



DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

- 7th December Times of Transition: the High Priests of Amun at the end of the New Kingdom: Jennifer Palmer
- 4th January Lunch at Crofter's Wine Bar for Members and Friends
- 1st February Uncovering the quarry workers at Gebel el-Silsila: Dr. Sarah Doherty
- 1st March The Tomb of Ankhtifi (part 2): Dr. Glenn Godenho

NEW GROUP WEBSITE

We have a new website, please do visit it and let us know what you think:
www.essexegyptology.co.uk

This month we welcome Jennifer Palmer: Jennifer Palmer studied Ancient History at the University of Birmingham, going on to take a Masters in Egyptology. She is completing the final corrections to her PhD, also at Birmingham, which focuses upon the Late Bronze Age Aegean. This talk explores a theme first encountered in Jennifer's Masters Dissertation, and recently presented at a talk at the EES, concerning the end of the New Kingdom and the early Twenty-first Dynasty. This was a time when Egypt became divided between the Tanite rulers in the North and the Theban rulers in the South. The talk particularly focuses upon the High Priests of Amun, one of the most prominent of whom was Herihor, who also assumed the kingship. Jennifer will examine the confusion surrounding the chronological placement of his career, the relationships between the High Priests of Amun and Ramesses XI, and will shed light on a problematic but important period of Egyptian history.

NEW YEAR LUNCH

Our New Year Lunch 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 / 01245 421729 - and give her the deposit at the December meeting.

THUTMOSE III TEMPLE DISCOVERED

As a result of an illicit dig by someone under their house in Tell Al Aziz, 40 km south of Giza, a previously unknown New Kingdom temple dated to Thutmose III reign has been discovered. Submerged by underground water, seven stelas, the remains of pink granite column bases and a pink granite 2.5m high seated statue (arms broken off) have been found. Excavation will continue.

BEYOND INDIANA JONES: THE ARK OF THE COVENANT AND EGYPTIAN RITUAL PROCESSIONAL FURNITURE" DAVID FALK

In October David Falk came to talk to us about his research on Egyptian Ritual Processional Furniture. He comes at the subject from a bit of a different angle from the speakers we generally hear - his central question is what can this Egyptian furniture tell us about the Ark of the Covenant, and the context in which the Pentateuch (the first 5 books of the Bible) was written.

He started by explaining what he wasn't going to be talking about - when discussing the Ark of the Covenant there is often what he called "an unhelpful dichotomy". At one extreme there are those theologians who regard the Ark of the Covenant as purely mythological or allegorical, and don't consider the idea of it being a real object at all. At the other extreme position is the Indiana Jones type of "discussion" about the Ark of the Covenant - an assumption that it was indeed real, and is somewhere to be found in the world today. These treasure hunters are mostly concerned with discovering it. At the end of the talk someone asked Falk what he thought had happened to the Ark of the Covenant - he thinks most likely it was melted down for the gold by Nebuchadnezzar as this is something that the Babylonians tended to do, even to diplomatic gifts (to pay their army).

So Falk is interested in the middle position that is often ignored - about what sort of real physical object the Ark was, and what it and its symbolism meant to the people of the time. From this question he gets to Egyptian Ritual Processional Furniture via the two main ideas about how and when the Pentateuch was originally written. One opinion is that it was composed in Babylon, during the Exile, and the descriptions of objects like the Ark of the Covenant are of things that were current then and back ported to the stories of time of the Exodus. The other opinion is that it was actually composed closer to the time of the Exodus and thus the objects described would be things that existed at this time. So Falk's question is now whether the Ark as described is closer to Egyptian ritual objects during the New Kingdom, or to Babylonian ritual objects - i.e. in which symbolic and iconographic context does it fit. I assume he has also looked at the Babylonian ritual objects to at least some degree, but as we are an Egyptology group it was the Egyptian ones he talked to us about.

First we need to know what Ritual Processional Furniture actually is. He had seven criteria for this; as well as defining what is meant by furniture and by processional, he had other less obvious criteria. For instance if it is carried by poles these must be attached below the centre of gravity - which indicates that display is more important than stability for this object. These objects must also be containers - boxes, or barques (a sort of boat), or thrones/palanquins (if you think about it, this is a container for a person).

