



## DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

1 <sup>st</sup> February	Uncovering the quarry workers at Gebel el-Silsila: Dr. Sarah Doherty
1 <sup>st</sup> March	The Tomb of Ankhtifi (part 2): Dr. Glenn Godenho
12 <sup>th</sup> April	From King to Ancestor: Transition to Nepatan Royal Afterlife: Dr Brigitte Balanda
10 <sup>th</sup> May	Reflections on the Dendara Zodiac: Addressing the what, when and why: Rosalind Park
7 <sup>th</sup> June	An ancient flash flood and stratigraphy in the Valley of the Kings: Stephen Cross

**In February we welcome Dr. Sarah Doherty, Ceramicist & Archaeologist for Gebel el Silsila Epigraphic Project & Gurob Harem Palace Project, Egypt.**

Sarah is an archaeologist and ceramicist, having worked on various sites in Egypt and Sudan, including Gurob Harem Palace Project, the Valley of the Kings and Amara West. Sarah's research interests include experimental ancient pottery manufacture, ethnography and pottery technology. She completed her PhD at Cardiff University, graduating in July 2013 under the supervision of Professors Paul Nicholson and Ian Freestone. Her thesis topic "The Origins and Use of the Potter's Wheel in Ancient Egypt" included establishing a set of criteria for pottery manufacture, identifying and reconstructing ancient potter's wheels, and making and firing replica Egyptian and Near Eastern pottery. As an Associate tutor at Cardiff University she taught courses including "Great Discoveries in Archaeology, Ancient Egypt: an introduction to Death and Burial in the Roman World." Sarah joined the Gebel El Silsila Survey Project in March 2014, and set about trying to establish a chronology of the site through its ceramics.

**In March we welcome back Dr Glenn Godenho to continue the talk he gave in late 2013 about the tomb of the Nomarch Ankhtifi.**

Glenn studied for his BA, MA and PhD in Egyptology at the University of Liverpool. His research interests are in the inscriptional and archaeological contexts of Ancient Egyptian social display, and current work includes the excavation and subsequent publication of two fieldwork projects: the First Intermediate Period (c. 2125-1975 BCE) tomb of Ankhtifi near Mo'alla in Upper Egypt and the Ramesside fortress (c.1278-1212 BCE) at Zawiyet Umm el-Rakham, 200km west of Alexandria on the Mediterranean coast. Glenn is a lecturer on the Manchester University Certificate and Diploma courses in Egyptology.

## **"New Discoveries at Hierakonpolis"**

**Renee Friedman**

In November Renee Friedman came to talk to us about the latest discoveries she and her team have been making at the site of Hierakonpolis. First she put the site itself into context. It was an important pre-dynastic Egyptian city, situated just north of modern Edfu, called Nekhen (and later Hierakonpolis by the Greeks). It is perhaps best known as the site where the Narmer Palette (now in the Cairo Museum) was found, as well as the Scorpion Macehead and the ivories of the "Main Deposit" (which are now in the Ashmolean Museum). By the time of the unification of Egypt (which the Narmer Palette is thought to commemorate) it was already a thriving and important city and the cult centre of the god Horus of Nekhen. By thriving city Friedman means that there is evidence of several thousand people living on the site, in a hierarchically organised society. They have excavated several examples of what they believe to be breweries (they are definitely places that made some sort of grain based foodstuff, most probably beer but perhaps some sort of porridge). Each of these breweries was capable of making around 80 litres of beer in a single batch which is pretty large scale production, and implies a high level of administrative organisation for the city. There are also preparation sites for fish, where the heads and scales of large Nile perch are found. The remains of the edible bits of the fish are found at a large building which seems to be a ceremonial space. So the fish needed to be caught in the Nile, brought to the preparation site and then the food taken to the place where it was to be eaten. This required a high degree of organisation, and Friedman said they have found evidence of what appears to be a system of tallies using shaped pebbles, and delivery receipts using the newly developing writing system.

