Company of Images: modelling the ancient Egyptian imaginary world of the Middle Kingdom (2000-1600 BC)

Abstracts

The purpose of this conference is to explore the fertile imaginary world of Middle Bronze Age Egypt (2000-1500 BC) through its material culture and the archaeological sources from which such material is recovered. The conference is an opportunity to explore how the ancient Egyptians populated their imaginary universe, combining different images, materials and objects - a "Company of Images".

www.companyofimages.com
Company of Images: modelling the ancient Egyptian imaginary world of the Middle Kingdom (2000-1600 BC)
London 18-20 September 2014, Institute of Archaeology, UCL
www.companyofimages.com

Thursday 18th September

Theory of function and ontology

1. Personal piety: an archaeological response
   RICHARD BUSSMANN, University College London

Personal piety is usually understood as expressing an intimate relationship of individuals with a specific deity, typical of the Ramesside period. Precursors have been suggested to exist among Middle Kingdom texts but their bearing on the phenomenon is controversial. The debates tend to revolve around questions of definition, chronology, and the range of data relevant for the discussion. Most authors develop their argument from written and visual sources witnessing new literary phrases and modes of display. Assmann explains the emergence of personal piety as a reflection of psychological crisis (loss of confidence in kingship), Baines as a result of changes in rules of display (decorum). Departing from archaeological evidence, my paper proposes an alternative explanation focussing on long term social change during the third and second millennia. I suggest that personal piety is a response to the gradual dissociation of people from their deities rather reflecting increasing intimacy. I argue in line with discussions from within anthropology and cultural history that ideas are articulated in a society whenever they have become controversial. The approach may also shed new light on the origins of Egyptian temples in the late fourth millennium.

2. Conceptions of demons in the Middle Kingdom Coffin Texts
   ZUZANNA BENNETT, Swansea University

The ancient Egyptians came into contact with a wide range of supernatural entities in daily life and in the afterlife. In the Middle Kingdom, images and descriptions of demonic beings were manifested onto objects such as the apotropaic ivory wands, figurines and coffins. Whilst modern scholars would consider these beings to be imaginary, to the Egyptians they were the real embodiment of their hopes and fears. The demons in the Middle Kingdom Coffin Texts represented a great potential threat to the continued existence of the ‘spirits’ of the ancient Egyptians after death. Although these beings are rarely depicted visually, their appearance and iconography are often described in the accompanying texts. Nevertheless, the category of ‘demon’ is difficult to distinguish from other entity types that occur in the Coffin Texts, such as deities and animals, due to similarities in names, appearance, functions and behaviours. Thus, scholars have debated over the definition of an ancient Egyptian demon and differed in their opinions of which entities should be considered to be demons. This paper aims to examine how the ancient Egyptians conceived the demonic beings in the afterlife during the Middle Kingdom. Through doing this, new criteria for entity classification will be proposed with the aim of clarifying the etic category of ‘demon’ for ease of academic discourse. These criteria can also be used as a modifiable framework for researchers of other supernatural entities, or demons from other types of material evidence or other time periods.
3. Imagined Past and Present of Egyptian Autobiographies: a Semiotic Look at Middle Kingdom Stelae
RENATA LANDGRÁFOVÁ, Czech Institute of Egyptology, Prague

Egyptian autobiographies are usually not connected with the idea of „imagined worlds“. The texts of the genre are interpreted as (more or less) authentic, albeit idealized, accounts of the protagonists’ lives. A closer look at both the texts and accompanying scenes, however, and their analysis within the framework of Peircean semiotics, allows us to see them differently: the past of the life lived must be interpreted with reference to an imagined, ideal world of the Egyptian system of Ma’at, without which the account is often meaningless. The present, which is often the subject of the scenes, again, is meaningless without a second level of semiosis which connects it to an imagined, idealized world that the Egyptian society was striving to actualize.

The paper will analyze these past and present imagined worlds in the form in which they can be derived from the texts and images of the autobiographies, and the ways these worlds served as reference schemata in them.

