



A small collection of ancient Egyptian objects, which formed a part of a private collection of an unknown Austrian donator from Phaestos (on the island of Crete), was donated to the museum in the second half of the 19th century. This collection contains prehistoric spiritual and religious objects (17), mostly shabti figurines and amulets. These objects date back to the period from 1070 BC to 30 AD. The name “shabti” originates from the Egyptian word *ushabti* and *shawabti*, meaning “the one who answers”. These “servant” figurines were laid into the graves with the deceased. Egyptians believed that after they died, they would answer for their behaviour in this world at the divine court, the Court of Osiris, in the celestial world. Those condemned to an afterlife of working in the eternal fields would be assisted by the shabti figurines, who would work on the land in their place. They would thus help their master have a more leisurely afterlife.

In addition to the shabti figurines, the collection also contains amulets, ornamental magical objects. Amulets were dedicated to various deities, and they provided protection to the person wearing them. The collection contains two amulets dedicated to the Egyptian god Bes, who was the personification of happiness, love, weddings and music, and whose presence warded off evil spirits from houses and their inhabitants, which is why he was also considered a demon – protector of houses.

The six amulets represent the eye of the sun, wedjat, that belonged to the sun god Ra or to the god Horus. It provides magical protection. According to Egyptian mythology, humans were created from tears from Ra’s eye, which gives wedjat an important role in the creation of a new life – a human being. Mythology linking it to Horus, represented as a falcon, includes two Horuses. One is the son of Osiris and Isis, who lost one of his eyes while seeking revenge for the murder of his father, Osiris. The other one is Horus – the hawk, united with Ra into Ra-Harakti, and his eye is called the wedjat eye. Magical connotations of the renewal of life are also attributed to amulets in the form of a scarab, the sacred beetle (*Scarabeus sacer*) symbolizing the sun, the soul, resurrection and fertility.

Among the objects (7) from antiquity dedicated to the worship of the Egyptian cult in small home shrines, one amulet stands out: it has the form of a *sistrum*, a small rattle instrument, used in dance and ritual ceremonies

related to the worship of the goddess Isis, who was the personification of motherhood and fertility.

Apart from the sistrum, the collection also contains a bronze statuette of Osiris, and one of Apis, the sacred bull, symbolizing the soul of Osiris. There is also a bronze amulet in the form of a naked man, a statuette of the goddess Neith, and a statuette of an Egyptian pharaoh.

In addition to these objects that came to the museum from privately owned collections, there were findings in Istria referring to the worship of Egyptian gods and merged Egyptian, Hellenistic and Roman deities.

The Romanization of Istria occurring after the capital of ancient Histria, Nesactium, was conquered in 177 BC, together with the influence of trade with various parts of the Mediterranean, brought elements of various cultures into the area of the indigenous, Histrian culture, resulting in syncretism, i.e. the merging of different religious cults. Inhabitants from Egypt and orientalized traders settled in the area of Istria, where they continued to worship their religious cults in order to acquire divine protection and prosperity.

Artefacts (14) were found in Istria related to the cult of Serapis, Isis, Isis-Fortuna, Jupiter-Amon, the goddess Hathor, and Achelous. The museum collection contains the following artefacts: an altar with a representation of Isis; a bronze statuette of Isis-Fortuna from Savudrija, a symbol of fertility; a marble fragment of a head relief depicting the goddess Hathor, who is the personification of love, beauty, music, motherhood and happiness, found in the amphitheatre in Pula; two artefacts with a representation of the god Achelous from Pula; a tombstone from Pula depicting the Egyptian deity Serapis, who is identified with Osiris and Apis, and artefacts with representations of Jupiter-Amon.

An altar found at the Roman forum in Pula has a significant role in the study of Egyptian-Hellenistic cults. It depicts a syncretic supreme deity, Jupiter-Amon, who was worshipped in most towns on the eastern coast of the Adriatic. These findings in Istria tell of the influence of the Egyptian culture that was brought to Istria through trade, and by new settlers of Egyptian origin. It was allowed to coexist by both the indigenous people and the newly settled Roman population, especially in towns, in the period from the 1st to 3rd century.

Ida Koncani Uhač



**EGIPATSKI
KULTNI
PREDMETI
IZ FUNDUSA
ARHEOLOŠKOG
MUZEJA ISTRE**

**EGYPTIAN
CULT OBJECTS
FROM THE
HOLDINGS OF THE
ARCHAEOLOGICAL
MUSEUM OF ISTRIA**

**VITRINA MJESECA
13.5. – 15.6.2011.
DISPLAY CASE OF THE MONTH
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Egipatska civilizacija je od ujedinjenja svih egipatskih plemena u faraonsko kraljevstvo (od 3100. pr. Kr. do 30. po. Kr.) neraskidivo povezana s religijom, čiji korijeni sežu u vrijeme štovanja lokalnih egipatskih plemenskih božanstava. Ujedinjenjem Donjeg i Gornjeg Egipta božanstva sjevera i juga prerastaju u državni panteon, a njihovo štovanje simbolizira prostorno i geografsko jedinstvo u ovisnosti zemlje, Sunca i doline rijeke Nil.

