



Swansea University  
Prifysgol Abertawe



## Cronfa - Swansea University Open Access Repository

---

This is an author produced version of a paper published in:  
*Archiv für Religionsgeschichte*

Cronfa URL for this paper:  
<http://cronfa.swan.ac.uk/Record/cronfa12024>

---

### **Paper:**

Szpakowska, K. (2013). Striking Cobra Spitting Fire. *Archiv für Religionsgeschichte*, 14(1)  
<http://dx.doi.org/10.1515/arege-2012-0003>

---

This item is brought to you by Swansea University. Any person downloading material is agreeing to abide by the terms of the repository licence. Copies of full text items may be used or reproduced in any format or medium, without prior permission for personal research or study, educational or non-commercial purposes only. The copyright for any work remains with the original author unless otherwise specified. The full-text must not be sold in any format or medium without the formal permission of the copyright holder.

Permission for multiple reproductions should be obtained from the original author.

Authors are personally responsible for adhering to copyright and publisher restrictions when uploading content to the repository.

<http://www.swansea.ac.uk/library/researchsupport/ris-support/>

Kasia Szpakowska

# Striking Cobra Spitting Fire

**Abstract:** In this paper, a working definition and examples of “demonic paraphernalia” are provided, as well as methods of recognition. Besides being of interest in and of themselves, these types of objects provide clues as to the nature of the demons, thus helping us in our quest for a taxonomy and “demonology” of Ancient Egypt. More specifically, this paper focuses on the use of Late Bronze Age clay cobra figurines as a case-study for the broader exploration of Ancient Egyptian “demonic paraphernalia”.

## Introduction<sup>1</sup>

While this is not the venue for a full discussion of definitions, for the purposes of this paper, the term “demon” will encompass those beings between gods, humans, and animals. A generic Ancient Egyptian term for the “demonic” is completely lacking, but this should not be taken to suggest that the concept was entirely unknown (there is neither a generic Egyptian word for “religion” nor indeed for “animal” that would correspond to Linnaean taxonomy). The words “demon” and “demonology” as they are used in contemporary English draw on a Judeo-Christian cultural heritage and are seen as negative aspects of cultural, religious, or cultic conceptualization and practice. The term is used here with the understanding that this “is a scholarly convention to fill the gap existing in Ancient Egyptian, which does not have a collective term that corresponds to the Greek *daimon* nor to the English pejorative term ‘demon’”.<sup>2</sup> The term interstitial supernatural entities<sup>3</sup> could be applied, as long as the term “supernatural” is understood to refer to those phenomena that lie outside the realm of “nature” as understood by Western culture.<sup>4</sup> Within this paper those beings that are benevolent (and who are otherwise sometimes referred to as “*genii*”) are also subsumed under the term “demon.”

---

<sup>1</sup> I am grateful to the British Academy for their support in funding the *Clay Cobras of Ancient Egypt and the Levant* project, and to the Research Institute for Arts and Humanities at Swansea University (RIAH) for supporting travel to the demonology conference. I would also like to thank the reviewers for providing thought-provoking insights for further exploration. This paper is a further analysis of an ongoing study that began with Szpakowska 2003a, 113–122.

<sup>2</sup> Lucarelli 2011, 109–125.

<sup>3</sup> See Karen Sonik in this volume.

<sup>4</sup> For the Egyptians, the divine and the demonic was a part of their concept of the cosmos, and therefore within “nature.”

Here as elsewhere,<sup>5</sup> within the category of “demon” I include those entities whose origins were the living – such as the *mwt* (damned), *xfty.w* (enemies), *DAy.w* (adversaries), and *Ax.w* (spirits) – for two reasons. First, their characteristics are functionally the same as those of a non-human origin. In lists where a range of entities are blamed for illnesses or afflictions, they can appear in tandem with other demonic beings. Second, it is clear from internal evidence that the *Ax.w* at least were considered demonic by the Egyptians themselves; in Coptic, it is the lexeme *Ax* that is the basis for *ih*, “demon.”<sup>6</sup>

The need for strict categorization reflects our own culture. In his recent work on ghosts, Christopher Eyre points out that

... in Egypt soul, ghost, demon, god are not distinct categories, but contextualized manifestations of the non-material; that are personified by men, or that manifest themselves of their own accord, in highly contextualized ways. They are points of contact, desired or undesired, and mostly unpredictable.<sup>7</sup>

## The Nature of the Evidence

Broadly speaking, our evidence comes in three related (and not always readily distinguishable), categories of evidence: compositions, illustrations, and objects. Surviving compositions from Ancient Egyptian provide a rich data set wherein demons are identified either by name or characteristic. These sources are referred to here explicitly as compositions, for the nature of the Ancient Egyptian graphemic system and scripts ensured that the concept of text and image were inexorably intertwined.<sup>8</sup> This is not to say that images, when included, necessarily illustrated a particular text, but they are integral to understanding the composition as a whole. In other instances, it is difficult to find a clear demarcation between text and image; a specific sign, whether hieroglyphic or hieratic can at times function as either or both. Hostile demons often appear in lists and groups, perhaps in order to ensure that all possible agents responsible for the affliction are included.<sup>9</sup>

Compositions that mention demons can be found from the Old Kingdom onwards in compositions found primarily in mortuary contexts such as tomb inscriptions (particularly in the form of curses,<sup>10</sup> and formulae called “appeals to the living”), *Pyramid Texts*, *Coffin Texts*, and the *Book of the Dead*. They can also be found in the *Royal Books of the Afterlife*, compositions that appear in the tombs of

<sup>5</sup> Szpakowska 2009, 799–805; 2012.

<sup>6</sup> *Wb I*, 16.10; Crum 1939, 89; Cerny´ 1976, 50.

<sup>7</sup> Eyre 2009, 33–46.

<sup>8</sup> Bryan 1996, 161–168.

<sup>9</sup> For a comparable situation in Akkadian sources see Rendu Loisel 2011, 323–332.

<sup>10</sup> For curses in general see Morschauser 1991.

pharaohs from the New Kingdom onwards, including the *Litany of Re*, *Composition of the Hidden Chamber* (more commonly known as the *Book of Am Duat*),<sup>11</sup> *Book of Gates*, *Book of Caverns*, *Book of the Earth*, *Book of Night*, *Book of Day*, and the “Enigmatic Books of the Netherworld”.<sup>12</sup> Demonic entities also appear in letters written to the dead.<sup>13</sup> Literary texts from all periods also include references to demonic entities. The *Tales of Wonder*, *Ghost Stories*, the *Bentresh Stela*, and the *Tale of Setne Khaemwase* constitute a small sample.<sup>14</sup>

Numerous magical and medical compositions have survived from the Middle Kingdom onwards.<sup>15</sup> These offer clues not only to the identity of demons, but they often dispense detailed guides on how to deal with their powers. In terms of hostile entities, the compositions impart information on which groups or individuals are responsible for which specific affliction or problem. By informing us of the means to counteract them, they provide further clues as to the hostile demons’ natures and even physiognomy. They also are our source of knowledge of associated rituals and which words, gestures, weapons, devices and ingredients are effective against which enemy. Some prescriptions call upon the aid of gods or beneficial demons for aid, reminding us that the boundaries between categories of beings in ancient Egypt were far more fluid and fuzzy than those today.

