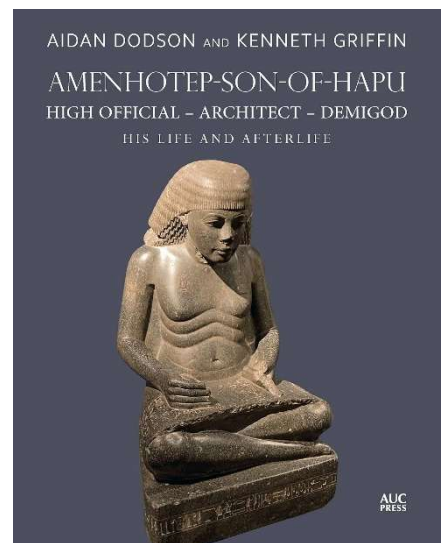


Meeting Report – September 2026

At the beginning of September we welcomed Aidan Dodson who talked to us about the life and afterlife of Amenhotep-son-of-Hapu, the subject of his book, written with Kenneth Griffin, which will be published in February next year.

Amenhotep-son-of-Hapu was acknowledged in his lifetime as a great builder but for a thousand years after his death he was revered as a healer as well and, along with another architect, Imhotep, attained the status of a god.

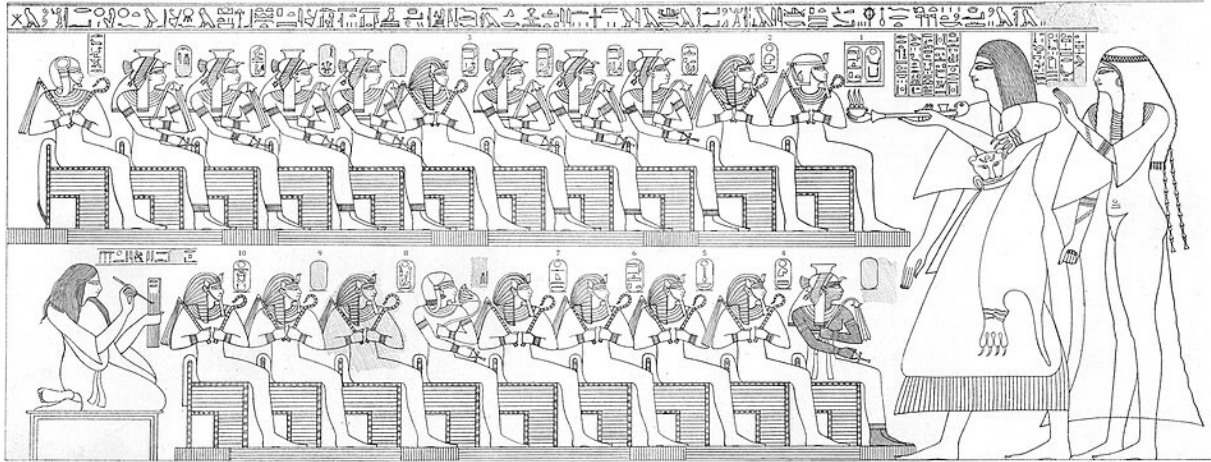


He was born in the reign of Thutmose III but came to prominence in the reign of Amenhotep III with many different roles and titles: 52 have been recorded in total. He was responsible for organising the pharaoh's man power and for building, amongst other projects, Amenhotep's mortuary temple at Kom-el-Hettan and the palace at Malqata. He was involved with the provision of quartzite and his title of 'digger of canals' might suggest he oversaw the creation of the Birket Habu, an artificial lake at Malqata. Aidan described him as the 'lord high everything'.

There are many clues as to the high esteem in which he was held: statues of him were found in Karnak temple in their original positions; he appears as a guest of honour at a feast shown on the wall of TT55, the tomb of Ramose; in a representation of Amenhotep III's first jubilee on the walls of his temple at Soleb, the only official whose name is given, as well as his title, is Amenhotep-son-of - Hapu.

He was buried in the necropolis of Qurnet Murai overlooking the mortuary temple of Amenhotep III at Kom-el-Hettan. The tomb is damaged and currently inaccessible but parts of his coffin and sarcophagus were removed in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries and can be seen in a number of museums. He also had a mortuary temple and its site is another sign of the esteem in which he was held as it is very close to Kom-el-Hettan. It had a lake and garden and must have been a pleasant place to visit although very little of it remains now.

His status continued to rise after his death. In TT359, the tomb of Inkerhau, he has been included in the scene of the 'Lords of the West'. The scene shows royal figures but Amenhotep-son-of-Hapu is the only 'commoner.' He is shown as a scribe and can be seen at the left of the lower row of figures



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By the 21st Dynasty he was still considered important enough to have his temple restored and a copy of its foundation decree made. The nature of his skill starts to change: in the temple at Edfu a daughter of Psamtick I (26th Dynasty) prays to Amenhotep-son-of-Hapu for help with an eye problem. By Ptolemaic times, his healing skills are referred to in graffiti on the walls of Deir el Bahari and on ostraca where his name has been hellenised to 'Amenothos'. New statues are raised to him at Karnak where he has become part of the divine landscape of Thebes.

A further development is the pairing of Amenhotep-son-of-Hapu with the Old Kingdom architect, Imhotep. A chapel at Deir-el-Bahari is dedicated to them. They also appear together in a number of temples with a clear distinction made in the Old Kingdom clothing of Imhotep and the Middle Kingdom dress of Amenhotep son of Hapu. He even makes a final appearance on twentieth century Egyptian stamps.

Questions and comments from members led to further discussion of why he might have been so popular and also why that popularity declined. Aiden's talk mentioned many sites and museums which people have visited without knowing about Amenhotep-son-of-Hapu's presence there so future visits will involve seeking him out.

Alison Woollard