



The Egypt Society of Bristol

NEWS UPDATE

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Issue 15

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Chairman's Dig

First, a sincere apology for the long gap between Issue 14 and this new newsletter. The problem has been essentially one of not enough hours in the day – with a little matter of multiple crises in the day-job, and seeing no fewer than two new books through the press. Many of you will have seen the 'baby' produced by the Treasurer and myself in bookshops or the latest Ancient History Book Club magazine (*The Complete Royal Families of Ancient Egypt* [Thames & Hudson, £29.95]); any time now *The Royal Tombs of Great Britain: an Illustrated History* (Duckworth, £25) should also hit the shops

We have not been the only ESB members hitting the publication trail. Andrew Chubb has recently published an intriguing volume on the tomb of Alexander the Great: for those wishing to purchase a copy at a discount should see the leaflet enclosed with this newsletter (for e-mail-only members, copies are available at meetings).

Another reason for delay in producing the newsletter has been two recent trips to Egypt. One was September's to Luxor, which took the form of a specialist tour of sites, combined with lectures on related topics. Speakers included the Chairman, Professors Alan Lloyd, Kent Weeks and Erhard Graefe, together with Dylan Bickerstaffe and David Rohl, and the special sites visited included the tombs of Sety I, Senenmut and Pinudjem II (AKA The Royal Cache). A number of members attended, and everyone agreed that the format was very worthwhile: next year there will be a similar gathering in Cairo, with more planned for future years.

The other trip was, of course, the ESB's own jaunt to Middle Egypt. A dozen members took part, and had a superb time, travelling to some of the most remote sites in the Nile valley, some of which were even new to the Chairman (e.g. Istabl Antar, near Beni Hasan, where we see our group opposite)! Provided that the slides come out OK, he will be providing a travelogue after the AGM (a change from the previously-notified topic) – but a few highlights must be mentioned. Near the top of the list must be dawn at the tombs at Deshasha – in spite of the key not being there! Also, the sepulchres at the wonderfully atmospheric site of Meir, and the spectacle of certain individuals preferring to bounce along in a tractor-trailer and leaving our 4WD half-empty at Medinet Maadi. As for the Fraser Tombs near Tihna el-Gebel But for many, the day-an-a-half spent at Tell el-Amarna was the high-point. We managed to see pretty well all there was to see, time alone stopping us from having every tomb unlocked!

Shortly before leaving for the latter, a number of ESB members were involved in a fund-raising day-



school in support of the new Egyptian gallery at the City Museum, run by the Bristol Magpies. The old gallery will be closing soon, to be replaced by one nearly twice the size and with far more objects on show. Sue will be telling the ESB all about its progress later in the year.

Speaking of the lecture programme, I am beginning the task of putting together the rest of the 2005/6 schedule, which (*inshallah!*) should be complete in time for the next mailing – which I *promise* will appear in a more timely manner than this one

Included in this mailing is a subscription renewal form: should anyone wish to make filling one in a matter of the past, please ask the Treasurer for a Banker's Order form. There are also a calling notice for the AGM and a form for the Winter Party. The latter will of course include a raffle – and our thanks go to Dr Peter Miller and Reg Clark for donations to recent raffles.



Lecture reports

30 March 2004: Aidan Dodson: *The Egyptian Royal Family*.

Due to family commitments, our expected speaker, Dr Mark Collier was unable to come to Bristol, therefore the Chairman presented the above lecture as a taste of his new book. Tonight we looked at various aspects of the relationship in the ancient royal families.

Starting with the King who was also a god. The King was believed to be sired by a God and this is illustrated in tomb drawings where the god takes over the body of

the current King, therefore the child conceived was the son of Ra or Amun and the god Thoth announced the birth of the new King.

For some time it was thought the Royal line passed down through the female and this could have explain the reason for marriages between bother and sister. This is now thought not to be the case. During times of political stress the King appears to have married his sisters, maybe to strengthen and reaffirm the dynasty. When the reigning King dies, there was a formal proclamation about the new King and a formal gathering and burial of the old King, the burial having been carried out by the heir. The King Sobekhotep III was not of Royal blood at all. The usual description for the father of the King is 'God's father' and only once has the title 'King's father' been found.

