

A New Look at the Goddess Bastet Bronze Statue At Zagazig University Archaeological Museum

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Abstract

The goddess Bastet, mistress of Bubastis, was initially depicted as a lioness but in later periods her worshippers, particularly in Lower Egypt, preferred to see her in the form of a cat. In her temple at Bubastis they dedicated hundreds of bronze figurines in varying forms, hoping to gain the goddess' favor. The Zagazig University Archaeological Museum statuette represents the goddess as a cat, adorned with a collar from which hangs a *wADyt*-eye amulet. The ears are pierced and no doubt originally held (silver or gold) earrings, while the eyes are inlaid with red copper. The base has two projecting tangs for attachment. The statuette may have been fixed to a shelf as a votive offering in a shrine or, as the writer suggest, secured to a divine standard and carried by priests during temple processions. So this paper tries to highlight upon this new suggested purpose or use of the Zagazig bronze statuette in comparison with the already existed standards of the goddess Bastet, by displaying gathered data from their occurrence, in three dimensions and iconographical documents.

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Bastet¹ is a cat goddess, who was worshipped in ancient Egypt at least since the Second Dynasty, probably originally a lion goddess; she was the goddess of Bubastis² (Tell Basta), the main cult centre of the goddess (the graecized form of the Egyptian term "*per Bastet*", "House (or sanctuary) of Bastet"). In the Old Kingdom she was linked with lion goddesses such as Sakhmet of Memphis and Tefnut of Heliopolis. As a result, Bastet also became involved in the myths concerning the sun's eye. She was called the daughter of the sun god Re, his eye or the eye of the moon, and eventually she was equated with the cobra goddess Wadjet (uraeus). Representations of Bastet from the Old Kingdom nearly always

¹Her name is also spelled *Bast*, *Baast*, *Ubasti* and *Baset*. for Bastet see: **BONNET, RÄRG**, p. 80-82 s. v. "Bastet"; **J. YOYOTTE**, in: **G. POSENER**, (ed.) *A Dictionary of Egyptian Civilization*, Translated by **A. Macfarlane**, Paris, 1962, p. 36-37, s. v. "Cat"; **E. Otto**, *LÄ I*, 1975, col. 628-30, s.v. "Bastet"; **Z. EL-KORDY**, *La Déesse Bastet, Depuis les temps les plus reculés de l'histoire, jusqu'à la fin du Nouvel-Empire*, MA. thesis, Cairo University, 1978, 62; **M. LURKER**, *The Gods and Symbols of Ancient Egypt*, London, 1982, p. 32, s. v. "Bastet"; **M. SALEH, H. SOUROUZIAN**, *Official Catalogue, The Egyptian Museum, Cairo*, Mainz, 1987, Nr.255; **J. MALEK**, *The Cat in Ancient Egypt*, London, 1997; **G. HART**, *The Routledge Dictionary of Egyptian Gods and Goddesses*, 2nd ed., London, New York, 2005, p. 45-7, s. v. "Bastet"; **F. RAFFAELE**, *An unpublished Early Dynastic stone vessel fragment with incised inscription naming the goddess Bastet*, *CCE (S)* 7-8, 2005, p. 27-46; (on line: www.globalegyptianmuseum.org/glossary.aspx?id=85 (last access 15/1/2012); on line: en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bastet last access 15/1/2012).

²Bubastis (or **Pr-BAstt**, namely 'the house of (the goddess) Bastet', Arabic بَسْطَة), located on the Tanitic Branch of the Nile; its extensive ruins, now called Tell Basta, lie to the Southeast of Zagazig, capital of Sharqiya Governorate. Bubastis was also called Baset (**BAst**), from which derived the goddess name as Bastet "The One of Baset" or "she of the city of Bast". It was first a part of the Heliopolitan or the 13th Nome of Lower Egypt. After the division of the Heliopolitan Nome, Bubastis became the capital of the northern part known as the 18th Nome of Lower Egypt (Imet-Khenti) and capital of the whole Egypt during the 22nd and 23rd Dynasties.

É. NAVILLE, *Bubastis*, 1887-1889, London, 1891; **id**, *The Festival Hall of Osorkon II in the Great Temple of Bubastis*, 1887-1889, London, 1892; **H. GAUTHIER**, *Dictionnaire des noms géographiques contenus dans les textes hiéroglyphiques II*, p. 75; **Wb I**, p. 423; **L. HABACHI**, *Tell Basta*, Cairo, 1957; **id**, *LÄ I*, 1975, col. 873-874. s. v. "Bubastis"; **A. EL-SAWI**, *Excavations at Tell Basta. Report of Seasons 1967-1971 and Catalogue of Finds*, Prague, 1979; **M. I. BAKR**, *Tell Basta I: Tombs and Burial Customs at Bubastis*, Cairo, 1992, p. 13-16; **F. LECLÈRE**, *Les villes de Basse Égypte au I^{er} millénaire av. J-C.*, *Analyse archéologique et historique de la topographie urbaine I*, *IFAO, BiEtud* 144/1, 2008, p. 363-85.

show her with the head of a lioness. Hunting lions during the feast of Bastet³ was even considered a taboo, according to a text of Ramesses IV at Abydos. Nevertheless, Bastet did not acquire the appearance of a cat until the Third Intermediate Period, when she was worshipped as a goddess of joy and fertility and protectress of the home and children. The cult of the "Mistress of Bubastis" spread considerably from the 22nd Dynasty onward (when the Libyan kings chose the Delta city of Bubastis as their capital), reaching its zenith during the Ptolemaic Period. Bastet was considered to be the mother of the lion god Mahes (Miysis) and in a few separate traditions as the mother of Nefertem or of Anubis.

