

Republishing a Wooden Chair in The National Museum of Egyptian Civilization  
(Je 56353 - Sr5253)

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**Abstract:** This research aims to republish the wooden chair currently in the National Museum of Egyptian Civilization (JE 56353 - SR5253) and define its function as a birth chair. It was described in the database registers as a (latrine seat/birth chair), that was found in the Tomb of Khnemôse (no.253), in a necropolis at el-Khokha site – Thebes, dated to the eighteenth dynasty; these two registered functions which are completely different were given to the wooden chair by M. Pillet (1952), the first to mention this chair providing only some basic information of it as a piece of funerary furniture found in the tomb. Depending on an analytical and comparative discussion of the chair's material and shape and other latrine seats of the eighteenth dynasty; and some other birth chairs from Egypt through the Ptolemaic, and Roman periods, and with some parallel scenes from outside of Egypt through the Hellenistic and Roman eras; to conclude it is most likely to be a birth chair than to be a latrine seat.

**Keywords:** Birth-chair, wooden chair, eighteenth dynasty, funerary furniture, the Tomb of Khnemôse, el-khokha site, latrine seat.

إعادة نشر لكرسي خشبي بالمتحف القومي للحضارة المصرية (JE 56353 - SR5253).

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**المخلص:** يهدف هذا البحث إلى إعادة نشر الكرسي الخشبي الموجود حاليًا بالمتحف القومي للحضارة المصرية (JE 56353 - SR5253) وتحديد وظيفته ككرسي ولادة. تم وصفه في سجلات قاعدة البيانات على أنه (مقعد المراض / كرسي الولادة)، الذي تم العثور عليه في مقبرة خنيموس (رقم ٢٥٣)، في مقبرة في موقع الخوخة - طيبة، مؤرخة إلى الأسرة الثامنة عشرة؛ تم إعطاء هاتين الوظيفتين المسجلتين المختلفتين تمامًا للكرسي الخشبي بواسطة M. Pillet (1952)، الذي يعد أول من أشار إلى هذا الكرسي ببعض المعلومات الأساسية عنه كقطعة من الآثار الجنائزية الذي عثر عليه في المقبرة. وبالاعتماد على مناقشة تحليلية ومقارنة لمواد الكرسي وشكله ومقاعد المراحيض الأخرى للأسرة الثامنة عشرة؛ وبعض كراسي الولادة الأخرى من مصر عبر العصور البطلمية والرومانية، ومع بعض المشاهد الموازية من خارج مصر عبر العصور الهلنستية والرومانية؛ يرجح كونه كرسي ولادة أكثر من كونه مقعدًا للمراض.

**الكلمات الدالة:** كرسي ولادة، كرسي خشبي، الأسرة الثامنة عشر، الآثار الجنائزية، مقبرة خنيموس، موقع الخوخة، كرسي مراض.

## Preamble:

This research is an analytical study of a wooden chair (pl.1a-e) in the (*NMEC*) National Museum of Egyptian Civilization (JE 56353 - SR5253)<sup>1</sup>. The chair was found in the Tomb of Khnemôse (no.253), in the necropolis discovered on the west bank of Thebes at el-Khokha site<sup>2</sup>. The chair is dated to the eighteenth dynasty, which is the given date for the whole tomb where it has been found<sup>3</sup>. The tomb was discovered among other two of the nobles by an expedition from the University of Cambridge between 1984 and 1990. The excavation work began as a project to complete work on the tomb of Amenmose (no. 254). It was subsequently expanded to include the other two tombs in the courtyard which are 253, and 294, and to a full excavation of the underground areas<sup>4</sup>.

## Discussion:

### 1.1. Description

The chair is in a fair condition of preservation (pl.1a-e), with some restorations in the rear left leg (pl.1e). It is made of wood and painted with a thin layer of white paint. It takes a rectangular shape with four legs; both the front and rear legs are connected with stretchers in the middle of their height to support the structure of the chair (pl.1a, c). It is hollowed in the middle with a narrow hollow of almost 10 cm in width, opened from the front side (pl.1b), and with wide long shoulders on both sides (pl.1d, e) that connect in a round shaped wide ending (pl.1e); with no back, no closed in sides nor borders. The chair measures 30 cm high, and has a width of 28 cm, with a maximum length of 44 cm.

