# Curse Rituals in Ancient Egypt

*By*
Samar Mostafa Kamal, Assistant Professor
Heba Ahmed Shehata, Master Degree Student
Tourist Guidance Department, Faculty of Tourism and Hotels
Minia University, Egypt

## Abstract

Curse magic was used in ancient Egypt to work against evil influences. Execration is a magical practice conducted to cause destruction or harm to an enemy or group of enemies. It is evidenced archaeologically and textually from the Old Kingdom and down to the Late Period (2686 – 332 B.C.). This article attempted to define the concept of curse rituals and sheds light on curse figurines uncovered from ancient Egypt, particularly those datable to the Old Kingdom. It focuses on execration texts and their development and the most important finds associated with them. It also deals with the different forms of execration rituals in ancient Egypt. Consideration is also given to private execration rituals in ancient Egypt. In order to do so, I follow a descriptive and analytical approach.

## Keywords

Magic, Curse, Execration, Rituals, Figurines

## Introduction

Ancient Egyptians believed in the power of magic and the use of spells and curses. The intention of the use of curses has been to overcome the supernatural power or to inflict misfortune or punishment. The aim of a curse was to do harm to those whom could be regarded as Egypt's enemies. In curse magic, rituals were performed symbolically with the intention to have a practical effect elsewhere. Magic was used by men and even the gods to give them power against all forms of evil. In ancient Egyptian language, magic was called *ḥkꜣ* or Heka. Heka was a divine force which existed in the universe and which could be personified in the form of the god Heka. Magic is the manipulation of supernatural beings by a human who expects that the correct sequence of words or actions will automatically bring about the desired result.

## 1. Curse Rituals in Ancient Egypt

Magic was an integral aspect of ancient Egyptian life. The world was created through the power of magic, where the creator god Atum stood on the primordial mound in the middle of the waters of chaos with the god Heka, who personified magical power. It was the god Heka who allowed for the gods to perform their duties through magic and, most importantly, maintained the concept of justice, harmony and balance of the universe.

Ancient Egyptians used magic in every aspect of their lives, such as when one became sick and consulted a physician, he was healed with medical prescriptions and the use of rituals and magical spells. Throughout one's life this same belief persisted, and at death, it was magical charms, rituals, and incantations which assured the soul of the deceased an easy passage to eternal life.

While many of these supernatural initiatives invoked the blessings of the gods, their primary purpose was to ward off evil spirits and to satisfy the gods in case one had angered them. An ancient Egyptian also had to protect himself from the presence of angry ghosts and, from living humans who meant harm to them. To maintain one's protection and safety, therefore, magical rituals and incantations were used which are now known as Execration rituals. Execration is a form of magical practice, it means to curse a person or entity whom one finds to be dangerous, or offensive in any way, execration rituals was used to cause destruction or harm to an enemy or a group of enemies. Execration rituals took the form of actions corresponding with a written text, which is now known as execration texts which acted to weaken the power of one's enemy while increasing one's own.
1

## I.1. Execration Texts: Historical Development

Execration texts are a class of formulas that functioned as cursing and destructive magic, intended to act against negative influences.2 The structure of the execration texts is simple as they only give lists of individuals, groups, and areas which were perceived as hostile or potentially hostile to Egypt. Execration texts listed the names of the enemies of the Egyptian king and the enemies of the Egyptian state, notably names of rulers of lands neighboring Egypt like Nubians, Asiatics, and Libyans. The enemies also included living and deceased Egyptians, as well as generally threatening forces.3

Execration texts were inscribed on different materials, including sheets of papyrus, clay and potter vessels, and fashioned figurines; the figurines were often shaped to represent a bound prisoner. Either the pottery pots or figurines were usually ritually destroyed, symbolizing the destruction of the enemies. 4 The fragments of the destroyed figurines were usually burnt and buried near tombs or ritual sites.5 Some Egyptologists suggests that execration figurines were buried near older, abandoned cemeteries whose formerly blessed inhabitants were perceived to have become angry or vengeful because they lacked funerary offerings, so execration figurines were offered as a sacrifice to the vengeance of the neglected spirits.6

The first group of execration texts, known as the Berlin texts, which was first published by Kurt Sethe in 1926, this group of texts were inscribed on pottery sherds and contained the names of approximately twenty places in Canaan,7 and the names of over thirty rulers of that period, these texts contained what is possibly the first mention on Jerusalem at that period, these texts dated back to the end of the 11<sup>th</sup> Dynasty to the 12<sup>th</sup> Dynasty.8 George Posener published another group of texts in 1940, known as the Brussels texts, this group of texts were inscribed on figurines of bound prisoners discovered in Saqqara, this group contained the names of sixty-four places, usually listing one or two rulers, this group dated back to the end of the 12<sup>th</sup> Dynasty,9 and an additional group of texts, the Mirgissa texts, which also dated to the 12<sup>th</sup> Dynasty was published by Yvan Koenig in 1990.10

Execration texts which were inscribed on pots and figurines, were attested from the Old Kingdom through the Late Period.11 Now over one thousand execration deposits have been found in Egypt, mostly in cemeteries at Semna,12 Uronarti,13  Mirgissa,14 Elephantine, 15   Thebes, Balat, 16   Abydos, Helwan, Saqqara, and Giza. 17 The

execration texts were quite specific in their intended victims. The name of the victims was written on the pot or figurine, which was used as a substitute of those victims (figure 1-3).18
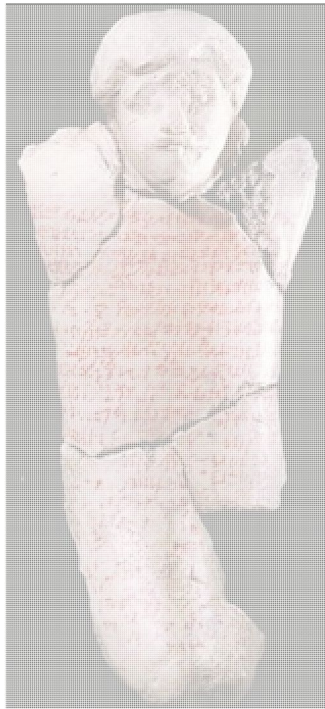


1

Figure 1: Execration figure from late 12th dynasty, bearing the names of several Asiatics (Silverman, D.P. (1997), *Ancient Egypt*, Oxford, Oxford University press, p. 145).

2                                                                                    3

Figure 2: (On the left side) Execration figurine from Saite fortress at Defennah. Ritner, R. (1993), *The Mechanics of Ancient Egyptian Magical Practices*, USA, Chicago, The University of Chicago, fig 12: p. 138

Figure 3: (On the right side) Clay imprint of execration figure with knife bisecting neck, New Kingdom, Giza. Ritner, R. (1993), *The Mechanics of Ancient Egyptian Magical Practices*, USA, Chicago, The University of Chicago, fig 13: p. 138

The earliest execration texts dated back to the 6th dynasty. They are four related deposits, datable to the reign of Pepi II.[19] Over four hundred of these figurines were excavated from the cemetery at Giza, while a few others have been found at the settlements of Elephantine and Balat. The figurines were inscribed with names, primarily those of Nubians, some have Egyptian names, and others were identified as chiefs and military commanders.[20] This group of figurines was made from unbaked clay and fashioned into the shape of bound prisoners with name labels inscribed on their chests, sometimes in red ink.[21]

Two of these deposits included a large shattered clay figure inscribed with a long text, listing a series of Nubian countries, this long text was defined as an early version of a "rebellion formula",[22] and this formula was later standardized only in the Middle Kingdom. The rebellion formula listed evil actions and evil intentions that was a threat or could become a threat to Egypt. It listed names of Egyptians and Nubians enemies, the remaining deposits consisted of many smaller clay figurines bearing individual Egyptian and Nubian names without the use of the rebellion formula.[23]

> The rebellion formula found in the necropolis at Giza on the figurines reads as: *"Every rebel of this land, all people, all patricians, all commoners, all males, all women, every chieftain, every Nubian, every strongman, every messenger, every confederate, every ally of every land who will rebel or who will plot by saying plots or by speaking anything evil against Upper Egypt or*

> *Lower Egypt forever. Every Nubian who will rebel, or who will make plots, or who will plot, or who will say anything evil."24*

The rebellion formula listed potentially hostile classes of Egyptians and Nubians with a list of their names and also generally threatening forces, including evil speech, slander, plots, strife, evil thoughts, evil actions, and nightmares. The rebellion formula intends to curse the enemies of Egypt, who act rebellion or even think of rebelling or conspire against Egypt. The texts was meant to symbolically defend against any politically or military threat, in other words, it serves as a curse to ward against any magical assault in anticipation of similar execration magic by Egypt's enemies.25

