## Contents

List of Figures .................................................................................................................................................. iii
List of Tables .................................................................................................................................................. viii
List of Contributors ..................................................................................................................................... ix
Preface ......................................................................................................................................................... x

### Section 1: Language, Literature and Religious Texts

- **Time(s) in Ancient Egyptian: Perspectives of a Broad Lexical Study. The Case of \( dw^3.t \) and \( dw^3 \)** ........................................ 3
  Gaëlle Chantrain
- **Nu, Continuity and Everlastingness in the *Pyramid Texts*** ............................................................. 17
  Joanna Popielska-Grzybowska
- **‘Children of Weakness’ in the *Book of Gates*** .................................................................................. 31
  Mykola Tarasenko
- **Is There an Egyptian Hero? – the Contributions of Mythological and Literary Studies to an Egyptological Subject** ........................................................................................................................................... 45
  Bárbara Botelho Rodrigues
- **The Study of Sacred Space in Ancient Egypt: an Example of Interaction Between Egyptology and Other Fields of Knowledge** ........................................................................................................................................... 51
  Guilherme Borges Pires

### Section 2: Art, Iconography and Architecture Studies

- **An Examination and Analysis of the Role of the Iconographic Rosette Motif in the Egyptian Artistic Repertoire: a Case Study** ....................................................................................................................................... 59
  Cheryl Hart
- **A Note on the Late Middle Kingdom Stela ‘Workshop’ at Thebes** .................................................. 71
  Danijela Stefanović
- **Domestic Architecture and Daily Life in Meroitic Nubia** .................................................................. 77
  Marco Baldi

### Section 3: Funerary and Burial Studies

- **The Earliest Source of the So-called *Book of Two Ways* as a Coffin Floorboard Decoration from the Early Middle Kingdom** ....................................................................................................................................... 87
  Wael Sherbiny
- **Egyptian Coffins at the Fitzwilliam Museum: a Case Study in Collection Formation** ..................... 97
  Helen Strudwick
- **The History of the Main Burial Shaft of Theban Tomb 99 from 1450 BC to the Present Day** .......... 115
  Nigel Strudwick
- **Provenancing Roman Period Mummy Masks: Workshop Groups and Distribution Areas** ............ 127
  Asja Müller

### Section 4: Material Culture and Museum Studies

- **The Decorated Pottery from Proto- and Early Dynastic Periods at Tell el-Farkha (Western Kom), Egypt** ....................................................................................................................................... 149
  Magdalena Sobas
The Sunshade after the Old Kingdom – Female Attribute with Hathoric Connotation? ......................................................... 161
Lubica Hudáková

Settlement Pottery from the Old Kingdom Period at Tell El-Murra Trench T5 ................................................................. 175
Magdalena Kazimierczak

Some Ramesside Appropriations of Ancient Memphis ........................................................................................................... 187
Steven Snape

A Stelophorous Statuette from the National Archaeological Museum of Athens: an Adorer Offering a Hymn–Stele to the Solar God Rē3 [AIG Λ 108] ............................................................. 197
Alicia Maravelia

The Cult of Bastet during the First Millennium BC: some Bronzes from the Museum of Fine Arts in Budapest ... 207
Maria Diletta Pubblico

Shabtis from the Museum and Private Collections in Croatia: Dating and Typological Study .............................................. 219
Mladen Tomorad

Shabtis and Pseudo-Shabtis from the Roman Provinces of Pannonia, Dacia and Moesia. An Overview .......... 241
Dan-Augustin Deac

The Egyptian Collection at the Civico Museo di Storia ed Arte of Trieste: its History and Some Highlights ..... 257
Susanna Moser

Excavating an Archive. The Borgia Collection of Egyptian Antiquities in the Museo Archeologico Nazionale di Napoli (MANN) ............................................................................................................................... 269
Stefania Mainieri

Section 5:

Historical Studies ........................................................................................................................................... 277

The Neolithic Period in Lower Egypt – Research Problems and Priorities ................................................................. 279
Agnieszka Mączyńska

Meret-Neith: in the Footsteps of the First Woman Pharaoh in History ................................................................. 289
Jean-Pierre Pätznick

Regional Administration in Late Middle Kingdom Egypt ......................................................................................... 307
Alexander Ilin-Tomich

Enemies Hanged Upside (Head) Down ............................................................................................................................. 319
Uroš Matić

Egypt and the Southern Levant Nomadic Populations: the Dynamics of Relations During Late Bronze/Early Iron Age ................................................................................................................................. 329
Eva Katarina Glaz

Section 6:

Egyptomania and Modern Travellers to Egypt ............................................................................................................ 339

Wonderful Things: Thematic Transmission in Egyptian Revival Jewellery ................................................................. 341
Joyce Tyldesley

Eight Years Following the Traces of Giuseppe and Amalia Nizzoli: Preliminary Results of the Nizzoli Project .... 347
Carlo Rindi Nuzzolo and Irene Guidotti

© Archaeopress and the authors, 2016.
The Sunshade after the Old Kingdom – Female Attribute with Hathoric Connotation?

