

Reflections of Eternity

The Mirror in Ancient Egypt

~ An Overview from Prehistory to the New Kingdom ~

Introduction

With a culture far removed in time and space from our own, why are aspects of Egyptian art both unexpectedly familiar and yet strangely exotic? Tomb scenes depict idealised individuals surrounded by personal belongings, often including mirrors and small items such as cosmetic containers. *Figure 1: Cosmetics box, containing juniper berries, powdered red ochre and a kohl stick, Wood, 12th Dynasty, Kahun, © Manchester Museum.* The meaning encoded in Egyptian tomb art emphasises 'perfection in the hereafter' with correct appearance both in life and in death clearly emphasised, (Meskell, 2002).

In the following article I will explore aspects of the chronological development of Egyptian mirrors from the Early Dynastic Period to the New Kingdom. I will examine the significance of mirrors in tomb art, and their function in the afterlife of the deceased.

Early Mirrors and Developing Concepts of the 'Self'

Small conical pieces of obsidian are known from prehistoric Turkey, fashioned into small dark receptacles shaped for holding water and easily transportable to a light source where they provided reasonable reflection. *Figure 2: One of the earliest known mirrors, hand crafted from obsidian. This remarkable artefact is estimated to be around 8000 years old, Ankara, Museum of Anatolian Civilisation, Photo: P. Gorgori.* Highly polished and worked into a slightly convex form, these early mirrors were designed to sit upright on a small stand. Similar items made from polished stone may have been used in predynastic Egypt, although no examples have yet been identified. In early Egypt most people would have viewed their reflection in water. It was not long however before Egyptians, in their eternal quest for perfection, found a more efficient method of achieving reflection.

There is no evidence of metallic mirrors from Egypt's Predynastic period. However, a highly polished selenite flake set into a wooden frame has been dated to the Badarian era, (4400 to 4000 BC), indicating remarkable ingenuity in the design of this early prototype. It is noteworthy too, that a desire to view the self is attested from an early stage in pre-unified Egypt, (Lilyquist, 1979).

The earliest conceptual awareness of the 'individual self' has received close attention in recent anthropological and archaeological investigations into ancient peoples, (Hodder, 2000). Today, it is hard to avoid images of oneself, caught in mirrors and in reflections from the modern world which surrounds us. In antiquity, concepts of the self developed gradually through the prehistoric period until the Bronze Age, when toilet articles such as mirrors,

tweezers and razors appeared almost at the same point in prehistory, (Hodder, 2000). These items were related to increasing individualism, warfare, self ornamentation and associated with changing aesthetics of the body, (Hodder, 2000). *Figure 3: One of the earliest known sculptures from the predynastic Badarian culture, this figure is made from the lower canine tooth of a hippotamus and may have associations with sexuality and regeneration, © British Museum.*

Petrie suggested that smoothly polished pieces of stone may have been wetted and used for reflection from the Early Dynastic era (Petrie, 1927). Flattened stone palettes with a bore hole allowing suspension may have been used as mirrors at this time. These 'palette mirrors' could have served a dual purpose, providing a flat grinding surface for the preparation of cosmetics and used as a reflective surface to facilitate the application of cosmetics, (Petrie, 1927). Experiments have indicated that when the stone was washed and wetted, it would have provided a reasonable reflection, (Lilyquist, 1979). Water used to wet the surface evaporated rapidly however, providing merely a fleeting reflection. It is possible that oil rubbed on to stone palettes would have provided a more lasting reflection than water but would have rendered the polished stone difficult to handle, (Lilyquist, 1979). *Figure 4: Cosmetic palette, with bore-hole, Nagada II. © Manchester Museum.*

Anatomy of the Mirror

From the First Dynasty through to the New Kingdom and beyond, Egyptian mirrors usually consisted of three main parts. These are:

- the mirror disk with an integral tang, usually formed from copper or bronze alloys, although silver is attested from the Middle Kingdom;
- the umbel, often integral to the handle, was formed from wood, ivory, bone, horn or metal alloys; and
- the handle, in those mirrors found intact which usually matches the materials used to form the umbel

Figure 5: Diagram of a mirror, photo: Nacho Ares. Mirror parts were joined by wooden pegs wedged or cemented into place with the slit at the top of the umbel filled with adhesive securing the tang of the mirror disk. On later mirrors metal rivets were soldered into place, connecting the handle to the disk, (Lilyquist, 1979). The umbel developed into a more elaborate third part of the mirror's design, sometimes crafted into a stylised head of a goddess, usually Bat or Hathor, although other deities including Sekhmet and Mut are also known. Male deities represented on umbels include Khonsu and Bes, although these are less common than female deities.

