CHAPTER III
THE SOUTH-FLOWER

Fig. III.1 Hieroglyphs referred to in text

The dichotomy between Northern and Southern Egypt pervaded much of Egyptian thought and organization, nor was it without potent effect in the fine and applied arts. In temples, royal tombs, and sometimes in private graves, the scenes on the North and South walls often refer to Lower and Upper Egypt respectively. By the New Kingdom the symbols of the two lands had become common decorative elements. Papyrus, the heraldic emblem of the North had as its counterpart the South-flower,¹ a far more enigmatic growth than its sedge compeer. Unlike the papyrus, it rarely occurs in pictorial contexts and that only comparatively late in the New Kingdom. During a large part of its history,

¹ The term South-flower (or South plant) is usually applied to the hieroglyph shema and the heraldic South-flower or “lily” indiscriminately. Such usage is justified since both motives are South plants, symbols of Upper Egypt (For a brief survey of the group of signs related with the South, cf. below). However, we need here terms by which the hieroglyph may be distinguished from the heraldic form, which usually appears as a trilobate “lily” type. Therefore we will, throughout call the former by its hieroglyphic value, shema, and will limit the use of the term South-flower to the heraldic form, which was also sometimes used as parts of hieroglyphic signs.
throughout the Old Kingdom and the Middle Kingdom, the South-flower occurs almost solely in symbolic designs or in certain hieroglyphics, and it was not until the New Kingdom that it emerged as a widespread decorative element. In that period we may collect numerous examples of the design, but these do not yield any evidence useful for the study of the ultimate nature of the South-flower, since they are cast into the highly stylized form which has been termed the “Egyptian lily” or the “lily of the South.” In the absence of a recognized natural prototype, Borchardt used “lily” as a convenient designation for this design, since its New Kingdom form seemed to him more reminiscent of that flower, or possibly of an iris, than of any other inflorescence. The term “lily” has been very tenacious. Bénédict explicitly connected the South-flower with the Madonna lily, and others have tended to take the “lily” denomination literally. However, the existence of a lilaceous prototype is open to grave doubt; accordingly South-flower appears to be the least misleading term.

The elucidation of the nature of the South-flower and the recognition of a natural prototype after which the South-flower was copied are made extremely difficult by the absence of pictorial representations of the flower and the extremely conventionalized versions in which it makes its first appearance. A survey of the possible natural prototypes of the flower is impossible before the typological development of the motive is clear.

THE OLD KINGDOM

2 See Fig. III.1 for hieroglyphs. *menhed* (Gardiner, *Egyptian Grammar* (Oxford, 1927), (writer’s outfit); *ta-wy* (JEV XVII (1931), 246, M 24*, New Kingdom ideogram for land); *tā-shema* (ibid, M 28*, New Kingdom ideogram for Upper Egypt); and *sernā* (ibid., R26, New Kingdom ideogram for unite).


5 Meurer in *Vergleichenes Formenlehre des Ornaments und des Pflanze* (1909), pp. 53-54 terms the motive the Upper Egyptian or South sign, or occasionally, the South plant.
The unification symbol which expressed the synoecism of the Two Lands has the hieroglyph *sema* as its central axis (See Fig. III.1). The *sema* consists of the lungs and trachea of an animal and its name was identical with the word for unite. It is flanked by papyrus and South-flower clumps, which knot their stems around the windpipe. The earliest known examples are incised on two vases of Khasekhemui, the fifth or sixth king of the Second Dynasty, found at Hierakonpolis (Figs. III.2A, 2B). Here, although there is some distinction between the flanking plants, no details are given. The design is next found in the context in which it remains most common throughout the whole course of Egyptian civilization. It was the canonical decoration of the sides of the king’s throne. Statues of Khasekhemui and Djoser do not yet bear the design. The earliest known

---

6 The main line of development has already been summarized by Bénédite (*Mon. Piot.*, XXV (1921-22), 21, Fig. 7).
8 Cf. Evers, *Staat aus dem Stein* II (Munich, 1929), 55-65, paragraphs 384-442 for a detailed history of the development of the plinth reliefs.
detailed examples occur on the series of Khafre statues found in a well by his mortuary temple at Giza.\textsuperscript{10}

Here the South-flower appears with three (Fig. III.3) or four (Figs III.4-5) “perianth” units of a simple, elongated lobe shape. Forms with only three “petals” are commoner than those with four. The three flowering stems are bound together close to their lower ends by cording, and even the base of the individual inflorescences are tied with cords in some cases.

The next examples of the South-flower come from the second reign of the Fifth Dynasty. A fragmentary slab from the mortuary temple of Sahure had been part of a relief showing the king enthroned. The side of the throne is preserved and appears to contain two different variants of the South-flower. In Fig. III.6 the tripartite bloom, with all its “floral leaves” attached to the stalk, is equivalent to many of the Khafre types. In contrast to this is the other inflorescence, Fig. III.7, where the inner edges of the outer “petals” apparently meet, judging by the drawing published, so that the middle “petal” appears as a lobe projecting from between the other two. Although this may have resulted from chance, by the lines of the petals accidentally

\textsuperscript{10} The date of these statues has been unjustifiably questioned by Borchardt. One of his main reasons appears to be that the “lilies” of the unification symbols do not conform to what he believed to be the
joining in the narrow area at the base of the flower (either in the work of the ancient carver or the modern draftsman!), it is the first indication of the direction in which the South-flower was to evolve. By the reign of the sixth king of this dynasty, the flower is shown in a slightly more regular stylized form. A splendid relief from the mortuary temple of Neuserre shows the king in company with deities. The dais on which his throne is placed is ornamented by an elaborate unification symbol in which two kneeling Nile gods grasp the stems of the heraldic plants. The “perianth” of the South-flower is now definitely campanulate and the two pointed, outcurving side petals are differentiated from the upright median one with rounded top (Fig. III.8). Moreover, the two outer units apparently join, making the inner petal into a lobe.

In a relief from Aswan, Pepi I is shown standing on a unification symbol in which the South-flowers are shown with three lobes, the top of the middle one being rounded. The interior edges of the “petals” are not shown. Several examples of the South-flower carved by workmen of Pepi II have been preserved. They illustrate the continuation of the tendency to distinguish the inner, rounded lobe from the outgrowing flanking “petals.” However, the lobe still remains directly connected with the stem, so that the three parts retain a certain equivalence. The only complete example occurs on a relief slab from the entrance chapel of the mortuary temple (Fig. III.9), but the South-flowers from the temple itself were undoubtedly cast into exactly the same form, which is more elongated than that used in the Neuserre relief. One of the rooms in the funerary complex of Queen Neit, eldest daughter of Pepi I and wife in turn of Mernera I and his successor Pepi II, was sculptured normal form, with central lobe (L. Borchardt, Pflanzensäule (Berlin. 1897). pp. 21, 22; cf. also ZAS XXXVI (1898).

---

11 The number of Old Kingdom types known is very small; although the general trend is clear, it is very possible that types comparable in regularity to that of Neuserre were in existence before that reign.
12 Borchardt, op. cit., p. 18, Fig. 29; the same as LD II, Pl. CXVI, but checked with and corrected by the original.
13 Jéquier, Fouilles à Saqqara. Le monument funéraire de Pepi II (Cairo, 1938), II, Pls. LXIII, LXVI.
with what was probably an elaborate throne dais. Lions are arranged antithetically on each side of a unification symbol. It is unfortunate that the details of the South-flower are obscured in the photograph and omitted in the small drawing of the design.\footnote{Jéquier, Foulles à Saqqara. Pyramides des Reines Neit et Apouit (Cairo, 1933), Pls. IV, V.} It is possible to make out only that the flowers are of a narrower campanulate form than the accompanying papyri, and that they appear to be equipped with a definite fringe at the top, possibly comparable to that of the sedge umbels.

