

The Iconography of Emotions in the Ancient Near East and in Ancient Egypt

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1. Introduction: Problems with interpreting emotions in ancient iconography

The iconography of emotions has probably never been thoroughly researched for the ancient Near East and ancient Egypt. Only in the *Lexikon der Ägyptologie* can an article about emotions be found,¹ in contrast to the *Reallexikon für Assyriologie*. In newer biblical dictionaries like *Das Neue Bibellexikon*, the *Anchor Bible Dictionary*, the *Calwer Bibellexikon* or *Herders Neues Bibellexikon* no entry exists at all about emotions in general, though a few articles deal with specific emotions.²

In the Old Testament we do not really have a specific word that denotes feelings, emotions or affects in general. But certainly the ancient Israelites had feelings, as did the people from ancient Mesopotamia or ancient Egypt. We only have words in the Hebrew Bible for specific emotions. Yet emotions can be expressed not only in words but also in art. Hence the main question of my article shall be: Which kind of emotions could be expressed by art in ancient times? In other words, how did ancient artists express feelings? Since we have only very few artistic representations from the area of Syria and Palestine, especially for the expression of emotion, I will mainly work with material from the neighboring areas of Egypt and Mesopotamia. Nevertheless, the artisans from Syria and Palestine lived in the same cultural sphere.

Generally it is easier to express emotion by language than by iconography. This is the same for ancient times as for our period. Today the emotion "love" can easily be expressed by the symbol of a heart or of two hearts linked together, but also by a kissing couple. While "love" can easily be shown, "jealousy" is much harder to indicate with iconographical symbols. But with the help of digital search engines like Google or oth-

1 ALTENMÜLLER, *Gefühlsbewegungen*, 508–10.

2 E.g., ARNOLD, *Joy*; SAKENFELD, *Love (OT)*.

ers, some pictures may be found as well. But a closer look at those pictures shows that the identification of jealousy is not as certain as the identification of love. Some emotions can easily be understood, whereas others are more difficult and not clear enough for identification.

In ancient times the expression of emotions was also more complicated – at least for modern people who want to understand those pictures. There are several reasons for this problem:

- For pictures from ancient times – and this is valid for Egypt, Mesopotamia, and the few pictorial documents from Palestine as well – faces are typically depicted in a stereotyped way. The individual and real person is not shown at all, but rather a typical and ideal character. Thus, for Egypt it was not a problem that a pharaoh usurped the statue of his predecessor, removed the name, and wrote its own name on it. The faces have no (or nearly no) individual elements and represent just a typical person of that period. Very often the view of the persons is not directed to any specific object, but to a point on the horizon, far away. Also the bodies of the persons are not presented in a normal, but in an idealized way. Individual facial features are rare, except in the time of Pharaoh Akhenaton. Only with the mummy portraits, which are certainly influenced by Roman portrait paintings, can authentic individual features be found in Egypt. On the other hand, Hellenistic drawings changed the iconography in the ancient Near East, too. But those new developments of artistic drawing did not appear before the Hellenistic or Roman period.
- Ancient symbols and actions, connected to certain emotions, may not be understood today anymore, because of changes of symbols. Certainly there were changes in the symbolism in the course of time, and likewise different cultures have different ways to express their symbols for emotions.
- In the ancient Near East and in ancient Egypt emotions are sometimes expressed by gestures, attitudes, and movements. Those gestures are normally completely different from the gestures that we use today to express emotions. And not all feelings and emotions can be expressed by iconography. Hence for modern viewers it is sometimes very hard to understand those pictures in the same way as the artist and the people in antiquity did.
- Very often we only have an official catalogue of pictures. The representation of Egyptian or Mesopotamian kings does not have any space for emotions. They wish to be shown in their

power and glory. Such representations do not offer emotions at all in the faces of the persons. But they provoke emotions in the persons seeing those pictures. Looking at the picture of an Assyrian king standing in his chariot, covered by an umbrella, dressed in his finery, provokes respect and humbleness in the ancient viewer. This is the same with the Assyrian soldiers with unnaturally strong muscles. This can be considered as a signal to the viewer, that he has to accept the power of the Assyrian army and not to fight against those soldiers. The picture itself does not show any emotion, but the emotion arises in the viewer. He is made anxious by the power of the Assyrian army, and this is the aim of the artistic representation.

2. Problems with the identification of emotions

Only a short look at specialist psychological literature shows that there is no consensus at the moment about feelings, affects, and emotions. There exists an open list of different affects. Here I am not adhering to any of the different theories, but I use the term emotion or feeling in a far-reaching and un-dogmatic way. Some of the emotions can be regarded as pairs with positive and negative expressions. Thus, love is the opposite of hate, and joy is the opposite of sorrow. Besides those pairs there are also some emotions of a rather neutral nature. The following list presents the main emotions and affects:

Positive	Negative	Neutral
<i>Joy, "joie de vivre"</i>	<i>Sorrow, sadness, grief, mourning</i>	<i>Surprise</i>
<i>Acceptance</i>	<i>Fear, despair</i>	<i>Disappointment</i>
<i>Love</i>	<i>Pain</i>	<i>Guilt</i>
<i>Awe, gratitude</i>	<i>Anger, hate</i>	<i>Shame</i>
	<i>Anger, rage</i>	<i>Courage, "élan"</i>
	<i>Jealousy</i>	<i>Duty</i>
	<i>Disgust</i>	
<i>Sympathy, pity, devotion</i>	<i>Aversion</i>	
<i>Interest</i>	<i>Indifference</i>	
<i>Pride, mightiness</i>	<i>Envy</i>	
<i>Steadfastness</i>	<i>Inconstancy, chaos</i>	

Here I choose four specific kinds of emotions which are represented in the iconography of ancient Egypt and ancient Near East. Because there are thousands of pictures from this area from the pre-Roman period, I

took some typical and general pictures to show the kind of representation of emotions.