The main features in the design of the Egyptian mirror are in place by the end of the Middle Kingdom. By the New Kingdom, more mirrors made entirely of metal appear. These disks were cold cast with handles stylised and formed using the lost wax method, (Lilyquist, 1979), *Figure 6: New Kingdom Bronze mirror, Cairo. Photo: Nacho Ares.*

Dating and Design

Mirrors can be difficult to date accurately, unless helpfully inscribed with a king's name, or found with other objects datable by their characteristics, (Lilyquist, 1979). Many mirrors in the past were dated by excavators to the cemetery from which they were recovered. This was problematic as it is difficult to extrapolate accurate chronological data from Egyptian burials where treasured possessions may already have been ancient at the time of interment, (Lilyquist, 1979).

By the First Dynasty, (3100 BC), the skills required to smelt metal and form disks from hammered-out ingots were in place, (Ogden, 2000). Most early metal mirrors were bronze alloy, with copper disks known but less common. Some early disks are curved, which may be due to deliberate design or an unintended consequence of warping during production, (Ogden, 2000). Concave and convex shaping within a mirror's design affects its optical properties, visibly changing the reflected image. It is therefore likely that such shaping was deliberate. Cordiform or heart-shaped disks and both ivory and wooden mirror handles have been recovered from mastabas at Saqqara, Helwan and Sedment, all dated to the First and Second Dynasties, (Saad, 1969, Lilyquist, 1979).

Mirror handles continued to be crafted from elephant or hippopotamus ivory through the Old Kingdom and beyond. Whereas elephant ivory was a highly valued commodity which came under direct pharaonic control, hippopotamus ivory was cheap and readily available throughout Egypt, (Krzyszkowska, Morkot, 2000). The hippopotamus still inhabited the Egyptian Nile Valley

throughout the Pharaonic era. *Figure 7: Ivory mirror-handle, carved in the form of a nude female, © Bolton Museum.* With its gleaming white appearance and high density, hippopotamus tooth may have become the poor man's ivory. Their incisors were the right dimensions for use as cylindrical mirror handles. Bone was another readily available resource, an easily worked material that polished up well for use as decorative inlay, or used to produce handles. Only fresh, uncooked bone was suitable, (Krzyszowska, Morkot, 2000). *Figure 8: Bronze-alloy mirror, NK. This finely crafted mirror could once have had an ivory, bone, stone or wooden handle covering the tang, © Manchester Museum.*

Obsidian, probably imported from ancient Abyssinia (modern Ethiopia and Eritrea) is another material found in Egyptian mirror handles dated to the Middle Kingdom, with a beautiful Twelfth Dynasty example found in the treasure cache of Sithathor-iunut, a daughter of Senwosret II, discovered amongst other precious items in her tomb at Lahun, (Aston, Harrell & Shaw, 2000), *Figure 9: Twelfth Dynasty silver hand mirror of Sithathor, with an obsidian Hathoric handle, inlaid with electrum, gold, carnelian and ivory, Museum of Egyptian Antiquities, Cairo.*

Small details such as evidence of repair using copper riveting might also help secure a date to the later Middle Kingdom when this method of mending was customary. This is also the period when the first cold-cast metal mirror disks appear, thinned out and hammered into shape; a bronze example found at Dendara was decorated with silver leaf, (Ogden, 2000; Lilyquist, 1979). By the beginning of the New Kingdom, so called '*ḥm*' handled mirrors are well attested. These club-shaped handles resemble the hieroglyph for servant,

[HIEROGLYPH]U36[/HIEROGLYPH], and are often formed from wood or polished stone, *Figure 10: ḥm handled mirror, Late Middle Kingdom, © British Museum*. Several titles found on mirrors, associate these artefacts with the servants who bear mirrors in tomb scenes; these include household servants, scribes and hairdressers, (Lilyquist, 1979).

