



ESSEX EGYPTOLOGY GROUP

Newsletter 108

June/July 2017

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

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| 4 th June | Hatshepsut's temple at Deir el-Bahri: Sergio Alarcon Robledo |
| 2 nd July | The stone village at Amarna: Anna Garnett |
| 6 th August | Short talks, book auction and annual general meeting |
| 3 rd September | Justice in ancient Egypt: Alexandre Loktionov |
| 1 st October | Ancient Egyptian Furniture: from the earliest to those "wonderful things" of the New Kingdom: Dr Geoffrey Killen |

This month we welcome, from Madrid, Sergio Alarcón Robledo. Sergio is one of the architects working at the Polish-Egyptian Archaeological and Conservation Mission of the Temple of Hatshepsut at Deir el-Bahari. He has studied Architecture at the Technical University of Madrid, and the MPhil of Egyptology at the University of Cambridge. His work has mainly focused on the excavation and interpretation of architectural evidence from ancient Egypt. His fieldwork experience includes his work at Deir el-Bahari and some nearby New Kingdom and Third Intermediate Period tombs. This coming season he will also join the Middle Kingdom Theban Project and the Egypt Exploration Society's Mission at Zawyet Sultan.

The temple of Hatshepsut at Deir el-Bahari, is one of the oldest known New Kingdom royal buildings, and is key for the interpretation of the Theban mortuary temples, as well as for a better understanding of how the royal identity was shaped in the beginning of the New Kingdom. His talk will give an overview of the temple showing both its importance in the development of New Kingdom traditions and explaining the main archaeological and restoration works which have been carried out since 1855.

Essex Egyptology Group Website

Richard Brown, our webmaster, is going to change the seven photographs which head up the site. If you have a suitable image, please send it to info@essexegyptology.co.uk and the committee will make a choice from those received. One image per member only, please.

Chairman's Corner: Brick beds and bedroom eyes

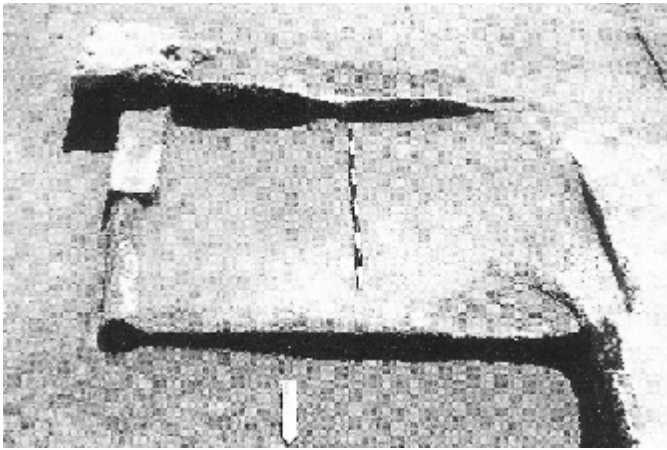


Fig 1: Sloping mudbrick 'double' bed with footrests from House Unit 1, Western Town, Heit el-Gurab at Giza. After Moelle 2016, fig 6.7. Original photo in M. Lehner, M. Kamel and A. Tavares *Giza Plateau Mapping Project: Seasons 2006-7, Preliminary Report. Fig 33.* © AERA, photo by Y. Kawae (From page 73 of https://oi.uchicago.edu/sites/oi.uchicago.edu/files/uploads/shared/docs/07-08_Giza.pdf).

I thoroughly enjoyed Manon Schutz's fascinating discussion of beds in ancient Egypt at the April meeting of the Group. Her work is truly fascinating and I look forward to the eventual publication of her PhD thesis. (If you were unfortunate enough to be unable to attend, I recommend Margaret Patterson's write up in this newsletter.) By coincidence, just after Manon's presentation I reviewed a new publication about urbanism in ancient Egypt (Moeller, Nadine. *The Archaeology of Urbanism in Ancient Egypt: From the Predynastic Period to the End of the Middle Kingdom.* Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 2016). While covering early urbanism in Egypt, Moeller deals with the vexed question of the ancient Egyptian 'bedroom', its identification and function, and introduced me to a new type of Egyptian sleeping structure 'the mudbrick bed'.

Moeller records that at the Old Kingdom Giza settlement of the pyramid builders, known as the Heit el-Gurab, a series of sloping mudbrick platforms have been found within the gallery

complexes and in some of the individual houses. These features have been interpreted as mudbrick sleeping platforms. They look reasonably comfortable and one example was a 'double' with a cylindrical mudbrick 'foot-board' (Fig 1 shows a low resolution copy. Internet users should view the original and associated plans in the original report from the following link https://oi.uchicago.edu/sites/oi.uchicago.edu/files/uploads/shared/docs/07-08_Giza.pdf).

