



## The Emotional Bond of Maternity: Revealing Human-Animal Connection in Ancient Egyptian Sculpture

الرابطة العاطفية للأمومة: إبراز الصلة بين الإنسان والحيوان في النحت المصري القديم

Azza Mohamed Hassan Ibrahim \*

### Article Info

معلومات المقالة

Article Language: English

لغة المقالة: الإنجليزية

Vol. 9 No. 1, (2024) pp. 46-59 | <https://doi.org/10.21608/SIS.2024.335377.1182>

### Abstract

المخلص

The ancient Egyptian artist succeeded in sensibly capturing and highlighting the emotions and feelings of motherhood in both humans and animals, which he observed in family life. His artistic creativity is evident in the way he transferred these emotions into various forms of art, whether on the walls of tombs or in sculptures. These works confirm the nature and identity of the society in which the ancient Egyptian lived, reflecting the behavioral patterns and familial emotions that permeated and spread among family members, both human and animal. Moreover, the ancient Egyptian artist did not limit himself to depicting human emotions but also extended to capturing the feelings between other living creatures that interacted with the ancient Egyptian. His ability to convey the emotions of motherhood in these statues with artistic sensitivity makes it difficult to distinguish between the emotions depicted in the statues and the real emotions in society. This research will explore the subject by presenting various examples of motherhood artifacts from the Old Kingdom to the Late Period, featuring both human and monkey figurations. The examples will center on both human and animal, with monkeys serving as specific examples to explore the concept of animal motherhood. These instances highlight specific gestures that emphasize maternal bond, ultimately revealing the common feature of maternity in both human and monkey sculptures through shared postures.

نجح الفنان المصري القديم في النقاط وتسليط الضوء على مشاعر الأمومة في كل من البشر والحيوانات بشكل حساس، وهو ما رآه في الحياة الأسرية. تظهر إبداعاته الفنية في الطريقة التي نقل بها هذه المشاعر إلى أشكال فنية متنوعة، سواء على جدران المقابر أو في التماثيل. تؤكد هذه الأعمال طبيعة وهوية المجتمع الذي عاش فيه المصري القديم، معكسة الأنماط السلوكية والمشاعر الأسرية التي كانت سائدة ومتداولة بين أفراد الأسرة، سواء من البشر أو الحيوانات. علاوة على ذلك، لم يقتصر الفنان المصري القديم على تصوير مشاعر البشر فحسب، بل امتد إلى النقاط المشاعر بين الكائنات الحية الأخرى التي تفاعلت مع المصري القديم. إن قدرته على نقل مشاعر الأمومة في هذه التماثيل بحساسية فنية تجعل من الصعب التمييز بين المشاعر التي تم تصويرها في التماثيل والمشاعر الحقيقية في المجتمع. ستستكشف هذه الدراسة الموضوع من خلال تقديم أمثلة متنوعة لقطع أثرية للأمومة من الدولة القديمة إلى العصر المتأخر، التي تظهر تصورات لكل من البشر والقردة. تركز الأمثلة على الإنسان والحيوان على حد سواء، مع استخدام القردة كأمثلة محددة لاستكشاف مفهوم الأمومة عند الحيوان. تبرز هذه الأمثلة إيماءات معينة تؤكد رابطة الأمومة، مما يكشف في النهاية عن السمة المشتركة للأمومة في كل من التماثيل البشرية والقردة من خلال وضعيات متشاركة.

**Keywords:** Motherhood; Monkey; Figurine; bond; Postures.

**الكلمات الدالة:** أمومة؛ قرد؛ تمثال صغير؛ رابطة؛ الوضعيات.

\*Lecturer, Faculty of Tourism and Hotels, Alexandria University

## Introduction

Ancient Egypt was a highly hierarchical society, and with half the population being female, women were also ranked according to social class. Women of the royal family, the elite scribal class, the minor professional class, and the peasantry shared little in common beyond their capacity for motherhood (Robins, 1993, p. 19). Regardless of social status, occupations, or responsibilities, the primary role of women in most societies has historically been childbearing and rearing. Ancient Egyptian culture was no exception: from the most powerful goddesses to the humblest peasants, Egyptian women are depicted in art as nurturers of the young (Roehrig, 1996, p. 16).

