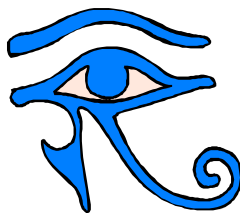


ESSEX
EGYPTOLOGY GROUP



Newsletter 74

October/November 2011

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

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| 2 nd Oct | The Petrie Museum through art and conservation – Gemma Aboe |
| 6 th Nov | Libya in Egypt – Andrew Fulton |
| 4 th Dec | Christmas party, workshop, book auction and fund raising event |
| 8 th Jan | tba |
| 5 th Feb | Egypt in the Pyramid Age – George Hart |

THIS MONTH

This month we welcome artist and illustrator Gemma Aboe who is a conservation assistant at the Petrie Museum in London.

NEXT MONTH

Next month we welcome Andrew Fulton, BA(Hons), MA, Cert Egyptology. Since retirement he devotes his time to expanding his private research in Egyptology and he will talk to us about Libya in Egypt.

REVIEW OF SEPTEMBER MEETING

This month's meeting introduced a new speaker to the group, Caroline McDonald the Curator of Archaeology from the Ipswich Museum, High Street, Ipswich.

Caroline started with an overview of the museum from its beginnings in 1846, opening December 1847 in Museum Street, Ipswich, with the remit to educate the working classes in natural history and run by a committee on behalf of subscribers. During the early years the museum gained national repute under the second President the Revd. Professor John Stevens Henslow, the mentor of Charles Darwin during his time at Cambridge University. The natural history displays (some specimens of which are still visible today) were set up to chart man's evolution according to Darwin's book *The Origin of Species*. The reputation of the museum had grown so greatly that in 1851 the British Association for the Advancement of Science met in Ipswich and it was inspected by Prince Albert who was so impressed that he made a donation of £10 and became its official Patron.

After a financial collapse in late 1852, a referendum was held in the town, where the residents were asked if they would like the museum to transfer to public ownership, with a levy of a public rate through the provisions of the Public Libraries Act 1850. The result was overwhelmingly in favour and the property and collection was formally transferred to the Corporation in 1853.

By 1880 the collection and use of the museum had far outgrown the building in Museum Street and a new museum was built in High Street where it stands to this day. The old building later became a dance hall and today is a restaurant, which Caroline said is well worth a visit.

Due to the reputation that the museum had and still has in the country it was able to secure a range of quality exhibits from the excavations of William Matthew Flinders Petrie. A full collection of artefacts from a specific location was donated to the Ipswich Museum as the Petrie collection was split between Ipswich, Bexhill Museum, Brighton Museum and Art Gallery, Buckinghamshire County Museum, Manchester Museum and of course Petrie Museum of Egyptian Archaeology. For more information about the collections visit www.accessingvirtualegypt.ucl.ac.uk and you can search the collection by object type, location, material and period. We were then treated to some stunning photographs from the collection which, from where I was sitting, brought gasps from those round about me and certainly whetted the appetite for those that have already visited the Egyptian collection to visit again, and those that have not, to make an effort and visit.

Highlights were the wonderful models of boats; workmen at work; pottery and pre dynastic arrow heads and knives. Many of the artefacts had an interesting story behind them including the models of which they were promised two and only one arrived. So a request was made for the second model, for which a replacement was duly dispatched; only the originally promised one also arrived, therefore providing three for the collection.

Caroline then went on to describe the new gallery, opened in August 2010, and how the collection was laid out to be educational for children and adults alike. Visitors make a virtual journey along the Nile with many interactive exhibits along the way, ending in the wonderful tomb-like resting place for the mummy and coffin of Lady Tahathor which was originally displayed at Colchester Museum together with a replica pit burial and other funereal artefacts. The gallery has increased the number of school visits and general visits to the museum which is of great importance to the continued development of the building in general.

One of the interactive exhibits for school children is the weighing of the heart where they have the opportunity to re-create the scene by wearing masks - one of which has been created using money raised and donated to the Ipswich Museum by the Essex Egyptology Group.

A fascinating talk which was, I am sure, enjoyed by everyone.

We are hoping to organise a group visit to the museum before the end of October prior to Caroline taking up her new position at the Museum of London.