In some respects these mudbrick beds are reminiscent of the traditional Chinese 'Kang', a brick platform warmed by hot air from a stove and used for sleeping and living in the colder northern parts of China. In the case of Egypt, the insulating properties of mudbrick and the location of the bed niches in the central part of the house probably contributed to keeping the sleeper warm in winter and cool in summer. They would also have been cheap to construct, and could have provided a more comfortable arrangement than a mat on the floor for those who couldn't afford an expensive wooden bed.

In some cases, the mudbrick sleeping platforms have been found occupying niches within one of the core rooms of a house. These rectangular rooms with some form of 'niche' at one end, have long been identified as 'bedrooms' (Fig 2), and the mudbrick beds found at Giza confirm that some were used for sleeping. However, as Manon Schutz observed, the idea of the 'bedroom' as a private place for sleeping, is very much a modern construction that probably isn't applicable to the Egyptian context. While some niched rooms were used for sleeping, they may have had many other functions as well. 'Multifunctionality' is a major feature of Egyptian houses. Archaeological evidence shows that rooms were often used for multiple purposes, and larger houses frequently combined domestic and official functions.

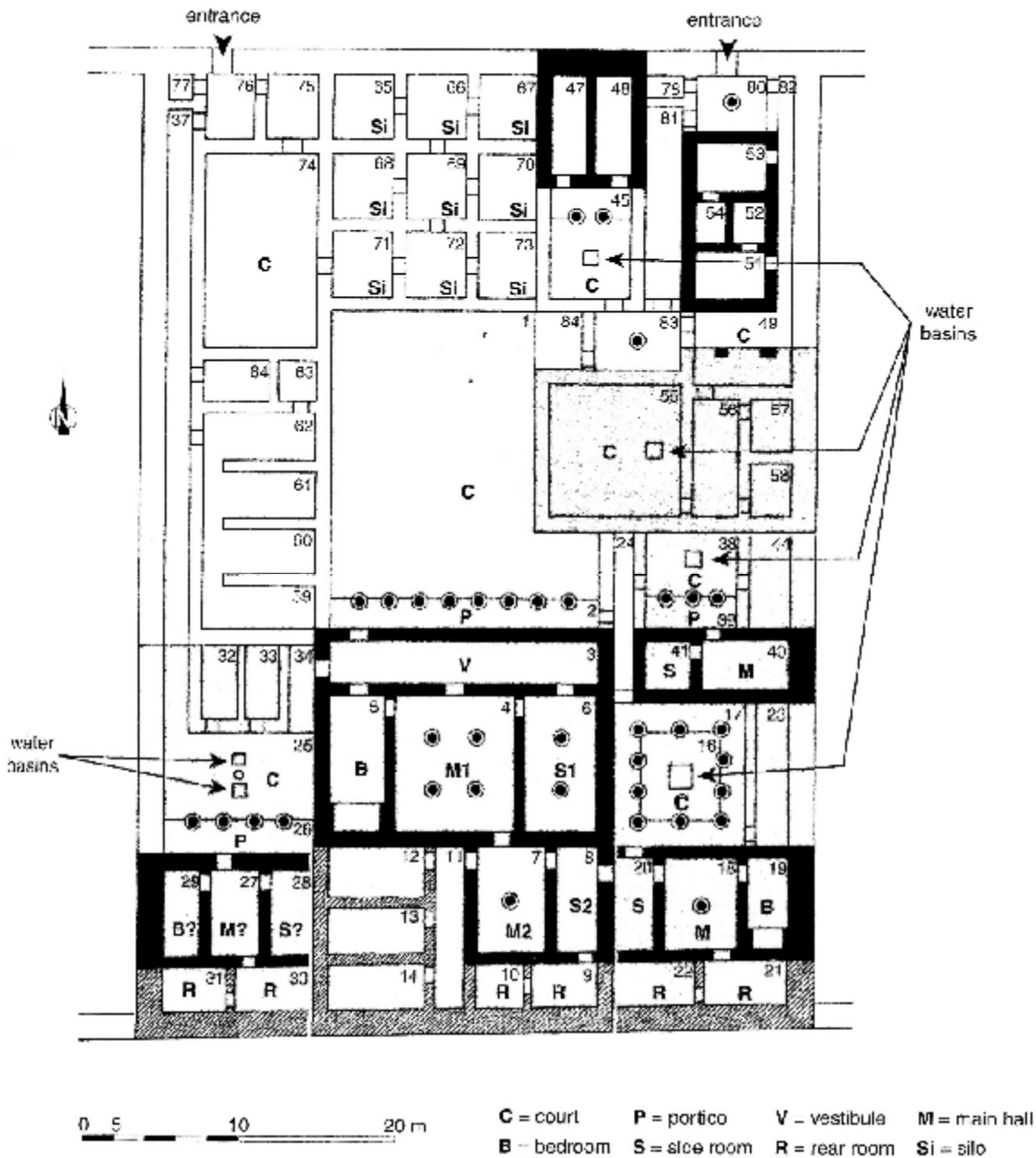


Fig 2: 'Mansion' from Middle Kingdom Lahun, showing niched 'bedrooms' (marked B), within core groups of rooms (in bold), and the convoluted routes through the property to them. After Moeller, 2016, fig 9.20, from an original by M. Bietak 'Zum Raumprogramm Ägyptischer Wohnhäuser des Mittleren und Neuen Reiches,' in M. Bietak (ed.). *Haus und Palast im alten Ägypten*, Wien 1996, 32, fig 12. © M. Bietak.

Just as rooms and houses could be multi-functional, Manan Schutz observed that beds could also have functions beyond, sleeping, procreation and illness. She noted that cross-culturally beds have often been used as seating and could function as thrones, since they were high status objects. Since Egyptian chairs and Egyptian beds share certain commonalities, it is quite possible that beds also provided comfortable seating areas in Egyptian houses, where the owner could demonstrate his wealth and status by virtue of being able to afford a bed.

To my mind there is a likely association between the bed as high status seating, the 'bedroom' as a more public, multifunctional room, and the layout of Egyptian houses. Nadine Moeller describes a core set of rooms in Old and Middle Kingdom houses. The precise layouts of the rooms varies over time and geography and the number of rooms naturally increases with the size of the houses, but throughout the periods they are always laid out to obscure visibility and restrict access into the innermost rooms (Bietak has identified these core areas within the elite

