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DWARF FIGURINES
FROM TELL EL-FARKHA

As indicated by preserved sources, dwarfs were known in Egypt since the earliest times. The latest discoveries made by the Polish Mission to the East Nile Delta in Tell el-Farkha¹ allow us to supplement Egyptian history during Pre- and Early Dynastic periods and to shed new light on the social group of dwarfs in this period. Hitherto publications regarding dwarfs in Egypt treat this issue generally and mainly refer to the period from the Old Kingdom onwards, or refrain to discussing one object, i.e. the sculpture group of Seneb's family. Two groups of dwarfs were known in ancient Egypt. The first consisted of individuals dwarfed due to illnesses (mainly achondroplasia), the second - of Pygmies².

Dwarf burials are known from Egyptian cemeteries. The oldest dwarf skeleton in Egypt was discovered in Mostagedda in grave no. 3510, it was

¹ The excavations in Tell el-Farkha have been conducted since 1998 by the Poznań Archaeological Museum and the Institute of Archaeology of the Jagiellonian University under the direction of M. Chłodnicki and K.M. Ciałowicz with collaboration of the Centre of Mediterranean Archaeology of the Warsaw University. See e.g. Chłodnicki M., Ciałowicz K.M., *Tell el-Farkha Seasons 1998 – 1999. Preliminary Report*, MDAIK 58, 2002, pp. 89 – 117; Chłodnicki M., Ciałowicz K.M., *Tell el-Farkha (Ghazala)*, PAM X -XVII; Chłodnicki M., Ciałowicz K.M., *Polish Excavations at Tell el-Farkha (Ghazala) in The Nile Delta. Preliminary Report 2002-2003*, *Archeologia* LV, 2004, pp. 47 -74; Ciałowicz K.M., *Excavations at the Western Kom at Tell el-Farkha 1998-2003 (Nile Delta, Egypt)*, *Recherches Archéologiques de 1999 – 2003*, Kraków 2006, pp. 334 – 353.

² El-Aguizy O., *Dwarfs and Pygmies in Ancient Egypt*, *ASAE* 71, 1987, pp. 53; Dasen V., *Dwarfism in Egypt and Classical Antiquity: Iconography and Medical History*, *Medical History* 32, 1988, pp. 257 - 258; Dasen V., *Dwarfs in Ancient Egypt and Greece*, Oxford 1993, pp. 7-8; Filer J., *Disease*, London 1995, p. 53; Kozma Ch., *Dwarfs in Ancient Egypt*, *American Journal of Medical Genetics* 140, no.4, 2006, pp. 305 - 306.

a burial of the Badari Culture³. The most interesting graves of dwarfs date to the Early Dynastic period, precisely to the 1st Dynasty⁴. It is a period in which we are dealing with the largest number of dwarf bone remains that survived to our times. They are mostly so called accompanying graves, belonging to royal complexes in Umm el-Qaab (Abydos). Those skeletons are also the best researched ones. A well documented example from Saqqara may also be considered part of this group⁵. The remaining dwarf graves may not be a basis of further detailed elaborations, often due to lacking documentation.

Dwarf graves accompanying the rulers of the 1st Dynasty in Umm el-Qaab may prove a high social status of this group. Stelae of the deceased were often encountered in those graves, nine of which belonged to dwarfs. Contrary to individuals of normal height, who were depicted in a sitting position, dwarfs were represented standing. This emphasized disproportions and defects of the skeleton. The figures were shown with their feet apart, short legs and slightly protruding buttocks resulting from pelvis deformations. Skeletons discovered in the graves with those stelae confirm a diagnosis of dwarfism⁶. The determinative for dwarf probably derives from the depictions of dwarfs on those objects. High status of a dwarf may be proved by a text on his stela (e.g. the Wediwesekh stela from the Den complex with an inscription “he who places the collar”) or its place in a ruler’s funerary complex (e.g. dwarf Shedi from the Djer complex, buried near cloth warehouses, which indicates that he may have been an administrator of the royal wardrobe)⁷.

During the Old Kingdom the number of discovered bone remains is scarce (the Perniankh mastaba in Gizeh, remains from Abydos and Beni Hassan)⁸. Some information of dwarfs in the Old Kingdom is provided by written sources. An example is a letter sent by Pepi II to Harkhuf, the nomarch of Elephantine, who was to bring him a Pygmy from the land of Yam. Harkhuf’s text was

³ Brunton G., *Mostagedda and the Tasian Culture*, London 1937, p.42, pl. X.; Brothwell D.R., *Digging up Bones*, London 1963, p. 163; Dasen V., *Dwarfs in Ancient Egypt...*, p. 17 and 320; Filer J., *Disease*, p. 55; Kozma Ch., *Dwarfs...*, p. 305.

⁴ Dasen V., *Dwarfs in Ancient Egypt...*, pp. 16 - 21.

⁵ Emery W.B., *Great Tombs of the First Dynasty; Excavations at Saqqara*, Cairo 1954, p. 36; Emery W.B., *Archaic Egypt*, Harmondsworth 1961, Pl. 23.

⁶ Dasen V., *Dwarfism in Egypt...*, p. 261, pl 2c; Dasen V., *Dwarfs in Ancient Egypt...*, p. 39.

⁷ Petrie W.M.F., *The Royal Tombs of The Earliest Dynasty*, London 1901, p. 24; Dawson W.R., *Pygmies, Dwarfs and Hunchbacks in Ancient Egypt*, *Annals of Medical History* 9, 1927, pp. 316,319; Dawson W.R., *Pygmies and Dwarfs in Ancient Egypt*, *JEA* 24, 1938, p. 186; Dasen V., *Dwarfs in Ancient Egypt...*, pp. 17 - 20, 107 - 108, 251 - 252, 320.

⁸ Filer J., *Disease*, p. 56; Kozma Ch., *Dwarfs...*, pp. 305 - 306.

discovered in his grave in Qubbet el-Hawa (Aswan)⁹. The Pyramid Texts are another source (among others in the complex of king Neferikare), with mentions regarding dwarfs¹⁰.

