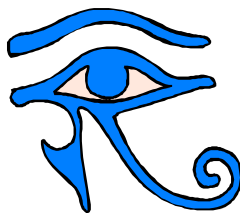


ESSEX
EGYPTOLOGY GROUP



Newsletter 58
April 2010

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

- 4th April The end of the 18th Dynasty – Sue Moseley
- 2nd May The Petrie Museum and the Birth of Egyptian Archaeology – Jan Picton
- 6th June Going to God's Land: Egypt's trade with Punt – Lucia Gahlin
- 4th July Recreating an Ancient Egyptian Market Place - Members
- 1st August "Free Mike Night" – 10-minute presentations by Members

APRIL MEETING

This month we welcome Sue Moseley for her first visit to our Group. She is a native of Essex, born in Chadwell Heath, and author of "Amarna – the Missing Evidence"; she is currently writing a sequel about the Pharaoh Horemheb.

REVIEW OF LAST MEETING

"From Hollywood to Thebes – in search of Natacha Rambova" - Rosalind Janssen



Rosalind's interest in Natacha Rambova dates to the 1990s when she was researching people who had studied Egyptology at University College, London (UCL). Whilst speaking to I E S Edwards (author of *The Pyramids of Egypt*, 1947) she 'encouraged' him to remember who had studied at UCL and he remarked that two unusual women had. She managed to establish that one was the wife of Paul Robeson (singer, actor) and the other was the wife of Rudolph Valentino (silent movie star), the latter being Natacha. Rosalind's investigations established Mrs. Robeson as a student but there were no formal records of Natasha. It would appear that she may have been a student on an informal basis in 1934 but, in any event, this set Rosalind off investigating Natacha. However, despite the fact that Natacha only died in 1966, it was difficult to find people

who had actually met her in her Egyptology 'phase' but Rosalind did manage to track down a couple of people, noted below.

Natacha was born Winifred Shaughnessy in Salt Lake City on 19 January 1897. Her father was an Irish Catholic who fought for the Union in the American Civil War. He was a businessman, with interests in mining activities. Her mother (also Winifred) was a granddaughter of Heber C Kimball, a Mormon Patriarch and right hand man to Brigham Young. (Kimball, incidentally, fathered over 60 children from various wives.) Her parents subsequently divorced and her mother (who eventually had four husbands), then married perfume millionaire Richard Hudnut.

At age 8, Natacha was sent to a boarding school in Leatherhead, Surrey for a 'proper English education'. Here she became interested in the classics. As a child she developed talented dancing abilities and was strikingly good looking but was too tall to be a professional dancer. However, she did train as a ballet dancer and aged 17, she began studying under Theodore Kosloff and performed in his Russian Imperial Ballet where, despite her size, she was given leading parts. It was at this time that she changed her name to Natacha Rambova and also commenced an affair with Kosloff. As well as dancing she also began costume designing, researching for historical accuracy. When she tried to leave Kosloff he shot her in the leg.

Natasha began working for Alla Nazimova (a Russian theatre & film actress, screenwriter and producer) as art director and costume designer. On the set of one of Nazimova's films, Natacha met Rudolph Valentino, one of the most popular and recognized stars of the silent film era. Rosalind showed a clip from his most famous (and last) film, *Son of the Sheik*. In 1922 Valentino and Natacha were bigamously married in Mexico. Natacha worked for Nazimova in the film *Salome* (1923) based on the Oscar Wilde play and Rosalind showed us a clip from the film showing the costumes and sets designed by Natacha, with Nazimova performing the dance of the 7 veils and demanding John the Baptist's head on a silver charger!

Natacha became involved in Valentino's business affairs and his image. Rosalind was told that Natacha taught Valentino to dance, in particular the tango. They tried to project an image of blissful domesticity but within 2 years they had divorced. Later, in the same year, Valentino fell ill and died of pleurisy. Rosalind showed clips of Valentino lying in state and the queues of women (mainly!) filing past. Valentino was buried with a 'slave bracelet' which Natacha gave him and which we saw in the *Son of the Sheik* clip. Despite the break up of their relationship, every year Natasha visited his grave on the anniversary of his death and placed a red rose on it. She became known as "The Woman in Black" as a result.

Following his death she set out on a new career as an actress, playing on the name of Mrs. Rudolph Valentino, perhaps not always willingly. Then in 1934 she began her studies at UCL. The Chair of Archaeology at UCL at that time was Professor Stephen Glanville, the immediate successor of Flinders Petrie. Rosalind added that Glanville came directly from the British Museum which was a problem as Amelia Edwards, the chair's founder, had stipulated in her will that no person from the BM should have her chair, due to her antipathy to Wallis Budge, Keeper of Antiquities at the BM. The way round this was for Glanville to resign from the BM and the next day to take up the chair.