Moving on to the Queen, the first known tomb for a royal wife is from the 1st Dynasty. During the reign of Pepi I there appeared to be some scandal in the Royal family. From the tomb of Weni his "autobiography" states he was appointed to "try the Royal wife" during some form of legal proceeding against her. As with a lot of the really tantalising snippets of information about ancient Egypt, no detail of the circumstances or the "crime" were given. A French team has been excavating the tombs of Pepi II's wives, one of which had not been used. Could this have been meant for the disgraced wife who may have ended up in an unmarked grave?

Nefertiti is a very prominent Royal wife being shown alongside her husband Akanaten, both as wife and in battle smiting the enemy. Nefertari is also a very visible Royal wife, being shown in temple statues the same size as her husband Rameses. Rameses cemented the relationship between Egypt and the Hitites by taking the daughter of the Hitite King, Maathorneferura, as one of his wives.

On to the Royal children. In the early periods, the sons and grandsons of Kings very often held the top jobs in the state. After the 4th Dynasty this practice disappeared. By the Middle Kingdom, only three royal sons are known. By the New Kingdom, sons of the King reappear and are depicted in tombs as "Lords of the West". Princes were brought up in the Memphis area where there were many recreational activities for them to do, the area being more lush than it is today. They were then sent to court officials to be trained in the role they would play in their adult life, the King often having many sons who could not all follow him as King.

By the 19th Dynasty the Royal family were seen more often in the art of the day, Akhenaten's family were shown in a previously unknown informal style where the King is seen playing with his children. Rameses II is well known for the number of sons he had, with carvings showing a procession of princes.

As with sons, daughters were depicted more often after the 4th Dynasty. By the Middle Kingdom they are only really known from their burials and in the 12th Dynasty Princess Neferuptah is the earliest known princess to have her name shown in a cartouche and have her own pyramid. This may have been as she was being groomed to become the first female Pharaoh, but her sister claims this distinction instead. Hatshepsut's

daughter in the 18th Dynasty is the first Royal daughter not known also as Royal wife. From Akanaten through to Rameses daughters appeared more often in drawings and statues. With the coming of the Ptolomaic period daughters married into the Hellenistic families and the Egyptian families gradually disappeared.

Our thanks go to Aidan for stepping into the breach (actually he never misses an opportunity to publicise his latest book).

Margaret Curtis

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18 May 2004 - Denys Stocks: *Making stone statues and cutting reliefs and hieroglyphs into hard materials.*

As an apprentice engineer, Denys was taught the same skills that enabled the Ancient Egyptians to make their statues and carvings. Since 1977, he has set out to prove by experimental archaeology how they did it with the materials they had available. Using an array of materials, reeds, copper/bronze chisels, serrated and flat edged saws, flint, chert, wooden mallets, sand and various stone pounders/rubbers, the Egyptians could easily produce their wonderful statues etc. The key, Denys, stressed was their knowledge of the materials and the appropriate tool to use. Using a bronze chisel on hard limestone is useless as the metal is too soft causing an unnecessary loss of expensive metal. Stone hardness is measured on a scale with diamond (10) being the hardest with other typical Egyptian stones as follows: calcite (3.5), slate (4), quartzite (6), granite, dolerite, porphyry and basalt (7).

At Aswan, the evidence at the unfinished obelisk shows that round pounders were used to wear away the granite and experiments with dolerite pounders have proved this was the technique used. Techniques suggested by evidence from statues etc have also been demonstrated in practice. Striations on statues like the Menkaure triads suggested long flat edged saws of up to 9ft in length. This has been proved possible by experiments in smelting/casting metals and then using the saws with stone weights and sand as an abrasive agent to similar effect. Another simple but effective tool was the tubular drill, consisting of a wooden core with copper wrapped around it with sand again used as an abrasion agent. When placed on a surface and weighted down and a rotary motion enabled by using a bow this could drill small holes (for eyes) or for coring vases and even removing the inside mass of Khufu's sarcophagus. Denys has calculated that a drill of 11cm diameter was used for this with 18 drill widths across the sarcophagus and that 4700 deben worth of copper would have been used up in this task. Essential tools for intricate reliefs were flint scrappers (as these are sharp enough even for use on granite), chisels and punches (demonstrated by stippling on reliefs) and a mud created of sand with copper flecks (a waste product of drilling) used as an abrasive paste.