Autobiographical or other inscriptions, datable to the reign of a specific king sometimes occur on mirror disks and handles. Some mirrors have personal names or titles which can be dated to a particular era. In the case of the royal butler, Kemeni, his beautiful cosmetic box, (*Metropolitan Museum, 26.7.1438*), complete with a variety of cosmetic pots, also contained the mirror of another man; an official of the same era named Reniseneb, *Figure 11: © Metropolitan Museum, 26.7.1351*. The cosmetic box and the mirror are both dated to the Twelfth Dynasty. The mirror is inscribed for Reniseneb, who lived during the reign of Amenemhat IV. The inscription also includes his title, 'Great One of the Tens of Upper Egypt', reference to a now obscure administrative position, (Godenho, 2011). Reniseneb's beautifully crafted mirror is bronze, with its ebony handle inlaid with gold. Intriguing questions remain as to whether the King's butler Kemeni and the official Reniseneb were related, and why did one man's mirror end up in another man's cosmetic box?! Kemeni's toilet box is not the only example of a man owning such an item and indicates that an interest in personal grooming was shared by both males and females, (Watterson, 1991).

Not all artefacts are as easy to date and with the original provenance of many mirrors unknown, significant stylistic attributes are taken into account in dating these artefacts, including types of materials used and decorative motifs, all help to place the mirror chronologically, (Lilyquist, 1979).

Representations of mirrors in tomb art and on coffins are usually accompanied by texts. The painted record is useful in dating actual mirrors through style and geographical location, (Lilyquist, 1979). Painted mirrors are found on the *frise d'objets* placed on the inside and sometimes on the outer surfaces of coffins dated to the Middle Kingdom. It was believed that objects painted here or within the tomb itself would become accessible to the deceased in the afterlife (David, 1998).

As noted earlier, New Kingdom mirrors are sometimes entirely metal, although wooden, stone, ivory and bone handles continue to be produced through this era and beyond. New Kingdom mirror handles are sometimes formed in the '*hm*' style discussed above, or formed as papyrus or lotus stalks, painted green or brown to reflect the plants they represent. It is also in this period that the motif of the nude female figure which forms the mirror handle becomes popular, although metal mirrors with a female motif start to appear from the late Middle Kingdom. In terms of dating Egyptian mirrors, it is usually an accumulation of associated evidence from geographical location if known; materials used and stylistic motifs employed, all of which combine to produce a reasonably firm date.

Mirrors, Make-up and Messages

Mirrors are often found in association with cosmetic implements and containers. Other items of toiletry associated with mirrors in burials across the dynastic era include hairpins, combs, eyeliner applicators, cosmetic spoons and both kohl and ointment containers, (Talabot,1999). These items have been found in both male and female burials and there is evidence that cosmetics were used by both sexes, (Manniche, 1999; Meskell, 2002). *Figure 12: Lady of the House Ipwet using a mirror as she applies unguents or cosmetics, © British Museum.* Cosmetic use is believed to have functioned on four levels: aesthetic, hygienic, therapeutic and in religious contexts, (Cotte et al, 2005). Kohl compounds made from malachite and galena, a mineral used in ancient Egyptian eye-paint, have some antibacterial and sun screening properties, (Cotte et al, 2005). The crude form of both malachite and galena was often placed in the graves in small linen or leather bags, ready for final preparation in the afterlife. Bags of green and black 'eye paint' appear on the offering lists of Djau, an Overseer of Priests under Pepy II, recorded in his tomb at Deir el Gebrawi near Asyut, (Kanawati, 2006). Cosmetic powders have been recovered from the tombs of men and women at Deir el Medina in Upper Egypt. Red or brown ochre and chrysocolla, a greenish-blue copper ore were also used for cosmetic purposes. The application and wearing of makeup has been described as 'an erotically charged activity', as indicated in the Turin Papyrus, (Meskell, 2002). This papyrus contains various images of sexual activity in one of which a woman is shown holding a mirror as she carefully applies her make up! Cosmetic use by Egyptian men and women has been