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<sup>1</sup> The author was granted permission no. 365 of the Standing Committee of the Supreme Council of Antiquities on the 10th of October 2022 for publishing and studying the wooden chair (JE 56353 - SR5253) in the National Museum of Egyptian civilization in Cairo *NMEC*.

<sup>2</sup> Bertha Porter, et al., *Topographical bibliography of ancient Egyptian hieroglyphic texts, reliefs, and paintings: The Theban necropolis part I. Private tombs* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1960), 338.

<sup>3</sup> The tomb is dated to the 18<sup>th</sup> dynasty; specifically, to the reign of Amenhotep III (Hellenized as Amenophis III): Porter, *Topographical bibliography*, 477; Amenhotep III was the ninth pharaoh of the dynasty that ruled Egypt (1386 - 1349 BC, or 1388 BC-1351 BC/1350 BC): Von Jürgen Beckerath, *Chronologie des Pharaonischen Ägypten* (Main: Verlag Philipp von Zabern, 1997), 190.

<sup>4</sup> The excavation was initiated by Norman and Nina de Garis Davies and the records of which are stored in the archives of the Griffith Institute: Nigel Strudwick, Helen Strudwick. *A guide to the tombs and temples of ancient Luxor* (Oxford: Cornell University Press, 1996), 23-56.



Pl.1a



Pl.1b



Pl.1c



Pl.1d



Pl.1e

## 1.2. Material/shape

It is believed that the known structure of birth bricks<sup>1</sup>, widely used in ancient Egypt, has developed slowly into the low-standing birthing chair/stool; a structure known as the *mshnt*<sup>2</sup> that was in use before 2500 BCE, and worked as some sort of a confinement chair made of brick<sup>3</sup>. And for the obvious lack of ancient Egyptian examples; we can track that simple form of a low brick/stone birth chair on a 3rd century BCE Limestone group Statuette from Cyprus, of a woman just gave birth while sitting on a simple rectangular stone birth chair accompanied by two midwives or a midwife and one of the parturient households (fig.1)<sup>4</sup>.

Then the bricks got replaced later by wood<sup>5</sup>, which is more possible to be appearing in an early representation of it from ancient Egypt in the temple of Luxor (fig.2)<sup>6</sup>; it resembles the birth chair (pl.1a-e) in material and differs in the structure because the birth chair (pl.1a-e) lacks the back. Moreover, this wooden simple birth chair appears in a 1st century BCE high relief reverse of an ivory panel, plaque (A)(fig.3), from Pompeii, the panel depicts probably the mythological birth of Meleager, where it shows a sitting parturient on a simple structure of a rectangular birth chair, made of wood with no back, no sides nor a seat<sup>7</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> Birth bricks consisted of two pieces of roughly shaped rocks, placed slightly apart under each foot, so as to create a makeshift seat that allowed the baby to drop between them: Aikaterini Koltsida, 'Birth-Bed, Sitting Place, Erotic Corner or Domestic Altar? A Study of the So-Called "Elevated Bed" in Deir el-Medina Houses', In "Studien zur Altägyptischen Kultur", Bd. 35 (2006): 170.; Some of these bricks have been decorated with images of birth scenes and were passed down through generations within the same family: Geoffrey Chamberlain, "Historical perspectives on health: Childbirth in ancient Egypt" in *The Journal of the Royal Society for the Promotion of Health* 124, no.6, (2004): 285.; A well preserved example is the magical birth brick found in Abydos at the mayor's residence that dates about 1750 to 1700 BCE, of Princess *Renisenebe* or another high-status woman in the residence, the brick is decorated with a polychrome birth scene: Sussane Töpfer, "The physical activity of parturition in Ancient Egypt: textual and epigraphical sources", in: Andreeva, A., Couto-Ferreira, E., Töpfer, S. (ed.), *Childbirth and women's healthcare across cultures* Dynamis, Dynamis, 34.2 (2014), 317-335.