The popularity of cats, especially of Bastet, notably increased in late Egypt and that was reflected in the large numbers of bronze statuettes of these animals. In her temple at Bubastis, their worshippers dedicated to her hundreds of bronze effigies of herself in order to gain her favour. Many different types of bronze statuettes are known and anatomically most of them are remarkably accurate. Some of these statuettes are in the form of a woman's body with a kindly cat's head; others show Bastet as a mother

³The city Bubastis had several festivals in honour of its patron goddess, Bastet. According to the Festival calendar of the temple of Horus in Edfu dated to the time of Ptolemy X, the main festivals at Bubastis fell on the 13th of the 2nd Month of *3xt*, the 13th of the 1st Month of *^mw* and the 18th of the 2nd Month of *^mw*. The festival that mentioned by Herodotus ought to be one of these, especially the list informs us that on the 1st of the 2nd month (=Pauni) of *^mw* was a festival in honour of the goddess Hathor of Dendera 'who lives in Bubastis', and Hathor actually travelled to Bubastis. That would fit Herodotus' festival context perfectly. She was simply one of the participants, albeit divine, in the great Bubastite festival. According to the Canopus Decree the Greater and Lesser Boubastia took place on day 1 of the 2nd Month of *^mw*, which seems to correlate this with the gathering of the crops, and the rise of the River Nile. The Saite Calendar mentions a festival on the 16th of the 2nd Month of *^mw* as does the Esna Festival List. Elsewhere, there are also texts mention a procession of Bastet at Karnak on the 29th of the 1st Month of *Prt*, a procession at Herakleopolis on the 5th Day of the 4th Month of *Prt* and a festival at Thebes on the 4th day of the 4th Month of *Prt*.

E. OTTO, *LÄ I*, col. 628–30, s.v. "Bastet"; **A. B. LLOYD**, *Herodotus Book II: Commentary 1-98*, 2nd ed., Leiden, 1994, p. 272-3; **J. MALEK**, *op. cit.*, p. 98; **I. RUTHERFORD**, "Down-Stream to the Cat-Goddess: Herodotus on Egyptian Pilgrimage", in **J. Elsner, I. Rutherford** (eds.), *Pilgrimage in Graeco-Roman & Early Christian Antiquity Seeing the Gods*, Oxford University Press, 2005, p.141-142.

suckling her kittens; many show her as a queen-cat, dignified and erect on her throng ready to spring, but adorned with jewels. These bronze "Egyptian cats", differing so greatly in quality, the least well made of which are often highly prized as works of art. The most common type, which our statue belongs to, is the traditional "hieroglyphic" image of a seated cat ⁴, albeit with the tail neatly lying on the ground along the paws. These vary in size from those which are only a few centimetres high to large life-size sculptures; the larger statuettes were made by hollow casting⁵, the smaller are often solid cast. They may have been used in many ways. In a rather opportunist way, some bronze statuettes of cats which were manufactured hollow could be used to contain the remains of cats in the hollow left after casting, and these were buried in cemeteries⁶;

⁴A. GARDINER, *Egyptian Grammar*, 3rd ed., Oxford, 1973, p. 459(E 13).

⁵The statuette is largely hollow, as would be expected for a direct lost-wax casting made with a temporary clay core, the method known to have been used in Egypt to produce such unique sculptures at the supposed date of the cat. A layer of wax, or perhaps wax mixed with resin or oil, of the intended thickness of the metal wall was applied around a clay core, which would prevent the molten metal filling the centre of the casting. The form was modeled and carved into the wax, which was then covered with an investiture or outer mould, made of a mix of clay, straw and dung and held apart from the central core by a series of metal core pins or chaplets. The mould was then fired (causing the wax to run out) and molten metal poured into the resulting gap between core and investiture. When cool, the core was removed and the outer mould cleaned off before finishing the metal surface.

A. LUCAS, *Ancient Egyptian Materials and Industries*, 4th ed. rev., 1962, p. 254-256; J. AMBERS *et al.*, "A new look at an old cat: a technical investigation of the Gayer-Anderson cat", *The British Museum Technical Research Bulletin* 2 2008, p. 1-12, figs. 1-13.

⁶In the mid-fifth century BC, Herodotus wrote that when a cat died, the inhabitants of the house shaved their eyebrows as a sign of mourning; dead cats were, according to him, taken to the City of Bubastis (Tell Basta) where they were embalmed and buried. The cat cemeteries in the vicinity of the temple of the goddess Bastet at Bubastis may, indeed, have been among the earlier large animal necropoli and date from c.900 BC. Several other sites have yielded large quantities of mummified cats. The location of cat cemeteries was not accidental at Bubastis, Saqqara and Istabl Antar they were situated close to the temple of the local deities Bastet, Sekhmet/Bastet and Pakhet. During the Ptolemaic period cats would have been buried in animal cemeteries in all parts of Egypt, and cat burials or cat mummies have been also reported from near Tanis in the delta, Giza, Akhmim, Abydos, Dendera, the Dakhla Oasis, and several other places. It is impossible to estimate the numbers of animals involved with any accuracy but hundreds of thousands, possibly millions, are indicated.

A. EL-SAWI, *op. cit.*, p. 76; J. MALEK, *op. cit.*, p. 126-128.

small statuettes have also been found among the bandages of real animals. Other statuettes may have been attached to a small box which then contained the body of a mummified cat.⁷ The majority of them were intended to be dedicated in a shrine.