The four deposits were closely associated by date. Three of the deposits were made within the space of two months. Judging from the repetition of identical names throughout the four deposits, and the similarity of the handwriting, it appears that only two scribes were involved in the manufacture of the four deposits. All were buried in the Giza cemetery, most enclosed in jugs docketed with the regnal year of the king and personal names of the victims.26

Giza remained a site for execration rituals through the 13th Dynasty, witnessing over two thousand years of the practice. However, larger and better preserved finds come from Mirgissa, which was the most important find for execration from the Middle Kingdom. Mirgissa is a large fort built along the bank of the Nile in Kush in Nubia during the Middle Kingdom to protect Egypt's borders.27

In the Middle Kingdom (2055-1650 BC), the ancient Egyptians continued to use figurines, on which execration texts were written. For example, a group of small and large figurines dating to the end of the 12th dynasty was excavated at the necropolis of Saqqara. The ancient Egyptians also used pottery vessels for execration texts, which were evidenced by an excavation of over 175 vessels outside the Egyptian fortress at Mirgissa in Lower Nubia. These vessels, which date back to the middle of the 12th Dynasty, were inscribed with long execration texts and appear to have been intentionally broken during the execration rituals.28

The Mirgissa deposit has revealed rituals that rich in both quantity and complexity of its elements. The deposit included four separate, but related burials including 197 broken red vessels inscribed with long execration texts, which had been intentionally broken during the execration rituals, in addition to 437 broken uninscribed red vessels, 346 various mud figures, 3 limestone captives figurines with the head of a fourth that had possibly served as substitute models for the texts on the vessels, some similar limestone figures of captives were also found in the fortress of Uronarti and Semna,29 and the remains of what could appear to be a human sacrifice.30 Also a human skull was found buried upside down in a pottery cup. Surrounding this find were many small traces of beeswax dyed with red ochre, probably the remains of melted figurines; about twenty centimeters from the skull was buried a flint knife.31 Probably, this flint knife was the traditional blade for ritual slaughter. The rest of the human body was found nearby, apparently thrown away instead of being buried. Examination suggested that the body was of a Nubian origin. Some Egyptologists regarded this remains of human body as undeniably the human counterpart to the clay figurines of the execration ritual. The burial of bound prisoners' figurines and execration texts on pots may have been part of the foundation ceremonies for such forts.32

The execration texts from Mirgissa resemble the Old Kingdom execration texts in many aspects, though they were considerably expanded in scope and more standardized. A series of unbaked pottery vessels (figure 4) or schematically modeled figures of prisoners in clay, limestone, alabaster, wood and wax, were inscribed with the rebellion formula. There were sections contained the names and parentage of contemporary Nubian, Asiatic, and Libyan princes, with mention of their chiefs, retainers, soldiers, messengers, countrymen, countries, and allies, a section contained individually named dead Egyptians, and a section on evil things, evil thoughts, evil plans, evil actions and even evil dreams.33
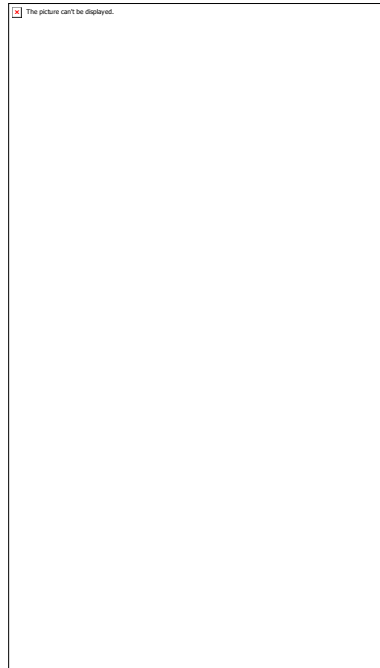


Figure 4: Small piece of red vessels inscribed with execration texts found in the deposit in Mirgissa, Middle kingdom, www.Metmuseum.org

The use of the standard formula in the Mirgissa execration texts, as well as the overall similarity of its basic content to the execration texts of the Old Kingdom, proves that the texts were not tailored to meet specific crisis situations. The vague enemies, as well as specific individuals, groups, or geographic locations, were named for things they might do in the future. Yet other individuals presumably were included because of things they had already done. The texts were characterized by the wish to forestall any potential threat from wherever it might arise. The rebellion formula was set in the prospective tense throughout seemed significant.34

The names of foreign chiefs were changed according to the political situation, to produce such an assemblage of execration texts, it would require a staff of trained scribes, and detailed, current records of the names and parentage of the contemporary rulers from even small localities well beyond Egypt's borders. The concern with foreign entities, and the desire to protect the state, ruler, and divine, combined with the knowledge of foreign politics, geography, and leaders that the texts demonstrate

proves that only the state could meet these requirements. Thus, despite their typically rather undistinguished find spot in or beside private graves, the rebellion formulae would seem state rather than private productions.35

Only a few examples of execration texts dating to the Second Intermediate Period (1700-1550 BC) and New Kingdom (1550-1069 BC) have been found, also small, uninscribed bound captives figures of clay mostly deriving from unknown contexts attested to the Late Period (747-332 BC).36 The archeological remains of execration texts were found throughout the Egyptian history, but the major number of remains were found during the Middle kingdom, the numeration of execration texts in the Middle Kingdom could have been because of the continuous threats of foreign enemies that Egypt had gone through, so they had to use supernatural powers to maintain Egypt's stability in case other measures fails. Also the presence of few examples from the New Kingdom could have been because at the beginning of the New Kingdom Egypt had strong rulers, who assured the stability of the country and the protection of it from any invasions.

**I.2. Execration Rituals**

Execration rituals were magical actions aimed at destroying or annihilating enemies. They were similar in nature to other protective measures, such as apotropaic animal sacrifice which was thought to have the power to avert evil influences, or walking on depictions of enemies. The main sources for understanding the execration rituals were the surviving manuscripts of its various versions and texts that were often inscribed on the ritual objects and thus became a physical component of the ritual.37

The execration texts contain nothing which in itself which could be called magical. The texts were mainly serving to identify the individuals, nations, or forces inscribed on the pots or figurines. The desired magical effect of these assemblages derived from the ritual to which they were subjected, not from the text which was written.38  A common feature of magical figurines is bondage (figure 5). Clay examples from Giza and Saqqara reveal holes for binding or suspension with cords, also on the back, the arms, or the arms and the legs, are bound together and, in the more detailed examples, the heads display foreign features and hairstyles.39



Figure 5: An uninscribed kneeling figure with his arms tied behind his back, dated back to the 12th Dynasty, Silverman, D. P. (1997), Ancient Egypt, Oxford, Oxford University press, fig 12, p. 145

Red pots were the earliest objects used in execration rituals, and remained a common tool of manipulation. By the late Old Kingdom, papyrus, hairballs, figurines, statues, and statuettes made of clay, stone, wax, or wood were also used. Live animals also likely composed a component of the ritual. Wax figures and sometimes fresh sheets of papyrus, on which the targeted name was written, were among the most commonly used materials.40

Execration rituals could be aimed at political, supernatural, or personal enemies. The political and supernatural were often tied together. The Book of Overthrowing Apophis,41 for example, instructs that the rite will fall the enemies of Re, Horus, and Pharaoh.42 Political execration rituals likely began as attempts to deal with rebellious Egyptians, but soon included rebellious vassals and foreign enemies (figures 6-9). They were almost always directed toward potential problems as a type of proactive apotropaic measure. The victims of these execration rituals were those who, whether dead or alive, would in the future rebel, conspire, or think of speaking, sleeping, or dreaming rebelliously, or with ill intent.43

These four terracotta figurines (figures 6-9), represents execration figurines, they were represented as bound captives with their hands were tied behind their backs, they represent Egypt's enemies, as they have foreign facial features and hairstyles, one of these figurines was depicted with an animal head, probably a donkey, the animal associated with the evil Seth.