mansions of the Middle Kingdom town of Lahun, as shown in bold on the plan reproduced in Fig 2).

Where elite individuals undertook official business in their houses, this might have been transacted in the 'bedroom', in the heart of the house, perhaps with the owner sitting on the bed where he could demonstrate his wealth and status. The petitioner, messenger, or fellow official would be lead through the maze-like series of rooms, perhaps decorated to impress visitors, along the indirect route prescribed by the layout of the core rooms. Very low status visitors might be denied entry to both the official and his 'bedroom', and were perhaps dealt with by lackeys or subordinates in the outer rooms. Those of sufficient importance would be ushered through to the 'bedroom' to see the official seated in his (or perhaps 'her', where we are talking about a queen, priestess or other powerful woman) bedroom/office, perhaps on his own bed. Visitors of equal status might be invited to sit on the bed, or possibly in adjacent chairs. In addition to the bed, there might have been 'office' furniture - baskets of papyrus or ostraca and scribal palettes for note taking, stools or mats for scribes and servants, and tables for refreshments. The combination of domestic architecture and furniture emphasised the owner's own status and any discrepancy between his status and that of his visitor.

Of course it's difficult to prove hypotheses about the locations where guests were received and business transacted. There is also likely to have been some personal preference and questions of decorum involved. The reception of guests in the 'bedroom' might have depended on other factors, such as whether the owner's dependents had somewhere else to be. But by challenging our ideas about room use, privacy and social dynamics, it's possible to rethink Egyptian civilisation and assess more complex combinations of evidence from multiple sources. It was only by chance that I happened to hear Manon Schutz's presentation on beds and read Nadine Moeller's book on urbanism at the same time, but it revealed to me how multiple strands of evidence come together to reveal the social dynamics of ancient Egypt. I hope the Group meetings provide many more such fortunate opportunities for all of us.

Hannah Pethen

Mighty in Waking and Great in Sleeping: the History of Beds in Ancient Egypt - Manon Y. Schutz

At the beginning of April Manon Y. Schutz came to talk to us about beds in Ancient Egypt. She's a D.Phil student at Oxford University, and beds in an Ancient Egyptian funerary context are the subject of her thesis. She has chosen to look at the funerary context because most of the evidence of beds that survives is from tombs. Her talk was divided into two parts - first an introduction to the topic of beds in Ancient Egypt, and then an overview of beds throughout Ancient Egyptian history.