Eamonn Gray

THE ANCIENT WORLD CONFERENCE

The Ancient World Conference 2011 took place on 3rd and 4th September 2011 at UCL and was in support of the Amarna Project.

It opened with a lecture by Barry Kemp, where he examined copies of inscriptions on architectural fragments at the North Palace for Merit-Aten's position. He suggested that the absence of Nefertiti's name from these might owe more to the fact that her mother had no role in that particular context, rather than reflecting disfavour or disappearance, nor could the status, or even existence, of Kiya be inferred from any of the traces where Merit-Aten's name had been recarved. He warned that restoring underlying, erased, texts was necessarily highly subjective; one would need to find new evidence and also re-examine the original inscriptions (which are now lost) if any real conclusions are to be reached.

Paul Nicholson presented evidence of faience and glass-making on an industrial scale at Amarna by examining the location, construction and usage of kilns close to the North Palace. He described findings arising from an experiment in glass-making based on the size and wear of the ancient kilns, which showed that, contrary to prevalent opinion, the Egyptians could have made glass in one production stage there; interestingly, glass ingots from the Uluburn shipwreck are a remarkable match to smelting pots at the Amarna site.

Jo Fletcher and molecular scientist Stephen Buckley presented their latest findings on the royal mummies of the late 18th dynasty, when royal embalming techniques were at their peak with special resins resulting in golden, statue-like tissue. They discussed anatomical studies of "controversial" mummies by their own team and by earlier researchers, particularly the evidence for the Younger Woman in KV35 being female (contrary to occasional suggestions otherwise!) and the unusual physical features of the royal family. They briefly looked at patterns of damage to these mummies and the inference that could be drawn from this, and are due to publish a paper later in the autumn which will also present their evidence for the identification of Nefertiti.

Stephen's explanation of the difficulty in extracting any viable DNA from these mummies at all, was taken up again by the geneticist Joanna Marchant who outlined the scientific processes and pitfalls involved in carrying out ancient DNA studies, discussing the inherent problems in the methods used by the recent Egyptian study, the lack of certain control measures, and some startling conclusions caused by a failure to consider earlier studies (eg. the "congenital deformity" of Tut-ankh-Amun's missing toe-bone, even though it is clearly present in earlier x-rays!). Joanna stressed that the scientists involved do believe their findings, but admit that they were under pressure to achieve certain results. And most of the top genetic labs in the world remain highly sceptical.

Dylan Bickerstaff took us on a visual tour of well-known and less well-known monuments, pointing out not quite obvious features, "hidden" images and vistas. Bill Manley examined the Sun Hymn in a lecture entitled "The Creator and Creation", comparing it with the philosophy of Aquinas, and tracing its concepts back to the Middle Kingdom *Instructions of Ptahotep*. He asked was it really reasonable to consider Akhenaten's ideas "revolutionary" and had human beings not had these same thoughts about creation at many times - indeed from the moment the species of modern man came into existence.

Gillian Pyke spoke about the Coptic monastic settlements in and amongst the North Tombs at Amarna, and gave us a fascinating glimpse of what life might have been like there. She also explained the features by which the tomb of Panehsy was converted into a church, including a unique, heavily damaged painting of a six-winged creature in the apse. Kate Spence examined pharaonic private houses at Amarna itself and explained the individual variations in layout (increasing in complexity with size) and in arrangements of neighbourhoods within the general style of the period, which show that Amarna was not built

to any prescribed plan. The amount of rubble in buildings and pictorial representations, mainly from Thebes, indicate that houses may have been two-storied. Both Gillian and Kate also examined the possible social implications of building and settlement layouts.

The conference ended on a high note with Stephen Cross presenting his research dating the flash flood in the Valley of the Kings which buried the entrance of Tut-ankh-Amun's tomb to the reign of Ay, and exciting evidence (including radar) of the presence of another tomb nearby which, given the position and level of its entrance, must date to the same period. Does it contain the missing Amarna mummies? Stephen has secured "unlimited funding", recruited a field director, and is currently awaiting permission to excavate!

As well as two informative days of exciting lectures, the conference was also a fantastic opportunity to socialise with like-minded enthusiasts, both amateur and professional, and meet friends old and new.