6         7         8

9
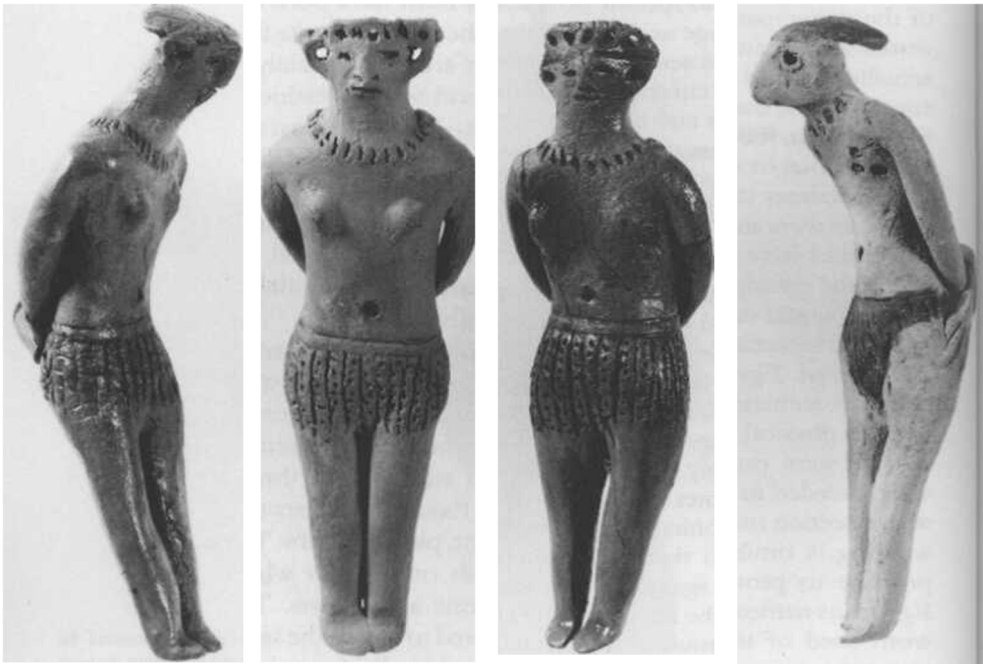
Figures 6-9: Four terracotta figurines of bound Nubians, 20th - 19th centuries BC. These were used in a cursing rituals (Pinch, G. 1994, *Magic in Ancient Egypt*, UK, British Museum Press, fig 49: KA 56912, KA 56913, KA 56914, KA 56928, p. 94). Within a full execration, each ritual action could require a separate rite. The magical procedure of the ritual is basically developed into the following steps with occasional variations. Ritual objects could be smashed like red pots, probably with a pestle, stomped on, stabbed, cut, speared, spat on, locked in a box, burned, and saturated in urine, before almost always being buried and sometimes buried upside down.44

As an example, a portion of one rite calls for the object to be bound and gives subsequent instructions *to "spit on him four times . . . trample on him with the left foot . . . smite him with a spear . . . slaughter him with a knife . . . place him on the fire . . . spit on him in the fire many times"*. A full rite could employ any of these actions numerous times with numerous figures. Thus, various magical measures were taken to prevent chaotic forces from acting before they could even begin.45  This special use of objects has its own symbolic meaning and apotropaic value, which rely on the specific material that is used and the magical principle of analogy and similarity that is expressed in the ceremony.46 This section discusses and highlights the various forms of execration rituals known in ancient Egypt.

### I.2.a. Spitting ritual

In ancient Egyptian myth, the creator god Atum created Shu and Tefnut by spitting.47 Spitting has a magical creative power. It is a divine power that generates life, and therefore commonly used in magical rituals for the transmission of healing and blessing.48 In addition to the positive, curative aspects of spitting and its role to the creation of cosmos, its potential nature as a weapon of destruction and corruption is well emphasized in the magical texts and well-practiced in magical rituals. The act of spitting could also be hostile and magically threatening, it was associated with the ejected venom of serpents, scorpions, insects, and other poisonous creatures. Thus, spitting figures is obvious in both the recitations and the practice of execrations directed against wax figurines representing the divine demons and their associates.49 The same idea is found in funerary magic. The casting of the hostile image with a spear or knife follows the spitting technique. This formula dominates the relevant reliefs on the walls of the Ptolemaic temples. The king, represented by the priest in the everyday re-enactment of the rite, spears the enemy human or divine in the presence of the patron deity of the temple. The sacrificial offering of the figurines comes as the final apotropaic step and symbolizes the total destruction of the enemy.50

### I.2.b. Bound Prisoners

The image of a victorious ruler in the act of striking a series of kneeling, bound prisoners is shown throughout the Egyptian history. The kneeling prisoners were shown with their hands tied behind their backs and sometimes their necks also tied with a rope. This imagery is presented on the Narmer palette (Figure 10, a-b), which has been interpreted as the representation of the conquest of Lower and Upper Egypt and their unity.51  On the back side of the palette, king Narmer is shown wearing the white crown of Upper Egypt and seizing a kneeling enemy by the hair and is about to strike him with his mace.52 This image of the king striking his enemies symbolizes

the triumph of order over chaos. Facing the king the falcon god Horus shown holding the head of a prisoner by a rope which symbolizing the submission of Upper Egypt.53

<div align="center">A                                                    B</div>

Figure 10, a-b : The Narmer Palette, Salah, M., Sourouzian, H. (1987), *The Egyptian Museum Cairo*, Egypt, Organization of Egyptian Antiquities, 8a, 8b, p. 44

**I.2.c. Trampling Underfoot**

Trampling upon an enemy was a standard gesture in magical rites in ancient Egypt. It was found on temple wall scenes, statue bases, furniture, tools used by the king and even represented on jewelry. It represents the common imagery of the traditional enemies of Egypt. It also represents the power of the king over his defeated enemies.54  An example of the images of vanquished enemies which were carved beneath the feet of the ruler can be found on the Narmer palette, where the king is shown trampling his enemies underfoot.55  The king is shown victorious over his enemies. He is shown striking down a kneeling enemy, and stepping on the bodies of some other foes on one side of the palette. On the other side of the palette (figure 8b), he is represented overlooking the decapitated corpses of his foes and as a bull trampling an enemy and breaking down the walls of a city or a fortress.56

Another example, could be found on the pectoral of Princess Mereret (figure 11), daughter of Senusert III of the 12th Dynasty. The pectoral is set within the framework of a shrin where the vulture goddess is represented with outstretched wings protects over the scene of the victorious king dispatching his enemies. Between the lotus flowers, king Senusert III tramples his enemies while depicted as an animal with a

head of a falcon and a lion's body which combines the power of the falcon with the strength of the lion.57



Figure 11: The pectoral of Princess Mereret, Middle Kingdom, Hawass, Z. (2010), *Inside the Egyptian Museum with Zahi Hawass, Egypt*, The American University in Cairo press, CG52003 p. 279.

Similar representations were found on objects from the tomb of Tutankhamun. This imagery of trampling the enemies underfoot symbolizes the strength of the king over his enemies as well as the defeating of enemies through magic.58 The royal footstools of Tutankhamun had representations of Asiatics and Nubians upon which the king would rest his feet. Also, figures of bound prisoners are shown on the soles of his sandals (figure 12), allowing him to trample underfoot his enemies with each step he takes.59



Figure 12: Representations of enemies on the sole of the sandals of Tutankhamon. Ritner, R. (1993), *The Mechanics of Ancient Egyptian Magical Practices*, USA, Chicago, The University of Chicago, fig 6: p. 123.

**I.2.d. Human Sacrifice**

Human sacrifice in ancient Egypt is still a controversial issue. The theory of "human sacrifices" was first formulated by Petrie in 1900 based on a particular burial pattern found in the royal tombs of the kings of the 1st Dynasty at Abydos. The hypothesis was that during the early stages of the Egyptian history, the kings of the 1st Dynasty practiced human sacrifice, having the retainers or high officials kill themselves or be killed so that they could be buried in the royal tomb and thus continue to serve the king in the afterlife.[60]

This theory was based on the presence around the Abydos royal tombs of less important graves belonging to the king's entourage. The tombs of the 1st Dynastic were large rectangular tombs, in which a large chamber was surrounded by numerous smaller chambers. These subsidiary graves were indicated by different researchers as burials of sacrificed victims, based on three characteristics: their great number which was viewed as abnormal, their proximity to each royal tomb, and the assumption that all of the deceased were buried at the same time as the king.[61]

An example of this case is king Djer, the second king of the 1st Dynasty, his tomb in Abydos, had 318 subsidiary graves. Reisner studied the subsidiary graves in order to determine which graves were possible examples of sacrificial servant burial. He concluded that 63 graves were probably such examples, and an additional 99 possibly were, making for 162 total possible sacrificial servant burials.[62]

Suggestions of evidence of human sacrifice does not appear prior to king Aha the first king of the 1st Dynasty, nor after the end of the 1st Dynasty. As such it is suggested that this practice appeared suddenly, shortly after the founding of the Dynastic period, then immediately died out, regardless of the fact that the custom of burying high officials surrounding the royal tombs were found in other periods but with no question of human sacrifice ever been involved.[63]