The first male and female dwarf figures come from the Naqada period. Because of the lack of archaeological context the figures are dated to the Amran period, mainly basing on stylistic criteria. This issue is disputable, however, and dating those depictions to the Gerzean Period is also possible¹¹. The figures probably come from el-Ballas (two female dwarfs)¹² and Naqada (two female dwarfs, one male dwarf and one dwarf with a child)¹³. The heads of the figures are long and oval, without hair. Small hollowed eyes, probably incrustated, were dominant in the faces of the figures. Apart from those features eyebrows were also marked, as well as light mouths and protruding ears. Sexual attributes are emphasized in female depictions: breasts, round hips and thick pubic hair. Other features include short arched arms and legs, emphasized hip lines and “x-like” bended knees¹⁴. The main difference visible in the figures from Naqada is the way legs are depicted, which may point to a type of disease. The legs are depicted either bent ‘x-like’, just as in the figures from el-Ballas, or bent outward. A figure considered to be a male dwarf is an interesting object. The man holds a child in his outstretched hands. He faces the child’s head, unfortunately not preserved. It is not sure whether the figure depicted a standing or a crawling person¹⁵. Dwarf deformations are depicted in an emphasized way, often grotesquely.

During the Early Dynastic period and the period that directly preceded it a considerable development of sculpture is observed. This period is charac-

⁹ Breasted J.H., *Ancient Records of Egypt vol. 1*, Chicago 1906: 159 - 161 § 350 – 354; Roccati A., *La littérature historique sous l’Ancien Empire égyptien*, Littératures Anciennes du Proche-Orient Paris 1982: 206 - 207.

¹⁰ Mercer S., *The Pyramid Texts in Translation and Commentary III*, Toronto 1952: 586; El-Aguizy O., *Dwarfs and Pygmies...*, p. 54; Silverman D., *Pygmies and Dwarves in The Old Kingdom*, Serapis vol. 1, Chicago 1969, pp. 53 - 62.

¹¹ Dasen V., *Dwarfs in Ancient Egypt...*, Oxford 1993: 272-273; Ciałowicz K.M., *Początki cywilizacji egipskiej*, Warszawa – Kraków 1999, pp. 373-377.

¹² Smith W. S., *A History of Egyptian Sculpture and Painting in the Old Kingdom*, London 1946: 1-4; Ciałowicz K.M., *Początki cywilizacji egipskiej*, pp. 372-377;

¹³ Steindorff G., *Catalogue of the Egyptian Sculpture in the Walters Art Gallery*, Baltimore 1946, p. 19, pl 1.

¹⁴ Petrie W.M.F., *Prehistoric Egypt*, London 1920: 6-9 pl II; Dasen V., *Dwarfism in Egypt...*, p. 260; Dasen V., *Dwarfs in Ancient Egypt...*, p. 272; Ciałowicz K.M., *Początki cywilizacji egipskiej*, pp. 374-375.

¹⁵ Capart J., *Primitive Art in Egypt*, London 1905, p. 172, fig 135; Steindorff G., *Catalogue...*, p. 19, pl. 1; Dasen V., *Dwarfism in Egypt...*, p. 260; Dasen V., *Dwarfs in Ancient Egypt...*, pp. 272-273.

terized by a greater care for detail and plastically carved faces. Examples of dwarf figures mostly come from votive deposits discovered within the boundaries of early sanctuaries in Hierakonpolis, Abydos, Elephantine, Tell Ibrahim Awad and Tell el-Farkha (Fig. 1). Figures were also sporadically discovered in graves, such as in Tarkhan¹⁶ or Abusir el-Meleq¹⁷. The figures were made of various materials: clay, stone, faience, bone, wood, ivory and hippopotamus tusk¹⁸.

Dwarf figurines from Hierakonpolis mostly come from the so called Main Deposit¹⁹. Among others, three female dwarfs of ivory are located in the Ashmolean Museum. Their common feature is a long, excessively large wig draped in curls over the shoulders and down the back. Two are probably dressed in a sort of garment, with plastically modeled faces. Their state of preservation is not satisfying. The third figure is naked. Her right hand is on the chest, while the left hand as well as the left side of the figure is not preserved. It is noteworthy that the first two female dwarf figures in garments are stylistically different from the naked one. That last figure was crafted much more precisely. Other dwarf figures from the Main Deposit were characterized by significantly worse craftsmanship. Those objects are a female dwarf figure of baked blue glazed clay and a dwarf of brown glazed limestone²⁰.

In the deposits from Abydos, particularly the temple one (near Kom es-Sultan), seven figures and fragments of figures depicting dwarfs were discovered altogether. They are heavy, crude and primitive. They show no care for detail or quality. All the figures were naked except from one, wearing a belt. Sexual features were often emphasized. Three depictions were made of limestone, two of green faience, one of gneiss and one of baked clay. In most cases arms are crossed on the chest, perhaps in a prayer gesture. They may also be placed on the hips or crossed at the waist²¹.

¹⁶ Baumgartel E.J., *About Some Ivory Statuettes from the Main Deposits at Hierakonpolis*, JARCE 7, 1968, pp. 8-9, Petrie W.M.F., *Prehistoric Egypt*, p. 10 pl. VIII no. 36; Dasen V., *Dwarfs in Ancient Egypt...*, p. 273.

¹⁷ Vandier J., *Manuel d'archéologie égyptienne I*, Paris 1952, p. 464, Dasen V., *Dwarfs in Ancient Egypt...*, p. 273.

¹⁸ Smith W. S., *A History...*, pp. 4 - 12; Ciałowicz K.M., *Początki cywilizacji egipskiej*, pp. 380 - 388.

¹⁹ Quibel J.E., Green F. W., *Hierakonpolis II*, London 1902, pp. 13-14; Wilkinson T., *Early Dynastic Egypt*, London – New York 1999, pp. 309-311.