Details of the bronze statuettes, such as the eyes, ears, the pattern of the fur, and the animal's ornaments, may be picked out in gold. The cats often have their ears pierced for gold or silver and some also wear a nose-ring. On their head may be the sun-disc and uraeus (serpent), both deriving from the lioness-headed image of Bastet, and between their ears an image of the scarab beetle which indicated the cat's connection with the son-god. A winged scarab may also appear on the chest. The eyes may be inlaid in rock crystal or similar opaque material. Round the neck there is occasionally a necklace of cowrie-shells or similar, often with a pendant, such as the *wADyt* -eye of Horus, an "aegis" consisting of a head of a deity with a broad collar, or a small figure of a deity. The fur is sometimes indicated by patterned incisions and several other techniques, as are the whiskers and the hairs in the ears. The cat's tail is invariably neatly placed on the ground along the right side of the animal, sometimes curled round the right forepaw. The reason for this lies in the conventions of Egyptian two-dimensional art and script in which animals looked to their right.⁸

The Zagazig University archaeological Museum is extremely fortunate in having been able to acquire a superb example of latter type of these survived bronze examples of Bastet statuettes (pl. 1.a-b). It is a small-size (c.20 cm high; cm10.8 width) cast bronze alloy

⁷These pedestals to which many of statuettes were originally attached, and which may have carried the name of the donor, were made of a different material, most probably wood, and these have now disappeared. When preserved, the pedestal may be in the shape of the "*menat*" counterpoise, with one end rounded and the other rectangular.

J. MALEK, *op. cit.*, p. 100-101.

⁸*ibid.*, p. 130.

figure of a cat sitting erect. This bronze Statuette of goddess Bastet (Reg. Nr. 501)⁹ which had been found in 1979 by the Zagazig University campaign in the cats' cemetery at Tell Basta near Zagazig (behind the so-called old slaughterhouse), dated to Late Period - about 600 BC.¹⁰ As in all such bronzes the animal is shown seated upright on its haunches, with its tail curved around the right side to the front paws, gazing with an expression of rapt attention at some infinitely distant object. The statuette represents her in this gentle cat form adorned with a collar from which hangs *wADyt*-eye amulet. The animal ears are pierced and no doubt originally held (gold or silver) earrings, the eyes of red copper. The base has two additional projecting tangs for attachment.¹¹

As for her function, the Zagazig cat's diminutive size suggests that she was intended as a votive offering in a temple or household shrine of the goddess. Other larger, similarly posed cat statuettes in wood or bronze served alternately as coffins for cat mummies. So this statuette may have been fixed to a shelf as a votive offering for a shrine, or secured to a divine standard finial which carried by priests during temple processions.

The gods' images as an earthly representation remain outwardly invisible, accessible only to the king as the high priest, included in the sanctuary (holy of the holies) of the temple and even hidden at processions inside the sacred bark of the god. To the people the divinity of gods' symbols seems to be reduced in objectified

⁹A. ABDEL-RAZIQ, "bastet", in M. I. Bakr, H. Brandl, F. Kalloniatis (eds.), *Egyptian antiquities from Kufur Nigm and Bubastis*, Berlin, 2010, p. 176-9, Nr. 53.

¹⁰It is very difficult to date the thousands of bronze statuettes of cats in museums and private collections with any precision; Most of them probably represent the cat of Bastet. It seems that the earliest among them date to about 900 BC and other to the seventh and sixth centuries BC, but the majorities of them are Ptolemaic (after 332 BC).

J. MALEK, *op. cit.*, p. 100-101.

¹¹Cf. G. ROEDER, *Ägyptische Bronzefiguren II*, Glückstadt; Hamburg; New York 1937, p. 48-49, abb. 117, 119-120, 123-124, 127.

appearance forms, to which the popular god standard¹² iAt¹³ (𓆎𓆏 var. 𓆎𓆏, 𓆎𓆏 or 𓆎𓆏) ¹⁴ belong since ancient times. God standards consisted of a decorated with ribbons bearing rod, with top mounted cross beam on which a divine figure (almost exclusively in animal form), a gods insignia or the hieroglyph of the divine name attached, and it is thus formally clearly separated from the gods rods. The gods' standards become the epitome of the visibility of God: The Falcon on the support bar is an extremely common determinative for "God" and the spellings of several names of deities are firmly connected with the gods' standard, such as Min, Upuaut, Ha, Thoth in Ibis shape. The God standard was occasionally personified and provided with human arms and hands to the acting god nature.¹⁵

Wooden standards, comprising poles surmounted by cult images, were used from the Predynastic period onwards as a means of dis-

¹²Three types of ancient Egyptian standards from historic times may be distinguished; **Divine standards** or god standards with images and symbols of individual deities. These played an important role in the royal cult and were carried by priests in procession. **Nome standards** consisting of portable support and the nome sign which usually represented the image of the nome deity or, according to the beliefs of that time, an object imbued with power. The **military standards** which were likewise carried divine images as symbol of might and victory. For ancient Egyptian standards see: A. ABDEL-RAZIQ, *Al-aalam fi Misr al-qadima*, Ph. D. diss., Zagazig University, 2005.

see also: BONNET, *RARG*, 253-4, s.v. "Götterstandarte"; S. CURTO, *LÄ* V, 1984, col. 1255-1256. s.v. "Standarten"; D. WILDUNG, *LÄ* II, 1977, col. 713-714, s.v. "Götterstandarte"; M. LURKER, *The Gods and Symbols of Ancient Egypt*, p. 116, s. v. "standards"; I. SHAW, P. NICHOLSON, *British Museum Dictionary of Ancient Egypt*, Cairo, The American University in Cairo press, 1995, p. 278, s.v. "standards"; G. GRAHAM, *The Oxford Encyclopedia of Ancient Egypt*, vol. 2, 2001, p. 163 - 67, s.v. "Insignias".

¹³The inscriptions from the Greco-roman Period sometimes called the standards that carried before the deities and kings for detaching evil away from them 𓆎𓆏𓆏𓆏 (var. 𓆎𓆏𓆏𓆏) or abbreviation 𓆎𓆏𓆏 (var. 𓆎𓆏𓆏).
Wb I, p. 480.

¹⁴V. LORET, "Le mot 𓆎𓆏𓆏", *RevEg* X, 1902, p. 87-94; *Wb* I, p. 26; A. GARDINER, *Egyptian Grammar*, p. 502 (R12), 550; O. FAULKNER, *A Concise Dictionary of Middle Egyptian*, Oxford, 1962, p. 7; R. HANNIG, *Die Sprache der Pharaonen Großes Handwörterbuch Ägyptisch-Deutsch (2800-950 v. Chr.)*, Mainz, 1995, 22.