There is also a fact remains that there was no indicators of a cultural preference or tolerance of human sacrifice in the Egyptian literature and beliefs, and no evidence at all at any point from the 2nd Dynasty onwards nor was there any indications of such practice occurring in the pre-dynastic cultures that existed immediately prior to the unification of Egypt.[64]

Also another suggestion of human sacrifice based on an iconographic study of two ivory jar labels dating to the reigns of king Aha and king Djer, both containing similar iconography that it was claimed to depict the ritual killing of human beings. The fragment label of Aha (figure 13) has only part of the entire scene is preserved, the scene shows two men sitting or kneeling, one piercing the other with a pointed object, with a bowl between them. This scene is replicated in the top right hand corner of the more complete label of Djer (figure 14). Based on these depictions, it might appear that the person to be sacrificed was bled to death, and that the blood was collected in the bowl.[65]

However, this representations is in contradiction with the human remains discovered in the subsidiary graves, where there were no sign of violence present on the skeletal remains. Stabbing to draw the blood, especially with a large object, will leave cut marks or impact damage upon the skeleton, which has not been present on surviving remains.[66]

It is possible that more than one method was used at different times, or that the ritual sacrifice of certain individuals was a separate practice to that of retainer sacrifice, and that such acts were part of other rituals or festivals. Poisoning may have been used as the method of sacrifice, also strangulation was another possibility.67

However, some scholars discussed the possibility that these representations might not depict human sacrifice, but they interpreted the images as depicting the work of physicians, pointing to their unique nature. This opinion was based on the fact that images or mention of putting people to death in the Egyptian literature were extremely rare. It is also extremely strange that such an act would be conducted with the executioner in a keeling or sitting position. Based on these remarks it was suggested that these scenes represented a medical procedure rather than ritual human sacrifice.68



Figure 13: A fragmentary label from the time of Aha. Wilkinson, T. (1999), *Early Dynastic Egypt*, London, Routledge, Figure 1, p. 267.
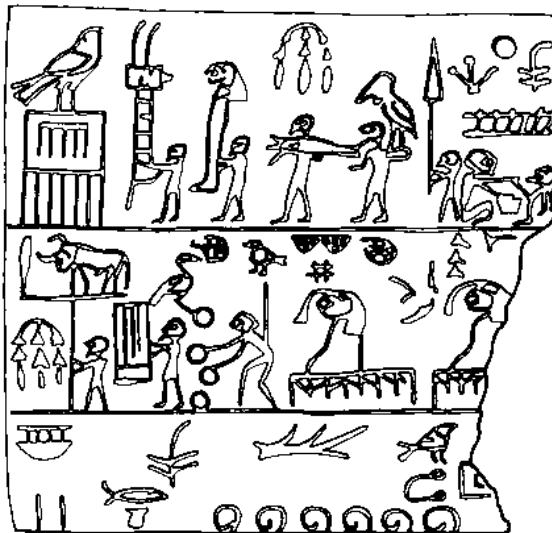


Figure 14: A label from the reign of Djer, Wilkinson, T. (1999), *Early Dynastic Egypt*, London, Routledge, Figure 2, p. 267

The context of the representation on Djer's label involves ritual objects being presented to the name of the king. The killing of a human being appears to be part of

the ritual, which would exclude the possibility of representing the ritual killing of a prisoner. The purpose of the entire ritual and its connection with human sacrifice are, unknown.69

Another possibility of ritual scarifying of a human being might be found in Mirgissa deposit, which was the most complete deposit associated with execration rituals. Some Egyptologists believed that execration rituals in some cases were accompanied by human sacrifices. This belief was based on the fact of the presence of a dismembered body of a Nubian, a human skull which was buried upside down in a pottery cup and a flint sacrificial knife which were found near the Mirgissa deposit.70  It is more convincing that the figurines were normally a substitute for human sacrifices.71

Also, recent excavation discovered two execration deposits date back to the New Kingdom, the 18th Dynasty, at Avaris.72  These deposits were associated with king Ahmose, they were most likely used by him after the capture of Avaris as strong magic to prevent further invasions by foreigners. In the first deposit, there were three male skulls which might have represented human sacrifice in the execration rituals, also accompanying these skulls were the fingers from the right hands of three males, probably the same males. In the other deposit two men skeletons were found lying face down. Some Egyptologists discussed that at Avaris, the figurines were not substitutes of the sacrifice, but instead they represented real humans that were sacrificed, as evidenced by the two full human skeletons found at the tomb. This additional finding of human execration victims is similar to the Mirgissa deposit.73

### I.2.h. Burial ritual

The final element of execration rituals is the burial of the figurines. Execration figurines were usually buried in cemeteries. The significance of burial symbolizes the association of the enemies with the dead. Spell 37 from the Coffin Texts, which is directed against personal enemies, states:

To be spoken over a figure of the foe made of wax and inscribed with the name of that foe on his chest with the bone of a synodontis fish: To be put in the ground in the abode of Osiris (which means graveyard).74

The entire spell is of relevance for the execration rituals, which states the use of a wax figurine and writing on it the name of the enemy so the figurine would be the substitute for that enemy, the spell stated here to use a fish bone to write the name of enemy, fish was a taboo diet in ancient Egypt, probably to desecrate the enemy and finally burying the figurine.75  Execration figurines were also sometimes buried upside down. This posture was commonly thought to be conflicted on enemies and the damned in ancient Egypt. Thus, they were denied a proper burial and would face a bad fate in the afterlife.76

### I.2.i. The Ritual of Breaking the Red Vessels

Before the appearance of execration figurines there existed the funerary rite of "breaking the red vessels" (figure 15), which was designed to repel or destroy enemies of the tomb owner. The remains of such rites were found at the royal cemeteries of Giza, Saqqara, and Lisht,77 and at several Egyptian forts in Nubia.78 It is mentioned in the Pyramid and Coffin Texts; the destruction of pots included the offering meal, using the vessels that had just contained the meal. It later became an independent ritual

intended to threaten enemies and prevent potential harm. At a later period in the execration ritual, the use of such pots continued alongside of figurines which were more realistic representations of the victims.79



Figure 15: The ceremony of breaking the red pots (left of center) on the day of the burial, was thought to dispel evil, Saqqara, Tomb of Horemheb, 18ᵗʰ Dynasty. Teeter, Emily, *Religion and Ritual in Ancient Egypt*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2011, fig 62, p. 146.

The rite of "breaking the red vessels" (sḏ dšr.w) is first attested in the 6ᵗʰ dynasty, and continued into the 18ᵗʰ dynasty.80 The first textual reference to the ritual of breaking the red vessels is Spell 244 of the Pyramid Texts; *"Hail, Osiris-NN,81 this is the Eye of Horus. Take it so that you may be strong and that he may be terrified of you-Break the red vases."82*

This spell was found on the east wall of king Merenre's burial chamber at his tomb in Saqqara,83 and also on the south wall of the passage between the burial chamber and antechamber of queen Wedjebten's wife of king Pepi II.84 The spell contains the ritual of the breaking of the red pots, which seems to have occurred at the end of the offering ritual. The mention of the eye of Horus in this offering ritual is to give strength to the king.85

Spell No. 926 in the Coffin Texts shows the inclusion of this rite in a ritual meal; *"Wash yourself, sit down at the meal, put your hands on it; divert the god's offerings, break the red pots, give cold water, purify the offering-tables ... fire and incense are for NN...".86*

 In a unique scene in the temple of Luxor, king Amenhotep III is shown dashing two vessels against one another in order to break them before the god Amun. Iconographic evidence for the rite can also be found in the New Kingdom tombs, mostly in the Memphite necropolis, in which priests are depicted smashing jars on the ground before offering booths.87

The use of red vessels continued in funerary offerings. In the Old Kingdom, the ritual of smashing pots had given birth to independent execration rites. By the Middle

Kingdom, execration texts had become standardized, perhaps indicating that the rite had also taken a standard form. Some execration rites arose due to specific circumstances, but by the Late Period there were both daily and cyclical festival execrations.88

In 1926 there were published texts from broken fragments of pottery bowls called the "Berlin bowls", which were the first identified execration texts.89 The "Berlin bowls" which had been dated to the 12th Dynasty consisted of broken fragments of pottery bowls of shattered and generally inscribed red clay vessels.90 These red clay vessels were smashed during the recitations of execration rituals.91 The names of enemies were written on the bowls to be cursed. With smashing the pottery the curse was believed to become effective by sympathetic magic on the enemies themselves.92