²⁰ Quibel J.E., *Hierakonpolis I*, London 1900, p. 7 pl XI, XVIII no 7, 19; Quibel J.E., Green F. W., *Hierakonpolis II*, pp. 34, 37 - 38; Capart J., *Primitive Art...*, p. 170, fig. 132; Smith W. S., *A History...*, p. 7.; Dasen V., *Dwarfs in Ancient Egypt...*, pp. 274 - 275, pl 28.1a, 1b.

²¹ Petrie W.M.F., *Abydos II*, London 1903, pp. 25-27, pl. V no: 46,48, pl. X no: 213; Dasen V.,

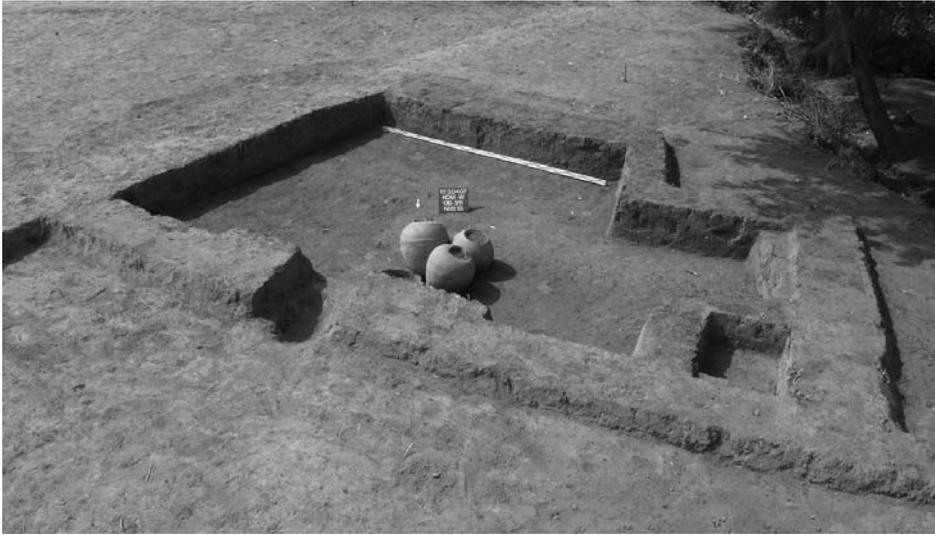


Fig 1. Room (shrine?) containing a deposit of dwarf figures, Tell el-Farkha 2006, Phot. Robert Słaboński.

German archaeologists discovered a faience figurine in the Elephantine temple deposit, which was interpreted as a dwarf by G. Dreyer and was dated to the Early Dynastic period or early Old Kingdom²². It depicts a standing naked man. His hands are placed along the body, he has an exceptionally big head and short legs. Eyes, nose and mouth are marked on the face. A shoulder-long wig is marked in black color on his head. The entire figure is glazed in light blue. Except from the above object a few other depictions and fragments may be interpreted as dwarfs. An example interpreted this way may be the lower part of a figure with characteristically bent legs²³.

The biggest and very interesting deposit was discovered in Tell Ibrahim Awad in 1996 (No. 10). It contained 212 objects of faience, bone and stone, including dwarf depictions, among others one of carnelian and a few of bone. One of the bone figures probably depicted a female dwarf and may be linked to that type of figures from Tell el-Farkha. However, in case of the Tell Ibrahim Awad find, the lack of adequate publications does not allow a full analysis²⁴.

Dwarfs in Ancient Egypt..., pp. 273-274.

²²Dreyer G., *Der Tempel der Satet, Die Funde der Frühzeit und des Alten Reiches, Elephantine VIII.*, Mainz 1986: 61, 99 no. 1 pl. 11.

²³Ibid., pp. 63, 101 no. 20 pl. 13.

²⁴Haarlem van V.M., *The Ivory Objects from Tell Ibrahim Awad*, *Egyptian Archaeology* 20, 2002, pp. 16-17; Belova G. A., Sherkova T. A., *Ancient Egyptian Temple at Tell Ibrahim Awad: Excavations and Discoveries in the Nile Delta*, Moscow 2002, phot. 100 – 102.

During the Old Kingdom we are dealing with sculptures that mainly depict dwarfs belonging to the elite (e.g. Seneb family²⁵, Perniankhu²⁶, Khnumhotep²⁷). A few sculptures of dwarfs of lower status that served the elites were also discovered (e.g. harp player from the Nikauinpu grave²⁸, dwarf from grave No. G7715²⁹, both from Gizeh) as well as a large number of reliefs of that type, mainly in graves in Gizeh and Saqqara. The reliefs, counting over seventy pieces, may be divided into groups depending on the activity and function of the depicted dwarf. On those reliefs dwarfs are depicted as personal servants mainly connected with the master's wardrobe, his jewelers or animal keepers. Furthermore in three cases the depicted dwarfs are connected to entertainment – two are dancers, one is a singer. A few depictions are hard to classify into one of the above groups or such a classification is highly doubtful. On those reliefs dwarfs are depicted e.g. catching birds or in boat scenes³⁰.

Bone remains and depictions of dwarfs all point to the fact that this type of physical defect was encountered in Egypt as early as the Early Dynastic period (the Badari culture). It is quite difficult, however, to establish their role in the society. Dwarf figures from the Predynastic period are interpreted as “companions of the deceased”³¹. It seems, however, that at least part of the figures were made for the living. The figure depicting a man holding a child has a hole on the back, which may point to a kind of “mechanical toy”. In turn one of the female figures from Naqada has a peg on the bottom, which may point to the fact that it was connected to something, e.g. as a furniture fragment. However their role may be mainly connected to early depictions of family guardians and fertility. A protective function is mainly indicated by the figure of a dwarf holding a child. A tradition of depicting dwarfs (female dwarfs) taking care of children is also known from the Middle Kingdom, although we encountered no such depictions in the Old Kingdom. Because of the material – bone – we may state that the figures belonged to the elite. On the other hand, however, they were also sometimes funerary gifts³².

²⁵ Junker H., *Giza V*, Vienna 1941, pp. 107 - 114; Smith W. S., *A History ...*, pp. 57, 67, 198.

