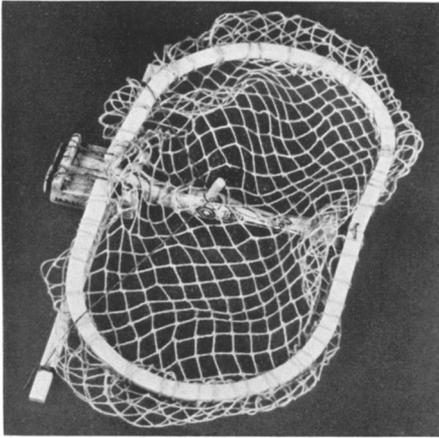


spirited scenes offer a perfect foil for the other cup and saucer, which present a peaceful countryside through which rides a hawking party. The latter pieces are decorated in the style of Johann Ludwig Faber, who was one of that numerous company called by the Germans *Hausmaler*, because they obtained from various factories undecorated porcelain to which they added such ornamentation as pleased their fancy or their public. Probably the Museum's new cups and saucers received their *Schwarzlotmalerei* not at the Vienna factory but at the hands of an independent deco-

## AN EGYPTIAN BIRD TRAP

Among the fashionable sports of ancient Egypt, none was more popular than fowling. From the Old Kingdom onwards the rich man loved to have his tomb decorated with "photographs" of himself hunting in the marshes. By the time of the XVIII Dynasty these scenes vary but little. The hero is shown standing poised on his papyrus skiff, holding a pair of decoy ducks above the reeds with one hand while he aims a throw stick with the other. The ladies of his family, who have accompanied him on



EGYPTIAN BIRD TRAP, WITH MISSING PARTS RESTORED  
FIG. 1. SET

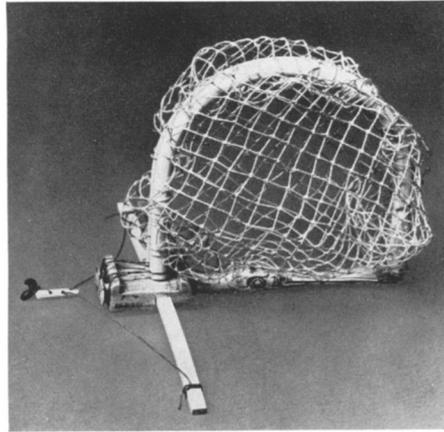


FIG. 2. SPRUNG

rator who was working in Bohemia.

Though less successful than Meissen in figure-modeling, Vienna turned out many delightful statuettes and groups. The Museum has made a modest beginning in this field by acquiring the figure of a brandy seller and a group symbolizing the arts of painting and sculpture. The former is very well modeled and has the soft, simple colorings used in early figures. Its period is about 1755. Somewhat later in date and definitely later in feeling is the group of boys who in gay fashion symbolize the arts. This animated group, though it implies an interest in the antique, was made a little too early to be weighed down by heavy pseudo-classicism, and so offers a fair terminus for our group of Vienna porcelains.

C. LOUISE AVERY.

the outing, watch admiringly, supply him with throw sticks, and collect the dead and wounded birds which a pet cat retrieves.

Fowling was not merely a sport, however. Birds of various sorts were a staple article of food, and wild birds were caught in many ways, in quantity and singly, both for immediate use and for stocking the fowl yards. The means most commonly employed for large-scale fowling was the clapnet. This net was set on marshy ground, while an overseer, or perhaps the noble himself, hid behind a shelter of reeds and gave the signal for pulling the ropes which closed the net. Dragnets with lead weights along the edges were used to gather in the quail which had alighted on the fields after the harvest. Nowadays the grain is cut, and the stubble provides no cover for birds.

The dragnet is still employed for fowling, but only by poachers, as it must be used on an unharvested field and destroys the grain.

Many birds could be caught at once in these nets, but a number of men were needed to attend to them. We may be sure that simple snares, and traps which could be managed by one person, were known at a very early time. The first evidence of the existence of small traps worked by a spring appears in the latter part of the Old Kingdom, and a few scenes have survived from that period which show these traps in use. Since, however, a picture of such a trap was already the hieroglyphic determinative of certain words connected with fowling, the device must have been invented even earlier. Scenes in which similar traps are employed appear in two XI Dynasty tombs at Beni-Ḥasan, but no representations of a later period are known to me, other than the hieroglyphic sign.

The Museum possesses the central portion of such a trap (figs. 1, 2).<sup>1</sup> It has been identified from its likeness to a more complete example in the Cairo Museum. This has recently been published by Grdseloff,<sup>2</sup> who was able to restore the missing parts with the aid of the ancient pictures. Originally a net was attached to two bow-shaped pieces of some suitable material, which, in the case of the Cairo trap, is wood. A cord was looped back and forth around the "handle" and the pegs opposite it, so as to cross the "broad end" four times. The tension was supplied by twisting these four sections of cord together in pairs, outwards, and into each pair an end of one bow was inserted. The other ends were tied loosely by a second cord which went through the two small holes at the far end of the "handle." A bar passed through the "broad end" at right angles to the axis of the trap, and a string was attached to the ends of this bar with just enough slack for its center to reach the hole near the center of

the trap. To set the trap the bows were pulled apart, against the tension of the twisted cords. They were kept in this position by the string, which was held taut by a short pin set loosely in the hole. To this pin the bait was fastened, and when a bird pecked at it the pin jumped out of the hole, thereby releasing the string and allowing the bows to clap together and imprison the bird in the net.

When we examine the various representations of these traps and the two examples which have survived, we see a development in the form of the "broad end." This leads us to the conclusion that ours is the latest in the series, and since there is no proof that traps of this particular variety continued to be made after the Middle Kingdom, we should place it in the XII Dynasty.

An interesting point which the fine material and good preservation of our trap establish is that the characteristically shaped "handle" represents the head of a spoon-bill. We have access only to drawings of most of the ancient pictures, but what must be an eye is indicated in one of the Beni-Ḥasan examples. The photograph of the trap determinative in the V Dynasty tomb of Ka-gemni clearly shows a bird's head.

As mentioned above, the advantage of these small traps was that they could be operated by one person. Sometimes the trapper left them set while he attended to other business. Sometimes he crouched nearby, luring the birds by imitating their calls. Egyptian birds were evidently not timid, and the traps could even be held in the hand. Ours is of such fine material and so dainty that we may be permitted to imagine that it belonged to such a maiden as the one who sings the ancient song:

"My beloved, see what I do. I have come and catch with my trap in mine hand. All birds of Punt, they settle upon Egypt, anointed with myrrh. The one that first cometh, it taketh my worm. What shall I say to my mother, to whom I go every evening laden with birds? [She will say:] 'Hast thou set no trap to-day?' Thy love hath charged me off."<sup>3</sup> NORA E. SCOTT.

<sup>3</sup> Papyrus Harris, 500, recto. English translation by Blackman, with omissions.

<sup>1</sup> Acc. no. 30.8.221. The Theodore M. Davis Collection, bequest of Theodore M. Davis, 1915. Ivory. L. 5¾ in.; w. 1¾ in. On exhibition in the Sixth Egyptian Room.

<sup>2</sup> Bernard Grdseloff, "Zum Vogelfang," in *Zeitschrift für ägyptische Sprache und Altertumskunde*, vol. LXXIV (1938), pp. 52-55, and "Zum Vogelfang im Alten Reich," *ibid.*, pp. 136-139.