Lubica Hudáková

Institute for Egyptology, University of Vienna, Vienna, Austria

Abstract: The motif of a male sunshade bearer accompanying the tomb owner or his relatives is attested from the early 5th dynasty until the early Middle Kingdom, and in the related depictions the sunshade has a practical shielding function. The gradual abandonment of the motif coincides with the appearance of female sunshade bearers that start to be represented from the First Intermediate Period onwards. The context of the scenes in which these women appear, along with their iconography and associated inscriptions, indicate that the sunshade became a Hathoric attribute some time after the end of the Old Kingdom and fulfilled this function well into the 18th dynasty.

Keywords: Middle Kingdom, decorative programme, iconography, sunshade, fly-whisk, sunshade bearer, Hathor, Neferu, Louvre C15

1. Introduction

The decorative programme of private tombs has always been one of the most important sources for studying ancient Egypt, be it from art-historical, archaeological, philological or cultural points of view. Even if the activities and events represented have to be regarded with caution, their informative value cannot be overlooked.

Since the year 2009, the project MeKeTRE has been focusing on the decoration of Middle Kingdom private tombs, studying the content and meaning of the scenes and their development in comparison with the Old Kingdom. Part of the project was the creation of an online database called MEKETREpository, the purpose of which is to collect and present the depicted themes and scenes in a structured way to scholars as well as to the interested public.1

The project is now in its second phase and concentrates on so called icons, that is, the smallest pictorial elements of which the images are composed. Each individual object (icon) represented in ancient Egyptian two-dimensional art may be studied in its own right in order to unfold the complexity of the scene or motif of which it is part. Thus, the aim of the project is to analyse which artefacts (objects of material culture) were represented in art, how they were transformed into images, whether the development of material culture was reflected in art, whether some artefacts or images of them were specific to a particular region or period of time, and so on. This art-historical approach is combined with philological investigation by studying the designations of objects and captions in order to detect how depiction and caption complemented one another.

In the present paper, I would like to turn attention to the images of cloth sunshades and their significance, especially in the tombs of the First Intermediate Period and Middle Kingdom. An in-depth analysis reveals that the item became a Hathoric attribute some time after the end of the Old Kingdom and fulfilled this function well into the 18th dynasty.2

2. Male sunshade bearers

Two-dimensional images of sunshades are attested from the early 5th dynasty at the latest. From then to the end of the Old Kingdom, the motif was used in the tomb decoration in the Memphite necropoleis as well as in the provinces. H.G. Fischer collected and identified more than a dozen of examples from this period, displaying male attendants carrying a portable sunshade.3 Concerning the context, these sunshade bearers are closely associated with the outdoor activities of the tomb owner, such as the inspection of estate or possessions. The bearers accompany him or his female relatives in the course of a mAA-activity or during transport in a carrying chair.4 In these scenes, the sunshade (or umbrella) has clearly a practical shielding function – the attendants simply carry it or hold it over the main person to protect him or her from the sun. The functionality and use of the item is well represented, for instance, in the tombs of Seneb at Giza (Fig. 92, late 5th dynasty), Pepyankh Henykem at Meir (6th dynasty, reign of Pepy II) or Hemre Isi at Deir el-Gebrawi (late 6th dynasty).5

Footnotes:

1 MEKETREpository [www.meketre.org], last accessed 19th August 2015.
3 FISCHER 1972: 151–156.
4 For a list of examples illustrating the former motif see OEE 11.7.7 [http://archaeologydataservice.ac.uk/archives/view/oee_ahrc_2006/], last accessed 19th August 2015. See also: FISCHER 1972: 152–154.
5 JENKIR 1941: 91, fig. 20; BLACKMAN and APPT 1953a: pl. XXXI; DAVIES 1902b: pl. XVIII.
The sunshade illustrated in Old Kingdom tombs consists of a pole supporting a pair of sticks crisscrossed diagonally and attached to the pole at the point of their intersection. A cloth is stretched over the sticks, with a large piece of it usually hanging down on one side (termed a ‘flap’). There are several stylistic variations that were summarised by Fischer, indicating, for example, the fastening or structure of the cloth, but the basic composition of the shade is in all cases most probably identical.