3. Examples for the representation of emotions in the ancient Near East and in ancient Egypt

3.1. Joy

If we wish to indicate joy today by a symbol, we probably would take advantage of a smiley emoticon. In ancient times the artists used dance and music to represent joy.



Fig. 1

Fig. 1 is typical for the time of Pharaoh Akhenaton and has been found in Tell el-Amarna.³ The era of Akhenaton is an untypical period in art history, and therefore this picture is also untypical for the representation of emotions in antiquity. This is the only period in the art history of Egypt, where individuality was shown for ordinary persons and kings instead of the typical idealistic representation. Even if the faces of the seven dancers are very stereotyped, the movement is completely individual. The joy of life is expressed by the completely different movements and the jumps of the dancers.

Another way of representing joy is music.

³ KEEL, *Welt*, 314 (No. 449). I would like to thank the authors of the books listed in the footnotes for kindly granting permission for these images to be reproduced here.

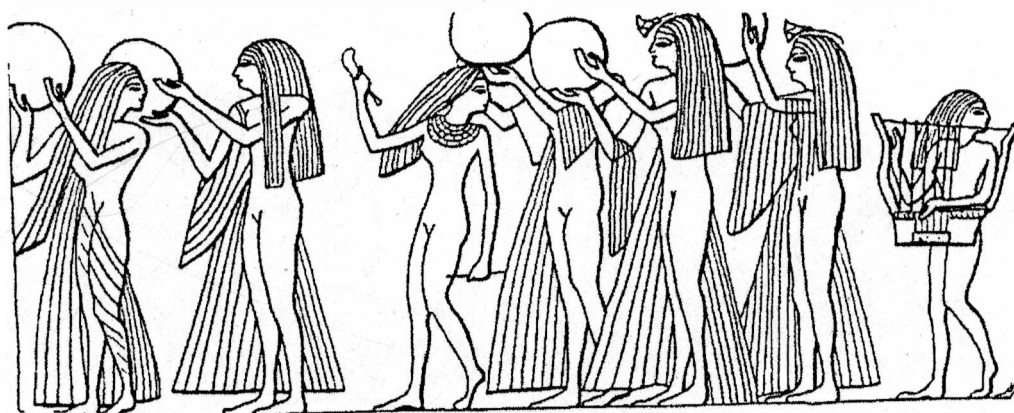


Fig. 2

Fig. 2 is the lower part of an Egyptian stele from Abydos from the time of Ramses II.⁴ The dynamism of the previous relief – typical for the Amarna period – is missing here. But the turning back of the faces makes the whole picture living and shows the joy of the women. Music was almost always a symbol for joy, in Egypt as well as in Mesopotamia, where the faces are likewise fitting.⁵ This is also true for Palestine, where every kind of dynamism and joy is completely missing. We can only assume that the musicians on a cultic stand from Ashdod (Fig. 3) also symbolize joy.⁶



Fig. 3

4 KEEL, *Welt*, 315 (No. 450).

5 Cf. KEEL, *Welt*, 316 (No. 452).

6 KEEL/ KÜCHLER, *Orte*, 44 (Pic. 29).

3.2. Mourning

Also for mourning, some typical pictures from different areas and periods can be found.



Fig. 4

Fig. 4 is part of a Book of the Dead of Hunefer from the time of Sethos I (about 1375 BCE).⁷ While the people involved in the burial ceremony are represented in the typical stiff attitude of Egyptian persons, the two women in front of the mummy clearly show emotions by lifting their hands up to their heads in order to express their sadness.

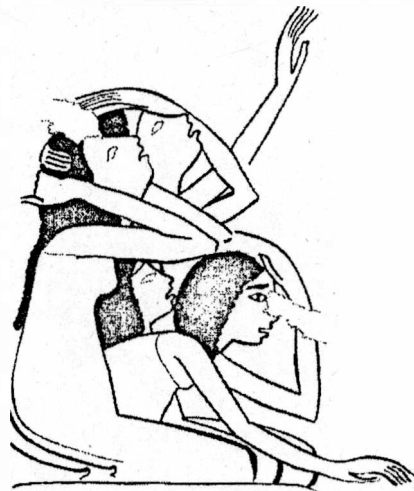


Fig. 5

Similar is the attitude within the picture in Fig. 5 from the tomb of Userhet in Abd el-Qurna (19th dynasty).⁸ Here the mourning women put their hands on top of their heads. This likely does not represent the scattering of ash on the head, as is mentioned very often in texts from

7 KEEL, Welt, 59 (No. 76).

8 KEEL, Welt, 297 (No. 428).

the Old Testament, but is rather a symbol for pain and sorrow. The half-opened mouth symbolizes crying and groaning, in connection with pain and sorrow. Depictions of mourning women may also be found on the Ahiram-sarcophagus from Byblos (Fig. 6).⁹

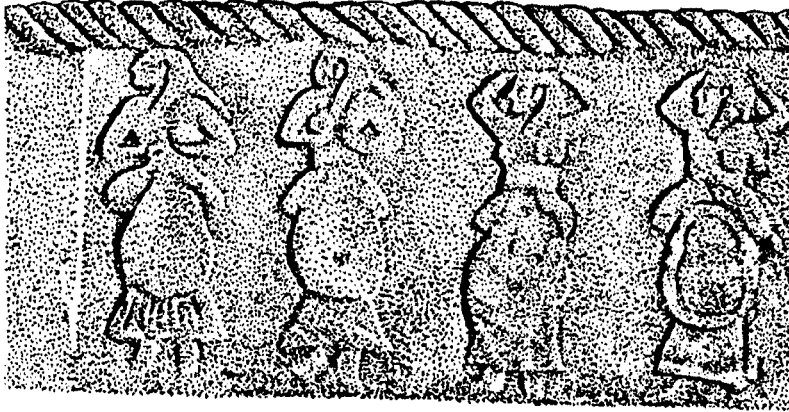


Fig. 6

Here the women have uncovered their breasts as a symbol of self-humbling and beat their hands on their head and belly. Similar gestures can be found on stands from the Philistine territory which are influenced by Mycenaean culture (Fig. 7).¹⁰

