

Unpublished b3 - Statuette of Yuya
Cairo, Egyptian Museum CG 51176 (JE 95312)

نشر تمثال الباليويا المحفوظ بالمتحف المصري بالقاهرة

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Abstract

This paper studies an unpublished *b3* statuette displayed at the Egyptian Museum in Cairo, second floor, room 43 (FIG. 1). It was discovered in the Valley of the Kings, in tomb KV 46 that belongs to Yuya and Thuya. The statuette belongs to Yuya , the Priest of god Min, the Principle god at Akhmim during the reign of king Amenhotep III. It carries the number JE 95312.


The statuette of Yuya is the first private *ba*-bird statuette found so far from ancient Egypt. This paper aims to study the symbolism of this statuette. *b3* statuettes became a main part of funerary furnishing starting from the New Kingdom onwards. Accordingly, they were probably intended to replace the real *b3* in case of being lost or destroyed, because the *b3* was an essential element for the deceased's daily renewal.


Keywords: *ba (b3)*, Yuya, Thuya, statuette, *b3*-statuette, funerary statuette.

الملخص:

يهتم ذلك البحث بدراسة تمثال "با" صغير غير منشور بالمتحف المصري بالقاهرة و هو معروض بالطابق الثاني، غرفة رقم ٤٣ (شكل ١). تم اكتشاف ذلك التمثال بمقبرة يويا و تويبا التي تحمل رقم ٤٦ بوادي الملوك بالأقصر. ينتمي ذلك التمثال ليويا الذي شغل منصب الكاهن الأكبر للمعبود "مين" و هو المعبود الرئيسي بمنطقة أخميم. جدير بالذكر ان ذلك التمثال يحمل رقم تسجيل JE 95312. يبدو أن ذلك التمثال هو أول نموذج لتمثال "با" عثر عليه من مصر القديمة حتى الآن ، كما يبدو أنه لا توجد نماذج أخرى من ذلك النوع من التماثيل تعود الى عصر الدولة الحديثة. تهدف تلك الورقة البحثية الى دراسة رمزية ذلك التمثال الصغير. ظهرت تماثيل "البا" كجزء من الأثاث الجنائزي بداية من عصر الدولة الحديثة و ما بعدها و قد ظهر ذلك النوع من التماثيل بوفرة خلال فترة العصور المتأخرة و كذلك العصرين اليوناني والروماني. ربما كان الهدف من تلك التماثيل أن تحل محل "البا" أو روح الشخص المتوفى في حالة فقدانها حيث كانت الروح أحد العناصر الأساسية الهامة للمتوفى في العالم الآخري مصر القديمة.

الكلمات الدالة: با؛ يويا؛ ثويا؛ تمثال صغير؛ تمثال با؛ تمثال جنازى.

This paper studies an unpublished *ba*-statuette displayed at the Egyptian Museum in Cairo, second floor, room 43 (FIG. 1).¹ It was discovered in the Valley of the Kings, in tomb KV 46² that belongs to Yuya and Thuya, father and mother of Queen Tiye, the principal wife of King Amenhotep III, mother of King Akhenaten, and grandmother of King Tutankhamun. The statuette belongs to Yuya  who was a powerful dignitary lived during the reign of King Amenhotep III. He was the Priest of god Min, the Principle god at Akhmim,³ his hometown. The statuette carries the number JE 95312.

b3 concept started to be associated with non-royal individuals since the end of the Old Kingdom only textually without any figurative representation.⁴ The statuette of Yuya  is the first private *b3* statuette found so far from ancient Egypt. This paper aims to study the symbolism of this statuette and its function as a main part of funerary furnishing starting from the New Kingdom onwards.