After this defining of terms Falk moved on to consider the iconography of the Ritual Processional Furniture - but before we can think about that, we need to think about the Egyptian ideas about sacred space. New Kingdom Egyptian temples are not like churches, which are places where the public comes to worship, instead they are places where a god (or gods) dwell and so they need to provide a sacred space suitable for the god that is insulated from the profane world. Anyone can come to the outside of the temple, and say prayers which will hopefully pass to the ears of the god inside. The first spaces inside the temple (the peristyle hall, the hypostyle hall) are places where the better sort of commoner can come into on festival days - the middle and upper middle class, retired priests and so on. This area represents a more

purified form of the world around us, and so the decorations generally have a lot of nature motifs. After this there are doors called the Gates of Heaven, which divide the profane space from the sacred space beyond. At the very back of the temple are the apartments where the god (the statue of the god) dwells, and that can only be entered by the high priest who tends to the statue of the god - feeding it and dressing it and so on. But Falk said that this is not the most sacred part of the temple, instead that is between these apartments and the Gates of Heaven where the sacred barque resides. The barque sits on a plinth, within a room that is effectively a temple within the temple. It even has a roof of its own.

The barque is a piece of Ritual Processional Furniture, and Falk said to think of it like a space capsule. On festival days the god leaves the temple to process around the area, and this is an important demonstration of the continuing legitimacy of the Pharaoh's rule. But the god cannot enter the profane world without being defiled in much the same way that people cannot go into space in their ordinary clothes otherwise they will die. And so the god must be carried within a portable sacred space - the barque. A barque is a boat, and the ones used for this purpose are models rather than full size. They are carried on poles and have a shrine (box) sitting in the boat in which the god sits. The iconography on the barque is important to both protect the god, and to make the space within the barque sacred. One of these functions is carried out by a frieze of uraeus snakes around the top of the shrine. These protect the contents of the shrine from evil. The inside of the shrine is sanctified by being enclosed within the wings of a vulture. Inside the shrine the statue of the god is placed between two kneeling winged goddesses - the space between their wings is yet more sacred and more insulated from the profane world. Falk then showed us a diagram that showed how the layout of the sacred barque recapitulates the layout of the temple - they are creating sacred space in the same way.

During Akhenaten's reign the temples were closed, and the state religion changed from polytheistic worship of many gods to worship of the Aten alone. So there was no longer a need for the sacred barques to carry the images of the gods during festivals. However Akhenaten used similar iconography to reinforce his own status as the son of the Aten and the link between the people and the Aten. During festivals he was carried on a throne in procession, in the same way that the god statue would have been carried in the barque. He had uraeus snakes on his throne as a protective symbol, and behind him stood two winged goddesses surrounding him in a sacred space. This form of throne wasn't seen before Akhenaten's reign, but was used thereafter by the Pharaohs of the New Kingdom even once the old religion was restored.

Both of the above examples are of iconography and furniture being used to create a sacred space to insulate the divine from the profane. Ritual Processional Furniture could also be used to purify the profane in order to make it fit for a sacred purpose. One example of this is the boxes in which offerings were put when they were taken to the temple. The offerings of food etc would start out profane, but by being placed inside this sacred space and taken in procession to the temple they would become suitable to be given to the god. Another example Falk gave of this is Anubis shrines, he believes these were used to transport the canopic jars containing the organs of the deceased to the tomb at which point they were placed into the canopic chest. This purified them so that they were suitable for the afterlife - the coffin performed a similar sanctification function for the mummy.

To conclude the talk Falk returned to the question of the Ark of the Covenant. Does this fit with the sacred iconography and function of the Egyptian Ritual Processional Furniture? He went through the description(s) of it given in the Pentateuch, all of which sound similar to the characteristics of Egyptian Ritual Processional Furniture and not similar to the later Babylonian iconography and materials. Most interesting is the description of the Mercy Seat on the lid of the box - this is the most important and most sacred part of the Ark of the Covenant. It is an area on top of the lid, between the outstretched wings of two cherubim, into which the presence of the Lord descends to speak to Moses and to Aaron. As Falk points out, this is very similar to the iconography used in the Egyptian cases, in particular the thrones used by New Kingdom Pharaohs from Akhenaten onwards. So Falk's conclusion is that the Ark of the Covenant was an object which came from an Egyptian context, rather than a Babylonian one. By this he doesn't mean that Judaism is in any sense an Egyptian religion, instead that they

used a symbolic language that they were already familiar with when creating a sacred space for their own God.