After the Old Kingdom, the motif of the male sunshade bearer reappears solely in the chapel of Mentuhotep II Nebhepetra at Dendera (built before the reunification) and in the tombs of Baket I and Khety at Beni Hasan dated to the late 11th/early 12th dynasty. In Dendera as well as in the tomb of Baket I, the cloth itself is not preserved or damaged, respectively, but the pole and the gesture of the attendant make the identification unquestionable. Fortunately, the tomb of Khety provides a complete image of the sunshade (Fig. 93) and it is immediately obvious that the rendering of the item changed considerably in comparison to the Old Kingdom models. The crisscrossed sticks have been suppressed and their presence can only be inferred from the short horizontal stroke at the top of the pole.

3. Female sunshade bearers

This gradual abandonment of the motif displaying a male sunshade bearer in the early Middle Kingdom coincides with the appearance of a new motif in the tomb decoration. This new motif displays nothing else but women carrying sunshades on various occasions and it already appears in the 9th dynasty. Not only the gender, but also the entire iconography as well as the context have been modified and none of the examples displays the practical use of the sunshade any more. On the basis of their context, the attestations can be divided into three groups, but upon closer examination, all of them can be linked together.

3.1 Offering bearers

The first group of women carrying a sunshade are attendants bringing burial equipment. This motif is attested in the tomb of Ankhtifi at el-Moalla (Fig. 94, probably 9th dynasty) and in the tomb of Sobekhotep at Kom Ombo (late 11th dynasty). In both tombs, the women grasp the pole of the shade and hold it above their head as if to protect themselves from the sun. Their attitude is at least partly comparable with the Old Kingdom examples and the illustration of the shade in the tomb of Sobekhotep is the only Middle Kingdom parallel resembling the Old Kingdom images of sunshades. In this particular tomb, the context is clear as the scene is situated in the burial chamber and the woman, designated as Intetnedjemet, stride towards the tomb owner together with other women carrying boxes, a mirror, a revolving fan, and an ointment jar. In the tomb of Ankhtifi, the scene is unfortunately fragmentary and less obvious. There have been at least two registers with female figures, occupying the southern and southeastern sides of pillar IV. The other sides were probably

---

**Fig. 92. Male sunshade bearer accompanying the tomb owner in a carrying chair. Tomb of Seneb, Giza, late 5th dynasty. After: Junker 1941: fig. 20.**

---

6 See e.g.: Wild 1966: pl. CL. In this example, the sunshade bearer does not interact with the tomb owner, he belongs to a group of attendants represented in two registers below the main figure.
7 Another type of sunshades attested since the Old Kingdom and widely used throughout Pharaonic history was the lotiform or palmiform shade, actually resembling a large-scale fan. See: Fischer 1984: 1104; Jequier 1921: 254–255. For yet another sunshade see: Balz 1941: 1–4.
8 Habachi 1963: fig. 7; Newberry 1893: pls. XVI, XXXI.
9 Kanawati and Woods 2010: photo 5.
10 Southern side (side 7) of pillar IV. VANDER 1950: 51, fig. 4.
11 West wall of the painted burial chamber. Wendo 1968: 77–78, pl. IV and colour plate VI.
12 Vander 1950: 51.
devoted to representations of cattle and offering bearers. The western side of this pillar features the famous biographical inscription describing the famine in Ankhtifi’s time. The sunshade displayed in the tomb of Ankhtifi has been described by Vandier as a sort of sceptre (‘une sorte de sceptre (extrémité jaune) coupé par une masse blanche’). He was apparently not able to recognise the item since the crisscrossed sticks have been entirely omitted and the pole has become shorter. However, this stylised representation becomes characteristic for the period to come.

3.2 Harvest and/or Harvest festival

In the tomb of Setka at Qubbet el-Hawa (QH 110, 9th dynasty) and in the tomb of Senet at Thebes (TT 60, early 12th dynasty), female sunshade bearers are associated with agricultural pursuits, namely with the grain harvest. In the former tomb, the motif is depicted between grain cutters and a man transporting cereal ears. The woman is represented striding and holds the sunshade in her left (rear) hand in front of her. She is well-dressed and richly adorned with jewellery. The pole of the shade resembles a staff and the item is suggestive of an attribute rather than an object with practical function.

In the tomb of Senet, female sunshade bearers appear in the register above the grain harvest. It was once decorated with an image of Intefîqer seated on a lion-legged chair that is now missing (Fig. 95). He is being approached by three women, each of which grasps the pole of a sunshade that rests upon her shoulder. The pole has become quite short, there are no crisscrossed sticks and the cloth does not have an L-shape any more, it simply hangs down. The woman on the left has

---

13 Vander 1950: 59, fig. 12.
16 Vander 1950: 51.
17 Enet 2008: 1729, pl. LXXII (scene 2). The related scenes occupy the northern end of the east wall (entrance wall).
18 Davies 1920: 9–11, pl. III. The related scenes occupy the eastern end of the north wall of the corridor.
The depicted grain harvest has been obviously associated with storage of grain, wine-gathering, gardening and acrobatic dancers represented on the opposite wall of the corridor. All scenes together apparently illustrate a sort of Harvest festival associated with the goddess Hathor; Davies suggested ‘a thanksgiving to the goddess of fertility.’ The presence of the leaping dance (‘Hathorsprungtanz’) in particular corroborates this interpretation, as it clearly has a Hathoric character.