¹⁵D. WILDUNG, *LÄ* II, 1977, col. 713-714, s.v. "Götterstandarte".

playing fetishes or representations of deities symbolizing the different towns and Nomes (provinces) of Egypt. Unfortunately the ancient Egyptian Standards are mostly known from figurative documents but few Standards are still extant such as the "flabella" of Tut ankh-Amun¹⁶ and three statuettes of deified animals (Late Period) in the Egyptian Museum of Turin.¹⁷ Data can be gathered from their occurrence, in three dimensions, on statues of Kings and of standard-bearing dignitaries. Lexical evidence on the standards is scarce, while literary references do not exist.¹⁸

According to their size, one must distinguish clearly between two main types of the gods' standards: **Type A** seemed as huge standards with long poles, fixed to the ground with or without special bases (pl. 5.i-j),¹⁹ sometimes supported (or held) by men²⁰ or by symbols in the form of the hieroglyphic signs *wAs*, *anx* and *Dd*,

¹⁶C. D. NOBLECOURT, *Vie mort d' un pharao, Tutankhamon*, Paris, 1963, pl. 20; I. E. S. EDWARDS, *The Treasures of Tutankhamun*, London, 1974, Catalogue Nr. 23; S. CURTO, *LÄ VI*, 1986, col. 1256, s.v. "standarten"; N. REEVES, *The Complete Tutankhamun, The king, The Tomb, the Royal Treasure*, London, 1990, p. 179.

¹⁷G. BOTTI, *Statuette per standardi funerary del Museo Egizio di Torino*, in: *Studi in onore di Ugo Enrico paoli*, Florence, 1955, p. 145-48; S. CURTO, *LÄ V*, col. 1255-1256, s.v. "standarten"; G. GRAHAM, *The Oxford Encyclopedia of Ancient Egypt I*, 2001, p. 167, s.v. "Insignias".

¹⁸S. CURTO, *LÄ VI*, 1986, col. 1256, s.v. "standarten".

¹⁹Cf. E. NAVILLE, *festival Hall of Osorkon II*, Pl. IX.7-9; W. M. FL. PETRIE, *The palace of Apries (Memphis II)*, London, 1909, pl. VI; K. LANGE, M. HIRMER, *Aegypten. Architektur Plastik Malerei in drei Jahrtausenden*, München, 1955, pls. 102-103; R. H. WILKINSON, *Reading Egyptian Art, A hieroglyphic guide to Ancient Egyptian Painting and sculpture*, London, 1992, p. 144, fig. 2; The Epigraphic Survey, *Medinet Habu IV. Festival Scenes of Ramses III, OIP 51*, Chicago 1940, pl. 213B.

²⁰For examples the inscriptions of Narmer Palette see: J. E. QUIBELL, *Hierakonpolis I*, London, 1900, pl. XXVI B; N. B. MILLET, "The Narmer macehead and related Objects", *JARCE XXVII*, 1990, p. 54, fig. 1; *id.*, "The Narmer Macehead and Related Objects: [Correction]", *JARCE XXVIII*, 1991, p. 224, fig. 1; FL. D. FRIEDMAN, FL. FRIEDMAN, "The Underground Relief Panels of King Djoser at the Step Pyramid Complex", *JARCE XXXII*, 1995, p. 6-8, fig 4. Scenes from the solar temple of Niuserra (Fifth Dynasty), see: F. WILHELM, von BISSING, *Das Re-Heiligtum des Königs Ne-woser-re (Rathures)*, Bd II, Berlin, 1923, 33a-b.

provided with arms²¹ (pl 2,6), and **Type B** in which were short portable standards carried in royal or religious festivals processions by the temple priests, sometimes provided with a pointed butt for sticking them upright in the ground (pl. 5).²²

Type A is shown accompanying the ruler very early on many royal monuments from the late Predynastic and Early Dynastic periods ;²³ on the partially preserved mace head of king " Scorpion " (Ashmolean Museum , Oxford) ,²⁴ erected amid the forecourts of the primitive temples of the deities : Neith²⁵ , Sobek

²¹For examples the fixed standards in the scenes of kings: Djoser Cf. Fl. **D. FRIEDMAN, Fl. FRIEDMAN, JARCE XXXII, 1995, p. 23, fig. 14; A. ĆWIEK, Relief decoration in the royal=funerary temples complexes of the old kingdom, studies in the development, scene content and iconography, Ph D. diss., Warsaw University, 2003, fig.66; Thutmosis III. Cf. LD III, pl. 36a-b; J. G. WILKINSON, The Manner and Customs of the Ancient Egyptians III, S. Birch ed., London, 1878, p. 133, pl. XXX: 1-2; Ramses II. Cf. *ibid.*, p. 367, pl. LXIII; for Greco-Roman Period scenes examples see: **A. MARIETTE, Dendérah. description générale du grand temple de cette ville I, Paris, 1870, pls. 9, 13, 20, 22, 38a-b.****

²²For examples the standards incised on the Hunter Palette. See: **F. LEGGE, "The Carved Slates from Hiraconpolis and elsewhere", PSBA XXII, 1920, p. 130-131, pls. II, IX; F. PETRIE, Prehistoric Egypt, London, 1920, p. 12-13, Pl. A, fig. 4; J. VANDIER, Manuel D'Archéologie Égyptienne I, Paris, 1954, p. 574-79, fig. 380; W. St. SMITH, A History of Egyptian Sculpture and Painting in the Old Kingdom, 2nd Edition, Oxford, 1949, p. 111, fig. 25.** Some of the military standards also are sometimes provided with a pointed butt for fixing them upright to the ground, but are in one instance a wooden stand is used. At El-Amarna the palace guards, when off duty, stood their standards in pedestals. Cf. **R. O. FAULKNER, "Egyptian Military Standards", JEA 27, 1941, p. 15, fig. IV: 6.**

