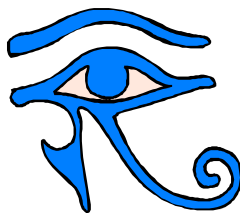


ESSEX
EGYPTOLOGY GROUP



Newsletter 53
November 2009

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

1 st Nov	New Kingdom Pharaohs and the Mediterranean - George Hart
6 th Dec	Christmas Fund Raising Event
3 rd Jan	An Introduction to Egyptian Literature – Joseph Clayton
7 th Feb	Excavating the Dead (Part 2) – Joyce Filer
7 th Mar	From Hollywood to Thebes: in search of Natacha Rambova

NOVEMBER MEETING

This month we welcome George Hart, past curator at the British Museum, lecturer and author of numerous books including the Dictionary of Egyptian Gods and Goddesses.

LECTURES AT THE EGYPTIAN CULTURAL BUREAU

The lecture season is just about to start at the Egyptian Cultural Bureau, 4 Chesterfield Gardens, London W1 (020 7491 7720). The lectures begin at 6.30 and are free of charge.

- 5th November, Chris Naunton “Deir el-Bahri & el-Assasif after the New Kingdom”
- 19th November, Martin Davies “An Introduction to Ancient Egyptian Art”
- 3rd December, Aidan Dodson “Amarna Twilight – the mystery of Akhenaten’s co-rulers”

2010 CALENDARS

The Essex Egyptology Group 2010 calendars are now on sale, £12 each from Clare Banks, if you want to know if one of your photographs is in it, only one way to find out

CHRISTMAS GOOD CAUSE

It is time to think about where you would like the proceeds of the Christmas fund raising event to go. It's a choice between The Amarna Project or the Egypt Exploration Society. There will be a vote at the November meeting but if you are not going to be there please could you indicate your choice to me (janet.brewer@bopenworld.com) by 1st November.

CHRISTMAS FUND RAISING EVENT - ADVERT

We will be having a quiz (quite easy), senet tournament, raffle (so please bring along prizes), blind auction, guess the weight of the Christmas cake, food and drink and, of course, the mummy wrapping (wouldn't be a party without it!). There will be a sheet sent around for you to choose what food or drink item you are able to bring along.

BIRKBECK SATURDAY SCHOOLS

Birkbeck are holding two Saturday schools in 2010. The first on Saturday 27th March "Daily Life in Ancient Egypt" followed on Saturday 12th June with "Kings and Pyramids in Old Kingdom Egypt". Birkbeck Saturday schools are very popular and each day has five Egyptologists lecturing on the subject. The day costs £42 and is from 10am-5pm. Details either from their web site or 020 7631 6627.

STUDY DAY IN SWANSEA

The Egypt Centre, Swansea University will be holding a study day on Monday 23rd November "Egypt through time - a day examining the chronology of Ancient Egypt through material culture".

Details from www.swansea.ac.uk/egypt, or e-mail a.a.taylor@swansea.ac.uk or 01792 295960.

REVIEW OF THE OCTOBER MEETING

Our guest speaker was Lorna Oakes, who gave an illustrated talk on the relationship between Egypt and Nubia - the land between Aswan and Khartoum - over a period of 2500 years. Lorna showed the important role trade played in the developing of this relationship.

Egypt obtained from Nubia goods that could not be found or produced in Egypt, such as gold, incense, and exotic wood for marquetry and fine furniture. Also, animal skins (panther) for ceremonial costumes, and giraffe tails for paint brushes. Goods found in tombs provide information about what was being traded; a diadem of gold beads and semi-precious stones, including an amethyst vase with gold neck trim, jasper made into pots and lapis lazuli (from Iran). An ivory comb, belonging to a king has been found in a 1st Dynasty tomb at Abydos. Goods were traded for their own use, or to reward officials.

We may infer that this was trade rather than exploitation, for alongside objects made by the Nubians themselves are found goods made by the Egyptians — oil, beer and grain found in pots. Sometimes Nubians acted as middle men in this mercantile activity, bringing goods from further south to Egypt.

