

## DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

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|--------------------------|--|
| 5 <sup>th</sup> October  | Beyond Indiana Jones: The Ark of the Covenant and Egyptian ritual processional furniture: David Falk |
| 2 <sup>nd</sup> November | New Discoveries at Hierakonpolis: Dr Renee Friedman  |
| 7 <sup>th</sup> December | Times of Transition: the High Priests of Amun at the end of the New Kingdom: Jennifer Palmer         |
| 4 <sup>th</sup> January  | Lunch at Crofter's Wine Bar for Members and Friends  |
| 1 <sup>st</sup> February | Gebel el-Silsila: Sarah Doherty  |

This month we welcome David Falk who is travelling to us from Liverpool where he is currently studying and next month we welcome Dr. Renée Friedman who is a graduate of the University of California, Berkeley, in Egyptian Archaeology and has worked at many sites throughout Egypt since 1980. With special interest in the Predynastic, Egypt's formative period, in 1983 she joined the team working at Hierakonpolis, and went on to become the director of the Hierakonpolis Expedition in 1996, a title she still holds. Currently the Heagy Research Curator of Early Egypt at the British Museum, she is the author of many scholarly and popular articles about all aspects of the fascinating site of Hierakonpolis.

## NEW YEAR LUNCH

Our New Year Lunch next year is on Sunday 4th January at Crofters in Witham, the restaurant where we have enjoyed a similar occasion for the past couple of years. The cost for three courses is £18.50, so with wine and tips it will probably be about £25. It is being organised by Alison Woollard and you will need to give her a £5 deposit, per person.

Lots of people have signed up so far so it promises to be a lovely social occasion. If you would like to attend please let her know - [a.woollard@virgin.net](mailto:a.woollard@virgin.net) / 01245 421729 - and give her the deposit at the October meeting.

## REVIEW OF SEPTEMBER MEETING

"Mysteries of the Amarna Period Royal Tombs: The Kings' Valley" Dylan Bickerstaffe

In September Dylan Bickerstaffe came to speak at the Essex Egyptology Group meeting about the 18th Dynasty tombs in the Valley of the Kings. He structured his talk around the order of discovery of the tombs, and concentrated on those related to the Amarna era (from Amenhotep III through to Horemheb). As well as telling us what is known he spent a lot of time

telling us what is less well understood - the facts in need of an explanation (generally giving his own theories and discussing those of others).

I shan't attempt to give an overview of the whole talk, instead I will pick out a few things that particularly caught my attention. One of these was KV58 - which was an almost empty tomb (having been robbed in antiquity), but the few bits and pieces left were intriguing.

Dylan believes that this could be the tomb of Nakhtmin, the son of Ay. I actually recognised the name Nakhtmin, as when I wrote a short article about shabtis for an old version of my blog I'd run across him in my reading as someone who provided shabtis for Tutankhamun's burial.\*

Nakhtmin is the sort of senior noble who is plausibly buried in the Valley of the Kings - he was the head of the army during Tutankhamun's reign and was also the son of Ay (who succeeded Tutankhamun as Pharaoh). The grave goods that were left in the tomb included pieces provided by Ay (which might be expected for a father to do for a son that predeceased him), and parts of a chariot including some with gold foil decoration. The gold had been scraped off by the thieves and crumpled up to carry away to be melted down - and they must have dropped it on the way out of the tomb.

\*Dylan mentioned this, and also pointed out an oddity - Ay didn't give any items to Tutankhamun's burial. The only thing from KV62 that is linked directly to Ay is the wall paintings that show him playing the role of Tutankhamun's son.

KV55 is another particularly interesting tomb - I knew something about it, because the remains found in that tomb have been postulated to be Akhenaten (most prominently by the DNA paper that was published a few years ago). The skeleton from KV55 probably isn't Akhenaten - Dylan told us about the conflicting evidence, primarily that the remains are those of a man too young to have had as many daughters or to have reigned as long as we know Akhenaten did. A more plausible explanation is that this is the remains of a man called Smenkhkare whose name is known as either a successor to Akhenaten or a co-regent with him. He was probably Akhenaten's younger brother (which fits with the DNA evidence). What I hadn't known about this tomb was anything about what else was found in it, nor anything else about it. I knew the remains were skeletal rather than mummified and it turns out that this is because water had got into the tomb through a crack in the rock above it. Over time this damp lead to the destruction of most of the organic material other than the bones. There was also the remains of a shrine found in this tomb, which was originally for the burial of Tiye (Akhenaten's mother, Amenhotep III's wife) - this was also pretty rotten and had collapsed. This is what lead to the original identification of the body from KV55 as an older woman - expectations (again) leading to the pathologists finding the "right" answer.

