



The Egypt Society of Bristol

NEWS UPDATE

Issue 14

May 2004

Chairman's Dig

The usual last-minute scramble allows me to include in this Newsletter a complete lecture programme for 2004/5 — including Mark Collier's postponed lecture from the current season.

It also includes the season's Amelia Edwards Memorial lecture, which promises to be a real treat. Dr Raven is an excellent speaker, and will be telling us about his current discovery — the tomb of Akhenaten's High Priest, which seems to lie on top of a Second Dynasty royal tomb! Some people have all the luck

You may note that it comes only seven months after this year's excellent lecture by the President. This is a result of Dr Raven's excavation commitments later in the academic year: the Amelia is basically held at what ever point in the given academic year that our chosen speaker is available.

As usual, the Chairman and Treasurer spent much of April in the USA, ending up at the American Research Center in Egypt's annual bash, this year in Tucson. Members with an interest in the Amarna Period (which there might be few ...) might like to know of one revelation during the Amarna Conference that preceded it. This was that Neferneferuaten, one of the obscure successors of Akhenaten, was *definitely* a woman — on a number of reused items in Tutankhamun's tomb Neferneferuaten has the epithet 'beloved of her husband', which seems pretty conclusive! This was a result of microscopic examination of some of the wonderful excavation photographs, showing how important such records are.

The Chairman has to admit that his response to this conclusive evidence was 'b*****!', as it largely trashes the reconstruction he published in the recent *Seventy Mysteries of Ancient Egypt* (edited by Bill Manley and published by Thames & Hudson)! Thus the last weeks or so has been accompanied by re-writing chunks of our *Complete Royal Families of Ancient Egypt*, due out in the autumn.

Such are the perils of progress



Lecture reports

by Margaret Curtis

24 January 2004

The Fortress at the end of the World: the latest excavations at Zawiyet Umm el-Rakham

Dr Stephen Snape, Lecturer in Egyptology, University of Liverpool

Stephen's lecture this evening dealt with the most recent findings at Zawiyet Umm el-Rakham, and hoped to convince us that what appeared to be little more than outlines in the sand, could be very interesting.

This site, built and abandoned during the reign of Rameses II, is well on the way to modern day Libya and is about as far west from the Delta area as the Egyptians ventured. It is placed almost exactly half way between the coast and the Libyan Plateau. Rameses had fortified existing coastal towns and built new fortresses along the coast heading west, perhaps in response to the flow of peoples from this area into Egypt following changes to their climate.

The fortress was discovered accidentally by a farmer in the 1940's. The walls are thought to have been over 6m high and made of large mud bricks. Unfortunately, the heavy rainfall experienced in this area has caused much of the brickwork to dissolve, but some of the limestone parts of the buildings which were buried remain in good condition.

The Egyptians who built the fortress understood the need to store rainwater for periods of dry weather. This is particularly clear from the remains of a temple which include limestone drainage channels for draining the rain into cisterns.

A stela which was discovered shows two 'standard bearers', the equivalent of an officer. Each, standard bearer was responsible for 250 men, therefore we can estimate there were 500 men stationed in the fortress.

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A well preserved storage magazine was uncovered containing pottery jars not native to Egypt, but of a type imported from Crete and Cyprus. These would have been used for the storage of wine and olive oil. Many of these jars were found exactly as they had been left as the site was abandoned very suddenly. These jars could have been trade goods which had found their way to the fort when ships from the Delta area took a route around the Mediterranean and traded goods when they landed for water and supplies. The most probably route back took them past the fortress where they may have stopped to take on more fresh water and supplies for the last leg of the journey home.

A large area of the site was used for domestic purposes to support the men stationed there. Cooking ovens and granaries have been identified as, with most Egyptians, their diet was based on bread and beer. Wells have been found and the water is still drinkable today.

There are signs of grain having been grown outside the walls of the fort. This seems to indicate the area was not hostile. Spinning bowls were recovered which were used in the making of linen from flax. Pins, which could have been used for pinning hair, have been found which indicates there were women present.

Stephen explained he was surprised no pylon had been discovered in the small temple. When he cleared the site down to the bedrock, evidence of a pylon was found but this appears to have been dismantled by the Romans as Roman pottery was found at this level.

The large house used by the Commander of the fortress has also been uncovered. Some objects have been found in a small private chapel dedicated to Ptah and Sekhmet. A beautiful statue of Nebra, the Commander, was found, but most of the names and titles on the statue had been chiselled off. This had been done very carefully and Stephen thinks it could have been in preparation for the next Commander's details to be carved.

I think Stephen achieved his goal as this was another occasion when a seemingly dull area of lumps and bumps in the sand can turn into a really interesting lecture and give us a glimpse of a different aspect of life in ancient Egypt.

24 February 2004
A Load of Old Bull
Aidan Dodson

No, Aidan is not being brutally honest about his lectures! The subject for the lecture for the Annual General Meeting of 2004 was the bull burials at Saqqara.

The Apis bull was a sacred animal to the god Ptah, in whose temple it lived. At death it was given a grand burial at Saqqara in the Serapeum, a huge, underground complex, with many annexes for the Apis bulls down through the ages.

