



The Egypt Society of Bristol NEWS UPDATE

Issue 22

November 2007

Chairman's Dig

As now seems traditional, I have to begin this newsletter with my apologies for the time taken since the last one: all I can hold up is the fact that I have, since the beginning of September, been away in Egypt, Italy, Scotland and the Netherlands, as well as trying to meet various writing deadlines!

Speaking of deadlines, you should all now be aware that the City Museum & Art Gallery's Egyptian gallery is now fully open, and the ESB's contribution (in the form of the conservation of the coffin of Petihuty) is acknowledged at the entrance:

ABOUT THE GALLERY

This gallery opened in 2007. It was created by staff from Bristol's Museums, Galleries & Archives, which is run by Bristol City Council.

We gratefully acknowledge support from:
Renaissance in the Regions
MLA Partnerships
The Bristol Magpies
The Egypt Society of Bristol
The Friends of Bristol Art Gallery

With special thanks to our advisors:
Dr Aidan Dodson, University of Bristol
Dr Stephen Quirke, The Petrie Museum
Dr John Taylor, The British Museum

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I am now involved in another new South Western Egyptian display – at Plymouth City Museum and Art Gallery, and will let everyone know when this opens.

Another new Egyptian display is, of course, the 'King Tut' show at the O2 (AKA 'The Dome') in London. I was fortunate to be invited to a preview a few days before it opened, and can report that they have made a good job of the display. It is spread over fifteen galleries, giving far more circulation space than when I last saw the exhibition in Bonn – indeed, some rooms have just one object. Also, labels are duplicated at both the top and the bottom of cases, so that they can be read while waiting to get closer.

One thing to emphasise, however, is that while billed as a 'Tut' show, the majority of the objects are from other tombs in the Valley of the Kings, in particular from that of Tutankhamun's great-grandparents, Yuya and Tjuiu. Indeed, the largest single object is Tjuiu's coffin, accompanied by her funerary-mask. This was made clear in the earliest showings of the exhibition in Switzerland and Germany, but 'Tut-hype' took over one the show crossed the Atlantic! Also, since it left Europe, the exhibition has lost the superb catalogue that originally accompanied it, visitors now being restricted to a dumbed-down, over-designed, volume that cannot be recommended.

That said, the exhibition is certainly well worth seeing, with even those who have seen the objects in Cairo benefiting from seeing them in well-lit and reflection-free cases for the first time! In many ways, it is the Yuya and Tjuiu material that should be the real draw, as it has never left Egypt before, and gives a fine impression of what those in the highest level of the nobility had in their tombs.

So, the ESB visit to Greenwich in March will be a real treat. It is now fully-booked, but if anyone drops out, we will maintain a reserve list – so if, on reflection, you would like to come, drop us an e-mail and you will be added to the list.

Frighteningly, in January it will be ten years since the ESB was founded. To mark the occasion, we are producing a limited run of commemorative polo-shirts, bearing the ESB logo and the legend '1998-2008'. They cost £15 each and can be pre-ordered with the enclosed form. The form also asks for suggestions as to any other items that members might want to buy in the future. This would be very helpful for planning purposes, as there are usually minimum order numbers and economies of scale for such things.

Look forward to seeing you all at the next meeting, *inshallah!*



Tales from the Treasury

Membership renewals are due in January: please see the enclosed form –and think about getting reduced-cost membership by taking out a standing order!



Lecture reports

by Margaret Curtis

8 May 2007: *The Columns of Egypt*, by Peter Phillips

What is the first thing you think about when Egyptian architecture is mentioned? More often than not it will be the pyramids. Peter's talk this evening brought the many and varied columns of Egypt to our attention.

Temples are often plain, but the columns are nearly always more interesting, being carved with lavish designs. This wasn't just to make the roof supports look pretty, but the designs were meant to represent the plants on the mound of creation, in fact a garden of papyrus in which the gods could live. The designs used were symbolic of the regions of Egypt with the lily capital generally used in the South and the Lotus in the North.

Peter described the different styles of column used in palaces and in domestic areas and the periods in which these designs were popular. The earliest columns were actually made of reeds supporting only light roof structures, later wooden columns appeared.

The simplest design was the rectangular column formed when digging out a rock tomb and leaving columns of rock standing. These could be developed further by cutting away the corners to create an eight sided column. Cut again, and a 16-sided column appears, known as a 'protodoric' column. These were not true Doric columns but were very similar.