Dylan's preferred theory about Smenkhkare is that he was a co-regent with Akhenaten, intended as his successor, who predeceased Akhenaten. This is partly fuelled by an object that he referred to as the "only interesting thing from the tomb of Tutankhamun". Obviously KV62 was full of precious objects, but most of them don't really advance our knowledge of Ancient Egypt. The one that does is a piece of a box, which is labelled with three names - that of the Pharaoh Akhenaten, that of a (probably female) Pharaoh Neferneferuaten and that of the (Dowager) Great Royal Wife Meritaten. It's known from writings elsewhere that Smenkhkare was married to Ahkenaten's daughter Meritaten. So this box fragment gives Tutankhamun's predecessor on the throne, and his regency council (in effect, my paraphrase). The theory is that Akhenaten originally intended his brother to be his successor, but as Smenkhkare predeceased him he was left with a baby (Tutankhamun, probably Smenkhkare's son) as his heir. So he installed his wife Nefertiti as a co-regent (Neferneferuaten) to provide continuity after his death. (I should've taken notes - I hopefully haven't misrepresented that too much!)

That's only a small selection of the interesting stuff from the talk, he covered rather a lot of other things as well. This was very much my sort of talk - Dylan told us about intriguing collections of facts and objects that are still in the process of being explained and gave us his own (and others) theories and potential explanations.

Margaret Patterson

## **EEG TRIP TO THE DISCOVERING TUTANKHAMUN EXHIBITION**

In the middle of August a few of us from the Essex Egyptology Group visited the Discovering Tutankhamun exhibition at the Ashmolean Museum in Oxford.

A lot of the items in the exhibition came from the Griffith Institute, who have all the papers and so on relating to Howard Carter's discovery of the tomb of Tutankhamun. The first third of the exhibition was about the discovery itself. It started with a bit of biographical information about Howard Carter and Lord Carnarvon before moving on to the discovery and the start of the excavation. This section included some of the original index cards for the objects, and the photographs taken by Harry Burton. As the photos are all in black and white they annotated the index cards with the colours of the objects, and also artists painted them. I was particularly taken with the gouache paintings of the jewellery. They also had painted replicas of the artwork on the sides of the painted box that was the first object to be removed from the tomb - this has war scenes and hunting scenes on the sides. In each scene the central large figure is Tutankhamun on a chariot, followed by his army or his huntsmen and riding down the enemies or animals. I was amused that the animals are painted so that they look dignified rather than the enemies who are in disarray!

The next section of the exhibition looked at the aftermath of the discovery - how it was received by the general public, and how it affected things like design and clothing styles. They had lots of letters that people sent to Carter, and newspaper articles about it. At first The Times had paid for exclusive rights to publish the stories about the tomb, but later other newspapers also had the chance. The stories about what was actually happening were "enhanced" with stories about curses (particularly after Carnarvon's death). This meant that Carter got quite a lot of letters from people who wanted to help him avoid succumbing to the curse. I was particularly entertained by the chap who was "known in the craft as Master of the Forge" who sent a "lucky hand forged horseshoe charm" to Carter. It was just the same as the ones he'd sent the English Generals in the Great World War apparently! He finished his letter by asking for a souvenir from the tomb to be sent to him ... I suppose at least he sent something he considered of value, unlike the person who requested a souvenir and only enclosed a pound for postage (to Australia!). This bit of the exhibition also included various objects inspired by the discoveries - like some jewellery, and some clothes (not all of which were any good!).

The last section of the exhibition was about the context for Tutankhamun. This was the bit that had some actual ancient Egyptian things. Tutankhamun was the Pharaoh just after the Amarna period, so they had a selection of Amarna era stuff and some later pieces from Tutankhamun's reign. Particularly fine was a fragment of a statue - all they had was a pair of hands but they were very nicely carved and delicate.