Moreover, when the desire for a child grew strong, ancient Egyptians turned to the gods for help. The simplest way was to pray to one or more deities. Some made fertility figurines or child statuettes to symbolize their wish for new life, while wealthier individuals could obtain an oracular decree, a written prophecy on papyrus. Several deities were invoked to aid women in conceiving. The most significant were the gods Min, Khnum, and Bes, along with the goddesses Isis, Hathor, the Seven Hathors, Taweret, Heqet, and Nut (Marshall, 2024, p. 7). Evidence from sites like Deir El-Medina and Amarna reveals that many homes had a domestic shrine dedicated to household deities, such as Bes and Taweret, as well as the goddess Hathor, all associated with fertility and childbirth. These shrines often included small female figurines depicted almost naked, sometimes with a clearly marked public triangle, a necklace, a hip girdle, and elaborate hairstyles. These figurines, found in various styles, date from the early Middle Kingdom through the New Kingdom and beyond, appearing in settlement sites, tombs, and temples (Robins, 1993, p. 75).

Isis, daughter of Geb and Nut, embodied the ideal wife through her devotion to her husband and brother, Osiris, and symbolized the perfect mother in her care for her son, Horus. Known for her powerful magical abilities, Isis was a central figure among the deities responsible for overseeing the child's conception, birth, and upbringing (Marshall, 2024, p. 8). In one representation, she is shown with her arms outstretched, encircling the seated or standing figure of Osiris, and at times her arms are depicted as wings (Wilkinson, 2003, p. 148).

After Osiris was murdered by his brother Seth, Isis grieved and embarked on a quest throughout Egypt to recover his body. Once she found him, she used her powerful magic to bring Osiris back to life and conceived a son, Horus, who would one day seek to avenge his father. Isis gave birth to Horus in the marshes of Khemmis in the Nile Delta, where she hid him from Seth's destructive schemes and other dangers, relying on her powerful magic for protection. As the ultimate symbol of motherhood, Isis is often depicted with her infant son. Her presence is frequently invoked in magical spells for the protection of children. Additionally, she became a significant funerary goddess, inspiring hope that she would resurrect the dead, just as she had once resurrected Osiris (Robins, 1993, p. 18; Wilkinson, 2003, p. 146). In the divine realm, Isis is renowned as the nurturing mother and protector of Horus. Depictions of a goddess nursing the king appear in Egyptian art as early as the Old Kingdom and persist throughout the history of Egyptian civilization (Roehrig, 1996, pp. 16-17).

Animals held a significant place in the lives of ancient Egyptians, a connection vividly illustrated by the abundance of animal imagery in their art. Egyptians enjoyed portraying animals with remarkable anatomical and zoological precision, reflecting both their skill and deep appreciation for the natural world. As a result, animal imagery has been carefully studied by archaeologists and art historians, as it offers unique insights into the practical and spiritual dimensions of ancient Egyptian life. Animals' images reveal that the Egyptians not only observed animals closely but also strived to capture their physical appearance and defining characteristics with remarkable accuracy (Rice, 2006, p. 16; Evans, 2010, p.1). Overall, the Egyptian artist displayed a deep sensitivity to nature, granting himself greater freedom in its representation. His renderings of animal skins, bird feathers, and fish details are often

remarkable, showcasing a profound understanding and appreciation of texture (Kanawati, 1987, p. 107).

Maternal affection is often reflected in a mother's body language beyond scenes of nursing and provisioning. Many species care for their young after birth, equipping them with essential social and survival skills. Animals also adapt their behaviors to meet their offspring's needs, expressing strong emotions, particularly in contexts associated with maternal care (Evans, 2010, p. 185). Moreover, Mother's love is a universal force found across countless species. Many animal mothers will fiercely defend their young, even risking their lives to protect them. When a child is hurt or lost, mothers often display profound grief and pain (Bekoff, 2007), which can be observed through their vocal expressions. For instance, a cow will repeatedly call out for her missing calf, and similarly, young animals cry out for their mothers. The joy and relief experienced during a reunion are evident (Darwin, 1872). Mammals, in particular, exhibit extensive maternal care, being highly attuned to the emotional states of their offspring (Spinka, 2012). In this research, the monkey will be used as a reference to animal motherhood.