Parallel representations are attested in the tomb of Senbi I at Meir (B1, early 12th dynasty) and in the tomb of Amenemhat at Thebes (TT 82, 18th dynasty) in the context of the so-called Festival of Hathor. In the latter tomb, for example, the dancers are accompanied by priests of Hathor clapping castanets and at least three female musicians bringing various emblems of the goddess towards the tomb owner and his wife. The leftmost woman even carries an unusual object that resembles a fly-whisk. A closer look reveals that it is a rather simplified reproduction of the sunshade, almost identical with that attested in the tomb of Senet. Its presence indicates that along with menat necklaces and sistrum it too was considered an attribute of the goddess Hathor.

3.3 Funerary repast scene and/or Festival of Hathor

The third and most striking group of women carrying a sunshade is associated with funerary repast scenes (or offering table scenes). The earliest example identified so far appears in the tomb of Setka at Qubbet el-Hawa (QH 110, 9th dynasty), with four women accompanying the tomb owner and his wife seated in front of an offering table and an offering list. Below the couple there was a row of eighteen men (some of them designated as ‘his son’) identified by Edel as funerary priests. Three of the four women are comparable with the sunshade bearers in the tomb of Senet since the shade rests upon their shoulders. They are dressed in long wrap-around dresses or skirts, whose upper hem and shoulder straps are richly decorated. In contrast, the fourth woman is depicted naked, wearing only a belt and jewellery (Fig. 96). A white piece of cloth held in her right hand might be her dress. Her oversized sunshade dominates the scene – the long pole stands on the ground and resembles a staff.

The height and outer appearance of the four women, their dominant position in the funerary repast scene and traces of inscription led Edel to the conclusion that they are not simple attendants but noblewomen. He even identified three of them with Iteti, Huti and Meritites represented elsewhere in the tomb and acknowledged as the tomb owner’s daughters. The fourth smallest woman was assumed to be daughter of the naked sunshade bearer standing in front of her. Iteti, Huti and Meritites bear the title ‘Priestess of Hathor’ and this fact is crucial since it is a further evidence that the sunshade can with reasonable probability be considered an attribute of the goddess. The sunshade bearer depicted in the harvest scene in the same tomb (described above) may in fact represent one of these women too – her presence would guarantee the favour of the goddess in respect of fertility.

The association with the funerary repast scene is also characteristic for the tomb of queen Neferu at Thebes (TT 319), wife of Mentuhotep II Nebhepetra, that features the most important group of female sunshade bearers.

Fig. 94. Female sunshade bearer, probably an attendant bringing burial equipment. Tomb of Ankhtifi, el-Moalla, 9th dynasty. After: Vandier 1950: fig. 4.

© Archaeopress and the authors, 2016.
Only fragments of the wall decoration are preserved, but concerning the chapel it is widely accepted that it was adorned with raised relief. It illustrated at least two processions involving women carrying, wearing or presenting various items such as *menat* necklaces and sunshades.

The rightward procession was oriented toward a large-scale offering table, beside which Neferu might have been depicted. At least twelve women have been illustrated in the upper and six in the lower register. The rightmost woman, apparently the leader of the group, presents a *menat* necklace towards the main figure, and

___

30 Shortly before submitting this article I had the opportunity to discuss the topic with Isabel Stünkel who dealt with the sunshade bearers in the tomb of Neferu while preparing the catalogue for the Middle Kingdom exhibition in the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York. I would like to thank her for providing me with her manuscript. See: STÜNKEl 2015: 97.

31 See e.g.: WINLOCK 1924: 12; SCOTT III 1986: 57; JAROS-DECKER 1984: 115. The opposite is stated in other sources, see e.g.: PM I.1: 292. See also: STÜNKEl 2015: 97.


___

© Archaeopress and the authors, 2016.
she and her colleagues all carry sunshades identical with those represented in the tomb of Senet (Figs. 97–98).