It was an interesting exhibition, worth a visit.

Margaret Patterson

## **"THE COFFINS OF THE SENIOR LECTOR PRIEST SESENEBENEF: A MIDDLE KINGDOM BOOK OF THE DEAD?" PROFESSOR HARCO WILLEMS**

Each year the British Museum host a two day colloquium about an egyptological topic, and a lecture in the evening of one of the days which is the Raymond and Beverly Sackler Distinguished Lecture in Egyptology. John went to the whole colloquium this year (about coffins) and I just came along and joined him for the lecture. This was given

by Harco Willems, and concerned the texts on a particular coffin from the Middle Kingdom.

Willems started by giving us a bit of context for this particular coffin. It was discovered in the 1890s at al Lisht. This site includes the mastaba of Imhotep and Senwosret I's pyramid, and was initially excavated between 1894 and 1896 by a French team. It had been re-excavated in the 20th Century (I think he said the 1980s), but the tomb of Sesenebenef wasn't part of this later excavation. The tomb contained the coffins, an outer and an inner one, and also a canopic box and some sticks and staffs which were removed. The coffins were not removed from the tomb (I think that's what he said) but the French team made a reproduction of the text. He noted that as this was done by candlelight in cramped conditions it's not entirely accurate, there are places when he is sure the transcriber has made errors. The coffins have several texts on them - not just in the places you always see texts on box style Middle Kingdom coffins, but also in some of the spaces that are normally filled with decoration. Willems said that these coffins must be from the later Middle Kingdom - late 12th or early 13th Dynasty. He used a particular feature of the hieroglyphs to reach this conclusion - the legs on the birds and the heads on the snakes are not present. In the later Middle Kingdom, hieroglyphs might be drawn like this to prevent them "coming to life" and causing mischief.

The French didn't have time to do a full analysis of the text, and the point of this talk was to describe the analysis that Willems has done (he said it isn't part of his "real" research at the moment, more of a hobby). But why study these in particular, given he's working from someone's (not entirely accurate) transcription because the coffins themselves are inaccessible? He explained that he feels there is much to be learnt from integral studies of the texts on a single coffin - looking at all the texts as a whole can tell much about the belief system behind them. Such integral studies of Middle Kingdom coffins are rare, and previous work has looked at early Middle Kingdom coffins - so he thought it would be interesting to look at a late Middle Kingdom coffin to see how the texts have evolved. These coffins are also particularly interesting because they have so many texts on them, which is not the norm for late Middle Kingdom coffins. Willems speculated that this was because Sesenebenef was a lector priest - he had a professional interest in texts.

Willems analyses texts on a coffin by looking at not just what they say, but also by using the grammar in them to figure out a chronological order. He finds that most Middle Kingdom coffin texts follow a particular sequence, even if they are superficially different. Sesenebenef's texts don't follow this chronological sequence, which is interesting. To explain this further Willems first told us what the "standard" sequence is. Coffins are intended to be oriented in a particular direction and so it makes sense to talk about the North end of the coffin etc. The texts that are on a particular side are thematically associated with the cardinal direction for the side, and the bottom of coffin concerns the underworld. One might expect the top of the coffin to concern the day sky, but early Middle Kingdom texts and coffins generally only concern the night part of the sun's cycle.

There are four zones through which the spirit of the deceased travels in the night. First is the descent into the underworld. Second is the liminal zone which is where the gatekeepers are, and where the deceased must correctly answer questions and pass examinations before his soul can proceed. The third zone is the area near the eastern horizon where the soul must merge with the dead father god (Osiris) who is preparing to be resurrected, and there are more gatekeepers here. The fourth is the eastern horizon and the sunrise. Generally early Middle Kingdom coffin texts are only

concerned with zones 2-4. Texts concerning zone 2 are normally in the present tense because the questions and answers can only happen when both gatekeeper and soul are present (so it must be the "now" of the text). Zone 3 texts are usually in a future tense, presenting a wish for what happens next. Zone 4 is always future tense, and expressed as a hope.