The act of breaking, was a mean of transferring the essence of substances and objects from the world of the living to that of the dead, it was an act intended to overcome threatening influences, and aimed at the destruction of evil forces, the breaking ritual holds a clear apotropaic character and the pots become substitutes for enemies.93

**I.2.j. Execration Figurines**

The magical practice of the manipulation of figures which represented real beings was well known in ancient Egypt. These figurines were frequently mentioned in the magical texts and in the funerary literature, representing gods, animals, and human beings.94 Such figurines were used in curse magic to fulfill the magician's orders. They were modeled in whatever form is desired by the magician, and a spell was then recited over them to bring them to life and enable them to execute the magician's orders. They were also employed in curse rituals as a substitute of the victim. The punishment which was used on the substitute image produces a similar result upon the victim which it was directed upon.95

In the Book of Overthrowing Apophis, wax models were made of current enemies of the state, as well as of the eternal forces of chaos. These enemies were identified by the use of their names and then destroyed in a variety of ways.96 Not many figures which were used to cast a spell on the people they depicted have actually survived in the archeological record due to the nature of the spell casting, especially those which were intended for destructive purposes because they were completely destroyed during the ritual.97

One of the earliest examples of the use of magical figures in curse magic to fulfill the magician's orders is mentioned in the Westcar papyrus (17th century BC).98 It includes the story of the Chief Lector Priest Webaoner and his unfaithful wife in the Old Kingdom in the reign of king Nebka (2686-2667 BC). Webaoner was informed by a servant that his wife was meeting her lover in a garden pavilion by a lake. The magician Webaoner made a crocodile out of wax and brought it to life using magic and gave it to the servant with certain instructions, the servant tossed the wax crocodile into the water. It grew into a real crocodile measuring about three and a half meters. The crocodile seized the lover and dragged him to the bottom of the lake.99 Webaoner returns to the lake with king Nebka and relates to him the crime that his wife and her lover had committed, which is adultery, and calls the crocodile up from the water with the lover still in its mouth. He then waits for king Nebka's judgment; king Nebka immediately orders the crocodile to devour the townsman once and for

all and commands that Webaoner's adulterous wife be set on fire and thrown into the river.100

Wax figures were also used in the New Kingdom in the records of the conspiracy against Ramses III (1184-1153 BC).101 A number of high officials, including the Overseer of the Treasury and certain scribes, conspired together against Ramses III apparently with the view of dethroning him. They took into their counsels a number of the ladies belonged to the *harim*. The conspirators managed to obtain a secret book of magic from the royal library. The texts explain that the conspirators made wax figures of both men and gods intending to affect the power of the king's personnel. These wax figures were used with the intent to harm to the king. The conspirators were either executed or forced to commit suicide.102 The *harim* conspiracy trials and punishments is mentioned in three documents: Papyrus Lee, Papyrus Rollin,103 and the Turin Judicial Papyrus.104

Also, king Nectanebo II (360-343 BC), the last native king of Egypt, is said to have repelled invaders through the use of magical wax figures. Whenever his enemies marched against him, he did not march out against them with soldiers, but he retreats to his room. If his enemies were coming by land, he would make wax figurines of soldiers, the magician king would then place the wax enemies in a bowl of water and recite spells upon them. The figures would then sink to the bottom of the bowl, causing at the same moment the destruction of the live soldiers. If the enemies were coming by sea, Nectanebo would place the wax soldiers in wax ships and recite the magical spells, causing the ships to sink into the sea at the same time.105

### I.3. The choice of materials and color

The red color was a powerful color in ancient Egypt, it was both a positive and negative color.106 It was associated with blood, in particular the protective power of the blood of Isis. It represented regeneration and life. Red also was associated with the sun god in its life giving aspects. Serpent amulets representing the Eye of Re in its protective and also potentially destructive aspects of the sun god were often made of red stones.107 During celebrations, ancient Egyptian would paint their bodies with red ochre and would wear amulets made of red stones as symbols of victory. In ancient Egyptian art, the normal skin tone of ancient Egyptian men was red, representing health and vitality.108

Red could also be employed to represent negative entities and concepts that embody the dangerous forces. It was closely associated with the god Seth who murdered Osiris and brought chaos. He was often represented with red color.109 Red was also associated with evil and hostile forces, representing aggression, destruction and anger. The names and images of hostile forces such as Seth and Apophis were often drawn in red, while the rest of the text in black. Moreover the red color also referred to the desert, and the desert in ancient Egyptian mythology could indicate the Asiatic enemies. Also in calendars of lucky and unlucky days the lucky days where written in black and the unlucky days were written in red.110

In execration rituals, red ink was used for the names and figures of enemies, and in many religious and magical texts, the names of dangerous beings were written in red.111 Also the hostile representation of the ritual of breaking the red vessels is evident in the specified color of the pottery itself. The two uses for the red color were

combined in the execration texts, where the substitute figure the pot or clay figurine and the identifying inscription on them are often red.112

The choice of wax as the basic constructive material for the figurines and pots is related to its peculiar physical properties, which makes it quite suitable for magical practices, and to its mythological association with the divine realm. Wax as a primeval substance was said to be created by the sun god himself. Wax was a symbol of the sun god Re and the goddess Maat, whose images were sometimes modeled in wax.113 Wax had protective and destructive significance; it was used in magic for both protective amulets and for the figures of enemies and evil beings which were made to be ritually destroyed.114 Yet, an object made of wax is characterized by its vulnerability and, thus, it could easily be destroyed during the rite. Also, the fact that it can be burnt without leaving any ashes distinguishes it as a perfect symbol guaranteeing the total eradication of the hostile image that it represents.115

Clay also had the same significance as wax. Like beeswax, clay can be easily modeled or destroyed and it is a primeval substance which symbolizes creation, fertility, and the process of ongoing life. It was represented by the annual inundation of the Nile, where mud was a symbol of life. Clay was also used in destructive and protective magic by the use of clay figurines which was produced to be used in the cursing rituals of the enemies. Clay was also modeled in the shape of harmful or venomous animals like scorpions to protect against them.116

**I.4. Individual Execration rituals**

Execration rituals were also used by individuals. An evidence of private practices could be the finds of small sets of buried figurines. The figures and pots used in the rites were often inscribed with the "rebellion formula", but sometimes only with personal names of foreign or Egyptian enemies or not inscribed. Simple rituals associated with private graves, and those having only personal names or no text, indicate an individual use of execration rituals as well.117

In some rituals in the Book of Overthrowing Apophis the rituals stated to destroy the images of Apophis, the enemies of the Pharaoh, and also one's own personal enemies. It is a state execration ritual, but includes personal enemies. Thus, it is hard to distinguish between personal magic from state religion in such practices. Private, small-scale rituals were far less archaeologically visible, especially when they involved the use of cheaper, less durable substances. Execration rituals were carried out both on a large-scale basis by the state and on a small scale by individuals throughout Egyptian history.118

**Conclusion**

The ancient Egyptians believed in fighting against any evil force that might disturb the cosmic order. Curse magic was a tool to control evil forces. Execration rituals was the main tool of curse magic to fight against evil influences. Execration rituals were directed towards actual or potential political enemies. Ancient Egyptians used magical cursing rituals to control the enemies of Egypt and the King as well as their own personal enemies. Execration rituals were to ensure Egypt's internal stability and Egypt's external dominance; remains of execration rituals were found since the Old Kingdome. Another form of early representations of execration rituals was the ritual of breaking the red pots, which represented the destruction of the enemies. By the

Middle Kingdom, the ritual of breaking the red pots was an independent execration rite.

Wax or clay was used to mold the figurines or the pots used for execration and red ink was commonly used to write the name of the enemies on them. These figurines were the substitute model for the enemies and it was believed that whatever misfortune happened to the figurines would also happen to the intended victims. Thus, an essential part of execration rituals was subjecting the figurines of the enemies to various forms of disfiguration and tortures, like bounding, cutting, piercing, burning, and burying. The most common form of bounding involves tying the arms or the arms and legs behind the back. This posture was attested in the oldest representation of the execration motif and continues throughout ancient Egyptian history. Execration rituals were always directed towards potential problems as a type of protective measure. It was directed against enemies who were dead or alive, forgings or Egyptians, enemies who would in the future rebel or think of rebelling, and also towards places or cities or nations.

The figurines or pots used in the execration rituals were often inscribed with a rebellion formula, which lists Nubians, Asiatics, Libyans, Egyptians as well as generally threatening forces. The figurines or pots were sometimes inscribed with personal names to identify the intended victims with the substitute figurine and other times the figurines were not inscribed with any text. The texts themselves contain no straightforward curses, but instead they serve to identify the fate of the enemies with that of the destroyed pot or image. It is more likely that the curses were derived from the ritual the figurines were subjected to not from the text.