Tilly Burton

THE ORACLE AND KENBET COURT IN DEIR-EL-MEDINA

As we are holding our workshop on Crime and Punishment in December I thought it timely to write a short piece about the legal structure in Ancient Egypt. Over a period of 200 years, during the New Kingdom, the craftsmen who built the royal tombs lived in the village of Deir-el-Medina. There are thought to have been 50-60 households who were appointed by the Vizier and received their remuneration in the form of rations from the King. As they also did work "on the side" the standard of living was high with many of the villagers literate. Because of the high literacy rate many ostraca survive giving details of lawsuits; as the village was unique it is possible that their legal matters were also unique – there is very limited information from elsewhere in Ancient Egypt to make a comparison.

There were three means of obtaining justice in the village; firstly, if it were a minor dispute it could be heard by a single official; there was the Oracle of the deified Amenhotep I (who founded the village) and, lastly, the local court – the Kenbet.

The Oracle was an image of the deity on a litter, carried through the village by eight priests at times of religious festivals. These priests would have been the villagers taking their turn at priestly duties. The villagers would ask questions about health matters, wisdom of a business transaction or the theft of private objects, and the Oracle would "force" the priests to walk backwards if the result was "no". It is thought by McDowell that the priests were moved by some sort of auto-suggestion, that they felt the right or wrong of a case and believed the deity would push them in a certain direction. The villagers believed in the Oracle so they cannot have seen any jostling of the priests to carry on ahead or retreat. Accounts were kept in case the decision was challenged in the future; the ostraca mention witnesses' names. In one ostrakon (O.BM5625) a workman, Kenna, complains that he rebuilt an old chapel and another workman claimed he should benefit on the order of the god – the Oracle decided that Kenna was the sole owner. It is likely the priests knew the whole story; they were villagers themselves and would know the moral rights and wrongs of a case before it came before the Oracle – perhaps that is how it worked so well.

The Kenbet was known as the "court of hearers", "court of the tomb" and "court of this day" - they were the same thing and are written on ostraca interchangeably within a single text! It is believed that the court met when necessary and when members were available; not at set intervals. The Kenbet did not meet within the village; it was a secluded community and some members were "outsiders", so met at the Khetem a central point between the outside world and the village which was located between the village and the Ramesseum. Most cases were of a financial nature, the records show that about 50% of these were where one

party failed to pay the promised exchange of goods. The rest of the cases were the “donkey business” with a few cases of family disputes or offences against individuals or the state.

There are no records of who exactly were members of the Kenbet. The records were mainly kept by the villagers and the authors of the texts may include their friends' names and not others. So if someone was excluded from the text it does not necessarily mean they were not part of the court. However it seems likely that the court included the captains of both gangs, members of the village (perhaps village elders?), local police chiefs and the scribe (or scribes) of the vizier - the “outsiders”. The claimant gave the case history with names, dates and witnesses. The members of the court questioned the claimant, the defendant and the witnesses but there is no indication that they used beatings to gain confessions. Laws do not feature in the records, just the facts of the case. The verdict might be ‘X is right’ ‘Y is wrong’ and Y would then be made to swear an oath that they would make reparation. Some cases would entail beatings “100 blows of the stick” and serious cases were passed on to the vizier for his verdict.

It is not clear whether the verdict would be unanimous or from one leader of the court, but O.Borchardt says “make the court be unanimous”. In O.Gard166 a woman confessed to stealing a cake before the court took place, but the trial went ahead - was this a public humiliation and an exposure of her crime before the whole village?

Cases could drag on for years without resolution and you could win a case again and again yet never receive reparation: a case concerning a vat of fat came up before the Kenbet four times over 18 years before the exchange of goods was paid! The court appears to have had little power to enforce its decisions; it relied more on its prestige and the fact that often the entire village would have heard the judgement – peer pressure. So it took a most stubborn individual to disregard the court's judgement.

From the number of ostraca found in Deir-el-Medina detailing cases, it is likely that the villagers enjoyed a good lawsuit; the Kenbet members would know the defendants and perhaps take into account that personal knowledge before making judgement and the Oracle, of course, came from the gods.