<sup>2</sup> This naming mostly derives from one of the representations of the goddess *mshnt* goddess of childbirth which is often depicted as a birth brick: Robert Armour, *Gods and myths of ancient Egypt* (Cairo: American University Press, 2001), 168; Ada Nifosi, *Becoming a Woman and Mother in Greco-Roman Egypt: Women's Bodies, Society and Domestic Space* (London: Routledge, 2019), 52.

<sup>3</sup> Barbara Watterson, *Women in ancient Egypt* (New York: Alan Sutton Publishing, 1991), 90-91.

<sup>4</sup> John Lund, *A Study of the Circulation of Ceramics in Cyprus from the 3rd Century BC to the 3rd Century AD* (Bristol: Aarhus University Press 2015), 233, fig.278.

<sup>5</sup> Watterson, *Women in ancient Egypt*, 90-91.

<sup>6</sup> P. B. Adamson, "Some rituals associated with parturition in antiquity," in *Folklore* 96, no.2 (1985): 176; the furniture quality of wood was accessible only in limited quantities and was therefore rare and expensive: William Peck, *The material world of ancient Egypt* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 81; therefore, it is suggested that wood was most probably the material for royal furniture such as the birth bed and the chair above depicted in the scene (fig.2).

<sup>7</sup> Susan Wood, "Literacy and Luxury in the Early Empire: A Papyrus-Roll Winder from Pompeii" in: *Memoirs of the American Academy in Rome* 46 (2001): 23-4, fig.1; Beth Gersh-Nesic, "Birth/childbirth", In H. E. Roberts (ed.), *Encyclopedia of Comparative Iconography: Themes Depicted in Works of Art* (Chicago: 2013), 140.



Fig.1

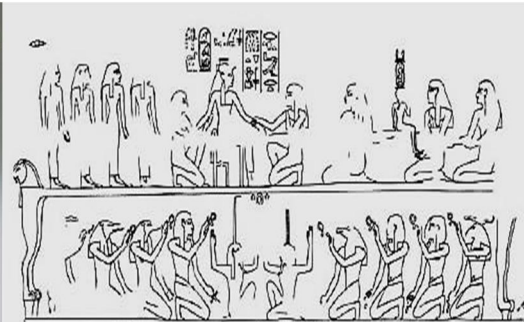


Fig.2



Fig.3

### 1.3. Function

The chair (pl.1a-e) was described as a latrine seat/ birth chair by M. Pillet who was the first to mention it and to suggest the possibility of its purpose as a birth chair<sup>1</sup>; The suggestion I highly support and supplement to prove it this discussion of function:

When comparing the chair (pl.1a-e) with actual latrine seats/stools of the 18th dynasty:

a)

A square monolithic piece of limestone, from the site of *Tell- El Amarna* (fig.4), which is hollowed from the middle with a narrow key-shaped hole, with very low edges on all sides of the seat, and it is 10 cm height, 53 cm width, and 40 cm length<sup>2</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> Maurice Pillet, "Les scènes de naissance et de circoncision dans le temple Nord-est de Mout, à Karnak" in *Annales du Service des Antiquités de l'Égypte* LII, (1952), fig.8, 90-1.

<sup>2</sup> Nifosi, *Becoming a Woman*, 223, fig.207.

b)

A square-shaped hollowed four-legged seat of ebony from *Thebes* (fig.5), which is 37.5 cm height, 43.8 cm in width, its legs are connected with stretchers to hold the legs firmly in place, and they taper toward the bottom and then flare out again to form balanced support<sup>1</sup>; along with two other wooden latrine seats (figs.6, 7) that almost accord in shape, measurements, and date to the one of ebony (fig.5).

The comparison displays that all latrine seats of stone, ebony, and wood (figs 4-7) are far different in shape from the chair (pl.1a-e); although they are all (figs 4-7) hollowed from the middle, the width of the latrine seats is far more than the that of the chair (pl.1a-e).



fig.4



fig.5



fig.6



fig.7

Along with this discussion of shape, material, and function, some reliable literary evidences display the spread of birth chair use in ancient Egypt such as the orders of Pharaoh to Hebrew midwives in *Exodus* “when you perform the duty of a midwife to the

<sup>1</sup> Geoffrey Killen, *Ancient Egyptian furniture: 4000-1300 BC I* (Oxford: Oxbow Books, 1980), 49, fig. 23, pls 82-3; Nigel Strudwick, *Masterpieces of Ancient Egypt* (London: British Museum Press, 2006), 196-197.