Pet monkeys and baboons were second in popularity only to dogs in ancient Egypt. Their likenesses appear frequently in secular art, including tomb scenes, figured ostraca, and various forms of minor arts. Monkeys were also thought to carry a certain degree of erotic significance for the Egyptians (Houlihan, 2001, p. 117). There are five types of monkeys found in ancient Egypt. The sacred baboon (*Papio Hamadryas*), the Olive baboon (*Papio Anubis*), the Green or Vervet monkey (*Cercopithecus Aethiops*), the Red monkey (*Cercopithecus Patas*) and the Barbary ape (*Macaques*). However, the most common among them are the Hamadryas baboon and the green vervet monkey. The vervet monkey, also known as the savannah or olive monkey, has a tail even longer than its body. Though it is neither as heavy nor as strong as the baboon, it is faster and possesses excellent physical agility (Osborn, & Osbornova, 1998, pp. 32, 39-41; El-Kilany & Mahran, 2015, pp. 248-249). Monkeys are depicted engaging in various human activities, with the earliest known representation appearing during the reign of Menkaure in the tomb of Debehen at Giza (Nord, 2010, p. 36).

The following papers will focus on three main sections. The first will provide a description of the artifacts, the second will highlight maternal bond through specific gestures, and the final section will explore the common feature presents in both human and monkey sculptures.

## 1- Artifacts Description:

The selected pieces are from four major museums: the Berlin, Louvre, Metropolitan, and Royal Ontario Museums. They will be categorized according to their estimated postures.

### 1-1. A Kneeling Woman Holding a Child (Berlin 14476), A Vessel of a Mother Monkey (Metropolitan 1992.338) and Figurine (seal) of Monkey (Louvre E 18998; MG 1489) With their Babies:

The woman leans distinctly backward, seemingly weighed down by the spout and handle resting on her head (fig. 1). Her hair is down, with two long locks draped over her shoulders, covering her ears. Although the paint indicating the woman's garments or jewelry is not preserved, an amulet around the child's neck remains intact. The child sits with his legs on either side of his mother's lap, his left arm visible, and his head, featuring large ears, is turned to the left (Roehrig, Dreyfus & Keller, 2005, p. 236).

The monkey vase (fig. 2) is inspired by careful observation of animal behavior, particularly the close bond between mother and young among primates. Created during the 6<sup>th</sup> dynasty, the vessel was

likely intended as a gift for dignitaries and foreign rulers during the king's thirty-year festival, or Heb Sed. Egg-shaped overall, the vase features details sculpted in the round, capturing an almost human intimacy in the pose of the mother and baby. The mother monkey is depicted holding her baby, who clings tightly to her chest. The inscription reads: "Ny-Khaswt-Meryre, female tenant landholder [of the pyramid endowment of Pepy I]," along with a reference to the "first occurrence of the jubilee" (Arnold, 1995, no. 81, p. 59).

Some statuettes merit only a brief mention: these are small limestone figurines, mainly representing dogs and monkeys, of which several examples were found at Meir. They are roughly crafted and resemble toys more than works of art. A similar statuette, which depicts a seated monkey holding her baby in her arms (fig. 3), is of better craftsmanship; it belonged to Prince Wahka, one of the powerful nomarchs of Gau el-Kebir (Vandier, 1958, p. 246).



1



2

Fig. 1. Vase in the form of a kneeling woman holding a child. The 18<sup>th</sup> dynasty, the New Kingdom. Painted pottery. Height: 14 cm (5 1/5 in.). Ägyptisches Museum und Papyrussammlung, Staatliche Museen zu Berlin 14476. After: (Roehrig, Dreyfus & Keller, 2005, no.162, p. 236).

Fig. 2. Vessel in the Shape of a Mother Monkey with Her young, the 6<sup>th</sup> dynasty, the Old Kingdom. Egyptian alabaster. Height: 13.7 cm (5 3/8 in.).The Metropolitan Museum (1992.338). After: <https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/543908> (29-7-2024, 11:18 PM).



3

Fig. 3. Figurine (seal) of monkey holding its child. the 12<sup>th</sup> Dynasty, the Middle Kingdom. Egyptian alabaster. Height: 5.7 cm. Louvre Museum, Department of Egyptian Antiquities (E 18998; MG 1489). After: <https://collections.louvre.fr/en/ark:/53355/cl010008234> (30-8-2024, 7:29 PM).

### **1-2. A Kneeling Woman (Louvre AF 1660) and Figurine of Monkey (Louvre N 4099; Salt n°527) Holding their Youngs:**

In this vase (fig. 4), the woman holds her child forward-facing on her lap. Although most of the painted details indicating clothing have faded, the soft contour of the mother's upper arms suggests she wears a shawl. The baby boy, seated atop this garment, is distinctly modeled with clearly indicated limbs and gender. His left-hand rests limply on his mother's arm, while his right hand firmly grasps her right wrist. The woman sits in a balanced, upright pose, her back straight and chin slightly raised. Her hairstyle features two locks drawn forward, with a long ponytail trailing down her back (Roehrig, Dreyfus & Keller, 2005, p. 236).