²³T. A. H. WILKINSON, *Early Dynastic Egypt, London, New York, 2003, p. 197-199, fig. 6.4.*

²⁴In the mace head upper register are five standards (the *xAsf* sign of foreign countries; Seth's animal, Min's emblem, Seth's animal again, and the jackal of Wepwawet), and under each is a suspended lapwing (*rxyt*, symbol of Lower Egypt). On a separate fragment appear three standards, one with a falcon on a half-moon, with suspended bows (a symbol of Nubia). See: **W. St. SMITH, op. cit., p. 114, fig. 30; K. M. CIATOWICZ, The Oxford Encyclopedia of Ancient Egypt, vol. 1, Cairo, 2001, p. 256-258, fig., s.v. " Ceremonial Mace Heads".**

²⁵Representation on the famous aAha's tablet from the Archaic Period, contribute unique information about domed hut of the Predynastic type, and rectangular enclosure fronted by two **nTr** flags, with a central standard (emblem pole) of Neith. Once again, during the Saite and Persian Periods, representations of the facade of the temple of Neith comparable to those of the archaic tablet of aAha, although more elaborate, engraved on stone. More simply we find, also in the time Saite and in the 30th dynasty, in simple hieroglyph, this same picture of the facade of the temple incorporated in a context.=

²⁶ and Horus +*b^awty*²⁷, and in the fields of the celebrations and ceremonials of royal and religious festivals especially the *sed*-festival such as the kings: Seneferu²⁸, Djoser²⁹, Neuserre³⁰, Sahure³¹, Amenemhat III³², Thutmosis III³³, Ramesses II³⁴, Osorkon II³⁵ and later king Apries.³⁶ This type sill occurred even during the Greco-Roman period.³⁷ To **type A**, there is a representation of a similar unique example of a standard belongs to the goddess Bastet (pl 2), depicted amongst the inscriptions of the so called festival Gateway of king Osorkon II in the great temple at Tell Basta

=See. **FL. PETRIE**, *Royal Tombs of the first dynasty* II, London, 1901, pl. X, 2; **M. G. JEQUIER**, "Les temples primitifs et la persistance des types archaïques dans l'architecture religieuse", *BIFAO* 6, 1908, p. 27-31, figs. 6-10; **Al. BADAWY**, *Le dessin architectural chez les anciens Egyptiens, Étude comparative des représentations égyptiennes de constructions*, Le Caire 1948, p. 12, fig. 10; **J. VANDIER**, *Manuel d'archéologie égyptienne* I, Paris 1952, p. 836-40, Fig. 560; II, 1954, p. 559-560; **BONNET**, *RÄRG*, p. 779, fig. 181, s.v. "tempel"; **PM** V, p. 88; **M. SCANDONE**, "Il tempio di Neith in Sais e gli dei sunnaoi in epoca tarda", *Oriens Antiquus* 6, 1967, p. 151, figs. 1(a-h), 2; **A. BADAWY**, *LÄ* I, 1975, col. 399-400, Abb. 1a-b, s.v. "Architekturdarstellung"; **R. EL-SAYED**, *La déesse Neith de Sais* I, Le Caire, 1982, p. 33; II, p. 225-226, Doc. 73; **Th. J. LOGAN**, "The Origins of the Jmy-wt Fetish", *JARCE* XXVII, 1990, p. 63-64, fig. 2.

²⁶**M.G. JEQUIER**, *BIFAO* 6, 1908, p. 31-34, fig. 11; **J. VANDIER**, *Manuel* II, p. 562-4, Fig. 314.

²⁷**T. A. H. WILKINSON**, *Early Dynastic*, p. 317-20, Figs. 8.9, 8.10; **FL. PETRIE**, *Palace of Apries*, pls. VI, IX; **J. VANDIER**, *Manuel* II, p. 565-566, Fig. 315; **A. FAKHRY**, *The Monuments of Sneferu at Dahshur, Vol. II, The Valley Temple. Part I, The Temple Reliefs*, Cairo 1961, p. 60-1, fig. 35; **B. WILLIAMS**, "Narmer and the Coptos Clossi", *JARCE* XXV, 1988, p. 48, fig. 7.

²⁸**A. FAKHRY**, *op. cit.*, pl. 48, 55.

²⁹**F.D. FRIEDMAN, F. FRIEDMAN**, *JARCE* XXXII, 1995, p. 1-42, pls. 2a-c, 12, 14, 16-17, 19a, 23-24.

³⁰**F. WILHELM, von BISSING**, *Das Re-Heiligtum des Königs Ne-woser-re (Rathures)*, Bd II, Berlin, 1923, 1:13, 23, 33a, 44d.

³¹**L. BORCHARDT**, *Das Grabdenkmal des Königs S'aAhu-Re^c*, Bd II, Leipzig, 1910-1913, pl. 47.

³²**S. FARID**, "Preliminary report on the Excavations of the Antiquities Department at Tell Basta (Season 1961)", *ASAE* 58, 1964, 94, pl. X; **C. C. Van Siclen III**, "Remarks on the Middle Kingdom Palace at Tell Basta", in: Bietak (ed.), *Haus und Palast im Alten Ägypten*, 1996, p. 239-246, fig. 11.

³³**LD** III, pl. 36a-b; **J. G. WILKINSON**, *Manners and Customs of Ancient Egypt* III, p. 137, pl. XXXI: figs. 1-2.

³⁴*ibid.*, p. 367, pl. LXIII.

³⁵**E. NAVILLE**, *festival Hall of Osorkon II*, Pls. I.5, 2.8, IX.1-10, XIII.IV.

³⁶**W. M. FL. PETRIE**, *op. cit.*, pls. III-IX.