Introduction:

Ancient Egyptians believed that human beings consisted of several aspects to their existence, including body (*ht*), name (*rn*), spirit (*b3*), double (*k3*), and shadow (*šwt*). The better term that expresses the meaning of *b3* is

¹ Tomb of Yuaa and Thuiu, 63, CG 1176. Thanks are due to the Egyptian Cairo Museum and kindly Al-Zhraa Saif (Curator and Keeper, and Head of Yuya and Thuya collection and Papyri and writing equipment of the New Kingdom at the Egyptian Museum in Cairo) for granting the author permission to publish this statuette and providing professional photography. I am also grateful to Prof. Maged Negm, Vice President of Helwan University, for his valuable comments. The researcher would like to express her gratitude to Emanuele Casini for giving free access to his paper, CASINI, E.: «The Three -Dimensional Representations of the Human-Headed *b3*-Bird: Some Remarks about their Origin and Function», *EVO XXXVIII*, 2015.

² The tomb was discovered in 1905 by Theodore M. Davis and James E. Quibell, almost intact. The majority of the tomb collection is kept in the Cairo Egyptian Museum. Davis was allowed to keep a share of Yuya and Thuya's collection. It is kept now in the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York. DAVIES, T. M., *The Tomb of Iouiya and Touiyou*, London, 1907.

³ KANAWATI, N.: "Akhemim", In *The Oxford Encyclopedia of Ancient Egypt*, edited by Redford, D.B., Vols.1-3, 51-53, Oxford, 2001, 51 [= OE I].


⁴ ŽABKAR, L.: «A Study of the *ba* Concept in Ancient Egyptian Texts», *SAOC* 34, 1968, 162.

“spirit”; however, it could assume some physical aspects too.⁵ According to the pyramid texts, *bs* only represents the life force of the dead king; it could refer to the dead king or divine.⁶ By the end of the Old Kingdom, *bs* concept started to refer to non-royal individuals.

The first evidence for mentioning the *bs* of a non-royal person appeared by the end of the Old Kingdom. It belongs to Hermeru, coming from an offering formula on his false door panel from his Sixth Dynasty tomb at Saqqara. An offering formula inscribed on the lintel of this tomb reflects the desire that the *bs* endures before god. It seems that the concept of *bs* has changed by the end of the Old Kingdom. By the Middle and New Kingdoms, the idea of the *bs* for a non-royal deceased developed and became tangible.⁷ It started to represent the vital abilities of the person. This probably explains the appearance of *bs* -statuettes for non-royal persons from the New Kingdom onwards.

bs-statuettes are among funerary statuettes that were buried with the deceased. They appeared for the first time in the New Kingdom, Eighteenth Dynasty (FIG. 1). They developed throughout of the Late Period and continued until the Late Ptolemaic Period.

Representation of *bs*:

According to texts and scenes, the *bs* is commonly represented as a human-headed bird- usually falcon  and sometimes with human arms. It was written variously with signs representing a stork (G 29), a ram (E

⁵ ŽABKAR, Study of the ba Concept in Ancient Egyptian Texts, 48.

⁶For further reading on ba concept, see BONNET, H., *Reallexicon der Ägyptischen Religionsgeschichte*, Berlin, 1957, 74-77; TAYLOR, J., *Death and the Afterlife in Ancient Egypt*, London, 2001, 20-23; ASMANN J., *Death and Salvation in Ancient Egypt*, Translated by LORTON D., Ithaca and London, 2005, 87-94; HARRINGTON, N., *Living with the Dead: Ancestor Worship and Mortuary Ritual in Ancient Egypt*, Oxford, 2013, 3-7; JANÁK J.: «Ba», *UCLA Encyclopedia of Egyptology* 1, №1, 2016, 4.

⁷ ALTENMÜLLER, H.: «Sein Ba Möge Fortdauern bei Gott», *SAK* 20, 1993, 1-15; ŽABKAR, Study of the ba Concept in Ancient Egyptian Texts, 60-61, 90-91; WOLF-BRINKMANN & MARIE, E. M: *Versuch einer Deutung des Begriffes “ba” anhand der Überlieferung der Frühzeit und des Alten Reiches*, Freiburg i. Br: G. Seeger, 1968; for more details on the date of the tomb, see BROVARSKI, E.: «False Doors and History: the Sixth Dynasty», In *The Old Kingdom Art and Archaeology*, edited by BÁRTA, M., 1-12, Prague, 2004, 98, 106, ft. 250.