A wooden figurine of a monkey, squatting on its haunches, holds its child in a protective embrace (fig. 5) (<https://collections.louvre.fr/en/ark:/53355/cl010013984> (11-8-2024, 9:32 PM)). The Mother monkey lies its child forward-facing on her lap as the previous example.



4



5

Fig. 4. Vase in the form of a kneeling woman holding a child. The 18<sup>th</sup> dynasty, the New Kingdom. Painted pottery. Height: 11 cm (4 3/8 in.). Louvre Museum, Paris AF 1660. After: (Roehrig, Dreyfus & Keller, 2005, no.163, p. 237).

Fig. 5. Figurine of monkey holding its child. Wood. Height: 11.7 cm. Louvre Museum, Department of Egyptian Antiquities (N 4099; Salt n°527). After: <https://collections.louvre.fr/en/ark:/53355/cl010013984> (11-8-2024, 9:32 PM).

### 1-3. Two Figurines of Women (Metropolitan 24.1.47, 24.1.48) and Figurine of Monkey (Louvre E 4523) With their Babies:

Small genre figurines depicting Egyptian women with their infant children appear in tombs from the 12<sup>th</sup> dynasty at El-Lisht and other locations. These faience examples (figs. 6, 7) portray women holding their Childs against their left side, wrapped snugly within the folds of their mantles (Hayes, 1978, p. 221).

This figurine (fig. 8) depicts a mother monkey gently cradling its child in a protective embrace (<https://collections.louvre.fr/en/ark:/53355/cl010012427> (11-8-2024, 9:27 PM)). Its arms are wrapped securely around the infant, evoking a strong sense of care and guardianship. Interestingly, the infant is positioned facing outward, away from its mother, showing a deep bond of trust.





6



7

Fig. 6. Figurine of a Woman with her Baby, the 12<sup>th</sup> dynasty, the Middle kingdom. Faience. Height: 9.1 cm. The Metropolitan Museum (24.1.47). After:

<https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/555717> (29-7-2024, 11:24 PM).

Fig. 7. Figurine of a Woman with her Baby, the 12<sup>th</sup> dynasty, the Middle Kingdom, Faience. Height: 7.4 cm (2 15/16 in.). The Metropolitan Museum (24.1.48). After:

<https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/555718> (accessed 3-8-2024, 9:57 PM).



8

Fig. 8. Figurine of Monkey holding its child. The 26<sup>th</sup> dynasty, the Late Period, Siliceous earthenware. Height: 5.6 cm. Louvre Museum, Department of Egyptian Antiquities (E 4523). After: <https://collections.louvre.fr/en/ark:/53355/cl010012427> (11-8-2024, 9:27 PM).

#### **1-4. Female Figure (Metropolitan 22.2.34) and Figurine of Monkey (Louvre AF 10848) Holding their Child:**

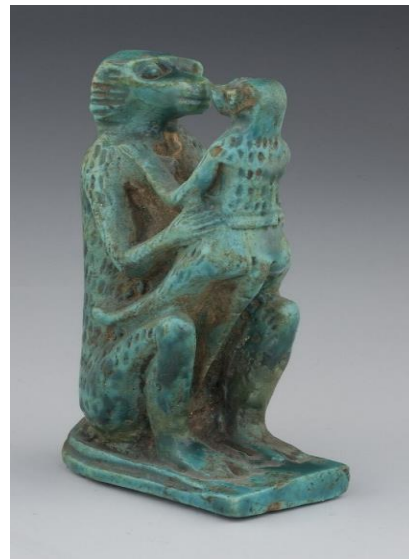
There are female figures crafted from various materials, including blue faience, wood, ivory, stone, pottery, and unbaked clay. Most of the figurines have been discovered in the 12<sup>th</sup> Dynasty cemeteries at El-Lisht, with others found at Thebes and Gebelein, and a few of unknown origin. This particular

figurine, (fig. 9) made of painted limestone, lacks feet, wears a wig, and cradles a child in her left arm (Hayes, 1978, pp. 220-221).