Coffin Texts (spells) 30-37 on early Middle Kingdom coffins are intended to be recited by the son of the deceased. The grammatical construction of these spells indicates that when the son is speaking the deceased is between zones 1 and 2, and the son is smoothing his father's passage through the trials that are about to come. The texts also address zone 3's gatekeepers in a similar fashion.

Sesenebenef's coffin texts don't follow this scheme. We still call them "Coffin Texts" because they are on a Middle Kingdom coffin, but actually the spells look more like precursors to the Book of the Dead. What Willems has found is that this is not only the case for the words in the texts, but also for the underlying theology as indicated by the grammar and positioning of texts on the coffin. For instance on the foot of the coffin is a spell for assuming the form of a sparrow in order to go forth by day - this is a very common sort of spell in the Book of the Dead (which was titled "The Book of Going Forth by Day" by the ancient Egyptians). In that spell all four of the underworld zones are referred to in the past tense, reinforcing the idea that this is a spell concerned with the day part of the cycle. So in contrast to the early Middle Kingdom coffins, and more like the later Book of the Dead, the whole of the cycle of the afterlife is present in the texts. Spells 30-37 cover most of the inside of the coffin, but they are also modified to make them more what we might think of as New Kingdom style. They are now designed to be read by the son as if his deceased father is at the beginning of the cycle when he hasn't been through zone 1 yet. Other spells emphasise the cyclical and repeating nature of the afterlife - for instance a spell about going out into day as a phoenix and returning to the underworld as a falcon.

Willems's conclusion is that the basic pattern of Sesenebenef's coffin texts is about complete cycles through the afterlife, in contrast to the early Middle Kingdom texts which are focussed on a single point on the cycle. He was keen to point out that this is not a new invention by the designer of Sesenebenef's coffin (which might have been Sesenebenef himself). For all we divide the various afterlife texts into distinct groups, they are actually more of a spectrum. Sesenebenef's texts fit into this as part of the evolution from Middle Kingdom ideas to New Kingdom ones.

Margaret Patterson

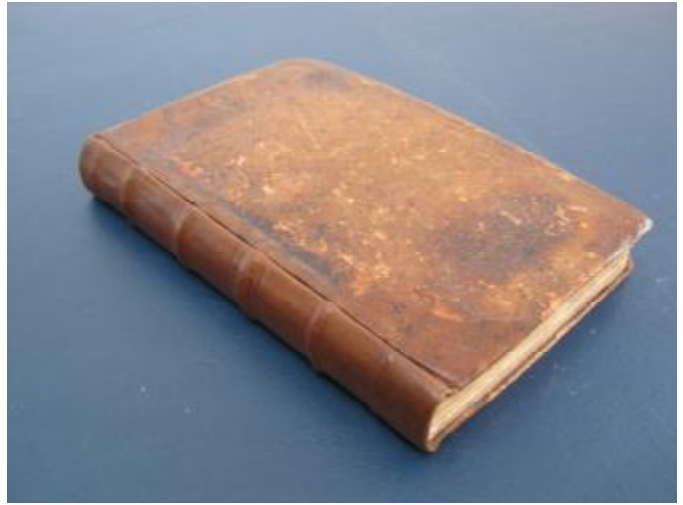
## **ESSEX EGYPTOLOGY GROUP CALENDAR 2015**

As you will recall from the AGM, Margaret Patterson has offered to co-ordinate a 2015 calendar for the group. At the moment we are waiting on reduction in printing costs, but so that we are "ready to go" once the prices come down, can you please sort through your Egyptian photographs and submit a maximum of three images per person - do not reduce them in size. The calendar would look better if they are landscape orientatation. Add a caption, so we know where they are from, and email them to Margaret at [margaret.l.patterson@gmail.com](mailto:margaret.l.patterson@gmail.com) as soon as possible. She will decide which pictures to include.

Can you email Margaret and let her know if you would like to order a calendar (or more) at a cost of £15 or under. We will only print calendars to advance order - so do let us know.

## EGYPT EXPLORATION SOCIETY LIBRARY

The EES Librarian, Hazel Gray, has sent these “before” and “after” pictures of one of their oldest books for which our book auction paid one-third of the cost of conservation.