As previously mentioned, many of the compositions include illustrations. For example, the *Book of Two Ways* (a subset of the *Coffin Texts*), maps the geography of the afterlife complete with representations of demonic entities that guard the paths. These entities must be identified, and in some cases responded to correctly in order for the deceased to be able to pass safely. These “guardian” demons serve to illustrate the intrinsic ambiguity of demons in ancient Egypt. They are hostile only to those who do not belong – they are benevolent towards those who prove themselves as worthy of passing by demonstrating the correct knowledge. From the Late Period onwards, tomb and temple ceilings feature astral bodies that have been demonized.<sup>16</sup>

Objects, whether inscribed with text or not, can also be decorated with demonic representations. In the case of both objects and compositions, hostile demons are rarely depicted. Those that are depicted (in particular in the Royal Books of the Afterlife) seem to be those that derive from an initially human source and appear anthro-

---

**11** See Colleen Manassa’s article in this volume.

**12** For an overview of these and bibliographies see Hornung 2005. See also the recently published Darnell 2004 and Roberson 2012.

**13** For convenient English translations see Wentz 1990, 210–219. For more recent discussions see Bochi 1999, 73–86; El-Leithy 2003, 305–313; Moreno García 2010, 133–153; O’Donoghue 1999, 87–104; Verhoeven 2003, 31–51.

**14** Convenient English translations can be found in Simpson 2003.

**15** Useful compendiums can be found online at Fischer-Elfert 2009. and in Borghouts 1978; Leitz 1999; Fischer-Elfert/Richter 2005.

**16** Lucarelli 2010.

pomorphic – those that we might call the damned dead (*mwt*, *djAy.w*, *xfty.w* and *Ax.w* noted earlier). More often, compositions and objects are decorated with the images of gods or benevolent demons – those whose function it is to ward, protect, and defend. Generally speaking, they appear in zoomorphic or hybrid form, wielding powerful weapons.<sup>17</sup> The helpful function of these entities is confirmed by those examples that are labeled or textually described.

Indeed, what are most readily visible in the archaeological record are the material tools used for combat or defense. These demonic devices are for the most part objects that act as conduits for benevolent demons to counteract hostile entities and their effects (though if any are found that provide access for hostile beings, they will need further study as well). Whether held in the hands of a priest or other individual, they operate by channeling and becoming activated by *heka*, the Egyptian concept of magic or active divine force.

This paper discusses the concept of these “demonic paraphernalia” in the context of Ancient Egypt. On a general level, a working definition and examples are provided, as well as methods of recognition. Besides being of interest in themselves, these objects provide clues as to the nature of the demons themselves, thus helping us in our quest for a typology and to create a “demonology” of Ancient Egypt. The specific focus will be on a particular corpus of objects – clay cobra figurines found in the Late Bronze Age. These highlight some of the interpretive problems encountered when dealing with uninscribed artifacts.

## Defining Demon Things

Recognizing an object as a demonic device can be complicated and frustrating. How do we recognize an object as having a special property rather than being say, an ordinary piece of furniture? Initially it must be by references to the object in texts, or, as will be discussed now, by their decoration or form. If we can find a text that specifically refers to the object, so much the better, for then we also know how it was used.

Ancient Egyptian Late Middle Kingdom apotropaic ivory wands are perhaps the most familiar example of the objects that can be classed as demonic paraphernalia.<sup>18</sup> Each is made from the tusk of a hippopotamus, and most are decorated with a parade of protective demonic entities. The latter are usually zoomorphic or hybrid, and they wield powerful weapons such as daggers, spears, and snakes (though these weapons can also appear on their own). These apotropaic ivory wands have long been associated with the protection of pregnant women and the process of child-

---

<sup>17</sup> Part of the goal of the demonology project discussed in this volume is to undertake a systematic semiotic and iconographic analysis.

<sup>18</sup> The most comprehensive publication is still Altenmüller 1965 who is in the process of updating the entire corpus for a new publication.

birth. The clues are found in inscribed examples, some of which name children or the “Lady of the Estate.” Others are actually inscribed with the information that they protect in the day and in the night and one example provides the names of some of the beneficial entities.<sup>19</sup> In that these objects are worn away at one end, the suggestion now is that they were employed to draw a protective circle around the vulnerable individual, whether it be a woman giving birth, an infant, or perhaps even any individual particularly vulnerable to the affects of hostile demons. They presumably function by demarcating a sacred space, bounded by the powerful apotropaic force of *heka* filled beneficial demons, warding away any possible assaults.

Identifying these images as signifiers of protective benevolent demons allows us to identify other objects as belonging at least partially to the sphere of demonic paraphernalia. A birth brick recently discovered in Abydos is painted with these genii to further protect the birthing mother.<sup>20</sup> In the Metropolitan Museum a faience spouted cup from Lisht sports the same parade of powerful creatures,<sup>21</sup> as does a clay cup now in the Petrie Museum,<sup>22</sup> providing the same protection to the contents of the cup as was offered to those within the protective circle created by the apotropaic ivory wands. While those objects date to the Middle Kingdom, in the New Kingdom headrests were often decorated with similar imagery<sup>23</sup>. Some of the spells inscribed on the headrests also confirm that the function was still apotropaic, though in this case the protection was for the sleeper. Many of the same benevolent demons can be found in funerary compositions such as *Coffin Texts* and the *Book of the Dead*, offering the justified dead the same protection as the living.

Other objects can only be identified by references in texts. The most useful of these for reflecting actual practice are spells. Those that are found in magical/medical compositions, as well as some of those found in what is usually considered a mortuary sphere, (such as *Coffin Texts*), often consist of prescriptions that stipulate the use of particular tools and ingredients along with gestures and incantations. For example, one Middle Kingdom spell protects a mother and child from a nasty demon:<sup>24</sup>

May you be spat out, one who came in the utter darkness, who entered creeping – his nose is behind him, his face turned back – having failed in that which he came to do.

May you be spat out, one who came in the utter darkness, who entered creeping – her nose behind her, her face turned backwards – having failed in what she came for.

...

I have made his protection against you,

**19** Voss 1999, 390–399.

**20** Wegner 2009, 447–491.

**21** Object #23 in Allen 2005, 30–1. Accession #44.4.4 now in the Metropolitan Museum of Art and can be seen in their online catalogue <<http://www.metmuseum.org/collections>>.

