



# The Egypt Society of Bristol

## NEWS UPDATE

Issue 24

May 2009

### Chairman's Dig

As usual, my ritual apologies for the excessive gap since the last newsletter .... Part of this has been the need to meet various publishing deadlines, in particular for a book on the end of the Eighteenth Dynasty, which should – *inshallah!* – be out in October from the American University in Cairo Press, entitled *Amarna Sunset: Nefertiti, Tutankhamun, Ay, Horemheb and the Egyptian Counter-Reformation*.

It is always good to see everyone at lecture meetings. We continue to try and book speakers as far in advance as possible to avoid diary clashes, and are now trying to work on a rolling basis rather than attempting to sort out a whole year in one fell swoop.

Below we include Amber's latest update on the City Museum's activities; for those interested in what is going on rather further afield, the President has pointed to a new e-newsletter from the Cairo Museum – just send an e-mail to [emcnewsletter@gmail.com](mailto:emcnewsletter@gmail.com) and ask to go on the mailing-list!

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



### Tales from the Treasury

As usual, this first newsletter since the AGM includes (on page 7) the income and expenditure account for 2008. As you can see, the increase in subscriptions last year has not given us the financial buffer that had been hoped. This is particularly due to higher-than-expected increases in portage charges made by the University, and also increases in travel costs for visiting speakers than we had planned for. We will try and avoid making further subscription increases, but it is probable that we will have to start charging for refreshments from January 2010. This will be done on the basis of an 'honesty box', with the charge set at £1.00 per person. As only some members are able to stay for refreshments this seems to be the most equitable approach to increasing revenue without raising subscription rates for another year or two.

As always, if there are any queries, please get in touch.



### Bristol's City Museum and Art Gallery- Egypt Collection Update

#### Reuniting the coffin of Iyhat



The coffin of Iyhat at Plymouth Museum was once in the collection of the Bristol Institution. It was given to Plymouth in 1919 but a few pieces remained at Bristol's City Museum and Art Gallery until November last year. There were a foot-piece from a coffin, a face from the lid of an outer coffin and 3 small wax figures still at Bristol (believed to be from the unwrapping of the mummy at the Institution in 1834). These pieces

have now been loaned to Plymouth for display with the inner coffin.

The new display at Plymouth will tell the story of this mummy and what is known of the unwrapping of it. You can also read a detailed history of the coffin in Aidan's recent article published in the *Journal of Egyptian Archaeology* (Volume 94 – available on-line at <http://www.plymouth.gov.uk/homepage/creativityandculture/museums/museumpcmag/museumcollections/museumhhcollections/museumiyhatandairy.htm>).

### Cartonnage Mask Conservation Project



A Roman Period cartonnage funerary mask has been in storage at the museum since at least 1910. It has a beautiful face but extensive historical damage to the top, back and sides. There are also numbers written on the face in pencil. There are no plans to display the mask so unfortunately it was not considered to be a priority conservation project. (The Museum of Bristol, planned to open in 2011, requires the full attention of most of the City Museum staff at present.) In light of this, an alternative plan was needed. A better, more stable mount was custom-made and the mask was carefully transported to the Conservation labs at Cardiff University. Over the next few years it will be worked on by post-graduate students.

The damage will be studied and repaired. However, as it is currently unknown what the pencil marks refer to, they are a part of the history of the object and they wouldn't be removed without being fully recorded, if they are removed at all.



### Belzoni Study Day

A 'Giovanni Belzoni and the Tomb of Sety I study day', organized by the Friends of Bristol's Museums, Galleries and Archives, was a great success in November. The speakers were Dr. Aidan Dodson, Peter Clayton, and Sue Giles and Harry Metcalf from the Museum. A selection of Belzoni's

paintings (from the Museum) and medals (from Peter Clayton) were available for closer study and there was some very interesting discussion. The event attracted people from all over the country and more than £750 was raised.

