SMALL FINDS IN ANCIENT EGYPTIAN HOUSEHOLD. MULTIFUNCTIONALITY AND ACTIVITIES IN BUILDING B AT TELL EL-GHABA (NORTH SINAI)

Small Finds en una unidad doméstica del Antiguo Egipto. Multifuncionalidad y actividades en el Edificio B De Tell El-Ghaba (Norte de Sinaí)

EVA A. CALOMINO *

ABSTRACT This work is presented as a continuation of previous writings in which the concept of 'small finds' has been problematized and a review of the materials catalogued as small finds for Tell El-Ghaba archaeological site has been systematised and conducted. This urban settlement was occupied between the beginning of the Third Intermediate Period and the Early Saite Period. The focus of this paper is to study the small finds recovered in Building B considering their contextual relationships, characteristics, and possible meanings in a structure defined as domestic. The detailed contextual study of small finds in a domestic context such as Building B aims to contribute to the scarce studies of this matter in the eastern Delta.

Keywords: Small Finds, Building B, Domestic Space, Activities, Tell el-Ghaba (North Sinai, Egypt).

RESUMEN Este trabajo se presenta como continuación de investigaciones previas en las cuales se ha problematizado el concepto de "small finds" y se ha sistematizado y realizado una revisión de los materiales catalogados como pequeños hallazgos del sitio arqueológico Tell El-Ghaba. Este asentamiento urbano estuvo ocupado entre principios del Tercer Período Intermedio y el Período Saíta Temprano. El objetivo de este artículo es estudiar los pequeños hallazgos recuperados en el Edificio B considerando sus relaciones contextuales, características y posibles significados en una estructura definida como doméstica. El estudio contextual detallado de pequeños hallazgos en un contexto doméstico como el del Edificio B pretende contribuir a los escasos estudios sobre esta materia en el Delta oriental.

Palabras clave: Hallazgos especiales, Edificio B, Espacio Doméstico, Actividades, Tell el-Ghaba (Norte de Sinaí, Egipto)**.**

* Departamento de Prehistoria y Arqueología, Campus Universitario Cartuja s/n, Universidad de Granada, 18071 Granada. *evacalomino@ugr.es*

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INTRODUCTION

The Tell el-Ghaba archaeological site is located on the east of the Nile Delta (North Sinai, Egypt), close to the extinct Pelusiac branch (fig. 1a)[1]. It is an urban settlement that was occupied between the beginning of the Third Intermediate Period and the Early Saite Period (from the mid-10th century BC to the end of the 7th century BC)[2]. Given the socio-political context of the period and its location in the eastern Mediterranean —related to the ancient 'Way of Horus', a strategic bridge between the eastern Delta and the Levant — this site has become important to analyse the social, economic and military policies that the Egyptian state developed on its eastern edge, as well as the characteristics of the various areas and structures, their contexts and the activities that would have taken place there (e.g. Crivelli *et al*., 2002, 2017; Basílico and Lupo, 2006; Crivelli, 2006, 2015; Lupo and Kohen, 2010; Calomino and Lupo, 2014; Chauvin, 2015; Lupo, 2015a, 2017; Lupo *et al.,* 2017, 2019). Evidence suggests that, at least by the beginning of the 9th century BC the site had already had some degree of interaction with the trade network of the Eastern Mediterranean.

Between 1995-1999 and 2010, the Argentine Archaeological Mission performed excavation tasks in several sectors of the site (fig. 1b). Specifically, in field tasks performed in areas I, II and VI, various architectural structures were discovered in which typologies could be established (Lupo *et al.,* 2017). The stratigraphic study established the occupation levels of the excavated areas, and the typology of the Egyptian ceramic material was temporally linked to the different areas in the absence of other chronological indicators, such as significant epigraphic inscriptions (Lupo, 2015a; Lupo and Kohen, 2015). In addition, the studies of the imported ceramics adjusted and complemented the chronology of the site (Kohen, 2015). Likewise, the geophysical survey carried out in 2010 by the team of the Polish Centre for Archeology of the Eastern Mediterranean in Cairo, made it possible to detect a significant number of structures not yet excavated, as well as to recognize the limits of the site (Herbich, 2015).

In such systematic excavations, among other objects, numerous small finds were recovered, the study and review of which seeks to contribute to the understanding of

1. Located at 30° 58' north latitude and 32° 25' east longitude, between Tell Hebua to the west and Tell Kedua to the east, Tell el-Ghaba was strategically located on the narrow coastal ridge interposed between the Eastern Lagoon and the swamps of the Mediterranean coast and close to the Pelusiac branch of the Nile that links with the ports of Pelusium and the Mediterranean Sea (Crivelli *et al.,* 2002).

2. The first interpretations focused on the study of ceramic material led to the identification of Tell el-Ghaba as an Early Saite settlement, dated to the beginning of the Twenty-sixth Dynasty, related to the reigns of Psametik I (664-610 BC) (to the second half of his reign) and Psametik II (early in his reign). Subsequently, there was a proposal of an earlier and longer chronology for site occupations (mid-10th century BC to late 7th century BC), from the correlation of the stratigraphic study —which established the occupation levels of the excavated areas— and the typology of the egyptian pottery (Kohen, 2015; Lupo, 2015b; Lupo and Kohen, 2015).

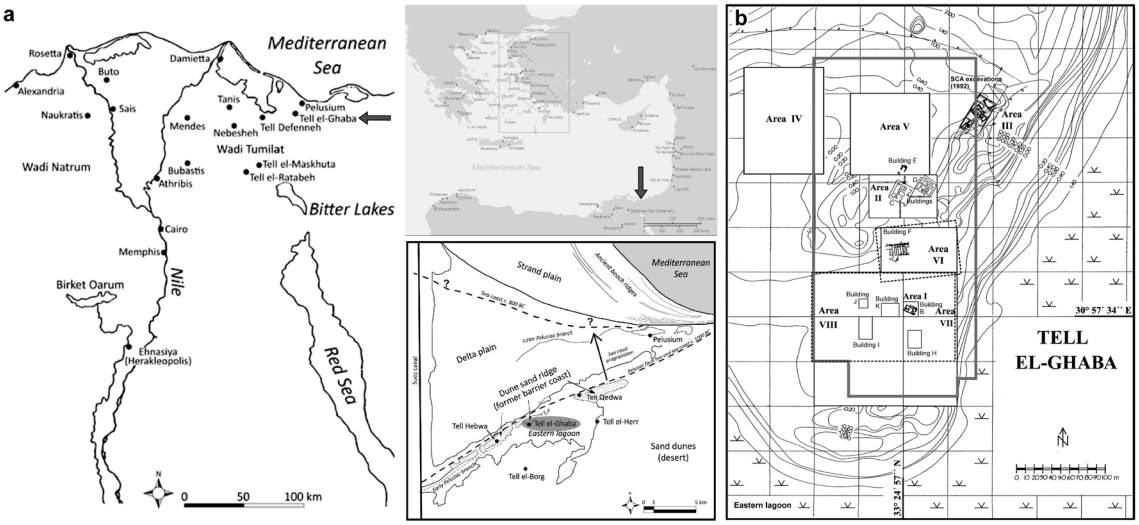

Fig. 1.—a) Map showing the location of Tell el-Ghaba in the eastern Mediterranean, in Lower Egypt and on palaeographic map of north-western Sinai (Lupo, 2015b:plate II); b) blueprint of Tell el-Ghaba showing excavation areas and excavated buildings; the area of the survey conducted by Tomasz Herbich in 2010 is outlined by a thick grey line (Herbich, 2015:fig. 1).

the functions that these objects would have had, to the types of activities they might have been involved in, to the understanding of the plastic-composite repertoire in its totality and to the interpretation of the themes, meanings and symbolism that they may have had.

Previously developed studies on Tell el-Ghaba materials suggest that the dominant activities in the structures were domestic (Calomino and Lupo, 2014; Calomino *et al.*, 2017; Crivelli, 2015; Crivelli *et al.*, 2017; Lupo *et al.*, 2017), such as food preparation, grain storage and consumption, and liquid conservation, among others. This interpretation has been reinforced by the data obtained from the analysis of ceramic assemblages and faunal remains (Cione, 2006a, 2006b; Cremonte, 2006; Lupo, 2006; Lupo and Cremonte, 2011, 2013; Calomino, 2015; Cione and de la Fuente, 2015). In turn, it has been proposed that a variety of activities were done in those spaces, which were then multifunctional, as it has been demonstrated in the intensive work focused on Building B (Lupo *et al.*, 2019). The pottery contexts and other finds recovered in Building B (Area I, Level IV) allow us to infer the relationship established between their residents and the domestic artefacts they handled on a daily basis. It should be noted that the idea of 'multifunctionality' has been applied to the use of residential spaces, based on the presence of domestic contexts that highlights the performance of several activities, such as storage activities, consumption, etc. We have especially proposed Building B at Tell el-Ghaba as a case study of an ancient Egyptian household (Lupo *et al.*, 2019).

In the spaces where these activities took place —in many cases rooms of the structures—, or related to them, a great variety of small finds were recovered —body ornaments, figurines, scarabs, among others— that were presented and analysed in various catalogues in publications about the site (Fuscaldo, 2005; Bacquerisse, 2015; Lupo, 2015a; Bacquerisse and Lupo, 2016), and that currently, from its reclassification, allow us to understand in greater depth the complexity of these domestic contexts (Calomino, 2021). These were not only found in well-defined contexts, but were also analysed under controlled laboratory conditions, subjected to consolidation and conservation processes according to the condition and state in which they were found (Arbolave, 2006), to later be recorded, drawn and photographed. This is not a minor issue, given that in Egyptian archaeology, the material remains of settlements have received comparatively less attention than those of temples and tombs (Giddy, 1999:9). The prioritisation in historical-archaeological research in Egypt of funerary contexts and architecture to the detriment of interest in the study of settlements and domestic contexts, prior to the 1970s, led to little care in recording the provenance of the finds related to everyday life (Shaw, 2020). Notwithstanding this, the current excavations in the settlements of the Egyptian Delta give priority to the reconstruction of the daily life of its inhabitants (*e.g.* Bietak, 2009, 2017; Mumford, 2010; Wilson, 2011, 2017; Müller, 2015; Leclère and Spencer, 2014; Spencer, 2016; Bader, 2018; Lupo *et al.*, 2017, 2019; Bennett, 2019; Jarmuzek *et al.*, 2019; Hoffmeier *et al.*, 2019), some of which have long-standing excavations and make us understand gradual processes of urbanisation in the long term, as is the case of Tell el-Dab'a (Bietak, 1981).

This work seeks to describe, complement and create ways of interpreting the activities from the study of small finds in this domestic space. This assemblage is being studied from a novel theoretical-methodological perspective, being classified into categories without referring to the functional question as the primary level of object classification. From these activities and the relationship of Building B's inhabitants with the materiality with which they interacted on a daily basis, the social and economic dynamics and the beliefs that would have been established in this space is analysed.