Aside from the unification symbol there exists a supplementary source for the typology of the South-flower. A common hieroglyph, \textit{menhed}, (see Fig. III.1) consisted of a picture of writing apparatus. To the oblong palette with holes for red and black is attached a small water jug and a long reed holder. The latter is often drawn as a papyrus stem with umbel,\footnote{Ptahhetep I, Pl. XV, 342. Margaret Murray, \textit{Saqqara Mastabas} (London, 1905), I, Pls. IV, XL, 93. Mereruka I, Pls. VII, XVIII, XXX.} but sometimes the South-flower appears. In an example from the tomb of Ptahhotep, the central unit is the largest. Aside from this and a slight outflaring tendency shown by the side “petals,” all three elements are equivalent (Fig. III.10). The stela in the tomb of User-neter at Saqqara is especially interesting, for, if we may rely upon the published copy, it contains examples with four “petals,” with tripartite outline but without inner dividing lines, and with three well defined “floral leaves” like Ptahhotep’s (Figs. III.11-13).\footnote{Even more variants can be found in this stela, but they appear to be merely accidental products of the draftsman rather than really distinct types (Margaret Murray, \textit{op. cit.}, Pl. XX).} When this hieroglyph appears in Pepi II’s temple the form of the Southflower...
resembles Fig. III. 13. On the one stela are illustrated the varying renderings which the South-flower could receive in the Old Kingdom, a variety which suggests that the motive was not based on any plant with striking characteristics well known to the Egyptian craftsmen. The experimentation and change marking the representations of the South-flower are in striking contrast to the papyrus and Nymphaea forms which, despite minor variations in details, always appear drawn according to immutable canons. When the South-flowers first appear they are amorphous juxtapositions of several “petals;” the sparse examples surviving from the Old Kingdom demonstrate how the motive was gradually worked into more satisfactory forms, the underlying tendency being to transform the inflorescence by imposing upon it a symmetrical triple pattern. The central lobe flanked by two outcurving “petals” is much the same kind of pattern as the triple papyrus motive. Although examples with increasingly prominent central lobes were becoming characteristic at the end of the Old Kingdom, they did not completely displace the alternative forms until the Twelfth Dynasty. As in the case of the papyrus, the first indications of the use of the South-flower in applied art are to be found in the Old Kingdom. 

*Kap-niswet*, generally called *Ka*j, built a mastaba at Giza in the middle of the Fifth Dynasty. On each intrados of the door he is shown seated with his wife. On the North wall his chair possesses the normal papyrus projection, but on the South side it is equipped with a South-flower, formed by an enlarged central “petal,” flanked by two others (Fig. III.14). It is possible that the chair with this ornament was only a creation of the carver. The decorative application illustrated in a relief from the south side of the antechamber in Pepi II’s mortuary temple is much more likely to correspond with an actual artifact. There

---

17 Jéquier, *Fouilles à Saqqara. Monument funéraire de Pepi II* (Cairo, 1938), II, Pl. LXXI.
18 With the exception, of course, of changes in the typology of the papyrus which occurred in the New Kingdom.
In the Middle Kingdom the evolution of the flower with a specialized lobe was completed and this became canonical, displacing completely all alternative forms. The greater part of an Eleventh Dynasty painted relief showing the enthroned Mentuhotep III has been preserved in his mortuary temple at Deir el Bahri (Fig. III.16). Two blunt-edged outer “petals” completely enclose the rounded lobe, which is sharply distinguished from them by its dark color. In the Twelfth Dynasty, the comparatively large number of seated royal statues provides a good sample of South-flower types current at that time. On the sides of the ten statues of Senwosret I from Lisht the rounded lobe projects above the level of the flanking petals, the tips of which not only display a tendency to flare outwards, but also to curl downwards (Fig. III.18-19). Much the same type was used in the relief showing this king enthroned in the Amun temple at Karnak, except that there the lateral “floral leaves” seem to be less pointed (Fig. III.17). On the black granite statue from Tanis the central lobe is pointed and the thin tips of the lateral “petals” project horizontally (Fig. III.22). Here the inner edges of the units are not shown but the three elements are none the
less sharply distinguished. Two black granite statues of Senwosret II from Tanis were
usurped by Ramses II; at that time inscriptions were added and the plinth reliefs were
brought up to date. In one case the New Kingdom form of the South-flower can
apparently be seen carved on top of the Twelfth Dynasty form (Fig. III.20), and elsewhere
some of the original types have survived and were sketched by Borchardt. An archaistic
form of the flower was favored by the makers of these statues. In Fig. III.23, five “floral
leaves” appear; the thin edges of the two outer ones curve out horizontally as in Fig. III.22,
and flank three “petals” with rounded tops. Fig. III.24 also has five elements, all pointed;
the outer ones lack the pronounced curve of Fig. III.23. To these forms may be added the
South-flower, quadruply divided, which is found on a statue of which only the base and
legs are preserved. Later usurpers have destroyed the name of the king to whom it
originally belonged (Fig. III.21). These forms are the last recrudescence of the oldest type
of South-flower characterized by more than three floral units. On statues of Senwosret III
(Fig. III.25) and Amenemhat III (Figs. III.26-27) tripartite forms are used. A detail of the
hieroglyph mnhd (See Fig. III.1) from the tomb of Djehuty-hotep proves that the same
kind of form, with lobe colored differently from the other “perianth” units had also become
standard in the script.

Fig. III.28                      Fig. III.29             Fig. III.30

The Middle Kingdom has bequeathed us a somewhat larger number of examples of
the use of the South-flower in applied art than the Old Kingdom. The fan carried in front
of Pepi II finds successors in those borne by attendants of Djehuty-hotep (Fig. III.28).
These are both short-handled and above the floral end of the staves there appears the
triangular block to which the feathers are attached. In one example the outcurving, flanking petals are missing. Both may apparently be cited as South-flowers having more than three units. Two stele in the Cairo Museum show extremely simplified drawings of what must be the same kind of fan (Figs. III.29). In addition to the fans, the tripartite whip or flywhiskis sometimes shown with a curved handle ending in a South-flower. That carried by a serving maid of Djehuty-hotep’s daughter has three small “petals” within larger lateral ones (Fig. III.30). Examples with handles possessing only the two lateral projections are held by the owners of two stele (Figs. III.31, 32). A type found on several stele is trilobate (Fig. III.33).

An actual example of a quite different kind of object was found at Lisht. The lady Senebtisi was buried in the early Twelfth Dynasty with a girdle of bead work to which were attached faience papyrus and South-flower heads each with long dependent stems of beads (Fig. III.34). Mace and Winlock have pointed out that this must have been a well known type of object in the Middle Kingdom. In the Cairo Museum they observed South-flower and papyrus beads, as well as the other types that were used to form the stems, all found at Dahshur. The inner anthropoid sarcophagus of a Sepi from Bersheh was incised with a girdle corresponding in every detail with that of Senebtisi (Fig. III.35-36). Beadwork girdles, usually combined with a kilt are among the usual objects painted on the inside of Middle Kingdom sarcophagi (Fig. III.37), and might
occasionally occur among the funerary goods shown on tomb walls. The wearing of such beaded kilts had begun in the Old Kingdom, for a fragmentary relief from Abusir shows Sahure wearing one of them. On one Middle Kingdom coffin a girdle is shown with six strands made up of the same elongated lentoid and quatrefoil beads which form the papyrus “stems” of Fig. III.36 and 38, but an even better example occurs in the coffin of Sehk-o, where the crowning South-flower beads are also shown (Fig. III.39). In all three of the cases of kilts with South-flowers (Figs. III.36, 39 and 34), there is a marked distinction between the small lobe and the outer petals. The form that was also normal in later times is more predominant in the faience work than in the fan and fly-whisk handles where, at any rate in the representations, more than three “petals” appeared.

In addition to the handles and beads with definite South-flowers, there is another object decorated by what are apparently variants of the same flower. Triple Tell el Yehudiyyeh juglets were found at Thebes in the tomb of the Mayor Yuy, dated by the

---

21 WVDOG, XXVI, Pl. XXXIX.
excavators to the Twelfth-Thirteenth Dynasties (corrected to New Kingdom) (Fig. III.40). They are decorated by spirals and stalked flowers, some trilobate, and others with a filling of concentric arcs between attenuated flanking petals. These forms may be decorative transformations of the South-flower, but a definite statement as to their identity can hardly be made until further examples or parallels are found.

THE NEW KINGDOM AND THE POSSIBLE NATURAL PROTOTYPES OF THE SOUTH-FLOWER

It is possible to collect an unlimited number of examples of the South-flower in the New Kingdom. Not only does the motive occur commonly in the heraldic unification group and in other half symbolic, half decorative designs, but it had also become a pure ornament that was widely applied. The large series of South-flower forms of which a sample is given in Figs. III.41 and 42, cannot be arranged to form any meaningful typological series. With the achievement in the Middle Kingdom of the lobed form, the orthogenetic development of the flower ended, and in the New Kingdom we find merely a large number of variations on this theme. However, it is possible to distinguish two tendencies, one or the other of which is displayed by many of the New Kingdom flowers. The lobe, having been definitely divided from the flanking petals, is often pushed upwards and projects above the lateral units, with which it was originally homologous (Figs. III.42, 43, 44, 45, 46). In the majority of cases the outer “petals” curve downward, but in purely decorative versions of the motive there is a strong tendency for these ends to turn into spiral coils. When used in the unification symbol or in designs where a symbolic meaning
prevails over the ornamental aspect, the South-flower generally assumes a more restrained form. Fig. III.44, from the unification symbol of the throne of Amenhotep III carved in the tomb of Khaemet, and Fig. III.47, from a triple group supporting the Nekhebet vulture in the tomb of Ramses IV, display an amount of twisting unusual in such contexts.