In 1934 Natacha met and married a Spanish Count, Alvaro de Urzaiz. She moved to Spain to live with him and in 1936 commenced a 'grand tour' with her mother, the Count and her in-laws. Countries visited included Greece and Syria. In Jerusalem they met Flinders Petrie and eventually reached Egypt, with which she fell instantaneously in love. (Sounds familiar?). Natacha believed in re-incarnation and felt that she had returned to "a place once loved". In Luxor they met Howard Carter and he showed them some of his work. The visit to Egypt left her spellbound and for the rest of her life she focused on Egypt. She felt that she had seen the "Fountainhead of the World's great cultures".

The Spanish Civil War broke out in July 1936 and the Count sided with the Fascist Falange Party of General Franco. As a result Natacha fled Spain to Nice, where (aged 40) she suffered a heart attack. Soon after, in 1939, she and the Count divorced.

She was asked by the Bollingen Foundation, an educational foundation, to look at scarabs and the religious significance of dogs in Egypt. She accepted but due to World War II she was not able to set off for Egypt until 1946 (aged 50) and arrived in Cairo with 9 suitcases. She found that much had changed since her first visit. It was, she felt, full of racial intolerance, which she attributed to US and UK troops based there in the war. She was also concerned at the exploitation of the peasants and animals, for example she grabbed the whip off a man who was beating his donkey and beat him unconscious with it, which caused a bit of a riot.

Whilst in Cairo she met a Russian archaeologist, Alexander Piankoff, who was working for the French Archaeological Institute in Egypt. He was interested in religious texts and as a result of this meeting she contacted the Bollingen Foundation and asked if they would forget her original mission and, instead, sponsor the recording of the religious inscriptions in the tombs of Ramses V and VI and nine pyramids, headed by Piankoff and organized by her. They agreed and provided US\$ 50k (a very substantial sum in those days) for a 2-year expedition, perhaps because of her name/family connections. She was back in Egypt in 1949 to begin work but then discovered that only one of the nine target pyramids (that of Unas) was open and so they went to Luxor to start on the Ramesside tombs. Rosalind read an extract from a book by Bernard Bothmer (US Egyptologist) that mentioned meeting Natacha & co. in Luxor. In fact, Natacha invited him to visit Edfu and Esna and they (with Piankoff and his wife) travelled there on 21 January 1950. Rosalind showed a photograph of the four of them in Edfu Temple taken on that day.

Whilst in Luxor it was noticeable that Natacha seemed to intentionally divorce herself from the famous Chicago House, home to the Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago. Perhaps the fact that Chicago House was comprised of epigraphers whereas she was a spiritualist contributed to this. Rosalind showed a photograph taken of Chicago House's 1954 Expedition which included two of the people that Rosalind managed to speak to and who had known Natacha. They were Mark Hasselriis (artist) who said that "she (Natacha) was no ordinary woman mysterious" and Donald Champion (photographer) who said that she was "as dignified as a queen all that excited her was art ..."

Natacha and 'her team' worked on the tombs of Ramses V & VI and that of Tutankhamen on the West Bank and also on Unas's Pyramid. They were copying all the religious texts – a complete inventory. In the 1950s she was driven by Egyptology and worked very hard (10 – 12 hours a day) editing the volumes of work produced. She even 'wore out' her fingers on the typewriter but simply purchased some caps for her digits and carried on. During the 1950s the Bollingen Foundation published the work, for example Tutankhamen in 1955 and the 'mystical papyri' in 1957. As well as Natasha editing these papers she also contributed and it is noticeable that these papers do not contain any spiritualist ideas and are acceptable scholastic works.

In the 1960s she contracted scleroderma (a chronic autoimmune disease) and returning to the USA, she died of a heart attack on 5 June 1966, aged 69. Her collection of Egyptian antiquities was donated to the Utah Museum of Fine Arts in Salt Lake City. Piankoff, coincidentally, died 45 days later.

So died a lady who led a very 'eventful' life. She was a dancer, designer (costume and sets for silent films), celebrity, actress, Egyptologist and spiritualist. In the 1910s and 20s she was an exotic character, choosing a Russian name and delighted in wearing distinctive clothing. She usually wore her hair up and covered by a satin turban (at least in public) but

Rosalind did show a rare picture of her with her hair cascading down. She dedicated the last 20 years of her life to Egyptology.