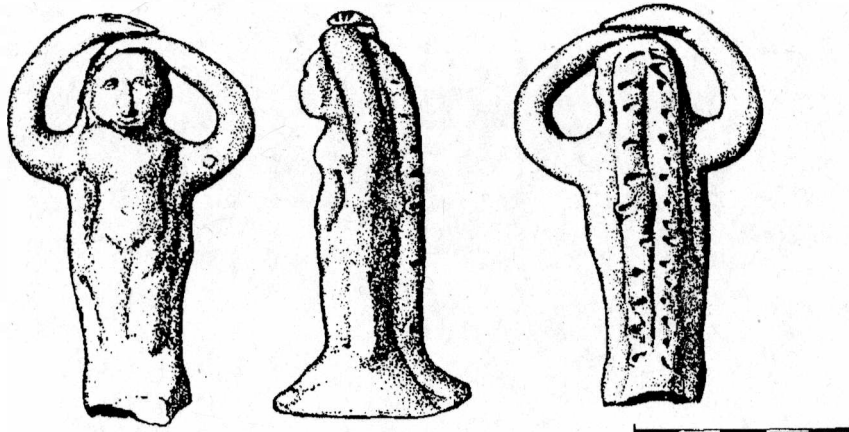


Fig. 7

9 ZWICKEL, 1000-Bilder-Bibel (Pic. 408).

10 DOTHAN, Philistines, 239 (Fig. 108); cf. PODELLA, L'Aldilà.

Particularly impressive is the sorrow and pain represented on a Roman coin, dated to the year 70 CE (Fig. 8).¹¹



Fig. 8

Left of the date-palm, which characterizes Judea, a Roman soldier is depicted, placing his foot on his helmet, which is not needed anymore after the destruction of Judea and Jerusalem. On the right side, a Judean woman is shown, sitting at the bottom, her head resting on her arm and mourning over the destruction of Jerusalem. This small picture, only 4 square centimeters in size, is a typical example of how artists in the Roman period were able to show emotions.

3.3. Fear, despair

Fear and despair are not directly represented in Egyptian pictures, except through the effect on the viewers of a large depiction of the ruler. The Egyptian pharaoh is presented on the gateway of every temple holding his enemies by their hair (Fig. 9).¹²

11 Drawing by Zwickel from the title page of SCHEFZYK / ZWICKEL, *Judäa*.

12 KEEL, *Sammlungen*, 18 (Pic. 7).

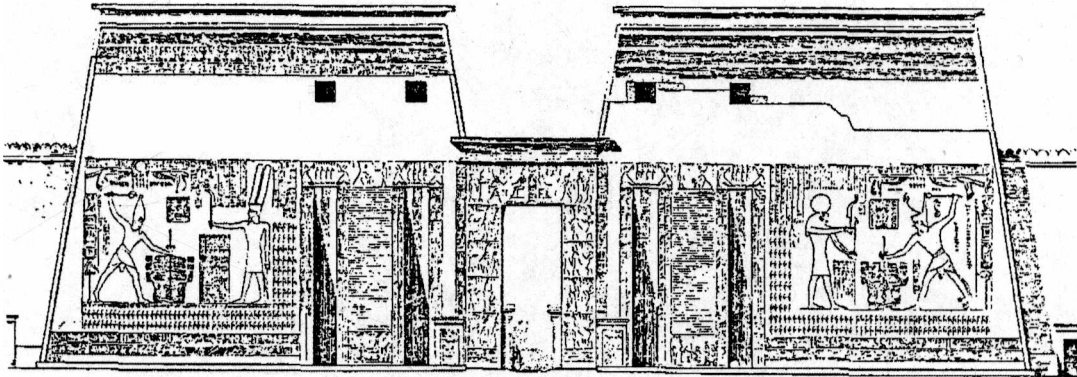


Fig. 9

The size of the pharaoh is unnaturally enlarged in comparison to the other persons shown on the reliefs. There is actually no fear to be seen on any of the faces of the enemies of the pharaoh. But the whole situation represented on the gateways can only be understood as a situation of fear for the enemies. Instead of showing this emotion on the faces, it is characterized by the difference in height: the large pharaoh is contrasted with the smaller enemies. The emotions arise in the observation of the viewers of that relief.

Similar are pictures showing the Egyptian conquest of Canaanite cities (Fig. 10).¹³

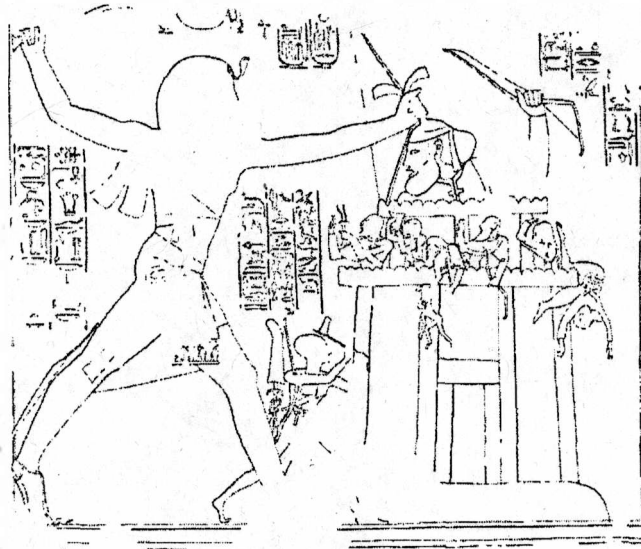


Fig. 10

Again the figure of the pharaoh is significantly enlarged. The inhabitants of the conquered towns do not show fear on their faces. But they offer incense to the pharaoh and recognize the majesty and the power

13 KEEL, Welt, 91 (Pic. 132a). On this type of picture see KEEL, Sühneriten, 413-69.

of the pharaoh. This is contrasted with the inability of the inhabitants to defend their own city and to organize their own independence. Nevertheless, the pain of the experience of being conquered by the Egyptian army is presented by some symbolic acts like the burning of incense.