The leftward procession is divided into three registers. Its destination is unfortunately unclear, but the figures might have approached an image of the tomb owner. The middle register is occupied by at least five groups of female figures. The first group is made up of women holding hands and wearing *menat* necklaces. A second group further right presents a *menat* necklace and carries a sunshade at the same time (Fig. 99). Isolated fragments represent parts of women with their arms folded and wearing extensive spiral-form bracelets as well as remains of a woman carrying a mirror in its case. One woman stands in front of an object that resembles a stand or sacred image, probably associated with Hathor. Like in the tomb of Setka, the women wear long skirts or dresses with elaborately patterned upper hem and sometimes with shoulder straps. As I have shown elsewhere, this leftward procession is one of the earliest representations of the so-called *Festival of Hathor*.

---

33 Compare Hudáková 2013: 314–316 (chapter 11.2.2.3.1). See: Smith 1958: 90, pl. 60 A. For the fragments compare New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 26.3.353-3 and 68.12 [http://www.metmuseum.org/collection/the-collection-online/search/590592; http://www.metmuseum.org/collection/the-collection-online/search/590597], last accessed 19th August 2015. According to the homepage of the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York, the fragments once decorated the right-hand wall of the corridor. According to Winlock (1924: 12, fig. 10), at least some of the fragments were found in the chapel.

34 New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 26.3.353pp. A stand with *menat* necklaces and emblems of the goddess is represented in the tomb of Ukhhotep IV. Blackman and Apted 1953b: pl. XIX.
Hathor characteristic for the decoration of several First Intermediate Period and Middle Kingdom tombs. In the tomb of Neferu, the sunshade has obviously a ceremonial and not a practical function and as such it is on a par with the *menat* necklace that was also a cultic adornment of the priestesses of Hathor.

Even more significant and conclusive in this respect is the *stela of Abkau* (reunification period or shortly before) that most probably originates from Abydos and is now in the Louvre (C15). The lower part of the stela displays funerary rites and a false door combined with a funerary repast scene (Fig. 100). To the left of the offering table are images of two women, adorned with jewellery and dressed in long skirts or dresses with decorated upper hems and shoulder straps. The woman on the right presents a *menat* necklace and at the same time her left hand is placed on the top of a sunshade standing on the ground. In this case, the criss-crossed sticks have been rendered and the identification of the shade is thus definite. She is described as ‘his *jwn.t(jt)* [the one of Dendera], his beloved, *Tnw*’ and is apparently meant to recite a song addressing Hathor that is written in front of her face. Because of her elaborate dress and the designation ‘his beloved’, Morenz assumed that she may be a female relative of the couple represented, probably their daughter; the title *The one of Dendera* would associate her with the Hathor of Dendera. The accumulation of Hathoric aspects – the name, the song and the *menat* necklace – indicates that the sunshade too had a Hathoric connotation in this context, most probably associated with regeneration (see also below).

### 3.4 Gestures and Garments

Summarising the iconography, the women represented carry the sunshade in three different ways. The first motif shows women holding the shade over their head (Fig. 94). Even if the attestations give the impression that the item

---

35 Compare: Hudáková 2013: 311ff. (chapter 11.2.2.3).
36 See also: Stünkel 2015: 97. A third procession of women, some of them equipped with sunshades, was probably depicted in the corridor – the fragments are in sunk relief. Cf. New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 31.3.1-1 [http://www.metmuseum.org/collection/the-collection-online/search/553296], last accessed 19th August 2015.
37 Drioton 1933: pl. IX; Borieux 1932: pl. XVII; Morenz 1997: 7–17; Barbotin 2005: 140–141; Landgrafová 2011: 88–91 (no. 29); Klebs 1922: fig. 46. Morenz dates the stela into late 11th dynasty, but Fischer (1976b: 9, FN 34) suggested a date not much earlier than the reunification. Indeed, the iconographical similarities between the stela of Abkau, the tomb of Neferu and the stela of Henenu (Hoddás and Berlev 1982: figs. on pp. 69–71) indicate that all three objects are contemporary and that the stela of Abkau was made in the reunification period or shortly before. See: Hudáková 2013: 406–409 (chapter 13.1.2.2).
38 The gestures of both women strongly resemble the gestures of the two women preserved on the fragment New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 26.3.353cc from the tomb of Neferu. It only shows the upper bodies without the hands, but since both figures also approach an offering table like on the stela of Abkau, they might have been represented in a similar manner. The right woman would have presented a *menat* necklace and supported a sunshade placed on the ground in front of her. The reconstruction is, however, only hypothetical.
40 Morenz 1997: 15–16. The woman on the left is interpreted by Morenz as Abkau’s wife that is also depicted next to the stela owner to the right of the offering table.
is functional, the women are in fact offering bearers and the shade apparently belongs to the funerary equipment. The second motif displays women holding the sunshade in an upright position and it thus seems to have similar function as a staff of office (Figs. 96, 100). Finally, the most common motif illustrates women carrying the shade over their shoulder with the cloth hanging down their back (Figs. 95, 97, 99). In the two latter motifs, the sunshade is clearly an attribute of its possessor. In contrast to the male bearers of the Old Kingdom, these women never hold the shade over someone else.41

Apart from the naked figure in the tomb of Setka (Fig. 96), all other women are dressed in long dresses,42 often featuring decorated upper hems and shoulder straps. Concerning jewellery, collars in combination with bracelets and anklets are only worn by women shown in the tomb of Setka and on the stela of Abkau, which were identified as female relatives of the owners of the monuments.