²⁶ Hawass Z., *The Statue of the Dwarf Pr-n(j)-'nh(w) Recently Discovered at Giza*, MDAIK 47, 1991, pp. 157 - 162, pl 12-14; O'Neil J.P. (ed.), *Egyptian Art in the Age of the Pyramids*, New York 1999, p. 299; Kozma Ch., *Dwarfs...*, p. 307.

²⁷ Borchardt L., *Statuen und Statuetten von Königen und Privatleuten im Museum von Kairo*, Berlin 1911, pp. 105-106, pl. 32. no. 144 ; Smith W.S., *A History...*, pp. 57-58.

²⁸ Smith W.S., *A History...*, p. 101 (13), pl.27c; Breasted J.H., *Egyptian Servant Statues*, New York 1948, p. 87, no 2 pl. 81b.

²⁹ Smith W.S., *A History...*, p. 100 (k3), pl 28b; Breasted J.H., *Egyptian Servant Statues*, p. 58, no3 pl.50b.

³⁰ Dasen V., *Dwarfs in Ancient Egypt...*, pp. 109 - 126; Kozma Ch., *Dwarfs...*, pp. 309 - 310.

³¹ Capart J., *Primitive Art...*, p. 220.

³² Dasen V., *Dwarfs in Ancient Egypt...*, pp. 104 - 105, 138.

We have more information from the 3rd phase of Naqada culture, which covered the Protodynastic and Early Dynastic periods. Generally according to the stylistic features of the depictions or material we may classify them in various ways. There are faience, stone, clay and bone figures. In that last case both ivory and hippopotamus tusk figurines are encountered. The difference in material may be caused by a few reasons. In case of Elephantine, where we lack bone objects, it may have been caused by a provincial character of that place, as opposed to Hierakonpolis, which was considered an administrative center as early as in the Predynastic period. In this aspect materials used in the Delta are quite interesting (Tell Ibrahim Awad, Tell el-Farkha). In the Delta hippopotamus tusk was a more popular material, which was also highly valued. Undoubtedly the choice of that material was connected to its availability. This choice directly influenced the sizes of figurines. Figures from Hierakonpolis are in the same style as those from Tell el-Farkha, however those made of ivory are about two to five times larger than analogous depictions from Tell el-Farkha. In case of some Early Dynastic dwarf figures we may have problems with identifying the depiction properly. Two objects (one from Tarkhan, the other from Tell Ibrahim Awad) may serve as examples. In both cases it seems possible to interpret them as children, not dwarfs. In this case such difficulties are caused by the fact that the objects were not sufficiently published.

The meaning of those figures is not certain. A number of hypotheses exist, one of them states that the dwarf figures depict an actual physical defect of a person making the votive offering³³. This regarded court dwarfs, who had the privilege of making votive offerings in state sanctuaries. However because of a relatively large number of such depictions this hypothesis is quite improbable. Another hypothesis states that the offerings were connected with fertility and protection of childbirth. The figures would therefore be indirectly connected with a later cult of Bes. Another argument confirming this theory is a co-occurrence of child figures in temple deposits. Except from their symbolic role, the figures also had a functional role. In some cases their elements (e.g. pegs in the basis) may prove that the figures were used as decorative elements for furniture. Female dwarfs are often depicted in extremely large wigs. In the Middle and New Kingdoms such wigs were connected with Hathor. A figure of a naked female dwarf from Hierakonpolis has a slightly protruding belly. According to some theories this may point to a depiction of a sick pregnant woman³⁴. Following this line of thinking, the figures may have been offered by female dwarfs who had problems with

³³Dreyer G., *Der Tempel der Satet*, p. 60; Dasen V., *Dwarfs in Ancient Egypt...*, p. 108.

³⁴Dasen V., *Dwarfs in Ancient Egypt...*, p. 108.

bearing children. Difficulties with pregnancies and child bearing are typical problems for female dwarfs, caused among others by hip and pelvis deformations. Female dwarfs may also have been connected with protecting the pregnancy. If we are looking for analogies with later Bes or Hathor we need to remember that this type of comparisons may be quite misleading with regard to the Early Dynastic period.

The difference in amounts and quality of dwarf figures on Early Dynastic sites is interesting. Dwarf figures were present in all places in Egypt where figure votive deposits were discovered, that is in Hierakonpolis, Abydos, Elephantine, Tell Ibrahim Awad and Tell el-Farkha. This may prove that beliefs connected with dwarfs were known in all Egypt. However on Elephantine and in Abydos dwarf figures are of a definitely lower quality. Contrary to Abydos and Elephantine, where dwarf figures were made of stone, faience or clay, in Hierakonpolis and Tell el-Farkha figurines were made of bone. This is evidence of both the workshop of the artists that made them, but also the recipient, who could have been a ruler offering them to the temple. An especially visible dominance of such depictions over others is visible in Tell el-Farkha. This may prove that this place was especially connected to the cult of dwarfs, similarly to Elephantine, which was connected to the cult of a hedgehog god.

A change in the character of dwarfs is visible during the Old Kingdom. The cult character of dwarfs visible in temple deposits disappears (although not entirely), while they gain secular character. Both sculpture portraits of high ranking dwarfs are created, and depictions of dwarfs in retinues of the elite. Generally a number of specialised groups are visible where dwarfs appear in tomb reliefs from the 4th Dynasty. The reliefs point to the fact that dwarfs were employed to make jewelery and served as personal servants and animal keepers. Inscriptions next to the reliefs often identify them by name or titles connected to their function, e.g. overseer of linen. This proves that we are dealing with real dwarfs and not only with convention. It is however also possible that in some cases depictions of dwarfs are connected with the prestige that a dwarf servant brought or even are a strictly compositional attempt to fill a certain space.

Despite a number of premises pointing to a high status of dwarfs we also encounter traces of some discrimination. Linking them with other deformed characters may be read as a sign of keeping a sort of “weirdos” or jesters in court or officials’ estates. An example is the depiction of a dwarf from the tomb of Ka-aper, where a monkey and a dwarf are depicted in identical poses one

above the other³⁵. This may be interpreted as comparing a dwarf to a jester or even a “house animal”.

