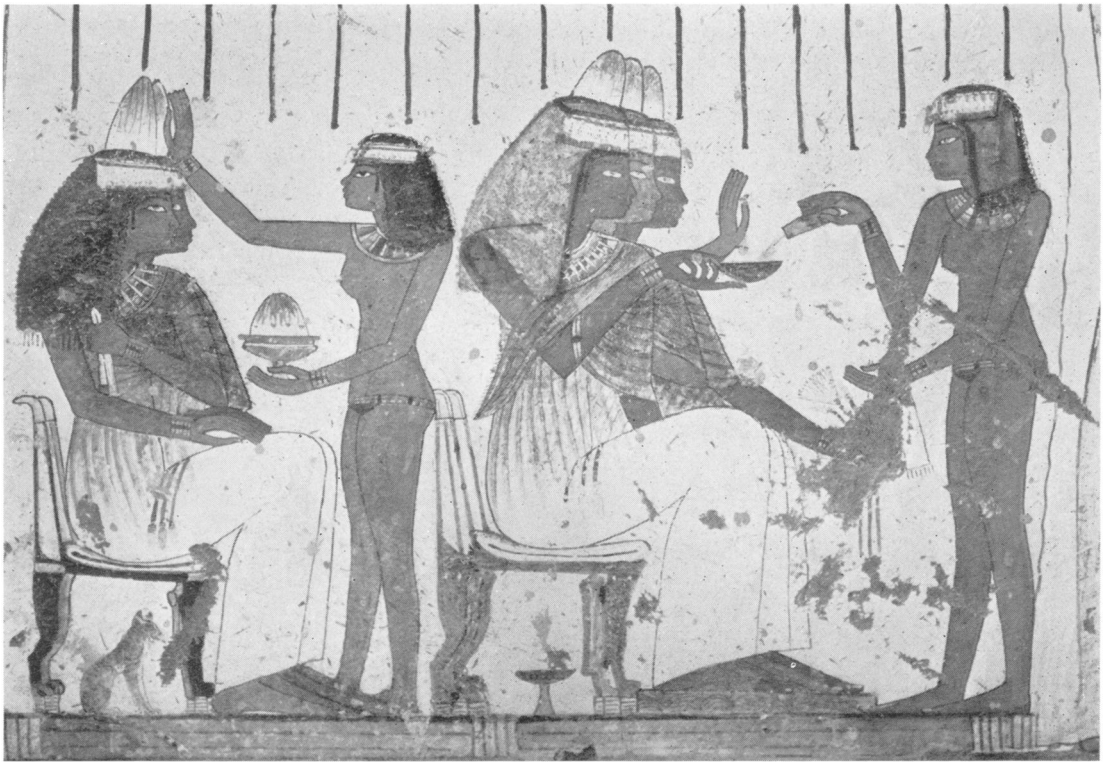




AN EGYPTIAN WINE BOWL OF THE XIX DYNASTY

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The stern, sharp-visaged gods and kings of ancient Egypt with which most of us are familiar create the impression that life in those days was a deadly serious affair. Through the decoration on a shallow faience bowl with a brilliant blue-green glaze we may, however, catch a glimpse of the gay life which the Egyptians enjoyed during the prosperous times of the New Kingdom.

This bowl may have been used as a wine cup at splendid banquets. On such occasions an orchestra of girls blended their lutes, harps, and oboes into a melodious background for talk and song. The musicians were crowned with lotus blossoms, and their hair was pomaded and dressed in braids. Dancing girls in diaphanous robes made the entertainment even more diverting as they swayed and turned in time to

their castanets and tambourines. Meanwhile serving boys and girls went among the guests, adorning them with floral collars and offering them bowls of wine. A cake of fragrant ointment was placed on each guest's head, where it remained throughout the feast, trickling gradually over his hair and filling the air with its sweet scent. Low stands holding wine vessels and roast fowl were festooned with vines. "Celebrate the joyful day!" went a singer's refrain, and there is ample evidence that her admonition was heeded.