Forms with lanceolate floral leaves without much trace of a downcurving tendency (Figs. III.48, 49 and 45) are less usual than more rounded blooms. Fig. III.49, especially, from a unification symbol drawn in the tomb of Aahmes at Amarna, is atypical in that the lobe appears as a full-fledged petal “in front of” its companions, rather than emerging from behind them. Of all the New Kingdom types, Fig. III.50 from the unification symbol on the chariot of Tuthmosis IV and Fig. III.51 from the throne of Amenhotep III painted in Tomb 226, may be chosen as the most typical and normal South-flower used in the New Kingdom. It was this type which occurred in the hieroglyphs, and often served decorative purposes.

Aside from the projecting lobe and coiling petals, there is a third feature frequently found on the decorative South-flowers of the New Kingdom. Drop-shaped elements often depend from the underside of the lateral petals. This feature is extremely rare when the flower is used in heraldic contexts, but does appear at least once on one of the thrones painted in the tomb of Haremhab (Fig. III.43). Such curious and meaningless additions cannot be explained on the basis of indigenous Egyptian development, and we must

---

therefore take them for granted until it is possible to discuss certain developments in the field of Aegean art which will probably explain the origin of these drops.\textsuperscript{23}

In addition to the usual heraldic, symbolic designs, and to the decorative applications, the South-flowers occasionally occur in the New Kingdom in representative contexts - as elements of floral bouquets that were popular at that time.\textsuperscript{24} In such cases, the shapes of the flowers are identical with the decorative South-flowers, and the occurrence in the bouquets is probably simply a reflection of the widespread use of the form in the applied arts.

When Schweinfurth, the great explorer of African botany, was preparing for his first trip to that continent and went for advice to Lepsius, the latter asked him to solve the problem of the natural prototype of the Egyptian South-flower.\textsuperscript{25} Schweinfurth continues: “Ich habe die Frage über ein halbes Jahrhundert nicht aus den Augen gelassen, habe sie in verschiedenen Hypothesen erörtert - aber mit keiner bin ich einer befriedigenden Lösung näher gekommen, obgleich die Kenntnis der Flora inzwischen zu einem gewissen Abschluss gebracht worden ist.” He believed that the symbolic importance of the South-flower displaced any interest in its naturalistic model and that the artists themselves had forgotten what plant was originally represented. Schweinfurth’s statement, “So gestaltet sich die ‘Lilie des Südens’ für uns so recht zu einem Wahrzeichen aller Schwierigkeiten die der Ägyptologe zu Überwinden hat, wenn er erklären will, was der Naturforscher nicht zu deuten vermag,” is not a happy augury in the search for a satisfactory solution of the problem.\textsuperscript{26}

\textsuperscript{23} Cf. Chapter XI, pp.453-460.
\textsuperscript{24} Ken-Amun I, Pls. XXXVIII, LIV (93). Schiaparelli, Cha (Torino, 1921-7), p. 34 (tied to baldachin of Osiris in the copy of the Peremhu belonging to Kha; end of Thutmose IV - beginning of Amenhotep III).
\textsuperscript{25} In the Introduction to Keimer, Gartenpflanzen im alten Agypten (Hamburg, 1924), p. viii: “Da Sie zur erforschung der Flora des Nilgebietes reisen, empfehle ich Ihnen vor allem eine noch ungelöste Frage zu enthüllen, die mich zeit Jahren in Spannung versetz und die noch kein Botaniker zu enträtseln vermocht: ‘Welche Art liegt der oberägyptischen Wappenpflanze zugrunde, die wir schlechtweg als die “Lilie des Südens” bezeichnen? Sie muss im Süden des Gebiets, in Nubien oder im ägyptischen Sudan verbreitet gewesen sein, und Sie muss sich unter den für die dortige Flora besonders charakteristischen Gewächs noch heute finden.”
\textsuperscript{26} Ibid., pp. viii-ix.
In all there are four different motives, three of which are connected with Southern Egypt, that must be taken into consideration. Simplest is the hieroglyph nekheb (See Fig. III.1) (with the value \textit{nn} when it appears in pairs). Its natural prototype has been identified by Loret as the Aglet-headed rush, \textit{Heleocharis palustris} \textit{R. Br.} \textit{(Scirpus palustris L.)}.\footnote{Studies Presented to F. Ll. Griffith (London, 1932), pp. 304-309. Gardiner, \textit{Egyptian Grammar}, p. 471, M 22 (“rush”). \textit{Beni Hasan} III, Pl. III, 7. The red tips were not universal, cf. Griffith, \textit{A Collection of Hieroglyphs} (London, 1898), Pl. VI, 66 (Dynasty XVIII).} He points out that the hieroglyph shows a plant without leaves, with parallel, independent stems (\textit{sic}), ending in reddish spots indicating the inflorescence; written evidence shows it to have been used in basketry. The only plant that could be found answering to these qualifications is the \textit{H. palustris} \textit{R. Br.} Before the date of his article (1932) Loret had already identified the \textit{nekheb} with a rush; he concluded that the other signs, referring to the South, were derived from it. This explanation has not, however, been accepted; the \textit{nekheb} hieroglyph is usually regarded as independent of the signs for South. Thus even if it is satisfactorily identified, this would not be pertinent in a discussion of the other signs.

The \textit{shewet} hieroglyph, (See Fig. III.1) which originally referred to the king of Upper Egypt,\footnote{Gardiner, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 471, M 23. Griffith, \textit{op. cit.}, Pl. VIII, 109 (Bersheh; Tehutohotp).} although somewhat similar in general form to \textit{nekheb}, has two pairs of lateral shoots usually ending in pointed lanceolate tips, not rounded red lobes. It is probably the non-flowering form of the \textit{shema} sign (See Fig. III.1), which Gardiner has suggested may be a sedge.\footnote{Gardiner, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 472, M 26 (“perhaps as a more elaborate version of M 23); cf. also M 25, 27, 28 for various combinations involving this sign.} In detailed versions of the latter hieroglyph, the ends, often trilobate, are colored red; the base from which it grows, interpreted by Gardiner as a land sign, may be painted blue; for this reason Griffith has considered that the plant grows from marsh or water.\footnote{\textit{Beni Hasan}, III, 12, Pl. III, 20. Cf. also Murray, \textit{Saqqara Mastabas} (London, 1905), I, Pl. XXXIX, 49, 50; Jéquier, \textit{Fouilles à Saqqara. Monument funeraire de Pepi II} (Cairo, 1938), Pls. X, XVI.} The \textit{shema} sign (See Fig. III.1), aside from its hieroglyphic uses, also appears in heraldic designs as, for example, in unification symbols dated to the reigns of

---


29 Gardiner, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 472, M 26 (“perhaps as a more elaborate version of M 23); cf. also M 25, 27, 28 for various combinations involving this sign.

Khafre, Menkaure, Mentuhotep III and Amenemhet I. On a statue of Tuthmosis III presenting offerings, the sides of the central block are covered by a series of vertical shema plants, as well as by offerings of ducks and Numphaeas. It may be placed on the heads of Nile gods or be used as a support for the vulture goddess on a basket, as in several excellent cases from the mortuary temple of Pepi II. Here, the normal shema form of the hieroglyph is replaced by a clump of six shoots, all of which are enveloped at the base by a conical sheath. In a small register showing animals in a desert, from the same temple, exactly the same kind of clumps are shown; their identity with the symbolic groups is clear. Moreover in the Fifth Dynasty, Sahure’s hunting scene contains a series of plants varying from the canonical hieroglyph shem a through numerous intermediary forms to a clump pattern similar to that used in the later registers of Pepi II. The Sahure and Pepi II plants prove that some of the vegetation occurring in other hunting scenes exemplifies the representative use of the shema hieroglyph. This function, however, seems to be limited chiefly to the Old Kingdom; by the New Kingdom the shema sign, although used in writing, hardly ever occurred in symbolic compositions.

It was the fourth member of this conglery, the heraldic South-flower, which was throughout Egyptian history preeminent as the foil to the papyrus. The shema and the

---

31 Borchardt, Statuen I (Cat. Caire, Cairo 1911), p. 11, Nos. 10 (back of plinth), 11. BMFA . XX (1922), 27, bottom = Reisner, Mycerinus (Cambridge, Mass., 1930), Pl. XLVII, b (Valley Temple, Statue 18; cf. also c, statue 19). Evers, op. cit., I, Pl. IX (Dendera; chapel of Mentuhotep III; badly weathered relief; side of throne; no details). Ibid., I. XVI (Tanis; statue of Amenemhet I).