Round columns often had designs at the top in the form of plants, these are known as 'campaniform-papyrus' columns. The column shaft was carved with three lines which represented the sides of a true papyrus stem. There was also a papyrus cluster column which was shown 'bound' together with a carved 'rope'. The shaft bulged at the bottom, just as the real plant does. Variations on this style were the papyrus bud column and lotus cluster column. Columns were also carved to represent tent poles which were wider at the top just as a wooden tent pole would be. Later, some showed the head of a deity at the top, very often Hathor.

The Osiride pillar is another form of column showing a statue of the King standing against a square column.

There are also composite columns, where features of several designs appear together.

The palmiform column, named because of the palm leaf carving, is the most enduring design, seen more often than any other throughout the many dynasties.

Peter went on to describe how the designs progressed through the centuries. In the 3rd Dynasty the earliest stone columns appeared, copying wooden columns and examples of this type can be seen at Saqqara. These were almost fake columns carved against the wall and not bearing any weight. Some unusual columns can be seen at Saqqara which may have been inspired by the buildings of the Marsh Arabs in Iraq.

In the 4th Dynasty there was a complete change of architecture as confidence in building in stone

grew. The first examples of monolithic granite columns appeared.

In the 5th Dynasty the first examples of Palmiform columns were seen. Peter put forward the idea the design represented ostrich feathers and not palm leaves, as these were considered more expensive and unusual. Later versions are definitely palms and a Roman column shows the leaves with dates and the distinctive design of the palm trunk. During this period the first stone papyrus-cluster and lotus-cluster designs appeared. Square and round columns were still popular.

During the 6th Dynasty square and round columns were still seen in the provinces but these examples are not as well carved. There was a preference for geometric forms during the First Intermediate Period. It is from the end of this period that the first evidence exists – in the form of columns – of a temple to Amun at Karnak.

After the period of chaos during the First Intermediate Period, in the Middle Kingdom there was a return to the old styles. This was a great period in Egyptian history where early protodoric and the first Osiride columns appeared. The plant designs were more rare but lotus cluster columns can be seen in domestic buildings. The Second Intermediate Period saw poorly executed imitations of such classical designs.

The New Kingdom again drew inspiration from traditional architecture from the past, but it also was during this period that the first Hathor headed column appeared. The only known tent pole columns in stone are found in the Festival Hall of Thutmose III. The king spent a lot of time with his armies on campaign so this design would have been appropriate for him. The Campaniform columns also reappeared, not having been seen since the Old Kingdom. The 'cluster of cluster' also column appeared which has only been found at Amarna.

Papyrus cluster columns were used throughout the 18th dynasty and the papyrus bud column evolved to provide more surfaces for the Ramesside kings to proclaim their activities. Osiride columns are very typical of the Ramesside period. Square pillars are still very much in use, particularly at Abydos. Peter feels this type of column is used in very holy places and is associated with death.

From the Third Intermediate Period through to the Ptolemaic Period, the various styles of columns evolved and fell in and out of fashion. Many of the columns from the Roman period were left unfinished. This showed the columns were carved from the bottom to the top, whereas previously carving was done from top to bottom. This is probably due to the fact that wood was more readily available to build scaffolding.

Following the departure of the Romans, Egypt collapsed and Coptic style buildings appeared with early Christian columns carved with distinctive basketwork tops. Some of the work is very like the stonework in Durham Cathedral and Celtic carving appears very similar to Egyptian work.