Rosalind was asked if there had been any biography of Natacha and she advised that there had been one but that focused entirely on her 'Hollywood days' and "No", she (Rosalind) did not want to write one. Rosalind did add that, perhaps surprisingly, Natacha does not feature in the existing published 'Who's Who of Egyptology'. However this was to be rectified in the next publishing. It was agreed that Natacha's life story could make a good film.

Mike Monks

LECTURES AT THE EGYPTIAN CULTURAL BUREAU

The lectures begin at 6.45pm (75 minutes, followed by refreshment), held at the Bureau, 4 Chesterfield Gardens, London W1 (020 7491 7720). They are free of charge.

- 13th May – Lucia Gahlin – How much do we really know about Akhenaten?
- 27th May – Bob Partridge – News from Egypt
- 10th June – Dr Patricia Spencer – Recent work of the EES Delta Survey

BIRKBECK STUDY DAY REVIEW

The subject of "Daily Life in Ancient Egypt" was tackled at the latest Birkbeck study day. With four exceedingly interesting talks plus one lecture via DVD we studied "earning a living at Deir el Medina" with Jac Janssen, "houses, fittings and furniture" with Carol Andrews, "hazards of living in Ancient Egypt" with Joseph Clayton and "real life" with Dylan Bickerstaffe. The DVD by Kasia Szpakowska was about women and children in Lahun. As always, the lecturers were enthusiastic about their topic and the pace was just right. I can thoroughly recommend these occasional Saturday talks.

Janet Brewer

BIRKBECK STUDY DAY – SATURDAY 12TH JUNE

The next study day is titled "Kings and Pyramids in Old Kingdom Egypt" and lecturers include Jaromir Malek, Bob Partridge, Tine Bagh, George Hart and Jose Perez-Accino. Cost £42. Further information 020 7631 6627: to enrol 020 7631 6651.

BLOOMSBURY SUMMER SCHOOL

This year the summer school is from 5th-30th July offering week-long courses on topics including "Living in Lahun" "Ancient Egyptian Religion" "Ancient Egyptian Literature" and "Crime and Punishment". For full details see the website www.egyptology-uk.com/bloomsbury or ring 020 7679 3622.

EGYPTIAN MUSEUM, CAIRO

It has been reported that Egypt's Ministry of Culture are almost ready to start construction of the new museum. The complex will have a 100,000 sq metre building and is to be located 2 km away from the Giza pyramids. One wall will be made up of triangles of translucent stone, onyx, set in a metal frame. Sounds lovely but I wonder when it will be completed.

LIST OF LETTERS etc RELATING TO AMELIA EDWARDS & COLLEAGUES

A list of letters and papers relating to Amelia Edwards and her colleagues and kept in the Egypt Exploration Society's Lucy Gura Archive is now available online at -

http://www.ees.ac.uk/userfiles/file/EES_AmeliaEdwards_Letters&Papers.pdf

INTERESTING COMMENTS FROM DYLAN BICKERSTAFFE

If you are interested in information about the results of DNA on some royal mummies including Tutankhamun see Dylan's web <http://www.dylanb.me.uk/wp/?cat=18>

Joyce Filer has very kindly written a series of three articles on health problems in Ancient Egypt – especially for the Essex Egyptology Newsletter – the first follows with parts two and three in May and June respectively

SOME NOTES ON HEALTH PROBLEMS IN ANCIENT EGYPT AND NUBIA

Part One: Problems With Teeth

In Book 2 of *The Histories* by Herodotus we are informed that in ancient Egypt there were doctors to treat each specific part of the body: the specialists! Of physicians we read:

'Some are eye-doctors, some deal with the head, others with the teeth or the belly.....'

The decoration on a wooden panel in the Cairo Museum, dating to the Third Dynasty (ca. 2686-2613 BC) shows the figure of Hesire, of whom the accompanying inscription indicates that he was a Chief of Dentists and Physicians.

Examinations of the teeth of the ancient Egyptian dead clearly indicate that, if there really were any specialist dentists, then they would have been fully employed for, if truth be told, a notable number of the rich and powerful of ancient Egypt certainly had need of such help; many kings and members of their families had quite an appalling range of dental conditions. Let's take a look at some of them.

Attrition, the wearing down of the tooth's surface, is a common feature of ancient Egyptian teeth. (1)

Traditionally, this attrition has been attributed to grit observed in ancient bread. The idea being that as the molar teeth grind bread the particles of sand are trapped between the biting surfaces of the teeth and cause damage.