A mother monkey, squatting on its haunches (fig. 10), holds its child facing her in an intimate, tender pose (<https://collections.louvre.fr/en/ark:/53355/cl010008795> (30-8-2024, 8:48 PM)). The infant is nestled securely against her chest, facing her, their faces nearly touching as if sharing a private moment. The mother's arms hold the child protectively, conveying warmth and a profound sense of connection, while her gaze appears focused and gentle, underscoring the deep maternal bond between them.



9



10

Fig. 9. Female figure holding her child. The Middle Kingdom. Painted limestone. Height: 15.8 cm (6 1/4 in.). The Metropolitan Museum (22.2.34). After: <https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/544223> (3-8-2024, 9:52 PM).

Fig. 10. Figurine of monkey holding child. The New Kingdom; the Third Intermediate Period. Steatite. Height: 6 cm. Louvre Museum, Department of Egyptian Antiquities (AF 10848). After: <https://collections.louvre.fr/en/ark:/53355/cl010008795> (30-8-2024, 8:48 PM).

### 1-5. Group of Two Women and a Child (Metropolitan 22.2.35) and Limestone Monkey Group Statuette (Royal Ontario 948.34.156):

A woman crouches on the ground, nursing a child with her right breast. Behind her, another woman sits on a block with both knees raised, using both hands to braid the first woman's hair (fig. 11). Such scenes in Egyptian art, depicting nursing mothers, provide glimpses into the realities of domestic life, where women care for their children while managing other household tasks (Breasted, 1948, p. 56, pl. 49a; Hayes, 1978, p. 222, fig. 138; Roehrig, 1996, p.16).

This lively statuette (fig. 12), featuring larger monkeys holding smaller ones, appears designed purely for the amusement of its owner. Monkeys were common pets in New Kingdom Egypt. The grouping of monkeys may represent a family scene, with the animals perhaps grooming each other. The statuette comprises six monkeys arranged in a roughly triangular shape on an irregular, oval base. One side of the triangle features a large monkey hunched on its haunches, knees bent, with its arms extended forward to clasp the head of a medium-sized monkey in front. This medium monkey, facing forward, holds a smaller monkey on its left side. Under the right elbow of the larger monkey, another medium-sized monkey holds a small monkey in its arms. On the left side, a medium-sized monkey sits facing the larger monkey's left leg. While the smaller monkeys' facial features are less defined,



all display large, outlined eyes, a prominent snout with slanted nostrils, and a simple line for a mouth. The statuette has been cleaned, yet traces of paint remain, with black around the eyes and some brown in the body folds (<https://collections.rom.on.ca/objects/196427/monkey-group-statuettes?ctx=4b4fc3ce-5b3e-4cc2-88bf-5cdda494c9fa&idx=7> (11-8-2024, 9:41 PM)).



Fig. 11. Group of two women and a child. The 12<sup>th</sup> dynasty, the Middle Kingdom. Painted limestone. Height: 7.1 cm (2 13/16 in.). The Metropolitan Museum (22.2.35). After: <https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/544225> (29-7-2024, 11:39 PM).








Fig. 12. Limestone Monkey group statuette. Late 18<sup>th</sup> Dynasty, the New Kingdom. Limestone. 6 x 6.3 x 2 cm. Royal Ontario Museum (948.34.156). After: <https://collections.rom.on.ca/objects/196427/monkey-group-statuettes?ctx=4b4fc3ce-5b3e-4cc2-88bf-5cdda494c9fa&idx=7> (11-8-2024, 9:41 PM).

## 2- Indication of Maternal Bond:

Maternal bonding is the emotional connection that forms between a mother and her child, typically beginning during pregnancy and strengthening after birth. This bond is marked by deep feelings of love, protection, and a strong desire to nurture and care for the child. In most human cultures, specific stances and gestures are used in daily life and formal settings to convey relationships, ideas, opinions, or emotions. Gestures may accompany, enhance, or even replace spoken language in various contexts. This is evident worldwide, from formal bowing, waving, and handshakes to the expressive gestures that bridge language barriers. Egyptian artists, however, intentionally integrated symbolic gestures into their artworks from very early periods, using them consciously to communicate meaning within

their compositions (Wilkinson, 1994, p. 192). The following discussion emphasizes that these gestures reflect the mother's emotional attitudes toward her child.