³⁷**A. MARIETTE**, *Dendérah: description générale du grand temple de cette ville*, Tome I, pls. 9, 13, 20, 22, 38.

represents a figure of the goddess Bastet as a cat sitting upon a standard fixed to the ground held by a figure in the shape of the **wAs**-sign.³⁸ So a new look of another purpose or use to the Zagazig bronze statue, and similar examples, should be suggested, as an emblem which may be fixed to the top of a horizontal base set upon a wooden pole.

Depictions of the portable standards (Type B) appeared very early on many of the ceremonial palettes, mace heads and labels of the late Predynastic and Early Dynastic periods (f.3200-2890 BC).³⁹ Conventionally, the Narmer palette (Egyptian Museum, Cairo) shows the king wearing the 'red crown' and preceded by a group of four standard-bearers as he inspects enemy dead.⁴⁰ In the (historic) Pharaonic times we find this type of Standards on a short pole show animals and other emblems, referring to respective deities carried mostly in civil and religious ceremonies and celebrations of the king (enthronement or jubilee) on wall reliefs in temples and tombs.⁴¹

No doubt the emblems or ensigns of these gods standards accompanying the king which are often shown in representations of festivals in historical times, needed to be made of inflexible and

³⁸E. NAVILLE, *op. cit.*, Pl. IX: 2.

³⁹W. St. SMITH, *op. cit.*, p. 111, fig. 25; T. A. H. WILKINSON, *op. cit.*, p. 197-199, fig. 6.4.

⁴⁰F. LEGGE, *PSBA* XXII, 1920, 126-130, Pl. I; J. E. QUIBELL, "Slate palette from Hieraconpolis", *ZÄS* 36, Leipzig, 1898, 81-4, Tf. XIII; VANDIER, *Manuel* I, 595-99, fig. 391-2.

⁴¹For examples the standards carried in the scenes of: (a) the *Sed*-festival from the solar temple of Niuserra (Fifth Dynasty). cf. F. WILHELM, von BISSING, *Das Re-Heiligtum des Königs Ne-woser-re (Rathures)* II, pls. 13, 17, 20-19a, 27, 32-33a-b, 38-39, 42-43, 46, 50b, 52; (b) The first jubilee of Amenhotep III. cf. The Epigraphic Survey, *The Tomb of Kheruef. Theban Tomb 192*, OIP 102, Chicago, 1980, Pl. 44; (c) the kings Seti I, Ramses II, Ramses III and Herihor officiating (or participating) in the ceremonies of the feast of Min. cf. *id*, *Medinet Habu IV*, OIP 51, pls. 203, 209, 212, 213; (d) Ramses III in the festival of Sokar. Cf. *ibid.*, pl. 226; (e) the *Sed*-festival of king Osorkon II, cf. E. NAVILLE, *The festival Hall of Osorkon II*, Pls. 1- II, IX, XIII, XIX, XXI, XXIII.

valuable materials (wood⁴² or metal), even Clement of Alexandria⁴³ (writing in the third century A.D.) relates that the Egyptians in the festival processions of their gods still "carried about 'golden' images, two dogs, one hawk and one ibis". I think bronze is a very suitable material for this task during the later periods especially some of the cats' figures adorned with gold and silver jewelry.

As for the way of fixation of the emblems to the staffs or the wooden poles of the standards, the ancient Egyptian since their prehistoric times till the Greco-Roman Period used many ways reflected in the great variety of the hieroglyphic signs forms which represented gods' standards such as: . These ways could be summarized in the following points: a) In Prehistoric and Predynastic times the primitive standards presented a common character. Their earliest representations appear atop images of Naqada II boats (pl. 5.a),⁴⁴ where they were composed of a long surmounted pole of a sacred emblem without the intermediary of any particular support. It seems well that, according to the description of Diodorus⁴⁵, the wood image (or figure) of the sacred

⁴²During his excavation in the tomb of king Horemheb at Valley of the Kings, Davis discovered two emblems of Khons standards of wood (Sycamore: Length 0.23 m and 0.21 m. height 0.10 m.), rounded on all sides, having pegs underneath for fixing to stands. This object, a leather bottle or piece of flesh, was an emblem of the god Khons, the son of Amon, and frequently figures in the bas-reliefs of the temples carried upon a pole among the sacred ensigns.

T. M. DAVIS, *The tombs of Harmhabi and Touatânkhamanou*, London, 1912, p. 105.

⁴³**CLEMENT OF ALEXANDRIA**, *The Stromata or Miscellanies V5*, Kessinger Publishing, 2004, chap. VII, p. 22. ; **J. G. WILKINSON**, *the Manners and Customs of Ancient Egypt*, vol. 3, p. 376; J. Černy, *Ancient Egyptian Religion*, London, 1951, 18.

⁴⁴**V. LORET**, " Quelques idées sur la forme primitive de certaines religions égyptiennes à propos de l'identification de l'hieroglyphe servant à écrire le mot dieu", *RevEg* XI, 1904, p. 76-77, Fig. 1-30; **FL. PETRIE**, *Prchistoric Egypt*, p.19-21, pl. XXIII, 5; **J. VANDIER**, *Manuel D' Archéologie Égyptienne I*, Paris, 1952, p. 340-1, fig. 231; **M. RAPHAEL**, *Prehistoric Pottery and Civilization in Egypt, The Bollingen Series VIII*, New York, 1947, p. 150 ff., pl. XXXVI, 1.