**22** UC16644 that can be seen in their online catalogue <<http://petriecat.museums.ucl.ac.uk/>>.

**23** For examples, see Perraud 1998; 2002.

**24** Papyrus Berlin 3027, C 1,9/2–6. See Yamazaki 2003.

with sweet clover – this means the use of force,  
 with onions – which harm you,  
 with honey – sweetness for people, bitterness for those yonder  
 with the tail of an *Abdjw*-fish,  
 with the jawbone of a bull(?)  
 with the back of a Nile-perch.

This spell relies on the use of organic elements such as sweet clover, onions, honey, the tail and back of fish and a jawbone as the devices by which to counteract the creeping demon. While these objects are unfortunately unlikely to have survived the millennia in the archaeological record, others may be found in museums and collections.

In 1990 Ritner re-published Ostrakon Gardiner 363, a spell against night terrors that again are clearly blamed on demons, in particular male and female adversaries and damned dead.<sup>25</sup> The text specifies that it is “to be said over the four *Uraei* made of pure clay and fire in their mouths. One is placed on each corner of each room in which there is a man or a woman ...”. At that time Ritner identified EA 55594 (a clay cobra figurine in the British Museum) as a possible surviving example of one of the mentioned *uraei*. Originally they seemed a rare phenomenon. However, since taking on this project, I have tracked down over 725 fragments of this type of clay cobra – indicating that far from being rare, they constituted a vital part of the demon-fighting rituals of many Egyptians living in Late Bronze Age Egypt.<sup>26</sup> A deeper analysis of these figures will provide a case study for the interpretation of figurines as paraphernalia intended to be used in the constant fight against demons.

## Clay Cobra Figurines and Their Context

Measuring an average of 12 cm. in height (about the size of a hand), these small figurines are formed predominantly of Nile silt<sup>27</sup> and are shaped in the form of a rearing snake poised to strike or threaten.<sup>28</sup> Unlike the more commonly found fragments of *uraeus* figures used as decorative elements on a frieze, the clay snakes generally lack a solar disk on their head, as well as the circular decorations one might expect to find on the front of the cobra hood. Many are decorated on the front, sides, or back with yellow, blue, red, or black paint or slip, suggesting that these would have been visible from all angles (see figure 1). Broken pieces reveal the black core of incompletely fired clay. This is typical of many of the figurines, as is the

<sup>25</sup> Ritner 1990, 25–41.

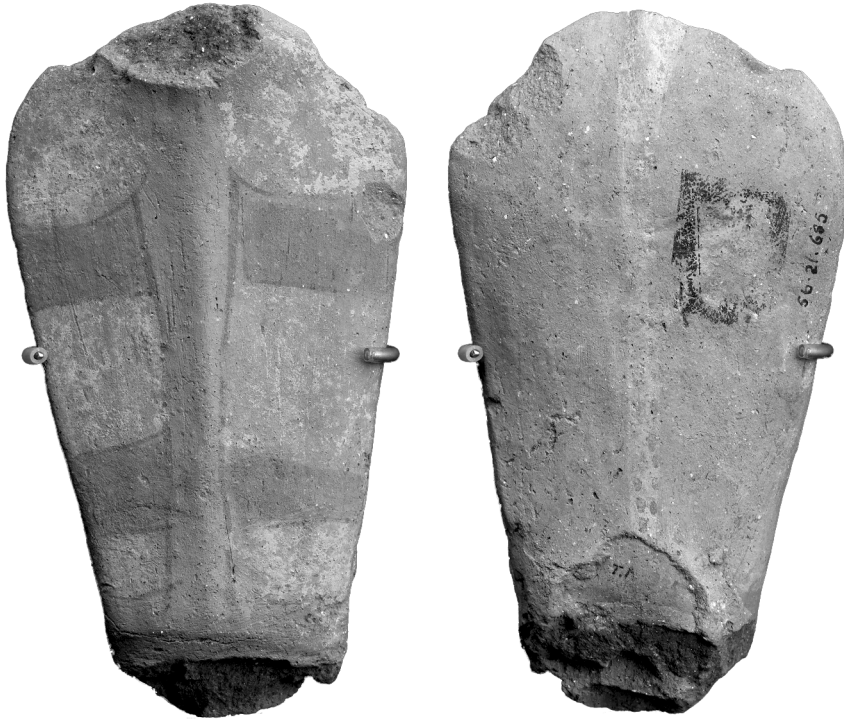
<sup>26</sup> A monograph on these artifacts is in progress by the author.

<sup>27</sup> This includes some of those found abroad, while others were made of the local clay.

<sup>28</sup> Note that while the term “cobra” has been and continues to be applied to these because of their hoods, some other snakes are also able to create hoods when threatened, and it is this gesture that is likely being represented rather than any particular species of snake; Young/Kardong 2010, 1521–1528.



course organic temper, and the remnants of some sort of gypsum or plaster accretions.



**Fig. 1:** Cobra torso (front and back) from Amarna ©National Museums Liverpool: World Museum #56.21.685

While some of the torsos are smooth, the most striking feature of others is the attached elongated bowl, rather resembling a miniature pottery stand. But the specific features of these cobras vary considerably. Some have a bowl, some do not. Some have extra protuberances that may indicate additional snakes, some do not. The eyes, heads, and tails vary in shape, as does the decoration in terms of its presence or absence, style and colors. Figure 2 below is an example of a cobra with a secondary snake attached and an offering tray.

There is no indication that they were made in molds, and their variation is consistent with objects that are made by hand. At this stage in the project there seem to be two broad categories of figurines: free-standing and those attached to the inside of bowls. Because so many are in a fragmentary state, for most of them it is uncertain to which category they belong.

These snake cobras have been found in archaeological sites in Egypt, mainly in settlements as well as military and administrative centers from Amarna north, and along the Mediterranean coast from the Libyan border into the Levant. Originally,





Fig. 2: Amarna cobra (front and side) ©Ägyptisches Museum und Papyrussammlung ÄM21583

these were thought to be a rare phenomenon, but more than 725 fragments are now known. They have been identified in fifteen sites as follows:

Nile Valley: Abydos, Akoris, Amarna, Gurob

Nile Delta: Kom Firin, Memphis, Qantir, Sais, Sakkara, Tell Abqa'in, Tell el-Borg

Levant: Beth Shean, Haruba, Kamid el-Loz

Libyan border: Zawayet Umm el-Rakham

It is probably no coincidence that with the exception of the Nile Valley sites, their findspots follow the main centers of settlement of Ramesside Egypt. It is noteworthy that many are found in the fortified complexes and administrative complexes, including the “Walls of the Ruler,” along the Mediterranean in the Egyptian Late Bronze Age. These artifacts are thus crucial to understanding the social and religious life of those living at the military installations, as well as the identity of their users and creators. It is unclear whether the cobras represent cults associated with women or men, officials or non-elite. They may have been used for extra-priestly rituals or embedded within the context of more formal religious structures. Because they are also found in settlements not usually associated with the military sphere, they serve to illuminate the relationship of domestic religious practices within the center of Ancient Egypt with those occurring at the periphery. In particular, they emphasize



Fig. 3: Map showing location of sites with LBA clay cobra figurines

that the troubles and demons that plagued Egyptians close to home followed them on the road.