4. ‘An image of the owner as he was on earth’: Representation and personhood in Middle Kingdom funerary images
RUNE NYORD, Christs College Cambridge

A significant proportion of figurative practices in Middle Kingdom funerary material culture leave the exact entities represented by the images relatively obscure to the modern observer. However, in other categories of objects, notable examples of which are shabti figurines and certain ‘fertility’ figurines, the ostensible point of reference is made clear by a combination of iconography, inscriptions and conceptual context. Still, the relationship between representation and represented is not necessarily straightforward in such cases either, as e.g. when Schneider (Shabtis 1977: I, 46) deduced a ‘double notion of the shabti as a substitute both for the master and the servant, but entirely in the former’s interest’. This paper explores the questions raised by such objects concerning the nature and function of representation, and the corollary potential for substitution for (and influence on) the ‘original’, in Egyptian funerary culture, with possible consequences for our understanding of the ontology of the image and the human being.

5. From technical aspect to practical functions: the wooden funerary models case (end of VIth dynasty-XIIth dynasty)
GERSANDE ESCHENBRENNER-DIEMER, Histoire et Sources des Mondes Antiques, Lyon

Wooden funerary models represent people or everyday scenes of life, used by Egyptian elites for funeral furniture between the end of the Old Kingdom and the XIIth dynasty (cir. 2350-1850 BC). The examination of wooden models, significant of political and religious deep changes at the origin of new customs and funeral faiths between the VIth and the XIIIth dynasty, specifies the geographical, historic and social context associated with their manufacture. The analysis of these objects allows a refinement of the perception of the relationship between craftsmen and power, omnipresent in the Egyptian society from the Predynastic period. This paper will first try to identify the methods of production and the types of diffusion used for this funerary furniture, typical of the Middle Bronze Age in Egypt. In the first part we will examine a map of wooden workshops between the end of the VIth dynasty and the XIIth dynasty. Then we will question the inherent functions of these objects in the religious thought of ancient Egyptians and more particularly the narrow relationship, which unites this furniture and the funeral practices between the end of the Old Kingdom to the end of the Middle Kingdom.
6. Figurines as folk culture?
ANNA STEVENS, British Museum and Amarna Project

Taking as its point of departure small hand-modelled mud plaques in the form of naked females, this paper will explore how ideas were transmitted into everyday material culture in ancient Egypt and whether we might find traces of ‘folk culture’ in figurine production.

Striking in their stylized representation of the human form, plaque figures were produced from the Middle Kingdom into the late New Kingdom (and probably beyond). They have a notably long period of circulation, in which they overlap with both moulded female figurines, in pottery and faience, and with more elaborate hand-modelled figures.

This talk will focus on the processes involved in making figurines (hand modelling versus moulding, firing versus sun-drying, etc) and on the interplay between manufacturing and decorative traditions. It offers that figures such as the hand-modelled plaques provided a canvas onto which certain elements found repeated expression and were clearly prioritised, but which allowed people to present them in their own combinations and with their own flare. It explores how hand-modelled plaque figures may have been particularly suited to absorbing current or spontaneous ideas, far more than moulded figures. And it asks whether we might find within them traces of local or community traditions.

7. ‘Composite worlds: some comparative thoughts on image, technology, and institutional change in early states’
DAVID WENGROW, University College London

The recent exhibition 'La fabrique des images' provides a bold scheme for modelling image worlds, both ancient and modern, based upon a four-field classification proposed by the anthropologist Philippe Descola. While the emphasis there is on image and ontology, my paper will discuss how modes of image making are also affected by changing scales of social organisation, and by accompanying changes in the technologies of image making and image distribution. The example of early Egypt will be placed in a comparative perspective, which includes neighbouring parts of the Eastern Mediterranean, Africa, and the Middle East.

Friday 19th September

Assemblages from excavations

8. A zoo en-miniature; animal amulets in semi-precious stones in the early and late Middle Kingdom
WOLFRAM GRAJETZKI, University College London, UCLA Encyclopedia of Egyptology: area editor Time and History

Small amulets made of semi-precious stone, depicting animals were especially popular in the First Intermediate Period and early Middle Kingdom. They are best attested in provincial cemeteries. They seem to disappear under the reign of Senusret I. In the late Middle Kingdom they are no longer common and other amulet types appear. The function and distribution of these amulets will be discussed as well as the fundamental political and social changes under Senusret I, that led to many changes in material culture.