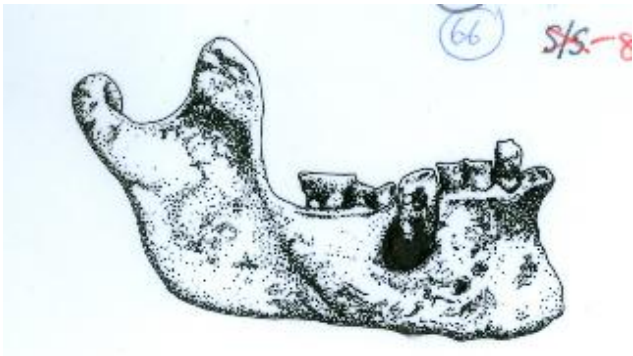
However, as the frontal teeth (incisors) are often seen to be worn down in many ancient Egyptian dentitions, perhaps another cause for attrition could be postulated?

Whatever the actual cause of attrition there can be no doubt that it can lead to other dental conditions. If teeth are worn down then eventually the inner pulp is exposed. Thus, infections can set in causing further complications such as abscesses. (2)



Many modern people know the agony of dental abscesses, the experience would certainly have been no less enjoyable for the ancient Egyptians. Luckily, people today have the benefit of an experienced dental profession and soothing medicants but, what was the situation in ancient times?

Some researchers have suggested that the doctor in ancient times would have drilled a hole in the jaw close to the site of the abscess and they have cited examples of perfectly round holes 'bored' into human jaws as proof. Certainly, this would have been a useful, but painful, way of relieving the agony of a dental abscess. However, what is often not taken into account is the fact that 'Mother Nature' may play her part in relieving the situation. Sometimes the pressure of infected pus within the abscess can build up to a pitch whereby it can only move in one of two directions. The most beneficial being through the bone of the affected jaw. In this situation the loss of the tooth is likely and, most interestingly, this 'procedure' leaves a perfectly round hole as evidence of the event - this I feel is what has caused researchers to mistakenly believe in the drilling of holes in jaws! (3)



Incidentally, the second direction or option for the infected pus is to *not* burst through the bone and travel through the blood system, possibly causing death.

In my experience it seems that it was the more wealthy people in ancient Egypt who were more likely to experience unpleasant dental conditions. A prime example is that of the mummy identified as the

pharaoh Amenhotep III. He is almost a 'catalogue' of dental problems: abscesses, worn teeth, gum diseases and broken or missing teeth. For this extremely wealthy man, and others like him, it is likely that an overly rich diet contributed to poor dental health. I am not saying that the poorer members of society always had good teeth but, in some ways, their more basic diet may have circumvented some of these dental conditions.

These are just some brief notes on a few aspects of dental health in ancient Egypt - there is much more to say but I think this gives readers a 'taste' (sorry!) of the situation.

1. Skull, Balamun, Egypt: attrition (wear) on maxillary (upper) molar teeth
2. Mandible (jaw), Gabati, ancient Nubia: abscess beneath frontal tooth and wear on molars
3. Drawing, mandible, showing round hole in bone caused by evacuated infection

(Illustrations: Joyce Filer)

Joyce Filer
Egyptologist and Physical Anthropologist

If readers are interested in finding out more about the health status of the ancient Egyptians and how bodies are investigated why not attend the following study days presented by Joyce Filer:

Tutankhamun: the latest information.
Find out about the new examination of the mummy of the 'Boy-King'
Saturday 29 May 2010: 11am - 5 pm
Central London

The Forensic aspects of Ancient Egypt
Find out how age at death, gender, health (and more) is discovered.
Saturday 19 June 2010: 11am - 5 pm
Central London

For more information on both events contact:
Richard at: rikki_promo@yahoo.co.uk or tel: 07973 6951 68

QUEEN HATSHEPSUT OF EGYPT

The most famous, if not the most notorious woman, in Egyptian was 'His Majesty, herself Queen Hatshepsut'. She ruled for twenty-one years during an uneasy peace, she was a very successful ruler. In this article I will give some history concerning Hatshepsut's remarkable reign: her personal life, the safety of Egypt's lands, and the economic welfare of Egypt.