32 Legrain, Statues I (Cat. Caire). Pl. XXXII, 422056.

33 WVDOG, XXVI, Pl. XXIX (cf. Pl. XXX for a lower Egyptian deity wearing a bent papyrus clump).

34 Jéquier, op. cit. II, Pls. XXXVI, XXXVIII, XXXIX.

35 Ibid., Pls. XLII, XLIII.

36 WVDOG XXVI, Pl. XVII.

37 Ptahhotep I, Pls. XXII, XXV, XXVI. Quibell, Excavations at Saqqara, 1907-08. The Tomb of Hesy (Cairo, 1913), Pl. LXII, 2 (Tomb of Hem-Kau and Sekhem-Hathor; donkeys in desert). Naville, XIth Dynasty Temple at Deir el Bahari (London, 1907), I, Pl. XVI, H.

38 Cf. Sethe in ZAS XLIV (1907), 24f for discussion of the relationship of nekheb, shewet and shema. He suggested that all may refer to the same plant; the shema showing the living, blooming plant, the shewet a flowerless example and nekheb a bud.

39 As has been stated before, both the shewet and shema signs have reference to Upper Egypt, and so are, in a sense flowers (plants) of the South. They can be distinguished by their proper hieroglyphic names. The term South-flower should be reserved for the heraldic motives of Figs. III.5 which is in need of a specific name that does not connote an unproven natural prototype.
South-flower are two symbols possessing the same referent, Upper Egypt, but performing, on the whole, different functions. The shema is predominant in the script as the sign for Upper Egypt, in contrast to the South-flower which is prevalent in pictorial, heraldic compositions. It is only natural that these two should be considered as the same. Often it is on the basis of the characteristics of the shema hieroglyph rather than of the heraldic South-flower ("lily") that identifications of a natural prototype have been made. Davies states of a characteristic New Kingdom trilobate South-flower that it is “probably not a lily at all, but belongs to a flowering rush; this is best known as the symbol of Upper Egypt,” and Jéquier evidently holds the same view. 

In passing, Hayes identifies a New Kingdom South-flower as a sedge, presumably following the tentative determination in Gardiner’s Sign-list. The earliest proposal of “some kind of Scirpus- sedge” as a prototype was made by Griffith in 1896, on the authority of a Mr. Brown of Kew Gardens; Newberry in 1924 treated such an identification as proved. Sometime before Erman had termed the shema flowering rush. It is on the basis of such statements then, and with the assumption that the shema and the heraldic South-flower are both copied from the same prototype, that the latter has been identified with a rush, reed, or sedge. However, even if the last-mentioned hypothesis is correct, the problem is not settled, for the identification with Scirpus has not been supported by detailed arguments, and is not accepted by

---

40 We have already seen that the South-flower occurs sometimes as part of signs. The hieroglyphic unification symbol of the New Kingdom is simply a heraldic group reduced to a small scale.
43 Beni Hasan III, 12.
44 “The sign for South was a scirpus reed; this was the cult object of a clan which dwelt on the East bank of the Nile a little above the modern village of Sharona, in Middle Egypt. The country south of the apex of the Delta was known as Ta Shema, ‘Reedland.’ It must therefore have been at some point north of the apex of the Delta that the scirpus reed was first used to designate the South.” Newberry, “Egypt as a Field for Anthropological Research,” Annual Report of the Smithsonian Institution, 1924, p. 444.
45 Erman, Life in Ancient Egypt (London, 1894), p. 16f.
46 Strictly speaking rush refers to a plant of the genus Juncus of the family Juncaceae, but it is also used for the genus Scirpus (which should be referred to as bulrushes or club rushes), a member of the Cyperaceae, the sedge family to which the papyrus belongs. The reeds belong to a third family, the grasses, Gramineae.
Keimer, who, like Schweinfurth, considers that the search for the prototype of the *shema* has not been successful. In any case there exists no good reason compelling us to assume that the *shema* and the South-flower are based upon the same natural prototype.

The identifications cited above are not the only ones that have been proposed for the mysterious South-flower. Although at one time Schweinfurth suggested a derivation from the aloe, a lilaceous plant, he himself did not consider this a satisfactory solution. Other students have attacked the problem on the basis of the form of the heraldic South-flower. Thus Meurer identified it with a single flower of a leek, citing as reasons the bands at the base (which he interpreted as the canals of irrigated land), the prominence of this vegetable in Egypt, as well as the supposed resemblance between the leek and South-flowers. For Riegl the South-flower offered no problem. He explained it as a simplification of the “halbe vollansicht” of a “lotus” (i.e. of a South-flower palmette); cf. Chapter XI, p. 466), and derived the down-curling side “petals” from the pendant sepals of a natural *Nymphaea*, in this following Goodyear. The simple South-flower was for Riegl but a secondary derivate of the parent palmette. Dieulafoy also considered the South-flower an open *Nymphaea*. Petrie also derived the New Kingdom South-flower, which he termed a fleur-de-lys, from the “lotus,” considering the two flanking elements as sepals and the lobe as a third, back sepal, with the front one completely eliminated. Würz and Luschan assumed that a palm was the prototype and Borchardt, in describing the forms used on the Khafra statues, referred to them as palm-shaped.

---

47 “L’identification très difficile de la plante *shema* a résisté jusqu’à présent à toutes les recherches,” BIFAO XXXI (1931), 126.
49 Borchardt stated that the “lilies” of the Khafra statues spring from the *heesp* sign for land (*Pflanzensäule*, p. 21).
50 Meurer, *Vergleichende Formenlehre des Ornaments und der Pflanze*, pp. 53-4, Abt. II, Pl. I.
51 Goodyear, *op. cit.*, p. 75.
A view that has carried more weight than those cited in the preceding paragraphs is that of Bénédite, who discussed the problem in connection with a Twenty-sixth Dynasty relief from the tomb of Psammethek-Meri-Nit acquired by the Louvre. On it are shown three women plucking five-petaled flowers from tall stems; another carries the blooms on her head to a pair who press them; the finished product, the fragrant extract, is presented to the owner of the tomb. Bénédite has pointed out this scene as an illustration of the preparation of the lily perfume mentioned by Pliny, “The lily holds the next highest rank after the rose, and has a certain affinity with it in respect of its unguent and the oil extracted from it, which is known to us as ‘lirinon.’” The plant referred to by Pliny is *Lilium candidum* L., and Bénédite felt that the Egyptian relief showed many of the characteristics of the white Madonna lily. With this Twenty-sixth Dynasty vegetation, he correlated the heraldic South-flower (especially forms such as Fig. III.5), the flowers of which he considers modeled after the lily. He underlines the fact that before the foreign conquests there appear to be no written references to lilies in the Nileland. Moreover the cultivation of *Lilium candidum* L. in Lower Egypt must have been introduced in the late period. Nevertheless, Bénédite believed it possible that the species was indigenous there, and cites a bulb with foliage found on a mummy the date of which is not given; this was identified as

---

56 A similar flower, carved in the round out of ivory, was found by Petrie in the “Palace of Apries” (*Memphis* II, Pl. XIV, top left).
57 *The Natural History of Pliny* (Trans. John Bostock, H. T. Riley, London; IV [1856], XXI, 11 (p. 314). Pliny mentions lily oil, and another oil, *susinum*, “the most fluid of them all, one of whose components was formed by lilies (Could the same *susinum* have any connection with the Egyptian word for *Nymphaea, seshen*? According to Loret the word *seshen* spread to Hebrew and Arabic as well as to Greek and Latin, *La Flora pharaonique* (Paris, 1892), pp. 114-115). In addition Pliny states that lily unguents make other preparations “more unctuous,” Pliny, *op. cit.* XIII, 2 (pp. 163, 165 of Vol. III, 1855). Although Pliny gives the provenience of many perfumes, and some come from Egypt, he does not connect the lirinon or the *susinum* with that country.
58 Bénédite, *op. cit.*, p. 5. (1) tall narrow stem, topped by the main flower; (2) six petalled corolla; (3) concave profile of the bloom.
59 Ibid., p. 25. It would have been a phenomenon comparable to the introduction of the lotus, *Nelumbo speciosum*, and the rose into Egypt at a very late period in the history of the country.
an immature Madonna lily by Loret and Poisson. The assumption of a lilaceous prototype is by no means unassailable. This plant does not exist in Egypt today, and no unequivocal proof of its presence in ancient times has been given. The connection of the Twenty-sixth Dynasty relief with the earlier series of South-flowers is doubtful. Although in some of the Psammethek-Meri-Nit examples there is a central lobe flanked by two others (Fig. III.52), the aspect of these blooms having two subsidiary lobes is very different (Fig. III.53); the resemblance to South-flowers is probably fortuitous. Any inflorescence consisting of a corolla with several lanceolate petals could have been stylized in Egypt in much the same manner. It is possible to cite species which have as much, or rather as little, claim to be identified with the South-flower as Bénédite’s lilies. Keimer has illustrated some faience beads, dating from the end of the New Kingdom, which he identifies as *Jasminum sambac* L. The natural prototype of one of the units in a floral bouquet of unknown provenience, published only by Prisse, is less certain; Schweinfurth identified it for Keimer as a Jasmine bloom. It is a trilobate form, which shares only the tripartite division, but no specific characters, with the South-flower. In addition, campanulate flowers, having apparently four petals with those on the outside flaring outwards, occur on a wooden stela, placed by Keimer around the Twenty-second Dynasty, which shows a certain Tapirit adoring a Horus god (Tum). The flowers appear as the individual elements forming the four “sun rays” that emerge from the sun disk worn by