However portraits of high ranking dwarf officials prove that dwarfs could also reach high social status. It seems that such characters as Seneb, Khnumhotep or Perniankh in a way owed their high position to their disabilities. They probably only used their close connections with high ranking state officials and in time gained numerous titles themselves.

During the Old Kingdom a certain departure from dwarf cult is visible. Depictions of dwarfs from that period mostly show them as servants to the deceased in the afterlife and their connection with the Early Dynastic figures is doubtful. However, some analogies may be found in the stylistic approach to the Early Dynastic figures and Old Kingdom depictions. In the portraits of Seneb, Khnumhotep or Perniankh a care for detail and realism is visible. This type of depictions, veristic even, allows a quite precise analysis of the disease. However in case of dwarfs working as servants some convention is visible. In a great majority they are depictions of typical achondroplastic dwarfs. On one hand this may reflect reality, since this type of characteristic is the most common one among dwarfs, on the other hand, it may be a result of a certain convention. Depicting a dwarf with visible body disproportions made the depiction clearer. Realistic depictions on one hand and schematic on the other are also visible in Early Dynastic figures. Assuming that the figures may have depicted real persons making offerings (i.e. court dwarfs), realistic depictions may have served as „portraits”, while the schematic ones were just generally depicting dwarfs. We need to stress, however, that this realism of Early Dynastic dwarf figures does not allow such far-reaching conclusions as in case of Old Kingdom sculptures.

Another trait common for both the Old Kingdom and the Early Dynastic period is the planning of royal necropoleis. Grave complexes of the rulers of the 1st Dynasty had evolved considerably with a peak during the 4th dynasty, when the pyramids of Gizeh were built. Despite many changes, either constructional or in meaning, some common traits survived. During the 1st Dynasty so called accompanying graves appeared in grave complexes of the rulers. A debate is still going on whether the courtiers buried there had died naturally or had been sacrificed during the ruler’s burial. More premises, e.g. on the construction of the tombs, allows us to think that the offering version is closer to the truth. During the Old Kingdom sacrificing courtiers was no longer practiced, however their graves accompanied the ruler. The royal necropoleis were surrounded by

³⁵ Fisher H. G., *A Scribe of the Army in A Saqqara Mastaba of the Early Fifth Dynasty*, JNES XVIII no 4, 1959. pp. 233 - 272, fig. 8, pl. 6.

cemeteries of the officials, who – as in the Early Dynastic complexes – accompanied the ruler and at the same time were protected by him. In graves accompanying the rulers of the 1st Dynasty dwarfs were often encountered, which is proved by funerary stelae and bone remains. A hypothesis has been made that a cemetery of court dwarfs was located in Gizeh on a necropolis to the west of Khufu's pyramid³⁶. In truth, the mastabas of Seneb and Perniankh were discovered there as well as a number of mastabas depicting dwarfs as servants in relief. We have no unambiguous proof that confirms a thesis of a special dwarf cemetery. However both in the case of Predynastic and Old Kingdom dwarfs a proximity of their graves to royal complexes points to their high social status. It seems therefore that dwarfs were in most cases tolerated, and their disabilities even ennobled them. This was probably based on the beliefs of Egyptians. However we may not state that there was absolutely no discrimination towards crippled people or treating them as „normal”.

³⁶Hawass Z., *The Statue of the Dwarf ...*, pp.157 - 162, pl. 12 - 14.

CATALOGUE

Until now the most numerous deposit with regard to dwarf depictions from the Early Dynastic period was discovered in Tell el-Farkha in 2006. The deposit was located in a room that could be interpreted as a chapel (Fig. 1)³⁷. A part of the figurines was deposited in a decorated vessel covered with a bowl³⁸, a part in the layer filling the room. Sixty two objects were placed in the above mentioned vessel³⁹. Most of the objects belonging to the deposit had holes drilled at the base. Similarly, figures of female dwarfs standing on bases also had such drills. They probably served to fix the figures on a larger base or other surface. However, dwarf depictions are the most numerous. All of the dwarf figurines are made of hippopotamus tusk.

The first numbers in the catalogue come from the field inventory (numbers beginning with the letter W), the second ones come from the registry of the Supreme Council of Antiquities in Mansoura (beginning with the letter R). Currently the figures are in the Cairo Museum, except from a fragment of the W07/56 figure and female dwarf figures Nos. W07/55 and W07/D1/17 (R-694), which are stored in Mendes. Basically the figures of male and female dwarfs from Tell el-Farkha may be divided into a few groups basing on their stylistic, and particularly their artistic advancement. This division is sometimes difficult due to various states of preservation of the figures. The below classification is mainly organisatory and it is based on stylistic criteria. In this case it is not possible to state that the degree of craftsmanship was characteristic for the development of dwarf depictions. We even observed a sort of schematisation. Depicting characteristic traits, such as a large head or legs arched outwards, characteristic for dwarfs, may have been means enough to depict them. In such a case we may be dealing with a development from realistic to schematic forms.

³⁷ Ciałowicz K.M., *Excavations at the Western Kom ...*, pp. 334 – 353; Ciałowicz K.M., *Ivory and Gold. Beginnings of the Egyptian Art*, Kraków 2007; Ciałowicz K.M., *Tell el Farkha*, [in:] Laskowska - Kusztal E. (ed.), *Seventy Years of Polish Archaeology in Egypt*, [Warszawa] 2007, pp. 69 - 78.

³⁸ Ciałowicz K.M., *Ivory and Gold*, Kraków 2007, fot. 5a.

³⁹ An initial publication of the figures of the deposit including the dwarf depictions: Ciałowicz K, M., *Predynastic and Early Dynastic Period*, [in:] Majewska A. (ed.), *Seventy Years of Polish Archaeology in Egypt. Egyptian Museum in Cairo 21 October - 21 November 2007*, [Warszawa] 2007, pp.44 - 71, Ciałowicz K, M., *Excavations of The Western Kom at Tell el-Farkha in 2006*, *Recherches Archéologiques* (in print).

