eastern Kom. Considerations of the general development of Egyptian art, which was burgeoning from at least the beginning of Naqada IIC/D (Tomb 100 at Hierakonpolis) until the 1st Dynasty, in combination with depictions of the clearly dominant role that leaders/rulers begin to play, prompt us to infer that the golden figures from Tell el-Farkha may even have been created during the Naqada IIIA Period. However, due to the fact that we have not gathered until now irrefutable evidence to support such a hypothesis, it is necessary to assume that our artefacts were created between the beginning of Naqada IIIA and the first half of Naqada IIIB, certainly earlier than the rule of any of the kings of the 0 Dynasty that we know of today.

In conclusion it is necessary to summarise a number of important points. Firstly, the deposits discovered at Tell el-Farkha are the only ones in Egypt to be so precisely dated. Those found earlier include examples from the later periods of Egyptian civilization such as the Old Kingdom, First Intermediate Period, and even the Middle Kingdom. For this reason some scholars linked them to much later periods and rejected the possibility of a separate period of Egyptian art associated with the Pre- and Protodynastic periods (p. ex. Baumgartel 1968). The Tell el-Farkha deposits come from contexts securely dated to the transition between Dynasties 0 and I and here it is worth noting

that the Western Kom at Tell el-Farkha was ultimately abandoned in the first half of the First Dynasty and was never resettled. This dating of finds at Tell el-Farkha makes it possible to assert conclusively that the first great period of development in Egyptian art took place during the formation of the Egyptian state. Many models established at that time were copied with greater or lesser modifications over the next three thousand years, up until the fall of Egyptian civilization.

Secondly, the fact that the content of deposits varies between individual sites suggests that no universally accepted canons were in force during the emergence of the Egyptian state. It also implies that various forms of rituals and cults were practised in various parts of Egypt.

Thirdly, the presence of votive deposits found in numerous locations throughout Egypt proves the existence of complex local cults,

though it is difficult to ascertain to whom they were addressed. For example, depictions of dwarfs are the most common group in Tell el-Farkha, while figurines depicting children with their fingers touching the mouth are the most common group in Elephantine. This may indicate the presence of developed local cults in particular regions of Egypt that continued despite considerable cultural unification. However, it is still unclear if at the dawn of the Egyptian state, specific and clearly defined gods were already being worshipped, or whether the king, as guarantor of order and all aspects of life, was the subject of cult devotion to whom offerings were made. Fourthly, golden statues as well as some ivory figurines such as a king, a woman with child in palanquin, a snake with a human female face in *neb* basket, and uraei provide evidence for the close connection between Tell el-Farkha and the emerging monarchy.

## Bibliography

ADAMS, B., 1974. *Ancient Hierakonpolis*. Warminster.

ADAMS, B. & CIAŁOWICZ, K.M., 1997. *Protodynastic Egypt*, Shire Egyptology 25. Princes Risborough.

AYRTON, E.R. & LOAT, W.L.S., 1911. *Predynastic Cemetery at el-Mahasna*. London.

BAUMGARTEL, E.J., 1968. About some ivory statuettes from the Main Deposit at Hierakonpolis. *JARCE* 7: 7-14.

BELOVA, G. A. & SHERKOVA, T.A., 2002. *Ancient Egyptian Temple at Tell Ibrahim Awad*. Moscow 2002.

BRUNTON, G. & CATON-THOMPSON, G., 1928. *The Badarian civilisation and prehistoric remains near Badari*. BSAE & ERA 46. London.

BUSZEK, A., 2008. Dwarf figurines from Tell el-Farkha. *Studies in Ancient Art and Civilization*, 12: 35-55.

CAPART, J., 1905. *Primitive art in Egypt*. London.

CHŁODNICKI, M. & CIAŁOWICZ, K.M., 2007. Tell el-Farkha (Ghazala). Season 2005. *PAM* XVII: 143-154.

CHŁODNICKI, M.; CIAŁOWICZ, K.M.; ABŁAMOWICZ, R.; HERBICH, T.; JÓRDECZKA, M.S.; JUCHA, M.; KABACIŃSKI, J.; KUBIAK-MARTENS, L. & MAĆZYŃSKA, A., 2002. Polish excavations at Tell el-Farkha (Ghazala) in Nile Delta. Preliminary report 1998-2001. *Archeologia* LIII: 63-118.