described by Kent Weeks as an act of 'personification', transforming individuals into a uniformity of perfection where even the sexes may have been hard to distinguish. The significance of applying cosmetics to the face and the body has layers of complex meaning in many ancient cultures, 'cosmetics as practiced in ancient Egypt was an art in itself ... giving the uniformity of perfection', (Assmann 1996). Assmann goes on to describe the wearing of cosmetics as a process where individuals were transformed into something 'super-individual', where men and women 'closely resembled each other' and where either sex may have been 'hard to distinguish'. The preparation and application of cosmetics was costly and time consuming, restricting the most elaborate use to elite members of society, (Meskell, 2002).

Egyptian poetry, sometimes referred to as the 'archaeology of the emotions', carries 'messages' about ancient life that allows limited insight into the past, (Parkinson, 1991). Within this literary genre, there are many references to mirrors, ointments and cosmetics. In a hymn to Hapy, a fecundity deity associated with the Inundation, we learn that at times of drought, 'cloth is wanting for one's clothes, noble children lack their finery; there's no eye-paint to be had and no one is anointed', (Lichtheim 1973). The maiden in a New Kingdom poem states, 'I wish to paint my eyes, so that if I see you my eyes will sparkle', (McDowell, 1999). This poetic sentiment is supported by modern chemical analysis with the discovery that the granular properties of galena provided the make-up with a glistening, metallic brightness, (Cotte et al, 2005).

Mirrors are held by women or their female attendants in hair-dressing scenes, the encoded imagery of which is as close as it gets to eroticism in ancient Egyptian tomb art. Female hair had erotic significance, marking women as icons of sexuality and fertility. Hair dressing scenes are thought to reference aspects of sexuality, fertility and regeneration, *Figure 13: Twelfth Dynasty sarcophagus of Kawit, a wife of Mentuhotep II. Both the princess's and her hairdresser's hands form the hieroglyphic determinative for 'hair' or 'hairdresser, [hieroglyph]D3[Hieroglyph]. Museum of Egyptian Antiquities, Cairo, G. Tassie.* Perhaps an aspiration for perfection in life and in death provides some indication of why mirrors feature so prominently as a desirable item in the afterlife.

Ownership and Association

A curious anomaly noted by many scholars concerns gender and mirror ownership. We know that mirrors were owned and included amongst the tomb goods of men, women and children. However, late Victorian and early 20th century excavators, uncertain as to whether the mirror-owning tomb occupant was male or female, often assigned gender by reference to other items found within the burial. Gender identification errors are common in burials containing mirrors alongside ritual knives, daggers or other items deemed 'masculine', causing the deceased to be erroneously declared male, when no other indicators of gender were present, (Lilyquist, 1979). Similarly, the occupant of tombs containing toiletry items and mirrors were sometimes mistakenly understood to be female; closer anatomical examination has

refuted this. Ultimately, mirrors are not an accurate indicator of gender within Egyptian burials, (Lilyquist, 1979).

Representations of mirrors occur in the tomb art of both males and females. Ownership of mirrors by men is more prevalent in the Old Kingdom and in the early Middle Kingdom, (Lilyquist, 1979). However, most scholars agree that from the late Middle Kingdom, throughout the New Kingdom and beyond, mirrors are predominantly associated with women. Mirrors might have symbolised different concepts for men and women, though this distinction is not clear, (Lilyquist, 1979; Szpakowska 2008). What does seem certain is that mirrors are rarely shown before the face of a man, held by a man or carried in offering scenes by male servants. Intriguingly however, mirrors are represented just as frequently on the '*frise d'objets*' painted on or within male sarcophagi or coffins, as they are on female coffins, (Lilyquist, 1979).