More recent work at Hierakonpolis has focussed on an elite cemetery dating to around 3,500BC. In previous seasons they have extensively excavated a tomb complex consisting of the tomb of a high status individual in amongst the tombs of several probably retainers plus a menagerie (with animal keepers too). The secondary tombs generally contain young individuals - between their late teens and their 30s - with the exception of a dwarf who is older. This indicates that these people probably did not die of natural causes, instead they were killed to accompany the main tomb owner. The menagerie has a wide range of animals - from domesticated cattle and sheep, to big cats, elephants and crocodiles. There are signs that the non-domesticated animals were kept in captivity for a little while before slaughter. The primary tomb in the cluster also shows evidence for a wooden superstructure, perhaps with coloured plaster walls.

A short distance away from that tomb complex in the cemetery is another complex which Friedman said dates to a generation or so later than the first one, and it shows some changes in relative statuses of the elite and their retainers over that time. Prior to 2014 a group of tombs had been excavated that were the retainers and menagerie for this tomb group. Again the retainers were generally young and in the prime of life. There was also another dwarf - dwarves had special significance to the Ancient Egyptians throughout their history (c.f. the god Bes). Interestingly the dwarves in both burials suffered from one of the more rare causes of genetic dwarfism, so Friedman speculates that they are likely to be related (which makes me uneasily think they might have fallen into the "menagerie" category for the people of the time). There is again a menagerie, which this time shows signs of longer term captivity for the "wild" animals. For instance one burial contains a pregnant female auroch - this skeleton also shows signs of skeletal abnormalities that develop with long term captivity. So the animal must have become pregnant in captivity, perhaps indicating a breeding captive population. In this tomb complex there is no sign of a primary tomb, and this is where things stood before the 2014 season.

In early 2014 Friedman and her team began work on excavating near that tomb complex. Separated from the secondary tombs by a 4 metre corridor there was evidence of a fenced enclosure containing a pillared wooden hall much like the one in the primary tomb for the first complex. Most of the season was spent excavating the space inside this enclosure both generally investigating it and also looking for signs of a tomb. In the very last week of excavation they finally uncovered a tomb! This was the start of a rather fraught couple of days - in the first day one of the things they found was a 30cm ivory statue. By the end of the day

rumours had spread about a (completely fictitious) 3m gold statue, and so the excavation site was put under guard overnight in case people came to rob it. The next day with several armed guards and officials keeping an eye on the area Friedman and her team finished excavating the tomb, managing (thankfully!) to finish the excavation without any unwelcome visitors.

There were several interesting objects found in the tomb, although not much of the remains of the occupant - just enough bones to establish that there had been a body, and its probable orientation in the grave. Friedman said that this was "stuff but no stiff" and she preferred that to the other way round. The finds included that ivory statue I mentioned in the last paragraph. There was also a pot, with a lion motif on it (which is a symbol of kingship in later Egyptian history). There were three containers for yellow ochre, made out of hippopotamus tusks and some palettes with signs of having been used to grind green malachite and red ochre. As well as this there were several fine ivory combs - one of which had a donkey carved at the top, and one a hippopotamus. Friedman thinks the lack of most of the body indicates that the tomb was disturbed in predynastic times - there are also signs that the wooden superstructure was burnt down before being rebuilt. So she hypothesises that the body was removed from the tomb as an attack against the occupant personally, and his tomb burnt down - then later he returns to favour in some sense and the wooden hall is rebuilt.

This was a fascinating talk! In part this was because it was about brand new discoveries, but it was also interesting to see evidence of early steps in what becomes the Egyptian culture we know. This could be the start of the process that led to the ruler becoming not just an important person (buried in the midst of his retainers) but semi-divine (buried set apart from his retainers in a special building).

Margaret Patterson

## **"Times of Transition: Herihor and the High Priests of Amun at the End of the New Kingdom"**

Jennifer Palmer

In December Jennifer Palmer came to talk to us about Herihor, who was High Priest of Amun in the reign of Ramesses XI and also called himself King. This is a complicated period of Egyptian history and there are several different views among Egyptologists. Palmer was presenting us with both an overview of the controversies and also her own opinions on the subject.