Schutz started by talking about the basics of the subject - what is a bed? It's important to start by thinking about our modern preconceptions of the subject so that one can hopefully avoid jumping to unwarranted conclusions when thinking about Ancient Egyptian beds. She gave a detailed modern definition of a bed, and then looked at how this is not a universal definition. For instance in our culture we think of beds as ubiquitous but you don't have to go as far afield as Ancient Egypt to see that this isn't always the case. Even a few centuries ago in European culture beds were high status objects (I was reminded that Shakespeare specified what was to happen to his second-best bed in his will, it was an important object). We also think of beds as private places - for one person or a couple - but in many cultures co-sleeping is common, and even in our own culture small children may co-sleep with their parents.

All the archaeological evidence for beds in Ancient Egypt come from high status contexts - high status burials, or place like Deir el Medina (which was a village for elite craftsmen and their families). Beds were luxury goods, and most people probably slept on the floor or on raised diases built into the floor of the room. There are various different words for bed in Ancient Egyptian literature and Schutz discussed some of these. There were beds called *ytjt.t* which are only mentioned in funerary contexts. *ḫt.t* beds were mentioned in everyday contexts during the

Old and Middle Kingdom periods, but by the New Kingdom are only seen in the funerary context. In the New Kingdom the name of beds in the everyday context was *ḥt.t*.

There was also the term *krk(r)*, which originally referred to a specific bed of a foreign king acquired by Tuthmosis III in one of his campaigns. This wasn't an unexpected sort of item to bring back from campaign as tribute or loot - beds were often exchanged as gifts between rulers, mentioned in the Amarna letters. Schutz also noted that in this sort of context a bed wasn't necessarily just a sleeping place, it might also be the equivalent of a throne (and in more recent times this was seen in Ethiopia where the kings sat in state on a bed instead of a chair). Interestingly this same term was later used to refer to cheap beds, which Schutz speculated was to debase the foreign bed - in effect the Egyptians were claiming that the most expensive bed of the foreigners was worth no more than a cheap Egyptian bed.



Another sort of bed common in Deir el Medina was a *ḥ'tj*, and an example of this is the bed belonging to Merit which is now on display in the Egyptian Museum in Turin (see photo). Beds like this were mid-range beds, better quality than a *krk(r)* bed, but not the most expensive available. Schutz used these beds as examples to look at what similarities and differences there are between modern beds and Ancient Egyptian ones. As you can see from the photo the shape of the bed is much the same as a modern bed - a wooden frame with four legs - although the board is a footboard and very few Egyptian beds had headboards, which is the reverse to our own beds.

Merit's bed was found with no mattress, although it's not clear if that's the way it would have been used in life or just how it was buried. There were linen blankets found near it which may have played the role of mattress, and other thicker blankets to be used as coverings during a cold night. Pillows are very rare in Ancient Egypt, instead they appear to have used headrests (see the photo) which do not look terribly comfortable to me. I say "appear to have used" because this came up in the questions at the end of the talk and Schutz discussed how in modern African cultures, that use headrests, they often aren't used to sleep on at night, instead they are to rest on whilst watching herds during the day or something like that. So it's not entirely clear if Ancient Egyptians actually slept on them.



The textual evidence for beds confirms that they were used for sleeping, but it's not clear if they were in a bedroom as we would understand it. And in the questions Schutz said that she doesn't like using the word "bedroom" for any areas of Ancient Egyptian houses because that term brings along all our modern connotations and we don't even know for sure that Egyptians slept in the rooms we are referring to as bedrooms. Beds in Ancient Egypt also had other functions, as they do today: sex, birth, illnesses and death. And in Ancient Egypt they were also for social occasions, and for sitting on rather than chairs. In artistic representations thrones and beds show similarities and the terms used to describe them overlap - so as mentioned above

an elaborate state bed was not entirely a distinct category of object to an elaborate state throne.

After a break for coffee and cake Schutz talked us through beds from Pre-dynastic to Roman times. Beds first appear in the Pre-dynastic era, but are not found everywhere throughout Egypt until the end of the early Dynastic era. Sometimes people were buried on beds, or next to them - and Schutz said that she thinks the "fetal" burial position common during the period is better thought of as a "sleeping" position. Partly because the Ancient Egyptians would have seen sleeping people more often than they would have seen fetuses, and partly because death is associated with sleep throughout Egyptian culture.