Even if a man was attacked and thrown down by a lion, the man's fear was not shown on his face in ancient Egyptian art.



Fig. 11

Fig. 11 is a relief from the lion temple in Musawarat es-Sofra dating from the early Ptolemaic era.¹⁴ The lioness shows resoluteness, but the desperate situation of the man is only represented by the attitude of his body. Additionally he stretches his right hand in the air. Normally people are represented in Egyptian art standing upright. It is the twisted posture on this relief, rather than the stiff face, that clearly shows the problematic situation of this man. This is definitely not a gesture of prayer. The man looks in the direction of the lion and not, as usually in prayer depictions, in the direction of the (supposed) god.

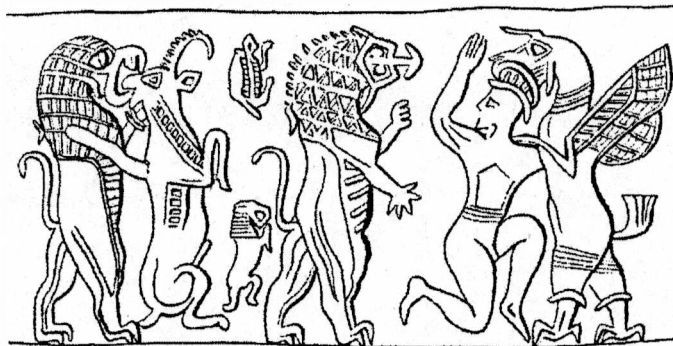


Fig. 12

14 KEEL, Welt, 75 (Pic. 101).

We also find a right hand lifted up on another picture (Fig. 12) on a cylinder seal from Babylon dated to the time about 1800 BCE.¹⁵ A dragon, symbolizing chaos, tries to devour a man. The man's hand lifted up symbolizes his cry for help, while his face seems to be rather apathetic, as far as this can be said about a seal only 1.8 cm high. The hand lifted up seems to be a symbol for fear and a helpless situation, both in Egypt and in Mesopotamia. This symbol will not normally be understood by modern people.

In this context I will refer to a picture we already discussed (Fig. 10). Also in this relief the leader of the Canaanite town lifts up his hand. He holds a broken bow in his hand, which is worthless for military purposes. The last two parallels make it evident that the hand lifted up is a symbol for fear in this picture as well.

A last picture of this group presents once again the hand lifted up as a sign of despair (Fig. 13).¹⁶

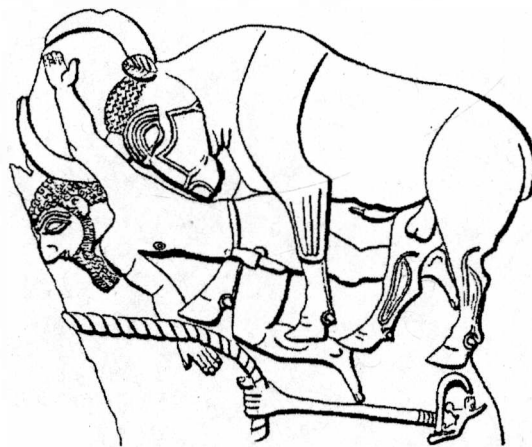


Fig. 13

It is part of an early Egyptian cosmetic plate dating to about 2850 BCE. The bull likely symbolizes the political leader subjugating his enemies. Once again there is no emotion visible on the face of the man. Having fear can only be recognized by the general composition of the picture – and by the hand lifted up. For people looking at this picture, it is natural to assume that this man is full of dread. But the fear is not shown on the face of the man; the fear appears in the mind of the viewers, because they automatically compare their own emotions with the emotions expected in the picture. And fear once again is only shown in the iconography by the hand lifted up.

15 KEEL, Welt, 62 (Pic. 81).

16 KEEL, Welt, 76 (Pic. 105).



Fig. 14

An ivory plate from Ugarit, dating to the 14th century BCE (Fig. 14),¹⁷ offers another aspect of fear, but it is nevertheless comparable to the other pictures. Since it is 14 x 12.5 cm large, the artist would have been able to present facial features, especially because ivory can more easily be worked than most of the other materials. But neither the king of Ugarit on the left side with a sword in his hand, nor the enemy thrown down by him, has any facial features connected with this situation. If we separate the facial features away from the scene, they could also be part of a peaceful banquet scene. Once again the general depiction offers some emotions. The king of Ugarit is presented larger, symbolizing him as a leader and as a victor.

The weapon in his hand symbolizes his strength. And like the Egyptian pharaoh on the gateways of the temples (see Fig. 9), he holds the enemy by his hair. The enemy is kneeling and lifts up his hands as a gesture of respect.