Some figurines were manufactured to represent the appearance of the traditional enemies of Egypt with taking care to the facial features and hair styles, figurines rarely took the shape of a donkey maybe to represent evil as the god Seth was sometimes depicted as a donkey.

The sequence of foreigners, Egyptians, and evil forces may appear in some finds that they are in multiple copies by different scribes. There were some variations in the manner in which the texts were copied. The sections of texts were sometimes written on individual pieces, other times they were written across several pots or figures. By the Middle Kingdom, the execration texts were standardized. Execration rituals were mostly state sponsored rituals since the execration texts were directed to the enemies of the state and any potential threat. Also, the texts were updated to reflect changes in both rulers and territories, indicating that these rituals were performed under the supervision of the state. The existence of figurines with only personal names is also evidence of private execration practices, where individuals used curse magic to curse their personal enemies.

**Bibliography**

Abo el Magd, A. (2013), 'Red Color in Expressing Anger in Ancient Egyptian Texts', *Journal of History and Future*, Minia University, pp. 7-8

Abu Bakr, A.M., and Osing, J. (1937), Ächtungstexte aus dem Alten Reich, Mitteilungen des Deutschen Archaologischen Instituts, Abteilung Kairo 29.

Adela, O. (2015), *Ancient Egypt Transformed: Middle Kingdom*, London, Yale University press.

Aharoni, Y. (1967), *The Land of the Bible: A Historical Geography*, UK, The Westminster Press.

Ben-Tor, A. (2006), *Essays on Ancient Israel in its near Eastern context*, USA, Eisenbrauns.

Binder, S. (2011), 'The Bulletin of the Australian Centre for Egyptology', *Australian Centre for Egyptology* volume 22, Australia, Macquarie University, p. 86

Blatherwick, H. (2016), *Prophets, Gods and Kings in Sīrat Sayf ibn Dhī Yazan*, Leiden, Koninklijke Brill.

Bremmer, J. (2007), *The Strange World of Human Sacrifice*, Paris, Peeters.

Budge, W.E.A. (1896), *The Life and Exploits of Alexander the Great being a Series of Translations of the Ethiopic History of Alexander by the Pseudo-Callisthenes and other Writers*, London, University of Cambridge press.

Budge, W. E. A. (1901), *Egyptian Magic*, London, Kegan, Paul, Trench and Trübner & Co.

Budka, J. (2014), *Egyptian impact on pot-breaking ceremonies at Kurru: A re-examination, in The Fourth Cataract and Beyond*, Proceedings of the 12th International Conference for Nubian Studies, UK, British Museum Publications.

Campbell, R (2012), *Human Sacrifice at Abydos in First Dynasty Egypt*, ANE C267.

Clark, R. (2003), *The Sacred Magic of Ancient Egypt: The Spiritual Practice Restored*, USA, Llewellyn publications.

Clayton, P. (1994), *Chronicle of the Pharaohs*, London, Thames and Hudson Ltd.

David, P.S. (1997), *Ancient Egypt*, Oxford, Oxford university press.

Edwards, G. and Hammond (1971), *The Cambridge Ancient History* Third Edition Volume 1 part 2: Early History of the Middle East, UK, Cambridge University Press.

Faulkner, R. (1937), 'The Bremner-Rhind Papyrus – III', *Journal of Egyptian Archaeology* 23(2).

Faulkner, R. (1969), *The Ancient Egyptian Pyramid Texts*, Oxford, Oxford University Press.

Gadalla, M. (2003), *Egyptian Harmony: The Visual Music*, USA, Greensboro, NC.

Graves-Brown, C. (2010), *The Ideological Significance of Flint in Dynastic Egypt*, volume 1, London, Institute of Archaeology, University College London.

Hansen, V., Curtis, K. (2010), *Voyages in World History*, Volume 1, USA, Wadsworth.

Hawass, Z. (2010), *Inside the Egyptian Museum with Zahi Hawass*, Egypt, The American University in Cairo press.

Hornung, E. (1997), *The Ancient Egyptian books of the Afterlife*, USA, Cornell University Press.

Janson, H., Janson, A. (2004), *History of Art: The Western Tradition*, Italy, Pearson Education.

Kamal. S.M. (2009), 'Taboos in Ancient Egypt', *Proceeding of the 3rd International Scientific Conference, Integrated Relation Tourism Territories and Development in the MediterraneanArea, Volume 1,* Helwan, Helwan University.

Kinnear, J. (08/10/14), *Human Sacrifice in Ancient Egypt*, http://www.ancient-egypt.org

Koenig, Y. (1990), *les textes d'envoutment de Mirrgissa*, RdE41.

Kousoulis, P. (2001), 'Overthrowing Apophis: Egyptian ritual in practice', *Ancient Egypt Magazine Nine Measures of Magic*, Part 3, Issue Nine - November/December 2001.

LaViolette, P. (1995), *Genesis of the Cosmos: The Ancient Science of Continuous Creation*, USA, Lake Book Manufacturing .Inc.

Mark, J (26/4/2016), 'Spiritual Defense – Execration Rituals in Ancient Egypt', *Ancient History Encyclopedia*, www.ancient.eu

Mark, J. (8-1-2017), 'Color in Ancient Egypt', *Ancient History Encyclopedia*, www.ancient.eu.

Mirecki,P. & Meyer, M. (2002), *Magic and Ritual in the Ancient World*, Leiden, Koninklijke Brill.

Morkot, R. (2003), *The A to Z of Ancient Egyptian Warfar*, USA, Scarecrow press, Inc.

Muhlestein, K. (2003), *Violence in the Service of Order: The Religious Framework for Sanctioned Killing in Ancient Egypt*, Los Angeles, University of California.

Muhlestein, K. (2008), 'Execration Ritual', *UCLA Encyclopedia of Egyptology*, Los Angeles, In Willeke Wendrich, Jacco Dielemao (eds.).

Muhlestein, K. (2008), 'Royal Executions: Evidence Bearing on the Subject of Sanctioned Killing in the Middle Kingdom', *The Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient*, 51/2 (2008).

Muhlestein, K. and Gee, J. (2011), 'An Egyptian Context for the Sacrifice of Abraham', *Journal of the Book of Mormon and Other Restoration Scripture*.

Oppenheim, A. etal (2015), *Ancient Egypt Transformed: The Middle Kingdom*, USA, Yale University press.

Pinch, G. (1994), *Magic in Ancient Egypt*, UK, British Museum Press.

Posener, G. (1940), *Princes et pays d'Asie et de Nubie*, Brussels, Foundation Egyptologique Reine Elisabeth.

Pritchard, J.b. (1958), *Archaeology and the Old Testament*, USA, Princeton university press.

Remler, P. (2000), *Egyptian Mythology A to Z*, USA, Chelsea House.

Kemp, B.J. (1966), 'Abydos and the Royal Tombs of the First Dynasty', The Journal of Egyptian Archaeology Volume 52, pp. 13-22

Ritner, R. (1993), *The Mechanics of Ancient Egyptian Magical Practices*, USA, Chicago, The University of Chicago.

Robins, G. (2001), 'Color Symbolism', *The Oxford Encyclopedia of Ancient Egypt*, volume 1, Oxford, Oxford University press.

Robins, G. (2008), *The Art of ancient Egypt*, Cambridge, Harvard University press.

Rogers, M. (2014), *The Esoteric Codex: Ancient Egyptian texts* Volume 1, USA, Lulu press.

Rommel, A. (2015), *The Esoteric Codex: Sorcery I*, UK, Lulu press.

Salah, M., Sourouzian, H. (1987), *The Egyptian Museum Cairo*, Egypt, Organization of Egyptian Antiquities.

Salim, R. (2013), *Cultural Identity and Self-presentation in Ancient Egyptian Fictional Narratives*, Copenhagen, University of Copenhagen.

Schafer, P. and Kippenburg, H.G. (1997), *Envisioning Magic*, Leiden, Koninklijiki Brill.

Seidlmayer, S. J. (2001), 'Execration Texts', *The Oxford Encyclopedia of Ancient Egypt* 1, Oxford, Oxford University Press.

Sethe, K. (1926), *Die Ächtung feindlicher fürsten, Völker und Dinge auf altägyptischen tongefässscherben des Mittleren Reiches, Berlin, Akademie der Wissenschaften*, Berlin, Akademie der Wissenschaften.

Silverman, D. P. (1997), *Ancient Egypt*, Oxford, Oxford University press.

Singer, G. (6-12-2010), 'Color in Ancient Egypt', *Forum Unesco*, World Heritage Centre.