Cobra figurines from settlement contexts such as Amarna have been found alongside objects traditionally associated with domestic use such as spindle whorls, jar sealings, pottery, basket rings, needles, headrests, and clay balls, while others have been found with amulets, figurines resembling phalluses, nude women, ducks, and quadrupeds. For example, one room of a house in the workmen's village of Amarna that had a niche or shelf as a feature, also contained a plaque of Amun in ram form, a weaving stick, broom, two fiber ring stands, jar stopper, broom, leather fragments, five clay balls and a clay cobra.<sup>29</sup> While a detailed analysis will be published elsewhere, at this stage it is useful to note that the majority of figurines were

<sup>29</sup> Peet/Woolley 1923, 79–80.

found in a domestic setting. Some have been found in and near temples, and fragments have even been found in secure contexts in the quarry area near the Workman's Village of Amarna. They are not particularly found in refuse, and with the exception of those from Sakkara, they do not appear in a mortuary context.

The cobra figurines seem to be strikingly absent from Nubian fortresses and in southern sites in general. While similar archaeological contexts in southern sites such as Askut also yield female figurines and mud and clay animals such as crocodiles,<sup>30</sup> the clay cobra figurines are strikingly absent. Initial investigations suggest that these figurines are also lacking in Middle Kingdom fortresses and settlements. While no conclusions can yet be drawn on the basis of their currently known geographical distribution, these artifacts are of interest.

From the numbers that have been found in Egypt, there is no reason to posit that these artifacts had their origin anywhere other than Egypt. Stylistic differences may, however, reflect incorporation of native practices and needs with Egyptian iconographic traditions. In some cases where technical analyses have been done (such as on the examples from Beth Shan<sup>31</sup>), it is clear that although these artifacts were made from local fabric, the clay was made more useable by the addition of Egyptian-style coarse organic temper and were then formed with the use of Egyptian technology.<sup>32</sup> The presence at many of these sites of pottery workshops and kilns testifies to the Egyptian practice of bringing their own potters onsite with them even to sites in the Levant. The practice at Levantine sites such as this perhaps reflects another adaptation of the New Kingdom emphasis on Egyptian self-reliance as suggested by Ellen Morris.<sup>33</sup> However, analyses of the figurines at Haruba in the Sinai revealed that while two of the figures were made of indigenous clay, two others from the same site and levels were made of clay from Egypt – demonstrating that in some cases at least Egyptians brought their familiar cult items with them to the bases at which they were stationed.

The temporal scope of the clay cobra figurines is mainly New Kingdom through the Twenty-First Dynasty. The earliest ones were found in Amarna. With the exception of the later mud figurines found at Abydos, this is also the southernmost site at which they are found. The ones at Abydos and Akoris are dated to the Third Intermediate Period at the earliest, and have idiosyncratic features distinguishing them from cobra figurines found at the other sites. Most of the other sites are Ramesside (specifically Ramesses II onwards). Their temporal span is thus firmly anchored within the Late Bronze Age through the Early Iron Age.

---

**30** Smith, S.T. 2003, 131–133.

**31** James/McGovern/Bonn 1993.

**32** Glanzman / Fleming 1993, 94–102.

**33** Morris 2005.

## Interpretation

Given the lack of ancient instructions on how to use the figurines, interpreting their function and even who used them is not a simple matter. As only two have been found in a funerary context, they do seem to be associated with cults performed on behalf of the living. Only two are known to have had a use as grave goods, (and this use may have been secondary),<sup>34</sup> while their form and size makes them unsuitable as amulets. Based on their morphology, associated artifacts, and findspots it is most likely that those that were free-standing as well as those that were part of bowls had a ritual or cultic use associated with the living either as objects of worship or as demonic devices.

So far, the majority of the freestanding cobras and bowls have been found in contexts associated with living quarters or areas of production (often ones that include kilns for firing ceramics as well as ones for the production of bread), whether these be in towns within the Nile Valley, military installations in the Delta, or at the fringes of areas within the Egyptian sphere of influence. Men were not the only inhabitants of these sites, and the question of whether women and children may have been active participants or even the main agents of the associated rituals needs also to be addressed. It seems clear that the figurines cannot solely be associated with “domestic religion” if we understand “domestic” to refer to practices that take place within the physical locus of the home, nor to “household” or “family” religion (associated specifically with members of the nuclear family as well as dependents, including servants), nor with a single social unit, such as the military. It may be safest at the moment to suggest that most of the cobra figurines are associated with Jonathan Z. Smith’s concept of the religion of “here,”<sup>35</sup> that is, the primary places of human occupation whether they be villages, forts, administrative outposts, or even temporarily quarries,<sup>36</sup> versus the religion of “there,” temples and locales that are specifically designated as the more permanent residences of supernatural entities. This religion of “here” is often manifested primarily through material remains, and thus is an aspect of religious practice in Egypt that has been unexplored until recently.<sup>37</sup> It is in the realm of “here” that personal afflictions take place, and it is “here” that these afflictions begin to be blamed on demons.<sup>38</sup>

The question then remains, what were these objects used for? Here again, the textual and representational evidence must be used. Spells abound to keep away

---

**34** Two of the Sakkara figurines were found in a burial (Sowada *et al.* 1999, 13).

**35** Smith, J.Z. 2003, 21–38.

**36** At least six fragments have been found in the quarries (Stevens 2006, 316).

**37** The situation is now beginning to be redressed by scholars such as Lesko 2008, 197–209, Ritner 2008, 171–196, Sweeney 2009, 154–164.

**38** As Frankfurter 2006, 13 explains “the ‘demonic’ is less a category of supernatural being than a collective reflection on unfortunate occurrences, on the ambivalence of deities, on tensions surrounding social and sexual roles, and on the cultural dangers that arise from liminal or incomprehensible people, places, and activities.”

snakes and scorpions and to cure their bites, but contrary to what we might intuitively expect, they do not usually feature the use of objects shaped like snakes. They rather tend to call upon feline creatures,<sup>39</sup> Horus, or his relatives. But the cobras are mentioned in other spells such the ostrakon published by Ritner and discussed above.<sup>40</sup> While the spell ends with the injunction that it is “to be said over the four Uraei made of pure clay and fire in their mouths”, the beginning provides us with the identity of the assailants.