In Gardiner's sign list, the images depict both a seated woman with a child on her lap  (B6) and a kneeling woman nursing a baby  (B5), with multiple variations in the woman's posture. She may appear standing, seated, or kneeling, and may or may not be shown holding the child to her breast, yet the primary idea remains unchanged. These various forms can serve as determinatives in hieroglyphic script for terms like *mnat*   means 'nurse', 'foster-mother' and *rnn*  also means 'nurse', 'rear' (Gardiner, 1957, p.448; Erman & Grapow, 1971, p. 78-436; Wilkinson, 1992, p. 33). This imagery is primarily associated with depictions of the goddess Isis and her son Horus, or symbolically, Isis with the king portrayed as Horus. In countless Egyptian sculptures and amulets, Isis is shown holding Horus to her breast. Alongside Isis, other goddesses; especially Hathor, who is often depicted as both a cow and a human figure, frequently appear in this maternal role as mother of the king (Wilkinson, 1992, p. 33).

In the previous examples of both monkey and human mother figures discussed in this paper, the strong bond with their young is conveyed through expressive gestures. These gestures emphasize the protective, nurturing connection between mother and child. Each mother holds her child close to her chest, either facing each other or facing forward. Additionally, both human and animal mothers hold their young with both hands (see figs. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 8, 9, 10) or wrap them in their mantles (see figs. 6, 7). This gesture is reminiscent of the goddess Isis, who is often shown protecting Osiris or the king (manifestation of her son Horus) with her outstretched arms (Wilkinson, 2003, p. 148). In another example (fig. 11), maternal affection is displayed through distinct gestures: one mother is shown nursing her baby, while another woman assists by grooming her, providing additional care. A unique example (fig. 12) portrays a family of monkeys grooming each other, highlighting familial bonds within animal behavior.

### 3- Common Feature in Human and Monkey Maternity Depictions:

This section will examine the connection between human and monkey maternity figurations, as shown in the studied examples. The analysis will focus on a key pattern: posture, along with examples from contemporary society.

In figure 1 and figures 2 and 3, the mother is depicted holding her child closely against her chest, encircling him with both hands. This posture signifies care and protection, creating a secure space where the child can hear the rhythm of her heartbeat, further reinforcing the sense of safety and intimacy. In figures 4 and 5, the mother is shown lying the child on her lap, facing forward, and surrounding him with her hands for added security. The child, in turn, rests comfortably, feeling safe and protected in his mother's embrace.

Furthermore, figures 6 and 7 depict the mother wrapping her baby in her mantle, providing both warmth and protection. While figure 8 shows the monkey placing its young between its legs, securing it further by embracing it with both hands. Although, these examples may appear different, a common thread can be seen in the sculptural context, where both the mother and her baby are unified in their protective pose.

Figures 9 and 10 share a common theme: the effort of holding their child. While the monkey figure conveys liveliness and dynamic action, the human mother is depicted with a more rigid posture. Both figures show the mothers lifting their child, but the monkey mother adopts a playful attitude, while

the human mother is portrayed holding her child firmly with both hands, surrounding and supporting him. Finally, figures 11 and 12 share a common theme of grooming, with both the human and animal figures depicted in a family composition, caring for one another. In both sculptures, the central focus is on the mother, who is shown nurturing and attending to her child.

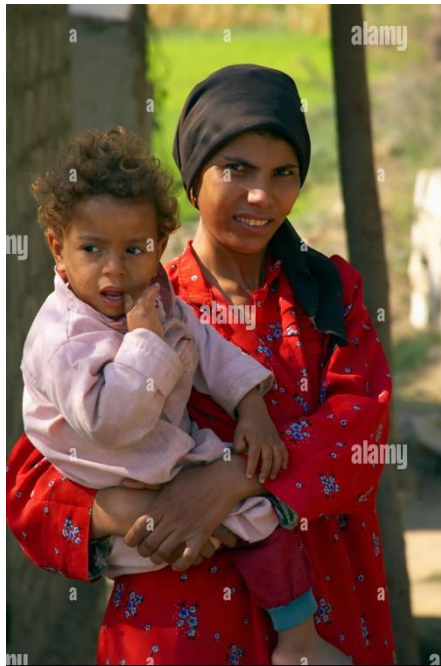
The following table summarizes the common depictions shared by humans and animals in ancient Egyptian art, illustrating maternal affection in both worlds. It highlights how both are sculpted in specific poses that emphasize their nurturing bonds. While the figurations are not identical, they share common gestures that reflect similar attitudes toward motherhood. This can be observed in contemporary society as well, where images presented below (see pls. 1, 2 and figs. 4, 9 respectively – see pl. 3 and figs. 2, 3) demonstrate that the act of holding a child has retained similar characteristics over time.