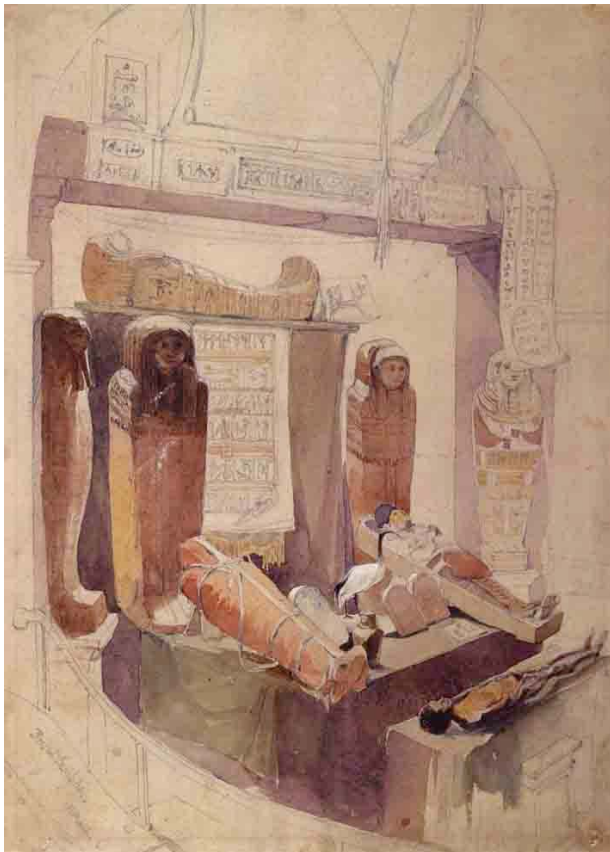
After this interesting and detailed lecture we won't look at the columns of Egypt in the same way again: particularly the Egyptian style columns used at Sainsbury's Homebase in Earls Court, London!

**19 June 2007: *Bristol's New Egyptian Gallery*,
by Sue Giles, Bristol's City Museum and Art Gallery**

Tonight's lecture covered a subject much closer to home - the new gallery in Bristol Museum.

Sue opened her talk with a brief history of the Egyptian collection in the museum starting in 1823 when the Bristol Institution set up premises in Park Street. Although primarily interested in geology and natural history, the Institution found itself collecting Egyptian material by way of donations. The tenth item listed in the catalogue is 'a fine mummy' donated by John Webb of Leghorn in Italy. Then, in 1824, Thomas Gerrard donated another mummy which he subsequently unwrapped, a popular form of entertainment at the time. How he came to be in possession of a mummy in the first place is unknown, although at that time the most popular souvenir of a trip to Egypt was a mummy or two.

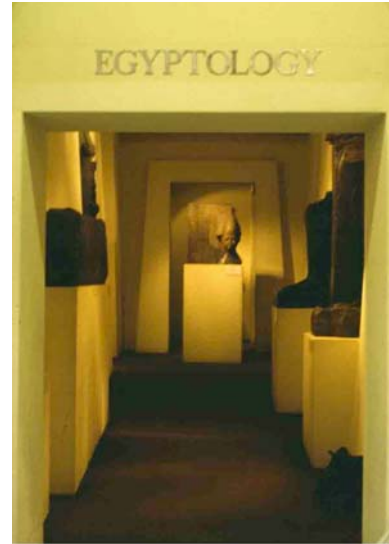
Garrard donated two more mummies in 1834, and one was unwrapped in 1834; a water colour of the time shows this event, including various coffins and stelae that had been donated to the Institution by this date. One of the unwrapped bodies was destroyed in 1906, two of the others disappeared, two coffins ended up in Plymouth, and two and half coffins were lost to woodworm, although a rare 18th Dynasty 'white' coffin remains.



The Egyptian collection in 1834

The collection once boasted a mummified crocodile, but this was destroyed in the 1950s as it 'took up too much room'. It is thought to have been broken up and put in the museum boiler.

Over the years the collection grew by donations from collectors, tourists, the British School of



Entrance to the 1981/2 gallery

Archaeology in Egypt and the Egypt Exploration Society who donated Horemkeniset. One of the most important donations was a collection of drawings from the Belzoni excavation of the tomb of Sethy I, now the subject of a temporary exhibition in the Watercolour Gallery. The whole Egyptian collection now stands at some 10,000 pieces.

Four years ago it was decided to commence phase 2 of the gallery. Phase 1, the then-current gallery, was built in 1981/2. It was soon discovered that the new part of the gallery would not sit well with the old, particularly with regard to modern thinking on the preservation of objects. It was therefore decided to create a completely new gallery.

It was finally agreed to display items to tell the story of people in Egypt from birth to death and to re-birth by way of their belief in the afterlife. The gallery is divided into two by the 'river Nile' with one side displaying belief and life in ancient Egypt and the other side displaying death and the afterlife.

A great deal of thought was given to the gallery and how the information should be presented before firm designs were drawn up, including the sensitive subject of displaying bodies. £100,000 was saved by the museum making their own display cases, rather than buying them in. Much thought went into the 500 items chosen to be displayed, many of which have not been shown before. Some of the items are tiny whilst others required heavy lifting gear.