The position of mirrors found in situ varies. Although some mirrors found in Early Dynastic burials were placed in the hands or by the feet of the deceased, most mirrors were positioned near the face, beneath the head or near the shoulders of men and women throughout the Dynastic period. Encased mirrors are often associated with sandals, matting and other high value burial goods. Other free-standing or hand-held mirrors are associated with a range of objects including jewelry, head-rests, linen and ointment jars, (Lilyquist, 1979).

Religion and Mirrors

Mirrors are associated with priestesses in the cult of Hathor from the late Old Kingdom and throughout the Dynastic era. In the Middle Kingdom at least six wives of the Eleventh Dynasty king, Nebhepetre Mentuhotep II, buried within chapels beneath the king's mortuary temple at Deir el Bahri hold priestess titles associated with the cult of Hathor, (Neville, 1910). One of Mentuhotep's wives, who bore the title 'royal ornament', indicating both her religious role and favoured status, was buried with two mirrors. Another of the king's consorts, Neferu, thought to be a sister-wife of the king and one of the first females to bear the title 'mistress of the household', had several representations of mirrors in her tomb, some of which were inscribed with the king's name. Many of these mirrors have umbels shaped as stylised heads of Hathor, or bear Hathoric symbolism on the handles, *Figure 14: Bronze mirror with Hathor representation, The Egyptian Museum, Cairo. Photo: Nacho Ares.* Other goddesses were represented on mirrors throughout the Dynastic era. Many have close association with Hathor, including the goddesses Wadjet, Sekhmet and Mut. With only two exceptions known, inscribed mirrors for men rarely include priestly titles. Those that do are inscribed with the name and title of a lector priest, (who read or performed sacred ritual in the temple), and with the title of an overseer of priests, (Lilyquist, 1979).

Another popular mirror form which appeared towards the end of the Middle Kingdom was the 'divine standard' design, usually accompanied by single or double horus falcons. *Figure 15: Divine Standard Mirror, with double Horus falcons, and papyriform handle, late Middle Kingdom, © British Museum.* In this form the

mirror disk may have represented the solar deity Ra; the sun god who ensured eternal renewal for the deceased in the netherworld, (Lilyquist, 1979). The divine standard mirror motif, with single or double horus-falcons continued as a popular design motif found throughout the Dynastic era.

Mirrors painted in burial chambers or on coffins sometimes have red disks thought to represent the sun. Other mirror disks are painted white, perhaps referencing lunar deities. Red and white forms are sometimes found in pairs, within the same scene. The range of colours used to represent mirror disks, includes red, yellow and white, *Figure 16: Yellow painted mirror, el-Kab, Tomb 7. Photo: Nacho Ares.* Complex iconography may also indicate the range of materials used to produce mirrors, with copper and bronze mirrors linked with solar deities, and rarer silver mirrors related to lunar symbolism, (Lilyquist, 1979).

In the New Kingdom, mirrors are closely associated with fertility and childbirth. It is from this era that mirror handles in the form of 'Bes', first appear. Bes was a domestic deity with close associations with women and children. His image is often found on household items as well as on magical wands and ritual knives associated with childbirth, *Figure 17: Nineteenth Dynasty Bes Mirror Handle. Photo: P. Gorgori.* An unusual New Kingdom silver disked mirror has an umbel representing Khonsu, which would appear to confirm a lunar association.

An Object of Desire

Mirrors are often indicators of status in Egyptian tomb art. Labour intensive production meant that even mirrors made from wood and polished stone would have presented considerable effort and economic output. The mirror, as an indicator of elite status, is supported within Egyptian literary sources. Descriptive lines in the 'Admonitions of Ipuwer', a lament composed in the Middle Kingdom, which looks back to the traumatic chaos of the First Intermediate period, (2200-2000 BC), indicate something of how mirror ownership was perceived by the Egyptians themselves,

“Poor men have become owners of wealth,

He, who could not afford sandals, is now the possessor of riches...

Behold, she who had no box is now the owner of a coffer,

And she who had to look at her face in the water is now the owner of a mirror.” (Parkinson, 1997).