The earliest known bed dated from the Naqada II period, but it has since been lost so the oldest bed Schutz showed us a picture of dated from Dynasty 0 (Naqada III). This bed, like most early beds is short - this is because they were for sleeping curled up on rather than stretched out. The legs of the bed are in the form of bovine legs - I'd generally say "bulls' legs" but Schutz explained that the legs could be either bulls' or cows'. Bulls are symbolic of fertility and strength which fits with the functions of a bed both as a place for sex and birth, and also as a safe place to sleep. The bull is also important in a funerary context - it's connected to Seth carrying Osiris in some versions of the Osiris myth, and the Apis Bull who is sometimes shown carrying the deceased. Cows also have protective meanings, as well as meanings in a funerary context - for instance there is the tale of the Heavenly Cow that carries Re to the sky. However it's worth noting that all the textual evidence for the meanings of bovine legs on beds is much later than the first known bovine legs on beds. So it's not clear if the stories arise because beds have bovine legs, or if beds have bovine legs because of the stories.

Fewer beds are from the Old Kingdom. One example is the bed of Queen Hetepheres which was buried with linen, which may have been bedcovers. Beds in this period get longer, and bodies buried on them are not in a contracted position. Whilst there are still bovine legged beds there are now also leonine legs on beds. Again this could either be male or female lions there's often no clear evidence either way. When they are definitely lions they tend to appear in pairs, which is a symbol of the sunrise and therefore a link to rebirth.

In the Middle Kingdom there are several types of beds. One of these types (also found in the Old Kingdom) is a frame without legs, and it's generally found in a funerary context under either the mummy or the coffins of the deceased. An example belonging to Djehutihotep is covered in protective texts. This type of slatted bed might be quite common, but as they are not always published in the excavation reports it's hard to tell how common. There are also beds with legs - there is one example where the body was buried on a bed which is rare in the Middle Kingdom. And there were also beds with pairs of lions as legs (as discussed above) with the coffin placed on top.

In the New Kingdom the coffin was placed on top of a bed as transport to the afterlife. Bovine legged beds came back into fashion, but with a slight difference - in the earlier periods the four legs of the bed mimicked the real legs of a bull (or cow) and consisted of one pair of front legs and one pair of back legs. But in the New Kingdom the four legs were identical. During this period elaborate beds were presented as tribute to kings, and Schutz showed us some examples. Tutankhamun was buried with several beds, including one that was in the sarcophagus under the coffins with short leonine legs and heads.

There is little evidence for beds in the Late Period, other than in reliefs. In the Graeco-Roman Period one sort of bed is generally found under the mummy, and has leonine legs and a slatted top like Middle Kingdom examples. However a key difference is that the tails of the lions are elevated on the Graeco-Roman beds, as a protective symbol. Schutz finished up her history of beds in Ancient Egypt by talking us through an example of a bed from the 2nd Century CE. This was found in the tomb of a pair of siblings, two children of 3-4 years old who were buried in the same coffin. The bed was not "just" a bed - in decorative motifs and in shape it's very reminiscent of temple architecture and reliefs, and it seems to have functioned symbolically as a temple within the tomb.

In conclusion Schutz said that beds were essential to sleep, procreation and death in Ancient Egypt. The various animal motifs (including the legs) are both protective of the sleeper and ensure the rebirth of the deceased in the afterlife.

This was an interesting talk about a subject that one often fails to properly consider - a bed is a bed after all, but Schutz made it clear that there was much more to beds and their uses than is obvious on the surface.

Margaret Patterson

Ancient Craft - Modern Science and The Evolution of Mummification

Robert D. Loynes

At the May meeting Robert Loynes talked to us about his work on Ancient Egyptian mummies. He is a retired orthopaedic surgeon who has subsequently achieved a PhD in Egyptology (from Manchester) using modern medical technology to investigate ancient mummies.

Loynes began by telling us about what is known about Ancient Egyptian mummification techniques. Despite the Egyptians love of writing things down the contemporary sources actually don't tell us anything - what we know is pieced together from later writings and examination of the actual mummies. The first mention of mummification techniques comes from Herodotus around 450 BCE, and it is next discussed by Diodorus Siculus in the 1st Century BCE.

The Egyptians believed that for eternal life one needed the following: one's whole body, one's name, one's Ka and one's Ba. But the reality is that bodies decay and fall apart, so some sort of preservation is necessary followed by rituals that return it to life. In prehistoric times bodies were buried in pits in the sand, and the contact with the dry sand accidentally mummified them. But as society got more sophisticated then higher statues individuals got more elaborate burials in tombs - which isolated them from the sand, and prevented natural mummification. As Loynes pointed out, the layout of tombs with an offering chapel in relatively close proximity to the burial chamber would leave people in no doubt as to what was going on down there! And so they developed a process to artificially dry out and preserve the body.