CHŁODNICKI, M.; CIAŁOWICZ, K.M.; ABŁAMOWICZ, R.; DĘBOWSKA, J.; JUCHA, M.; KIRKOWSKI, R. & MAĆZYŃSKA, A., 2004. Polish Excavations at Tell el-Farkha (Ghazala) in the Nile Delta. Preliminary report 2002-2003. *Archeologia* LV: 47-74.

CHŁODNICKI, M.; CIAŁOWICZ, K.M.; ABŁAMOWICZ, R.; CICHOWSKI, K.; DĘBOWSKA-LUDWIN, J.; JUCHA, M.; KABACIŃSKI, J.; KACZMAREK, M.; PAWLIKOWSKI, M.; PRYC, G.; REWEKANT, A.; SKRZYPCZAK, M.; SZEJNOGA, P. & WASILEWSKI, M., 2006. Polish excavations at Tell el-Farkha (Ghazala) in the Nile Delta. Preliminary report 2004-2005. *Archeologia* LVII: 71-128.

CHŁODNICKI, M.; CIAŁOWICZ, K.M.; ABŁAMOWICZ, R.; DĘBOWSKA-LUDWIN, J.; JUCHA, M.; MAĆZYŃSKA, A.; PRYC, G.; ROZWADOWSKI, M. & SOBAS, M., 2008. Polish excavations at Tell