The Island of Elephantine, opposite Aswan, was the start of the ivory trade; expeditions went either by the desert route, or by the Nile south into Nubia. Again, tombs are a source of information. The tombs of the officials of the 6th Dynasty are on the bank opposite Aswan. The tomb of Harkhuf is the most informative. Harkhuf served under King Pepi II, the last king of the 6th Dynasty. His main job he says was to mount expeditions into Nubia. On one he took 300 donkeys and brought them back loaded. His autobiography tells that the king gave him a testament, also written up in front of his tomb. It appears that the king was most pleased to have a

new dancing partner - a pygmy, possibly a dwarf. Weni, in another autobiography, recounts that, put in charge of the army to fight the sand people, the Bedouin, he took with him Nubian archers as a contingent of the Egyptian army. Lorna suggested that the Nubian archers equate to goods.

Cartouches were left by the kings on their expeditions; and even if they left no inscriptions they left statues, for instance, the diorite statue, now in the Cairo Museum, from the quarries near Abu Simbel.

To the south of Aswan, the First Cataract is a rocky barrier across the Nile. On the island of Sehel, are rocks with inscriptions telling of expeditions into Nubia where canals were cut by the kings of the Middle Kingdom in order to get round the barrier. No traces of the canals remain. The inscriptions - the cartouche of kings, figures of gods, hieroglyphs — show the gods of the barrier were worshipped and their protection sought for the hazards of the journey to be undertaken.

Beginning in the 12th Dynasty fortresses were built at the Second Cataract. These were huge, comprising temples, offices, warehouses and accommodation for the soldiers. Their purpose was to guard the Nile and control the traffic coming up from Nubia.

After the Middle Kingdom the kings of Egypt ruled the South, with the Hyksos ruling the Delta. In the 17th Dynasty the kings decided to rid Egypt of the Hyksos. Despite an attempt by the Hyksos to get Kush to mount a joint attack on Egypt, the Hyksos were driven out and parts of Nubia were recaptured for Egypt.

In the 18th Dynasty Tuthmosis III, who reigned jointly with Hatshepsut, introduced a change of direction; instead of building more fortresses to control Nubia, they built temples.

The Amarna letters reveal that by the end of the 15th Dynasty native supplies of Egyptian gold were running out - so control of the Nubians was even more necessary. The Nubian temples of Rameses II were built to show that Nubia belonged to Egypt and was to remain under Egyptian control. Casts in the British Museum of temple reliefs from the Temple of Beit el Wali show scenes of Nubians offering tribute of exotic goods to Rameses II. Viceroys are portrayed with both exotic and domestic animals appropriated from Nubia. Both Egyptian temples and statuary were intended to impress and intimidate the Nubians. The four massive statues of the facade of the main temple at Abu Simbel are a powerful visual representation of Egyptian might and a warning to the Nubians against rebellion.

In the New Kingdom a deliberate policy of acculturation was pursued. We know from the tombs of important persons that the Egyptians tried to impose Egyptian culture on the Nubians. Nubians took over the burial procedures of the Egyptians - mummification and canopic jars. One tomb scene shows a Nubian official buried in the Egyptian manner — he represented himself as an Egyptian on his own tomb, but on this tomb he is shown as a Nubian.

Lorna closed this engaging history of Egypt's relations with Nubia by referring briefly to the later history of the area.

After the Battle of Qadesh a peace treaty was drawn up, in which Egypt and the Hittites would share control. Egyptian royal power declined and the South of Egypt

came under the control of the high priests. A Nubian dynasty founded itself; King Piye marched north, and as his stele relates, conquered Egypt. By the 25th Dynasty their control of Egypt was well established.

Margaret Mumford, Malcolm Smith

Egypt at Highclere

Highclere Castle has now opened its cellars for an Egyptian exhibition. The exhibits include an Antiquities collection, an exhibition of the history of the house in Lord Carnarvon's time, and an amazing reproduction of Tutankhamun's tomb with amazingly realistic replicas of many of the objects found in the tomb.