Male adversary, female adversary ... be far from ... dead male, dead female, without coming. He will not go forth face forwards, limbs as sound limbs – his heart is for the evening-meal for the One in the Moment of Striking. NN born of NN has extracted your hearts, dead ones. He has seized your hearts dead males and dead females. He has offered them to the Striker for his sustenance of his limbs. You all, you will not live! Your limbs are his(?) offering cakes. You will not escape from the 4 Noble Ladies from this fortress of Horus who is in Shenit.<sup>41</sup>

It specifically targets the male and female damned (*mwt*) and adversaries (*DAj.w*). The demonic nature of these entities is emphasized by their description as reversed – not facing forwards and their limbs unsound – revealing their fundamental nature as chaotic in stark contrast to the ordered world of the living. Their hearts are removed, their power is consumed, and they are rendered inert and powerless to escape in the very same fashion as are the enemies of Ra and Osiris every night in the afterlife. Compositions in the tombs of New Kingdom pharaohs portray through words and images the continual torture and torment of these demonic beings. The key here is that this spell, as described in the final passage, is to be recited over four clay rearing cobras which become charged with *heka*, necessary to repel the demons. The Egyptian term for the rearing cobra is *jart* or *uraeus*. Throughout Egyptian history, the *uraeus* is conceived of as a female divine force, and her power is just as effective against demons and enemies whether her physical conduit is composed of gold (such as that worn by the pharaoh) or made of clay.

This spell also refers to the “Four Noble Ladies,” and this refers to both the figurines and to that which they channel – the power of the four goddesses. Their precise identity is not crucially important – they can be identified in other circumstances as Isis, Nephthys, Selket and Neith, or even other combinations. What is more important is the role that they play in magical texts. They appear again in a spell to protect a house,<sup>42</sup> which begins by conjuring (*Snj*) one by one all the gaps that could potentially be breached by demonic entities (again more specifically male and female dead and enemies). Once the windows and even the tiniest chinks,

<sup>39</sup> Perhaps invoking the image of the sun god Ra in his form of the great cat subduing Apep.

<sup>40</sup> The translation largely follows Ritner 1990, 25–41.

<sup>41</sup> The translation largely follows Ritner 1990, 25–41, while the following discussion as related specifically to nightmares is published in more detail in Szpakowska 2010, 21–39.

<sup>42</sup> Papyrus Chester Beatty VIII vs. 1, 1–2, 4 in Borghouts 1978, 10–11, #11.

bolts, holes, hiding-places and cross-timbers have been ensorcelled, the spell user proceeds:

... He has conjured his own place, his room, his bed. He has conjured the four noble ladies (*Sps.t*) in whose mouth is their flame and whose fire goes behind them to chase away any male enemy (*xfty*), any female enemy, any male dead (*mt*), any female dead that is in the body of NN born of NN. They will not come for him in the night, by day or at any time. They will not fall upon the four noble ladies ... .. their flame in their mouth ... ..rushes, colocynths (?)...<sup>43</sup>

It is not explicitly stated here whether or not clay cobra figurines would be used with this spell, but the parallels with this and the Gardiner ostrakon are striking. Here again, the Four Noble Ladies are called upon to protect the private space where a demon might find an individual at his most vulnerable – the bedroom. In the Metternich Stela, the Noble Ladies offer intimate security for the god Horus by protecting his body.<sup>44</sup> On a practical level, it may be that it was not necessary to actually have four figurines at any one time – the quadrupled power of the fiery goddess could be encapsulated in a single icon and embodied by a figurine of clay.

## Fiery Serpent

In Papyrus Salt 825 we find the protective nature of rearing cobras emphasized once again. The “rebels” who act against Osiris are here represented by the figures of a foreigner (Asiatic) and Seth, bound together by the elbows back-to-back, encased in a rectangular cage. There are four vignettes, each guarded by a set of four protective icons on the top. One set consists of four flaming torches, the second cobras, the third praising baboons, and the fourth the heads of lionesses.<sup>45</sup> Again there seems to be a metaphoric connection between fire, lionesses, cobras, and in this case baboons as well – a connection that deserves further study to be explored fully.<sup>46</sup>

In a range of sources and times, two of the most prominent weapons used to defend divine and mortal beings from demons are cobras and fire. That the rearing snake was selected as a potent power against disorder is not surprising. Venomous snakes are some of the most dangerous creatures of earthly Egypt, and some, such as the red spitting or black-necked cobra of Egypt, to defend themselves by spraying their burning venom from a range of almost 8 feet directly towards the

---

**43** Ibid.

**44** The spell calls upon them as “the Four Noble Ladies who are the protection of your body!” Ibid., 70, #93. See also vs. 3.1. For the Noble Ladies see also Leitz 1994, 144f; Quack 2004, 467–496, 492; Goyon 1987, 57–76.

**45** A clear photograph can be seen in Raven 2012, 114.

**46** While the presence of baboons may seem surprising, in fact these connections are not limited to this papyrus. For example, there are a number of examples in the *Book of the Dead* depicting the Lake of Fire where the lake itself is surrounded by torches and baboons.

eyes of their antagonist. The poisonous particles are dispersed as a spray rather than spit. High-speed cameras have captured the images of snakes propelling the venomous particles in patterns.<sup>47</sup> This spray was also depicted by the Egyptians as a series of dots, as can be seen for example in the *Book of Gates* where a giant snake continually spits poison at the damned. Here, the snake's spray is explicitly labeled as *xt*, fire, confirming the connection between fire and venom.<sup>48</sup>

Snakes are also the ultimate transformative creatures, giving birth within the earth, moving strangely upon the ground without the use of legs, and continuously transforming and rejuvenating themselves by shedding their skin. This can be seen in Hour Four of the Book of the Amduat, where strange snakelike creatures inhabit the desert region, and the very bark of *jwf-Re*, the Flesh of Ra, the Sun-God at night is transformed into that of a snake to allow passage through the dry sandy region. Some snakes guard and protect the gods, others restrict passage through the various locations to only those who possess the correct knowledge, while others perpetually torture the damned.

With the exception of Nehebkau, male gods were not usually represented as snakes. Instead, this icon was associated with some of the most powerful goddesses in Ancient Egypt including Weret-hekau, Hathor, Isis, Nephthys, Mut, Neith, Wadjet, Meretseger, and Renenutet, as well as the Four Noble Ladies. While the main individual characteristics of these goddesses vary, they all carry within them the potential to be vicious maintainers of *maat* in their wrath against *jsfet* and to act as the fiery eye of the sun. It is this characteristic that is signified when they are represented either totally or as hybrids in snake form. The association between powerful goddesses was so strong that the sign of a rearing cobra becomes the standard and generic determinative for any goddess.