To make a mummy the Egyptian way the first thing that needs to be done is to remove the soft and squishy bits that wouldn't dry easily - the organs from the torso and the brain. In actual fact the brain would have been fine if it was left in the body, but the Egyptians didn't know this so as it looked squishy they took it out. The rest of the internal organs were preserved in canopic jars and buried with the mummy. Next the body was cleansed with perfumed water and oils, before being dried in natron. Natron is a sort of naturally occurring salt with other sodium compounds as well as NaCl. The embalmers packed it inside the body as well as covering the body with natron. This increased the contact between body and salt thus drying it quicker, and also filled up the space left behind when the organs were removed. Drying the body took 30-40 days, and then almost as long was spent bandaging it and performing rituals. During the bandaging process amulets were placed in the wrappings to protect and aid the deceased in the afterlife. The rituals included the Opening of the Mouth ceremony which reactivated all the senses of the deceased. After this the mummy was covered in resins for protection - the Egyptians believed this worked via magic, but we now know that the resins they used have antibacterial properties.

Loynes next gave us a history of medical imaging in the context of what can be used to see inside mummies. The development of modern techniques has been very helpful for people working on mummies (whether Egyptian or not), as it means you don't have to destroy the subject (by unwrapping it and/or dissecting it) to find out what's inside. X-rays were discovered in 1895 and as we all know they shine through the soft tissue and reveal the solid bits (bones etc) on the inside. Modern X-ray images are much more detailed than the first images, but they still have the problem that you see all the internal structures on top of each other with no indication of relative depths in the body. The CAT scan process was invented in

1975, and it solves this problem. CAT scans use multiple X-ray images from different angles around the specimen, and these images are then merged on a computer to generate an image of a virtual slice through the specimen. The machine then moves along and captures data for another slice, and so on. Then the software stitches together all these slices into a 3-dimensional model of the whole thing. As computers have got faster, and the software has got more sophisticated, the virtual slices have got much thinner and so show much more detail in the final model. Modern software lets you manipulate the model, so now you can dissect a mummy in a non-destructive way.

Having introduced the subject to us Loynes moved on to telling us about things he has seen when examining CAT scans of Egyptian mummies. One thing he has investigated is the routes the embalmers used to remove the brain - it's not always removed the same way. Some mummies show evidence that the thin bit of bone at the top of the nose (the nose septum) has been broken and the brain extracted this way - this matches what Herodotus wrote. Another potential route is for the brain to come out via the base of the skull, to do this the neck must be disturbed which shows up clearly in the CAT scans. Some mummies, however, show evidence of neither of these routes - their nasal septum is intact, and the neck is undisturbed. In these cases Loynes has looked for other possible routes: sometimes in children the embalmers have taken the brain out through the base of the skull which is much thinner than in adults. Other mummies show signs that the brain was removed via the eyes.

The eyes themselves are treated differently in different time periods. Before Dynasty 22 half or more of mummies have nothing done to the eyes. After Dynasty 22 the mummies eyes are generally packed to mimic the shape of living eyes (deshicated eyes are too flat), and between Dynasty 22 and 28 eyes plates are also used which provide the right visual appearance.

After a break for tea and cake Loynes returned to the evidence he's seen in mummies of how they were mummified - now moving from the head to the torso. Herodotus described two routes to the removal of the internal organs - via an incision on the left flank or via the perineum. Loynes has seen evidence of both of these on CAT scans of mummies, and showed us examples. It's also clear that the Ancient Egyptians tended to repack the body cavity after removal of the organs. This is something that might be done for two different classes of reason: practical or ritual. Loynes has surveyed the types and quantities of materials used to see if there's evidence supporting either conclusion, but the answer is not clear cut and obvious. On the one hand the materials used are cheap, which suggests that the packing filled a practical purpose. But on the other hand frequently only small quantities were used, certainly not enough to fill the cavity, which suggests that it served a ritual purpose.

CAT scans also let you see what has been added to a mummy while it was being prepared. The most well known objects are amulets, and Loynes showed us examples of these. Other things are more unusual - in one mummy Loynes discovered there was an ibis inside the wrappings as well as a person! He speculated that this might indicate the person was involved in the worship of Thoth or was a scribe. There are also sometimes more practical (as opposed to ritual) objects - for instance he has seen mummies that have been strengthened (or put back together) with planks and rods, some inside the body, some outside the body.