Time and again, as a guest drained the wine

ABOVE: *A banquet scene. From a painting in the tomb of Neb-Amūn and Ipu-ky at Thebes. XVIII Dynasty, about 1400 B.C.*



*Blue-glazed faience bowl. Probably XIX Dynasty (1320-1200 B.C.). Rogers Fund, 1945
Diameter about 5 inches*

from the Museum's blue bowl, he saw the picture on the bottom: a man in a knee-length kilt like that worn by the boy who had served the full cup. Vines cascade from the man's arms. Those on his left arm are obscure, but the arrow-shaped leaves of the vine on his right arm can be identified as those of *Convolvulus arvensis*, popularly known today as the morning glory. The man supports a wine jar against his right shoulder, and in his left hand he holds what is probably a cone of ointment. Although ointment was usually carried on a footed dish (see ill. opposite), this man is carrying it in the palm of his hand. Our assumption that the object in his hand is a cone of ointment is justified not only by the wavy lines, representing

oil trickling from the dripping cake, which descend from his palm, but also by the similarity of the broken line used to represent the object to the dotted lines often used for cones in tomb paintings. We may therefore interpret the picture as that of a servant at a banquet. Decked with vines for the occasion, he carries wine and fragrant ointment for the pleasure of the guests.

The bowl is of nearly the same size and shape as many other Egyptian bowls of blue-glazed faience, but most of them are decorated with stylized drawings of fish and lotus. Only a few have men or women in the decoration, and occasionally cows or monkeys appear. There is only one bowl in this relatively small group, to



*Blue-glazed faience bowl (no. 722) in the Manchester Museum
Diameter about 3½ inches (9 cm.)*

which the Museum's bowl belongs, that can be dated with any certainty. This bowl, now in the Manchester Museum, was found by Sir Flinders Petrie at Gurob, buried with a group of objects, one of which bore the cartouche of Ramesses II (1298-1232 B.C.). It is thus shown to be a product of that king's dynasty, the Nineteenth (1320-1200 B.C.).

Humor of a sort which would appeal to a present-day host as much as it did to an Egyptian of the New Kingdom appears in the decoration of the bowl from Gurob. Picture a guest at a party as he drained this bowl. There, in the center, he saw a monkey propped up on its tail, munching some fruit, while a man, tied to its waist, dances before it. The impression the guest received is that which one would have on looking in a mirror that showed things the opposite of the way they should be. The effect on the startled guest must have been amusing, and it requires small imagination to hear the host

assuring him that the bottom of the bowl is indeed a real mirror.

This same spirit of satire, which appears to ward the end of the New Kingdom, is found in a papyrus of the Twenty-first Dynasty (1085-950 B.C.) in the British Museum. Part of it shows a scene of goats and geese, and who turns up as the goatherd but a wolf, with a knapsack on its shoulder and a double flute in its mouth? To carry on the farce, the geese in the scene have been left in the charge of a sly, greedy cat.

A bowl of unknown provenance in the Brooklyn Museum is similar in style to the New York and Manchester bowls. Here a peevish-looking monkey, playing the double pipes, capers among vines. These are *Convolvulus* again, used no doubt to indicate that the monkey is dancing out of doors. Like the monkey in Manchester, this one is a wiry fellow with no sign of fur except for a shaggy fringe along its belly. Both animals were drawn quickly with a sharp,



*Blue-glazed faience bowl (no. 34.1182) in the Brooklyn Museum
Diameter 4 inches (10.2 cm.)*

firm line, which gives them a certain sense of liveliness. A border of dots and a series of inner borders have been placed around the rim of each bowl, and in each case the artist, aware that he was drawing a picture for a circular space, has adapted his composition to it. The monkey's tail and the dancing slave in the Manchester bowl and the vines in the Brooklyn bowl round out the scenes. It is therefore likely that these pieces are contemporary.

Musical monkeys turn up in artists' sketches of the Nineteenth and Twentieth Dynasties (1320-1200 and 1200-1085 B.C.) from Deir el Medīneh. Evidently artists, weary of drawing men of distinction all day, turned to such subjects for relaxation. Besides monkeys and foxes playing flutes, there are dogs and rats mimicking the involved offices of the priests.

There is a complete animal orchestra in a papyrus of the same period, now in the Turin Museum (see ill. p. 160). A donkey strums the

harp; the soft, rippling music of the lyre is supplied by a lion; a crocodile plays the lute, while a monkey blows the double pipes. For some reason the artist is making fun of the graceful female musicians who entertained at feasts.

A bowl similar to the Museum's bowl is in the collection of the University Museum in Philadelphia (ill. p. 158). This also shows a scene from daily life. Like the bowl in Manchester, it was found by Petrie at Gurob, but, unfortunately, not under circumstances such as to permit exact dating. Although it is badly broken and worn, we can see a slender young girl poling her boat through papyrus marshes. She is no doubt going to market, for there is a cage of geese on the boat. It is a lively scene, and the girl is altogether charming in her scant attire as she stands there, turning her head, while she poles the boat through a thicket.