Egipatska kultura i umjetnost u svakom su segmentu bile prožete duhovnošću i religijskim motivima. Za vrijeme Stare države (2686. - 2181. god. pr. Kr.), u Egiptu se razvio službeni kult Sunca. U čast bogu Sunca Ra počele su se podizati piramide, kao asocijacija najbliže točke kraljeva uzlaza na Nebo, u kojem je kralj, nakon svoje materijalne smrti, trebao doživjeti vječni život stapajući se s božanskim Ra. Piramidalni oblik bio je usko povezan s vjerovanjem u kraljevski solarni zagrobni život na Nebu.

Slabljenjem kraljevske dinastije postupno je oslabio i kult Sunca, a u vrijeme Srednje države (1991. - 1786. god. pr. Kr.), zamijenio ga je pristupačniji Ozirisov kult, koji su prihvatili i obični, brojni vjernici iz naroda. Njegovo kultno svetište nalazilo se u Abidu, u Gornjem Egiptu. Bog Oziris simbol je plavljenja Nila, dakle plodnosti, obilja, vegetacije, žita, Mjeseca, a istovremeno je i bog podzemlja, odnosno mrtvih te obnove života, koji se iznova rađa svakim plavljenjem rijeke. Oziris je često prikazivan u obliku mumije iz čijih ruku niče žito.

Egipćane je dakako najviše okupirala misao o smrti, koju su smatrale tek fizičkim odvajanjem od ovozemaljskog svijeta na putu u zagrobni život. Stoga je najveći broj egipatskih predmeta posvećen upravo kultu mrtvih.

Razvojem kolekcionarstva u 19. st., brojni arheološki i umjetnički predmeti završavaju u privatnim zbirka ljubitelja starina. Jedna manja zbirka antičkih egipatskih predmeta, koja se nalazila u privatnoj kolekciji nepoznatog Austrijanca iz Phaestosa (s otoka Krete), u drugoj je polovini 19. st. poklonjena muzeju. U toj se zbirci čuvaju predmeti (17) duhovnog i religijskog karaktera iz prapovijesnog razdoblja, uglavnom ušebti figurice i amuleti. Predmeti datiraju u razdoblje od 1070. god. pr. Kr. – 30. god. po. Kr.

Ušebti dolazi od egipatske riječi *ushabti* i *shawabti*, što znači “onaj koji odgovara”. Ove su figurice “sluge” polagane uz pokojnike u grobovima. Egipćani su vjerovali da će nakon smrti, u nebeskom svijetu, pred božjim, Ozirisovim sudom, odgovarati za vladanje na ovom svijetu. Onima koje će u zagrobnom životu čekati rad na vječnim poljima, ušebti figurice pomoći će tako što će za njih obavljati poljodjelske poslove. Tako će svom gospodaru omogućiti lagodniji zagrobni život.

Uz te figurice, u zbirci se čuvaju i amuleti, nakitni predmeti magijskog karaktera. Amuleti su posvećivani različitim božanstvima, a vlasniku su pružali određenu zaštitu. U zbirci se nalaze dva amuleta posvećena bogu Besu, personifikaciji sreće i ljubavi, vjenčanja i glazbe, koji je svojom prisutnošću tjerao zle duhove od kuće i ukućana, zbog čega se smatra i demonom – zaštitnikom kuće.

Šest amuleta prikazuje Sunčevo oko udat, koje je pripadalo bogu Sunca Ra ili bogu Horusu. Njegova je zaštita magijska. Po egipatskoj mitologiji, ljudi su nastali iz Raova oka u obliku suza pa udat oko ima važnu ulogu u stvaranju novog života – čovjeka. U mitologiji koja to oko povezuje s Horusom, prikazivanim kao sokol, postoje dva Horusa. Jedan je sin Ozirisova i Izide, koji je tražeći osvetu za ubojstvo svog oca izgubio jedno oko, dok je drugi Horus – sokol, udružen s bogom Ra kao Ra – Harakta, a njegovo se oko naziva udat oko. Magijsko značenje obnavljanja života pripisuje se i amuletu skarabeja, svetog kukca (Scarabeus sacer), simbolu Sunca, duše, uskrnuća i plodnosti.