9. A household cult at Kom el-Fakhry: Middle Kingdom objects in context
NAGWAN ELHADEDI, MSA, Egypt

During the American Research Center in Egypt (ARCE)/ Ancient Egyptian Research Associates (AERA) Memphis field school in 2011 (MRFS) we recorded the objects excavated from the Middle Kingdom settlement at Kom el-Fakhry, Mit Rahina. The site excavations included a cemetery.
on the west and part of a settlement on the east. The cemetery consists of vaulted mud brick tombs containing limestone burial chambers, which are dated to the First Intermediate Period or early Middle Kingdom.

We excavated large structures consisting of a north building and a south building containing several rooms as a part of the settlement that dates from the early 12th to the late 13th dynasty. The site offers a rich, well stratified Middle Kingdom assemblage of domestic religious material and daily life objects. Finds from probable domestic contexts include: querns and grinders, whetstones, weights, abraders, palettes, polishers, pounders, anvils and stone basins, reused ceramic tools, weaving tools, a wide range of chert tools, a Bes amulet, beads, pendants and scarabs, stone vessels, door sockets, clay model animals, models and games, faience tiles, and many inscribed sealings, statuettes, and a coffin mask. The Kom Fakhry objects excavated from good stratigraphic contexts certainly contribute much to our understanding of the character of the settlement and the activities which are represented.

Domestic religious practices - that is, religious conduct within a household setting - are represented at Kom Fakhry in a room showing a long series of occupation. Items for a household cult were found in situ including a limestone stela, an offering table, and a small seated statue of a man, N(y) ka, and a woman, Sat-Hathor. This assemblage was definitely in use during the 13th Dynasty. East of this room from the same phase we excavated the head and feet of a limestone dwarf lamp statue that was surrounded with other limestone fragments which may also have come from the statue. Currently we are studying the Kom Fakhry objects and comparing them with other the settlement material, particularly that excavated by the EES at Kom Rabia (RAT).

10. Unbroken stories: Middle Kingdom faience figurines in their archaeological context
GIANLUCA MINIACI, University College London, École Pratique des Hautes Études

Small figurines modelled in a wide range of materials such as mud, clay, faience, ivory, stone, and wood are known throughout ancient Egyptian history. However, in the late Middle Kingdom (ca. 1800 BC), a new type of figure quite suddenly appeared in the archaeological record only to disappear just as abruptly by the end of the Second Intermediate Period (ca. 1550 BC). These figurines were diagnostic for their range of forms and for their manufacture; a lustrous and intensely blue faience, composed of a coarse core covered by a thin finer surface layer and finished in a glossy bi-chrome glaze. Late Middle Kingdom faience figurines often appeared together with other categories of objects displaying a broad range of apotropaic imagery (ivory tusks, cuboid rods, feeding cups), which have been interpreted as tools for protection of child and mother during pregnancy and childbirth.

The aim of the paper is to analyse faience figurines coming from secure archaeological contexts and attempt to provide a possible interpretation for their use and purpose.

11. Imagined communities, practical identities: contextualizing household figurines at Wab-sut
NICHOLAS PICARDO, Harvard University (The Giza Project)

The presence and use of magico-religious figurines in ancient Egyptian houses reflect a world view in which otherworldly realms of deities and demons could intersect with the earthly sphere in the most mundane yet intimate of settings – the home. By invoking these fantastical agents through figurines, household members situated themselves in their company, and as such they referenced the Egyptians’ own placement in the larger ideological context of the cosmos. However, such practices were social phenomena as well: from procurement of figurines through active use to their disposal, they involved interactions among household members that were contingent upon their roles in a real-world community, particularly within the household itself. Details about who used figurines,
who enjoyed the perceived benefits they conferred, along with where and when they did so, simultaneously defined and were constrained by social boundaries. Such distinctions were potent factors in the creation, mediation, and maintenance of practical social identities—of the household as a whole, of sub-groups, and perhaps even of individuals—especially in large, elite households. This paper considers the social significance of figurine assemblages within the context of households. The case study is the late Middle Kingdom settlement of Wab-sut at South Abydos with focus on the material record of the elite house known as “Building E,” which includes figurines of animals, stylized anthropoid figures and other forms.