The style of drawing here is certainly close to that of the vine-decked man on the Museum's



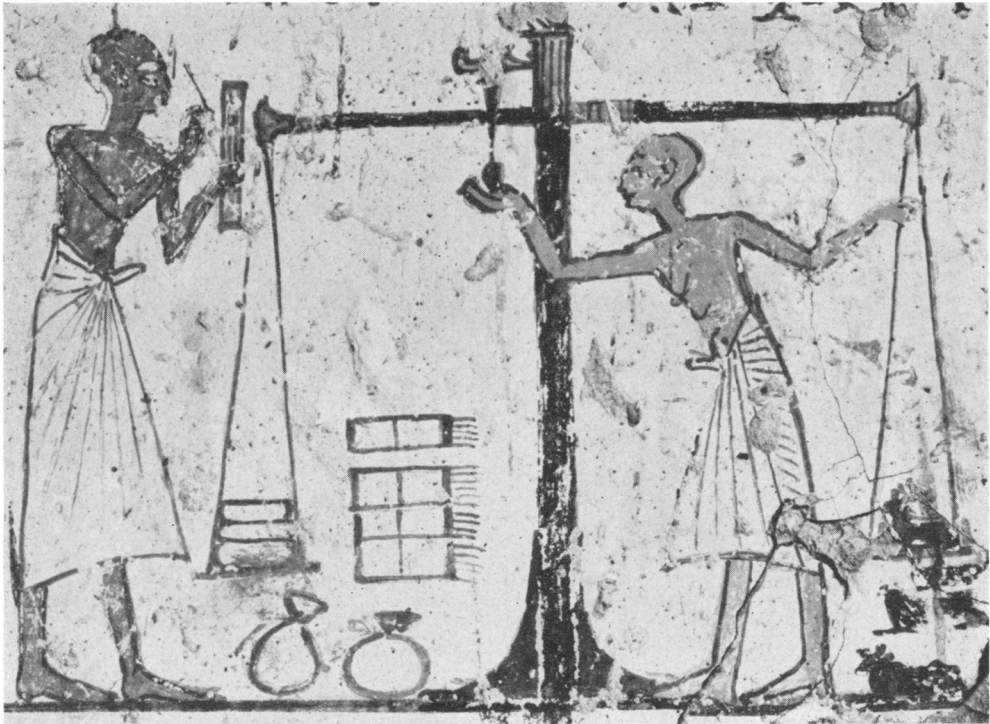
*Blue-glazed faience bowl (no. E 14235) in the University Museum, Philadelphia
Diameter about $5\frac{3}{4}$ inches (14.5 cm.)*

bowl. In both figures the line flows in a swift, uninterrupted sweep from one joint to the next, and at each joint there is a sharp break which accents the rhythm. The figures are alike not only in the manner of drawing but in proportions. Both are long and thin, with spindly arms which give no hint of roundness but which intensify the gestures.

If a parallel is to be found to this manner of drawing, it is in certain of the figures in the paintings of the Theban tomb of Nefer-ronpet, a scribe in the treasury of Amūn during the reign of Ramesses II. In one painting Nefer-ronpet is shown supervising the weighing of

linen in the treasury. There, helping at the scales, is a servant who bears a remarkable resemblance to the figure on the Museum's bowl.

Both men have that type of elongated, bulging skull that first appears in the art of the time of Akh-en-aten (1386-1369 B.C.), near the end of the Eighteenth Dynasty (1567-1320 B.C.), and continues late into the New Kingdom. Both men, also, are disproportionately tall, the legs of the servant on the bowl accounting for well over half his height. Their spindly arms and legs give them the appearance of wooden marionettes. If in some way strings could be attached to their hands, their arms, it seems,



Weighing linen in the treasury of Amūn. From a painting in the tomb of Nefer-ronpet at Thebes. XIX Dynasty, about 1250 B.C.

would move easily at shoulder, elbow, and wrist, and the little men could be manipulated to make any gesture that would suit the puppeteer. The two figures are, indeed, so similar that they must be contemporary. The Museum's bowl is therefore, like the monkey bowls, a product of the Nineteenth Dynasty.