Reference: A.G.McDowell, Jurisdiction in the workmen's community of Deir-el-Medina, 1990, Leiden Netherlands

Janet Brewer

CHRISTMAS FUND RAISING APPEAL

At the recent AGM it was proposed that either the Egypt Exploration Society Archives Campaign (viz Chris Naunton talking about John Pendlebury) or the South Asasif Conservation Trust (viz Elena Pischikova talking about the tomb of Karakhamun) were the recipients of our Christmas fund raiser. Voting will take place at our October and November meetings.

LIVERPOOL UNIVERSITY SCHOOL OF ARCHAEOLOGY, CLASSICS AND EGYPTOLOGY SUMMER SCHOOL – 2011

I was looking for a cheap holiday – honest! I'd written the car off in January so dreams of visiting the West Indies had to be put on hold. Then the leaflet from SACE arrived: a week of hieroglyphs for £150 plus the offer of cheap university accommodation. It would be good to explore Liverpool and then I could go on to the Lake District for some walking. What's not to like?

There was indeed much to like. 'Beginners and intermediate hieroglyphs' proved to be the lectures and exercises of the first few weeks of one of the undergraduate Egyptology modules. The lectures were excellent: really lucid accounts of some of the fundamentals – although we had reached relative clauses by Friday! I'm not in a position now to absorb all the information (something else to be added to the 'when I retire' list) but I came away with the confidence that when I do have the time to learn all the material I will understand what's going on. We received an excellent pack to supplement Bill Manley and Mark Collier's HOW TO READ EGYPTIAN HIEROGLYPHS. Mark Collier was indeed one of the lecturers along with Glen Godenho and Roland Emmech, all of whom managed to make their specialisms sound fascinating as well as taking part in the 2011 'who can draw an owl fastest' competition. Some of the other people on the course were students who are starting the degree course in September and who wanted to begin getting to grips with what they will be studying – lucky people! I hope I've persuaded Glen to come and talk to us next year.

There were other courses about Egypt and the classical world on offer so the Summer School is worth looking at for next year. The university halls of residence were at the bottom of Penny Lane and were fine for the week with really good food and en suite. There were about three miles between the department and the halls of residence – a journey I often walked. Smithdown Road, Upper Parliament Street – names which might be familiar if you followed the rioting in Liverpool with any attention. How kind of the locals to riot after I had left!

I had long lunch hours in which to explore the two Cathedrals as well as the Walker Art Gallery and the Adelphi Hotel or St George's Hall or even the shops. I was taken on the nearest I've been to a pub crawl for many years on the last night which included a speedy viewing of the only Grade One listed men's toilets in England – in a pub called the Philharmonic Dining Rooms, once much frequented by John Lennon and company.

Happy days! Alison Woollard

BRITISH MUSEUM TOURING EXHIBITION – PHAROAH: KING OF EGYPT

The recently arrived British Museum magazine reveals that the BM has organised a touring exhibition in conjunction with the museums in Tyne and Wear examining the propaganda and reality surrounding the role of pharaoh. The exhibition is free and opens at the Great North Museum in Newcastle at the end of September. Then it travels to Dorchester, Leeds, Birmingham, Glasgow and Bristol. There are more details on the British Museum website.

STUDY DAYS

Two study days presented by Joyce Filer BA; Dip-Arch; M.Sc; M.Sc. Taking place 11am-5pm, Hughes-Parry Hall, 19-26 Cartwright Gardens, London WC1. Both days include a practical session. For information and bookings, contact Richard on 07973 695168

EXCAVATING TOMBS AND GRAVES IN ANCIENT EGYPT

Saturday 22nd October 2011, among topics covered will be where to find burials in Egypt, how are they excavated and recorded, what techniques are used to examine them and what happens to the mummies and objects found.

Cost £40, closing date for bookings is 6th October.

FORENSIC ASPECTS OF ARCHAEOLOGY

Saturday 26th November, topics covered will include who is male and female, what they looked like in life, what they ate, their diseases, age at death and, possibly, how they died. [Note a review of this study day was written in December 2010 by Wanda Sellar.]
Cost £40, closing date for bookings is 10th November.

This month thanks go to Janet Brewer, Tilly Burton, Eamonn Gray and Alison Woollard.

The Essex Egyptology Group Committee comprises
Clare Banks (Treasurer) – Janet Brewer (Secretary) – Eamonn Gray (Publicity)
Lesley Kelly (Membership) – Alison Woollard (Programme)

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

All articles express the views and opinions of their authors

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