She started by giving us some historical context for the time of Herihor who lived at the end of the 20th Dynasty (which is also the end of the New Kingdom). This dynasty consisted of the Pharaoh Sethnakhte followed by Ramesses III to XI. They all (except Ramesses XI) had fairly short reigns, and there were several invasions of Egypt during this time (for instance the invasion of the sea peoples during Ramesses III's reign). This was also a period of internal chaos as shown by documentation of unrest at Deir el Medina, and many tomb robberies and thefts from temples during the reigns of Ramesses IX to XI. Ramesses XI reigned for 30 years, and at the end of his reign Egypt was split into two (practically speaking) with a Pharaoh in the North and the High Priest of Amun ruling in the South. In his Year 19 an alternative dating scheme was introduced starting with Year 1 of the Repeating of Births (also called the Renaissance), which ran for 10 or 12 years in parallel with the normal regnal years.

Palmer said there are several puzzle pieces of known people and events that need to be fitted together if we are to understand this period. These are: the "suppression of the High Priest of Amun Amenhotep"; "King" Herihor; High Priest of Amun Piankh; disruption at Thebes; the Renaissance. Until the last few decades the accepted theory was that High Priest of Amun Amenhotep had rebelled against Ramesses XI and been removed from office. His successor was Herihor who had set himself up as a "King" but many Egyptologists considered this to be more "playing King" than truly ruling. Herihor was then thought to be succeeded by his son Piankh who only called himself High Priest of Amun. Herihor was considered a good candidate for the person who instigated the Renaissance - perhaps these were his "regnal" years. Taken

together this seemed to show Ramesses XI as a weak king who had lost control of the south of his country.

However this was based in large part on a mis-transcription of a single relief - this names all of Herihor's children (19 sons and a handful of daughters). As copied down by a 19th Century scholar it seemed to list a son called Piankh, but re-examination showed that this wasn't the case. This means that the chronology isn't fixed and is open to re-interpretation. The last few decades have seen heated debate between Egyptologists about how and whether to re-interpret the evidence for this period!

After this scene setting Palmer first discussed whether or not Herihor should be counted as a real King. The evidence against it seems to boil down to it being inconvenient for the assumed timeline (Herihor succeeded by Piankh). It is true that he isn't widely attested, and isn't named in Manetho's history of Egypt but Palmer doesn't see this as sufficient reason to discount him. There is also a suggestion that he didn't use royal iconography, but a thorough survey of his iconography shows that he does use royal iconography when appropriate and priestly iconography when that is appropriate - as other Pharaohs did before and since. Palmer's conclusion here is that any explanation of this period needs to take Herihor's kingship into account rather than dismiss it.

So is this a power struggle with Ramesses XI, instigated initially by High Priest of Amun Amenhotep? Palmer thinks that a re-examination of the sources for Amenhotep's so-called rebellion do not support this idea. She noted that Amenhotep asked for Ramesses XI's help during the suppression, which suggests that Ramesses XI wasn't doing the suppressing! Her preferred explanation is that Amenhotep was forced out of power by someone unknown and this is the suppression the documents reference. Pharaoh sent the Viceroy of Nubia (Panehsy) to restore him, in Year 12, and later Panehsy himself was forced out (perhaps by Piankh who is documented as campaigning against him in Nubia later).

Palmer next talked about how the Renaissance fits in. This has previously been used to back up the idea that Herihor was "playing King while Ramesses XI wasn't looking" - the new dating scheme is thought to be part of Herihor's "rule". However this isn't something based on any sources. Palmer thinks it is more plausible that Ramesses XI himself instigated the date change. The years of the Renaissance are documented as directly linked to regnal years of Ramesses XI, which doesn't suggest any sort of break with the Pharaoh. And there is precedent for Pharaohs using the rhetoric of a Renaissance when restoring order after a period of chaos - for instance Seti I does so at the beginning of his reign (which is just after the Amarna period). There is also documentary evidence for Ramesses XI visiting Thebes in the early years of the Renaissance - which suggests he was still in control of Upper Egypt during this time.