Denys's experiments over the years have proved conclusively that the Egyptians were experts in using their native materials to make beautiful statues and

reliefs. They had to produce many different tools, using extensive mining and quarrying operations, industries for casting metals and a network of transportation to enable them to do this. A fascinating lecture on the importance of finding out how the Egyptians created their monuments and not just the usual why they created them.

Nicki Blake



22 June 2004 - Dr Bill Manley: *Flinders Petrie and the Politics of Archaeology*.

For this, the last lecture of the 2003/4 season, Bill Manley described how Flinders Petrie's political views could colour the way he viewed the past and the discoveries he made.

Flinders Petrie is probably one of the most well known names in archaeology, not least of all for the discovery in 1908 of the only completely intact burial of what was thought to be a woman of the Royal family. But we jump ahead!

The Politics - In 1939 at the age of 85, Petrie summarised his career in a publication called "The Makings of Egypt" in which he made the sweeping statement that Egypt did not originate new civilisations, but their periods of greatness was directly the cause of immigrants and invaders. He cited two main arguments for this, one that it takes two races to start a new civilisation and two, civilisations all begin by a decadent race being taken over by a less civilised race, thereby shaking up the decadent civilisation. From this he reasoned an archaeologist was best placed to comment on the future, from having such an understanding of the past. Why did Petrie reason all of this? Bill explained it was probably because of his political beliefs.

Born in Kent in 1853, Petrie was a poorly child, suffering from various illness which prevented him from attending school. He taught himself by reading his engineer father's books and in time became a talented surveyor. Because of his surveying talents, Petrie became interested in the measurements of ancient monuments, believing they held some ancient truths. At the age of 20 he surveyed Stonehenge.

In 1880 Petrie went to Egypt to survey the Pyramids at Giza and during this time lived in empty tombs, not wishing to become involved with the local people and customs. His interest in Egypt was probably because of its connection with the bible. His father was a very religious man so no doubt the young Petrie was brought up in a religious household. Once he started excavating he became known for his detailed and careful work, the pottery charts he devised are still used today.

In 1891 he discovered Greek Mycenaean pottery in Egypt, which appeared to prove his point about outsiders, in particular, Europeans, influencing the development of Egypt. Following this he became interested in depictions of foreign races in Egyptian art, particularly the faces.

During 1900 to 1920 Petrie wrote many political pamphlets, Socialism having real historical meaning for

him. One of his theories to stop the decline of a civilisation was to pay the working classes not to have children, therefore stopping the decline before a more robust nation was able to take over. This, apparently, was not an extreme view in his time.

The Discovery - We now return to the discovery of the mummy in 1908. The tomb was found in Dra'Abu-Naga near the Valley of the Kings, where the modern road leading into the Valley is today. The body was that of a woman, buried with a child of about 2 years old. Petrie described the find as "a perfect burial of about the 17th Dynasty". He went on to say "there was no valuable article in it". As was common in those days, he completely removed the burial the same day and unwrapped the body. Bill Manley has discovered subsequently that at this time Petrie had broken his leg, so it is likely someone else, probably his wife, dealt with the excavation, made drawings and may have taken the finds to him.

Once the excavation was complete he contacted his sponsors, at that time the South Kensington Museum, but they did not want it. It was offered to the Scottish National Museum and the discovery ended up in Edinburgh. Although Petrie had said there was nothing of value in the find, quantities of gold items were uncovered, the largest piece being the gold inlaid feather pattern coffin of the woman. In fact, the burial produced the largest group of gold objects ever to leave Egypt. Beautiful jewellery was also found, including a heavy gold collar and quality pottery items containing food as well as items of ivory from Syria.