Loynes also talked a bit about the signs of disease, injury and causes of death that you can detect using CAT scans of mummies. There's actually not much evidence of disease, as the soft tissues of the body are either removed or deshicated during the mummification process - so you really only see evidence of things that affect the bones. One Roman period mummy that he's looked at appears to have been beaten to death. The body is that of an old man, and he's suffered several fractures in the face, the skull, the arms, the spine and the pelvis. Loynes also showed an example of one of the soft tissues diseases that he did detect - gall stones show up clearly on the scan. That mummy also had a spinal fracture and heel fractures which are consistent with landing from a great height on the feet.

Another thing that Loynes has investigated is how the mummies he's examined shed light on the development of mummification techniques from the 18th Dynasty onwards. The first example he showed us was of the mummy of Nebri "Head of Stables" - a title that makes him

one of the high elite, as horses were new to Egyptian culture in the New Kingdom. Nebri lived during Tuthmosis III's reign, and all that remains of him is his head and his four canopic jars all of which are now in the Turin Egyptian Museum. The CAT scan of his head that Loynes examined was also used to produce a virtual skull that was then used to create a facial reconstruction of Nebri. In terms of technique his mummification was very sophisticated, but there wasn't much of the brain removed. Packing (including the eyes) was a key feature.

The Third Intermediate Period (22nd to 25th Dynasty) example that Loynes showed us had more packing of the mummy, and the body cavity was completely filled. The brain removal was also done in a subtly different way - the hole through the nasal septum was at a different angle (less vertical than in the 18th Dynasty). In the Ptolemaic period the hole in the nasal septum to remove the brain is once again at a more vertical angle. In the example he showed us there was resin inside the body cavity, and it had visibly soaked into the spine. The internal organs had been removed via the perineal route, and the higher organs (lungs, heart) were still present in the body.

The Roman period mummies that he's examined have something strange happening with the ribs - it's impossible to dislocate one's ribs in life, but that's what has happened in these mummies. He has looked at the wrapping styles of around 30 Roman era mummies, and one distinctive group is the "red shroud mummies". The red colour comes from red lead, from Spain. This group includes the older man who was beaten to death that he showed us earlier in the talk, and the man who had an ibis bird inside his mummy.

One trend is that from the Old Kingdom period to the Roman period there is less and less emphasis on the tomb. And so by the Roman era the mummification techniques have become more about the final external appearance of the body. I think this correlates with something Manon Y. Schutz said last month when she talked about a 2nd Century CE coffin bed which appeared to function symbolically as a temple within the tomb (rather than the tomb itself playing that sort of role).

Loynes has examined 90 mummies so far, and is hoping to look at lots more so that he can draw more robust conclusions. Even though 90 seems a reasonable sample size once they have been separated by time period, geographic location or other factors each group ends up quite small, which makes teasing out what is a unique feature of a particular mummy or what is a common feature of the group, more difficult.

During the questions at the end someone asked about the hearts of the mummies he's examined. For theological/ritual purposes the heart is supposed to be replaced in the body so that the weighing of the heart can take place in the afterlife. But Loynes says that in practice the heart is normally no longer there, and replaced with a heart scarab.

In the questions he also showed us one of the other ways modern technology can be used to investigate mummies. He had a 3D printed model of an incision plate from the inside of a mummy which had been made using the data from a CAT scan, which I think is a really cool way that modern technology is letting us "unwrap" mummies without destroying them.

Margaret Patterson

The Valley of the Kings: Mummies and Gods

Dylan Bickerstaffe and Peter Robinson

We had our fourth study day in April 2017 attended by 36 people. It was a good day which ran perfectly until a massive power cut in the afternoon, but Tilly Burton managed to keep us going with a couple of laptops on chairs which were sat on tables until the power was resumed.

Our two speakers were very engaging and gave talks that intertwined without any repetition. Dylan started with the discovery of the Valley, he talked of Diodorus Siculus, Strabo, Pocock

and Belzoni. He told us that the western valley is thought to be mainly 18th dynasty with the Valley of a later date.

Peter showed us how to read a royal tomb; he mentioned the texts written in the tombs; the Amduat, the Book of Gates, the Litany of Re, the Book of the divine Cow, the Book of Caverns, the Books of the Earth and explained their uses. Then he took us carefully through the Amduat, from the first hour at sunset and journey's beginning, through all 12 hours to the end of darkness where Osiris and Re meet.

Dylan then spoke about the Valley in the Amarna Period. He told of us about the tombs found by the American Theodore Davis; Yuya and Tuya KV46, Tutankhamun's embalming cache KV54, KV55 the tomb of Queen Tiye, or Akhenaten or someone, KV56 un-named but gold jewellery was found inside, probably for a child. Horemheb's tomb, KV57 was found by Ayrton and Carter found Tutankhamun in 1922.