The first known burial was overseen by Thutmose, the eldest son of Amenhotep III, who would have been king if he had survived. His bother, Akhenaten, rather famously ruled in his place.

Herodotus tells us that after the death of the current Apis bull, a countrywide search was made for a replacement. An animal bearing markings as near to the previous bull was chosen, and it is clear these markings evolved over the years when markings could not be matched exactly.

The earliest surviving bull 'mummies' (reign of Horemheb) were merely solid blocks of resin, fragments of bone and bandages. A slightly later one had human shape and bore a human mask It is may be that these animals had been cooked and eaten, perhaps recalling the 'Cannibal Hymn' of the Pyramid texts describes the King eating the gods to acquire their power. By the 26th Dynasty' however, the whole animal was being properly mummified, as was mother of the Apis. The last known example of a Apis burial was during the time of Cleopatra VII.

The Serapeum was discovered by Auguste Marriette. He came to Egypt to collect Coptic manuscripts but was prevented from doing so by the authorities because manuscripts had been stolen in the past. Going to Saqqara, he found a buried avenue of sphinxes, which led to the Serapeum, which he then excavated, despite not having permission to do so — ironically, as he later became the founder of the Egyptian Antiquities Service, and jealously guarded the states right to control all excavation!

It is always a pleasure to hear our own Chairman speak and the Winter Party was another success.

To: Dr Aidan Dodson
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PLEASE RETURN THIS FORM BY 14 JUNE 2004

Please send me/us tickets for the ESB **Summer Party**, @ £7.00 each, and enclose a cheque for £..... and a **stamped addressed envelope**.

Name

Address

..... e-mail

Egypt Society of Bristol Programme 2004/5

Tues 18 May 2004: Lecture, *Making stone statues and cutting reliefs and hieroglyphs into hard materials*
Denys Stocks

Tues 22 June 2004

- Lecture, *Flinders Petrie & the Politics of Archaeology*
Dr Bill Manley, National Museums of Scotland and Universities of Glasgow & Liverpool
- Summer Party (at 1945 — see booking form)

Tues 12 October 2004: Lecture, *Seeing ancient Egypt from above: Satellites and survey in Middle Egypt and the Delta*. Sarah Parcak, Department of Archaeology, University of Cambridge.

Thursday 28 October 2004: University of Bristol Amelia Edwards Memorial Lecture,
The tomb of Meryneith at Saqqara and its surroundings
Dr Maarten Raven, National Museum of Antiquities, Leiden, Netherlands
Reception Room, Wills Memorial Building at 1715
NB: this is a University event, not organized by the ESB, but all are very welcome.

Tues 2 November 2004; Lecture: *First Millenium Temple Platforms at Saqqara: the archaeological work of the Saqqara Geophysical Survey Project, 2001-2003*.
Dr Dan Lines, University of Birmingham.

Saturday 20 November 2004: City of Bristol Museum & Art Gallery — New Egyptian Gallery Fundraiser
The Rediscovery of Ancient Egypt: the Pioneering Years
Speakers: John Ruffle, Dr Patricia Usick, Dr Aidan Dodson & Dr John Taylor
University of Bristol Chemistry Theatre 2, Cantocks Close, Bristol 8, from 0945 to 1645
NB: This is a Bristol Magpies event; tickets £25 (whole day)/£15 (half day); see Chairman for booking details.

Mon 6 to Tues 14 December 2004: Trip to Middle Egypt, including: *Biahmu; Hawara; Medinet Maadi; Deir el-Bersha; Tuna el-Gebel; Ashmunein; Tell el-Amarna; Mallawi Museum; Meir; Beni Hasan; Speos Artemidoros; Zawiyet Sultan; Tihna el-Gebel; Dishasha*. Cost for person sharing a room £1,103 (an 8% saving on the regular price). Please contact the Chairman for further details and bookings.

Tues 11 January 2005: Lecture, title TBA.
Diane Bergman, Griffith Institute, Ashmolean Museum, Oxford

Tues 15 February 2005:

- Annual General Meeting (at 1830)
- Lecture, *Ramesses II's Poisoned Legacy*.
Dr Aidan Dodson, Department of Archaeology, University of Bristol
- Winter Party (at 1945)

ESB lectures are held in Lecture Room 1, Department of Archaeology, 43 Woodland Road, Clifton, at 1845. Doors open at 1815. Street parking available in the vicinity. Disabled access is available.

Tues 22 March 2005: Lecture, *Siting an Ancient Egyptian Warlord: Ankhthifi and his Tomb near Moalla*
Dr Mark Collier, Lecturer in Egyptology, University of Liverpool

Tues 24 May 2005; Lecture, *Tracking and identifying artistic hands in Middle Kingdom sculpture*
Dr Marcel Marée, British Museum

Tues 28 June 2005

- Lecture, *Mummies, Asps ... and far too much eye make-up: Ancient Egypt in the Movies*
John Johnston
- Summer Party (at 1945)

Accommodation for members from distant parts

The ESB has members all over the country, who have difficulty in getting home from meetings. A limited number of University rooms are available nearby, at a current B&B cost of £52 (single)/£65 (twin). Bookings may be made on 0117-954 5555 or Hawthorns-reception@bristol.ac.uk.