---


63 Jasmine, although not a member of the indigenous flora of Egypt was apparently acclimatized there before the end of the New Kingdom since a flower, probably of *J. grandiflorum* L. is said to have been found at Deir el Bahri in a Twenty-first Dynasty context, and remains of *J. sambac* L. come from the Second-Third Century A. D. cemetery at Hawara; today both species of shrubs are common in Egyptian gardens (*Ibid.*, p. 28), and the flowers are strung in garlands (Annales XXXVI (1936), 151, Fig. 144; cf. 152, Fig. 145 for a garland of pomegranate flowers).
the god.\textsuperscript{64} Clumps of papyrus and of normal, lobed South-flowers are placed at the lateral borders of the stela. The blooms of this unique and unexplained representation are more like the primitive South-flower forms than Bénédite’s lilies, but we cite this Louvre stela here, not because we think it gives a valid parallel for the South-flowers, but as a warning showing that designs superficially resembling early South-flowers, but of different date and not part of a large series of examples, cannot aid in the search for the natural prototype of the motive. There does not seem to be any proof that the Psammethek-Meri-Nit lilies are actually examples of detailed naturalistic South-flowers and with their exclusion from the evidence pertinent to the problem of the natural prototype of the emblem of Upper Egypt, the only plausible reason for an identification with the \textit{L. candidum} \textit{L.} disappears.\textsuperscript{65}

Bénédite also discussed the problem of the relationship of the heraldic South-flower and the \textit{shema}. He was not the first to touch upon the question, for Borchardt in 1897 stated that the two were completely unconnected, and that the occasional substitution of one for the other can by no means be considered proof of their identity,\textsuperscript{66} but Bénédite’s treatment is much more detailed. He, following Sethe, considered that the \textit{shema} is the flowering form of the \textit{shewet} plant.\textsuperscript{67} However, a lily was chosen as a foil for the papyrus; in other words Bénédite believed, with Borchardt, that the heraldic South-flower was distinct from the \textit{shema} hieroglyph. The classical South-flower motives (such as Figs. III.18, 19, 42, 50 and 51) were then developed, Bénédite suggested, by a conflation of the lily-derived form with the trilobate \textit{shema}. This recognition of the possibility that the two motives are not necessarily identical and copied from the same natural prototype is a clue that may lead us to a possible solution to the problem.

\textsuperscript{64} \textit{Ibid.}, 97, Fig. 146. Boreux, \textit{Ant. egy. Louvre}, II, 292-3, No. 1327. Cf. also Mogensen, \textit{La collection egytienne Glyph. Ny Carsberg}, Pl. CXIII, 752, “Saite” stela with flower rays extending from the sun.

\textsuperscript{65} Thiersch has distinguished traces of both the lily and iris in the Egyptian South-flower.

\textsuperscript{66} Borchardt, \textit{Pflanzensäule} (Berlin, 1897), p. 20, n. 1. Besides the unification symbols cited above, note 39, he refers to a faience pendant, possibly of the Late Period, in which the \textit{shema}, without flowers (i. e. presumably a \textit{shewet} ) substitutes for a “lily,” (Berlin 7709).

\textsuperscript{67} Bénédite, \textit{op. cit.}, pp.19-23. For the relationship of the \textit{shewet} and \textit{shema} he refers to Sethe, “Das Wort für König Oberägyptens,” ZAS, XLIX (1911), 16.
Two of the most prominent students of the ancient Egyptian flora, Schweinfurth and Keimer, have both referred to the long and unsuccessful search for the natural prototype of the South-flower. It is possible that the reason this long quest has been unrewarded is simply because the heraldic motive never possessed a natural model at all. The occurrence of the *shema* in representative desert scenes proves that it was vegetal in character, even though we do not know the species of plant to which it refers. However, this does not give us license to consider the South-flower as ultimately vegetal, for, despite their identical meaning, the *shema* and the emblem of Upper Egypt were practically never conflated. It was only in the New Kingdom that there appears to have been some combination of the two motives, which had been kept distinct until that time. The clearest example is on the stele of a *Nefer-heb*, undoubtedly of the Eighteenth Dynasty. There the *shema* sign is tipped with South-flowers.\(^{68}\) Although in most cases the details are unclear, it is possible that the same thing may have happened in some New Kingdom hieroglyphs. In a *shema* sign in Qenamun’s tomb, the top “flower” consists of three separate “floral leaves,” while the lower ones are apparently trilobed like South-flowers,\(^{69}\) and the same may be true for at least some of the *shema* hieroglyphs in Ramose’s tomb.\(^{70}\) The *shema* in relief on a jewel casket of Tutankhamun apparently has trilobate ends.\(^{71}\) Such cases evidently represent a secondary development; in fact, in view of the identical meaning of the two motives, it is strange that confusion between them does not occur more often. Usually, however, as Bénédite has pointed out, the two motives are kept completely separate, and the heraldic emblem of Upper Egypt occurs in decorative contexts where it is required as a foil for the well defined papyrus umbels of the North. It is only when Bénédite deduces that, in order to produce a satisfactory compeer for the papyrus, a lily prototype was copied, that we cannot follow him. The necessity for an aesthetically satisfying design for the Upper Egyptian side of the unification symbol, a need which the

\(^{68}\) P. Lacau, *Stele du Nouvel Empire* I (Cat. Caire), Pl. XLVIII, 34099 (Abydos).
\(^{69}\) *Ken-Amun* I, Pl. LXV, C.
\(^{70}\) *Ramose*, Pls. XXXIX, XLVII, right; XLVIII, top; LII.
shema with its tall attenuated median stem did not fill, was satisfied by the creation of a completely artificial and abstract motive, not based on any prototype, and sharing nothing, aside from its meaning, with the shema.

It is possible to adduce a number of features of the earliest known examples on the Khafra statues which support such a view. In the first place there is the servility with which the South-flower clump follows the tripartite arrangement of the papyrus group. Although the knotting of the median papyrus stem around the sema gives a different aspect to the motive, the clump is essentially the same simple symmetrical scheme exemplified in the triple papyrus hieroglyph and in the arm chair of Hetepheres. In the latter design (Fig. II. 31) the three stems are bound together in exactly the same manner as are the three South-flower stalks on the sides of Khafra’s chair, which emphasizes the artificiality of the mold into which the emblems of the South are cast, in contrast to the triple papyrus stems growing from their sheathing foliage, which was at least naturalistic in intent despite its stylized appearance. Further evidence of this artificiality is found in the lines of “cording” which are placed at the base of the inflorescence, and are strongly reminiscent of the well known banding of the plant columns. Such lines appeared even on the earliest representation of a Nymphaea pillar known to us, on the Third Dynasty coffin from Gebelein (Fig. II.125). The heads of the Khafra South-flowers, which are usually considered to represent a flower with a corolla formed of a number of petals, are apparently nothing but areas, of roughly the same shape as the papyrus umbels, which were distinguished from the Northern Egyptian emblems in the simplest manner possible, by the formation of lobes. The completely abstract and non-vegetal character of these “flower” heads is shown by the carving of the tops of the trachea in the sm3 hieroglyph in exactly the same fashion (though sometimes with more than four lobes) on several of the Khafra statues. To these reasons may be added supplementary evidence gleaned from

71 ILN, July 16, 1927, p. 108 right, above.
72 Borchardt, Statuen I (Cat. Caire), pp. 9, No. 9; 13, No. 13; 15, No. 14; 18, No. 17.
other sources. We have already seen that the hieroglyph *nekheb*, a picture of a writing outfit, had a bunch of reeds often topped by a papyrus head. In other cases the South-flower appears. We know exactly what the natural prototype of this part of the outfit looked like; bundles of ragged-ended reeds have been found in graves. It is clear that both the papyrus and the South-flowers were added as decorative endings, and it is not possible to deduce from this sign that the emblem of Upper Egypt might have been a reed.