*Hebrew women, and see them on the birth stool; if it is a son, then you shall kill him; but if it is a daughter, then she shall live.”<sup>1</sup>*

And in Ptolemaic and Roman Egypt as well, such as the specific description of Soranus of Ephesus<sup>2</sup> of birth chairs that were used during his flourishing time, in his work of *Gynecology*<sup>3</sup> “*The laboring woman may be placed in position upon the birth chair. In the middle of the chair, a crescent-shaped cut was made of medium size, neither too big so that the woman sinks to the hips, nor, on the contrary, narrow so that the vagina is compressed. And the entire width of the whole chair must be sufficient to accommodate fleshy women too; and its height medium, for in women of small size footstool placed beneath makes up the deficiency. Concerning the area below the seat, the sides should be completely closed in with boards, while the front and the rear should be open for use in midwifery. Concerning the area above, on the sides, there should be two parts shaped like the letter ii for the crossbar on which to press the hands in straining. And behind there should be a back, so that both the ions and hips may meet with resistance to any gradual slipping; for if they reclined even with a woman standing behind, by the crooked position they would hinder the movement of the fetus in a straight line.*”<sup>4</sup>

Nevertheless, these literary sources are reliable in proposing the widespread shape of birth chairs in Dynastic, Ptolemaic, and Roman Egypt; they are to be supported by some archaeological evidence that displays an artistic close similarity, missing only an ancient Egyptian one, such as:

a)

A limestone Loculi slab from the soldier’s tomb at El-Ebrahimia in Alexandria, it is painted with a polychrome funerary scene of giving birth (fig.8), that dates to the late fourth-early third century BCE<sup>5</sup>. The scene depicts a woman in labor

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<sup>1</sup> Exodus 1:16.

<sup>2</sup> Soranus of Ephesus, who was a Greek-born and Greek-trained physician who lived during the 2nd century AD, born in Ephesus, learned and practiced bases of medicine laid by Herophilus of Chalcedon in Alexandria, and subsequently in Rome during the reigns of Trajan and Hadrian, He is the best-known adherent of the Methodist School of Physicians, which focussed on regimen and moderation: Donald Todman, ‘Childbirth in ancient Rome: From traditional folklore to obstetrics’ in *Australian and New Zealand Journal of Obstetrics and Gynaecology* 47 (2007): 83; Suidas, *Lexicon*, (ed.) Ada Adler (Leipzig: Teubner 1928-1938), s.v. Soranos.

<sup>3</sup> *Gynecology* is a huge volume compiled by Soranus of Ephesus and it is considered to be the only classical medical resource that gives a very detailed account of probably everything regards women's health: Veronique Dasen, ‘Childbirth and Infancy in Greek and Roman Antiquity’ in B. Rawson (ed.) *A Companion to Families in the Greek and Roman Worlds*, (2011), 296.

<sup>4</sup> Soranus of Ephesus. *Soranus' Gynecology*, (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1991). II.3 (68); for the Greek text: Soranos D' Ephese, *Maladies des femmes*, livre II (Paris: Les belles lettres, 1990) II.3.

<sup>5</sup> Fathia Gaber, ‘*Alexandrian tomb stelae during Ptolemaic and Roman rule: a study in Greek, Roman and Egyptian influences along with the Alexandrian characteristics*’ (Unpublished PhD dissertation, Alexandria University, 2012), 74, 415-6, cat.no.136; Dimitris Plantzos, *The Art of Painting in Ancient Greece* (Atlanta: Lockwood, 2018), 260, 263, fig. 257.

sitting on a birth chair aided by two other women; The painting is not well preserved, but the shape of the birth chair is clear enough to be outlined<sup>1</sup>.