This work is presented as a continuation of previous (Calomino, 2018, 2021) writings in which the concept of 'small finds' has been problematized, a review of the materials catalogued as small finds for the site has been systematised and conducted, and a new analytical proposal was applied to characterise the sample of special finds selected from the classification of the objects in categories and subcategories without using the function as primary value of classification (taking the published data and the registry bases —field and laboratory registry sheets, databases, photographs and drawings—). In the first place, a compendium is presented about Building B, the spaces that form it, and the main findings and activities interpreted for each one (these topics are taken up in greater detail in the last section); secondly, the small finds recovered in the occupation floor of this structure are addressed, establishing the general characteristics of the sample, and

then emphasising the specific characteristics and meanings[3] of the objects. Finally, a reflection is proposed on the presence of these small finds in the rooms of this domestic structure and their relationship with other finds.

FINDINGS AND ACTIVITIES IN A MULTIFUNCTIONAL BUILDING

In area I, on the oldest level of occupation (level I) in which abundant fish remains and hearths (Crivelli, 2015:63) appear, different constructions with particular characteristics were erected (level II). A tent, Structure G, and a reed hut, Building A, appear, not strictly contemporary.

In this same area (level IV), in area II East (level II) and in area VI (level II), single-story mudbricks buildings were discovered, rectangular in shape and with a different interior layout: Building B, Building L and Building F, respectively. In area II, two solid mudbrick structures were also exhibited: Building C (area II West, level II) and Building D (area II East, level IV). Their characteristics correspond to those of the tower-houses, which made their profuse appearance in the Third Intermediate Period. Marouard (2014:127-128) characterises this type of construction as a multi-story, self-contained, private cell building.

In this work we analyse the small finds related to the contexts of Building B of area I. We will focus on those corresponding to the loci of its occupation (level IV), so as to interpret and infer the relationship of residents with the artefacts that they interacted with on a daily basis[4].

The study of the architecture and occupation of space in this structure, within the framework of interdisciplinary work, has allowed for a prolific set of presentations and publications (*e.g.* Basílico and Lupo, 2004; Calomino and Lupo, 2014; Calomino *et al.,* 2017; Crivelli, 2015; Lupo *et al.*, 2017); as well as the description of their contexts, mainly considering the ceramic assemblages, and the inferences made about them, in previous analyses, about the possible activities that would have taken place there (Calomino, 2015; Lupo *et al*., 2019).

After the Building A fire, Area I remained unoccupied for a while until a new building, without foundation trenches, was built directly over Locus 0289, formed as a result of the removal of old occupations (Crivelli, 2015:69-74). Building B (level IV) was built in mudbricks. It has a rectangular plan, measures 13 m by 9 m,

3. There is an extensive bibliography on amulets in ancient Egypt. In this work, symbology is mainly addressed for the epigraphic material and other objects from Tell el-Ghaba.

4. As for the use of the exterior space of Building B, we have no evidence in this regard. In 2010, the excavations partially found a mudbrick building, the Building K in area VIII, contemporary and adjacent to Building B. After that year, the fieldwork in Sinai was interrupted for reasons of public knowledge related to the political changes in the area, which made it impossible to access the materials again stored in the magazines and continue with the excavations, which did not allow verifying the relationship between the two buildings.

and its orientation is ESE-WNW. It comprises eight rooms, one of them understood as a deposit (fig. 2).

When found, the walls of Building B had only one to four courses of bricks, with a height of between 23 cm to 25 cm; only one external wall preserved five rows, reaching a height of between 40 cm and 50 cm.

It appears to have been remodeled several times, as suggested by the presence of a hearth inserted in an exterior wall (L0023), when it had partially collapsed and before its reconstruction; the different composition and size of the adobe bricks in the upper part of this same wall and of an internal wall (L0281); and the floor overlay present in room B-4 (Crivelli, 2015:74).

The identification of openings or bays, pivots and a threshold in limestone have given an idea of the circulation inside Building B (fig. 2). Room B-5 is the largest and could accessed from rooms B-3, B-4 and B-6. Perhaps it was also from room B-5 that it was possible to reach warehouse B-7. Another possibility is that

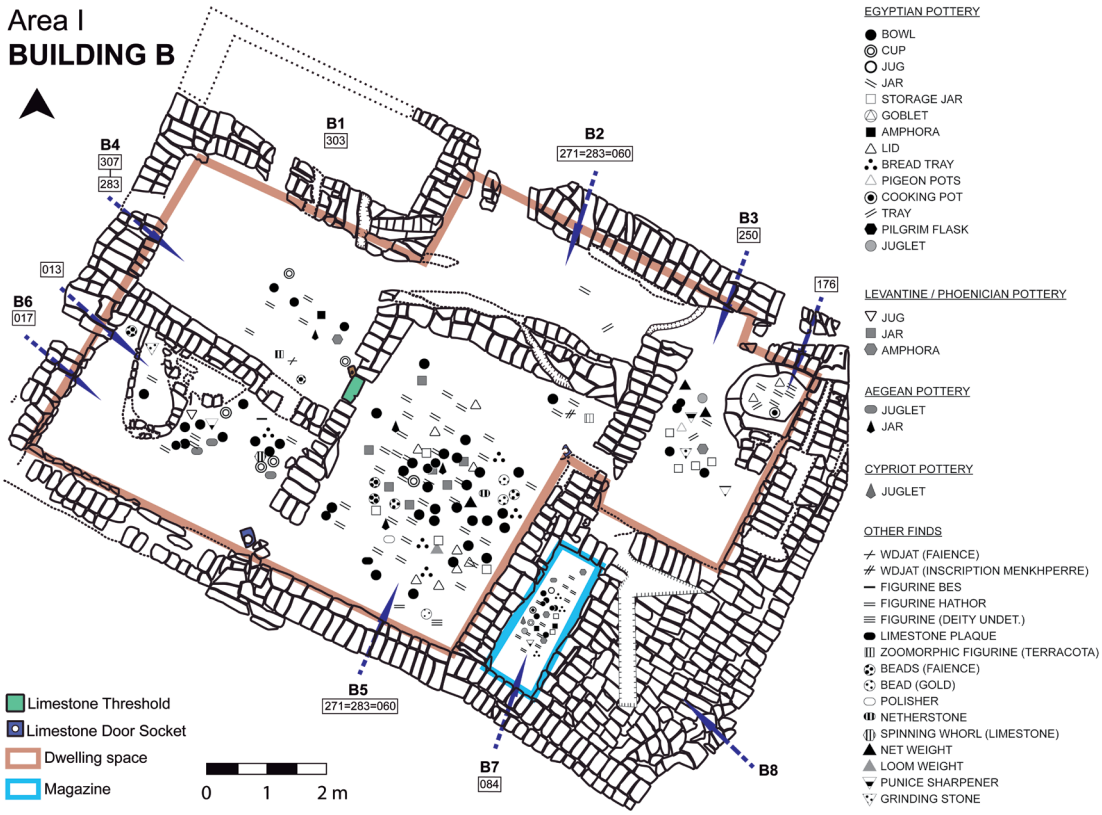

Fig. 2.—Top plan of Building B with detail of the location of the threshold and door socket and of the main objects found in the rooms (modified from Lupo *et al.,* 2017)

room B-7, small and with the presence of a large number of ceramic containers, may have been manipulated from above through a trapdoor.

Spaces B-1 and B-8 were seriously damaged by subsequent cutting, and their links to the rest of the building are unclear. It appears that B-1 was accessed only from room B-4. The exterior may have been accessed through room B-8, a space paved with mudbricks, similar to a porch.

The ceramic material found in Building B is abundant, prevailing that manufactured in Nile clay, with some examples in marl from Upper Egypt. There is also the presence of a small number of imported vessels, probably from Phoenicia and Cyprus. The small finds include an important variety of types —which have been described as figurines and statuettes, personal ornaments, fishing tools, among others. Table 1 summarises the characteristics, main findings and activities for the rooms of Building B.

It has been interpreted that this building would have been the residence of an extended family that inhabited it perhaps for several generations, as evidenced by its restorations (Lupo *et al.*, 2017). The ceramic assemblage has been associated mainly with activities of food preparation and consumption, storage, and the conservation and transport of liquid and solid substances (Calomino, 2015).

TABLE 1
TABLE WITH MAIN CHARACTERISTICS AND FINDINGS BY ROOM OF BUILDING B

Room	*Floor*	*Measures (m)*	*Main Characteristics and Finds*
B-1	L0303	4 × 1.5	The N and W walls are almost destroyed. The floor (L0303) revealed human frequentation with the presence of charcoal and ashes. Accessed only from B-4. Possibly a private space, with temporary occupations, aimed at private activities or rest.
B-2	L0271=L0283=L0060	4 × 1.3	Possibly private activities. Pottery: egyptians jar and tray; phoenician amphora. Others: fish bones.
B-3	L0250=L0175=L0280	3.5 × 2.1	Include the oven L0176 with a mudbrick platform built as part of the external wall L0179. Beside the S side of oven L0176 is a mudbrick platform. Some mudbricks forming part of this feature are almost white, in contrast with the rest of the fabric, so that minor refurbishing seems to have taken place here. Pottery: egyptian bowls, cooking pots, jars, storage jars, pigeon pots, trays, lids, juglets and dipper juglet (Nile clay, Marl F and Marl A4); levantine amphora; cypriote black on red juglet. Others: punice sharpener; grinding stone; silurid fish and molluscs. This space would have been related to the hot and cold preparation of food and substances, the transfer of contents and consumption.