Although the retrospective lament of the 'Admonitions' appears to associate mirrors with elite society, it is important to note that mirrors have also been retrieved from domestic settings, including the workmen's village at Lahun and from very simple graves, including those of children, (Lilyquist, 1979), *Figure 18: Bronze and Wooden Mirror, Twelfth Dynasty, Kahun,, © Manchester Museum.*

What's in a name?

So why did Egyptians include mirrors amongst burial goods in royal, elite or humble tomb settings? The functionality of mirrors can best be described as

multi-dimensional and it seems clear that apart from a cosmetic value, there were symbolic meanings attached to mirrors within the funerary context. The complexity of this symbolism is indicated in the terminology used in association with mirrors.

The term most often used for 'mirror', "ꜥnh", also means "life", with perhaps a play on words 'reflected' in the mirror's role in preserving the image in a state of continual existence, (Bird, 1986). It is difficult to know the significance of mirrors for the living but the act of preserving a "living" likeness appears part of the complex Egyptian ideology concerning an idealised afterlife, where qualities of eternal vitality, regeneration and fertility were paramount, (Bird, 1986). The phrase, "ꜥnh-mꜣꜣ-hr", literally 'mirror that sees the face', is the term most often used by scribes in association with painted representations of mirrors. In some cases the word 'pr' or 'house' is used with 'ꜥnh' in mirror labels, suggesting perhaps a domestic use for certain types of mirror. Poignantly, other labels refer to 'a mirror for use during the course of the day'. The range of terminology used to describe different types of mirror provides a fleeting glimpse into domestic arrangements. Perhaps sturdier mirrors were placed in rooms where cosmetic application or hairdressing was carried out, with more finely crafted mirrors reserved for ritual purposes, *Figures 19-19a: Finely crafted and sturdier type mirrors, Brooklyn and Vienna. Photos: Nacho Ares.*

Although the term 'ꜥnh' was used to describe free-standing, encased and hand mirrors from the Middle Kingdom onwards, mirror nomenclature evolved for particular types of mirror. Five mirrors from Middle Kingdom Bersheh are

labeled, 'mirror in its house', referring to their elaborate casing. Other mirrors from Bersheh are named, 'the excellent one', and 'the divine one'. Whether this relates to the mirrors or is in reference to their owners is unclear! By the late Middle Kingdom, such fine distinctions are less frequently found in mirror labels, with all types of mirror mostly referred to simply as, 'ꜥnh', *Figure 20: Mirror case in form of an [hieroglyph]S34[/hieroglyph], Tomb of Tutankhamun, Cairo Museum. Photo: Nacho Ares.*

The label, 'ꜥnh m33 hr' ("a mirror to see the face") written as, [hieroglyph]S34-U3-D2[Hieroglyph/h] was used in all periods to describe different types of mirror, including encased mirrors, free-standing mirrors and hand mirrors of 'divine standard' or Hathoric design. *Figure 21: Encased mirror under chair, el-Kab, Tomb of Renni. Photo: Nacho Ares.*

Capturing Eternity

The concept that the mirror actively 'saw', rather than simply reflected a living image, occurs early in Egypt, (Lilyquist, 1979). The mirror's capacity to observe and to 'see' the face, capturing and maintaining the essence of the person reflected, is a conceptual variation which takes us into the ancient Egyptian mindset in a world we cannot easily comprehend. On some mirrors, the eye-sign [hieroglyph]D4[/hieroglyph] used in the label 'ꜥnh m33 hr', ('a mirror to see the face'), is drawn onto the disk or handle, forming the phrase, 'one who sees the face', 'face seer' or 'one who sees Ra'. Amuletic wadjet

eyes drawn on to paintings of mirrors seem to support this complex connotation.