As well as being used as weapons by the gods, pharaohs, and humans, snakes were also wielded by beneficial demons (and gods). As discussed above, one of the ways we can recognize demonic devices is by their iconography. The images themselves serve not only as “labels” to their function. For the Egyptians, writing and drawing were performative: by composing, they would “make it so.” The demonic devices discussed above, the apotropaic ivory wands, headrests, and vessels, are decorated with beneficial demons taking the form of Bes- and Beset-like warriors, or fantastic creatures containing the most recognizable portions of intimidating animals such as crocodiles, lions, panthers, hippos, hawks, and the Seth-animal. They can be clothed in the skins of panthers or leopards, marking their affiliation with the wild and untamed world, but also their control over hostile chaotic entities. Amongst their arsenal of weapons that include more traditional weapons such as spears and daggers (which could be depicted on all their limbs, including their feet), they wield snake staffs. Snakes can also appear in the mouths of the deity, either in the process

---

<sup>47</sup> Young/Boetig/Westhoff 2009.

<sup>48</sup> Anthes 1983, 93–94.



of being bitten and restrained, thus being absorbed and consumed by the beneficial demon, or as evoking their fire-spewing power. The rearing cobras can also be held in their hands, poised to strike. This smiting pose is found in Ancient Near Eastern imagery,<sup>49</sup> including the traditional smiting pose of the Egyptian pharaoh,<sup>50</sup> emphasizing the victory of order over chaos.

The importance of fire as an effective counter-agent against the many agents of chaos is a topic worthy of a full study, and can here only be summarized. From the earliest times, the pharaoh himself was shown wearing the cobra on his brow.<sup>51</sup> That the *uraeus* here represents the protective power of the cobra and the threat of burning fire can be seen in texts such as Pyramid Text 273 (Pyr. 396b-c), “His gods are on his head, his uraei are on his brow; the guiding serpent of Unas is on his forehead: that which perceives the *ba*, useful, it burns.” Scenes from compositions describing the Netherworld graphically depict the burning of the damned and the enemies of Ra and Osiris by fire. These chaotic entities can be shown held hostage by flames, assaulted by or chopped up and immersed in cauldrons of fire perpetually lit by flame-spitting cobras or lionesses.<sup>52</sup>

The same fire is used as an ultimate weapon for the protection of vulnerable mortals. In spells it can appear as a massive conflagration, consuming those who dare to come too close. One spell describes,

... it is the consuming flame by Sia, Lord of Heaven. The earth is on fire, the sky is on fire, the people and gods are on fire. You say you are hidden against it (but) “it is come” – as is its name in truth. Beware of the flame which comes forth from the Two Horizons!<sup>53</sup>

In others it is wielded as a flame-thrower, targeted with pinpoint accuracy by a deadly sharpshooter.<sup>54</sup> Snakes themselves are imbued with fire in their bellies as is described in Coffin Text 423 “... fire going up, flame up from the bellies of those who creep, and the fiery one will be against them as the Eye of Ra.”

It is reasonable then that the fiery serpent defending the king and the gods would be integrated into spells or encapsulated as three-dimensional objects designed for people of lower ranks as well, to illuminate the chaotic darkness and incinerate fiendish hordes. Snake figurines found at Abydos may provide further clues as to the function of the figurines in general. They take the form of tiny snakes rearing on platforms – one of the tallest is a mere 10 cm in height from the bottom of its

**49** Wiggerman 1992; 2000, 217–252.

**50** Davis 1992.

**51** Johnson 1990.

**52** It is worth considering whether these entities, when not explicitly marked as divinities should be included in the category of beneficial demons.

**53** Papyrus Leiden I 348, spell 36, lines in Borghouts 1971, 32; Borghouts 1978, #9. See also the links between the sun god, the *uraeus*, and fire to combat headaches (blamed on Apep) in Papyrus Leiden I 348 (rto IV, 9–10), spell 11, in Borghouts 1971 and explained more fully in Leitz 1987, 55–60.

**54** Papyrus Chester Beatty III, r. 1–11, for a detailed discussion see Szpakowska 2003b.

platform to the top of its head. They are made of dark silt mud, and remain unfired. Approximately sixteen are known. Ten were excavated by a joint team from Pennsylvania and Yale Universities, from the debris (possibly dating to the Third Intermediate Period) near Osiris temple and the Ramesses II temple enclosure (at that time named the “Portal”).<sup>55</sup> This debris consisted of the surviving materials from previous excavations and from looting. Amongst the remains were two artifact types noted by O’Connor as being particularly intriguing. One of these consisted of small, unbaked mud figurines with visible straw temper, shaped into the forms of ram heads, vultures, and cobras. Of the latter, ten were found by the 1967 excavation. A further six can be found in Leiden and in London.<sup>56</sup> The provenance of these figurines is uncertain as they were acquired in the Nineteenth Century from the collector Giovanni Anastasi (1780–1860). Nevertheless, the similarity to the ones excavated in 1967, even in terms of associated artifacts, is so striking that there can be little doubt that they too must have come from Abydos.

Conveniently, some of these snake figurines are inscribed, and I was able to examine one of them.<sup>57</sup> The mud was inscribed vertically in cursive hieroglyphs with white ink which is now barely legible. Luckily, the tool used to inscribe the text scratched the mud and these markings are still partially visible. One of the signs is unfortunately unclear and indeed this should be considered a tentative translation only. It seems to read *Tz Hrt ? ? nhs* “One-who-raises-the-face [...] (against) Seth”. The lexeme *nhs* can refer to the hippopotamus or Seth in later periods. The reference to “raising the face” is an ideal descriptor of the distinguishing feature of a cobra who raises herself up, facing and poised to strike against any who might threaten.

However, it must be stressed that these figurines are in many ways very different from those that were fired and so while they represent a local manifestation of the same phenomenon, any comparisons must be undertaken cautiously. These Abydene mud figurines and other associated magical artifacts are the subject of a study by Maarten Raven, who suggests that at least in part their role was to protect the temple.<sup>58</sup> Nevertheless, it is clear that one of the most powerful signifiers for the protection of a space, whether it be the space surrounding a god, a temple, or a vulnerable individual, from a demonic entity, whether it be Seth or any of the afflicting hordes, was that of a rearing cobra poised to strike with her fiery breath.

---

<sup>55</sup> O’Connor 1967, 10–23.

<sup>56</sup> Four are now in the Rijksmuseum in Leiden (AT103a-d) and two are in the British Museum (EA2002; EA2003.)

<sup>57</sup> I am grateful to The British Museum for allowing me to examine EA 2002, for providing access to Samuel Birch’s notes on the object (Samuel Birch [1836–1886] was one of the first Egyptological scholars at the British Museum) and to Richard Parkinson and Robert Demarée who helped to make sense of the text.

<sup>58</sup> Raven 2012, 117–118. More light may be shed on this with the forthcoming publication by Goyon 2012.