Streit, K. 2017. 'A Maximalist Interpretation of the Execration Texts: Archaeological and Historical Implications of a High Chronology', *Journal of Ancient Egyptian Interconnections* Volume13.

Teeter, E. (2011), *Religion and Ritual in Ancient Egypt*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press.

Waraksa, E.A. (2009), *Female Figurines from the Mut Precint: Context and Ritual function*, Academic Press Fribourg, Fribourg, Switzerland.

Watrin, L. (2008), *Human Sacrifices in early Dynastic Egypt: An Archeological Mirage*, Department of Mediterranean Studies, Greece, University of the Aegean.

Weiss, M. (1968), 'The Pattern of the Execration Texts in the Prophetic Literature', *Israel Exploration Journal* volume19 no.3, Israel, Israel Exploration Society.

Werness, H. (2006), *Continuum Encyclopedia of Animal Symbolism in World Art*, USA, Continuum International Publishing group Inc.

Wilkinson, T. (1994), *Symbol & Magic in Egyptian Art*, London, Thames & Hudson, Ltd.

Wilkinson, T. (1999), *Early Dynastic Egypt*, London, Routledge.

Wilkinson, T. (2007), *The Egyptian World*, London, Routlegde.

Wilkinson, T. (2010), *The Rise and Fall of Ancient Egypt*, London, Bloomsbury.

Willems, H. (1990), 'Crime, Cult and Capital Punishment' *Journal of Egyptian Archaeology* 76.

Worschech, U. (1997), *Egypt and Moab: The Biblical Archaeologist* volume 60 no. 4, USA, The American Schools of Oriental research.

---

[1] 1 Mark, J (26/4/2016), 'Spiritual Defense - Execration Rituals in Ancient Egypt', *Ancient History Encyclopedia*, www.ancient.eu

2 Seidlmayer, S. J. (2001), 'Execration Rituals', in *The Oxford Encyclopedia of Ancient Egypt* 1, Oxford, Oxford University Press, p. 487.

3 Rogers, M. (2014), *The Esoteric Codex: Ancient Egyptian Texts* Volume 1, USA, Lulu press, p. 114.

4 Oppenheim, A. etal (2015), *Ancient Egypt Transformed: The Middle Kingdom*, USA, Yale University press, p. 163

5 Edwards, G. and Hammond (1971), *The Cambridge Ancient History* Third Edition Volume 1 part 2: Early History of the Middle East, UK, Cambridge University Press, p. 508.

6 Silverman, D. P. (1997), *Ancient Egypt*, Oxford, Oxford University press, p. 145

7 Canaan was the name of a large country which corresponds roughly to present-day Lebanon, Syria, Jordan and Palestine and was also known as Phoenicia, ww.ancient.eu.

8 Sethe, K. (1926), *Die Ächtung feindlicher fürsten, Völker und Dinge auf altägyptischen tongefässscherben des Mittleren Reiches, Berlin*, Akademie der Wissenschaften, pp. 31-72

9 Posener, G. (1940), *Princes et pays d'Asie et de Nubie*, Brussels, Foundation Egyptologique Reine Elisabeth, pp. 20-40

10 Koenig, Y. (1990), *les textes d'envoutment de Mirrgissa*, RdE41, pp. 90-101

11 Ritner, R. (1993), *The Mechanics of Ancient Egyptian Magical Practices*, USA, Chicago, The University of Chicago, p. 137.

12 Semna was a fortified area established in the reign of Senusret I (1965-1920 BC) on the west bank of the Nile at the southern end of a series of Middle Kingdom fortresses founded during the 12th Dynasty (1985-1795 BC) in the second cataract area of Lower Nubia, www.en.m.wikipedia.org

13 Uronarti was an ancient Egyptian fortress that was located on an island on the Nile River. It was located near the second cataract in Lower Nubia. It is believed to be constructed during the Middle Kingdom, www.en.m.wikipedia.org

14 Mirgissa was a settlement in Northern state, Sudan, situated at the second cataract, it contained one of the largest fortresses in Nubia, www.en.m.wikipedia.org

15 Elephantine is an island on the Nile, forming part of the city of Aswan in southern Egypt. The island is located just downstream of the First Cataract, at the southern border of Upper Egypt with Lower Nubia, www.en.m.wikipedia.org

16 Balat is the modern city *Ayn Asil* in the *Dakhla* Oasis, www.en.m.wikipedia.org

17 Ben-Tor, A. (2006), *Essays on Ancient Israel in its near Eastern context*, USA, Eisenbrauns, p.63.

18 Ritner, R. (1993), *The Mechanics*, p. 137.

19 Teeter, E. (2011), *Religion and Ritual in Ancient Egypt*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, p. 178

20 Abu Bakr, A.M., and Osing, J. (1937), *Ächtungstexte aus dem Alten Reich*, Mitteilungen des Deutschen Archäologischen Instituts, Abteilung Kairo 29, pp. 97–133.

21 Rommel, A. (2015), *The Esoteric Codex: Sorcery I*, UK, Lulu press, UK, p. 66.

22 Rebellion formula is a cursing text written on the execration objects to protect Egypt against any harm and curse all enemies, Silverman, D. P. (1997), *Egypt*, p. 145

23 Rommel, A. (2015), *Sorcery*, p. 97-133.

24 Rinter, R. (2003), *The Mechanics*, p. 139

25 Pritchard, J.b. (1958), *Archaeology and the Old Testament*, USA, Princeton university press, p. 68.

26 Ritner, R. (1993), *The Mechanics*, p. 139.

27 Muhlestein, K. (2003), V*iolence in the Service of Order: The Religious Framework for Sanctioned Killing in Ancient Egypt*, Los Angeles, University of California, p. 19.

28 Aharoni, Y. (1967), *The Land of the Bible: A Historical Geography*, UK, The Westminster Press, p. 144.

29 Seidlmayer, S.J. (2001), *Encyclopedia*, p. 488

30 Muhlestein, K. and Gee, J. (2011), 'An Egyptian Context for the Sacrifice of Abraham', *Journal of the Book of Mormon and Other Restoration Scripture*, (20/2/2011).

31 A complete study of the uses of flint in ancient Egypt is found in Graves-Brown, C. (2010), *The Ideological Significance of Flint in Dynastic Egypt*, volume 1, London, Institute of Archaeology, University College London.

32 Willems, H. (1990), *'Crime, Cult and Capital Punishment',* Journal of Egyptian Archaeology 76, pp. 46-51

33 Adela, O. etal (2015), *Ancient Egypt Transformed: Middle Kingdom*, USA, Yale University press, p. 171

34 Seidlmayer, S.J. (2001), *Encyclopedia*, p. 148.

35 Mirecki,P. & Meyer, M. (2002), *Magic and Ritual in the Ancient World*, Leiden, Koninklijke Brill, p. 139

36 Seidlmayer, S.J. (2001), *Encyclopedia*, p. 487

37 Muhlestein, K. (2008), 'Execration Ritual', *UCLA Encyclopedia of Egyptology*, Los Angeles, In Willeke Wendrich, Jacco Dielemao (eds.), p. 1.

38 Weiss, M. (1968), 'The Pattern of the Execration Texts in the Prophetic Literature', *Israel Exploration Journal* volume19 no.3, Israel, Israel Exploration Society, p. 155.

39 Pinch, G. (1994), *Magic in Ancient Egypt*, UK, British Museum Press, p. 93

40 Muhlestein, K. (2008), *Execration*, p. 1

41 The Book of Apophis is a collection of magical spells from the New Kingdom which were supposed to curse and repel the evil of the serpent Apophis the god of evil, www.ancient.eu

42 Faulkner, R. (1937), 'The Bremner-Rhind Papyrus – III', *Journal of Egyptian Archaeology* 23(2), pp. 173-175.

43 Pinch, G. (1994), *Magic*, p. 93

44 Rommel, A. (2015), *Sorcery*, p. 66.

45 Muhlestein, K. (2008), *Execration*, p. 2,3

46 Kousoulis, P. (2001), 'Overthrowing Apophis: Egyptian ritual in practice', *Ancient Egypt Magazine Nine Measures of Magic*, Part 3, Issue Nine - November/December 2001, p. 32.