10), and a human-headed falcon (G 53).⁸ The representation of the *b3*-bird on the wall of the burial chamber of Sennefer at Sheikh Abd el-Qurna (TT 96) is one of the earliest depictions of these figures.

b3-statuettes are always represented with a human head and a bird's body (hawk). The bird's body represents free movement of the deceased. It reflects the ability of mobility by leaving the corpse during the day, then coming back to reunite with it every night. The human head represents the nature of the being it manifests (either human or divine).⁹ This kind of statuettes started to appear in the New Kingdom and increased by the Late Period. However, there is a representation of the transport of a *b3*-bird during a funerary procession. This probably suggests the existence of these statuettes during the reign of Amenhotep II, Thutmose IV, and Amenhotep III (FIG. 3).

Description:

This statuette was discovered in the tomb of Yuya and Thuya (KV 46). It dates back to the 18th dynasty, New Kingdom. The tomb was robbed during ancient times. Accordingly, the original place of the statuette within the tomb is unidentified.¹⁰

b3 - statuettes were mainly made out of painted wood. However, other materials were used to produce them such as metal, stone, glass, faience, and terracotta. Worthy of note that most of *b3* - statuettes which were made out of stone date back to the Graeco-Roman Period.¹¹

The statuette of Yuya is represented as a human-headed bird (hawk). It is made out of painted limestone, which is exceptional for its vivid well preserved colors. The face is represented with a beard and wearing a short

⁸ For more information on the Hieroglyphic *b3* -sign, see JANÁK, J.: «Saddle-Billed Stork (Ba-Bird)», *UCLA Encyclopedia of Egyptology* 1, N^o.1, 2014; JANÁK, J.: «A Question of Size: A Remark on Early Attestations of the ba Hieroglyph», *SAK* 40, 143-153; DAVIES, T. M. & NAVILLE, É., *The Funeral Papyrus of Iouiya*, London, 1908, 10.


⁹ JANÁK, *Ba*, 4.

¹⁰ For more information on the robbery of the tomb, see DAVIES, *Iouiya and Touiyou*, 16-19.

¹¹ SCALF, F.: "The Role of Birds within the Religious Landscape of Ancient Egypt", In *Between Heaven and Earth: Birds in Ancient Egypt*, edited by Rozenn Bailleul-LeSuer, 33-40, Chicago, 2012, 201; for other examples of *b3* -birds made out of stone, see CASINI, *b3*-Bird, 10, ft. 6, 11.

black wig. The face and claws are painted reddish brown. The wings are given elaborate patterns of green, blue for the underside of the tail, yellow for the underbelly and white for the thighs. There is an *ib*-amulet¹² around that statuette's neck.

There is a representation of an offering table in front of the bird's claws. Offering tables were an essential element in ancient Egypt. They represent a link between the spiritual and living world, providing nourishment for the deceased.¹³

The offering table represented here takes the shape of the *hotep*  sign¹⁴. It is the most common shape for ancient Egyptian offering tables. Yuya's offering table carries a representation of loaves of bread, four of which are conical in shape, while the one in the middle is round in shape.

The bird stands above a black wooden base. The text over it reads as follows:

Text: 

Transliteration: *ḥtp*¹⁵ *Wsr*¹⁶ *n k3 n i33*¹⁷ *m3^c-ḥrw*¹⁸

Translation: Offerings (by) Osiris (to the) *k3* of Yuya, justified.

¹² Ancient Egyptians believed that the heart was the seat of intelligence, feelings, and the storehouse of memory. For further details on heart amulets, see ANDREWS, C., *Amulets of Ancient Egypt*, London, 1994, 72-73.