Further intended meaning within the breadth of symbolism associated with mirrors, particularly with regard to the mirror as a device to capture life, is indicated through their use in ritual. In representations of dances in tomb scenes, mirrors along with wands and menats are often held aloft by young women performing in rituals associated with Hathor. One dance scene from the Sixth Dynasty tomb of Mereruka is of particular interest. Four dancing girls hold mirrors; three also hold ritual wands which terminate in a hand, *Figure 22: Ivory wand, Brooklyn Museum. Photo: Nacho Ares.* The fourth dancer (fourth from the left, *Figure 19* below), holds her own hand up close to her mirror. The dancer's purposeful pose seems to indicate her intent to capture the action of hand-clapping reflected in the mirror, in order to hold it there for eternity. *Figure 23: Detail, Plate 164, Lilyquist 1979, after Duell, 1938, Tomb of Mereruka.* The accompanying text reads, 'the beautiful name of Hathor, the hand of Atum', a reference to Hathor's crucial role in the regeneration of Atum, an early creator god. Other references to creation and renewal continue within the scene through the presence of harpists who play before the dancers. The harp is associated with intimate love songs and with the act of creation.

Conclusion

It is clear from this discussion that there is a range of meaning encoded within the ancient Egyptian mirror, and that it was desirable to possess one in the afterlife. While the symbolism bound to these 'objects of desire' is not fully understood, the range of ritual actions associated with mirrors includes resuscitation of the deceased, conservation of the appearance, a means of capturing and maintaining important ritual and as a depository of the soul, (Pavlov, 1910, Lilyquist, 1979).

With their complex iconography merely touched upon in this article, the next time you have the opportunity to stand before a display case filled with dulled, ancient mirrors, take a moment to consider the reflections captured within these once shining disks; reflections of Egypt, thousands of years ago.

Figure 24: Reflections caught in New Kingdom Mirror, Amended, B. O'Neill, Louvre Museum, Creative Commons, Original photo: Janmal

Barbara O'Neill

For a useful chronology of Egyptian mirrors from the Old Kingdom to the Roman era see: <http://www.digitalegypt.ucl.ac.uk/metal/mirrors.html>

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Figure 1: Cosmetic Box, EGY 75, Manchester Museum

Figure 2: Neolithic obsidian mirrors, Museum of Anatolian Civilisation, Ankara,
Photo by P. Gorgori

Figure 3: Badarian fertility figure BM EA 59648, British Museum

Figure 4: Stone Palette, Naqada II, EGY 4592, Manchester Museum

Figure 5: Mirror, Athens. Photo by Nacho Ares, diagram Barbara O'Neill

Figure 6: New Kingdom Mirror, Cairo. Photo by Nacho Ares

Figure 7: Ivory mirror handle, Bolton Museum

Figure 8: Early New Kingdom Mirror, EGY 5591, Manchester Museum

Figure 9: Twelfth Dynasty mirror of the Princess Sithathor, Cairo.

Figure 10: New Kingdom 'Hm' handled mirror, BM 22830, British Museum

Figure 11: Middle Kingdom mirror of Reniseneb, Metropolitan Museum, New
York

Figure 12: Lady of the House, Ipwet, British Museum.

Figure 13: Kawit hairdressing scene, Cairo Museum, G. Tassie

Figure 14: Bes Mirror Handle, Nineteenth Dynasty, Photo by P. Gorgori

Figure 15: Hathor mirror, Egyptian Museum, Cairo. Photo by Nacho Ares

Figure 16: Divine Standard Mirror, BM 2731, British Museum

Figure 17: Yellow painted mirror, Tomb of Renni: El Kab 7, Photo by Nacho
Ares

Figure 18: Twelfth Dynasty Mirror, Kahun EGY 189, Manchester Museum

Figure 19: Metal mirror, provenance Aswan, Brooklyn Museum NY. Photo by Nacho Ares

Figure 19a: Mirror, Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna. Photo by Nacho Ares

Figure 20: Mirror Case Tomb of Tutankhamun, Cairo, Photo by Nacho Ares

Figure 21: Mirror Case Tomb of Tutankhamun, Cairo Museum, Photo by Nacho Ares

Figure 22: Ivory Wand, Brooklyn Museum, NY. Photo by Nacho Ares

Figure 23: Mirror captures ritual action, Tomb of Mereruka after Lilyquist, 1979

Figure 24: Egyptian Mirrors, Louvre Museum, Paris. Photo by Janmal, amended by Barbara O'Neill