

The Hippopotamus in Ancient Egypt

Hippopotami have lived in Egypt for thousands of years. They love to spend time in the river Nile. Like us today, the ancient Egyptians wanted to understand the world and why things happen. They did this by looking at the natural world around them, including the river Nile, the plants, the sky and all the animals, birds and insects.

Much of what we know about the ancient Egyptians was found in the remains of tombs, pyramids and temples. This includes the discovery of images of well over 1,000 gods. The majority of these gods are linked to the natural world and especially animals.

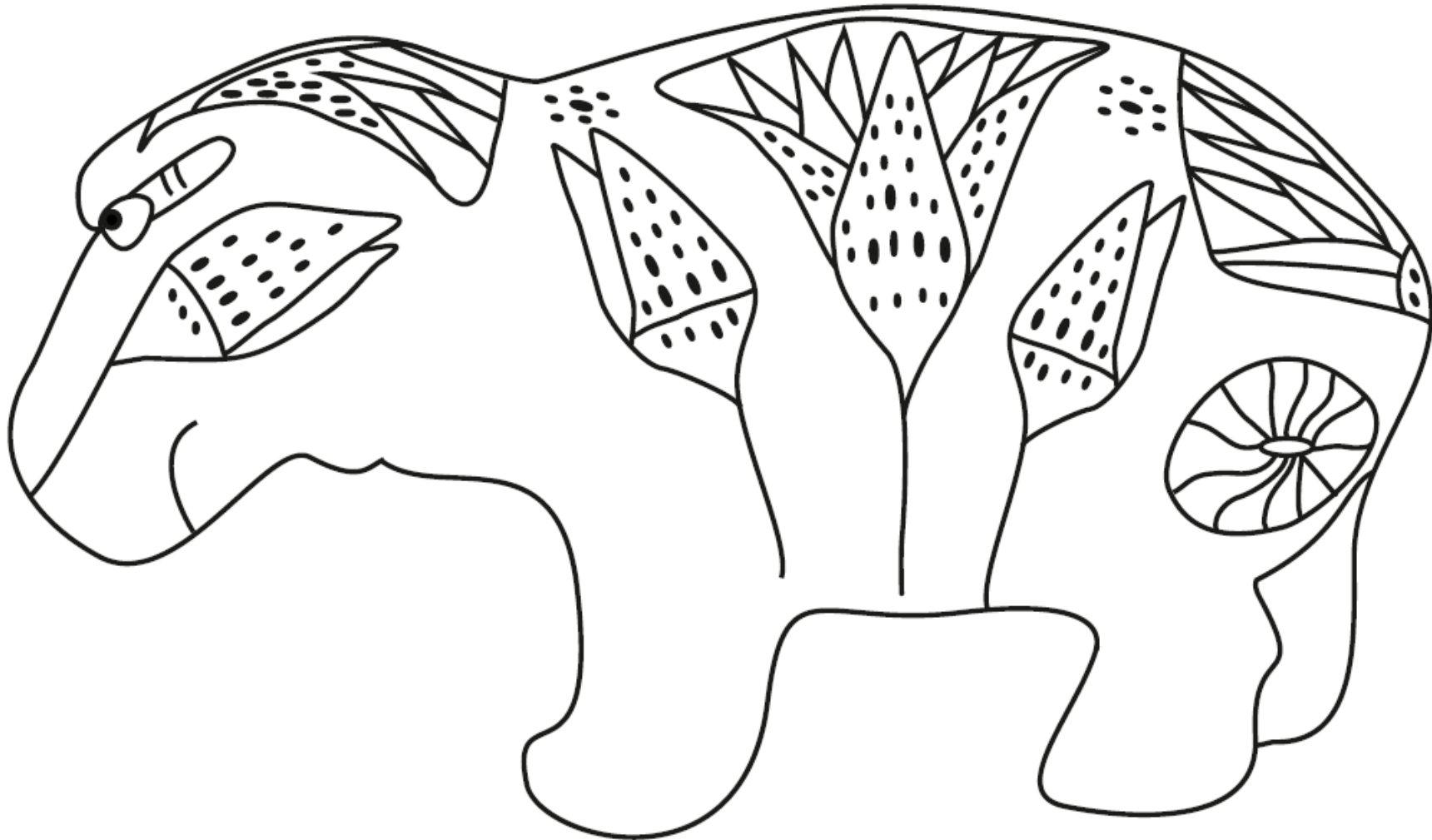
While the hippopotamus was connected to more than one god, the most popular is called *Taweret* (pron. Tow-er-ret). *Taweret* was seen as strong and powerful, but she was also protective, and a symbol of motherhood and childbirth.

Taweret was often depicted as a pregnant woman as you can see in the two amulets below that we have at RAMM. Amulets were small and could be carried, placed in your home or tomb for protection and good luck.



The ancient Egyptians believed that death was not the end, but that you went on to be re-born into the afterlife. Bright blue figures of hippopotami, like the one above, have been found in tombs with images of water plants and even birds and butterflies painted on them. It is thought the figures were put in the tombs near the mummy to represent rebirth in the afterlife. Take a look online at all the different [blue figure hippos](#).

It is now your turn to colour in the figure of the hippopotamus on the next page.



Bright-blue Egyptian faience figures of hippopotami, such as this, were placed in the tombs of high-ranking civil servants toward the end of the Middle Kingdom. But you can make this hippo any colour you would like!