The artificial design of the South-flower, produced possibly for the first time in relief during the reign of Khafra, was gradually transmuted into a more gracefully stylized form in the development which has already been followed. The trilobate design that resulted was not without parallel in Egypt. Another pattern, the *khekher*, which must be considered mainly as an artificially developed ornamental motive even though it is claimed to be originally derived from wattle and daub architecture, sometimes developed at the top a trilobate form not dissimilar to the triply-divided South-flowers. Accordingly it seems most satisfactory to regard this heraldic emblem of Upper Egypt as the ornamental counterpart of the *shema* plant developed as a suitable companion for the papyrus. The South-flower was a completely artificial form without any naturalistic prototype, but was endowed with a vegetal nature by the Egyptians. Thus it was able to appear in representations of New Kingdom bouquets although it corresponded to no real plant. In view of the unsuccessful search for a natural prototype for this symbol which has been carried on for many long years since the time of Lepsius, it is hardly likely that the explanation of the motive as an abstract creation will be displaced by the discovery of any realistic model.

---

73 For example, Quibell, *Excavations at Saqqara* 1906-7 (Cairo, 1908), Pl. XXXVI, 1.
74 Cf. the fragment, probably of a stela, published by Quibell, *op. cit.*, Pl. IX, 3.
75 Ludwig von Sygel’s explanation of the South-flower is interesting only from a historical point of view. He found its origin in spiral design which he considered a derivative from metal working. (Marburg, 1883, 2 3).
THE SPREAD OF THE SOUTH-FLOWER IN THE NEW KINGDOM

With the Eighteenth Dynasty the heraldic emblem of Upper Egypt entered upon a new phase in which it became one of the most characteristic elements used by Egyptian designers. In contrast to the scanty Old Kingdom and Middle Kingdom traces of the South-flower in the applied arts, the New Kingdom brings an abundance of sample objects, which exemplify the adaptation of this flower for the decoration of a large variety of things. Many of the most striking ornaments, however, are formed by combinations of the South-flower with other elements.\(^{76}\) Even when these are omitted, a number of applications involving only this bloom alone can be found.

In most cases single flowers are involved and, aside from use in friezes, the designs in which the South-flower appears are modeled upon papyrus\(^ {77}\) or \textit{Nymphaea} patterns. South-flower clumps, often triple, but sometimes with bent stems, accompany the papyrus as dadoes on the bases of walls or columns,\(^ {78}\) as the headdress of deities,\(^ {79}\) or as heraldic bushes supporting a cobra.\(^ {80}\) It is not unusual to find single papyrus and South-flower stems, emblematic of the two lands, with cobras coiled around them.\(^ {81}\) South-flower clumps with three or more stems could be used as heraldic filling motives, not directly connected with other elements of the composition, as in the interior of a Nineteenth Dynasty coffin belonging to an Amenemopi at the edge of a mythological scene in the tomb

---

\(^{76}\) Cf. Chapter VII.
\(^{77}\) ZÄS., XLIV (1907), 10.
\(^{79}\) Budge, \textit{Book of the Dead}; Facsimile of the Papyri of Hunefer, Anboi, Kerasher and Netchenet, Pl. V (probably end of Dynasty XX or XXI). MMA: \textit{Handbook of the Egyptian Rooms} (New York1911), p. 105, Fig. 45 (Ramses I temple: Niles bringing offerings). Calverley, \textit{op. cit.}, II, Pls. V (gods bringing offerings; decoration of support of sacred boat), XXIII (part of design of large table), XXIX (goddess adoring Seti I or welcoming him into the temple), XXXV (central support of sacred bark).
\(^{80}\) Ramose I. Pls. XXIX (serpent), LI. Calverley, \textit{op. cit.}, II, Pls II, XXXVI. Figs. III.45-46.
\(^{81}\) Calverley, \textit{op. cit.}, II, Pl. XXXVI.
of Ramses IV (Fig. III.47), or in a stela of Ramses III from Hermopolis (Fig. III.54). A large clump of flowers forms part of an ornate military standard from the tomb of Ramses IX. 82 The openwork decoration of a gold stand supporting one end of a sacred bark of Amun shows South-flower and papyrus clumps flanking an ankh. 83 A very small and unique design which fills a triangular space between two prisoners on a footstool of Amenhotep III, consists of a central papyrus umbel flanked by two South-flowers. 84

The unification symbol itself often appears with a large number of twining stems, 85 but the only really creative invention is that which expresses the imperial ambitions that are marked features of this period of Egyptian history. There are several cases in which the stems of the heraldic plants not only knot themselves around the trachea of the $sm^3$, but also ramify and bind prisoners of various nationalities placed on both sides of the symbol. 86 A scene in which Seti I is seated between the two goddesses of Lower and Upper Egypt is noteworthy. Their thrones are supported by three unification symbols, at the edges of which the individual papyrus and South-flower stems flare out and up, to be grasped by Horus and Thoth, who are carved on a larger scale than the seated figures. 87 In addition, on several objects from the tomb of Tutankhamun, this symbol was part of the decoration. It appears in gold repoussé in the middle panel of a footboard of a bed. 88 It was carried out in the round on chairs. All four sides between the rungs of a wooden chair

---

82 Felix Guilmont, *Tombeau de Ramsès IX* (MIFAO XV, 1907), Pl. LXXXV.
83 Calverley, *op. cit.*, II, Pls. X, XI.
84 BMMA, XXIV (1929) 37, Fig. 2 (Onen, butler of Ti, T 120, but this number is attributed in Top. Cat. to a certain Mahu).
85 For examples of New Kingdom unification symbols additional to those represented in Fig. III.3, cf: *Ken-Amun I*, Pl. LV, A; II, Pl. XI, A (93). *Huy* Pl. IV (42). MMA: *Handbook of the Egyptian Rooms*, 1911, p. 105, Fig. 45 (Temple Ramses I: here the outermost papyrus and South-flower stems are bent circularly, reflecting influence of the type of papyrus clump design which was very popular at the close of the Eighteenth Dynasty). Calverley, *op. cit.*, III, Pls. XXXI, XXXII, XXXIV, XXXVII and passim.
86 Carter-Newberry, *Tomb of Thoutmosis IV* (Cat. Caire), pp. 25, Fig. 1; 26, Fig. 2; Pl. IX, I, A (Chariot). *Amarna VI*, Pl. IV (Parennefer T.7; panel below window of appearance). *Tomb Tut II*, Pl. XVIII (First chariot). *Huy*, Pl. XXVI (Metal tribute vase; 4). On the poverty and lack of originality of the New Kingdom unification symbols in contrast to those of the Middle Kingdom, cf. Evers, *op. cit.* II.
87 Calverley, *op. cit.*, II, Pls. XXX, XXXVII.
with back and of two stools, one gilded besides being painted white and one only white, are filled by the unification symbol. The curved stems and inflorescences fill the space between the rungs and base of an elaborate faldstool, and adorn the panel immediately below the circular seat of a three-legged stool. An elaborate stone vase is supported on an open work stand. The vessel itself is cast into the form of the *sema* and flanked by South-flower and papyrus clumps, some of whose stems are grasped by two Nile gods wearing the same plants as headdresses. They also hold within their elbows two “columns” of papyrus and South-flower around which are entwined cobras. Altogether this baroque production exemplifies three different heraldic applications of the South-flower. In another vase the designer has restrained himself to flanking an oval flask with two heraldic clumps; their stems knot themselves around the neck of the vessel, but there is no further attempt to approximate the canonical unification symbol.

There are some rare examples of objects decorated by bud-flower designs in which a South-flower substitutes for the normal *Nymphaea*. The pattern on the broad shoulder of a faience libation jar from the tomb of Tuthmosis IV is ornamented by a series of these flowers and waterlilies. The large blooms are separated by pointed *Nymphaea* buds (Fig. III.55). Less equivocal is a silver ear ring found at Amarna, from which projects a South-flower flanked by what are probably *Mimusops* fruits (Fig. III.56). Despite the presence

---

88 *Tomb Tut* III, Pl. XXXII, C.
90 *Ibid.*, Pl. XXXIII.
91 *Ibid.*, Pl. LXVIII, A.
of fruits rather than buds, the dependance of this design on the *Nymphaea* bud-flower formula is clear. In a foundation deposit of Tuthmosis III at Koptos was found a scarab decorated with a bud and South-flower group identical with the more common bud-*Nymphaea* designs (Fig. III.57).\(^94\)

A number of the products of the workshops were decorated by South-flowers which do not form any definite patterns. In many cases these blooms are applied in the same manner as the swamp plants. For example, stemmed South-flowers were used as part of the ornamentation of the metal vases. Usually the compositions are more elaborate than the rows of papyri or waterlilies alternating with buds (Fig. III.58).\(^95\) In the ornate vessels of the Nineteenth Dynasty examples with South-flower bases are found (Fig. III.59).\(^96\) There are also metal chalices which appear to be made in the form of a South-flower and were sometimes very conspicuous. The manner in which these flat designs were carried out in the round is not clear.\(^97\) Earlier examples may be paired with a beaker, and possibly such forms may be decorative designs patterned after the waterlily chalices rather than actual independent objects.\(^98\)

Although combinations of South-flowers with other elements occur as decorations on pottery or faience bowls, it is more unusual for plain blooms to occur. However, on a long-necked oval jar in the Cairo Museum, a plain lobed flower growing from a long sinuous stem with opposite leaves serves as a filling motive below a galloping horse;\(^99\) a

\(^{93}\) *Ibid.*, Vol I, Pl. XLVII.