These two figures are part of the last glimmer of an art style unique in Egyptian history. Toward the end of the Eighteenth Dynasty Egypt came under the rule of Akh-en-aten, in whose reign the religion of Egypt was revolutionized and the art of the country underwent the greatest change in its long history.

When Akh-en-aten moved his capital to el 'Amārneh he took with him artists experienced in decorating palaces and villas, instead of those who worked in tombs depicting the offices of the dead. As a result the art of el 'Amārneh, in palaces and tombs alike, is a good deal livelier and freer from convention than that which preceded it. True portraits were made of the king, showing his bulging skull, voluptuous

lips, and sagging abdomen, and it became the fashion for the wealthy citizens who could afford tomb reliefs to have themselves portrayed to resemble him.

Soon after the death of Akh-en-aten a reaction almost as violent as the revolution which preceded it set in, and the old state religion was restored. Official decrees, however, could not wipe out an art style as easily as they could erase a god's name from a temple wall. Traces of the 'Amārneh style are found well into the Nineteenth Dynasty. Even the head of Ramesses II in the Museum's collection, which should be as reactionary as any work of art, being an official portrait of the pharaoh, shows the effects of the 'Amārneh style. A softness of modeling and a certain sense of fullness around the slightly smiling mouth recall the fleshy portraiture of Akh-en-aten's reign.

In the figure on the Museum's bowl and those in Nefer-ronpet's tomb paintings we have already seen that the bulging skull which began to be represented in Akh-en-aten's time

continues to be shown in the Nineteenth Dynasty. It is usual in the history of art that, when a style is wearing out, the drawing becomes mechanical and the figures become attenuated, as they are in these examples. The traces of the 'Amārneh style are hardly perceptible in these drawings, but they depend on its tradition for their character.

The Museum's bowl (acc. no. 45.2.8) is 1¾ inches (3.5 cm.) high and just under 5 inches (12.5 cm.) wide. Its provenance is not known.

The following is a list of the bowls known to the author, other than those mentioned in the article, that comprise the small group to which the Museum's bowl belongs.

Seated female lute player. Leiden. Wreszinski, Atlas, I, n.d., pl. 76b.

Standing female lute player. New York, Metropolitan Museum. 74.51.5074. From Cyprus. Cesnola, Atlas, 1885-1903, III, pl. cviii, IV; Myres, Handbook, 1914, p. 273, no. 1574, ill.

Seated woman smelling a lotus. Chicago, Art Institute. 94.758. Handbook of the Egyptian Collection, 1923, p. 82, ill.

Seated woman smelling a lotus. London, British Museum. 98.12.1.145. From Cyprus.

Bull in a papyrus thicket. New York, Metropolitan Museum. 74.51.5072. From Cyprus. Cesnola, Atlas, III, pl. cviii, 5; Myres, Handbook, p. 273, no. 1573.

Cow by a pond with fish on either side. Paris, Louvre. "Curtis 88c."

Cow standing on a papyrus skiff. Philadelphia, University Museum. E 14231.

Woman poling a boat carrying a cow. Petrie, Illahun, Kahun, and Gurob, 1891, p. 19, pl. xx, 3.

Man poling a boat carrying a cow. London, British Museum. 97.4.1.1042. From Enkomi, Cyprus. Hall, Journal of Egyptian Archaeology, I (1914), p. 04, pl. xxxiv. This piece, which differs from the others in the group in that it is a dish about 10 inches in diameter, is included because of the close relation of its decoration to that of the bowls.

Two people standing by a body of water, one pulling out a net. Paris, Louvre. E 14372.

Boys playing in date palms. Manchester. 655. Petrie, Kahun, Gurob, and Hawara, 1890, p. 38, pl. xviii, 35.

Bes dancing. Cairo. 3685. Bissing, Fayencegefässe, 1902, p. 25.

Suppliant woman before Hat-Hor enthroned. Chicago, Art Institute. 94.757. Handbook, p. 82.

Seated man holding a cup into which a woman is pouring a libation. Catalogue of the MacGregor Collection, 1922, p. 37, pl. viii.

Two scenes with birds and animals set in opposition on the same ground line. Berlin. 16774. Matz, Die frühkretischen Siegel, 1928, p. 44, ill.

The illustrations on pages 156, 157, 158, and 160 are reproduced through the courtesy of the Manchester Museum, the Brooklyn Museum, and the University Museum, Philadelphia.



An animal orchestra. From a restored copy of a satirical papyrus in Turin. In the Brooklyn Museum