3.5 The form of the sunshade

The various renderings of the shades have been already summarised by Fischer.43 The first significant step in the development of the icon concerns the form of the pole of the sunshade. The Old Kingdom examples usually feature a carinated round-topped head, but already in the tombs of Ankhtifi and Setka dated to the 9th dynasty, the head is knob-like, having the form of a lotus bud, and the pole receives the form of a spear (Figs. 94, 96). Fischer linked this change to the gradual appearance of lotiform spear-like staffs attested since the end of the Old Kingdom as a female attribute.44

In the tombs of Ankhtifi and Setka the cloth of the shade also underwent a development: both the horizontal and vertical parts were displayed, but they became much thinner and the criss-crossed sticks were entirely omitted (Figs. 94, 96). The diminishing importance of the horizontal element, that is, the main shady part of the cloth, can also be observed on the stela of Abkau (Fig. 100). It only has a symbolic size and even if the criss-crossed sticks have been rendered, the pole already imitates a lotus bud typical for this period.

The finalisation of this change from a practical towards an attributive and rather symbolic item is characteristic for the images in the tomb of Neferu and Senet (Figs. 95, 97—99). The cloth became a single mass hanging down from the pole without the indication of the horizontal portion or any fastening. In the former tomb, the head of the pole has either the form of a lotus bud or a closed lotus blossom (Figs. 97, 99). In both tombs, as well as in the tomb of Setka,45 and on the stela of Abkau, a fringe at the lower end has been indicated (Figs. 95, 98, 100); sunshades in the tomb of Neferu even feature orange-red stripes (Fig. 97).46

Despite this schematic visualization, the proper form of the sunshade was without any doubt still understood. In the burial chamber of Neferu, a sunshade has also been depicted in the object frieze and in this case, it features an L-shaped cloth and criss-crossed sticks (see below).47

3.6 The sunshade and its significance

The preceding observations strongly suggest that the female sunshade bearers attested in the First Intermediate Period and early Middle Kingdom tombs are of significance and obviously conveyed a certain meaning. The fact that they never hold the shade over someone else but rather carry it like an attribute, and that the representations of the shade became more and more ‘hieratic’48 and inoperable, make it clear that it was considered a ‘ceremonial’49 item.

As already mentioned, the context of the scenes directly or indirectly refer to the goddess Hathor.50 Most of the women either bear a title related to Hathor or possess cultic emblems of hers such as menat necklaces,51 and appear in scenes associated with fertility, funerary cult or festivities. It was Davies who already assumed that the sunshade was a ‘less-known medium of her [Hathor’s] grace’, even if he failed to identify it exactly and only spoke of a white flag.52

Not only the iconography and the context, but also the written evidence corroborates this assumption. Already in the Old Kingdom, the Egyptian name for the sunshade was sbA and thus identical with the word for ‘star’.53 Fischer assumed that this analogy was based on the criss-crossed sticks, which together with the pole gave

41 This was already noted by Fischer. Fischer 1958: 31.
42 Fischer described them as skirts, but they are actually high-waisted, sometimes provided with shoulder straps, and rather represent wrap-around dresses. Fischer 1958: 30.
44 Fischer 1958: 31...Compare also Hudakova 2013: 233–234 (chapter 10.1.2.4).
the impression of a five-pointed star. This association might have been one of the factors that made the sunshade a Hathoric attribute, since Hathor was among others known as a celestial goddess, bearing the epithets such as nb.t p.t ('Mistress of Heaven/Sky') and nb.t sb3.w ('Mistress of the Stars').