\(^{94}\) Cf. Chapter II, n. 290.

\(^{95}\) Here the outer South-flowers curve in a fashion reminiscent of the sides of the Egyptian volute discussed in Chapter V. Prisse, *Art Égy.*, II, Pl. CLVII, 3, 4 (Imsibe; 65; Ramses XI; practically identical with the Thenuna example (Fig. III.58).

\(^{96}\) Atlas II, Pls. XXXVII, XXXVIII, No. 7 (Karnak, Seti I; “Syrian booty”), XLIV, Nos. 2, 14 (Seti I), LI (Libyan booty; Seti I), LXI (Haremhab; Syrian booty).

\(^{97}\) *Ibid.*, Pl. CLVII, 13 (Asiatic, Libyan booty of Ramses III; Medinet Habu).

\(^{98}\) *Men. et al.*, Pls. IV (86), XXXIV (Amenmose; 42).

similar stemmed South-flower appears together with papyrus stems.\textsuperscript{100}

The same statement can be made for weapons and military equipment. Such objects were frequently decorated by hybrid designs with the South-flower as a basis,\textsuperscript{101} while ornament formed by a simple flower is more rare. Three broad-bladed daggers among Qenamun’s New Year’s gifts have midribs ending in papyrus, and the other three end in a South-flower (Fig. III.60). A crooked scimitar (\textit{khepes}) with this same kind of decoration, the flower being even equipped with tiny drops, belonged to Tutankhamun (Fig. III.61). \textit{Khepes} weapons with their handles ending in South-flower hafts were very common in the later New Kingdom (Fig. III.62).\textsuperscript{102} The tips of model faience boomerangs from the grave of Tuthmosis IV are painted with stemless flowers (Fig. III.63), or with long stalked blooms.\textsuperscript{103}

Fig. III.62 may be cited as an example of the application of the South-flower form to an ending or haft, comparable to the many types of objects fitted with papyrus heads. The use of the South-flower in such positions had begun long before the New Kingdom, in the fan of Pepi II and in the Middle Kingdom objects related to that fan. These all found successors in the New Kingdom. Examples of feathery fans with trilobate hafts appear

\textsuperscript{100}Wallis \textit{Egyptian Ceramic Art} (London, 1898), p.48, Fig. 100 (Flinders Petrie Collection).
\textsuperscript{101}Cf. Chapter VII, Check List of South-flower Hybrids. In addition friezes of these flowers and a triple group occurs on the sword of Kamose and the axe of Ahmose.
\textsuperscript{102}Also Champollion, \textit{Mon. III}, Pl. CCLXIV = Rosellini, \textit{Mon. Civ.}, Pl. CXXI = Calliard, \textit{Arts et Metiers}, Pl. XLIII, B, 3-10; armory painted in tomb of Ramses III.
\textsuperscript{103}Also Carter-Newberry, \textit{op. cit.}, pp. 110-113 46610, nos. 9, 10. Nos. 46411-15 have long stemmed flowers but are not illustrated.
(Fig. III.64), but others in which the outer “petals” of the haft flank a number of interior units are not uncommon.\textsuperscript{104} An actual example (or model) of a fan stock with trilobate haft is preserved in the Louvre.\textsuperscript{105} Ceremonial fly whisks when carried by women were made with South-flower hafts (Fig. III.65), but those used by men were left plain. Other objects with this kind of haft are mirrors (Fig. III.66)\textsuperscript{106} and an ointment spoon (Fig. III.67). A statue of Seti I is carried by deities (or masked priests) on a litter supported by long, thick staves, the ends of which are shaped as South-flowers at one end and papyrus at the other.\textsuperscript{107} Slender shafts forming part of the supporting framework of chariots could end either in a South-flower or in a papyrus inflorescence.\textsuperscript{108} The handles of two small silver pitchers found in a basket from the burial of of Hat-nufer, mother of Senmut, end in South-flowers.\textsuperscript{109} By the Nineteenth Dynasty the ends of the handles of metal vessels and the accompanying rivets are worked in the form of palmettes.\textsuperscript{110}
In the Middle kingdom beads in form of the South-flower had already appeared and they find successors in the new Kingdom examples, which were not, however, used in bead kilts, but were strung in a necklace; the blooms are carved out of a bluish stone and carnelian and the Nubian grave in which they were found contained three scarabs bearing the name of Tuthmosis III (Fig. III.68). Much the same kind of bead evidently served to form registers in the floral variety of the old *usekh* collar that became popular in the Eighteenth Dynasty (Fig. III.69). A number of individual faience flower pendants or their moulds have been found at Amarna (Figs. III.70, 71, 72, 73-75).\(^{111}\) Single South-flowers adorn a pair of ear rings in the Metropolitan Museum of Art (Fig. IV.70). The green glazed bezel of a ring from Amarna consists of two flowers separated by three ovals (Fig. III.76). The oval bezel of another ring from that site is adorned by a *wazet* eye with two flowers used to fill the corners (Fig. III.77); we have seen that *Nymphaeas* served the same purpose. A scarab base might be covered by a single flower (Fig. III.78). South-flowers also play an important role in the ornamentation of rings (Figs. III.79-80) and a bracelet (Fig. III.81) of Tutankhamun. One element of an elaborate pectoral from the

---

same burial is a beetle with spread wings and grasping with its two hindmost legs a South-flower on one side and a *Nymphaea* bud-flower group on the other. No better example of the baroque and decadent taste of this age could be given than this parody on the normal theme of the vulture grasping two round cartouches.

There remains a miscellaneous assortment of applications. Laces or ties were often ended by South-flowers, as well as by papyrus or by other vegetal forms. A lobed emblem of upper Egypt hangs from the kilt of an Asiatic who leads a horse in the tomb of Amenmose. The ties of a wrist guard inscribed with the name of Amenhotep II are ornamented in this way. The basis for restoring the ties of *usekh* collars in the tomb of Neferhotep, son of Neby, with South-flowers is not given. Pendants from a gold corselet of Tutankhamun end in South-flowers as well as papyri and *minusops*. A lace hanging beside the girdle of Seti I ends in this way. That part of a horse’s harness which was set upon the shoulder and curves outward and up was sometimes shaped in the form of a South-flower. Another miscellaneous application is the appearance of single South-flowers, interspersed with smaller papyrus umbels and with a border of *Nymphaea* flowers and buds on a well preserved fragment of tapestry from the tomb of Tuthmosis IV, but worked with the cartouche of Amenhotep II. Although this is the only textile preserved using individual South-flowers, hybrids based on this motive were popular decorations for robes. The body of the state dahabeah of Huy was elaborately decorated. Triangular spaces at each end are filled by a *Nymphaea* and South-flower respectively. In this same position on a similarly decorated official boat, lent for the

---

112 *Tomb Tut.*, III, Pl. XIX, B, above.
113 *Ken-Amun I*, Pl. XXII (wrist guard; pomegranate fruit ties).
114 *Men. et al.*, Pl. XXXV (42).
115 *Ken-Amun I*, 30, No. 109; Pl. XXII.
116 *Neferhotep I*, Pl. XXVI, B.
117 *Tomb Tut.* I, Pl. LXVI, B.
118 Frankfort, *Cenotaph of Seti I at Abydos* (London, 1933), Pl. L.
121 Cf. Chapter VII, Check List of South-flower Hybrids
122 *Huy*, Pl. XII (45).
funeral of Qenamun, there appears a *Potamegeton lucens* L. inflorescence with two pairs of leaves.\(^{123}\) As a final miscellaneous application we may cite a horn ending in a female head that is crowned by a South-flower; it is shown among the gifts to Amun.\(^{124}\)

The South-flower was also used as a capital, but apparently only for slender shafts of impermanent buildings. Unlike the papyrus and *Nymphaea* capitals no actual examples are known. The papyrus columns from the “North” court of Zoser’s funerary complex were paralleled by a column in the “South” court, but it is most unfortunate that only its base has been preserved, for it was undoubtedly crowned by what would have been our earliest example of the emblem of Upper Egypt. However, in the hieroglyph *sh* (See Fig. III.1), which represents according to Gardiner an open booth, the canopy is always supported by a South-flower column. In Old Kingdom examples the capital apparently consists of two horizontal lobes.\(^{125}\) Although in the Middle Kingdom\(^{126}\) and New Kingdom\(^{127}\) trilobate forms are normal, it was possible for the old bilobed form to reappear.\(^{128}\) Aside from the hieroglyphs, however, examples of simple South-flower columns are very rare. In a relief from the Memphite tomb of Haremhab, carved during the Amarna period, there is represented a *sh* booth supported by a South-flower shaft.\(^{129}\) The roof of an open cabin, containing a pair of horses, of the large boat of Huy already mentioned, is supported by a column with a South-flower capital.\(^{130}\) Such a pillar was apparently represented on a piece of a flat faience plaque (?), said to come from the palace of Amenhotep III at Thebes.\(^{131}\) Most commonly, the South-flower capitals make their

---

\(^{123}\) *Ken-Amun* I, Pls. XLII, LXVIII, B. For discussion of this plant, cf. Chapter XIII.