12. Royal Mortuary Imagery of the Second Intermediate Period: Senebkay and the tombs of the Abydos Dynasty
JOSEF WEGNER, University of Pennsylvania

The discovery in 2014 of the tomb of king Senebkay (ca. 1650 BCE) at South Abydos provides a glimpse of mortuary scenes and texts of a king of the Second Intermediate Period. Although unique as a decorated Upper Egyptian royal tomb of the Hyksos Period, the tomb’s imagery shows common elements in artistic style and iconography with a range of mortuary objects dating to this time frame. The paper will discuss the decorative program, iconography, and texts of the Senebkay tomb along with evidence of the other known tombs of the Abydos Dynasty kings at South Abydos.

13. Late Middle Kingdom funerary assemblages and their symbolic background. A critical review of some current hypotheses
HARCO WILLEMS, Katholieke Universiteit Leuven

As Bourriau showed nearly a quarter century ago, late twelfth dynasty funerary assemblages are markedly different from those encountered earlier in burials. According to her, these assemblages (often including funerary figurines of different kinds) are likely to render the ideas expressed earlier in the Coffin Texts in material form. In different ways, this angle of incidence is also found with Miniaci and Grajetzki. The former believes that the main tenets of important earlier Middle Kingdom texts like CT spell 335 explain the form and function of Rishi coffins, while the latter has repeatedly stressed the continuity of the Middle Kingdom tradition of inscribing texts on coffins. Likewise, Seiler assumes that the pottery component of late Middle Kingdom and Second Intermediate Period assemblages show a process of "Tradition und Wandel".

All these authors thus appear to believe that, at least initially, the assemblages simply continue lines of thought already established in the early Middle Kingdom. This paper will offer a critical evaluation of these accounts, and attempts to show that, to the extent that later Middle Kingdom funerary ideas are at all traditional, they are unlikely to be firmly rooted in what might be called the "Coffin Texts tradition".

Related object types

14. Decoration and image on Middle Kingdom pottery: Can Fish Dishes be read?
SUSAN J ALLEN, The Metropolitan Museum of Art; Museum of Fine Arts Boston

The vast majority of ancient Egyptian pottery is undecorated. There are only a few periods when the pottery workshops created wares which bear designs or motifs: the White Cross-lined and Decorated Wares of the Naqada II and III periods, the Blue Painted Ware of the 18th-19th Dynasties and the painted pottery of the Coptic/Late Antique period. All of these are painted wares. In the Middle Kingdom, however, there exists one
unique ware that is a combination of vessel shape, fabric, and manufacture which is decorated with incised designs on the interior. The images employed to decorate these dishes were derived from the natural world which the people of ancient Egypt experienced daily and which held meaning for them.

The most common type of design was a large Tilapia fish filling the base with smaller fish, lotuses and other aquatic plants and triangular elements suggesting mountains or water arranged along the walls of the dishes. It is from this that the name ‘fish dishes’ comes. Sometimes other animals representing both the Nile and the desert were included. ‘Fish Dishes’ belong to the living. They are not found in tombs but in settlements. Can we speculate on how they were used by the ancient Egyptians? As a deliberate arrangement of images rather than decoration, can we try to read them and understand what they represented for the user? Do they reflect a ritual or custom; are they symbols of regeneration, fertility, the rhythm of life? Can they be related to other images in the world of the Egyptians in the Middle Bronze Age?

15. Clappers and the wielding of female ritual power in Egypt’s Middle Kingdom
ELLEN MORRIS, Barnard College, Classics and Ancient Studies, New York

Performing for gods, kings, and the blessed dead, khener-troupes of musicians and dancers were a vital and much-commemorated component of religious ritual in Egypt. If Betsy Bryan is correct, the etymology of xnr comes from the verb xni, to “keep rhythm,” the determinative of which is a pair of clappers. Clappers are well attested in archaeological contexts of the Middle Kingdom, where they typically either take the shape of plain curved tusks or else of human forearms and hands. Based on their morphological similarity to so-called magic wands, on the fact that both were most often fashioned of hippo ivory, and on their similarly intimate association with feminine ritual power, it is likely that the two types of artefacts were thematically interconnected. As will be discussed, this supposition is strongly supported by the archaeological contexts in which clappers were found. Khener women and their masked counterparts wielded clappers in ritual performances that can be seen to have negotiated important transitions in life and again in the strange and unsettling world that came after it.