### **New Collections Database**

2008 saw the implementation of 'Emu' at the museum, a new collections management database. It is very powerful and has lots of potential. Multiple images are being uploaded, cross-referencing across sites etc. is much simpler and objects can be linked to each other, for example everything from the same tomb group. Not all of the Egyptian collection is on the database yet, but we're getting there! All the individual samples from the Bristol Mummy Project, unwrapped in 1981, are currently being registered. This includes bandages, organic material and insects.

It is hoped that an on-line version of the museum's database will be available from Summer 2009.

### **Researchers**

We have recently facilitated Egyptology researchers studying a wide variety of topics; for example, the shabtis of Pedamenope, Bronze Age Egyptian weaponry, 'Synchronising Absolute Scientific Dating and the Egyptian Historical Chronology' (using organic samples from the Bristol Mummy Project); and Predynastic artefacts from El-Amrah.

### **Egypt Gallery**

We have continued to receive very positive feedback about the gallery. More information is regularly added to the 'Explore and Respond' area and the 'Voices' project, whereby visitors add their own comments to object records is still very popular. If you haven't already done so, please come in and add your thoughts.

A future aim is to produce a guidebook to the gallery.

Amber Druce  
*Documentation Assistant of  
Ethnography & Foreign Archaeology*

### **Lecture Reports**

**13 May 2008 *Digging the Desert Frontier : Mining Pharaoh's Gem Stones***  
Dr Ian Shaw, University of Liverpool

We have all admired the beautiful jewellery of the ancient Egyptians, but have we given any thought to the people who mined the stones in the first place?

The working of semi-precious stones into items of personal adornment dates back to the 5th millennium BC and a wide range of stones could be found in the deserts of Egypt. Tonight Ian concentrated on the mining of amethyst found in Wadi el-Hudi, turquoise from Wadi Maghara and chalcedony from Gabel el-Asr.

Gems were valued, not only for their use in making jewellery, but they had their place in religion as well. Temple drawings show precious stones being offered to the Gods. Hathor is most frequently

connected with mining and she protected the workers when they travelled far away to the borders of the country.

Because the mining areas were often far from the main centres of Egyptian civilisation the miners came into contact with other peoples of the desert. Therefore, despite being far from home, they played an important part in the economy and society of Egypt. Although carvings have been found in these areas showing the typical 'smiting of enemies' scenes, Bedouin and Asiatics were often absorbed into the mining communities and worked alongside the Egyptian miners. Wadi el-Hudi, where amethyst was mined, was part of the development of Nubia and the Nubians were involved in mining the stones. Inscriptions and carvings on rocks show some of the workforce wearing feathers indicating they were different from the Egyptian peoples.

It was not only the geology and landscape which influenced the layout of mining settlements, but the potential dangers the miners faced. Sites have been found on hill tops and these have been small, tightly knit communities using their hilltop position for defence. In less hostile areas, the sites are more dispersed.

At the Serabit el-Khadim turquoise mines temples were discovered which are different in style from those found in populated areas of ancient Egypt. This is thought to be the result of contact with other desert peoples. A stela was found describing the expedition to locate precious stones, but no real settlement was found as it is thought the buildings were made of reeds which have long since decayed.

Chalcedony, of which carnelian is a variety, was quarried at Gebel el-Asr; gneiss, a black stone used only for statues of Kings was also found there. One of the most familiar statues made from this stone is the figure of Khafre with the guardian hawk at his neck, now in Cairo Museum.

We also know how the stones were excavated and worked. Hammer stones made of Basalt were discovered at Tell Ras Budran in south Sinai and tomb paintings show thread holes in beads being drilled out. The method has been recreated by archaeologists today and they have proved it works.

Tonight's lecture was yet another aspect of Egyptian civilisation and how the mining of semi-precious stones expanded the economy and the land boundaries. When we see the beautiful artefacts made from these precious stones we will appreciate the difficulties the ancient Egyptians encountered to obtain them in the first place.

**13 January 2009 *The Rediscovery of the South Asasif Necropolis at Thebes***  
Dr Elena Pischikova, American University in Cairo

The first lecture of 2009 told of the recent 25th and 26th Dynasty discoveries, and rediscoveries, in the area known as the South Asasif which is an area on the west bank at Luxor near the Ramesseum. The site had previously been excavated in 1922 and it was originally planned to look over the site again, but

so much was found that it was decided to completely re-excavate.