Another chalk stone relief from the 5th dynasty (2480–2350 BCE) may add some additional observations (Fig. 15).¹⁸

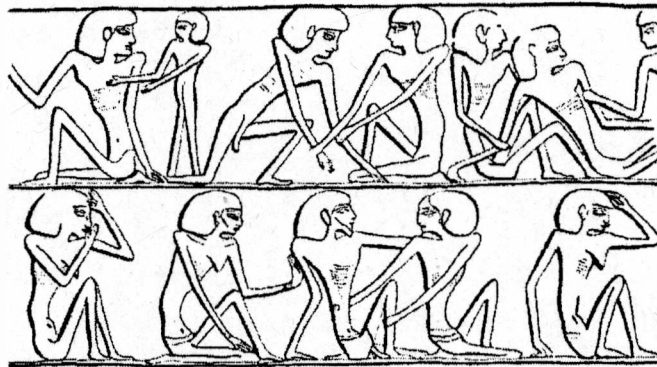


Fig. 15

It depicts starving nomads. Their faces are mostly stereotyped, but the emaciated bodies, with the individual ribs visible, are evidently a symbol of despair. Once again the attitudes of the nomads show the hopeless situation of those people. On the right side of the upper row a member of the community has to be supported, because he is not able to sit upright anymore. In the lower row at the right and the left side, a

17 KEEL, Welt, 275 (Pic. 403).

18 KEEL, Welt, 66 (Pic. 88).

woman is putting her hands on top of her head as a symbol of despair and sadness. Once again it is the general impression of the picture which creates emotions in the viewer, rather than the features of the faces.

In Egyptian art there is also another possible way of expressing the hopelessness of a situation. This can be observed in the famous reliefs presenting the battle of the troops of Ramses III against the Sea Peoples (Fig. 16).¹⁹

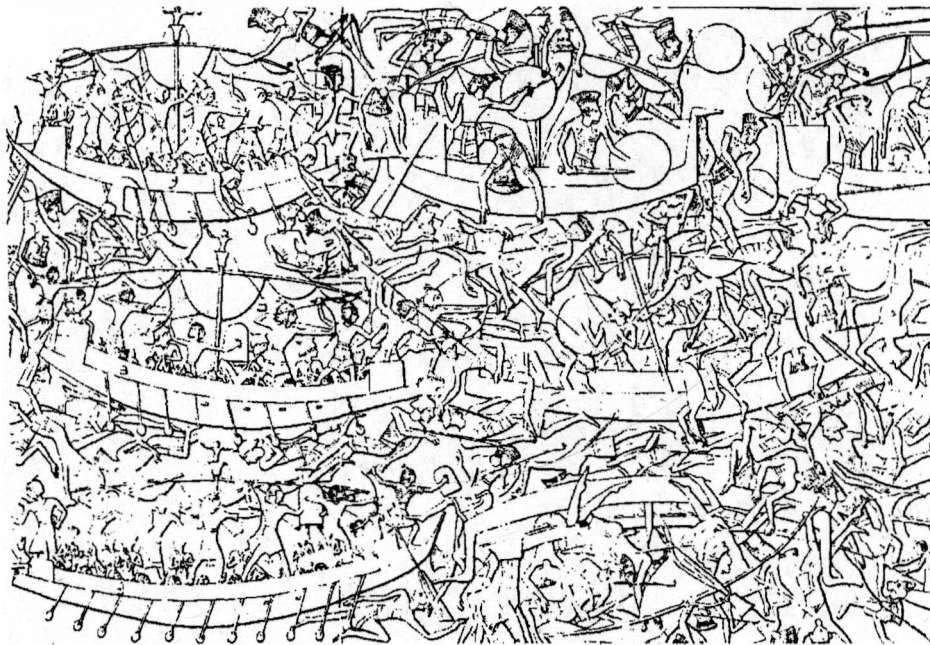


Fig. 16

In the oriental imagination, good feelings are always connected with a systematic order, while bad feelings are connected with disorder and chaos. According to this oriental system, order is always connected to God or to gods, who have the responsibility (together with the king) to establish, to stabilize, to preserve, and to protect this order. This battle scene presents the Egyptian army in orderly sequence, shown by the upright and parallel bodies of all the Egyptians. On the other hand the army of the Sea Peoples is in complete disorder. Their bodies are bent and lying in completely different directions. Only in a world organized by godly order can a person feel good emotions. Once again the general composition of this picture awakes different emotions in the eye of the viewer, although no emotions are presented on the faces themselves.

¹⁹ DOTHAN, *Philistines*, 10 (Fig. 7).

As we have seen, the fear and despair of human beings is not normally presented in Egyptian or Mesopotamian art. Nevertheless, the artists were well able to present emotions, but only in the faces of animals. In the tomb mastaba of Ti, located near Saqqara and dated to the 5th dynasty, a herd of cows is shown crossing a river (Fig. 17).²⁰