Entrance to the 2007 gallery

Conservation is a major part of the gallery and many items were cleaned and conserved before being put on display. Photographs were found of the boat models in the collection taken at the time they were discovered in the tomb, which enabled the models to be put together in the right order. A wooden statue of a cat was X-rayed and a mummified kitten was discovered inside. Our own Aidan Dodson has been involved translating the names of hundreds of shabtis.

Sue's lecture, punctuated by loud claps of thunder and pouring rain, whetted everyone's appetite for a visit to the gallery as soon as possible.

[Note: much of the material from the lecture will be found in an article by Aidan and Sue in the latest edition of the magazine *Kmt: a Modern Journal of Ancient Egypt* – if you do not subscribe to this and are interested in seeing a copy, please see the *Chairman*.]

16 October 2007: *The Sphinx Revealed: A forgotten record of pioneering excavations*
by Dr Patricia Usick, British Museum

This report was prepared with thanks to Dr Usick for the use of her notes.

When Henry Salt sent off his report on the 1817 excavations at Giza, he cannot have foreseen that the work, carefully prepared in Egypt and painstakingly edited in London, would never be published as he had planned. The work was to be entitled: *Sphingographia, or Drawings descriptive of the result of the Excavation made at the great Sphinx of Ghizeh in the year 1818(sic), together with a memoir on the Excavation of the Sphinx, by Henry Salt Esquire, His Majesty's Consul General in Egypt, to which are added Drawings of some antiquities found in some of the sepulchres near the Pyramids, with Explanations* (phew!). Instead, the manuscript and drawings remained unstudied until their rediscovery almost 200 years later in the Egyptian archives of the British Museum. The work was bound in two volumes: one the text of the Memoir and the other an Atlas for the drawings. Parts of the text were published no fewer than three times three times, but the important links between Salt's plans and references, illustrations and text, were omitted, and as a consequence his discoveries became impossible to locate on the ground.

Salt, a trained artist, had accompanied Viscount Valentia on a tour of India, Ceylon, Abyssinia and Egypt. Arriving in Egypt as Consul General in 1816, he sponsored many excavators (including many of those by Giovanni Belzoni) and amassed important collections of antiquities, many of which came to the British Museum. In Egypt Salt travelled the Nile and made many other drawings of monuments and inscriptions which he hoped, but failed, to publish.

Salt's memoir was the dramatic account of the discoveries made by the Genoese Mercantile captain Giovanni Caviglia at the Great Pyramid of Giza, including the first clearance of the Sphinx since ancient times. Caviglia arrived in Egypt in 1816 at the

age of 46 and worked at the pyramids of Giza for over two decades. A religious man with an interest in mysticism and the occult, he devoted his working life to a quest to reveal the mysteries of the Pyramids.

Caviglia uncovered a vast (now demolished) Roman staircase and esplanade as well as fragments of the Sphinx's missing beard and the divine cobra on its brow. He and his workmen defied the cascading sands to dig out a great trench before



the Sphinx, bringing to light an ancient open-air chapel in which were hieroglyphic stelae, Greek inscriptions, and sphinx and lion sculptures. Salt and the merchant banker Samuel Briggs underwrote the expenses and Salt enthusiastically recorded the work. According to the Memoir, the work cost Salt 18,000 piastres, or £450. Salt's descriptions are pioneering archaeology in their attention to detail at a time when many antiquities were leaving the ancient sites without any record of their provenance. With hieroglyphics still undeciphered, Salt's accurate copies of the inscriptions, both Greek and hieroglyphic, are particularly valuable.

Salt's landscape views of the desolate Giza tombs are very evocative. The many lively scenes which he copied from the Old Kingdom tombs capture the character of the fine reliefs. Drawings show the excavations in progress and the finds in situ, and he attempted a reconstruction of the Sphinx. Salt's ground plan assigned numbers to the 'Mausoleums' (i.e. mastabas) he investigated and these tombs, and elements of the wall scenes decorating them, can now be identified by their modern designations. According to his biographer Halls, it was to be the cost (presumably the expense of the drawings) which prohibited publication. Salt was not a wealthy man and relied on the sale of his collections of antiquities to provide him with a pension.