So how do we fit Herihor in? Palmer suggests that he doesn't call himself King until after Ramesses XI died. The timeline would then be: High Priest of Amun Amenhotep -> High Priest of Amun Piankh -> High Priest of Amun Herihor until Year 34 of Ramesses XI -> King Herihor (after Ramesses XI died) -> King Pinudjem I.

There are still a couple of things that need to be explained if this timeline is correct - and Palmer discussed those next. One of these is the dates that Herihor and Piankh are attested in. Egyptian dates are normally regnal years of a particular Pharaoh, but often the Pharaoh isn't named, which is inconvenient for Egyptologists! Herihor is attested in a Year 5 and a Year 6, Piankh is attested in a Year 6 and a Year 7, and Year 10 of the Renaissance. So this seems to make perfect sense with the older idea of the chronology of these two men, and less sense for Palmer's new chronology. Her theory after re-examining the evidence is that Herihor (and later Pinudjem I) are dating using the regnal years of the Pharaohs in Lower Egypt; whilst Piankh is using Ramesses XI's regnal years when he's not using the Renaissance dating.

The other thing that needs explanation is how come Herihor reigned between Piankh and Pinudjem I. It's known that Pinudjem I was Piankh's son, so why didn't he succeed immediately - and why didn't one of Herihor's many sons succeed him? To explain this Palmer looked at the wives or mothers of these men. Herihor's wife is a woman called Nodjmet, who is given the title King's Mother (rather oddly one might think at first glance, as none of Herihor's children

became King). There are also letters from Piankh to Nodjmet in a fairly intimate style, and they are clearly very close. Piankh's wife and Pinudjem's mother are known only from an initial in a damaged graffito - but Palmer suggests that ndm is another possible reading, which is the beginning of Nodmjet's name (the hieroglyphs in question are similar shapes and it is a damaged text). If that is the case then perhaps Piankh was married to Nodjmet before Herihor was? Palmer speculates that Piankh may have died unexpectedly (he was campaigning in Nubia shortly before he vanishes from the record, which may be an explanation). If his children were young, then there would be a power vacuum - and perhaps Herihor stepped in as a Piankh supporter to ensure the eventual succession of Piankh's children, marrying Nodjmet to legitimise his assumption of the High Priest of Amun role.

Palmer's conclusion is that the evidence is stronger for Herihor to be Piankh's successor than his predecessor, and she believes that if the misreading of the list of Herihor's children hadn't happened in the 19th Century then no-one would be suggesting otherwise. She also believes that Ramesses XI wasn't as weak a king as he is generally portrayed - he retained control of the country during his lifetime, and after his death the partition into two pieces went smoothly with both parts retaining close links (and using the Lower Egypt regnal years for a common dating scheme).

This was a fascinating talk, about a very confusing section of Egyptian history - Palmer was assiduous in explaining all the theories as well as her own one, and giving the evidence for and against them as she saw it.

Margaret Patterson

## **Tutankhamun: The Truth Uncovered**

I must confess when I read the blurb on the BBC for their new Tutankhamun programme, *Tutankhamun: The Truth Uncovered*, I was not entirely impressed. It talks about "new scientific research" and how "presenter Dallas Campbell [...] carries out unique experiments to get to the truth." and then proceeds to talk about stuff that sounds like a re-hash of the 2010 Hawass et al paper ( *JAMA*. 2010;303(7):638-647). So I was sceptical about the likelihood of it being anything new. Interestingly, Zahi Hawass is not mentioned once during the programme, but some of the other authors of that paper (Ashraf Selim and Albert Zink) are extensively interviewed. So my overall impression is that this is a second go at making a layperson-accessible documentary based on the 2010 paper, with the intention of distancing itself from Hawass.

The programme started with a bit of scene setting - about how Tutankhamun was discovered. This included a bit about how Tutankhamun's death must have been unexpected, drawing on the small size of the tomb and the mould on the decoration of the tomb as evidence.