⁴⁵Being raised, says **Diodorus**, on a spear or staff, which an officer bore aloft, each standard served to point out to the men their respective regiments, enabled them more effectually to keep their ranks, encouraged them to the charge, and offered a conspicuous rallying-point in the confusion of battle.=

symbol was directly fixed to the forefront of a spear, or at least of a long stem with pointed end through a hole in the ensign underside.⁴⁶

b) From the prehistoric time passing to the first three dynasties onward, one can notice a certain number of modifications in the shape of the standards. Some special characters with the prehistoric signs were preserved, for example the absence or the presence of only one streamer, but the rule seems to be providing the pole with two streamers which may be used for tying the emblem to the pole at first then used only for decoration, then some animals emblems were installed more conveniently and easily than the poor elephant sign pierced of part to part of the prehistoric times (pl. 5.1). They had, perpendicularly to the extremity of the shaft, a sort of rod (bar) or horizontal platform on which they can be held upright.⁴⁷ So the fixation system has been changed, where they used emblems projecting tangs or pegs⁴⁸ to be vertically fixed to the horizontal wooden base, certainly concealed from viewers eyes.

c) Finally, the entire composition consisted of the sacred emblem was set on to an integral plinth with which it was cast as a piece. This base was provided with a centered, cylindrical fitting on its underside for attachment into a staff. Such finials, originally affixed to staves of either metal or exotic hard wood such as ebony or cedar, served as standards either to be carried by priests in procession or to be affixed to a sacred bark. There are many

=DIODORUS I, 86; J. G. WILKINSON, *the Manners and Customs of Ancient Egypt* I, p. 196.

⁴⁶One of the oldest emblems of a standard represent an oval-shaped terracotta (clay) male human head was found at the site of Merimda Beni Salama, about 50 kilometers northwest of Cairo. A recess underneath the head suggests that it was attached to a pole on standard carried in religious ceremonies.

J. EIWANGER, "Die neolithische Siedlung von Merimde Benisalame", *MDAIK* 38, 1982, p 74, pl.10; M. SALEH, H. SOUROUZIAN, *Official Catalogue of the Egyptian Museum*, p.39, No.1; I. SHAW, *The Settled Word*, in: *Ancient Egypt, The American Univ. press*, Cairo, 1999, p. 76-77; N. REEVES, *Ancient Egypt, The great discoveries, A year - by - year Chronicle*, Hong Kong, 2000, p. 219; A. el-SHAHAWY, *the Egyptian Museum in Cairo. A Walk through the Alley of Ancient Egypt*, Cairo, 2005, p. 13.

⁴⁷V. LORET, *RevEg* XI, 1904, p. 78.

⁴⁸Th. DAVIS, *op. cit.*, p. 105.

examples existed in Museums all over the world, such as the *Shilbe* standard of Mendes in Egyptian Museum at Cairo⁴⁹, a standard finial of the falcon-god Horus in British Museum⁵⁰ and a divine standard finial of a sacred bark in Leiden Museum.⁵¹

To this last way of fixation, Louvre museum has a unique piece represents the upper part of a standard of the goddess Bastet (pl.3).⁵² This bronze object, topped with a sculpture in the round representing a mother cat and three lively kittens, was the upper part of a divine standard. This object used to be attached to an ebony or cedar or ivory shaft; the small hole into which the shaft was slotted is still visible at the back, above the fold that accentuates the base. The hollow, cylindrical lower part opens out to form an umbel at the top, where a scene depicting a mother cat and her kittens is mounted on a semi-circular base. The part that resembles a capital is adorned on both sides with a plant motif in slight relief: a palmette at the front and a partly open umbel at the back. The mother cat is lying on her left side, upper torso erect. She is leaning toward one of her kittens, her head turned slightly to the right. The cat's body follows the curve of the base; the legs define three areas for the kittens. The first kitten is depicted squatting on its haunches, one paw on its mother's nose and the other on her breast; the second is lying down, either suckling or kneading its mother's belly to make the milk flow; the third is lying down, too, and playing with her tail. The Egyptians observed their environment closely and portrayed the attitudes and behavior of their household cats with certain realism.

Another unique standard finial of bronze now in Boston Museum (pl. 4) represents goddess Bastet emblem as a cat sitting erect, on top of a bundle of papyrus plants, adorned with a broad composite

⁴⁹D. J. BREWER, R. F. FRIEDMAN, *Fish and Fishing in Ancient Egypt*, the American University Press, Cairo 1990, p. 65, fig. 3.23.

⁵⁰G. HART, *Eyewitness Guides: Ancient Egypt*, London, 1990, p. 31.

⁵¹(On line: www.globalegyptianmuseum.org/record.aspx?id=13943 last access 14/1/2-12).

⁵²(On line: www.louvre.fr/en/oeuvre-notices/divine-standard (last access 14/1/2012)).

collar surrounds the neck of the animal, and from it is suspended an aegis with lion's head, sun disc and uraeus.⁵³ Concerning the figure of a 'cat on a column' that is found on bronze terminals which imitate either a papyrus umbel or a lotus flower and are reminiscent of architectural column-capitals, **Malek** believes that the lotus, as a symbol of regeneration would have been particularly appropriate, but the shape of the column is often rather ambiguous. Originally, he presumes, the objects were attached to staves or sticks and these would have been more than ordinary walking sticks and may have designated the holder's office or priestly function. Another possibility is that they formed decorative finials of furniture such palanquins or litters.⁵⁴ Or it formed, as I suggest, finials of some of the tall, slender columns which stood amidships before the sacred bark-shrine of gods.⁵⁵

In conclusion, a portable standard needed to be light, a cast bronze alloy figure of a cat is suitable enough to serve that aim, possesses a symbol made of a solid and valuable material provided with protruding parts for fixation to a horizontal base upon a wooden pole. So it is most probably that one of the purposes of the hollow casting bronze statue of Zagazig University Museum, with all its former characteristics which it possesses, is to be one of the emblems served as ensign mounted atop of one of the goddess Bastet portable standards.