The area Dr Pischikova intended to excavate was not the easiest to get at. The first tomb to be excavated, that of Irtieru, a noble lady, was in a village under houses inhabited by a local family. Old photographs were available of the entrance to the tomb and showed it being used as a stable. To complicate matters even more, the house in question was owned by the Abd el-Rassul family. This family was notorious for its involvement in trading Egyptian artifacts and as the family connected with the discovery of the famous Royal Cache found in the 1870s.

The Egyptian authorities had intended to move the inhabitants of the village to a new site to enable excavation to be done and it took a great deal of diplomacy on Dr Pischikova's part and quantities of baksheesh to gain access whilst the house was still being used. The tomb under the house was being used as a pen for geese which were very aggressive when caught and moved out! On some days Ahmed Mamoud, the owner of the house, was welcoming and provided drinks of hot, very sweet, buffalo milk. And this was on very hot days during the summer. On other days he would not allow the team in as he considered the tomb to be his property and at one point Dr Zahi Hawass, Head of Egypt's Supreme Council of Antiquities, became involved to mediate. Eventually Ahmed Mamoud and his family were moved to a bigger house with more land in the new Qurna village and excavation was able to move faster.

The mud brick houses were taken down and the courtyard in front of the tomb, which had been used to pen animals over many years and which was two and a half meters deep in "organic" matter, was cleared. In the summer heat this proved to be a very smelly and unpopular task. Despite this, columns and side porticos were found. The side portico was badly cracked due to fluids from the animal pens draining into the site over the years. The first room to be discovered had been used as a kitchen and laundry room. The room contained inscriptions and a painted ceiling that was covered with soot from the fires. It was feared the soot would be ingrained into the plaster and impossible to remove, but cleaning was started and took 8 months to complete. The reward was a beautifully painted ceiling being revealed.

Further into the tomb was a pillared hall which had been used by the family as a bedroom. It was frightening to see from the photographs that most of the pillars had been removed and there was nothing supporting the ceiling, which could have collapsed on the sleeping family at any time. Temporary supports had to be put in place for the safety of the excavation team.

The team moved on into the second hall through a doorway which still retained colour along the lintel. Most of the pillars remained and there was a false door at the end of the room. The only item to be found by the team was found in this room – a small statue of a *ba*-bird which the Rassul family must have overlooked.

In this room the entrance to a burial chamber was found and the team started to excavate revealing

steps leading down to a vaulted chamber with remains of wall paintings and inscriptions from The Book of the Gates. The team found a scrawled message on the wall from the Rassul family which roughly translated as "don't bother looking for anything, the room is empty".

Just on the perimeter of the village was a large crack in the ground which had been used as the village rubbish dump. Although the team had been advised it was unlikely anything would be found, it was decided to go ahead and once again a great deal of unpleasant material had to be removed. This took four weeks.

Hopes were raised when a carved fragment was found and at week 6 a wall with carvings showing Karakhamun was discovered. The team continued down seven meters to floor level where a pillared hall was found. The ceiling had collapsed and there were many hundreds of pieces of stone fragments of carving which, in time, will all be pieced together again. The team were amazed to find a beautiful carving of a hunting dog, which has now become the symbol of the project.

The second hall was filled with debris, including many animal bones dating back to Coptic times. This room was heavily smoke damaged from a faience workshop that, in this case, could not be fully removed although the beautiful carvings can still be seen.

It was thought this tomb had been reused as the original owner's name had been removed in many places. It may have been reused by the Vizier Nespaqashuti: his mother had been buried nearby so he may have wished to be buried near her tomb. It seems the work may have been abandoned as the area was not stable and another tomb was built at Deir el-Bahari.