## AUTUMN STUDY DAYS

### EGYPT EXPLORATION SOCIETY

Saturday 11th October, 10.30am-5.30pm

The Brunei Gallery Lecture Theatre, SOAS, Thornhaugh Street, London WC1

**“Dynasties in Decline: The Second Intermediate Period in Ancient Egypt”**

Speakers: Prof Kim Ryholt (Uni of Copenhagen); Prof Josef Wegner (Uni of Pennsylvania); Dr Irene Forstner-Muller (Austrian Archaeological Institute of Cairo)

Cost £28 for EES members and £33 for non-members, details and booking visit

[www.ees.ac.uk/events](http://www.ees.ac.uk/events)

### EGYPT EXPLORATION SOCIETY

Saturday 1st November, 10am-4pm

The EES, 3 Doughty Mews, London WC1

**“Thebes in the Second Intermediate Period”**

Speakers: Marcel Maree, Dr Wolfram Grajetski, Dr Gianluca Miniaci, Dr Garry Shaw

Cost £25 for EES members and £30 for non-members, details and booking visit

[www.ees.ac.uk/events](http://www.ees.ac.uk/events)

## BLOOMSBURY SUMMER SCHOOL

Saturday 22nd November, 10am-5.30pm

Cruciform Lecture Theatre, UCL, Gower Street, London WC1

**“Mosaics to Mummy Portraits: the art, architecture and people of Roman Sicily, Syria and North Africa”**

Four lectures by Dr Paul Roberts, Head of the British Museum's Roman collections: From Greece to the Normans; Rome in Africa, Africa in Rome; Ancient Faces; Palmyra Bride of the Desert

Cost £40: application forms available at the October meeting or visit [www.egyptology-uk.com/bloomsbury](http://www.egyptology-uk.com/bloomsbury)

## EVENING CLASS

Commencing Thursday 16th October (8 weeks) 6pm-8pm  
Classes take place at the EES, 3 Doughty Mews, London WC1

**“Egypt and the Near East: A Story of War, Diplomacy, Exoticism and Trade”**

The aim of the course is to explore the interactions between Egypt and the Near East through the presentation of selected Egyptian texts (including the autobiography of Weni, battle of Meggido, Papyrus Anastasi I, the Treaty of Qadesh and the story of Wenamun)

The tutor is Marwan Kilani a DPhil student in Egyptology and Near Eastern archaeology at the University of Oxford.

Cost £130 for EES members and £165 for non-members, details and booking visit [www.ees.ac.uk/events](http://www.ees.ac.uk/events)

## NEW SPEAKERS FOR 2015

In 2015 we will be welcoming some speakers that are new to our Essex Group. In February, we have Sarah Doherty who will be talking about the sandstone quarries of Gebel el Silsila. These quarries have a wealth of inscriptions dating from prehistoric petroglyphs to Roman. The thousands of graffiti and engraved images were produced by nomads, traders, workers and priests, allowing the study of the lives of common people and their achievements. The quarries show the techniques used for extracting stone as well as the removal and transportation of the blocks which would be used in Egypt's temples and shrines.

In March, Dr Glenn Godenho will be back with the tomb of Ankhtifi, part 2; and in April, Dr Brigitte Balanda will speak on the royal tombs at Napata which was the political centre of the kingdom of Kush (c.900-300 BC).



In May, Rosalind Park will be discussing the Dendara Zodiac, removed from a roof chapel in the Ptolemaic temple at Dendara (a replica is in place) and now in the Louvre, it represents a night sky with constellations and the signs of the zodiac (some as we know them today, others correspond to an Egyptian iconography).

Following in June we have Steve Cross speaking about an ancient flash flood and stratigraphy in the Valley of the Kings and in July we welcome the founder of the Group, Charlotte Booth, to speak about the General, then King, Horemheb.

It promises to be a good year.

**This month thanks go to Margaret Patterson for her three contributions to the newsletter**

## **The Essex Egyptology Group Committee**

**Rosemary Ackland - (Treasurer) – Janet Brewer BEM (Secretary/Membership) –  
Tilly Burton (Programme) - Dick Sellicks (Publicity/Facebook)**

**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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