16. “Paddle Dolls” – ritual figurines of fertility
ROBERTO A. DÍAZ HERNÁNDEZ, Johannes Gutenberg Universität Mainz, Institut für Altertumswissenschaften

The function of the so-called ‘Paddle Dolls’ has been a topic of discussion among Egyptologists for some time now: they have been interpreted as toys (J. Garstang, 1907), ‘concubines of the dead’ (H. Winlock, 1947), personified menat necklaces (P. Barguet, 1953), fertility statuettes (J. Bourriau, 1988) and figurines representing female dancers of the goddess Hathor (E. F. Morris, 2011). This paper argues that the “paddle dolls” are indeed ritual figurines of fertility as the following archaeological, iconographical and ethnological facts suggest: a) A paddle doll was found in tomb 5 of the Ramesseum beside a papyri-box containing magical spells for protecting mothers from demons during birth and other ritual fertility objects such as ivory wands; b) Paddle dolls are usually characterized by a marked pubic triangle, as evidence for their fertility function, and sometimes they are also decorated with fertility motifs such as the hippopotamus-form of the fertility goddess Taweret; c) Paddle dolls resemble dolls of present day African tribes used as ritual objects of fertility. After analysing these facts I will conclude that paddle dolls were ritual female figurines typical from Upper Egypt that Egyptian women used as a
kind of amulets for getting pregnant and having a happy birth. Lastly, they are a good evidence for African influence in Upper Egypt, as their resemblance with African fertility dolls suggests.

17. Female figurines without legs: a new iconographic approach
MAYA MÜLLER, Basel

Female figurines without legs: a new iconographic approach. Two variants of legless figures belong to the MK only: the faience figurines with flattened back and the ‘paddle dolls’, geometrically shaped silhouettes. Past efforts of finding a single clue to their meaning ended in truisms. Instead, all iconographic elements must be defined and analysed separately, the heretofore most neglected ones being the general shape of the figures and the textile patterns.

The reduced form of the round-bottomed body resembles a spherical bottomed oil or water jar, precursor of the NK Hathor headed ritual jars, figurines wearing a dress with net pattern perfectly emulating a pot in a carrier net. Among the textile patterns on the figurines’ dresses, the feather pattern characteristic of the clothes of deities and kings is an important visual sign of divineness. Various lozenge and net patterns decorating dresses of goddesses and justified tomb owners point to a broader spreading of marks of divineness; together with chequered, zigzag line etc. patterns, they form the obligatory set of textile patterns covering the palace façade motif, from the ED period onward. They all derive from primary textile techniques like twining or interlacing, characteristic for the mats that protect the dead body, since prehistoric times (PT 690).

Resulting from such investigations (including all other properties such as presenting the pubic region, or the hair-style) we arrive at a series of associations of a symbolic nature, forming a fluctuating complex of ideas connected with the figurines. The accent is on ‘fluctuating’, any specific case study generating a specific set of associations.

18. The Ramesseum Ladies
ANGELA M.J. TOOLEY, Independent Researcher

The ‘Ramesseum Ladies’ are fertility figures or parts of fertility figures from the Theban necropolis, more specifically from what is often referred to as the ‘Magician’s Tomb’ or Tomb 5; the Thirteenth Dynasty shaft tomb below Ramesseum store 5. The tomb is well known for its collection of papyri, faience figurines, snake wand, ivory birth tusks and wooden Beset statuette; all objects considered to have a magico-religious function. Although often referred to, but never in detail, the ‘Ladies’ are the so-called fertility figures, of which at least four are definitely from this deposit. The fifth ‘Lady’ is somewhat problematic. When considered closely it can be demonstrated that there are three different types of fertility figure within the deposit: a wooden paddle doll; a faience figure; and at least two limestone figures - each decorated in a different way. The latter two types are generally considered to be the same. However, this is not the case.