Room	*Floor*	*Measures (m)*	*Main Characteristics and Finds*
B-4	L0271=L0283=L0060	4 × 2.5	Disturbed in part by ditches (perhaps the remains of later structures). filled by L0029 and L0038. A superposition of floors was noted, the later one truncating the earlier one. The older floor (L0283) was covered by muna (clay) L0307, which is another floor preparation, and on which the floor (L0306) was formed by human frequentation. Pottery: egiptyan bowls, jars, cups, tray, lid and amphora (Nile clay and Marl F); levantine amphorae. Others: zoomorfic figurine (terracotta); beads (faience, alabaster); fragments (faience, quartzite, lead). Would have been possible in this space: small-scale storage or conservation, transport and transfer of content and consumption. The objects are in the center of the structure and close to the access with B-5.
B-5	L0271=L0283=L0060	5 × 3.4	Larger room accessed by different rooms, B-4, B-6 and B-3, as illustrated by the presence of pivots and a limestone threshold. The floor (L0294) was prepared. Pottery: egiptyan bowls, jars; cups, storage jars, bakery trays, lids, amphora imitation torpedo-type (Nile clay, Marl A4 and Marl F); levantine amphorae; cypriote juglets black on red. Others: fish bones; wdjat 'Menkheperre' (faience); figurine deity undet. (faience); anthropomorphic (dieties in faience) and zoomorphic figurines (terracotta); beads (faience, mollusk); loom wieghts; net wieghts; netherston (quartzite); slags and fragments (bronze, faience, alabaster, limestone, granite, iron). A wide range of domestic activities would have been developed away from the smoke from the ovens, and leaving the connective spaces free. Much of the social interaction within this dwelling would have taken place in this room. N=77 vessels.
B-6	L0017	3.9 × 2.6	Oven L0013 (Figure 5) and an adjacent surface (plausibly for supporting vessels) were attached to wall L0012. Both installations were made in mudbrick and covered with plaster. A large pot was still resting in situ on this fire feature. Entrance area cleared of objects. Pottery: egiptyan bowls, cups, jars, storage jars, trays, torpedo-type amphorae (Nile clay and Marl A4); cypriote black on red juglets. Others: complete silurid fishes; smussel shells; Bes figurine (faience); scarabs (faience, steatite); beads (gold, faience); wdjat; gaming piece; fragment (limestone). Presence of vessels in situ in the oven and on the adjacent platform (local and imported ceramics) allow us to think of certain activities that could have taken place in this space: transportation, cooking, preparation and consumption of food.

Room	*Floor*	*Measures (m)*	*Main Characteristics and Finds*
B-7	L0084	2.4 × 0.9	Storage room or magazine in which a set of pottery vessels was found in situ. Its floor (L0084) was formed with reused mudbricks, leveling it with the floor (L0017) of B-6. Access may have been through a trap door. The ceramic material includes local and imported vessels, generally complete and of different types. Pottery: egiptyan bowls, deep bowls, cups, jars, lids, cooking pot, juglets, storage jars, bakery trays (Nile clay and Marl A4); levantine jars; cypriote juglets. Others: purnice sharpener; faience fragments. In this storage deposit, on a high and low scale, the substances would have been acquired and transferred to other rooms.
B-8		c. 2 × 3	Bad state of preservation. It seems to have been a porch with a mudbrick floor. The entrance of Building B could have been here. Pottery: egiptyan jars and tray.

The small finds of Building B: main characteristics

As previously mentioned, the review of the set of small finds from Tell el-Ghaba has been approached from the systematisation of the total sample in an analytical-interpretative basis prepared for this purpose (Calomino, 2021:252-257), which allowed the advancement in the analysis of the functionality/performance of these according to their characteristics, registration and context. Likewise, this proposal has prioritised the classification of objects without using the function —associated with each concept and its 'nature'— as the primary categorization value. On the contrary, it is from the general characteristics and their relationships that it is possible to infer a multiplicity of roles for these objects in their contexts.

The set of variables considered to review and reclassify the objects, mainly the Registry, Context and Characteristics data proposed in Calomino 2021, are in this work[5].

It is worth mentioning that in order to make the primary classification in our analytical-interpretative basis, from all the objects in the database we exclude those whose study has required particular methodologies and were already published as part of other categories. The general database for Tell el-Ghaba recorded 964 small finds (as a field record category and considered 'finds' in the laboratory record)[6].

5. The Record includes an individual numbering —as the entry unit is per object— and the references to the base documentation. Context data refers to the information of the Area, Grid, Locus, Level, Structure or Building where it was found. The Characteristics integrate a set of variables that allow an exhaustive description of each object (morphology, material, dimensions, colour, manufacturing techniques, features, thematic compositions, condition, alterations, and state of conservation).

6. It is possible to recognize different moments in the investigation, related to each other, and

Approximately 365 out of all of these were detailed in the catalogue (Bacquerisse, 2015; Lupo, 2015a). Other special finds, at a second level of separation, were treated in specific analyses, such as remains and lithic instruments, net and loom weights, weapons and fishing equipment. Slag, other debris and fragments were not included in the works. From this review, a total of seven hundred and seven (N=707) items were established for the entire site, whose main characteristics were already published (Calomino, 2021). For the classified small finds sample, seeking to include the largest number of findings recovered from all the field and laboratory work, not only the published data was considered, but also the original registration documentation —Access database, registration records field and laboratory, photographs and drawings. We mainly focused on the control of objects that had previously been described under the categories of: personal objects, religion, recreation and figurative art —as ascribed functions.

Out of the total number (N=707), 68.88% (487:707) have been found in Area I. A number of 379, of these 487 finds, are related to lower levels, contemporary and subsequent to Building B. Specifically, 67 (N=67) small finds correspond to the occupation level of this structure (level IV), including loci related to floors, combustion structures, external floors adjacent to walls, walls, feature fills, among others (table 2).

Considering the total number of small finds found in Building B, 30% of the objects are complete (20:67), and 70% are fragmented (47:67) (fig. 3). Out of those 47, approximately 77% [36] present less than 50% of the piece and 23% [11] more than half of the piece (fig. 4).

All complete objects have maximum dimensions of 3cm long by 3.20 cm high by 1.70 cm wide and diameters between 0.30 and 1.10 cm and the perforations usually measure between one and two mm. The main alterations consist of breaks and weathering. In the entire sample, the general state of conservation is poor

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in some simultaneous cases, in which the 'small finds' category is used. In this sense, and taking the case of Tell el-Ghaba into account (it has been decided to take the known stages for the site under study, and that in general, are similar for other analyses of archaeological sites to along the Egyptian Delta), it is possible to recognize its use in: a. record of findings —'finds'— in situ in the squares or excavation areas —where it is sought to establish the locus of origin and contextual relationship —and complementary registration forms are used to the of locus (prepared based on manuals and proposals for excavation and documentation and previous knowledge about fieldwork and registration of objects mainly in Near East); b. the registration and graphic documentation (photograph and illustration) of such objects —with their field references— in the laboratory, in order to relieve the materials in detail according to the specific pre-established record sheets, including the tasks of necessary restoration and conservation; c. the preparation of digital databases according to such records; d. the preparation of publications and catalogues according to these databases and prior registrations —this process may entail a subdivision into other categories, since that some objects are separated for a specific analysis and will vary according to need of each study, the research questions and of each publication—; e. the selection of objects likely to be exhibited in museums or transferred by the Supreme Council of Antiquities (SCA) (Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities) (government agency responsible of the regulation of archaeological excavations in Egypt and of the conservation and protection of all ancient objects).

TABLE 2
TABLE OF FINDINGS BY LOCUS ACCORDING TO MORPHOLOGY (LEVEL IV)

LOCUS	*DESCRIPTION*	*N.º FIND*	*MORPHOLOGY*												
			Figurines				*Flat-based Lentoids*			*Plane*			*Circular*		*Undeter-mined*
			Anthropomorphic		*Zoomorphic*		*Figurative-Zoomorphic*			*Wdjat*		*Gaming Pieces*	*Type*	*Geometric shape*	
			Type	*Male/ Female / Deity*	*Type*	*Animal/ Deity*	*Type*	*Dorsal*	*Base*	*Type*	*Composition*	*Origen*			
0017=0018	Floor Room B-6	0008											bead	segmented	
		0009	male deity	*Bes*											
		0010A													undeter-mined
		0019					scarab	X. I / 5.a	inscription						
0033	Irregular natural fill toward external wall L0023 W-external area NW	0143											bead	spherical	
		0033A								right eye					
		0143 (2)											bead	spherical	
		0360										recut			
		1072											bead	irregular	
0034	Human frequentation Room B-4	0140											bead	spherical	
0038	Non intentional fill of ditch in B-4	0137											bead	lozenge	
		0138													undeter-mined
0046	Human frequentation Room B-6	0031A								undeter-mined					
		0083					scarab	8D.11/ other	figurative						
		0198											bead	discoidal	
		1024										recut			

0047=0233	Wall Room B-4	0939													undeter- mined
		0380											bead	discoidal	
		0519											bead	discoidal	
		0404													undeter- mined
0060=0271=0283	Floor Room B-4	0459			mammal	undeter- mined									
0060=0271=0283	Floor Room B-5	0364											bead	cylindrical	
		0326													undeter- mined
		0445													undeter- mined
		0457													undeter- mined
		0472			mammal	undeter- mined									
		0486	female deity	*Hathor*											
		0488													undeter- mined
		0490													undeter- mined
		0533	deity	undeter- mined											
		0762													undeter- mined
		0762 (2)													undeter- mined
		0762 (3)													undeter- mined
		0766													undeter- mined

0060=0271=0283	Floor Room B-5	0766 (2)													undeter-mined
		0788													undeter-mined
		1000								right eye	inscription-linear				
		0430			undeter-mined										
		0579													undeter-mined
		0529											bead	tube	
		0531											bead	segmented	
		0554								undeter-mined					
		0754													undeter-mined
		0754 (2)													undeter-mined
0278	Hearth Room B-5	0385											bead	irregular	
0285	External area N-Natural fill and human frequentation	0461											bead	drum	
0326	External area S-Hearth	0636					scarab	undeter-mined	non-figurative						
0343	External area S-Non intentional fill of pit	0671											bead	discoidal	
		0678											bead	segmented	
0068	External area S-Fill of pit	0100													undeter-mined
0096	External area S	0099													undeter-mined

0113	Non intentional fill of pit-Room B-5	0200											bead	cylindrical	
		0462			mammal	baboon									
0126	Debris layer Room B-5	0344											bead	irregular	
		0406													undeter-mined
0183	External area S-preparation of floor	0284										recut			
		0296													undeter-mined
		0205											bead	spherical	
		0208											bead	irregular	
0222	Room B-3	0290													undeter-mined
0246	External area S-Natural fill & human frequentation	0300											bead	spherical	
0247	External area S-Natural fill and human frequen-tation	0339													undeter-mined
0264	External area SE	0403											bead	cylindrical	
		0415													undeter-mined
		0448													undeter-mined
		0452													undeter-mined
		0465													undeter-mined

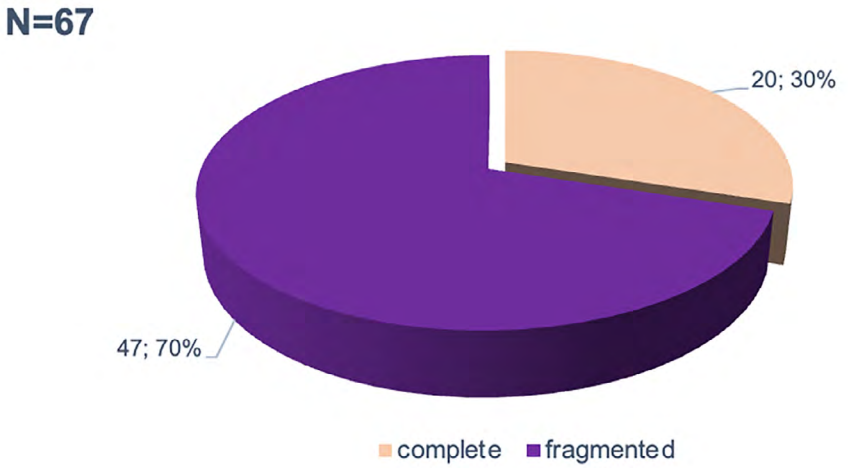

Fig. 3.—Percentage and frequency of complete and fragmented small finds.