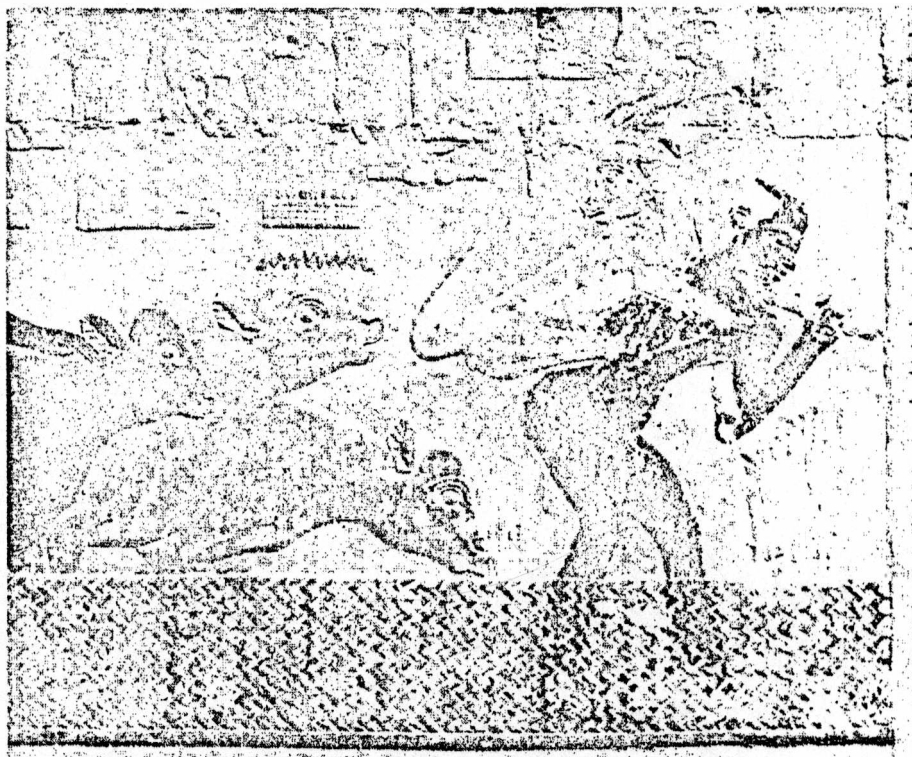


Fig. 17

A calf, which is not yet able to cross the river, is carried on the back of an Egyptian. The face of this calf is horrified because of the unnatural and unusual situation, and evidently it is crying. Behind the calf the adult cows are presented crossing the river as well, and the mother cow can easily be recognized: she is crying too, while the two other cows enjoy the fresh water or are completely uninvolved. For the Egyptian artist it was evidently possible to express those emotions of animals with a high quality of expression.

Another Egyptian relief from the tomb mastaba of Mereruka, also situated near Saqqara and dated to the 6th century BCE, may be added (Fig. 18).²¹

20 LANGE/ HIRMER, Ägypten (Pic. 69).

21 LANGE/ HIRMER, Ägypten (Pic. 77).

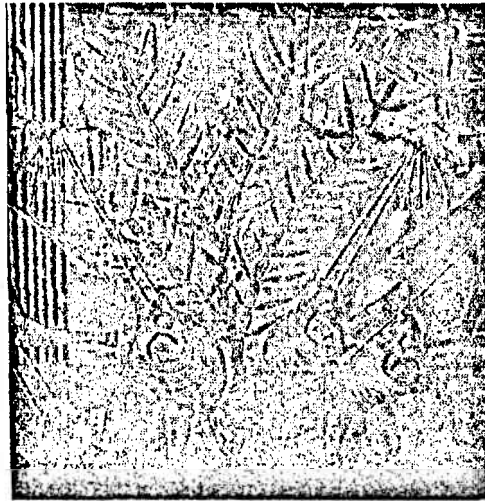


Fig. 18

Once again it clearly presents emotions on the faces of animals. The scene shows some hippopotami harpooned during a hunting scene. The mouths of the hippos are opened wide, their tongues are curled, and their eyes are enormous. You almost feel like an observer hearing the cries of the hippos. Here too we have a naturalistic scene, depicting the emotions of the animals very clearly.

The ability to present the emotions of animals in pictures does not only appear in the early periods of the Egyptian kingdom, but also in later times. A relief on the temple of King Sethos I in Abydos presents the young King Ramses II and a prince hunting a sacrificial bull (Fig. 19).²²

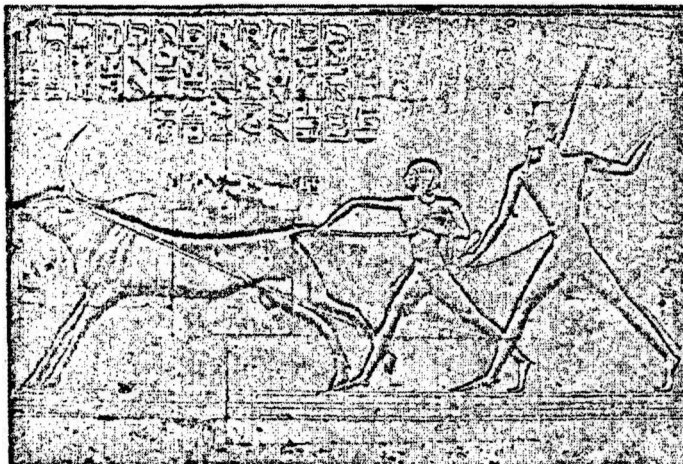


Fig. 19

22 LANGE/ HIRMER, Ägypten (Pic. 224).

The eyes of the prince and of the king are strictly oriented to the horizon and looking above the bull. The attitude of the two bodies is idealized and not realistic for a hunting scene. The two men are depicted according to the classic kind of human representation in Egypt. Completely different to the portrayal of the two men is the presentation of the bull. Looking at his face, you can observe the fear.

Even in Mesopotamia, emotions can be presented together with animals (Fig. 20).²³

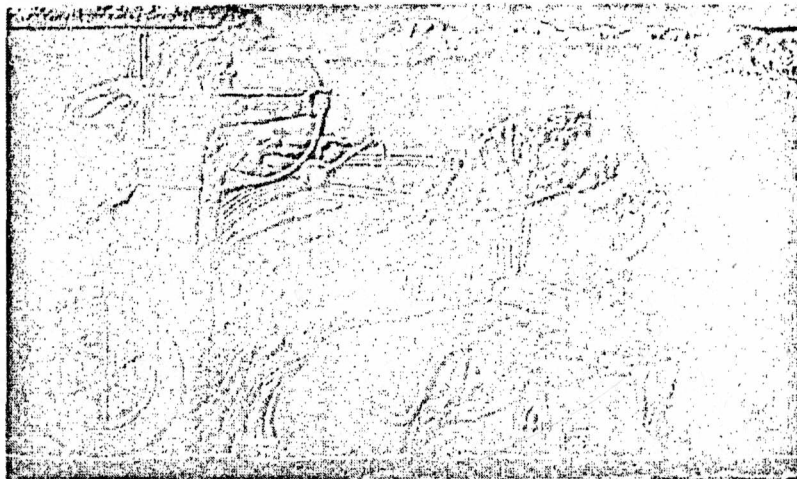


Fig. 20

In Mesopotamia lions are a typical symbol for the representation of disorder. Conquering a lion means also conquering disorder, or at least reducing it. Therefore it was one of the main duties for kings to fight against lions and kill them, in an event held every year in the royal gardens. By doing this, the king's ability to maintain godly order would be symbolized. As in Egyptian reliefs, the eyes of King Ashurbanipal II (883–859 BCE) are set in a fixed stare toward the horizon, not looking at the lion at all. Even the horses are not anxious because of the proximity of the dangerous animal. Completely different is the attitude of the lion. Though running forward, he is looking backward. His eyes are concentrated on the fight against the king. His mouth is open wide; the animal is roaring. In his face the nearness of death is clearly visible – completely different to the faces of the horses, which are very stereotyped.