¹³ For more information on offering tables, see see Hölzl R., *Ägyptische Opfertafeln und Kultbecken, eine Form- und Funktionsanalyse für das Alte, Mittlere und Neue Reich*, Hildesheimer Ägyptologische Beiträge, Hildesheim, 2002.

¹⁴ BOLSHAKOV A.O.: "Offerings: Offering Tables", In *The Oxford Encyclopedia of Ancient Egypt*, edited by Redford D.B., Vol. 2, Oxford, 2001, 572-576 = [OE II]; LINDIUS E.: «Offering Tables as Ritual Landscapes. An Anthropological Perspective of Ancient Egyptian Materia Magicae», *DWJ* 4, 78-106, Heidelberg, 2020.

¹⁵ ERMAN, A. & GRAPOW, H. (eds), *Wörterbuch der Ägyptischen Sprache*, vols.1-4, Leipzig: J. HINRICHS, 1926-1931, 183[=WB III]; FAULKNER, R.O., *A Concise Dictionary of Middle Egyptian*, Oxford, 1988, 179.

¹⁶ Var., ; ; . FAULKNER, R.O., *Middle Egyptian*, 68.

¹⁷ Also written ; ; ; ; ; 

¹⁸ Var., ; ; ; FAULKNER, R.O., *Middle Egyptian*, 101.

Commentary

1. The body of the statuette (in a hawk form) represents the ability of the spirit to move in and out of the tomb. Thus, it could represent the freely moving part of the person that was able to commute between heaven, earth, and the netherworld. It is the representative of the person himself.¹⁹
2. Ba-bird statuettes are usually represented wearing the wide collar or *djed*-pillar amulet.²⁰ However, there is only two examples represented wearing heart amulet so far. Yuya's statuette is the first one. It is represented wearing the *ib*-heart amulet that became widely depicted during the reign of Amenhotep II until the Amarna period. This amulet differs from those intended to be a magical substitute for the heart. It has been suggested that the purpose of this amulet is to reflect the high rank and royal favor of the individual wearing it.²¹ There is also a *b3*-figurine represented wearing *ib*-heart amulet. It dates back to the Late Period (FIG. 4).²²
3. As for the colors of the statuette of Yuya, it could be assumed that they were typical colors for such figures in ancient Egyptian art. This assumption depends on the colors of the *b3*-bird represented in the tombs of Sennefer (TT96) and Hormoheb (TT78). Moreover, the scenes representing *b3*-bird in the Book of the Dead confirms this assumption.²³
4. It is notable that the offering formula represented on the base of the statue is directed to the deceased's *k3*, not to the *b3*. The *k3* of the deceased depends on the power of his *b3*. Its power will enable the *b3*'s mobility out of the tomb during the day. This would be assured through scenes and

¹⁹ BAUMGARTEN, A., ASSMANN, J., STROUMSA, G. (eds.): *Self, Soul and Body in Religious Experience*, Brill, E-Book, 1998, 384-403.

²⁰ CASINI, *b3* bird, 12.

²¹ SOUSA, R.: «Heart of Wisdom: Studies on the Heart Amulet in Ancient Egypt», *BAR* 2211, Oxford, 2011, 7-8. For more details on the meaning of heart-shaped amulets, see, SOUSA, R.: «The Meaning of the Heart Amulets in Egyptian Art», *ARCE* 70, 43-59.

²² It was discovered by the Austrian Archaeological Institute in 1969. It is coming from the transverse hall of tomb. BUDKA, J.: «Bestattungsbrauch und Friedhofsstruktur im Asasif: eine Untersuchung der Spätzeitlichen Befunde anhand der Ergebnisse der Österreichischen Ausgrabungen in den Jahren 1969-1977», *UZK* 34, Wien, 2010, 259-260, FIG. 115; for further reading on this *b3*-figurine, see MOKHTAR, H., ZAKI, Y., «Unpublished bA-Figurines in the Egyptian Museum at Cairo», *IJTAH* 2/1, 2022, 119-120.