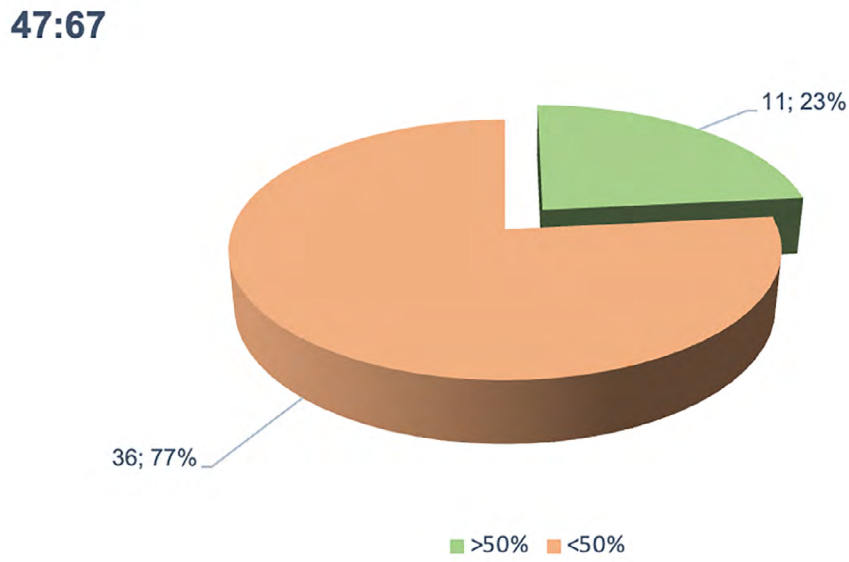

Fig. 4.—Percentage of objects with more and less than 50% completeness within the fragments.

(51% | 34:67), mainly related to the low degree of integrity of the objects; and we also found cases with good and fair preservation (good: 24% | 16:67, fair: 25% | 17:67) (fig. 5).

According to morphology: a. 42% (28:67) have indeterminate morphology. It can be slag and other types of debris and fragments of objects (of which, given their low percentage of completeness, a total or complete morphology cannot be identified); b. 33% correspond to circulars (22:67), dealing exclusively with beads;

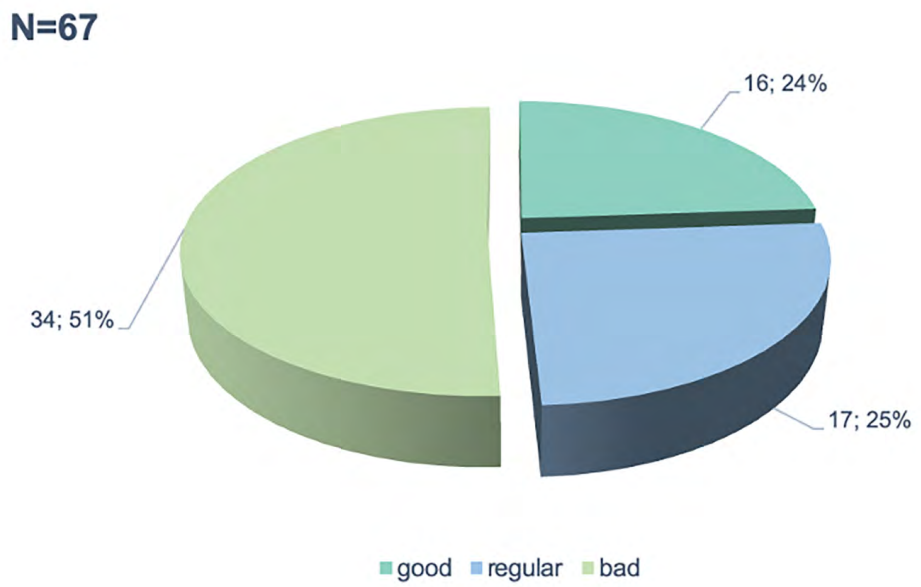

Fig. 5.—Percentage and frequency of small finds materials according to state of conservation.

c. 10% (7:67) correspond to planes, two indeterminate *wdjat*, three right *wdjat*, and three game pieces, and another 10% (7:67) to figurines; d. in smaller proportions are the flat-based lentoids —three scarabs— (3:67 | 5%) (fig. 6).

Small finds are made from various rocks and minerals, clay, metals, and molluscs (fig. 7). Faience predominates, in approximately 48% (32:67), over almost all the morphological categories. As we will see, according to these types, the manufacturing techniques used will be different. If we do not take into account objects of indeterminate morphology (which could include a large number of remains of faience and bronze slag), faience continues to predominate and other objects made with recycled or non-recycled ceramics and molluscs, little or not modified (fig. 8).

Regarding manufacturing techniques, 49% (33:67) of the small finds were moulded (with various types of moulds). 27% was melted (18:67). 6% (4:67) were used without or with little modification, specifically in those of circular morphology and 18% was made by hand — through modelling (two cases), recycling and trimming of sherds (three cases), abrasion and polishing (one case) and carving and polishing (six cases) (12:67) (fig. 9).

In general, there is variety in terms of techniques for the different morphological categories, not associating a form with a particular type, although some techniques appear to be specific for certain categories, such as modelling for figurines, which in turn is associated with use of clay for its preparation (fig. 10).

As we have seen, the largest number of small finds are made of faience (n=32), but it presents, in all morphological categories, a wide range of colours that include shades of blue, brown, red, yellow, grey, and green (fig. 11).

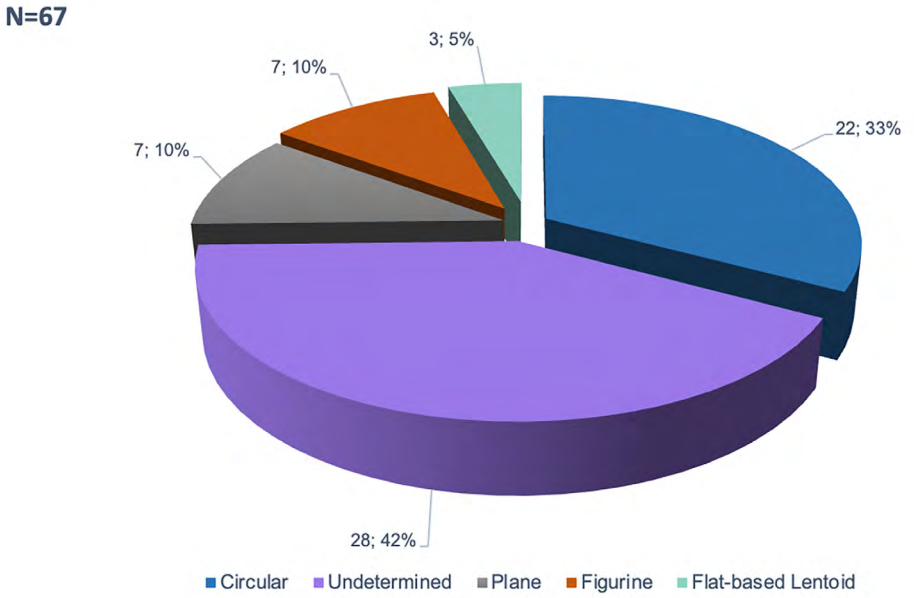

Fig. 6.—Percentage and frequency of small finds according to morphology.

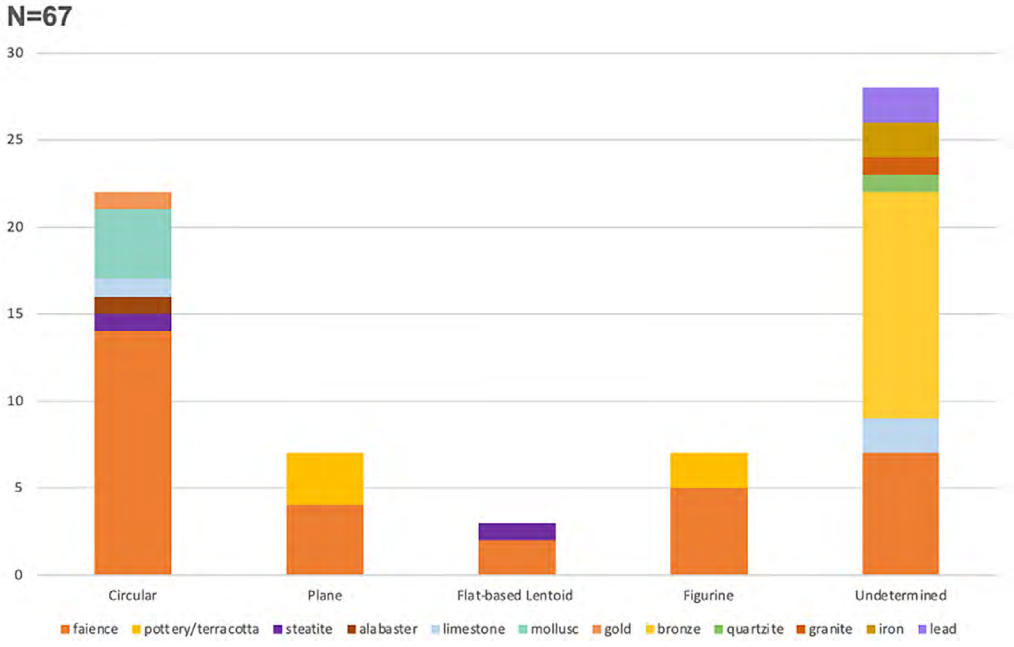

Fig. 7.—Frequency of small finds materials according to morphology.