After several false starts the Memoir and drawings arrived in London in 1821 with a consignment of antiquities for the British Museum from Salt's first collection. As mentioned earlier, the contents of the Memoir have been published three times, but never in the fully complete form envisaged by Salt. The first appearance was as the source material for the 33-page article in the July 1818 issue of the *Quarterly Review*.

The second appearance came in 1834 when Halls, in his biography of Salt, confined himself to a 'very rapid sketch' of the discoveries since 'a detailed and finished account of his [Caviglia's] undertakings, written by Mr. Salt, and accompanied by numerous illustrations, is likely to be laid before the public.'

The third appearance is in the publication by Colonel R.W. Howard Vyse (1784-1853), who had travelled to Egypt and Syria in 1835. Initially, the now elderly and somewhat eccentric Caviglia had worked for him, but the two had an acrimonious falling-out, and from 1837 Vyse worked with the civil engineer John Shea Perring. By now Salt's manuscripts were in the possession of his patron, Lord Mountnorris.

The manuscript's text contains a 105-page hand-written description of the excavations in 1817. It is a fair copy but heavily annotated by the author and editors. The wide margins are full of Salt's own notes and comments. The manuscript has a travel story of its own, as beset by obstacles as that of many travellers in Egypt. The manuscript and drawings survived a complex journey to London. In 1817 Salt sent a first draft of the text (but not the drawings) back with Lt. Colonel Straton, an officer in the 6th Enniskilling Dragoons. The excavated finds were sent to the British Museum the same year. A year later, in 1818, Salt was planning to send the memoir and sketches back with William John Bankes, who returned to England in 1819, but evidently without

them as Salt then wrote they would now return with his servant Nathaniel Pearce. Pearce was in Alexandria awaiting a ship 'at the latter end of May 1820', presumably with the manuscripts, as well as antiquities for the British Museum. Tragically, Pearce never left Alexandria with his cargo, having been seized with a fever from which he died on 12th August 1820.

Salt evidently sent the manuscripts to London by a later shipment not long afterwards for it appears from the title page that the Memoir was in London by 1821. It was probably among the 'many drawings, sketches and memoirs' which Salt sent to Bingham Richards, his agent, in the autumn following Pearce's death.

Following the death of Lord Mountnorris in 1842, the manuscripts appear in the catalogue of the sale of the contents of his home, Arley Castle, Staffordshire, which took place on 6th December 1852. Among numerous original drawings by various different artists, including many by Salt, was Lot No. 1124: 'Memoir on the Pyramids and Sphinx, with upwards of seventy plans and sketches by Salt'. Although there is no record of their purchase, this is the museum's manuscript because the lot number is written in pencil on its title page.

Although Salt obtained a leave of absence to supervise the publication of his Memoir, pressure of work prevented his return to England and he was to die in office in 1827. Salt's name lives on through his Egyptian collections and Caviglia's name is remembered because many of his finds still bear the neatly written words 'Presented by Capt. Caviglia'. Samuel Briggs, the joint sponsor of the excavations, was less fortunate. His name was to be perpetuated through Caviglia naming one of the smaller Queen's pyramids as 'Mr Briggs' pyramid', but this has proved to be a more transitory fame.



NEW ANCIENT WORLD TOURS (AWT) BROCHURE NOW OUT

As you are aware, the Chairman regularly escorts tours for AWT, who also organised the trips to Egypt for the ESB and also for the Bristol Magpies. The 2008 brochure is now out, both on-line at <http://www.ancient.co.uk/> and in hard copy: the ESB has a limited number of copies available.

You may be particularly interested in two tours. One **departing 13 September** is led by the Chairman and Treasurer, and is to Middle Egypt, covering all the key sites of the area: Amarna, Sheikh Ibada, Fraser Tombs, Beni Hasan, Deir el-Bersha, Tuna el-Gebel, Ashmunein, - and the very rarely visited Meir, Qasr Qarun, Qasr el-Sagha and Dimai. Basic cost is £1,499 for 10 days; for full details see the Chairman or visit <http://www.ancient.co.uk/Z8123.aspx>.

The other – on which the Chairman and Treasurer are planning to be 'ordinary travellers' – leaves on **29 September** – and is the 'definitive' tour of the Western Desert oases, covering the lot: Kharga, Dakhla, Farafra, Bahariya and Siwa. Basic cost is £1,695 for 13 days; details again from the Chairman or at <http://www.ancient.co.uk/Z8126.aspx>.