²³ CASINI, *b3* bird, 14, 20.

texts.²⁴ Accordingly, the representation of an offering table in addition to the offering text will help the deceased to fulfill his wish to gain entry into the Osirian afterlife.²⁵ The offering table is probably a personification of the field of offerings. It is a place where the deceased spend part of their lives after death there, and when the sun goes down, they return to their tombs.²⁶

In conclusion, the *b3*-bird statuette of Yuya is the only non-royal example from the New Kingdom so far.²⁷ Moreover, there is no royal *b3* -statuette found from the New Kingdom so far. The deceased is supported with proper text to enter the field of offerings and benefit from the blessings from the offering table of Osiris himself.²⁸ Typically, it is the Field of Offerings or the Field of Reeds, the goal of the deceased's journey in the world beyond, to which he is granted the ability to return. These statuettes were probably intended to replace the real *b3* in the case of being lost or destroyed, as the *b3* was an essential element for the deceased's daily renewal.

²⁴ ŽABKAR, Study of the ba Concept in Ancient Egyptian Texts, 127 ff.

²⁵ For further discussion see, ASMANN, J., *Death and Salvation*, 372, 294, 297; MESKELL, L., *Archaeologies of the Social Life*, Oxford, 1999, 111-112; SNAPE, S., *Ancient Egyptian Tombs: The Culture of Life and Death*, Chichester, 2011, 197; LESKO, L., "Ancient Egyptian Cosmogonies and Cosmology", SHAFER, *In Religion in Ancient Egypt, Gods, Myths, and Personal Practice*, edited by B., BAINES, J., LESKO, L., and SILVERMANN, D., 120, Ithaca, 1991.

²⁶ *shꜣt ḥꜣpw* (Field of Offerings). For more information, see VAN DIJK, J.: "Paradise", In *The Oxford Encyclopedia of Ancient Egypt* edited by Redford D. B., Vol. 3, Oxford, 2001, 26-27= [OE III]; LECLANT, J.: "Earu-Gefilde", In *Lexikon der Ägyptologie*, edited by Wolfgang, H. & Otto, E., vol. 1-7, 1160-1165, Wiesbaden, 1972 = [LA¹I].

²⁷ This would be as a result of tomb robberies prevailed by the end of the New Kingdom. Few tombs were found almost intact such as that of Yuya and Thuya (KV 46) in addition to the tomb of Tutankhamun (KV 62).

²⁸ ASMANN, *Death and Salvation*, 297.

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Internet Resources:

- Tomb of Hormoheb TT 78 at Thebes, December, 14, 2021
https://www.osirisnet.net/tombes/nobles/horemheb78/e_horemheb78_03.htm
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<https://escholarship.org/uc/item/9tf6x6xp>



FIG. 1. *b3* statuette of Yuya

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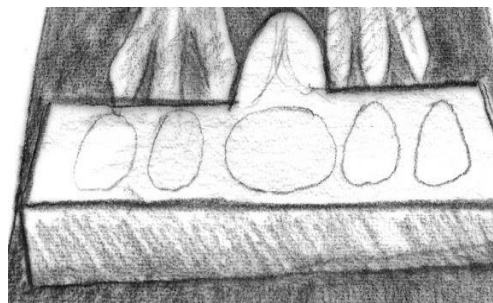


FIG. 2. Facsimile for the offering table represented in front of the statuette's claws

After: SOUSA, *Heart of Wisdom: Studies on the Heart Amulet in Ancient Egypt*, 85, FIG. 64.



FIG. 3. Transport of a *b3*-bird during a funerary procession, tomb of Hormoheb at Sheikh Abd el-Qurna (TT78).

https://www.osirisnet.net/tombes/nobles/horemheb78/e_horemheb78_03.htm

[accessed December, 14, 2021]



FIG. 4. Late Period *b3*- figurine wearing a heart amulet JE/94594

SR4/15767 from the Cairo Museum

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