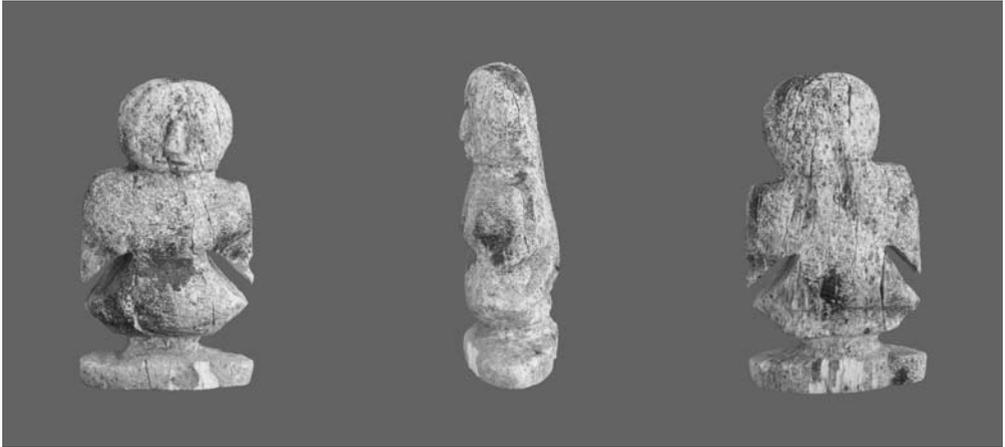
Group I. These figures are very schematic, geometric even. Their simplicity, primitivism even, may in this case cause problems with interpretation. Two figures may be counted into this group. Both come from the vessel deposit.

1. Inv. No.: WD06/43 and R-642. Pl. I: A. Dimensions: height 3,9cm, base height 0,4cm. A schematic depiction of a dwarf dressed in a long robe, standing on an oval base measuring 2,2x1,2cm in diameter. A lack of sexual attributes makes interpretation difficult. Probably a female dwarf, which is indicated by slightly marked breasts. The hands are marked by cuts separating them from the body. The feet are joined and the bending of the knees is marked on the back. A rhomboidal lower part of the robe indicates spread knees. A large, round head is flat, with no signs of hair. The face has a plastically marked wide nose, with eyes and mouth marked by incisions. The figure was preserved in medium condition, with numerous cracks and chips, especially on the base.

2. Inv. No.: WD06/35 and R-634. Pl. I: B. Dimensions: height 5,9cm, base height 1,2cm. A schematic depiction of a dwarf standing on an oval base measuring 2,5x1,4cm in diameter. A female dwarf wearing a long dress. The feet are joined together on the base, knees slightly bent and arched outwards. The hands are marked with incisions separating them from the body, however with delicately modelled muscles. The breasts are slightly modelled and emphasised by an incision. The face is very schematically modelled. Plastically marked nose that fluently changes into eyebrows, mouth clearly marked by an incision. Long hair falls down to the middle of the back. A parting is marked over the forehead, creating two round parts of the hairdo, additionally incised on the sides. The preservation state is good with numerous cracks, but with no visible chips.

Group II A. The second group may shortly be characterised as figures with large wigs. However, due to technological differences, this group should also be divided into two subcategories. Four figures may be counted among type IIA (two figures from the deposit and two from the shrine room).

3. Inv. No.: WD06/41 and R-640. Pl. I: C. Dimensions: height 3,8cm, base height 0,8cm. A standing female dwarf on an oval base measuring 0,7cm in diameter (on the bottom of the base there is an opening measuring 0,3cm in diameter and 0,4cm in depth). The figure comes from the deposit. The woman is dressed in a long dress. Her short hands are schematically separated from the body. Her knees are bent, with feet joined together and separated from the base by an incision. The face is carved schematically with marked eyebrows, nose, thin mouth and almond-shaped eyes. A large wig lies on her head, separated at the top of the head and falling to the back. The figure was preserved in medium condition, with numerous cracks, the face is worn away.



A



B



C

4. Inv. No.: WD06/42 and R-641. Pl. II: A. Dimensions: height 3,3cm, base height 0,8cm. A standing female dwarf on a base from the deposit. In the bottom of an oval base measuring 01,2x0,9cm an opening had been made measuring 0,4cm in diameter and 0,8 cm in depth. The woman wears a long dress. Short, simplified hands are separated from the body. The knees are visibly bent, the feet are joined together and separated from the base by an incision. Details of the face are invisible resulting from a bad preservation state of the figure (face is worn away). A large, long wig is placed on the head. The hair is separated into two parts above the forehead and it falls to the shoulders and back. Curls are modelled in the lower part of the wig, depicted in the form of incisions creating a regular checked pattern. The figure was preserved in medium condition, with numerous cracks and without fragments of the face.

5. Inv. No.: W06/8 and R-666. Pl. II: B. Dimensions: height 4,7cm, base height 1,1cm. A standing female dwarf on a round base (0.8cm in diameter). Earth and salt created a sediment on the figure, colouring it dark bronze. The woman wears a long robe and has slightly arched kneed and joined feet. Her short hands are separated from the body, the left hand is not preserved. A large wig separated in the middle lies on her head. The face is largely destroyed with traces of almond-shaped eyes, small nose and thin lips. An opening had been made at the bottom of the base, measuring 0,3cm in diameter. The figure is badly preserved.

6. Inv. No.: W07/55. Pl. II: C. Dimensions: height 2,3cm, base height 0,5cm. A standing female dwarf on a round base was discovered in 2007 in the layer filling the room. In the bottom of a round base measuring 0,8x0,9cm in diameter an opening had been made measuring 0,3cm in diameter and 0,3 cm in depth. The woman wears a long robe and has spread legs with arched knees and feet joined together. Her short hands are separated from the body. A large wig is separated in the middle and falls to the shoulders and back. In that part incisions are visible that emphasized the curls of the wig. Her face has lightly marked almond-shaped eyes, small nose and thin lips. Similarly to the above described example, soil and salt coloured the figure dark brown and created a sediment. The figure was preserved in medium condition, with a visible crack running through the base and the left side of the figure.