The meat of the programme had three main threads: what his physical condition was in life, how he died, who he was related to. The physical condition section was mostly concerned with the clubfoot that the 2010 paper identified, and with the deterioration of some of the toe joints on that foot (which indicate a degenerative bone disease called Köhler disease). Although they used a virtual autopsy table to display the CT scan data, I still thought it was difficult for the untrained eye (i.e. mine) to pick out the features Selim was showing us. I would have appreciated some diagrams of "this is what it normally looks like" and "this is the disease state" or something of that sort. They also had done a CGI reconstruction of Tutankhamun based on this skeletal data - which was well into uncanny valley territory!

When discussing his cause of death Campbell discussed a couple of previous theories - one debunked ages ago (blow to back of head), although you wouldn't know it from the programme. The other was the idea that Tutankhamun was thrown from a chariot, which seems hard to believe if he did have a clubfoot and a painful foot disease as chariots require good balance and strength to drive. In this section of the programme they also talked about which of

the bits of damage to Tutankhamun's mummy were potential injuries at the time of death. I was a bit disappointed that Selim just dismissed in a sentence or two pretty much all the damage as modern damage caused by Howard Carter. I know from a talk given by Chris Naunton that there's at least one anatomist out there who thinks the damage to the ribcage must be at least soon post-mortem if not pre- or peri-mortem due to the nature of the fractures. I guess that might be a case of simplifying the story for television, but it feels a bit cavalier. However, he did identify a fracture to the femur above the right knee as occurring pre-mummification and late enough in life that it hadn't healed (as you can see resin along the fracture). The theory is that an accident capable of causing this fracture would be traumatic enough to be the cause of death.

There weren't any surprises in the genetic data, it was all straight from the Hawass et al paper. They show that Tutankhamun was the son of KV55 and "the younger lady", who were full blood siblings and the children of Amenhotep III and Tiye. I felt the genetic data was very poorly presented. I am not convinced that someone who didn't already have a basic idea how the genetic testing worked would understand it after this - maybe it's expecting too much to have a decent explanation in the time they had but it would have been nice if I'd had a sense that they'd tried. I was also disappointed in their handling of the discussion of who Tutankhamun's father was. The DNA evidence shows that his father is the skeleton referred to as KV55. There are at least two theories as to the identity of this skeleton - Smenkhare or Akhenaten - and no conclusive evidence one way or the other. So it was a real shame to hear the programme state that KV55 is Akhenaten as if it were fact. That is definitely one of the plausible hypotheses, but it's certainly not proven and perhaps never will be. At best a misleading simplification, at worst intellectually dishonest.

The three threads were tied up with a theory proposed by a medic; he had three lines of evidence for his theory: the four Pharaohs up to and including Tutankhamun died at ever younger ages; the art style of the Amarna period; the visions recorded by Tuthmosis IV and Akhenaten on stelae. He put these together to suggest that Tutankhamun's death was caused by a particularly bad fall caused by temporal lobe epilepsy. I didn't buy it from the way it was presented. My main stumbling blocks are firstly that I don't see why the Amarna art style needs to be considered as a literal representation of the way Akhenaten looked. And I thought the Hawass paper had ruled out some of the representation being literal (due to various skulls not being deformed as represented). The other stumbling block was that he was thinking about the idea of Pharaohs recording visions from the gods on public proclamations from a very modern context - i.e. thinking it must be something pathological rather than appropriate to its culture. Maybe he's right, but I wasn't convinced.

I have been pretty negative so far - this programme pushed several of my buttons about how to present science and/or controversial ideas in general, and as I said at the beginning I went into it cynical. However, there were some good things about it. For instance, Campbell is always an engaging presenter and there were some very well done CGI reconstructions of buildings, particularly in Amarna that were worth watching the programme for. They didn't quite look real, but I think they were the best I have seen in a programme. And Campbell got the walking between the (non-existent) pillars looking around at the splendour thing just right.

Margaret Patterson

## CROWNS IN ANCIENT EGYPT



Photograph from the outer wall of Dendera Temple this image shows a number of the King's crowns; some look wearable but others like the Atef crown with its plumes and horns do not. Diadems have been found but no known crowns, so no-one is clear exactly how they were made or from what materials; just theories taken from images such as these.

Janet Brewer

This month thanks go to Margaret Patterson.

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