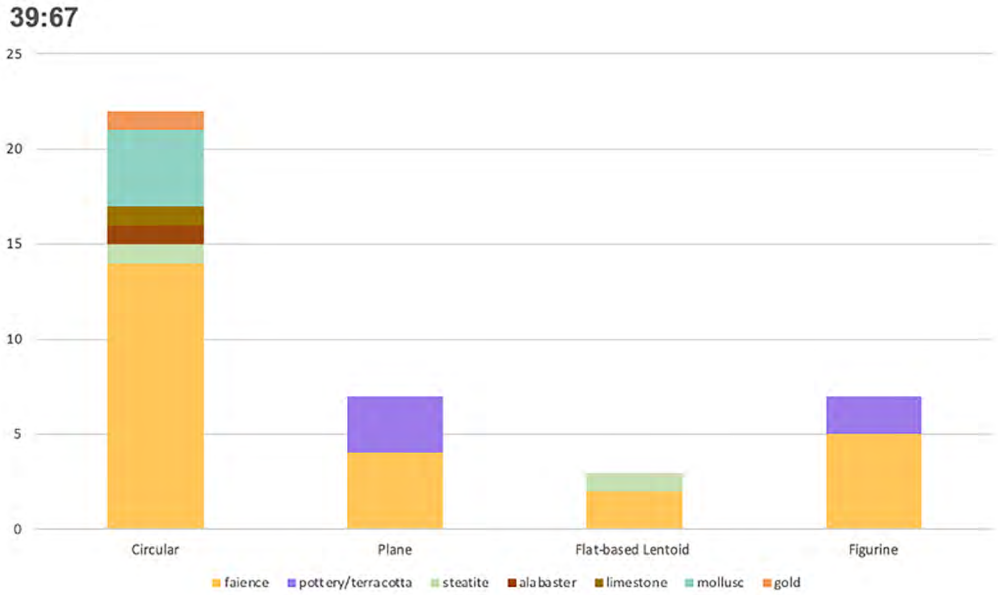

Fig. 8.—Frequencies of small finds by morphology (excluding undetermined).

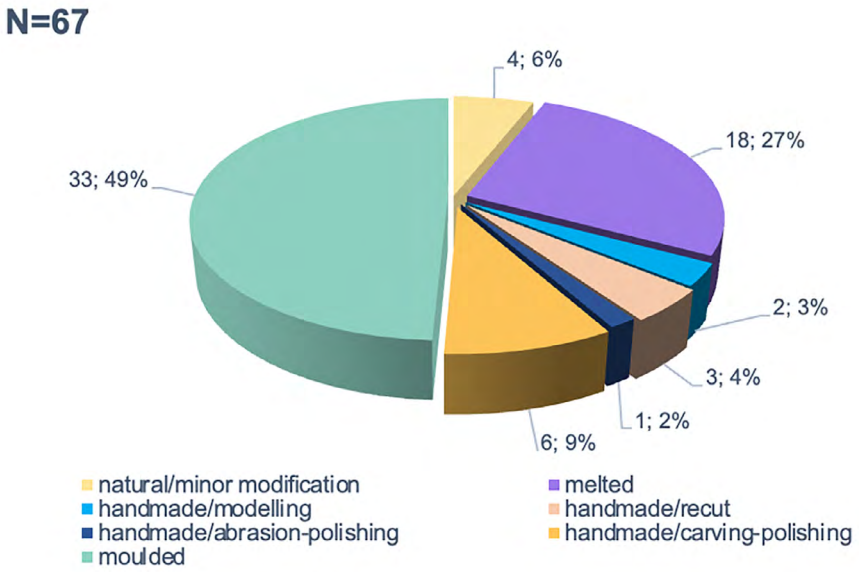

Fig. 9.—Frequencies and percentages of small finds materials according to manufacturing techniques.

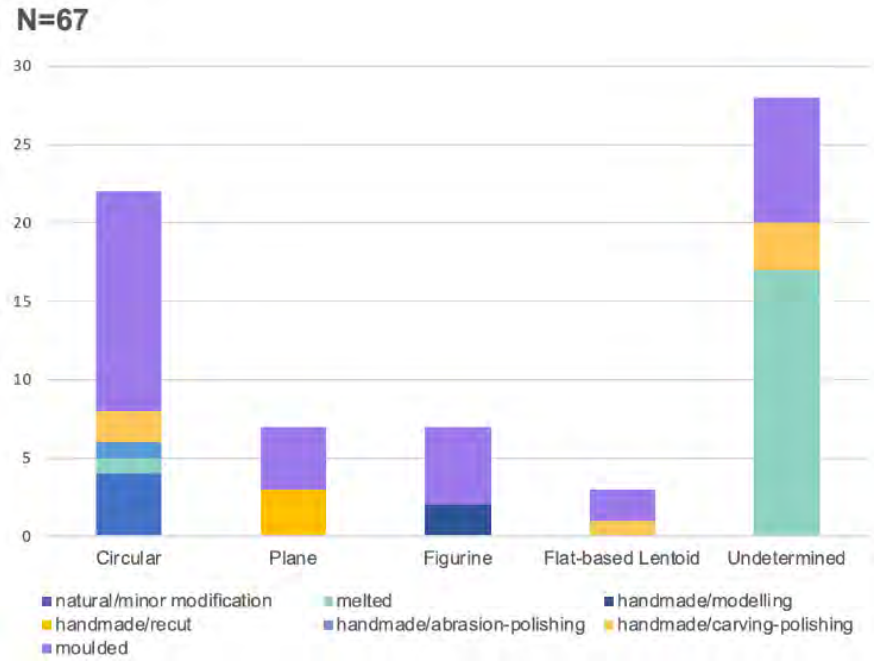

Fig. 10.—Frequencies of small finds manufacturing techniques according to morphology.

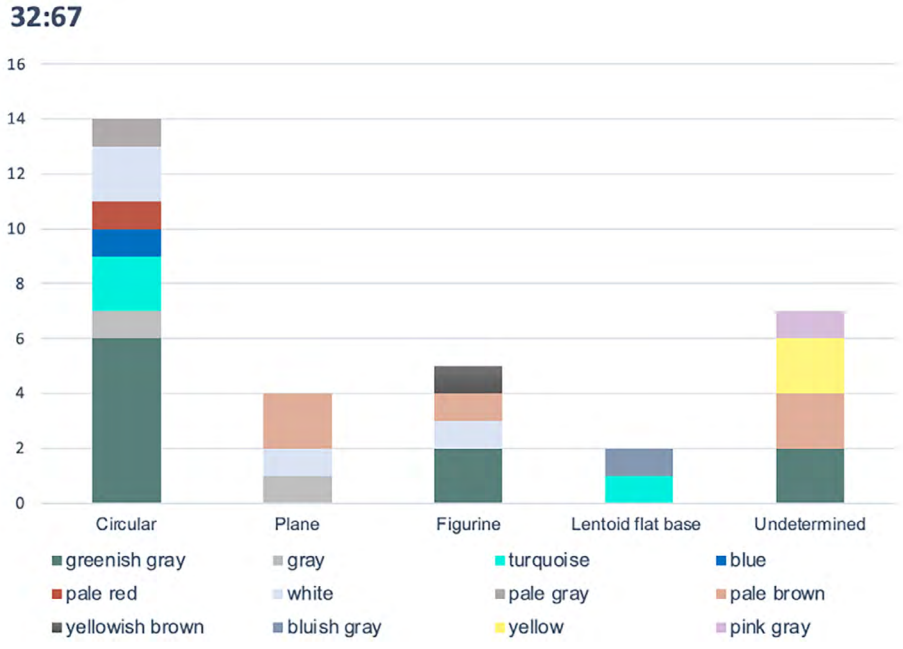

Fig. 11.—Frequencies of colours of small finds in faience according to morphology.

The small finds recovered at Tell el-Ghaba present four main types of features: transverse or longitudinal perforations, a vertical back loop, and a hole in the base. We can add the presence of flat bases to these (as part of the morphological structure in the lentoids with flat base and as a base for figurines) and the rear pillars include a clear possibility that these objects can be supported as part of the furniture of the rooms (Calomino, 2021). Among the special findings of Building B, 41.79% present some of these features (28:67), 71% longitudinal perforation (20:28) (mostly simple and artificial, only in 1 case the perforations are multiple —three— and in another natural), 29% transverse perforation (8:28) (fig. 12). Both circular and plane have longitudinal and transverse perforations, the figurines with transverse perforation and the lentoids exclusively with longitudinal perforation (fig. 13).

Regarding the figurines, we must also consider that in the spaces between the parts of the body, zoomorphic or anthropomorphic, the objects could be linked and held with strings or other elements, making the figurines versatile in terms of these functions (Calomino, 2021). As we have seen, the main utilities related to perforations, holes and/or rings/loops integrate threading, crimping, suspension, fastening and/or fitting, without being exclusive in many cases. An object could have had various roles throughout its life history, for example, integrating different items such as necklaces or bracelets.

The small finds of Building B: specific characteristics and meanings

As we have seen, several of the morphologies identified in the general sample are present in the various rooms of Building B. Within these morphologies we find

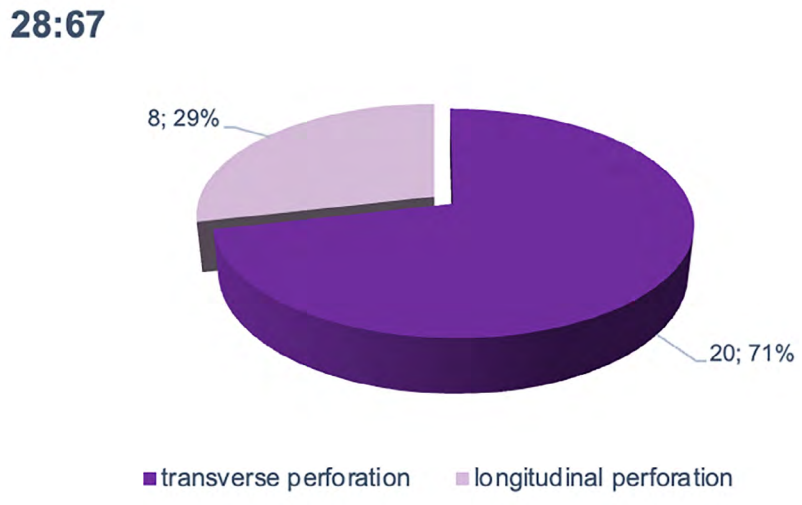

Fig. 12.—Frequencies and percentages of features types in small finds.

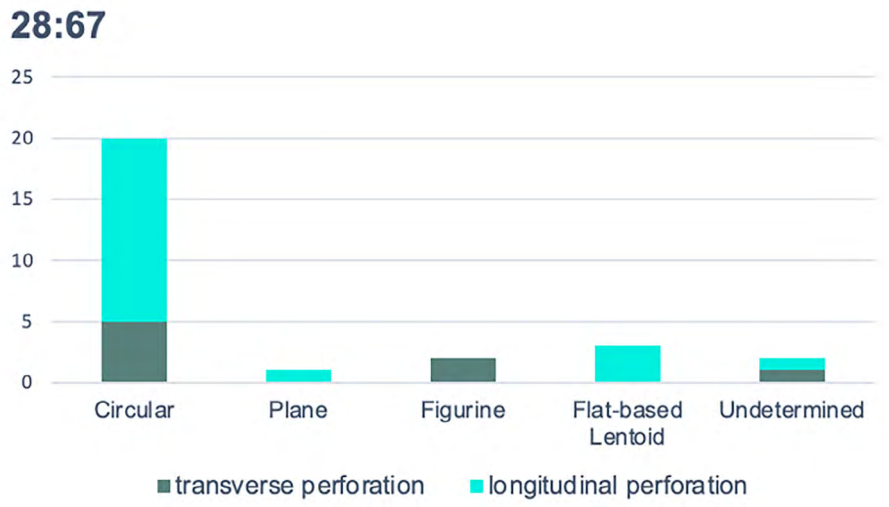

Fig. 13.—Types of features of small finds according to morphology.

specific characteristics of the objects that are related to their functions —in a broad sense, integrating roles and meanings— and to the activities carried out in the various spaces.