Queen Hatshepsut was the daughter of Pharaoh Thutmose I (a.k.a. Thutmosis) of 18th Dynasty during the New Kingdom, Egypt's Golden Age. Her reign was in ca. 1490-1468 B.C. Some historians believe that she was the Pharaoh's daughter that pulled Moses from the Nile. She married her own half-brother Thutmose II, a son of Thutmose I, by a secondary wife. Thutmose II was sickly and only reigned 4 years. Before he died, he married his daughter by Hatshepsut to his daughter's half-brother. The half-brother was the son of one of the harem women by Thutmose II. At Thutmose II's death, Hatshepsut was appointed regent until her nine-year old nephew/stepson Thutmose III was old enough to rule, as Ahmose's wife Nefertari had acted as regent for Amenhotep I, the Pharaoh before Thutmose I. However, instead of fading into the background of Egyptian politics, as women were supposed to do, Hatshepsut grabbed control. Sometime during the years after Thutmose II's death, Hatshepsut crowned herself Queen/Pharaoh of Egypt, rebelling against her role as a submissive royal woman. She wore the double-crown of Egypt and the traditional false beard as worn by the pharaohs. She believed that by divine power, and by her right of pure blood, she should and would be the pharaoh of Egypt.

In the twenty-one years that Hatshepsut ruled, there were no great military campaigns. Egypt's armies did not conquer new lands as it had under her father Thutmose I. He had conquered Palestine and lands as far north as the Euphrates River and south into Nubia. The lands controlled by Egypt were already very large and difficult to oversee. Previous rulers had gone to battle and returned only to find their kingdom in confusion and disorder. Hatshepsut's reign was already shaky because she had usurped the throne from her nephew and she didn't need anything else to threaten her insecure throne. Perhaps Hatshepsut avoided the need for conflict, not only because she didn't need to expand Egypt's borders, but because she was a woman. One could hardly expect a queen to lead an army into battle. But her armies did defend Egypt's existing borders with several minor skirmishes on the frontiers in Nubia and Syria. Hatshepsut's reign was a period of peace in between other pharaohs who tried to expand their borders.

Under Queen Hatshepsut Egypt expanded its trade routes. She commissioned an expedition to renew trading with Punt, once thought to be on the coast of Ethiopia and Djibouti, although now believed to have been in Somalia. It was considered a lengthy and arduous expedition but Hatshepsut thus re-established a profitable trade with a country which had many riches to offer Egypt. Because of this connection, Egypt had a fresh supply of myrrh, trees, ebony, ivory, gold, cinnamon, incense, eye paint, apes, monkeys and skins of southern panthers. Hatshepsut also initiated and encouraged freedom of trade with other countries. During the New Kingdom, even ordinary free people lived decently, although simply, in Egypt but the people who had money lived very well.

During this period the country had great wealth and the Queen/pharaoh maintained control of the nation as well as building great monuments; Hatshepsut raised many temples to glorify herself, as all pharaohs had done before her. She built two giant obelisks, each about one hundred feet high, and erected them in Thebes. They were then sheathed in a combination of gold and silver. A huge temple, called the 'morning temple,' was built to honour Hatshepsut.

Except for trading expeditions, the queen felt that Egypt should withdraw from the outside world, as in the days of its past, to be concerned only with what was happening in the Nile Valley. Hatshepsut did not wish to become involved with the political turmoil that was in the Middle East; small martial nations like the Assyrians, Babylonians, and Hittites who grew and shrank in size in time with different leaders. She believed Egypt should not interfere with the outlandish foreigners, but let Egypt mind its own business and let the foreigners mind theirs. Hatshepsut was not alone in her thinking; many of the high priests of Amon distrusted involvement with the barbaric outside world; for these reasons, hers was a peaceful and prosperous reign. But Hatshepsut's reign came to a rapid and mystifying end; some believe that she died of natural causes, others think that Thutmose III murdered her. Either way, she died.

Hatshepsut had ruled as a powerful pharaoh for twenty-one years, had added much wealth to the treasuries of Egypt, and had not allowed it to collapse under her rule. Personally, she fought for ultimate control of Egypt, yet she honestly believed she was the rightful divine ruler. During her reign Egypt prospered, economic problems were few, and trade flourished. Egypt did not expand its borders during Hatshepsut's reign, but it did not diminish them either. Hatshepsut had a glorious and illustrious reign, proving herself worthy to be pharaoh. Certainly, she deserves a special place in the hall of the great pharaohs of Egypt.

Linda Louisa Dell

(Editor's note: at our September meeting we will welcome Victor Blunden whose talk is titled "Queen Hatshepsut – Beloved Queen or Wicked Stepmother?")

CONTRIBUTIONS

This month thanks go to Linda Louisa Dell, Joyce Filer and Mike Monks

The Newsletter Editor, Janet Brewer, welcomes all articles, letters, reviews and quizzes.

All articles express the views and opinions of their authors

Please e-mail to eeg_newsletter@btinternet.com

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