Među predmetima (7) antičkog razdoblja, koji simboliziraju štovanje egipatskog kulta u malim kućnim svetištima, može se izdvojiti amulet u obliku *sistruma*, malog glazbenog instrumenta, čegrtaljke koja se koristila u plesnim i ritualnim obredima prilikom štovanja božice Izide, personifikacije majke i plodnosti.

Uz sistrum, u zbirci se čuva brončana figurica Ozirisova te figurica Apisa, svetog bika, koji simbolizira Ozirisovu dušu. Tu su i brončani amulet golog muškarca, figurica božice Neit i figurica egipatskog faraona.

Osim ovih predmeta, koji su u muzej dospjeli iz privatnih kolekcionarskih zbirki, u Istri su otkriveni nalazi koji simboliziraju štovanje egipatskih bogova i sinkretiziranih egipatsko-helenističkih i rimskih božanstava.

Romanizacijom istarskog prostora nakon osvajanja glavnog histarskog grada Nezakcija 177. g. pr. Kr. i prodorom trgovine iz raznih krajeva Mediterana, na prostor autohtone, histarske kulture stižu različite nove kulture, što je rezultiralo sinkretizmom, odnosno spajanjem različitih religijskih kultura. S obzirom da se na istarski prostor naseljavaju egipatski i orijentalizirani stanovnici (trgovci, oslobođenici), oni nastavljaju štovati svoje kultove u nastojanju da zadobiju božansku zaštitu i blagostanje.

Na području Istre pronađeni su tako spomenici (14) koji se vezuju uz kult Serapisa, Izide, Izide-Fortune, Jupitera-Amona, božice Hator i Aheoloja. U zbirci muzeja čuvaju se sljedeći nalazi: zavjetni žrtvenik s prikazom Izide; brončana figurica Izide-Fortune iz Savudrije, kao simbol plodnosti; mramorni ulomak reljefa glave s prikazom božice Hator, personifikacijom ljubavi, ljepote, glazbe, majčinstva i sreće, iz pulskog amfiteatra; dva spomenika s prikazom boga Aheoloja iz Pule; nadgrobni spomenik s prikazom egipatskog božanstva Serapisa iz Pule, koji se poistovjećuje s Ozirisom i Apisom, te spomenici koji prikazuju Jupitera-Amona.

Značajno mjesto u proučavanju egipatsko-helenističkih kultura pripada oltaru pronađenom na rimskom Forumu u Puli, koji prikazuje sinkretičko vrhovno božanstvo Jupitera-Amona, štovanog u većini gradova na istočnoj obali Jadrana.

Nalazi ovih spomenika na istarskom području govore o utjecaju egipatske religije koja se proširila putem trgovine i novonaseljenih stanovnika egipatskog podrijetla, a koju je autohtono i ostalo doseljeno rimsko stanovništvo, osobito u gradovima, prihvatilo u suživotu tijekom razdoblja od 1. do 3. stoljeća.

Ida Koncani Uhač

From the moment all Egyptian tribes were united into a kingdom ruled by a pharaoh (3100 BC–30 AD), the Egyptian civilisation was inseparable from a religion that could be traced back to the time of worshipping local Egyptian tribe deities. When Lower and Upper Egypt were united, the deities of the South were united with those of the North into a state pantheon, and their united worship symbolized the spatial and geographical unity of the state dependent on the soil, the sun, and the river Nile.

Egyptian art and culture were permeated with spirituality and religious motifs in all their segments. During the Old Kingdom (2686-2181 BC), Egypt saw the development of the official cult of the sun. Pyramids were erected in honour of the sun god – Ra, as a connection with the point of the king's ascent into the heavens, where the deceased king would experience eternal life by merging with the divine Ra. The pyramidal form was closely connected with the belief in the royal solar afterlife in the heavens.

The weakening of the royal dynasty meant a gradual weakening of the cult of the sun, and during the Middle Kingdom period (1991-1786 BC), it was replaced by a more approachable cult of Osiris that was accepted by numerous worshippers among the common people. His cult temple was in Abydos in Upper Egypt. Osiris was a symbol of the flooding of the Nile, i.e. of fertility, abundance, vegetation, grain, and the moon. He was also the god of the underworld, i.e. the dead, and the renewal of life reborn with each new flood. He was often depicted in the form of a mummy with grain growing from its hands.

Egyptians were intensely preoccupied with the thought of death, which they considered to be a mere physical separation from this world on the way to the afterlife. This is why the largest number of Egyptian artefacts is dedicated to the cult of the dead.

The development of collecting art during the 19th century led to many archaeological and artistic objects ending up in private art collections.