The second epithet nb.t sb3.w is actually used in the song recited by the sunshade bearer on the stela of Abkau (Fig. 100). Morenz already noted that the word sb3.w is determined with the hieroglyphic sign for wood (Gardiner M3 – a branch), being probably an allusion to the image of the sunshade. He described the shade as a possible symbol for ‘eine Art Himmelszelt’, maybe understood as a support of the sky and thus interplaying with Hathor’s epithet ‘Mistress of Heaven’. Anyhow, the word sb3.w used in the epithet with the determinative for wood may actually be translated as ‘sunshades’ too, i.e. as a ‘Mistress of Sunshades’ instead of ‘Mistress of Stars’. Whether stars or sunshades, the celestial aspect would have been expressed. As Morenz observed, the cryptographic stela opens even a third possible explanation of the word. The term sb3.w was also used to denote the ‘door/doorway’. The main text of the stela actually mentions a ‘gate (rw.t) of receiving offerings’ as a place where Abkau built his tomb. The false door represented under the offering table and the ‘Oversee of the Doors’ (jmj rs sb3.w) depicted next to it may be related to this concept – Morenz assumed a special door of Hathor at Deir el-Bahari, perhaps a special (short-term) Theban funerary institution. Thus, the epithet may have conveyed a multifaceted meaning.

4. Excursus: the sunshade in the object friezes

Last but not least, the prominence of the sunshade in the early Middle Kingdom is also stressed by its appearance in object friezes. One example is to be found in the painted burial chamber of Neferu at Thebes, wife of Mentuhotep II Nebhepetra. As already mentioned above, the item features an L-shaped cloth and criss-crossed sticks. The object frieze on the head-end of the wooden coffin of Ashayet (T3C), another wife of Mentuhotep II Nebhepetra, displays her in the company of two male sunshade bearers. Each of these figures holds steady the pole of one sunshade that is as high as the figure of Ashayet, shown standing in-between. Interestingly, the cloths of the shades are not held over her but seem to protect the male attendants. However, this is most probably due to the unusual rendering of the shade. It features an extensive L-shaped cloth, but the head of the pole is not attached to the centre of its horizontal part but to the outer end, and the criss-crossed sticks were omitted. The way the attendants present the items to Ashayet calls to mind offering bearers and the context also indicates that the sunshades are meant to belong to her equipment. This is also corroborated by the fact that Ashayet touches the pole of one of the shades, as if to accept it. Since she bore the title ‘Priestess of Hathor’, the item could well be considered a sign of her office.

A third very similar example has been illustrated on the interior of the head-end of the coffin of Heqata from Quibbet el-Hawa (A1C). In this case, however, it is the male tomb owner who stands in front of a male figure, who carries or presents a sunshade in exactly the same manner as on the coffin of Ashayet. In contrast to Ashayet, Heqata leans against his staff and does not take the item over from the bearer. An almost identical scene has apparently been preserved on the coffin of Iqer from Gebelein (G1T).

On the basis of these four examples, Willems suggested that the inclusion of the sunshade ‘among the offerings represented in the object frieze was a southern Egyptian peculiarity’. He considered it to be part of the “private object ritual […] that never seems to have reached a codified form”. The exact purpose of the various pieces of equipment among the offerings is still a matter of discussion, but it is rather unlikely that there was no cultic reason for their presence. The sunshade too must have been of significance beyond its ‘daily’ use as a protector against the sun; the reason for its inclusion was most probably its Hathoric connotation.

---

54 FISCHER 1972: 155; fig. 5; FISCHER 1984: 1104–1105. For the association of sunshades with stars compare also the early Middle Kingdom object friezes on the coffins of Heqata and Iqer, where sunshades apparently correlate with the passage of the Coffin Texts spell 934 mentioning Imperishable Stars: WILLEMS 1996: 74, 394[1], 400 [note ak]. Furthermore, in the New Kingdom a star is also depicted on a lotiform/palmiform shade (or large-scale fan) represented on a relief block from the reign of Amenhotep III, cf. JARITZ and BUCKEL 1994: 485 (top image).

55 Morenz assumed that the item might have become associated with Hathor because women started to be depicted with it. MORENZ 1997: 11–12, fn. 14. But it was rather in reversed order.


57 LEITZ 2002: 126.


59 This translation is also used in Thesaurus Linguae Aegyptiae, example for lemma-no. 131270 [http://aaew.bbaw.de/ta/index.html], last accessed 11th August 2015.

60 According to Morenz, the epithet nb.t sb3.w is only attested on this stela and in the Story of Sinuhe. The Story contains a passage comparable with the text of the song; for the comparison and the possible implications see: MORENZ 1997: 7–17.

5. Conclusion

In conclusion, the given evidence strongly suggests that the sunshade became a Hathoric emblem in the First Intermediate Period at the latest. The female sunshade bearers are attested from the 9th dynasty onwards but became especially popular in the reunification period. Furthermore, the attestations are restricted to Upper Egypt and were especially popular in the Theban region; the same has also been observed in respect of sunshades as part of the object friezes. On one hand, such chronological and geographical distribution is not surprising when considering the prominent role of Hathor of Dendera and Deir el-Bahari for the 11th dynasty and the kingship of Mentuhotep II Nebhepetra in particular. Nevertheless, it is striking that the sunshade apparently did not gain any importance in other cultic centres of the goddess such as Kom el-Hisn and Meir.