Summing up, we may conclude that the emotions of human beings are not normally presented in their faces, either in Mesopotamia or in Syria or in Egypt. Only sometimes fear may also be expressed by lifting

²³ ORTHMANN, Propyläen Kunstgeschichte (Pic. 205).

up a human arm. Instead of in the facial features, the emotions are often expressed by the general layout of the whole iconographic scene. This offers to the viewer different kinds of emotions. The depiction of human beings had to be done in a traditional way, which normally allowed no emotional or individual expression. They had simply to be presented in an idealized and characteristic way, free of any emotions. But the absence of the expression of emotions is not connected with a lack of ability on the part of the ancient artists. On the contrary, when representing animals they are well able to express all kind of emotions on their faces.

3.4. Love and sympathy

Love and sympathy is the last group of emotions I want to present here. They can be expressed by a close physical contact.

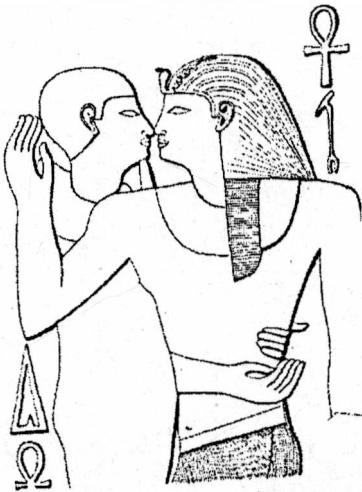


Fig. 21



Fig. 22

Fig. 21 shows the tenderness between the god Osiris and King Sesostris I,²⁴ while Fig. 22 shows the tender affectionate connection of a royal couple from Ugarit.²⁵ In both pictures the partners are looking into each other's eyes – the god and the king on the one hand and the couple on the other hand. Both partners have nearly the same height, symbolizing equality. No characteristic features are depicted in the faces, but the attitude – the surrounding of the partner's body by the arm, the holding

24 KEEL, Welt, 180 (Pic. 274).

25 KEEL, Welt, 264 (Pic. 387).

of the partner's hand, or touching the shoulder and the arm of the partner – expresses a tender connection between both of them.

In Egypt many figurines of couples are attested, with both partners sitting side by side. Sometimes man and woman are of the same height, but sometimes also the woman is shown a little bit smaller than the man.



Fig. 23

Fig. 23, dating to the 4th dynasty, is just one representation typical of those very common figurines.²⁶ In this type of representation of a couple, both are looking at a distant point on the horizon. Although they do not look at each other, the close connection of the couple is represented by the hand of the women. While the man is depicted in the typical standardized version with his arms hanging down, the woman surrounds his body with her right arm and puts her left hand on his upper arm. Both bodies do not touch. Nevertheless a great tenderness and love is shown by the attitude of holding another person in one's arm. Again emotion is not symbolized by the faces, but by the attitudes. The representation of a woman was evidently not so fixed in Egyptian art as the depiction of a man. Only during the time of Pharaoh Akhenaton (1353–1336 BCE) was this strong artistic canon broken.

²⁶ LANGE/ HIRMER, Ägypten (Pic. 41).



Fig. 24

In Fig. 24 Nofretete (or Nefertiti) and Akhenaton are sitting opposite each other, looking at one another.²⁷ This symbolizes love and tenderness. Both partners are touched by the sunbeams of the sun god Aton. Both are playing with their children. One is sitting in the lap; the other one is held in the arms. This natural scene of daily life was never shown in Egyptian art before or after Akhenaton. The love for the children is represented by the close physical contact of the parents and the children. One child gets kissed by its father; the other one is speaking with its mother and at the same time pointing with its finger to the father. To depict daily life in such a natural way is a new invention in Egyptian art. The artists from the time of Akhenaton presented a daily scene, which was normal in all families at any time before and later. The artists of Akhenaton had no problems presenting such daily life. This shows that they were likely trained in doing so, but usually only for exercises. In official art emotions could not be presented in the same way, because this was illegitimate and not accepted by the public. In order to show emotions, Egyptian artists also searched for possible ways of expressing them in the context of the close framework of accepted art.

Also in Assyrian art the presentation of love and tenderness is done in a rather hidden manner.