The third tomb Dr Pischikova wants to investigate is still to be excavated. This is thought to be the tomb of Karabaskin, Mayor of Thebes and priest of Amun, the first Kushite tomb on the west bank at Thebes. When the team showed interest in this tomb a crowd of local young people gathered outside saying it was their summer house. Apparently, they used it as a meeting place as it was the coolest place during the hot summer months. The team finally gained access but found the tomb had been completely destroyed and the debris level was very deep. A ramp was found, but the stone was in very bad condition following flood damage. Some shabtis were found but it was thought the tomb had been left unfinished. There is more work to do here in following seasons.

This first lecture of the new year was very well attended and we were able to enjoy the many photographs of the discoveries which portrayed the beauty of the finds much better than the words above. It was clear this had not been the easiest of digs, or the cleanest or sweet smelling, but well worth it with much more to be found.

Further information can be found at <http://www.southasasif.com> and if anyone is interested in putting together a very large jigsaw puzzle the team would be happy for you to take part in assembling the broken pieces of the fallen ceilings (Amber Druce will be doing so this summer, *inshallah!*).

**10 February 2009 Ancient Quarry Landscapes in Egypt: Forgotten and Endangered**  
Dr Elizabeth Bloxham, University College London

This was the night of 11th AGM of the Egypt Society of Bristol and, despite the recent very bad weather, was well attended and we applaud all our members who came along on a very cold evening.

Our speaker tonight raised the question of why these ancient quarries are forgotten and in danger of disappearing completely, particularly as so much information is yet to be discovered from them.

Previous excavations have concentrated on the ornamental stone aspect of the quarry sites, not the history of the place or the people who worked there and, in some cases, still work today.

Unfortunately, not all ancient quarries look like a quarry as we would recognize it. Some look like a jumble of stones in the sand or just the remains of spoil heaps. In the northern Fayyum area there are quarries on top of high hills which cannot be seen at all from the ground.

Khafre's Quarry, where the stone for the famous statue in the Cairo Museum came from is just a sandy landscape with stones of varying sizes lying on the surface of the desert. The stones for the first known statue of the Second Dynasty were just picked off the surface of the desert leaving pits in the ground which have long since filled with sand. The chosen stones were trimmed at the quarry site to a rough outline of the intended figure and, if not perfect, were discarded and left where they lay.

At Widan el-Faras, 80km south west of Cairo there are the remains of an 11km roadway. This is probably the earliest paved road of its kind, and leads to an ancient quay on the Fayyum Lake where the large stones were loaded on to boats to commence their journey to various sites along the Nile. In ancient times the lake shoreline was much closer to the quarry site than it is today which aided the transport of the stones by water.

Quarry sites can provide valuable information on climate change and the quest for water in ancient

times. Water was not brought in to a quarry site but wells were dug at the site and, surprisingly, water was found only about 1 m under the surface. Separate wells were dug for use by the animals.

The climate was wetter in ancient times and woods grew providing fuel for fires. Remains of goats, cattle, birds and fish have been found and sites were described in ancient times as the 'place of catching birds' and 'place of the fisher'. Obviously the landscape and climate was very different then.

These quarry sites are significant in that they tell the story of human occupation from early times through to the present and the search for one particular resource - stone. Hillsides have been found strewn with tools from as long ago as 150,000 years. Tools made from stone from particular quarries have been found up to 1,000 miles away from their original site.

Grinding stones from 18,000 years ago have been discovered showing that the way of life was changing to a more settled community growing corn. Down the years, the style of these stones has hardly changed.

There was then an explosion in ornamental stone work and rock art has been found dating back to pre-dynastic times. Over 300 panels of art have been found at one site, some of which can only be seen clearly when the sun is setting and the afternoon sun casts shadows of the faint outlines.

Why are these sites in danger and what threatens them today? Basalt continues to be quarried from the Old Kingdom quarries and some have been bulldozed and are lost forever. Thankfully, this has now been stopped. A new city is being built in Aswan which will see 100,000 people. No one considered the archaeology which would be lost, but one quarry in danger in this area is hoping for World Heritage status in order to protect it for the future.

Desert tourists are also a great threat to these quarries. They are not visiting the quarries, but drive over them whilst sightseeing. They also take pieces of pottery which are found on the surface or destroy the context of any find.