I was able to visit with Charlotte Booth and her hieroglyphs group, and we started with the Antiquities collection, which included interesting objects such as the votive offering table of Teta-Ky from his 18th dynasty tomb at Dra abu el-Naga. The offering table has clearly marked compartments for oil or water, with grooved channels, and was discovered in 1908. Teta-Ky was Mayor of Thebes. A finely woven blue and gold fringed shawl was displayed in excellent condition, as well as two beautifully coloured lotus flower faience bowls, found in tomb 24 under Hatshepsut's temple in 1910. Also on display was a diorite pestle with khol pots and sticks, as well as tweezers from the 12th dynasty. Many other interesting objects were displayed.

The exhibition about Lord Carnarvon included an early battery powered car which went 12 miles an hour, and details of Lord Carnarvon's numerous speeding fines! He was also a talented photographer and President of the Camera Club in 1916. An early pioneer of colour photography, he exhibited many portraits in b/w and colour. Records suggest that Lord Carnarvon photographed a lot of naked women, but the photographs were apparently tactfully destroyed by his butler after his death. During the first world war Highclere Castle was used as a military hospital, and the exhibition includes photographs and records from this time.

The reproductions of alabaster vases, decorated chests, statues and furnishings for the tomb of Tutankhamun in 3 cellars are excellent replicas, as are the wall decorations and hieroglyphs. It would be useful to give the artists more credit for their work, I think. The book to accompany the exhibition, 'Egypt at Highclere' by Fiona Carnarvon is very good but, as stated, does not give much credit to the artists as far as I can see. For anyone who has not seen the contents of Tutankhamun's tomb this exhibition is really worthwhile. A replica of one of Tutankhamun's ceremonial trumpets is included in the exhibition, and one can press a button to hear the only recording of its actual sound. Anyone approaching the last cellar can hear the mournful strains of the 'Last Post' from the trumpet! The exhibition also includes information about the discovery of the tomb by Howard Carter.

I also visited the castle, and was especially interested in the photographs and portraits from the early nineteenth century, relating to Lord Carnarvon and his family. The castle is not particularly commercialised and the visit was very enjoyable.

'O night, spread thy wings over me, as the imperishable stars' (Epitaph on the tomb of Howard Carter, from a prayer to the goddess Nut).

Marguerite Kramer

'Egyptian Landscapes'

The Ramses Wissa Art Centre in Cairo is currently exhibiting some beautiful tapestries in the Nature in Art museum in Gloucester. The tapestries are produced at Harrania village, Sakkara Rd Giza, which is open to visitors from 10.00 – 5.00pm, 7 days a week. The tapestries are superb and depict daily life in Egypt as well as the trees, fruits, flowers and bird life of contemporary Egypt. Natural dyes, such as madder, cochineal and indigo are used to dye the wool and cottons for the tapestries, and all the weavers are involved in the dyeing process. The use of natural dyes makes the tapestries vibrant and colourful.

The founder of the workshop, Ramses Wissa Wassef, an architect, had trained many young people from the age of 9 to become professional weavers, having originally set up a school for poor children in Cairo in 1941. When the school was finished, Ramses obtained permission to teach some of the pupils to weave at the end of the school day. The school thrived, and over the years Ramses set up the workshop at Harrania, with additional galleries, workshops and houses. He also created a garden which inspires many of the tapestries. There are now 56 weavers at the workshop directed by Suzanne and Yoanna Wissa Wassef, known, since the death of Ramses, as the 'second generation'. Ramses Wissa Wassef was also awarded the Aga Khan award for architecture in 1983.

The artist Jackie Garner was also exhibiting at the Nature in Art museum (I was really lucky to find this museum) and has produced a range of watercolours, acrylics and pastels inspired by Egyptian birds and their corresponding hieroglyphs from ancient Egypt. She plans to publish a book about wildlife in Ancient Egyptian art.

Marguerite Kramer

The Egyptian Temple in London : A walking tour

I recently joined with some Friends of the Petrie for a walking tour of London looking at Art Deco buildings that display Egyptian influence. The walk was led by Cathie Bryan who has a degree in Egyptian archaeology from UCL and while living in France led many tours of that city looking at the many Egyptian themed buildings and funerary monuments and while London is not so rich in such monuments there is still much to see and enjoy. The main period for such architecture is the Art Deco period of the early 20th century. During the 1920s-30s, Art Deco had an influence on the design of various public buildings producing straight lines, mainly white frontage, geometric door and window surrounds. Following the discovery in 1922 in the Valley of the Kings Egyptian elements taken from the worldwide mania that followed saw an explosion of Egyptian motifs and design.