47 LaViolette, P. (1995), *Genesis of the Cosmos: The Ancient Science of Continuous Creation*, USA, Lake Book Manufacturing .Inc, p. 103

48 Gadalla, M. (2003), *Egyptian Harmony: The Visual Music*, USA, Greensboro, NC, p. 68

49 Kousoulis, P. (2001), *Nine Measures*, p. 32.

50 Kousoulis, P. (2001), Ibid, p.32

51 Hansen, V., Curtis, K. (2010), *Voyages in World History*, Volume 1, USA, Wadsworth, p. 42

52 Janson, H., Janson, A. (2004), *History of Art: The Western Tradition*, Italy, Pearson Education, p. 136.

53 Salah, M., Sourouzian, H. (1987), *The Egyptian Museum Cairo*, Egypt, Organization of Egyptian Antiquities, p. 43

54 Robins, G. (2008), *The Art of ancient Egypt*, Cambridge, Harvard University press, p.38

55 Morkot, R. (2003), *The A to Z of Ancient Egyptian Warfar*, USA, Scarecrow press, Inc, p. 32

56 Wilkinson, T. (2010), *The Rise and Fall of Ancient Egypt*, London, Bloomsbury, p. 42

57 Hawass, Z. (2010), *Inside the Egyptian Museum with Zahi Hawass*, Egypt, The American University in Cairo press, p. 279

58 Wilkinson, T. (2007), *The Egyptian World*, London, Routlegde,  p. 101

59 Binder, S. (2011), 'The Bulletin of the Australian Centre for Egyptology', *Australian Centre for Egyptology* volume 22, Australia, Macquarie University, p. 86.

60 Clayton, P. (1994), *Chronicle of the Pharaohs*, London, Thames and Hudson Ltd, p. 21.

61 Watrin, L. (2008), *Human Sacrifices in early Dynastic Egypt: An Archeological Mirage*, Department of Mediterranean Studies, Greece, University of the Aegean, p. 273

62 Kemp, B.J. (1966), 'Abydos and the Royal Tombs of the First Dynasty', *The Journal of Egyptian Archaeology* Volume 52, pp. 13-22

63 Clayton, P. (1994), *Chronicle*s, p. 23

64 Clayton, P. (1994), Ibid, p. 23

65 Watrin, L. (2008), *Human Sacrifices*, p. 274

66 Wilkinson, T. (1999),  *Early Dynastic Egypt*, London, Routledge, p. 267

67 Kinnear, J. (08/10/14), *Human Sacrifice in Ancient Egypt*, http://www.ancient-egypt.org

68 Campbell, R. (2012), *Abydos*, p. 8

69  Wilkinson, T. (1999),  *Early Dynastic Egypt*, London, Routledge, p. 268

70 Bremmer, J. (2007), *The Strange World of Human Sacrifice*, Paris, Peeters, p. 131

71 Willems, H. (1990), 'Crime, Cult and Capital Punishment', *Journal of Egyptian Archaeology* 76, pp. 46-51.

72 Avaris was the capital of Egypt under the Hyksos. It was located at modern *Tell el-Dab'a* in the northeastern region of the Nile Delta, www.en.m.wikipedia.org

73 Muhlestein, K. (2008), 'Royal Executions: Evidence Bearing on the Subject of Sanctioned Killing in the Middle Kingdom', *The Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient*, p. 23-24.

74 Ritner, R. (2003), *The Mechanics*, p. 173. The brackets are Ritner's insertion

75 Kamal. S.M. (2009) , 'Taboos in Ancient Egypt', *Proceeding of the 3rd International Scientific Conference, Integrated Relation Tourism Territories and Development in the MediterraneanArea, Volume 1*, Helwan, Helwan University, pp. 6-7

76 Blatherwick, H. (2016), *Prophets, Gods and Kings in Sīrat Sayf ibn Dhī Yazan*, Leiden, Koninklijke Brill, p. 187

77 Lisht is found on the west bank of the Nile River near al-Fayyum, It is a 12th Dynasty necropolis.

78 David, P.S. (1997), *Ancient Egypt*, Oxford, Oxford university press, p. 144

79 Streit, K. (2017), 'A Maximalist Interpretation of the Execration Texts: Archaeological and Historical Implications of a High Chronology.' *Journal of Ancient Egyptian Interconnections* Volume13 pp. 59-69.

80 Waraksa, E.A. (2009), *Female Figurines from the Mut Precint: Context and Ritual function*, Academic Press Fribourg, Fribourg, Switzerland, p. 107.

81 Refers to the deceased.

82 Faulkner, R. (1969), *The Ancient Egyptian Pyramid Texts*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, p. 58.

83 The fourth king of the 6th Dynasty

84 The fifth king of the 6th Dynasty

85 A complete study of the Eye of Horus in the Pyramid Texts is found in, Edwards, S. (1995), *Symbolism of the Eye of Horus in the Pyramid Texts*, University College of Swansea.

86 Faulkner, R. (1969), *Pyramid Texts*, p. 66.

87 Waraksa, Elizabeth A. (2009), *Female Figurines*, p. 107.

88 Faulkner, R. (1937), *Bremner-Rhind Papyrus*, pp. 169 - 174

89 Pritchard, J.B. (1958), *Archeology*, p. 66

90 Hornung, E. (1997), *The Ancient Egyptian Books of the Afterlife*, USA, Cornell University Press, p. 6.

91 Clark, R. (2003), *The Sacred Magic of Ancient Egypt: The Spiritual Practice Restored*, USA, Llewellyn publications, p. 329

92 Worschech, U. (1997), 'Egypt and Moab: The Biblical Archaeologist', *The American Schools of Oriental Research* 60/4, p. 229.

93 Budka, J. (2014), *Egyptian impact on pot-breaking ceremonies at Kurru: A re-examination, in The Fourth Cataract and Beyond, Proceedings of the 12th International Conference for Nubian Studies,* UK, British Museum Publications, p.646

94 Schafer, P. and Kippenburg, H.G. (1997), *Envisioning Magic*, Leiden, Koninklijiki Brill, p. 72.

95 Salim, R. (2013), *Cultural Identity and Self-presentation in Ancient Egyptian Fictional Narratives*, Copenhagen, University of Copenhagen, p. 31

96 Pinch, G. (1994), *Magic*, p.92.

97 Pinch, G. (1994), Ibid, p. 90.

98 The Westcar papyrus is an ancient Egyptian text containing five stories about miracles performed by priests and magicians, it is now displayed in the Ägyptisches Museum, Berlin, www.en.m.wikipedia.com

99 Budge, W. E. A. (1901), *Egyptian Magic*, London, Kegan Paul Trench and Trübner & Co., p. 68.

100 Salim, R. (2013), *Cultural Identity*, p.61

101 Salim, R. (2013), Ibid, p. 31,32

102 Pinch, G. (1994), *Magic*, p. 95.

103 The Rollin and Lee papyri are ancient Egyptian record of the trials held against conspirators of Ramesses III, they describe the magical aspects used and the punishments apportioned to them, which in all three cases was a death sentence, www.en.m.wikipedia.com

104 The Turin Judicial papyrus is an ancient Egyptian record of the trials held against conspirators plotting to assassinate Ramesses III in what is referred to as the "*harim*

conspiracy". The papyrus contains mostly summaries of the accusations, convictions and punishments, www.en.m.wikipedia.com

105 Budge, W.E.A. (1896), *The Life and Exploits of Alexander the Great being a Series of Translations of the Ethiopic History of Alexander by the Pseudo-Callisthenes and other Writers*, London, University of Cambridge press, pp. 4-5.

106 Remler, P. (2000), *Egyptian Mythology A to Z*, USA, Chelsea House, p. 43

107 Wilkinson, R. (1994) , *Symbol & Magic in Egyptian Art*, London, Thames & Hudson, Ltd, p. 107

108 Singer, G. (6-12-2010), 'Color in Ancient Egypt', *Forum Unesco*, World Heritage Centre

109 Mark, J. (8-1-2017), *Color in Ancient Egypt*, www.ancient.eu

110 Abo el Magd, A. (2013), 'Red Color in Expressing Anger in Ancient Egyptian Texts', *Journal of History and Future,* Minia University, pp. 7-8

111 Robins, G. (2001) , 'Color Symbolism', *The Oxford Encyclopedia of Ancient Egypt* volume1, Oxford, Oxford University press, pp. 292-293

112 Ritner, R. (2003), *The Mechanics*, p. 147.

113 Werness, H. (2006), *Continuum Encyclopedia of Animal Symbolism in World Art*, USA, Continuum International Publishing group Inc, p. 41

114 Wilkinson, R. (1994), *Egyptian Art*, p. 102

115 Kousoulis, P. (2002), *Egypt Magazine*, Last modified: January 23, 2002.

116 Wilkinson, R. (1994), *Egyptian Art*, p. 94.

117 Ritner, R. (2003), *The Mechanics*, p. 184

118 Muhlestein, K. (2008), *Execration*, p. 3.