- el-Farkha (Ghazala) in the Nile Delta. Preliminary report 2006-2007. *Archeologia* LIX: 81-151.
- CIAŁOWICZ, K.M., 1992. La composition, le sens et la symbolique des scènes zoomorphes pré-dynastiques en relief. Les manches de couteaux [in:] FRIEDMAN, R. & ADAMS, B. (eds.), *The Followers of Horus. Studies dedicated to Michael Allen Hoffman*. Oxford: 247-258.
- CIAŁOWICZ, K.M., 1997. Le manche de couteau de Gebel el-Arak. Le problème de l'interprétation de l'art pré-dynastique, *Warsaw Egiptological Studies I. Essays in honour of Prof. Dr. Jadwiga Lipińska*, Warsaw: 339-352.
- CIAŁOWICZ, K.M., 2001. *La naissance d'un royaume. L'Égypte dès la période pré-dynastique à la fin de la 1<sup>ère</sup> dynastie*. Kraków.
- CIAŁOWICZ, K.M., 2006. Excavations at the Western Kom at Tell el-Farkha 1998-2003 (Nile Delta, Egypt). *Recherches Archéologiques de 1999-2003*. Kraków: 336-353.
- CIAŁOWICZ, K.M., 2008. The nature of the relation between Lower and Upper Egypt in the Protodynastic period. A view from Tell el-Farkha [in:] MIDANT-REYNES, B. & TRISTANT, Y. (eds.), ROWLAND, J. & HENDRICKX, S. (ass.), *Egypt at its origins 2. Proceedings of the International Conference "Origin of the state, Predynastic and Early Dynastic Egypt", Toulouse (France), 5th-8th September 2005*. OLA 172. Leuven: 501-513.
- CIAŁOWICZ, K.M., 2009. Excavations of the Western Kom at Tell el-Farkha in 2006. *Recherches Archéologiques. Nouvelle Série 1*. Kraków: 429-455.
- CIAŁOWICZ, K.M., 2011. The Early Dynastic administrative-cultic centre at Tell el-Farkha, [in:] FRIEDMAN, R.F. & FISKE, P.N. (ed.), *Egypt at its Origins 3, Proceedings of the International Conference "Origin of the State. Predynastic and Early Dynastic Egypt", London, 27th September-1st August 2008*. *Orientalia Lovaniensia Analecta* 205. Leuven: 763-800.
- CIAŁOWICZ, K.M. & JUCHA, M., 2003. Tell el-Farkha 1998-2000. Stratigraphy and Chronology of the Western Kom [in:] POPIELSKA-GRZYBOWSKA, J. (ed.), *Proceedings of the Second Central European Conference of Young Egyptologists*. Warsaw: 29-35.
- DONADONI ROVERI, A.M. & TIRADRITTI, F. (eds.), 1998. *Kemet. Alle sorgenti del tempo*. Milano.
- DREYER, G., 1986. *Elephantine VIII. Der Tempel der Satet. Die Funde der Frühzeit und des Alten Reiches*. *Archäologische Veröffentlichungen* 39. Mainz am Rhein.
- DREYER, G., 1999. Motive und Datierung der dekorierten prä-dynastischen Messergriffe [in:] *L'art de l'Ancien Empire égyptien*. Paris: 195-226.
- GODRON, G., 1990. *Études sur l'Horus Den et quelques problèmes de l'Égypte archaïque*, *Cahiers d'Orientalisme* XIX. Genève.
- GRIMM, A. & SCHOSKE, S., 2000. *Am Beginn der Zeit. Ägypten in der Vor- und Frühzeit*. München.
- HARTUNG, U., 2000. Friedhof U [in:] DREYER, G.; VON DEN DRIESCH, A.; ENGEL E.-M.; HARTMANN, R.; HARTUNG, U.; HIKADE, T.; MÜLLER, V. & PETERS, J., *Umm el-Qaab. Nachuntersuchungen im frühzeitlichen Königsfriedhof*. 11/12 Vorbericht. *MDAIK* 56: 46-63.
- KAISER, W., 1971. Die kleine Hebseddarstellung in Sonnenheiligtum des Neuserre [in:] *Aufsätze zum 70. Geburtstag von Herbert Ricke*. Beiträge zur Ägyptischen Bauforschung und Altertumskunde 12. Wiesbaden: 87-105.
- KAISER, W., 1983. Zu den der älteren Bilddarstellungen und der Bedeutung von *rpwt*. *MDAIK* 39: 261-296.
- MIDANT-REYNES, B., 1987. Contribution à l'étude de la société pré-dynastique: le cas du couteau "ripple-flake". *SAK* 14: 185-224.
- MILLET, N.B., 1990. The Narmer mace-head and related objects. *JARCE* 27:53-59.
- NEEDLER, W., 1984. *Predynastic and Archaic Egypt in The Brooklyn Museum*. Wilbour Monographs 9. Brooklyn.
- PAYNE, J.C., 1993. *Catalogue of the Predynastic Egyptian collection in the Ashmolean Museum*. Oxford.
- PETRIE, W.M.F., 1903. *Abydos. Part II. 1903*. EEF 24. London.
- QUIBELL, J.E., 1900. *Hierakonpolis I*. ERA 4. London.
- RUMMEL, U., (ed.) 2007. *Meeting the Past. 100 Years in Egypt. German Archaeological Institute Cairo 1907-2007*. Cairo.
- SCHLÖGL, H., 1978. *Le don du Nil. Art égyptien dans les collections Suisse*. Bâle.
- SMITH, H.S., 1992. The Making of Egypt: A review of the influence of Susa and Sumer on Upper Egypt and Lower Nubia in the 4th millennium B.C. [in:] FRIEDMAN, R. & ADAMS, B. (eds.), *The Followers of Horus. Studies dedicated to Michael Allen Hoffman*. *Oxbow Monographs* 20. Oxford: 235-46.
- STEINDORFF, G., 1946. *Catalogue of the Egyptian sculpture in the Walters Art Gallery*. Baltimore.
- SPENCER, A.J., 1993. *Early Egypt*. London.
- VAN HAARLEM, W.M., 2009. *Temple Deposits at Tell Ibrahim Awad*. Amsterdam.
- VERCOUTTER, J., 1992. *L'Égypte et la vallée du Nil 1. Des origines à la fin de l'Ancien Empire 12000-2000 av.J.-C*. Paris.
- WHITEHOUSE, H., 2009. *Ancient Egypt and Nubia. In the Ashmolean Museum*. Oxford.
- ZIEGLER, Ch., 1990. *Le Louvre. Les antiquités égyptiennes*. Paris.