As part of a wider study of Middle Kingdom and Second Intermediate Period fertility figures, and images of women in this period in general, this paper considers the ‘Ramesseum Ladies’ within a late Middle Kingdom chronological framework and developmental scheme, looking at their iconography in detail, its chronological significance and also considers what they can tell us of the tomb in general.
Saturday 20th September

Single Images Types

19. Dog figurines in the Middle Kingdom
KAMILA BRAUŁIŃSKA, Faculty of History, University of Warsaw

The analysis of Egyptian iconography indicates that dogs were consistently presented throughout all the historical periods. The styles, contexts and animal types varied, however followed a certain pattern. The evident tendencies may be identified, depending mainly on the period of Egyptian history. In the Middle Kingdom a motive of a dog spread in the small objects, made most of all of faience, and rarely of other materials as well. One observes certain similarities in the way of depicting the dog in the figurines of the discussed period. There is a particular scheme of presenting the animal, its poses, and its exterior features. Indeed puzzling is the fact that the types of dogs presented, in large percentage are not coherent with the most of the known Middle Kingdom dog-iconography. Nevertheless, the further reflection, analysis and the comparison to the iconography reveal a particular tendency in the depictions the study concerns. It appears that the faience dogs are "more domestic" than the elegant specimen presented on the walls of the nobles' tombs. However, the other materials the figurines are made of, seem to determine the representation of another type of dog.

20. The hippopotamus goddess with the crocodile on her back: a chiefly late Middle Kingdom image
SABRINA CERUTI, Consultant for the Egyptian Department of the Civico Museo Archeologico, Milano

The Egyptian hippopotamus goddess shows one of the most distinctive iconographies amongst the members of the Egyptian pantheon. The main features of her pictorial representation originate in the late Old Kingdom. Yet, it is not until the Middle Kingdom (the Middle Bronze Age) that the goddess fully displays her most peculiar features. Her image is by this time that of a standing figure with a hippopotamus muzzle, a prominent belly, pendulous breasts, lion paws, and a crocodile's skin on her back. Notwithstanding some minor iconographic variations (particularly in the depiction of the head) and the addition of some paraphernalia in the New Kingdom—above all the tripartite wig joining and coalescing with the crocodile skin on her back—, the description of the goddess given above is consistent throughout the surviving documentation until the Late Period, in both two- and three-dimensional representations of her.

From the Middle Kingdom, however, a few documents display a unique and significant variation of her traditional iconography, in that she no longer wears a crocodile skin, but appears to have a whole, living crocodile climbing on her back. This alternative depiction of the goddess seems to have been a short-lived one, and to have disappeared from standard religious iconography after the Middle Kingdom. In virtually all known specimens, it was then confined to astronomical ceilings, where the hippopotamus goddess embodied one of the Northern constellations—yet, even in this context, it remained a less common variant of her more typical depiction. In this paper, I will offer an overview of the development of this particular iconography of the hippopotamus goddess, which so typically characterises her rich imagery during the Middle Kingdom, and explore its significance.

21. The Middle Bronze Age Egyptian Griffon: Whence and Whither?
LISA SABBAHY. Assistant Professor of Egyptology, and Director of the MA Program in Egyptology and Coptology, American University in Cairo

This paper will focus on the iconography, meaning and contextual use of the griffon in Middle Bronze Age Egypt, specifically the griffon in tomb scenes. To accomplish this, a discussion of ancient Egyptian griffons from the Predynastic to the Late Period will be included, to help analyze the meaning of the griffon in light of its context in ancient Egyptian material objects through time. The Middle Bronze Age Egyptian griffon is found in tomb depictions at Beni Hasan and el-Bersheh,
and also on the apotropaic wands. What is the origin of this creature, and in what context is it used in these tombs? Why would the griffon appear in these specific tombs and scenes? How does its use and possible meaning on earlier and later monuments help our interpretation? In particular, the symbolism of the griffon with a human head between its wings will be addressed.