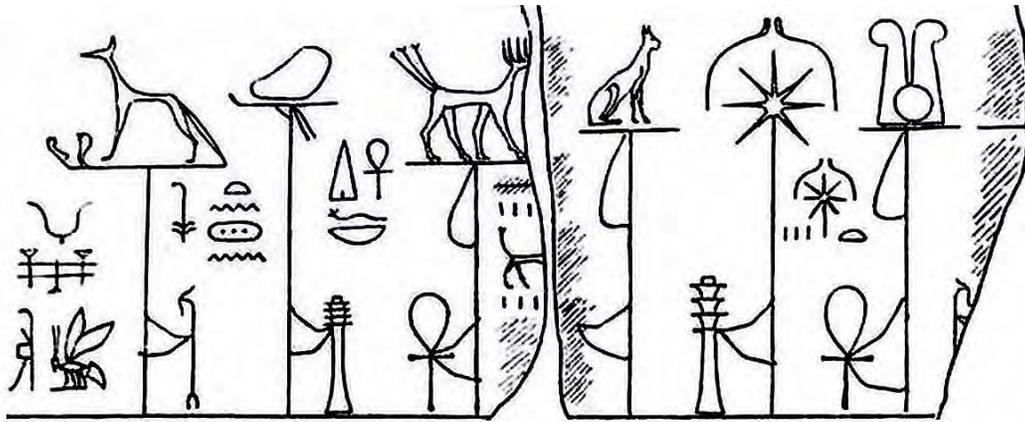
⁵³Accessions, June 12, 1952 through October 16, 1952, *BMFA*, Vol. 50, No. 282 (Dec., 1952), p. 84; **T. P. GREIG**, "In the Auction Rooms", *The Connoisseur* CXXX, 1952, No. 528, p. 137-140 (illus.); **B. V. BOTHMER**, "Ptolemaic Reliefs IV: A Votive Tablet", *BMFA* 51, No. 286 (December 1953), 80-84, fig. 1, 7.

⁵⁴**J. MALEK**, *op. cit.*, p. 107, 110.

⁵⁵**A. ERMAN**, *Aegypten und Aegyptisches Leben im Altertum*, Bd 2, Stuttgart, 1885, p. 373; **G. FOUART**, "Un Temple flottant, Le Vaisseau d'Or D'Amon-R â", *MonPiot* 25, 1921-1922, p. 141-169, figs. 1-8; **H. BONNET**, *RÄRG*, 1952, p. 78-80, s.v. "Barke"; **K. A. KITCHEN**, *LÄ I*, 1975, col. 619-20, s.v. "Barke"; **I. SHAW**, **P. NICHOLSON**, *op. cit.*, p. 48-9; **D. JONES**, *Boats*, London, 1995, p. 20-25, figs. 12, 14; **M. R. BUNSON**, *Encyclopedia of Ancient Egypt*, rev. ed., USA, 2001, p. 65, s.v. "barks of the gods"; **P. BRAND**, *Oxford Encyclopedia of Ancient Egypt*, p. 171-173, s.v. "sacred barks".



Pl. 1 Bastet Bronze Statue at Zagazig University Museum



Pl. 3 Bastet standard amongst other divine standards – Great temple at Tell Basta
E. NAVILLE, *The festival Hall of Osorkon II*, pl. IX.1-3.



a

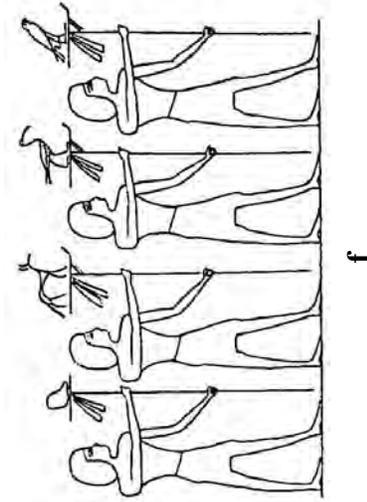
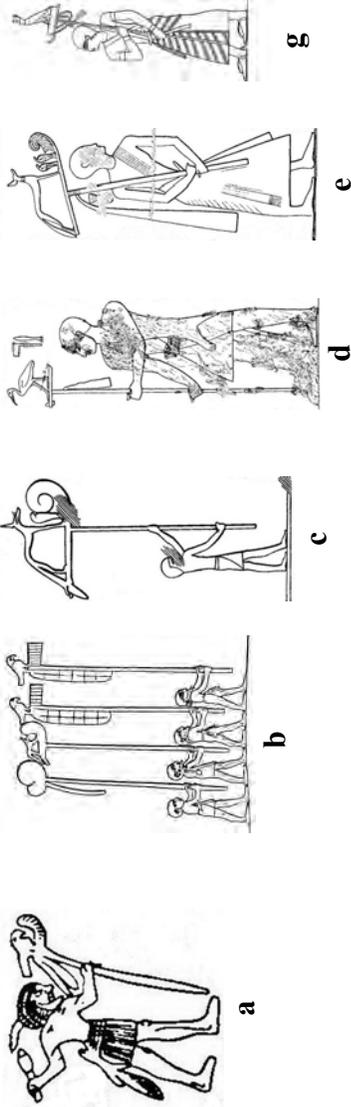


b

Pl. 2 Bastet divine standard at Louvre Museum
www.louvre.fr/en/oeuvre-notices/divine-standard



Pl. 4 Standard finial of Bastet at Boston Museum



Pl. 6 Shapes of Standards of type B

- a-W. St. SMITH**, *History of Egyptian Sculpture and Painting*, p. 111, fig. 25.
b-J. E. Quibell, *Slate palette from Hieraconpolis*, ZAS 36, 1898, p. 81-4, Taf. XII.
c-F. WILHELM, von BISSING, *Das Re-Heiligtum des Königs Ne-woser-re (Rathures)*, Band II, Berlin, 1923, 1.33b.
d-The Tomb of Kheruef, OIP 102, pl. 44.
e-Médinet Habu IV, OIP 51, pl. 213.
f-E. NAVILLE, *The festival Hall of Osorkon II*, pl. XXI.1.
g-LD IV, Blatt 55a-c.