Group II B. Three figures may be counted among this group. Their craftsmanship is better than in case of group II A. All the figures come from the deposit discovered in 2006.

7. Inv. No.: WD06/33 and R-632. Pl. III: A. Dimensions: height 2,8cm, base height 0,8cm. A standing female dwarf on a square base (length of walls



A



B



C

0,7cm). An opening had been made at the bottom of the base measuring 0,2cm in diameter and 0,8cm in depth. The woman wears a long robe. Short hands separated from the body are not entirely preserved. The right hand is not preserved, while the left one is only preserved down to the forearm. Her knees are bent and spread, the feet are joined at the base, with distinctly modelled heels. The face is modelled with eyebrows emphasized by incisions and almond-shaped eyes, a relatively narrow nose was modelled, while the lips are practically not marked at all. A wig lies on her large head, parting in the middle. Hair falls to her shoulders and to her back, where they curl, which is shown by an incised checked pattern. Unfortunately, there are chips in the wig.

8. Inv. No.: WD06/48 and R-647. Pl. III: B. Dimensions: height 3,1cm, base height 0,8cm. A standing female dwarf on an oval base widening towards the top (diameter at the bottom of the base 1,2cm, at the top: 1,4cm). An oval opening had been made at the bottom of the base measuring 0,3cm in diameter and 0,8cm in depth. The knees of the figure are bent and spread apart and her feet are pointing inwards with the toes and outwards with the heels. Her short hands are separated from the body and arched. Her face is plastically modelled with emphasized eyebrows, lightly marked eyes and a straight, relatively small nose. It lacks a modelled mouth, however. The face is slightly worn away (smooth). A wig with a partition lies on the big head. Hair falls to the back, where it terminates in a clear line, as well as towards the shoulders. Large protruding ears are visible underneath the wig. In this case only the wig may suggest that the figure depicts a female, since no long robe or modelled breasts are visible. The figure is well preserved, with a slight chipping on the right hand and numerous cracks.

9. Inv. No.: WD06/51 and R-650. Pl. III: C. Dimensions: height 2,6cm, base height 0,6cm. A standing female dwarf on an oval base widening towards the top (diameter at the bottom of the base 0,7cm, at the top: 1cm). Similarly to the above example only the wig indicates that the figure depicts a woman (it lacks a long robe and modelled breasts). Perhaps the figure wore a knee-long skirt. An opening had been made at the bottom of the base measuring 0,4cm in diameter and 0,6cm in depth. The knees of the figure are bent and spread apart and her feet are pointing inwards with the toes and outwards with the heels. Short hands are separated from the body. The face is modelled plastically, although schematically. Eyebrows are marked, almond-shaped eyes are poorly visible and so is a small nose. A large heavy wig with a partition lies on the head. Hair falls to the shoulders and back, where it terminates in a clear line. Contrary to the above described depictions, curls are marked as waves in the upper part of the wig, while the hair falling to the back is straight, without texture.



A



B



C

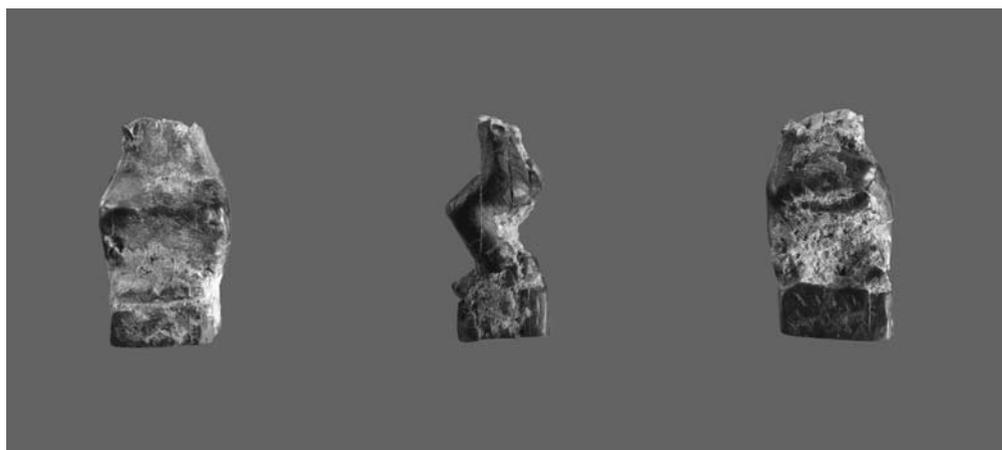
Perhaps ears are visible from below the wig. The figure is poorly preserved, the head is horizontally split, it lacks the frontal part of the body and the right leg, the right arm is not preserved.

10. Inv. No.: W07/56. Pl. IV: A. Dimensions: height 2cm, base height 0,4cm. In the 2007 season a fragment of another (probably female) dwarf figure was discovered in the same temple room. Only curved legs in a long robe were preserved, roughly up to the waist. The figure stands on a rectangular base. The preservation state renders proper analysis difficult, it is most probable that the fragment should be qualified among objects in group II, without determining the subcategory.

Group III. Figures of this group are characterised by elaborate details and may be considered „realistic” depictions. This group comprises of three figures, two of which were discovered in a deposit in 2006. The third figure was discovered in a vessel in 2007 in the layer filling the shrine room.

11. Inv. No.: WD06/36 and R-635. Pl. IV, B. Dimensions: height 3,4cm, base height 1cm. A standing female dwarf on a round base measuring 1,2 cm in diameter. An opening had been made at the bottom of the base measuring 0,3cm in diameter and 0,9cm in depth. The dwarf wears a long robe and has visibly modelled breasts. Her legs are bent and slightly spread apart. Her feet are joined together. Short hands are slightly bent in the elbows and drawn aside from the body, with fingers marked with incisions. Her face is plastically modelled, showing eyebrows, narrow almond-shaped eyes, wide lips and a straight nose. A triangular face is slightly arched to the left. A large and heavy wig rests on her head. Hair parts in the middle of the head and falls to the shoulders, the texture of the hair falling to the back is emphasised by vertical incisions. Two strands fall to the shoulders in the front, also with hair texture marked with incisions. The figure is preserved in good condition, however it lacks the right knee and the left breast, it also has numerous cracks and chips on the wig. The attribution of this figure to this group is questionable. Because of the large, heavy wig it could also be attributed to group IIB, however visible care for detail and realism allows to place it in this group.