Series of images

22. Magic wands, apotropaic animals, and the Festival of the Returning Eye of Re
LAUREL D. HACKLEY. American University in Cairo

The processions of deities and animals on the ivory wands of the Middle Kingdom are meant to represent the moment of the procession and festival that welcomes the returning Eye of Re to Egypt. The main themes of this event are the domestication of chaotic forces, the northward spread of the inundation at the new year, and the conception, birth, and nurture of the young sun god. Textual and archaeological evidence indicate a well-established festival dating at least to the Eleventh Dynasty and persisting into the Graeco-Roman Period.

The wands are characterized by a selection of animals and deities that have previously been explained as simply ‘apotropaic.’ However, among these are all the animals that are explicitly mentioned in descriptions of the festival procession. Other animals and motifs on the wands also conform closely to the themes of the festival and the myth.

The connection between the wands and the myth of the Solar Eye provides a rationale for these objects, as well as the related birth bricks and magic rods, as protective talismans for mothers and children. The depiction of the joyful procession ensures the docility and protection of what would otherwise be very dangerous spirits. By referencing the festival, the wands identify new mothers and young children with the divine pair of the pacified Eye and the young sun god.

23. Armed and dangerous: An iconography of protective Middle and New Kingdom demons
KASIA SZPAKOWSKA, Swansea University

One of the most obvious characteristics of Middle Kingdom iconography is the surfacing of new populations of beings, many of them creatively composite. They appear as both two and three-dimensional images on objects such as ivory wands and vessels, as well as formed as figurines themselves. During the New Kingdom, seemingly mundane household pieces of furniture such as chairs, beds, and particularly headrests, as well as the occasional ring or seal also began to be decorated with strikingly similar imagery. Many are armed with weapons or potent religious icons, appearing to be engaged in fierce warrior dances. In this respect they differ from those of the Middle Kingdom which at first glance appear to be more static. While many of the objects were found in tombs, their wear patterns and supporting evidence confirms their use in daily life. Thus, although these creatures arose from the Egyptians’ imagination, they constitute tangible manifestations of a common belief in the efficacy of these little demons for dispatching anxieties, terrors, and afflictions that were very real. In order to allow for a deeper iconographical and semiotic analysis, I will focus on a discrete subset of these entities: those that appear to be armed on their secondary limb(s). The goal of this discussion is to share preliminary analyses in terms of their context, the nature of the weapon itself, and the pose, comparing those on specific object types from the Middle Kingdom (wands and cups) with those in the New Kingdom (bedroom furniture).

24. Figuring migrations: severing and joining power lines
STEPHEN QUIRKE, University College London

In the late Middle Kingdom, series of different images appear in two dimensions on a new artefact.
type, longitudinal half-sections of hippopotamus lower canines, and more rarely on select other surfaces. Inscriptions on some tusks identify these images collectively as *sau* “protections”. Building on the researches by Hartwig Altenmüller, Peter Hubai (SAK 37, 192) has returned attention to a translation by Erman of *sau* in a tusk inscription as “amulets”. Tusk inscriptions also assert the main function of figures as to “come to select protection”, using the term *stpsa*. In this paper, I explore implications of the specific associations behind the two terms *stp* and *sa*, and possible links between the different practices of combining figures, across the second millennium BC.

The conference will be held at:

Christopher Ingold XLG1 Chemistry Lecture Theatre
University College London,
20 Gordon Square
London WC1H 0AJ

ORGANISING COMMITTEE
Gianluca Miniaci, Stephen Quirke, Marilina Betrò, Jan Picton

EXECUTIVE BOARD
Gillian Cordall, Anna Giulia De Marco, Silvia Gomez, Zsuzsanna Lengyel, Marta Krzyżanka, Porin Šćukanec Režniček

The conference is part of the research project EPOCHS - *Egyptian Periodisation Object Categories as Historical Signatures*, funded by the European Research Council inside the scheme Marie Curie - Intra European Fellowship (http://www.ucl.ac.uk/archaeology/research/directory/epochs-miniaci)

CONFERENCE SUPPORTERS:

Tickets available at www.companyofimages.com