Circular morphology items exclusively integrate beads (fig. 14): a. three cylindrical (F0364, F0200, F0403) (Fuscaldo, 2005:127), one drum (F0461) (Bacquerisse, 2015:372), one tube (F0529) (Fuscaldo, 2005:127; Bacquerisse, 2015:371), four discal (F0380, F0198, F0519, F0671) (Bacquerisse, 2015:371), three spherical (F0143, F0143 (2), F0140) (Bacquerisse, 2015:371,374), and two segmented (F0531, F0678) (Fuscaldo, 2005:127; Bacquerisse, 2015:371,373), made in mould with faience; b. two spherical beads and one lozenge, made by carving, abrasion and polishing soapstone, limestone and alabaster respectively (F0300, F0205, F0137) (Fuscaldo, 2005:93,100; Bacquerisse 2015:371,375-376); c. a segmented one made of gold (F0008) (Fuscaldo, 2005:98; Bacquerisse, 2015:375), formed by eight internal and eight external rows of spherical shaped beads; and d. four irregular beads, one exploiting a gastropod and three molluscs —*Monnetaria annulus*— (F0385, F0208, F1072, F0344 respectively) (Fuscaldo, 2005:93; Bacquerisse, 2015:377-378; Cione *et al.,* 2015:26).

The figurines (fig. 14) comprise three anthropomorphic and three zoomorphic figures. Among the first we find three deities, with the exception of an indeterminate one moulded in faience (F0533) (Fuscaldo, 2005:126) that has been identified: a. a masculine deity recognized as *Bes* simple (F0009) (Fuscaldo, 2005:98; Bacquerisse, 2015:361; Bacquerisse and Lupo, 2016:143-144) with a crown of feathers, made in faience with mould, greenish grey in colour, with transverse perforation in the back at neck height; and b. a female deity representing *Hathor* (F0486) (Fuscaldo, 2005:126; Bacquerisse, 2015:364) moulded in faience featuring a crown of feathers

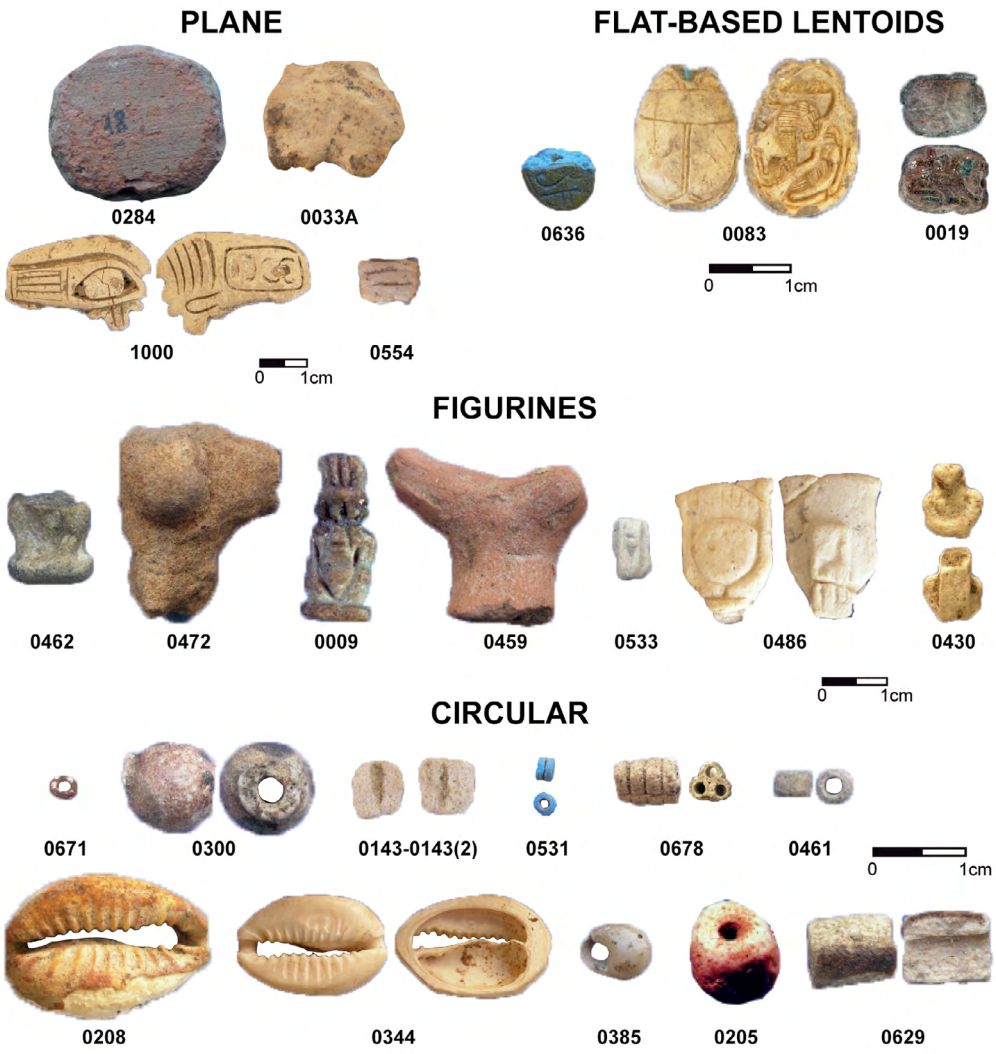

Fig. 14.—Photographs of small finds —by morphology— found at Building B (Argentine Archaeological Mission).

framed by the horns and surmounted by the sun disk, a dorsal pillar, and a transverse perforation at the bottom of the pillar. Among the latter, an indeterminate animal (F0430) and three mammals have been described, specifically two indeterminate mammals (F0459, F0472) (Fuscaldo, 2005:127; Bacquerisse, 2015:359) modelled in clay (one of them could represent the head of a jackal) and a baboon (F0462) moulded in faience.

The plane objects (fig. 14) integrate two indeterminate *wdjat* (F0554, F0031A) (Fuscaldo, 2005:126; Pereyra, 2009:262; Bacquerisse, 2015:365-366), two right

wdjat (F0033A, F1000) (Fuscaldo, 2005:23,98; Bacquerisse, 2015:365) and three game pieces (F0284, F0360, F1024) (Fuscaldo, 2005:93; Bacquerisse, 2015:379-380). As for the latter, they were made by reusing ceramic fragments (by cutting and smoothing fragments of pots made around them) and do not present compositions. The *wdjat* are made of faience with a mould and some of their details would have been finished by hand —by incision and/or addition of colour—, in one of them (F1000) a mixed composition incised on the reverse has been recognized, composed of a cartouche inscription reading '*Menkheperre*' and six linear motifs.

The flat-based lentoids (fig. 14) are represented by figurative zoomorphic objects, they are three scarabs with longitudinal perforations, two of them moulded in faience (F0019 y F0636) (Pereyra, 2009:264-266; Lupo, 2015c:387-388) and another carved, polished and drilled in steatite (F0083) (Pereyra, 2009:264; Lupo, 2015c:387-388). Object F0019 presents a dorsal scheme X.I / 5.a[7] (rounded prothorax, with a simple line separating the elytra at an angle) and an inscription on its base (Rosso *et al.,* 2002; Pereyra, 2009; Lupo, 2015c; Calomino, 2021:table 2) that evokes themes of royal and divine iconography, whose meaning has been associated with the demarcation of status, the search for assimilation of divine power and/or royalty. The scarab 0083 also presents a composition on its base (in this case engraved or carved) that evokes these themes and meanings from figurative motifs (Rosso *et al.,* 2002; Pereyra, 2009; Lupo, 2015c; Calomino, 2021:table 2) and a dorsal scheme characterised by a rounded prothorax with a line separating the simple elytra with little curvature, dividing line between double elytra (8D.11) and other characteristic features. Object F0636 has an indeterminate dorsal outline and non-figurative motifs incised on its base (volute and linear) that are recognized for the Levant and are recognized as a common theme for the Near East in the period in question (Lupo, 2015c; Calomino, 2021:table 2).

Some of the mentioned small finds have been considered as amulets (see definition *e.g.* Petrie, 1914:1-2; Andrews, 1994:6; López, 2007:49,58-59; Kovács, 2008; Wilkinson, 2008:16; López *et al.,* 2014:13-14; Fritz, 2021:9), objects of personal adornment and recreational pieces (Calomino, 2021). Bacquerisse, focusing on the form and not the function of these objects, has considered that 'most of the items classified as figurines and statuettes and as objects of personal adornment seem to have had, an amuletic or cultic value in addition to their ornamental use'. (Bacquerisse, 2015:357).

Studies concerning amulets and the role of religion at Tell el-Ghaba were conducted (*e.g.* Lupo, 2015a). Religious observance in domestic contexts must have been an extended practice. This is reflected by the occurrence of amulets of various sorts, fertility statuettes, inscribed plaquettes with the name of the god *Amun* and votive offerings. Most of these objects served an apotropaic function, protecting

7. The classification and description of the dorsal scheme of objects with a flat-based lentoid morphology is carried out considering mainly the proposals of Tufnell, 1984 —retaking Ward, 1978—, Lupo, 2015c and Velázquez *et al.,* 2015.

people against evil and ensuring women's fertility and childbirth (Bacquerisse, 2015; Bacquerisse and Lupo, 2016).

Among the small finds found in Building B, it is possible to recognize several objects that, due to their specific characteristics, would have denoted, possessed and acted an amulet value. The 'amuletic value' is taken as a possible role and not as an ascribed function (the concept 'amulet' to refer to the object works as a label that integrates a function amulet)[8]. Among these we find items considered as 'special'[9] due to their material and origin, their general figurative morphology and the thematic compositions of their fronts/backs and dorsal/base schemes (inscriptions, figurative motifs, non-figurative and mixed motifs). Such is the case of the beads made with mollusc *cowries —Monetaria annulus—*, the figurines of *Bes* y *Hathor*, the scarabs and the *wdjat*.