So, what appears to be a hole in the ground or scattered stones to us can provide new and valuable information covering a period of many thousands of



*The granite quarries at Aswan*

years. Our speaker is trying to raise awareness of the value and vulnerability of these areas and is working with contractors to ensure they do not destroy these sites. The history of these quarries reflects the history of the peoples of Egypt and should be classed as World Heritage sites wherever possible.

Further information can be found at <http://www.quarryscapes.no/>

Margaret Curtis

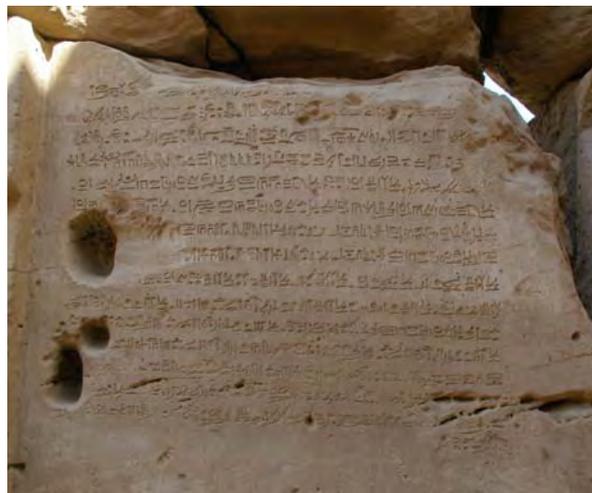
**2 December 2008    *Redefining the Sacred:  
private transformation of temple space in late  
New Kingdom Egypt***

Dr Elizabeth Frood, University of Oxford

Between the end of the 20th Dynasty and through the 23<sup>rd</sup> Dynasty Karnak Temple became not only a focal point for royal display but also for non-royal (both elite and priestly) interventions in the spatial displacement. The background to this development is the fact that when Rameses III died in 1156BC there is little stability with eight kings coming to the throne in 30 years, manifestations including to workers strikes and tomb robbery. However, within the precincts of Karnak Temple the High Priests of Amen retained their power, authority and continuity.

At this time the elite moved away from the decoration of the tomb walls although with an increase in coffin, stele and body decoration. This is replaced by the provision and dedication of numerous statues in temples such as those found in the *cachette* at Karnak. In fact with the explosion of statuary display many scenes usually found on the tomb walls are now being found on the statues that provided a good medium for elite self presentation. However, temple wall images and inscriptions are a radical medium for non-royals to present themselves and it is at this point the priests are doing exactly that. They redefine the space of the temple with activity orientated to priestly status.

One priest, Amenhotep, redesigned and decorated a doorway which facilitated access from the priestly area which depicts him welcoming Rameses IX and being rewarded by the King. In his offering scene, which faces the sacred lake, he, against the usual artistic conventions, has his figure depicted as more than life size. Other parts of the temple have multiple inscriptions relating to a particular theme such as the Xth Pylon which is inscribed with a group of oracular texts. Within the Middle Kingdom courtyard in front of the sanctuary area there are remnants of 44 inscriptions relating to priestly initiations. They contain dates, names, titles



*Text of Horakhbit*

and prayers etc and seem to relate to actual ritual practices. There were also explicit transition/transformation areas designating priestly action/power and as the High Priest was always named they were clearly political in nature relating to group and individual mechanisms of power.

One particularly interesting inscription by the priest Horakhbit, probably dated to the 22<sup>nd</sup> Dynasty, found off the Middle Kingdom courtyard area of subsidiary shrines contains 16 lines of cursive script. He appears to be both laying claim and gaining acceptance into the sacred space with his decree. It is clearly modelled on Third Intermediate Period donation stele and annals with a semi fictional 500 year genealogy of his ancestors, some of his titles, prayers to Amen, threats to anyone who would dare to remove the text and allusions to initiations and other ancient knowledge. The titles he lays claim to indicate his position as Overseer of the Door and Initiate indicating that access to certain sacred spaces was restricted to those with the proper authority. The priestly titles within his genealogy further indicate a structuring of the temple space. In addition he has also included the names of several actual viziers of the 18<sup>th</sup> Dynasty although chronologically they were mixed up showing the semi fictional nature of the genealogy.