b) A late Ptolemaic-early Roman<sup>2</sup> scene of low relief, was found in the temple complex of Dendera<sup>3</sup>. The relief displays the parturient squatting on a birth chair in lower sunk relief, within an architectural motif that corresponds to that of the *bhnt* building (fig.9)<sup>4</sup>.

c) An early Roman wall relief and the Central scene in sanctuary (A)<sup>5</sup>, on the south wall, at Isis temple in Dendara (fig.10), of Emperor Augustus's reign (30 BC - 14 AD)<sup>6</sup>. The scene depicts goddess Nuth giving birth while squatting on a birth chair settled inside a shrine in a way that resembles the late Ptolemaic-early Roman relief<sup>7</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> Brown Blanche, *Ptolemaic Paintings and Mosaics and the Alexandrian Style* (Cambridge: Archaeological Institute of America, 1957), 15, 20, 45, pl. II.1.

<sup>2</sup> Many scholars date the relief to the Ptolemaic period: John Nunn. *Ancient Egyptian medicine* (London: British museum press, 1996), 193, fig.9.1; Eugene Strouhal et al., *The medicine of the ancient Egyptians* (Cairo-New York: the American University Press, 2014), 137, fig.39. And I agree with that point of view even prefer to specify the date to late Ptolemaic- early Roman period, regarding the careful well-incised face features, drapery details, and expression of a stressed laboring woman using face features and body movements of the parturient.

<sup>3</sup> Sylvie Cauville, *Dendara : le temple d'Isis. Volume II. Analyse à la lumière du temple d'Hathor* (Paris: Peeters Publishers, 2009), 27.

<sup>4</sup> The *bhnt* building is a pylon-shaped entrance that is basically to be understood as a place, where a regeneration or (Re) birth process has taken place; and also symbolizes the mystery of the divine birth and the idea of cyclical regeneration: Dagmar Budde, *Das Götterkind im Tempel, in der Stadt und im Weltgebäude, Eine Studie zu drei Kultobjekten der Hathor von Dendera und zur Theologie der Kindgötter im griechisch-römischen Ägypten*, MÄS 55 (Darmstadt / Mainz: Philipp von Zabern, 2011), 304; it became an essential component of the standard plan of the main entrance of the temple by the New Kingdom and was used in Graeco-Roman temple complexes as well, Patricia Spencer, *The Egyptian Temple: A Lexicographical Study* (London: Kegan Paul International, 1984), 201.

<sup>5</sup> Sylvie Cauville, *Le temple de Isis*, (Le Caire: Institut francais d'archeologie orientale, 2007), 78, 80-81, Pl.88.

<sup>6</sup> Isis's temple is the small sanctuary that lies to the south-west, behind Hathor temple; originally it was known under Nektanebos I, Ptolemy VI, and Ptolemy X. as the birthplace; it was converted into a place of worship for Isis in Augustus' times: Budde, *Das Götterkind im Tempel*, 138.

<sup>7</sup> Cauville, *Dendara*, 27.





Fig.8

All three scenes from the Ptolemaic and Roman periods (figs. 8- 10) display birth chair accessories like hand bars, on which the parturient is pressing her arms; sometimes footrests; only appear in (figs. 9,10), on which the parturient is placing her feet. They raise the female feet a degree above the ground. These birth chair accessories offer some help to the parturient during the delivery, as a solid structure to lean on, press on, and through her entire weight on, while squatting, and pushing to rest her tensed muscles between contractions. These accessories correspond perfectly with the description of the birth chair mentioned by Soranus<sup>1</sup>.



Fig.9

<sup>1</sup> Soranus, *Gynecology*, II.3.68; Dasen, 'Childbirth and Infancy', 296; notable that the shape of a birth chair that Soranus emphasized was widely spread for midwifery uses in the Graeco-Roman period, Todman, 'Childbirth in ancient Rome', 83.