The burial was carefully done, containing items of excellent quality, obviously a woman of importance. But who was she? Sadly, the only writing found on the body was broken off just where the name should have been! One item made of faience, which was originally thought to have been a fly whisk is more likely a sceptre, a sign of royalty and power.

Recent facial reconstruction of the woman has shown she is not typically Egyptian and her bones show she grew up eating a Nubian diet. Therefore she could have been a Nubian princess who married into the Egyptian Royal family to forge a stronger alliance. Sadly there is no evidence to show if the child was hers.

In 1909 the exhibit disappeared into obscurity, only being described as "a pretty burial of a woman with her knick knacks"! This has now been described as the most important burial to have left Egypt. Therefore, why did Petrie describe it as having nothing of value?

Petrie knew she was a foreign woman, although did not know she was from Nubia. This did not fit into his theory of the major influences in Egypt coming from Europeans. Also the 17th Dynasty was not one of the highest points of Egyptian history, therefore this did not prove his point of a civilisation only rising to greater heights by the influence of a stronger, outside civilisation. His general political beliefs were colouring the way he saw the past, the only items he would have considered valuable would be those proving his view. How easy it is to colour an interpretation of the past with what we personally believe. It also proves it is valuable to know something about the archaeologist who draws

conclusions about discoveries and I'm sure this is still relevant today.



2 November 2004 -- Dr Dan Lines: *Saqqara Geophysical Survey Project*

Dan opened his lecture by explaining the method of investigation used by the Project at their large site within the Saqqara area. A magnetometer is used, an instrument which measures magnetic field strength up to 5-10 metres beneath the earth. Areas to be searched are marked out in squares and the magnetometer is walked over the area taking up to 3,500 readings in each square.

Different materials give out different magnetic readings, therefore mud brick structures show up in areas of sand. Readings can be downloaded to a laptop in the field and the results can be viewed immediately. Some real excavations are combined with the readings, but these are kept to a minimum.

Because the area the Project has been given to survey is a large one, for this lecture Dan concentrated on an area of First Millennium temple platforms. A recent survey revealed a structure with 2 stone plinths. Some minor excavations revealed limestone steps and a platform where a temple had once stood. The steps

were unexpected as limestone does not show up from the readings taken.

One area mapped showed a very dense concentration of remains of temple platforms. Unfortunately, these cannot be cleared due to a ruling by the Antiquities authorities in Egypt and it must be very frustrating to know they lie just beneath the sand.

Unfortunately, there is no way of proving to which Gods the temples were dedicated as only a very few small articles have been found; some pottery vessels were found buried upside down. Various domestic items of pottery have been uncovered, probably as the buildings were used as homes when they were no longer used as temples after the late 2nd or 3rd century BC.

The ESB has been host to several speakers dealing with the Saqqara area and Dan demonstrated with his lecture there is a great deal still to find at this site.

Margaret Curtis

The sharp-eyed will note the lack of a report on Sarah Parcak's excellent lecture, Seeing ancient Egypt from above: Satellites and survey in Middle Egypt and the Delta, on 12 October. This in no way reflects on Sarah's presentation, rather the absence of our usual reporter, and the indisposition of the planned substitute on the night!

Egypt Society of Bristol Programme 2004/5

Tues 11 January 2005: Lecture: *F.Ll. Griffith & C.E. Wilbour: Two very different Egyptologists & two very similar Libraries.*

Diane Bergman, Griffith Institute, Ashmolean Museum, Oxford

Tues 15 February 2005:

- Annual General Meeting (at 1830)
- Lecture, *The Bit in the Middle: the ESB on tour in December 2004.*
Dr Aidan Dodson, Department of Archaeology, University of Bristol
- Winter Party (at 1945)

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, University of London
- Summer 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.

Accommodation for members from distant parts

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.

Also, our member Nigel Venner is generously offering ESB members a 25% discount on rooms at the Castle of Comfort Country House Hotel, Dodington, Nether Stowey, Bridgwater (01278 741264/reception@castle-of-comfort.co.uk: normal rates from £38 single and £95 double).