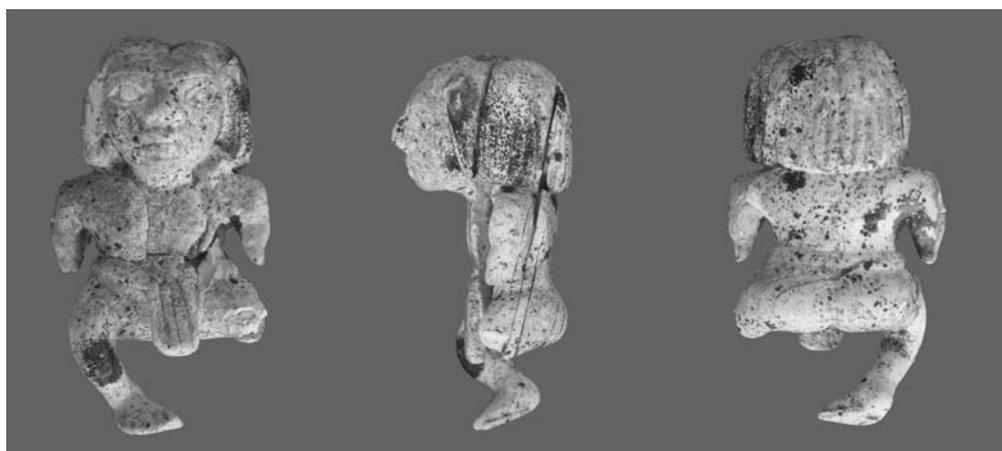
12. Inv. No.: WD06/54 and R-653. Pl. IV: C. Dimensions: height 4,8cm. A standing male dwarf. No base. The figure is very realistic, however with visibly overdrawn, even caricatural proportions (very large head and short limbs, especially hands, head takes up almost 1/3 of the whole figure). The dwarf only wears a loin cloth with a penis sheath, probably in the form of a piece of cloth, which is emphasised by vertical incisions creating folds in the fabric. The knees of the figure are bent and spread apart and his feet are pointing in-



A



B



C

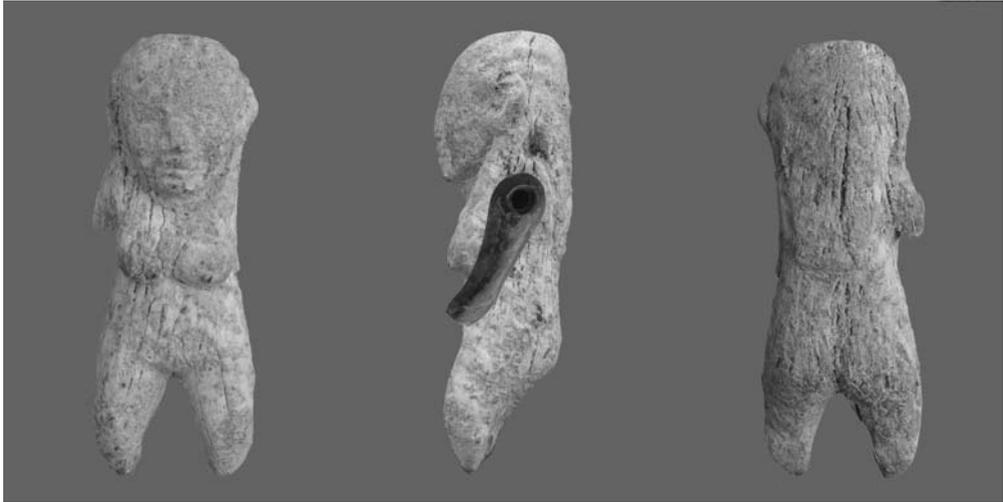


Plate V

Phot. Robert Słaboński

wards with the toes and outwards with the heels (the left leg is not preserved). The hands are very short with modelled fingers and emphasised muscles. The round head is impropotionally big. It is covered by a elaborate wig with a partition in the middle and with hair texture marked with vertical carvings. The face of the dwarf is definitely the most sophisticated part of the figure. His eyebrows are plastically emphasized, as are large, almond-shaped eyes with pupils and schematically drawn eyelids. Large wide nose, prominent wide lips. The hairdo has a partition in the middle and falls to the shoulders, hair strands are emphasized by vertical incisions. The wide nose is as if a prolongation of a flat forehead, the lips are wide and prominent. The figure is preserved in very good condition despite numerous cracks and chips on the body and the lack of the left leg.

13. Inv. No.: W07/D1/17 and R-694. Pl. V: A. Dimensions: height 8,5 cm. A standing naked female dwarf figure discovered in 2007 was placed in a vessel which was located in the shrine-room. Elements of a considerably flat face are well made, including a wide nose, lips and eyes with pupils and eyelids. A large, wavy wig rests on her head and falls to both sides to her shoulders and to the half of her back, revealing the left ear. The breasts are well modelled, emphasising the sex of the figure. A skin fold below the neck and slightly sagging breasts may point to advanced age. Her legs, arched outwards, terminate (as if cut) just below the knees in a way that makes stability of the figure impossible. The right arm is not preserved, only a fragment of the shoulder-joint is visible. Where the left hand should be, however, an drilled opening had been made. A matching left hand (W07/44. Pl. V: 13) was discovered in the same room,

also with an opening – the parts must have been joined by a peg. An outline of fingers is visible on the clenched fist. An opening in the palm indicated that probably some item was placed there – a sceptre or staff for the stability of the figure. The hand was probably stretched out, which is indicated by the build of the figure (had the hand been arranged along the body, the palm would have brushed against the hip). The hand was coloured dark brown because of the soil it rested in. The figure is preserved in medium condition with numerous cracks.

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