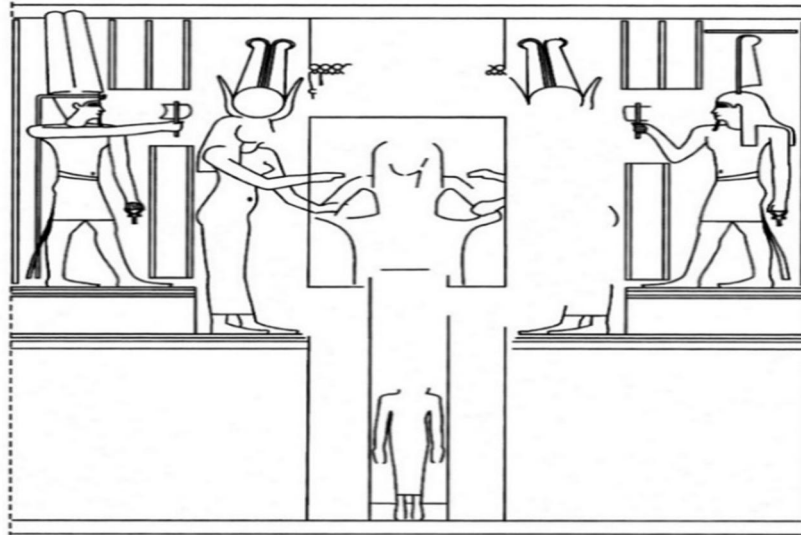


Fig.10

According to the literary sources that imply the widespread usage of the birth chair in Dynastic, Ptolemaic, and Roman Egypt; and the accompanied archaeological pieces of evidence that prove it well; the birth chair shape appears to have been a full-on chair that is fully opened from the front side, with low back, closed in low sides with crossbars to press the hands/ arms on, no seat (figs. 8-10), and often with low in height foot rests (figs. 9,10); which almost accords to Soranus's description; and are also applicable to the wooden chair in the NMEC (pl.1 a-e), which supports it is a birth chair. Furthermore, the scenes of birth chairs from Egypt (figs. 8-10) display the changes that occurred to The simple shape of an eighteenth dynasty birth chair (pl.1 a-e), Which corroborates that a middle-height back, sides with boards and crossbars, and foot rests were affixed to it later, and the sides became closed in, except for the frontal and rear ones (figs. 8-10); Which can be regarded as the evolution of birth chair shape during the Ptolemaic-Roman eras in Egypt.

Worthy of mention that the described birth chair by Soranus was wide spread in the Roman world as well, which is clear from a 2<sup>nd</sup> century CE terracotta funeral relief (fig.11) from the tomb no. 100, of the Isola Sacra necropolis in Ostia, which depicts the midwife Scribonia Attica delivering a child of a woman seated on a birth chair<sup>1</sup>, that accords exactly to Soranus's description<sup>2</sup>; and actually is relatively close to that on the loculus slab of Alexandria (fig.8) which indicates the cosmopolitan widespread usage of this shape of the birth chair in midwifery in the classical world simply for they allowed women to stand, squat, or semi-squat while actively pushing, then to sit back and relax between contractions<sup>3</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> Guido Calza, *La Necropoli Del Porto di Roma Nell'Isola Sacra*, R. Istituto di Archeologia e Storia dell' Arte, (Roma: La Libreria dello Stato, 1940), 248-9, fig.1.

<sup>2</sup> Zanker P., *Roman Art*, Translated by Henry H. Gordon (Los Angeles: Getty publication, 2008) 47, fig 29.

<sup>3</sup> Amanda Banks, *Birth chairs, Midwives, and Medicine* (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 2012), 1-3.



Fig.11

**Conclusions:**

Birth chair's origin sprang from ancient Egypt, and they have become a predominant fabricated item to be used in the delivery process not only in Dynastic Ptolemaic and Roman Egypt but also in the Hellenistic and Roman world. Both literary and archaeological evidence presented in this paper clarify and illustrate that:

Its original material and structure have developed from bricks that were placed slightly apart to create a shifting seat where a woman would squat on to give birth; to the confinement structure made of brick, and finally to the low-standing wooden birth chair/stool (pl.1 a-e).