Human	Monkey	Posture
Fig. 1	Fig. 2 – 3	Holding her/its child close to her chest, encircling the young with both hands.
Fig. 4	Fig. 5	Lying the child on her/its lap, facing forward, as she/it holds them securely with both hands.
Figs. 6 – 7	Fig. 8	Enveloping their young within their embrace, they appear almost as a single, unified form.
Fig. 9	Fig. 10	Lifting their children in both standing and sitting positions, they support them with a firm, focused effort using their hands.
Fig. 11	Fig. 12	Nursing and Grooming in a group composition.

- Table A. Human-Animal Maternity connection – based on their postures



Pl. 1. Woman holding her baby in Nubian Village near Aswan, Egypt. @hadynyah. After: <https://www.gettyimages.com/detail/photo/muslim-woman-holding-her-baby-southern-egypt-africa-royalty-free-image/534000599?adppopup=true> (31-8-2024, 10:33 PM).



Pl. 2. Egyptian Mother With her Child. @ Edward Carlile, 2007. After:  
[https://www.alamy.com/stock-photo-egyptian-mother-with-child-10432605.html?imageid=3F733128-BF50-4DFA-AEF1-09A759C87E9B&p=30017&pn=1&searchId=578d80c7beb48310b7b661c502b146bf&searchtype=](https://www.alamy.com/stock-photo-egyptian-mother-with-child-10432605.html?imageid=3F733128-BF50-4DFA-AEF1-09A759C87E9B&p=30017&pn=1&searchId=578d80c7beb48310b7b661c502b146bf&searchtype=Q)  
 Q (31-8-2024, 10:23 PM).



Pl. 3. Monkey holding baby, India, Asia. @ Dinodia Photos RM, 2009. After:  
[https://www.alamy.com/stock-photo-rhesus-macaque-primate-monkey-holding-baby-india-asia-83587681.html?imageid=2E421495-E945-499A-A188-4EB73A584502&p=148099&pn=1&searchId=b26d4dee43d791308e9908d9b0e62f81&searchtype=](https://www.alamy.com/stock-photo-rhesus-macaque-primate-monkey-holding-baby-india-asia-83587681.html?imageid=2E421495-E945-499A-A188-4EB73A584502&p=148099&pn=1&searchId=b26d4dee43d791308e9908d9b0e62f81&searchtype=Q)  
 Q (31-8-20204, 10:03 PM).

## Conclusion:

The art and culture of ancient Egypt reflect a deep reverence for motherhood and fertility, both human and animal. Women, regardless of social status, were primarily valued for their roles in childbearing and rearing, while goddesses like Isis symbolized ideal motherhood, caring and protection. Fertility

and maternal protection were central to ancient Egyptian life. The Egyptians held a deep appreciation for the natural world, often portraying animals with remarkable detail. These depictions show their keen observation and highlight the shared theme of maternal care between humans and animals.

Figures of both human and monkey mothers often display similar gestures, emphasizing protective and nurturing bonds, whether by holding their young close to their chest or resting them on their laps. These patterns of maternal imagery reflect universal attitudes toward motherhood that continue in contemporary society, showing that these gestures of care and closeness have gone beyond time and culture.