I found this a fascinating talk. I had learned quite a lot before about the 'whats' of these sorts of objects - the boxes, the barques and so on - but I'm not sure I had ever heard a discussion of the 'whys' of them. Particularly new to me was the idea of purifying offerings by transporting them in a ritual fashion in a ritual box. It's also interesting to hear about scholarly research into something like the Ark of the Covenant, that often seems to only show up in the Indiana Jones type story (whether intended as fiction or non-fiction).

Margaret Patterson

OUT OF EGYPT

One of the things that John's parents had recorded for him from the Discovery Channel (which we don't have at home) for us to watch while we visited was a series called Out of Egypt. This series was presented by Kara Cooney, an Egyptologist, and it was a comparison of various widespread human cultural characteristics across a wide sweep of ancient cultures. She started each episode with something in ancient Egyptian culture and then looked at how other civilisations did this same thing.

She covered quite a wide range of subjects. For instance one episode looked at urban living and how it arose in different places from the truly ancient cities of the Middle East to more recent but still ancient cities in South America. She looked at the various ways society changes with urban living, both good and bad. Other episodes looked at things like how sacred violence shows up in many different cultures and societies - she went from the Egyptian imagery of the Pharaoh smiting his enemies to the Salem witch trials and the Spanish Inquisition, via the Aztecs, and looked at how similar or dissimilar the forces shaping this ritual or religious use of violence were

I really liked this series. You don't often see series that cover such a wide subject - this did a good job of looking at a variety of different cultures and asking both how we are all the same despite our different cultures, and how our cultures have shaped us into different people. And astonishingly for a Discovery channel series it didn't set out to "solve the mystery" or to provide a definitive answer to some question, instead it was a thoughtful overview of a complicated subject.

Margaret Patterson

EGYPT'S LOST QUEENS

Egypt's Lost Queens was a one off programme (<http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b04gnhv5>) presented by Joann Fletcher about four influential women in Ancient Egyptian history. Of the women she picked to focus on there were two who wielded power in their own right, and two who were mothers and/or wives of Pharaohs. Fletcher didn't just go the easy route of picking all the "obvious" ones - i.e. no Nefertiti, no Cleopatra - instead she covered Hetepheres, Hatshepsut (who does count as an obvious choice), Nefertari (ditto) and Arsinoe.

Hetepheres was the mother of the Pharaoh Khufu - the man for whom the Great Pyramid at Giza was built. Fletcher said that Hetepheres was the first burial at the Giza plateau and so she positioned her as the founder of this burial site - I suspect it's more likely that Khufu picked the site for his own pyramid, then buried dear old Mum there when she died rather than Hetepheres having much say in the matter. As there's not much known about Hetepheres other than her family relations this segment of the programme mostly looked at those of her grave goods which have survived - which includes a bed frame, and a carrying chair. They are in the

Cairo Museum and I remember we saw them when we were there a few years ago - pretty impressive to see a bed that's 4,500 years old.

Hatshepsut is an 18th Dynasty Pharaoh who first ruled as her step-son Tutmosis IV's regent when he was under age, and subsequently ruled in her own name as Pharaoh (with him as co-ruler but in the junior role). Fletcher mostly talked about how Hatshepsut used the propaganda machinery of Ancient Egypt to legitimise herself - her temple walls were covered with herself as Pharaoh (with all the accessories including the false beard); and also with references to her divine parentage and birth. Fletcher also talked about Hatshepsut as a military commander and suggested there is evidence she may have seen battle.

Nefertari was Rameses II's most important wife - she is the woman to whom the secondary temple at Abu Simbel is dedicated. She seems to have been involved in the diplomacy of the time - Fletcher showed us a letter from Nefertari to a Queen in Mesopotamia. And of course you can't have a programme about Nefertari without visiting her tomb which is one of the most spectacularly decorated tombs that has been found.

The last of Fletcher's powerful women was Arsinoe, who was the daughter of the first Ptolemy to be Pharaoh of Egypt and later ruled herself - as co-ruler with her brother Ptolemy (who was also her second husband, her first was king of Macedon). At the end of this section of the programme Fletcher talked about how Arsinoe's iconography references that of the earlier queens - with a crown formed from the crowns that these previous women wore in their own iconography. She was positioning that as a deliberate reference on Arsinoe's part but I would have thought it more likely that Arsinoe and her predecessors were referencing the same gods and the same iconography as each other rather than a more direct link.