## Concluding Thoughts

Textual evidence in the form of spells clearly point to the apotropaic use of these figurines as demonic devices that functioned as fiery weapons and as the demarcations of a lethal defensive perimeter impenetrable by demonic entities. The representations depicting individuals offering a rearing snake on a platform and stele dedicated to goddesses with similar iconography (including Meretseger, Neith, Weret-Hekau and particularly Renenutet) suggest that the three-dimensional figures could also be used as divine statuettes.<sup>59</sup> While this aspect will not be discussed here, it highlights again those fuzzy boundaries surrounding Ancient Egyptian conceptions, for in both cases the figurines act as a metaphor and conduit to and from the world beyond. On the one hand they accelerate prayers to the goddess, on the other they channel her powers against demonic foes. The archaeological context suggests that use of clay cobra figurines and their intrinsic magic was not restricted to the literate elite, but was accessible to a wider segment of the population. Their extensive geographical distribution testifies to their popularity.

Texts, representations, and comparanda can help us to identify paraphernalia used to channel divine powers in the fight against demons. These in turn aid in our quest to understand the place of demons within the Ancient Egyptian worldview and system of categorization. Their conceptual metaphors are expressed not only in their written language but in objects as well, which can be considered as three-dimensional classifiers. *Women, Fire and Dangerous Things* is the title of a classic work on metaphor by Lakoff.<sup>60</sup> An Ancient Egyptian writing about their common metaphors might have titled it (in typical wordy fashion) as *Cobras, Fire, Goddesses, and Demon-Slaughtering Things*.<sup>61</sup>

## Bibliography

- Allen, James P. (2005), *The Art of Medicine in Ancient Egypt*, New York; New Haven.
- Altenmüller, Hartwig (1965), *Die Apotropaia und die Götter Mittelägyptens: Eine typologische und religionsgeschichtliche Untersuchung der sogenannten "Zaubermesser" des Mittleren Reichs*, Munich.
- Anthes, Rudolf (1983), "Der Ichneumon, die Kobra and wir", in: *Göttinger Miszellen* 62, 93–94.
- Bochi, Patricia A. (1999), "Death by Drama: The Ritual of Damnatio Memoriae in Ancient Egypt", in: *Göttinger Miszellen* 171, 73–86.

---

<sup>59</sup> This aspect is now under systematic investigation through an iconographical typology of the objects based on individual features, symbols, attributes, posture, material, decoration, colors, as well as the specific archaeological context and position relative to associated finds, and cannot be discussed in detail here.

<sup>60</sup> Lakoff 1990.

<sup>61</sup> I gratefully acknowledge here the influence of Orly Goldwasser's work, particularly Goldwasser 2002.

- Borghouts, J. F. (1971), *The Magical Texts of P. Leiden I 348*, Leiden.
- Borghouts, J. F. (1978), *Ancient Egyptian Magical Texts*, Leiden.
- Bryan, Betsy M. (1996), "The Disjunction of Text and Image in Egyptian Art", in: Peter der Manuelian (ed.), *Studies in Honor of William Kelly Simpson*, Boston, 161–168.
- Černý, Jaroslav (1976), *Coptic Etymological Dictionary*, Cambridge.
- Crum, W. E. (1939), *A Coptic Dictionary*, Oxford.
- Darnell, John Coleman (2004), *The Enigmatic Netherworld Books of the Solar-Osirian Unity: Cryptographic Compositions in the Tombs of Tutankhamun, Ramesses VI and Ramesses IX*, Fribourg and Göttingen.
- Davis, Whitney (1992), *Masking the Blow: The Scene of Representation in Late Prehistoric Egyptian Art*, Berkeley.
- El-Leithy, Hisham (2003), "Letters to the Dead in Ancient and Modern Egypt", in: Zahi Hawass (ed.), *Egyptology at the Dawn of the Twenty-First Century: Proceedings of the Eighth International Congress of Egyptologists, Cairo 2000*, Cairo, 305–313.
- Eyre, Christopher (2009), "Belief and the Dead in Pharaonic Egypt", in: Mu-Chou Poo (ed.), *Rethinking Ghosts in World Religions*, Leiden, 33–46.
- Fischer-Elfert, Hans-Werner (2009): *DigitalHeka*. <<http://www.uni-leipzig.de/~digiheka/>> (seen June 22, 2012).
- Fischer-Elfert, Hans-Werner / Richter, Tonio Sebastian (2005), *Altägyptische Zaubersprüche*, Stuttgart.
- Frankfurter, David (2006), *Evil Incarnate: Rumors of Demonic Conspiracy and Ritual Abuse in History*, Princeton.
- Glanzman, W. D. / Fleming, S. J. (1993), "Fabrication Methods", in: Frances W. James / Patrick E. McGovern / Anne G. Bonn (eds.), *The Late Bronze Egyptian Garrison at Beth Shan: A Study of Levels VII and VIII*, Philadelphia, 94–102.
- Goldwasser, Orly (2002), *Prophets, Lovers and Giraffes: Wor(l)d Classification in Ancient Egypt*, Wiesbaden.
- Goyon, Jean-Claude (1987), "Nombres et Univers: réflexions sur quelques données numériques de l'arsenal magique de l'Égypte pharaonique", in: Alessandro Roccati / Alberto Siliotti (eds.), *La magia in Egitto ai tempi dei faraoni: atti, convegno internazionale di studi, Milano, 29–31 ottobre 1985*, Verona, 57–76.
- Goyon, Jean-Claude (2012), *Le recueil de prophylaxie contre les agressions des animaux venimeux du Musée de Brooklyn Papyrus Wilbour 47.218.138*, Wiesbaden.
- Hornung, Erik (2005), *The Ancient Egyptian Books of the Underworld*, London.
- James, Frances W. / McGovern, Patrick E. / Bonn, Anne G. (1993), *The Late Bronze Egyptian Garrison at Beth Shan: A Study of Levels VII and VIII*, Philadelphia.
- Johnson, Sally B. (1990), *The Cobra Goddess of Ancient Egypt: Predynastic, Early Dynastic, and Old Kingdom Periods*, London and New York.
- Lakoff, George (1990), *Women, Fire, and Dangerous Things: What Categories Reveal About the Mind*, Chicago.
- Leitz, Christian (1987), "Spruch 11 des magischen Papyrus Leiden I 348 (rto IV, 9–10)", in: *Göttinger Miszellen* 98, 55–60.
- Leitz, Christian (1994), *Tagewählerei: das Buch h3 t nhh ph.wy Dt und verwandte Texte*, Wiesbaden.
- Leitz, Christian (1999), *Magical and Medical Papyri of the New Kingdom*, London.
- Lesko, Barbara S. (2008), "Household and Domestic Religion in Ancient Egypt", in: John Bodel / Saul Olyan (eds.), *Household and Family Religion in Antiquity*, Oxford, 197–209.
- Lucarelli, Rita (2010), "Demons (Benevolent and Malevolent)", in: Jacco Dieleman / Willeke Wendrich (ed.), *UCLA Encyclopedia of Egyptology*. <http://escholarship.org/uc/item/1r72q9wv%3E>.