The beads made with *cowries* have a porcelain appearance, one had its back removed through scraping (F0344), and two others (F0208 and F1072) were first drilled with a pointed instrument and then enlarged and given the desired shape and angle. the hole with a sharp tool made of shell, stone, or metal (Cione *et al.,* 2015). They appear to come from the Red Sea, transported in their natural state and being modified *in situ*. For ancient Egypt, it is proposed that due to their appropriate size, their distant provenance, outstanding beauty, and the fact that they are not spiky but have a rather massive construction, *cowries* were appreciated as ornaments or jewellery (in fact their shape was copied in other metallic materials such as electrum and gold). In turn, they seem to have been desired beads and earrings for their symbolic importance[10] given by their figurative appearance similar to a female vulva (related to sexuality and fertility) or a half-closed human eye or a serpent's head (Cione *et al.,* 2015). In this way, *cowries* were mainly worn to protect against the 'evil eye' or to secure female fertility and fecundity (Andrews, 1994). It was used as an amulet throughout the history of pharaonic Egypt and considered that they had powers to protect the intimate parts of women and favour their fertility, hence the girdles formed by lined natural shells (López Grande, 2007:64).

The figurine F0009 represents god *Bes* with the four feather crown standing on a rectangular platform with the arms along the body (the right one is broken). No facial features can be distinguished because the piece is too eroded (Fuscaldo, 2005:98; Bacquerisse, 2015:361; Bacquerisse and Lupo, 2016:143-144). It presents characteristics of the Saite Period, and like other *Bes* found at the site, it carries no knives, musical instruments, or snakes. In Tell el-Ghaba, they were used as amulets by its population and that they all shared the apotropaic character and function.

8. For a discussion of this topic see Calomino, 2021:24.

9. The 'special' character can be given by the total amount of each type of objects in relation to others in their contexts (for example, scarcity), their characteristics —material, thematic, manufacturing, etc.— the presence of images, due to their general manufacturing and/or from extractive or additive techniques and/or their combination, and their parallel with other objects of Egyptian history.

10. Petrie (1914) considered them in its IV category: the group of the so-called protective amulets.

If we take into consideration that throughout pharaonic history the god *Bes* has played a role within the domestic sphere, as a protector of women pregnant women, children and childbirth; in turn that his figure by opposing an ideal of Egyptian beauty seeks to generate an apotropaic effect to scare away demons malignant, we can consider that the small-finds with the image of *Bes* in Tell el-Ghaba were also part of this sense.

In Building B, it could have been worshipped in domestic shrines as household protectors fighting off evil spirits, aiding women in labour and watching over mothers, children, and childbirth (Bacquerisse and Lupo, 2016:149). Along with this popular deity, mainly worshipped in domestic sanctuaries and family cults —caretaker of sleep, births, the sphere of women— within households and related to objects of daily use[11], another protective divinity has been found in Building B, it is the representation of the head of one of the oldest and greatest female deities, *Hathor* (F0486) (Andrews, 1994:19-20). Together with the *wdjat*[12] eyes, they make up the set of protective amulets found in level IV of Building B. The only specimen was found in this structure (F1000) that presents incisions on its back, linked to the ideas of restitution, regeneration and abundance (Pereyra, 2009:261) typical of the image of the eye, the composition mixed incised on the reverse, composed, as previously clarified, by a cartouche inscription: mn-xpr-ra, along with six linear motifs. This object can be linked to scarabs of the type '*menkheperre*' (Jaeger, 1982) found at Tell el-Ghaba (Lupo, 2015c:387-390) and which are well attested to the 25th and 26th dynasties (Pereyra, 2009:269).

The scarabs and scaraboids recovered from Tell el-Ghaba could have been used as personal adornments, as amulets, as seals and/or as a means of identification, and given that they all have longitudinal perforations, they could have been threaded or threaded (Lupo, 2015c:387). As previously mentioned, considering the thematic-decorative composition of its bases, those recovered in the rooms in Building B (F0019, F0636 and F0083) symbolise the search for assimilation of divine power and/or royalty and demonstrate shared motives for areas of the eastern Mediterranean. In its base F0019 presents a composition cryptographic, which can be read as: Hs-jar, sphinx, anx/Hsi + sphinx (n) + ankh (i + m) + (n): 'favoured by Amun' (Lupo, 2015c:388). The scarab F0083 bears an incised figure of a lion turned back on its base; it is flanked by two wADyt and the ra hieroglyphic sign above the feline. No doubt, the lion represents the Egyptian king in his utmost power (*e.g.* Ben-Tor, 1993:32); the cobra goddesses (depiction of the Lower Egypt royalty) protect the king as Ra does (Lupo 2015c:388).

Out of these three specimens, only F0083, made of soapstone —one of the most common materials for making scarabs in ancient Egypt— (Ben-Tor, 1993:41;

11. It should be noted that although it does not seem to have received an official cult during the dynastic period, images of *Bes* are also found in palaces and in some temples of the pharaonic period, and probably in Greco-Roman times this god had some kind of sanctuary dedicated to him.

12. As for the qualities of *wdjat* eyes as an amulet for protection see e.g. Andrews, 1994:41-42; López Grande, 2007:59-60; López Grande *et. al.,* 2012:594-596.

Wilkinson, 2008:23; Sparavigna, 2009:13), could have been used to seal, since the faience would not allow a clear impression and the act of sealing could break objects made of this material, so F0019 and F0636 could be considered private pseudo-seals (Schulz 2020:369), whose amulet value, of status and property and of self-affirmation would be equally given by the act of owning them. Schulz (2020:370) propose that the definition of 'amulet' applies in part to pseudo seals, since 'are individualised items that name or represent the user (individual person or king) and/or the expected provider, protector, or patron (deity, king, institution)'. The Egyptians considered them effective in providing help and protection not only divine, but also real and official. Most pseudo-seals bearing a royal name or likeness were given to members of the royal family and distributed to officials, institutions and individuals. Even the local workshops produced copies of them to meet high demands.

Given the above, the flat-based lentoids found in Building B they could have functioned as seals or pseudo-seals and as amulets (mainly evoking the welfare of royal and divine protection), while the presence of the thematic compositions incised in their bases, and by the detailed representation, on their dorsal faces, of zoomorphic motifs that represent the sacred scarab (*Scarabaeus aegyptiorum*), emblem of Khepri as creator god (Wilkinson, 2008:7-15; Sparavigna, 2009:9), prepared to be threaded, threaded, suspended and/or supported (certainly not embedded by the presence of compositions in their bases).

In ancient Egypt it was believed that the effect of the magical properties of the amulets could be greater if they were worn on the body, both of the dead and of the living. That is why they are designed to be hung or suspended with threads of organic or metallic materials —individually or forming bracelets, pins, necklaces and belts/girdles— from the ears, the hair, around the neck, on wrists, arms and ankles and/or waist (López, 2007:60). To this end, and considering the small size, the transverse perforations would have been elaborated and lengthwise and the gaps left between the body parts of the figurines of the small finds found in Building B.

Now, the symbolic meaning of an amulet evokes its magical power, and results from a wide range of variables that integrate not only the shape and decoration figurative, but also the material and colour, as well as the set of rituals —in the manufacturing activity and its subsequent use, related to actions, words and specific texts— made, which provoke the process of communication between the natural and supernatural spheres (Andrews, 1994:6; Schulz, 2020:369). The raw materials were carefully chosen for each type of amulet, since the properties attributed to the materials and even their colour —and the colours sought after the process of manufacturing we can add— contributed positively to the effectiveness of those magical objects (López, 2007:62). In religious terms, colour conveyed concepts —through the properties of its minerals— and information about the actual state of an object and, through the underlying magical powers associated with colour, gave him supernatural qualities. Therefore, the colour represented the visible world and conveyed symbolic concepts that could reflect religious concepts with more complex meanings (Hartwig, 2016:38). In this way, considering the set of objects,

we cannot rule out the possibility that others, in addition to those previously described, —such as bead sets and those that could be thought of as ornaments in general— have possessed amulet value and magical abilities, given by their colours, its material, its combination with other objects, the activity in which participate or issues that we do not know about their forms.

As we have seen, the small finds recovered on the floors of the rooms of Building B are manufactured with specific manufacturing techniques and by exploiting with little modification of snails. In the first group we identified the use of pastes, such as faience (in blue colours, browns, reds, yellows, greys and greens) and clay, rocks and metal (soapstone, limestone, alabaster and gold).

Most of the objects are made of faience (at Tell el-Ghaba in particular and in ancient Egypt in general), which offered a shiny and bright, a quality that for the ancient Egyptians was a symbol that reflected the essence of life. In fact, they used the word THnt to denominate this material, from the same root as THn, which we translate as brightness, reflection or flash of light in the darkness (López, 2007:62). On rare occasions the concept XsbD was used, the same word that they used to name lapislazuli, 'both are related to those for the properties of "shining", "gleaming" or "dazzling", emphasising the role of faience as an artificial gemstone' (Nicholson and Peltenburg, 2000:178). Now, faience, although it required knowledge specific technicians for its elaboration, allowed a more modest access to that quality that the possibility of obtaining semi-precious stones, such as lapis lazuli, jasper, serpentine or turquoise, achieving similarity in appearance and colour[13] and perhaps thus also integrating their magical qualities.

Soapstone, limestone, and alabaster were soft rocks[14], easily workable with opaque or glossy shades and smooth surfaces. The objects made in these rocks found in Building B, show light colours, such as white, pinkish grey and yellowish brown. White can represent ritual purity, sacredness, southern Egypt ('White Crown') and can be associated with white sacred animals (Wilkinson, 1994:116; Boczar, 2012).

Like some objects manufactured in faience, ceramic objects denote red to reddish brown colours, hues that relate to life and regeneration, anger, death and destruction (Wilkinson, 1994:116; Boczar, 2012). But more than related to colour, in this case, the symbolism of clay, and therefore ceramics, is linked to the meaning inherent in the material and the raw material and its ability to refer to animals, people and gods. Deposited by the Nile, easily shaped and destroyed, this 'primeval substance which recalls both the original creation and the ongoing process of life and fertility' (Wilkinson, 1994:93-94), could have been used for magical not only protective properties, but also destructive.

Gold (nbto) symbolised the flesh of the gods, especially that of Re. Its brightness, and its ability to remain unchanged and not suffer oxidation, were understood

13. As for colours and symbolism see Baines, 1985; Wilkinson, 1994; Bryan, 2010.

14. See specific features in Aston *et al.,* 2000. Petrie (1914:52) states that rock properties influence each material, in this sense the alabaster is for increase of milk and the limestone to get dirt from eye, against venom.

as manifestations of eternity. In turn, the colour yellow would mainly seek this similarity (Andrews, 1994:105; López, 2007:63-64), and it can represent the sun, the eternal, and can be associated with the flesh and bones of the gods (Wilkinson, 1994:116; Boczar, 2012).