## References:

- Arnold, Dorothea. (1995). *The Metropolitan Museum of Art Bulletin*. vol. 52, no. 4, New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art.
- Bekof, Marc. (2007). *The Emotional Lives of Animals: A leading scientist Explores Animal Joy, Sorrow, and Empathy-and Why They Matter*. California.
- Breasted, James Henry Jr. (1948). *Egyptian Servant Statues*. Bollingen series, 13. New York: Pantheon Books.
- Darwin, Charles. (1872). *The Expression of the Emotions in Man and Animals*. London, John Murray.
- Egyptian Mother With her Child Retrieved from: <https://www.alamy.com/stock-photo-egyptian-mother-with-child-10432605.html?imageid=3F733128-BF50-4DFA-AEF1-09A759C87E9B&p=30017&pn=1&searchId=578d80c7beb48310b7b661c502b146bf&searchtype=0> (31-8-2024, 10:23 PM).
- El-Kilany, Engy & Mahran, Heba. (2015). *What Lies Under the Chair! A Study in Ancient Egyptian Private Tomb Scenes, Part I: Animals*. Journal of the American Research center in Egypt, 51, pp. 243-264.
- Erman, Adolf & Grapow, Hermann. (1971). *Wörterbuch Der Aegyptischen Sprache*. II, Berlin: Akademie-Verlag.
- Evans, Linda. (2010). *Animal Behavior in Egyptian Art: Representations of the Natural World in Memphite Tomb Scenes*. Australian Centre for Egyptology Studies 9, England: Aris and Phillips Ltd.
- Gardiner, Alan. (1957). *Egyptian Grammar: Being an Introduction to the Study of Hieroglyphs*. Third edition, Griffith Institute, Ashmolean Museum, Cambridge: University press.
- Hayes, William C. (1978). *Scepter of Egypt: A Background for the Study of the Egyptian Antiquities in The Metropolitan Museum of Art: From the Earliest Times to the End of the Middle Kingdom*. Part I. Cambridge: The Metropolitan Museum of Art.
- Houlihan, P. F. (2001). *A history of the animal world in the ancient near East: Animals in Egyptian art and hieroglyphs*. Handbook of oriental studies: section1, vol. 64, Boston: Koln: Brill.
- Kanawati, Naguib. (1987). *The Tomb and Its Significance in Ancient Egypt*. Prism Archaeological Series 3, Egypt: Al-Ahram Commercial press.
- Louvre Museum Retrieved from: <https://collections.louvre.fr/> (11-8-2024, 9:32 PM).
- Marshall, Amandine. (2024). *Motherhood and Early Childhood in Ancient Egypt: Culture, Religion, and Medicine*. Cairo: The American University press.



- Monkey holding baby Retrieved from: <https://www.alamy.com/stock-photo-rhesus-macaque-primate-monkey-holding-baby-india-asia-83587681.html?imageid=2E421495-E945-499A-A188-4EB73A584502&p=148099&pn=1&searchId=b26d4dee43d791308e9908d9b0e62f81&searchtype=0> (31-8-20204, 10:03 PM).
- Nord, D. (2010). *Under the chair: A problem in Egyptian perspective*. Millions of jubilees studies in honor of David P. Silverman, Vol. 2, Cairo: Conseil Supreme des Antiquites de L'Egypte, pp. 33-54.
- Osborn, Dale J. & Osbornova, J. (1998). *The mammals of ancient Egypt*. England: Aris &Phillips Ltd.
- Rice, M. (2006). *Swifter than the arrow: the golden hunting hounds of ancient Egypt*. Britain: TJ international Ltd, Padstow, Cornwall.
- Robins, Gay. (1993). *Women in Ancient Egypt*. London: British Museum Press.
- Roehrig, Catharine H. & Dreyfus, Renee & Keller, Cathleen A. (2005). *Hatshepsut from Queen to Pharaoh*. New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art.
- Roehrig, Catharine H. (1996). "Women's work: Some occupations of non-royal women as depicted in ancient Egyptian art." In *Mistress of the House, Mistress of Heaven: Women in Ancient Egypt*. edited by Anne K. Capel and Glenn E. Markoe. New York: Hudson Hills Press.
- Royal Ontario Museum Retrieved from: <https://collections.rom.on.ca/objects/196427/monkey-group-statuettes?ctx=4b4fc3ce-5b3e-4cc2-88bf-5cdda494c9fa&idx=7> (11-8-2024, 9:41 PM).
- Spinka, Marek. (2012). *Social dimension of emotions and its implication for animal welfare*. Applied Animal Behavior Science, 138, 170-181.
- The Metropolitan Museum Retrieved from: <https://www.metmuseum.org/> (29-7-2024, 11:18 PM).
- Vandier, J. (1958). *Manuel D'Archéologie Egyptienne: Les Grandes Epoques La Statuaire*. III, Paris: A. and J. Picard.
- Wilkinson, Richard H. (1992). *Reading Egyptian Art: A Hieroglyphic Guide to Ancient Egyptian Painting and Sculpture*. London: Thames and Hudson Ltd.
- Wilkinson, Richard H. (1994). *Symbol & Magic in Egyptian Art*. London: Thames and Hudson Ltd.
- Wilkinson, Richard H. (2003). *The Complete Gods and Goddesses of Ancient Egypt*. London: Thames & Hudson Ltd.
- Woman holding her baby in Nubian Village Retrieved from: <https://www.gettyimages.com/detail/photo/muslim-woman-holding-her-baby-southern-egypt-africa-royalty-free-image/534000599?adppopup=true> (31-8-2024, 10:33 PM).