- Lucarelli, Rita (2011), "Demonology During the Late Pharaonic and Greco-Roman Periods in Egypt", in: *Journal of Ancient Near Eastern Religions* 11, 109–125.
- Moreno García, Juan Carlos (2010), "Oracles, Ancestor Cults and Letters to the Dead: The Involvement of the Dead in the Public and Private Family Affairs in Pharaonic Egypt", in: Anne Storch (ed.), *Perception of the Invisible: Religion, Historical Semantics and the Role of Perceptive Verbs*, Köln, 133–153.
- Morris, Ellen Fowles (2005), *The Architecture of Imperialism: Military bases and the Evolution of Foreign Policy in Egypt's New Kingdom*, Leiden.
- Morschauer, Scott (1991), *Threat-Formulae in Ancient Egypt: A Study of the History, Structure and Use of Threats and Curses in Ancient Egypt*, Baltimore.
- O'Connor, David (1967), "Abydos: A Preliminary Report of the Pennsylvania-Yale Expedition, 1967", in: *Expedition* 10:1, 10–23.
- O'Donoghue, Michael (1999), "The 'Letters to the Dead' and Ancient Egyptian Religion", in: *Bulletin of the Australasian Center for Egyptology* 10, 87–104.
- Peet, T. Eric / Woolley, C.L. (1923), *The City of Akhenaten I*, London.
- Perraud, Milena (1998), "Un Raccord au Louvre: L'appui-tête E 4231 + E 4293 à figurations de Bès", in: *Revue d'Égyptologie* 49, 161–166.
- Perraud, Milena (2002), "Appui-tête à inscription magique et apotropaïa", in: *Bulletin de l'institut français d'archéologie orientale* 102, 309–326.
- Quack, Joachim F. (2004), "Fragmente memphitischer Religion und Astronomie in semidemotischer Schrift", in: Friedhelm Hoffmann / Heinz-Josef Thissen (eds.), *Res severa verum gaudium: Festschrift für Karl-Theodor Zauzich zum 65. Geburtstag am 8. Juni 2004*, Leuven, 467–496.
- Raven, Maarten J. (2012), *Egyptian Magic: The Quest for Thoth's Book of Secrets*, Cairo.
- Rendu-Loisel, Ann-Caroline (2011), "Gods, Demons and Anger in the Akkadian Literature", in: *Studia Materiali di Storia delle Religioni*, 77:2, 323–332.
- Ritner, Robert K. (2008), "Household Religion in Ancient Egypt", in: John Bodel / Saul Olyan (eds.), *Household and Family Religion in Antiquity*, Oxford, 171–196.
- Ritner, Robert K. (1990), "O. Gardiner 363: A Spell Against Night Terrors", in: *Journal of the American Research Center in Egypt* 27, 25–41.
- Roberson, Joshua Aaron (2012), *The Ancient Egyptian Books of the Earth*, Bristol, CT.
- Simpson, William Kelly (ed.) (2003), *The Literature of Ancient Egypt: An Anthology of Stories, Instructions, Stelae, Autobiographies, and Poetry*, New Haven & London.
- Smith, Jonathan Z. (2003), "Here, There, and Anywhere", in: Scott B. Noegel / Joel T. Walker / Brannon M. Wheeler (eds.), *Prayer, Magic, and the Stars in the Ancient and Late Antique World*, University Park, PA, 21–38.
- Smith, Stuart Tyson (2003), *Wretched Kush: Ethnic Identities and Boundaries in Egypt's Nubian Empire*, London and New York.
- Sowada, K. / Callaghan, T. / Bentley, P. (1999), *The Teti Cemetery at Saqqara IV: Minor Burials and Other Material*, Warminster.
- Stevens, Anna (2006), *Private Religion at Amarna: The Material Evidence*, Oxford.
- Sweeney, Deborah (2009), "Gender and Oracular Practice in Deir el-Medīna", in: *Zeitschrift für ägyptische Sprache und Altertumskunde*, 135:2, 154–164.
- Szpakowska, Kasia (2003), "Playing with Fire: Initial Observations on the Religious Uses of Clay Cobras from Amarna", *Journal of the American Research Center in Egypt* 40, 113–122.
- Szpakowska, Kasia (2003), *Behind Closed Eyes: Dreams and Nightmares in Ancient Egypt*, Swansea.
- Szpakowska, Kasia (2009), "Demons in Ancient Egypt", in: *Religion Compass* 3:5, 799–805.
- Szpakowska, Kasia (2010), "Nightmares in Ancient Egypt", in: Jean-Marie Husser / Alice Mouton (eds.), *Le cauchemar dans l'Antiquité: Actes des journées d'étude de l'UMR 7044 (15–16 Novembre 2007, Strasbourg)*, Paris, 21–39.

- Szpakowska, Kasia (2012), “Demons, Pharaonic Egypt”, in: Roger Bagnall, et al. (eds.), *Encyclopedia of Ancient History*, London.
- Verhoeven, Ursula (2003), “Post ins Jenseits – Formular und Funktion altägyptischer Briefe an Tote”, in Andreas Wagner (ed.), *Bote und Brief*, Frankfurt, 31–51.
- Voss, Susanne (1999), “Ein ‘Zaubermesser’ aus K95.2”, in: *Mitteilungen des Deutschen Archäologischen Instituts* 55, 390–399.
- Wegner, Josef (2009), “A Decorated Birth-Brick from South Abydos: New Evidence on Childbirth and Birth Magic in the Middle Kingdom”, in: David P. Silverman/William Kelly Simpson/Josef Wenger (eds.), *Archaism and Innovation: Studies in the Culture of Middle Kingdom Egypt*, Philadelphia and New Haven, 447–491.
- Wente, Edward (1990), *Letters from Ancient Egypt*, Atlanta.
- Wiggerman, F. A. M. (1992), *Mesopotamian Protective Spirits: The Ritual Texts*, Groningen.
- Wiggerman, F. A. M. (2000), “Lamashtu, Daughter of Anu. A Profile”, in: M. Stol (ed.), *Birth in Babylonia and the Bible*, Groningen, 217–252.
- Yamazaki, Naoko (2003), *Zaubersprüche für Mutter und Kind: Papyrus Berlin 3027*, Berlin.
- Young, Bruce A./Boetig, Melissa/Westhoff, Guido (2009), “Functional Bases of the Spatial Dispersal of Venom during Cobra ‘Spitting’”, *Physiological and Biochemical Zoology*, 82:1, 80–89.
- Young, Bruce A. / Kardong, Kenneth V. (2010), “The Functional Morphology of Hooding in Cobras”, in: *Journal of Experimental Biology* 213, 1521–1528.