Further reading: Peter Robinson recommends:

Erik Hornung (1999) *The Ancient Egyptian Book of the Afterlife*, Cornell University Press – a pocket-sized paperback that includes details about some of the afterlife texts in the KV

Zahi Hawass (2006) *The Royal Tombs of Egypt: the art of Thebes Revealed*, James & Hudson

Janet Brewer

Our fifth Study Day – 21st April 2018

Deir el-Medina, the Workers' village

Dr Cedric Gobeil, Director Egypt Exploration Society and Field Director of the French archaeological mission at Deir el-Medina

Tickets available February 2018

All My Books

Q: What do you give the person who has everything?

A: A list of where to find it.

With shelves at home laden with books about Egyptology and regular attendance at events with the opportunity to add to the collection, your Secretary wanted a list of her books to be able to check potential purchases and avoid duplications. As her advisor in all things technical, I was given the task of coming up with a solution, preferably a sensible one.

The final product was easiest to specify, a list of books on her phone. The beginning looked pretty straight forward as well, since the majority of books had ISBNs, and many still had a cover with a barcode on it. The methodology was to be as simple as scan barcode, look up barcode and collect book details, add details to list of books and when list complete, put it onto the phone.

There are apps for phones, tablets, webcams and cameras on laptops that use the inbuilt camera to capture the barcode and convert the image to numbers and store the result in a list or as a field in a spreadsheet. I tried a variety of these and, when they worked, the result needed still more work to look up the details and store them. So I bought a dedicated barcode scanner.

As barcodes have been in widespread use since the 1980s, my scanner has a suitable retro feel about it. If any of you ever spent time altering the communication parameters of dial up modems or printers (stop bits, parity etc), with the scanner, the parameters are supplied as barcodes and you just scan them in. Five stars for efficiency.

The scanner operates like a mouse as you open your application at the field where the ISBN goes and then pretend you are at B&Q, and press and hold the red line over the bar code until the handset gives a satisfying BEEP.

Having captured the ISBN, the next step was to get the book details and store them. A surprising number of people have written their own book database software (you have a lawn, do you build your own lawn mower?) and offered it for public consumption. There are also cloud based solutions, involving subscriptions that move onto the cataloguing systems used by real libraries. Simple listings are complicated by people who want to share their lists, share their books and their critiques of their books.

Some e-book listing software offers the chance to add the physical titles to the list. I tried Calibre, which offers a lot of flexibility within the software but the exported list was confusing and the method of export was rudimentary.

Of the PC systems, I tried several (All My Books, Book Tome, Collectorz.com's Book Collector and Libra) and I bought "All My Books" on the basis that it worked well, was comprehensive enough without being overpowering and had suitable variety for exporting the lists produced. The look up, variable by country is Amazon, and you get all the detail Amazon has on the book and a picture of the cover. As Amazon deals with other sellers, a lot of the older books come up as well.

This is a book card from "All My Books". On the right hand side are Subjects, Main and Additional, which with the Synopsis, are from Amazon. On the Additional tab are details of publisher, year of publication, format etc.

There are enough fields to customise to your own requirements. I did my preliminary work on crime fiction books, and could add the correct sequence where the author's stories followed a timeline.

With scanner and software, it was the work of a few hours to scan, look up, export the completed list to Excel and copy it to the Windows phone.



I read that the good thing about standards is that there are so many of them and that seems to be true for ISBNs. The odd book reacted like the frozen peas at check out, the cover being too shiny to scan. A few books without dust covers had their codes printed inside with publishing details for manual input and look up. A few older books were simply manually input.

The software has inbuilt TWAIN access to a scanner, so if the cover picture is missing, the wrong edition or poor, you can scan your own picture in.

Within the software, author name is flexible as you can have John Smith converted to Smith, John. The export is not variable, so Excel gets John Smith, and needs its own conversion to Smith, John. Excel then has trouble with titles, middle initials and qualifications and needs increasingly more complex conversions. It was simpler to amend all author names to forename surname.

As the phone has Excel on it, the list was copied in order of Author surname, but can be sorted into Title. The software also exports the list as HTML, pdf or text.

The barcode scanner and All My Books* cost about £50 in total. Janet is pleased with her book list. I am pleased with a project that could be completed without lifting anything heavier than a scanner or a book.

* (All My Books is from BOLIDE Software, <http://www.bolidesoft.com/>, who also produce another cataloguing software, All My Movies)

Dan Brewer

Thanks go to Dan Brewer, Margaret Patterson and Hannah Pethen.

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