27 LANGE/ HIRMER, Ägypten (Pic. 184).

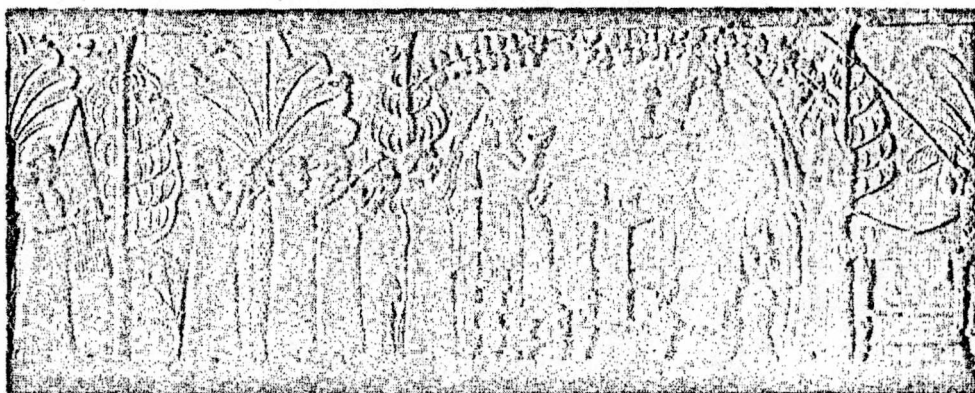


Fig. 25

Regarding the famous relief (Fig. 25) from the time of Ashurbanipal II, there is no real contact between the couple in the center of the banquet scene.²⁸ The king does not look at his wife, but at a distant point on the horizon above the head of his wife. Likewise also his wife does not look into the eyes of her husband. The connection of both is visible by the high-ranking position of both; he is lying on his divan, she is sitting on her throne. Both are prestigious persons; the servants, right and left of the divan, honor them. Both have the same position for the hand, holding drinking bowls. There is only a small detail that may be understood as symbol of love and sexuality in this picture: to the right and to the left of the divan two incense burners are standing. Such incense burners were used in private houses in order to clean the room ritually after sexual intercourse (cf. Herodotus 1.198).²⁹ Likely the sexual connection between the couple is symbolized in this relief by the representation of those instruments.

By the way, there is also another emotion expressed in this picture. On the left side the head of an Elamite leader, cut off by Ashurbanipal, is hanging in the tree. This is a signal to the viewer of the relief that Ashurbanipal is a proud and successful king, who is conscious of his success and who is ruling with mighty power. Once again this emotion is not directly expressed, but represented by a symbol: the head of an enemy cut off.

The art of Syria and Palestine has always been more provincial than the art in Egypt or Mesopotamia. Nevertheless typical reliefs exist, representing care and love for the children. On an orthostat from Karatepe,

28 ORTHMANN, *Propyläen Kunstgeschichte* (Pic. 247).

29 A connection of this incense ritual with Tob 8:2 is denied by MOORE, *Tobit*, 236.

dating to the 8th century BCE, a woman is shown, nursing a rather adult-looking child (Fig. 26).³⁰



Fig. 26

Children were normally breastfed until the 3rd year (cf. 2 Macc 7:27). If the representation is only fairly naturalistic, this child is older than three years. Therefore this picture does not represent the feeding of a child, but may be interpreted as a symbolic representation of care and love.

Similar pictures may be found from Egypt.



Fig. 27

In Fig. 27 a tree presents an unrealistic female breast to a human being.³¹ In other examples of this group the tree represents a goddess

³⁰ ORTHMANN, Propyläen Kunstgeschichte (Pic. 365).

offering food and beverage to a worshiper (cf. perhaps Sir 15:2; 24:16-21). This symbolic representation shows the care and love of a goddess toward the people praying to her. Once again no emotion is visible on the faces, but the emotion is represented by a symbolic gesture.

Love and sexuality may also be represented by the symbol of a dove (cf. Song 2:14; 5:2).



Fig. 28



Fig. 29

Fig. 28 shows a love goddess with doves, which are her symbolic attributes.³² In Fig. 29 a dove is flying from the goddess to a sitting person, symbolizing the love of the goddess for her worshiper.³³ The dove as a symbol of love was already known in the middle of the 2nd millennium BCE, but is mostly lost in our times.

Sexuality and love are also shown on some cylinder seals with a goddess undressing herself.

31 KEEL, *Baumgöttinnen*, 96 (Pic. 40); for this type of representation of nourishment by gods, see the whole article by KEEL.

32 KEEL/SCHROER, *Eva*, 115 (Pic. 69).

33 KEEL/SCHROER, *Eva*, 113 (Pic. 67). For the whole group of representations of doves in oriental iconography, see KEEL, *Tauben-, Stier- und Schlangendarstellungen*, 140-68.

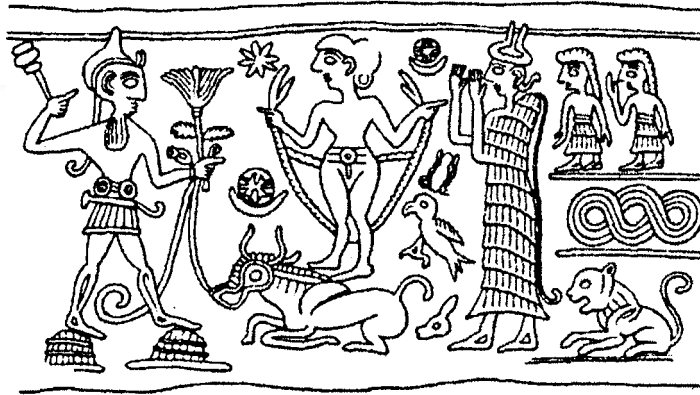


Fig. 30

A typical representation is Fig. 30, where the naked fertility goddess is opposite the weather god Baal who is approaching on the hills.³⁴ Although the sexual connotation, symbolizing the insemination of the earth/ goddess by the weather god, is more prominent in this cylinder seal, the whole scene is also a depiction of love and desire.

Summary

This short overview has shown that there are more kinds of emotions in ancient art than we may observe at first glance. Emotions are presented in antiquity differently from modern times. Gestures, attitudes, and symbols, some of them very strange for us today, were used in ancient times in order to express emotions. Pictures of grief and sorrow, but also pictures of animals, show impressively the ability of ancient artists to express emotions in iconography. But it was completely unusual, and out of order, to present emotions on the faces of human beings, at least of human beings in an official state. The artists searched for other possibilities for expressing emotions in the context of official art. Modern viewers feel emotions and affects regarding many of those pictures and reliefs, but those emotions are not directly presented in the pictures itself, but in the general layout and composition of the pictures.

34 KEEL/SCHROER, Eva, 21 (Pic. 25).

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