\(^{124}\) *Atlas* II, Pl. ??.


\(^{127}\) Ramose, Pls. XXX, LI, and hieroglyphs of any New Kingdom tomb publication.

\(^{128}\) Griffith, *op. cit.*, Pl. II, 9 (*hb*; Deir el Bahri).

\(^{129}\) JEA VI (1921), 33, Fig. 1. *Atlas* I, Pl. CCCLXXXVI, B.

\(^{130}\) Huy, Pl. XII = *Anc. Egypt. Paint.* II, Pl. LXXXII (40).

\(^{131}\) Spiegelberg, *Aeg. Kunstdenkmäler, Strasburg.* Pl. XIX, 73,
appearance, not in simple columns, but in those elaborate formations consisting of a number of superimposed capitals of different types.\footnote{Cf. Chapter VII, p. 291. \textit{Annales} XXXVIII (1938), Pl. LXVIII, a, shows a South-flower column painted on the Twenty-sixth Dynasty or under the Persians, on a wall of the tomb of Zed-Amun-if-Pankh at Bahria oasis.}

The decorative use of the swamp plants illustrated the skill of the Egyptians in compelling “naturalistic” motives to serve ornamental purposes without relinquishing the representative form of the designs. In the typology of the South-flower, which was not copied after any natural prototype, we can watch the Egyptian craftsmen searching for and finding a pattern which could be used as a satisfactory partner for the papyrus. Although the shape of the “flower” itself underwent a development guided only by a desire for symmetry and clarity, and independent of any model, the contexts in which it was used, both its heraldic functions and decorative applications, are almost all modelled after, or at least paralleled by, papyrus and \textit{Nymphaea} motives. If the story of the South-flower were limited to the design and utilizations surveyed within this chapter, its share in the decorative art of Egypt would be much smaller than that of the swamp plants. This is not the case. The most typical New Kingdom plant ornaments, were, as we shall see, hybrids constructed on the basis of the South-flower, which are of great significance, not only for the local decorative art of Egypt, but also for the ornament of the entire Near East. The descendants of the motive whose first amorphous forms occurred on the plinths of the Khafra statues were to flourish with such abandon that their ramifications can be found in every corner of the ancient Near East and even penetrated ultimately into Europe.\footnote{Cf. Chapter VII, p. 291. \textit{Annales} XXXVIII (1938), Pl. LXVIII, a, shows a South-flower column painted on the Twenty-sixth Dynasty or under the Persians, on a wall of the tomb of Zed-Amun-if-Pankh at Bahria oasis.}

III.5  *Ibid.*, pp.9, No. 9; 13-14, No. 13; 15, No. 14

III.6  WVDOG XXVI, Pl. XLII


III.8  WVDOG VII, Pl. XVI = Schäfer-Andrae, *Kunst des Alten Orients*, p. 253


III.10  Ptahhetep I, Pl. XVIII, 408

III.11  M. Murray, *Saqqara Mastabas*, Pl. XX


III.14  Junker, *Giza* III, p. 131, Fig. 151, left; Pl. VIII, b. Cf. p. 136


III.16  Evers, *Staat aus dem Stein* I, Pl. X

III.17  *Ibid.*, Pl. XVIII

III.18  Gautier-Jéquier, *Fouilles de Licht*, MIFAO VI(1902), Pl. XII

III.19  Borchardt, *Statuen* II, 25, No. 415


III.21  *Ibid.*, 87, No. 538

III.22  Evers, *op. cit.*, Pl. XL

III.23  Borchardt, *op. cit.*, 37, No. 432 (Tanis; usurped by Ramses II)


III.25  Petrie, *Tanis* II, Pl. IX

III.26  Borchardt, *op. cit.*, 4, No. 385

III.27  Evers, *op. cit.*, I, Pl. CXVII (Bubastis)

III.28  Bersheh I, Pl. XIII (T.2; Amenemhat II-Senwosret III)

---

133 Cf. Riegl, *Stilfragen*, 1893, p. 60: “Das erste Auftreten des Volutenkelchs ist von Ausserordnenlichen Wichtigkeit für die gesammte Geschichte der Ornamentik.” At the time he wrote, the Egyptian Southflower was considered important mainly as a source for the Ionian column.
III.29  Lange-Schäfer, *Grab und Denksteins des Mittleren Reich* (Cat. Caire), Pl.
        XC, 537 (Stele 20334)

III.30  Bersheh I, Pl. XXX

III.31  Peet, Com., *Abydos* II, pp. 117-8; Pl. XXIII, 5 (Neb-ankh)

III.32  Lange-Schäfer, *op. cit.*, Pl. XC, 536 (Stela 20711)

III.33  Peet, Com., *op. cit.*, Pl. XC, 53 (stela 20210, 20394, 20460)

III.34  Mace-Winlock, *The Tomb of Senebtisi*, Pl. XXXI, C

III.35  Lacau, *Sarcophages antérieurs au Nouvel Empire*, I, 1 (Cat. Caire), Pl.XX

III.36  *Ibid.*, I, 2, 200, Fig. 2

III.37  *Ibid.*, I, 2, Pl. XLIX, 398

III.38  Mace-Winlock, *op. cit.*, pp. 70-72; Pl. XXVII


III.40  BMMA XVIII (1928), Dec. Pt. II, p. 31, Fig. 25, right

III.41  PM IV, ii, 843, Fig. 824 (Kamose; end of bronze soxket of sword)

III.42  Vernier, *Bijoux et Orfévreries* III (Cat. Caire), Pl. XLII, 3

        IV

III.44  *Atlas*, Pl. LXXXVIII, b, 1

III.45  LD III, Pl. CXX, C (Silseleh; cliff cave)

        given) (Biban el Moluk 17)

III.47  Or. Inst. Thebes, Neg. 8436 (Biban el Moluk 2)

III.48  Bouriant, *op. cit.*, Pl. III

III.49  *Amarna* III, Pl. XXXIV (Ahemes; T.3)

III.50  Carter-Newberry, *Tomb of Thoutmosis* IV (Cat. Caire), p. 26, Fig. 2

III.51  *Men. et al*, Pls. XLI, XLIII

III.53  Ibid.

III.54  MDIAA V (1935), 37, Fig. 18, b (Hermopolis. Fragment of a dedicatory stela of Ramses III)

III.55  Carter-Newberry, op. cit., p. 60, Pl. XX, 5 A

III.56  City of Akhenaten II, Pl. XXVIII, 5

III.57  Petrie, Koptos, Pl. XV, 44

III.58  Atlas I, Pl. XLVI, a

III.59  Atlas II, Pls. XXXVIII, XXXVII, No. 7

III.60  Ken-Amun I, Pls. XVI, XVII

III.61  Tomb Tut III, Pl. XLV

III.62  Medinet Habu I, Pl. XXIX

III.63  Carter-Newberry, op. cit., pp. 110-113; Pl. XXV, 46409

III.64  Medinet Habu I, Pls. XXII, XXIX and passim

III.65  Ken-Amun I, p. 26, Pl. XVI, No. 7

III.66  Annales II (1901), 12, Fig. 13

III.67  JEA XIII (1927), Pl. V, BM 5968

III.68  Firth, Nubia 1908-09, II, Pl. LV, 7

III.69  Ken-Amun I, Pl. XV

III.70  Tell el Amarna (Petrie), Pls. XVIII, 365

III.71  Ibid.

III.72  Ibid, Pl. XIX, 461

III.73  Ibid., Pl. XIX, 462

III.74  Ibid., Pl. XIX, 463

III.75  Ibid., Pl. XIX, 464

III.76  Ibid., Pl. XVI, 222

III.77  City of Akhenaten, II, Pl. XLIX, I.C.8

III.78  Not found
III.79 ILN, Sept. 22 1923, 528, Fig. 5, middle right and upper left corner

III.80 Ibid.

III.81 ILN, Feb. 26, 1927, p. 352, Fig/ 4