I'm torn about what I think about this programme. On the one hand it is very well filmed and talks about a lot of interesting stuff, some of which I hadn't seen before. On the other hand I did spend a fair amount of time thinking "well, yeah, but ...". In simplifying things to emphasise her point I sometimes feel Fletcher goes too far towards misrepresenting things.

Margaret Patterson

Greetings from Luxor!

Our members', Sue and John Robinson, send us this piece from Luxor: Our return to Luxor and to our Nile Side apartment Villa Sehnaz on the West Bank, though always a joy, always presents with glitches and stories.

We arrived after midnight, welcomed by our lawyer Nasser Mahmoud who looks after the house, garden and us probably in that order. All was well; though no water that night and a wonderful story of the four Cobras in the garden. The Snake Catcher from Karnak village was summoned armed with sack and stick, three snakes caught; the fourth killed by the lawyer who then had sleepless nights wondering if the female would come to his house and bite him! Such deep belief coming from ancient tradition!

The palm trees of which there are eight were all infested with beetle, large terracotta coloured beasties, Nasser The Farmer, arrives machete and spraying equipment to hand; major climbing of very tall palms with only a piece of rope! Health and Safety just not an issue! We all pray he is a good climber! Job done, repeat spraying in two weeks! Hey Ho!

Forty years of marriage celebrated in Aswan at the Old Cataract Hotel, ghosts and whispers of Agatha Christie, Churchill, Noel Coward, et al all around us, a suite overlooking the Nile, wonderful meals and wonderful memories.

Luxor, though bereft of tourists so far seems like an ancient and modern city much more at ease with itself. Smart uniforms prevail for traffic and tourist police together with well-polished boots and smiling faces, the chaps in charge likewise, giving the impression that there is form and order. The people seem less woebegone; the streets seem cleaner, yellow no parking lines,

and even zebra crossings on The Corniche, reassuring the likes of us that we might make it across the road in one piece.

The Governor of Luxor actively encouraging tour operators to visit , grand dinners at ancient Temples, entertaining the great and the good of German and Italian tourist industry on splendid Dahibayas (wooden carved boats with sails).

Yesterday we visited El Kab, an prehistoric and Pharaonic site 80 kilometres south of Luxor, ten of us and a picnic. Wonderful wall paintings, tombs of princes and scribes, hieroglyphic texts written on huge stones scattered in the desert Wadi, such a privilege to see these sites and feel such connection with ancient people, telling a story, not in the Times, but on rocks in the desert.

Our return from the south always includes a "culture shock "stop at a truck drivers cafe at Esna; city of the ancient cult of Khnum, creator God, who fashioned us on a potter's wheel, using the mud of the Nile. It is also famous for its bananas which indeed are very good. Few Europeans stop here, but the tea and coffee, served in glasses, plus the opportunity to buy Turkish delight (from Saudi Arabia, can you believe?). So exotic for us, routine and mundane to the locals, we buy bananas, terracotta pots, consider the quality of wool scarves, it's winter here, long johns and woollies various including gloves all for sale. Alongside this cornucopia of goodies, are the Mosque, the loos and the ritual washing areas for purification, prior to worshipping their God. A truck of tethered haughty camels awaits the return of their driver from his prayers. The TV beaming the Word from Mecca, whilst young boys gather the glasses, wipe the tables with less than pristine dishcloths and bring shisha smoking pipes to the customers. We are watched with amusement and acceptance; no hassle, polite and honest purchasing of things various, such a treat!

We leave you with a small insight into the farmers (fellahin) of the West Bank written by a German anthropologist who came across a fellahin farmer Abd Al-Radi. The fellahin have a history relevant both now and in Pharaonic times, the inundation which brought the rich alluvial soil to ensure a good wheat harvest and in its turn taxation for the ancient King to maintain his armies and keep Egypt strong. Today they still labour around us, but we are quite sure they don't pay tax! Their life continues as observed by Hans Alexander Winkler:

"The vision of the Fellahin is narrow, the axis in space is the Nile, the axis in time is their God. Both determine all happenings. That there might be people who are not nurtured by the Nile does not enter their heads. And that there are reasonable people who do not strive for God's paradise is incomprehensible. The daily thoughts of the fellahin are directed to work, the crop must be harvested, fodder beans bought, the water buffalo is about to calve, the irrigation system must be checked. The market is a weekly event. There the fellah takes his onions and radishes, garlic and tomatoes, goats and calves. He buys cloth and shoes, spices and thread, a holiday veil for his wife, a staff for himself. He may have a tooth pulled, an amulet prepared or a pattern tattooed on his hand for good luck. Thoughts of marriage make him happy, when muffled hand drums sound, the songs ring out and the scent of boiled meat and festive bread fills the house. Politics and war, newspaper stories and stock market reports, discoveries and inventions- all these are far, far away from the fellah's vision. His eyes linger on the Nile and his God alone."

(Hans Alexander Winkler; Ghost Riders of Upper Egypt)

John and Sue Robinson

REVIEW OF BRITISH MUSEUM LUNCHTIME LECTURE

Recently I attended the last in an excellent series of lectures associated with the exhibition "Ancient Lives". Professor Joel D Irish of Liverpool John Moores University (via Arizona State and Alaska) is a dental anthropologist and his lecture was titled "Who were the Ancient Egyptians?".

He told a packed BP Lecture theatre that only our teeth are the hard tissue in our bodies that is seen, that teeth can show diet, disease and origin of that person. This last was what we were interested in.

Arizona State University Dental Anthropology System gives a scoring system for 100 traits found in teeth. There is no difference between male and female and those traits are 80% inherited and only 20% environmental. He looked at 36 of those traits in 1000 Ancient Egyptian dentitions, 500 Nubian, 322 North West African, 345 Southern European and Middle Eastern and 1200 Sub Saharan (west, central, east and south Africa). He mentioned a couple of these traits; "shovelling" which is found in 1.2% of West Asians, and 92% of native Americans; "Caribelli cusp" which is found in 1.9% of Arctic Eskimos, and 49% of West Asians.

With what he described as an incredible amount of data he started statistical analysis using a mean measure divergence, then a 3-D schematic and as this was, he said, too messy, went to a 2-D schematic using colour to differentiate.

Using dental anthropology he has proved that Ancient Egyptians are part of the Mediterranean gene pool, with some Nubian and lesser sub-Saharan African. The really interesting part is that the traits in these teeth are present in pre-dynastic as well as dynastic teeth from cemeteries throughout Upper and Lower Egypt. Therefore disproving those theories of a "super race" arriving in Egypt at the time of the first dynasty.

As an add-on a couple of questions were interesting. One about toothache gave the information that in Hierakonpolis they were drinking beer but wine in Naqada. Another about eruption of wisdom teeth was that they were common in earlier populations but our softer foods cause less dental wear and movement of teeth so fewer people have wisdom teeth; he also said our faces are smaller than in the past, so less space for them.

I have to say that apart from an excellent talk he was a very amusing speaker and the hour went by in a flash. Most of the talks in the series of lectures were free and were excellent; I hope they do something like this again.

Janet Brewer

GOOGLE MAPS "DO" THE PYRAMIDS

<http://www.google.com/intl/en-GB/maps/about/behind-the-scenes/streetview/treks/pyramids-of-giza/>

Ruth Berrington

Exhibition In The Queen's Gallery, Buckingham Palace

7 November 2014 to 22 February 2015

Adult £9.75, concessions £8.75

Cairo to Constantinople: Early Photographs of the Middle East

The exhibition follows the journey taken by the Prince of Wales (later King Edward VIII) in 1862 as he undertook a four month tour around the Middle East.

Further details see

<http://www.royalcollection.org.uk/exhibitions/cairo-to-constantinople-early-photographs-of-the-middle-east>

Study Day

The Friends of the Petrie Museum are holding a study day,
"Secrets Revealed: Artists and Epigraphers in Egypt"

Saturday 13th December, 10am-5pm, Institute of Archaeology, UCL
Tickets cost £35 for Friends of the Petrie Museum and £40 non-members

It features Lee Young "The Lure of the East; Annie Pirie, Rosalind Paget and Howard Carter",
Andrew Bednarski "Frederic Cailliaud and a history of copyists", Patricia Usick "William John
Bankes's Egyptian Drawings"

Details available at the December meeting

This month thanks go to Margaret Patterson, Ruth Berrington, John and Sue Robinson
and Janet Brewer

**The Essex Egyptology Group Committee
wishes you all a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year**



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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