Its shape has evolved from the simple rectangular hollowed and fully opened front side wooden chair in Dynastic Egypt (pl.1 a-e) to a full-on chair, opened from the front side, with a low back, closed in low sides with crossbars, no seat, and sometimes with low in height footrests in Ptolemaic-Roman Egypt (figs. 8-10). This evolution of shape wasn't cosmopolitan; since the shape of the full-on birth chair appeared in Egypt in the 3<sup>rd</sup> century BCE (fig.8), the Hellenistic world was still in use for the simple structure of birth chairs made of brick/stone (fig.1), and of wood (fig.3).

The chair (pl.1 a-e) clearly isn't a latrine seat; for the structure of the aforementioned latrine seats (figs. 4-7) which indicates that they are designed for a quick use; is far different from the structure of the chair (pl.1 a-e); and not like a birth chair which is hollowed in the middle as well, but wholly opened from the front side, and its shoulders are wide enough for the parturient uses of squatting, or semi squatting, or sitting for a while to relax between contractions which the chair (pl.1 a- e) provides in its shape clearly, but regarding the dimensions of the latrine

seats which are very close to that of the chair (pl.1 a- e), except for its width which is 28cm, and compared to the width of the latrine seats (figs. 4-7) that vary from 53 cm to 43.8 cm; this either suggests a symbolic purpose for the chair (pl.1 a- e), or perhaps a craft deficiency in preparing the appropriate width of the chair (pl.1 a-e) regarding the resemblance in height and length of the chair (pl.1 a-e) and the seats (figs. 4-7), in either way symbolic or actual purpose of use, the chair (pl.1 a-e) is a very good example of the structure of the birth chair in ancient Egypt.

### **Plates and figures**

Plate (1a): A frontal view of the birth chair in NMEC; all photos by author, with the courtesy of the National Museum of Egyptian Civilization.

Plate (1b): An upper view.

Plate (1c): A rear view.

Plate (1d): A right side view.

Plate (1e): A left side view.

Figure (1) a limestone statuette from the Sanctuary of Golgoi–Ayios Photios, Cyprus. It is 16.5 cm H.; 25.1 cm W., in the collection of the metropolitan museum of art (inv.no.74.51.2698): Lund 2015, 233, fig. 278. **Photo:** The Metropolitan Museum Online collection.

Figure (2) Birth scene in the temple of Luxor, of the queen giving birth while sitting on a throne. **Drawing** after: Brunner 1986, n.5, pl 9.

Figure (3) The reverse of an ivory panel with a mythological birth scene in relief, from Pompeii, in The National Archaeological Museum (inv.109905-A), Naples, Italy, 1st century BCE. **Photo:** Wood 2001, fig.1.

Figure (4) a limestone latrine seat found in the excavations of Egyptian Exploration Society in middle Egypt on the site of *Tell El-Amarna*, now in the collection of Cairo Museum (JE 55520 – SR 5164). **Photo:** by the author, with Courtesy of the museum.

Figure (5) a latrine seat/stool of ebony, in the British museum in London (inv. EA2472). **Photo:** The British museum online collection.

Figure (6) a latrine seat/stool of wood, in the British museum in London (inv. EA2474). **Photo:** The British museum online collection.

Figure (7) latrine seat/stool of wood, in the British museum in London (inv. EA2475). **Photo:** The British museum online collection.

Figure (8) a painted limestone loculus slab now in the collection of the metropolitan museum in New York (inv.no. 04.17.1), with a height of 73.6 cm, it was found in 1884 in the same underground tomb as the adjacent tomb marker and it probably once served as a funerary monument above ground. **Photo:** The Metropolitan Museum online collection.

Figure (9) A late Ptolemaic-early Roman slab I low relief is now in the collection of Cairo Museum (JE 40627 – SR 11837) with a height of 19.5 cm, Length of 26 cm, from Dendara. **Photo:** by the author, with Courtesy of the museum.

Figure (10) central scene in sanctuary (A), south wall, Isis's temple, Nuth giving birth to Isis who **Photo& drawing:** Cauville 2007, Pl.88.

Figure (11) Terracotta funeral relief of a Roman mid-wife, 2nd century CE. Tomb 100/Tomb of Scribonia Attica in Isola Sacra necropolis, Ostia, in Museo Ostiense, Ostia, Italy. **Photo:** Calza 1940, 248, fig.1.

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