The question arises when and if the item lost this meaning. The tomb of Senet from the early 12th dynasty seems to provide the latest evidence known so far. However, the schematic illustration of the sunshade makes its correct identification rather problematic since the object resembles a fly-whisk, an object attested since the Old Kingdom. The main difference between the two items is the rendering of the head of the pole. In the case of the sunshade, the head has the form of a lotus bud, whereas the pole of a fly-whisk features a clenched hand. Furthermore, the sunshade features a fringe at the lower end of the flap. Fly-whisks and pennants were usual attributes of the priestesses of Hathor in the time of the 18th dynasty and it is thus well possible that sunshades were simply not recognised among them so far.

A brief look at the decoration of 18th dynasty tombs proves this assumption. The tomb of Amenemhat (TT

Fig. 101. Singers/priestesses of Hathor carrying fly-whisks, sunshades and a menat-necklace. Tomb of Puyemre, Thebes (TT 39), reign of Thutmose III. After: DAVIES 1923: pl. LIV.

---

70 It is noteworthy that the sunshade does not appear in the prominent scenes representing the so-called Festival of Hathor at Meir or Kom el-Hisn. Cf. Hudáková 2013: 322–329 (chapters 11.2.2.3.5 and 11.2.2.3.6).
72 E.g., Schott did not differentiate between the sunshade and the fly-whisk. He described the objects as ‘verschieden geformte Wedel’. Schott 1953: 44.
82) and its parallel representations with the tomb of Senet were already mentioned above, but similar observations can be made in regard to other Theban tombs as well. In the tomb of Ramose (TT 55), for example, the sunshade is so small that only the lotus bud instead of a clenched hand precludes its confusion with a fly-whisk.73 The tomb of Puyemre (TT 39) from the reign of Thutmose III is especially important as it illustrates three singers/priestesses of the goddess, each carrying two different insignia (Fig. 101).74 There is a fly-whisk, a menat necklace and a third object, which was described by Davies as a ‘flag with pinked ends attached to a staff’.75 When comparing the gestures of the two women on the left and the form of the object carried upon their shoulders, it becomes clear that it actually represents a sunshade.76 In this tomb, the difference between the sunshade and the fly-whisk is obvious.

The Theban examples of sunshades from the 18th dynasty may well stand in the tradition that was established in the Theban region around the beginning of the Middle Kingdom and prove their Hathoric connotation. The present case study has hopefully demonstrated that an in-depth analysis of single objects represented in art can brings us a step further in our understanding of the ancient Egyptian culture.

6. Bibliography

ALLAM, Sch.

BALCZ, H.

BARBOTIN, C.

BLACKMAN, A. M.

BLEEKER, C. J.
1973 Hathor and Thoth. Two Key Fig.res of the Ancient Egyptian Religion [Studies in the History of Religions (Supplements to Numen) XXVI]. Leiden: Brill.

BOREUX, Ch.

BRUNNER-TRAUT, E.

DAVIES, N. de G.


1933 The Tomb of Nefer-hotep at Thebes II. New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art.


1915 The Tomb of Amenemhet (No. 82) [The Theban Tombs Series, First and Introductory Memoir]. London: Egypt Exploration Fund.

BLACKMAN, A. M., and APTED, M. R.

1953b The Rock Tombs of Meir VI: The Tomb-chapels of Ukhotpe son of Iam (A, No. 3), Senbi son of Ukhotpe son of Senbi (B, No. 3) and Ukhotpe son of Heny-her-yib (C, No. 1) [Archaeological Survey of Egypt, 29th Memoir]. London: Offices of the Egypt Exploration Fund.
DAVIES, N. M., and DAVIES, N. de G.  
1933 The Tombs of Menkheperrasonb, Amenmose, and Another (nos. 86, 112, 42, 226) [The Theban tombs series 5]. London: Egypt Exploration Society.  

DE BUCK, A.  
1939 De godsdienstige opvatting van den slaap inzonderheid in het oude egypte. Leiden: Brill.  

DRIOTON, M. É.  

EDEL, E.  

FISCHER, H. G.  


1976a Notes, mostly textual, on Davies’ Deir el Gebrâwi.  


1936 Excavations at Gîza 1930–1931 II. Cairo: Faculty of Arts of the Egyptian University.  


2011 It is My Good Name that You Should Remember. Egyptian Biographical Texts on Middle Kingdom Stelae. Prague: Faculty of Arts, Charles University in Prague, Czech Institute of Egyptology.  


1943 Untersuchungen über religiösen Gehalt, Sprache und Form der ägyptischen Totenklagen. Mitteilungen