The small finds of Building B: contexts and activities

Going back to the subject presented in table 1 and table 2, it is possible demarcate that the small finds at Tell el-Ghaba are closely related to other findings, and to the various activities that were carried out in the Building B and which, at the same time, are present in areas outside of it[15]. In previous publications various activities have been presented which were related to each room in Building B and with the ceramic assemblies in particular (*e.g.* Basilico and Lupo, 2004; Calomino and Lupo, 2014; Calomino, 2015; Lupo *et al.,* 2017; Lupo *et al.,* 2019). Therefore, it is not the objective of this section to detail them again, so as to include small finds.

In room B-3 (L0222), only one indeterminate object made in faience was found. The main activities carried out in this space would have been related to the preparation of food and its consumption (as verified by the grinding elements and the ceramic analysed assembly). The room presents a space prepared for cooking defined by a large oven and adjacent adobe platform, built on one of the external walls of the building. It could have been developed in this room: the preparation in cold and in hot food and substances, the transfer of contents and consumption, with prevalence of Egyptian pottery, remains of silurid fish and stone tools (Lupo *et al.,* 2019).

In room B-4 (L0034, L0036, L0047=0233, L0060=0271=0283) eight small finds were recovered: four beads —one spherical in faience, one lozenge in alabaster and two discal in faience—; a zoomorphic figurine of an indeterminate mammal (one head) on pottery; and three indeterminate objects —in faience, quartzite and lead. They were close to the remains of the finds, mainly Egyptian ceramics, in the centre of the structure and close to the access with B-5. Depending on the characteristics of the ceramic assemblage, the storage or small-scale preservation, transport and transfer of contents, and consumption, would have been possible in this space (Lupo *et al.,* 2019).

Room B-5 contained the largest number of small finds, with 28 objects recovered from a pit fill, hearth, and a layer of debris (L0060=0271=0283, L0278, L0126): six beads (four made in faience —two cylindrical, one tube-shaped and one segmented— and two irregular —mollusc and gastropod); 15 indeterminate

15. As previously established, regarding the use of the exterior space of Building B, we have no interpretations in this regard, due to the absence of sufficient evidence. In 2010 the excavations put the partially discovered mudbrick building Building K (in area VIII), possibly contemporary and contiguous to B. Due to the interruption of fieldwork after that year could not be continued the study of it and the relationship between the structures and the spaces between them.

objects (three faience, one iron fragment, one in granite, one in limestone, one in lead and eight fragments of bronze); five figurines, two anthropomorphic (in faience: female deity *Hathor*, and an indeterminate deity), three zoomorphs (an indeterminate mammal in ceramics, a baboon in faience and an indeterminate zoomorph in faience); and two objects with plane morphology (a *wdjat* indeterminate in faience and a right eye in faience with inscription and motifs linear on reverse). These have been found near the entrance that connects B-3 with B-5 (towards the wall, NE corner of the room, since the area of the various accesses is clear of objects) and from the centre towards the corner southeast of it where the largest number of objects recovered for this space. Most of the social interaction would have occurred there. The house would have acted as an articulating and integrating space for the activities in different areas (Lupo *et al.,* 2019). The large amount of material pottery, especially bowls and jars, suggests that most of the social practices were held in this place, away from the smoke that they had to generate the furnaces in activity in rooms B-3 and B-6, and with better air for breathing.

On the floor of room B-6 (L0017=0018) and locus L0046 —also product of human frequentation— eight small finds have been found: a male anthropomorphic figurine of the deity *Bes* in faience; two flat-based lentoids on faience and soapstone —scarabs with compositions on their bases—, two beads —one segmented gold and a discoid in faience—; a plane object —*wdjat* indeterminate—; a game piece; and an indeterminate limestone object. The presence of vessels *in situ* in the kiln, and on the adjacent platform (local and imported ceramics) allow as to think about certain activities that could have taken place in this space: transport, cooking, preparation and consumption of food (Lupo *et al.,* 2019). The objects are mainly located near the adjoining walls with B-4 and B-5, and to the oven and adjacent platform, the entrance is also clear of objects.

In room B-7, a storage deposit, in high and low scale, in which the substances would have been acquired and transferred to other rooms (Lupo *et al.,* 2019), only very small fragments of faience were found.

Some small finds were recovered in the external areas related to the occupation of Building B. In the north external area (L0285): a bead in the form of drum made in faience. Towards the south and southeast external sector (associated with loci referred to a hearth, pit fills, floor preparation, human frequentation and natural filling) has been found: an object with a flat-based lentoid morphology (scarab in faience with non-figurative motifs on its base); one gaming piece; six beads (one discal —faience—, one segmented —faience—, two spherical —in limestone and soapstone—, an irregular one —mollusc—, and a cylindrical one in faience); and eight indeterminate objects (two in faience, one iron fragment and five fragments of bronze). In the northwestern external area, close to external wall L0023 of B-4, five small finds were found: three beads (two spherical in faience and one irregular —mollusc—), a right eye in faience and a game piece.

Contrary to what we might expect, small finds are absent or are scarce in the spaces where private or public activities would have been developed. On the other hand, their presence is abundant in the spaces of greatest interaction. Despite eva-

luating their presence in each space, it is necessary to mention that they are very easy to transport objects, in fact it is one of the qualities that identify them as such, and perhaps wearing some as ornaments corporal or as part of the clothes was the objective of possessing them. It is no coincidence that the fragmentary state of the sample is accidental —it is mainly about products of breakage and weathering and possibly debris from the use of materials[16].

It has been inferred that the inhabitants of this unit (an extended family possibly) would have had a high economic status (Lupo *et al.,* 2017) within the site, perhaps associated with a local administrative elite linked to the state administration (Lupo, 2015b:291), evidenced by the presence of certain small finds —such as the gold bead and scarabs with royal and divine references, mainly to *Amun*—, a few Upper Egyptian vessels, and juglets —found in rooms B-3, B-6 and B-7—, local and imported, which would have been related to the containment of ointments, perfumes or fine oils, such as the Cypriote Black-on-Red ridge-neck juglets. In this sense, the local, Egyptian and domestic character is highlighted from the small finds, mainly made with faience, and although diverse in morphology and materials, share a protective character related to daily habits, for this reason it is not casual that they are in circulation, participating in the activities of the social interaction of this residence.

SMALL FINDS FROM AN ANCIENT EGYPTIAN HOUSEHOLD

Based on the review carried out, it is possible to establish that, although the small finds recovered from the Tell el-Ghaba excavations make up a set variety of objects, the sample belonging to the occupancy level of Building B is highly fragmentary. It is mainly made up of debris and/or fragments that would represent less than half of a complete object, broken or weathered. The sample is also composed of a large number of indeterminate items, which could be considered as parts of other objects that have not been preserved, waste or remnants of the production of objects made mainly in bronze and faience. Considered as complete objects, these are elements that do not exceed 3 cm by 3.20 cm, and perforations are usually constant and similar, measuring no more than two millimeters, mainly made by drilling the material.

In the total set, objects with undetermined morphology are the most common. This predominance is due to their poor state of conservation and the fragmentary condition of the finds. Circular objects, mainly beads made of faience, follow in frequency. In comparison, plane objects, figurines and lentoids, which were mainly made in faience, are scarce in the rooms in Building B.

16. Whether there would have been a local production of small finds at Tell el-Ghaba has not been confirmed.

Most of the presence of faience for making small finds corresponds to the predominance of the use of moulds as the manufacture of various morphologies. There is no direct relationship between faience colour and morphology. The colour spectrum varies across all categories, with shades of grey being particularly common and diverse.

It has been detailed that approximately half of the sample has traits that can govern specific functions directly related to the body, the furniture and clothing —support, threading, crimping, suspension, fastening, and/or join—, defining the set of objects of Tell el-Ghaba as elements versatile individually and linked, in parallel, to thematic specificities or compositional of each object.

Defining the use and meaning of small finds is undoubtedly a difficult and complex task. As we have seen, understanding their function requires considering various factors, including thematic and symbolic compositions, because meaning is integral to the function of each object. In turn, the variables that make up, for example, signs of ownership and amulet values as part of the utility of objects are related to more characteristics than epigraphy can signify[17]. The research questions pursued are not only oriented to recognize if we are dealing with amulets, ornaments, seals or domestic pieces, but rather seek to understand whether the objects could have functioned in all or some of those options and others.

The small finds discovered in Building B and nearby areas represent a group of popular, locally produced objects from the period. These objects hold meanings that can be interpreted within religious, mythical, ritual, and identity-related contexts. Even so, religious practices of the site cannot be clarified, it has been proposed uses and meanings from the knowledge we have of these objects throughout Egyptian history and specifically for the Third Intermediate Period and Saite Period. The specificity is given by some characteristics that emerge from the analysis of the evidence as a whole. For example, considering a size small transportability is suggested. These objects were manufactured using specialised but simple production methods, relying on local raw materials, and made with specific intentions for apotropaic use. In this sense, many of the small finds are related to the domestic sphere, with the protection of children, mothers and women pregnant, as is the case with the image of *Bes*; with the powers of protection and even curative for diseases such as the *wdjat* could have; with the power of life and rebirth of the *Khepri* scarab; or with those who can be considered pseudo-seals that allow us to think of both religious and identity meanings of who owns them. As a whole most of these small finds mentioned they sought magical protection (*heka*) (Ritner, 1993) to the individual who owned them, their decorations intended to bring into play the forces of these divine representations, through sympathetic and/or apotropaic magic. They could be carried by each person from taking advantage of the sectors in which the

17. In this sense, in Calomino, 2021:240, the difficulty in dissociating the ornamental of its usefulness, its value and meaning and possible effectiveness, is a division that generally tries to be done by classifying objects between symbolic/decorative —where most of the small finds are integrated— and utilitarian/functional —where others are integrated object types.

objects could be lined up, suspended, linked and fastened with strings or other elements —possibly integrating different items—, as part of body adornments, of outfits, placed in the furniture, in domestic offerings, accompanying the activities people's daily. Thanks to various iconographic representations and funerary evidence, we know that each amulet was selected to be carried in a certain place on the body (López, 2007:50), one might wonder if for the ancient Egyptians it was positive to accompany some of their daily activities —such as cooking, serving the food and drink, use ointments, drink, etc.— with certain personal objects that would be propitious to carry them out, just as they were prescribed in other scopes[18].

In this paper we have presented, continuing with the analytical review of the small finds recovered from the Tell el-Ghaba excavations, the main characteristics of this set of objects from the occupancy level of the Building B and linked zones. We thus hope to have advanced in the possible symbolism that they could have had the small finds of Building B at Tell el-Ghaba, and how they could express various themes in terms of thematic compositions —for those whose representation and characteristics allowed it—, and in the analysis of the objects in their contexts, in the structure where they were found in relation to the other remains residence materials.

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18. Knowledge obtained from the textual documents of Egyptian religious literature as the Texts of the Pyramids, the Texts of the Sarcophagi or the Book of the Dead, as well as other writings preserved on papyrus or ostraca.

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