Temples generally had purely architecturally defined areas of sanctity but at this period in Karnak Temple the priests intervened and added new levels of sanctity with their texts transforming the sacred spaces.

Nikki Blake

## INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT

	2008	2007	2005
<b>INCOME</b>			
Membership fees	£1,090.75	£1,282.85	£1,152.50
Events: Meetings	£62.00	£73.00	£20.00
Parties:	£431.00	£239.00	£420.00
Raffle	£91.70	£32.01	£77.00
Trips:	£0.00	£1,540.00	£0.00
	£584.70	£1,884.01	£517.00
Donations:	£130.25	£132.00	£5.95
	£1,805.70	£3,298.86	£1,675.45
<b>EXPENDITURE</b>			
Speakers' travel & costs: hospitality	£634.70	£619.92	£359.50
honoraria	£240.00	£280.00	£0.00
Events: refreshments	£512.25	£307.30	£535.37
portorage	£299.16	£0.00	£172.05
Mailings:	£126.19	£200.47	£135.47
Trips:*	£575.00	£921.25	
Donations by ESB	£0.00	£0.00	£1,500.00
Raffle prizes	£33.93	£13.50	£11.40
Sundries	£16.98	£9.03	£31.16
	£2,438.21	£2,351.47	£2,744.95
<b>NET INCOME/LOSS**</b>	<u>-£632.51</u>	<u>£947.39</u>	<u>-£1,069.50</u>

\* Corresponding income fell in 2007.

\*\* Discounting Trips expenditure, balance is -£57.51.



# Egypt Society of Bristol Programme

*and other events of interest in the area*

**May 2009 – June 2010**

All lectures are held in Lecture Room 1, Department of Archaeology & Anthropology, 43 Woodland Road, Clifton, at 1845. Entry for members is free and includes 'wine and nibbles' afterwards.

**Tues 19 May 2009.** Lecture: *Warriors, Priests and King's Men: Egyptian Biographies of the Middle Kingdom*  
Dr Renata Landgráfová, Charles University, Prague/Freie Universität Berlin

**Tues 30 June 2009.** Lecture: *Beyond the Pyramids: the later years of the Memphite Necropolis.*  
Followed by **SUMMER PARTY (see slip below).**  
Dr Aidan Dodson, University of Bristol

**Tues 13 October 2009.** Lecture: *Crocodile Mundi: Egyptian Water-Spells.*  
Jo Kyffin, University of Liverpool

**Tues 17 November 2009:** Lecture: *Beyond Isis and Osiris: Alternative Sexualities in Ancient Egypt.*  
John J. Johnston, University College London.

**Tues 15 December 2009.** Lecture: *Late Period noble sculpture.*  
Campbell Price, University of Liverpool

**Tues 19 January 2010.** Lecture: *An Introduction to Ancient Egyptian Art.*  
Martin Davies, President of the ESB.

**Tues 16 February 2010. ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING at 1830 hrs,** followed by:  
Lecture: *From Soldiers to Pharaohs: Ay and Horemheb.*  
Dr Aidan Dodson, University of Bristol, followed by **WINTER PARTY.**

**Tues 16 March 2010.** Lecture: *TBA.*  
Dr Karen Exell, Manchester Museum, University of Manchester

**April/May 2010.** Lecture to be announced.

**Tues 15 June 2010.** Lecture: *The Birds of Ancient Egypt.*  
John Wyatt, Ornitho-egyptologist. Followed by the **SUMMER PARTY.**

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Return to: Dr Aidan Dodson  
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Please send me ..... tickets for the ESB Summer Party 2009 @ **£8.50** each and enclose a cheque for £ ..... and a **stamped addressed envelope**/I will collect them on the evening (**delete as applicable**).

Name .....

Address .....

.....

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E-mail .....