The walk started at Adelaide House on London Bridge, this building while it does not show much that is obviously Egyptian, if you look closely the 'proto' Doric columns of the entrance and the tall window and floor levels especially as seen on the river frontage bring to mind the temple of Hatshepsut at Deir el-Bahri. Looking now at what we would describe as a fairly low rise building it is amazing to think that at the time of its completion in the 1920s (before Tutankhamun) it was the tallest building in London.

We then hopped onto a bus to Fleet Street to look at the Telegraph and Daily Express Buildings. While this tour only allowed us to view the exterior of the buildings Cathie had managed to persuade the security at the Express to pull the curtains so that we were able to see the wonderful Art Deco foyer.

While the outside is pure modernism all steel, glass and geometry, the interior is pure art deco with a wonderful tiled floor that echoes in waves Egyptian motifs and design. From Fleet street we again took a bus to view Britannia House in Shaftesbury Avenue here you can clearly see Egyptian influence and for the first time the use of a Pharaoh's head over a door and while that is not something that is pure Egyptian and would never be seen in Egypt here it shows just how well the

western view of Egypt had filtered down and become accepted.



A tube journey away and we ended our tour at Mornington Crescent for the Carreras Building now called Greater London House but known to most as the Black Cat Cigarette factory. The building dates to 1926 designed by M.E. and O.H. Collins, it has cat-head roundels repeated across the façade and two eight-foot high seated cats, inspired by the Egyptian feline goddess Bastet, guarding the entrance. Originally it was to be named the Bast building but I think for obvious reasons that name was not adopted. After falling into sad decline and neglect the restoration for the millennium saw the Bastet Cats brought back and the whole frontage returned to as close to the original as was possible cat heads, wiry whiskers, stylish Art Deco lettering, colourful Egyptian capitals even the

railings show Egyptian hieroglyphs and symbols.



I even noticed over the road in the pavement a storm drain marked by a perfect eye of Horus. London has many buildings showing Egyptian facades and motifs some are modern, in Canary Wharf the Four Seasons Hotel would not look out of place overlooking the Nile instead of, as here, the Thames. I have often passed some of the buildings on this walk but now after listening to Cathie I will aim to pause and look with a

better eye and look forward to discovering more of Egypt in London.

Transport notes - Start at the Monument tube walk down to Adelaide House on London Bridge from there double back to pick up the Number 15 bus to Fetter Lane for Fleet Street. From Fleet Street walk along Shoe Lane to Holborn and take the 242, 8 or 25 bus to Britannia House (across from Shaftesbury Theatre). Then walk to Tottenham Court Road tube and take the Northern Line to Mornington crescent. Allow around 2-3 hours.

Rosemary Ackland

IF YOU NEED A TOUR GUIDE IN LUXOR

We have received information from Ken Downs (past Chairman of Tameside Egyptology Group in Manchester) of a close friend of his who is a resident of Luxor and is presently employed as Antiquities Inspector at Karnak Temple with particular responsibility for the new visitors centre. His name is Mr Nagy and Ken tells us that he a qualified Egyptologist and is an English speaking tour guide for anywhere in Egypt. If you would like more details please contact Ken Downs, telephone 0161 367 7703 or e-mail downsken@hotmail.com

IF YOU WANT TO RENT A FLAT IN LUXOR

We have received the following from Jane Akshar that some of you may be interested in.



“For those of you wanting a more hands on experience in Luxor ever thought about renting a holiday apartment in the heart of the Luxor, East or West Bank. Flats in Luxor is owned by a Brit, Jane Akshar, the author of Luxor News the Egyptology blog about Luxor and together with her Egyptian husband she has been providing accommodation and private tours since 2003. Her flats are spacious, newly built to a high standard with swimming pool and

onsite chef. She has loads of knowledge about the sites and can help you visit those obscure places. Full details are on the web site www.flatsinluxor.co.uk”

NEWSLETTER CONTRIBUTORS

This month thanks go to Rosemary Ackland, Margaret Mumford, Malcolm Smith and Marguerite Kramer.

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

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