

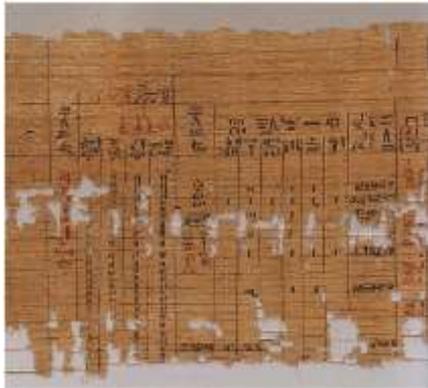
HOTEP

Issue 38: February 2019

Review of January meeting

We were very happy to welcome, from Cambridge, **Nigel Strudwick**, former curator at the British Museum, currently engaged in fieldwork in Luxor. His speciality is administrative texts of the Old Kingdom which formed the basis of his talk, *'Egyptian Decrees, Biographies, Accounts & Formulae in the Age of the Pyramids'*. He illustrated this with examples from royal, government and temple documents, as well as personal communications.

He started with the recently discovered Wadi el-Jarf archive of Merer, the leader of a crew who ferried limestone from the Tura quarries to Giza. Merer's day-book has provided insight into how the casing stones for the Great Pyramid were collected and delivered to the building site, how long the voyage took and how often the trip was completed.



Another el-Jarf document (above) recording deliveries of food and other supplies to the coastal port, is the earliest 'spreadsheet' yet discovered. Nigel showed how to decode similar documents from the archive of the 5th Dynasty pyramid temple of Niuserre, revealing one to be a recognisable work rota for temple doorkeepers and porters. A short letter from a harassed local official to his superior complained about craftsmen not turning up when expected to do some renovation work – things don't change! From the formulaic decrees establishing ownership of lands and temple endowments to everyday office 'memos' Nigel showed how bureaucrats, throughout history and across different civilizations, have adopted virtually identical methods of working and of recording their activities.

The newsletter of The Southampton Ancient Egypt Society

January Quiz Answers



The trees around Nebamun's pond are **sycomore figs**, with their clusters of yellow fig-shaped fruit, and some form of **acacia** with dark brown pods. The palms are **date palms**, with their single trunks, and **dom palms**, with forked trunks. In the bottom left-hand corner is a **grape vine** looking like a rather straggly bush. In the pond are white **lotus** or **water lilies**. The border around the pond is filled with clumps of **poppies**, **cornflowers** and **papyrus**. Underneath the trees are two prolifically fruiting **mandrake** plants.



Have you seen anything of an Egyptian theme which might make us smile? If so, please let us know so that we can share it through Hotep.

Still available on catch-up
'The Victorian Queens of Ancient Egypt'
BBC Radio 3: Sunday 3 Feb, 6.45 p.m.

In the first part of this programme, Samira Ahmed looked at the British fascination with ancient Egypt as illustrated by the exhibits in three northern local museums. The Egyptian collections in Batley, Bolton and Macclesfield were started by three indomitable ladies from wealthy textile-manufacturing families, the Victorian Queens of the title, whose contributions to the popularity of Egyptology are only now being properly recognised.

Marianne Brocklehurst's diaries describe her acquisition of a mummy in its coffin ↓ when she visited Egypt with her lifelong companion, Mary Booth, in 1873. The smell of the body became so bad that the MBs, as they were known, dumped it overboard to prevent their smuggling being discovered. The coffin was brought back to England to become the prize exhibit in the museum Marianne founded in the 1890s.

On her journey to Egypt in 1892, Amelia Oldroyd of Batley, visited Amarna which was then being excavated by Flinders Petrie, a family friend, and his wife, Hilda. Petrie called Amelia 'the intrepid Miss Oldroyd' and praised her for nursing Hilda through a fever. Her collection

included a face mask ↑ from a cartonnage coffin which was recently displayed in the 'Beyond Beauty' exhibition at 2 Temple Place and can be seen in the *Kingdom of Osiris* gallery of the Bagshaw Museum, Batley.

Annie Barlow, of Bolton, was among the first women to attend the Higher Education institution of Bedford College and visited Egypt to find out about cotton, the raw material and basis of her family's wealth, and to collect examples of ancient textiles. She hosted Gandhi → on his information-gathering visit to the Lancashire cotton mills. All three women were



inspired by their Egyptian adventures to act as local fundraisers for the Egypt Exploration Fund, fore-runner of the EES. Their contributions were recognised by Petrie who donated pieces from his excavations to augment their own collections, all of which they made available to the public. More about those collections can be seen on the following websites.

<https://macclesfieldmuseums.co.uk/mbs-trip>

<https://kirkleestogether.co.uk/2016/05/24/the-mummy-returns/>

<http://boltonlams.co.uk/museum/museum-collection-highlights/egyptology/egyptology-collection-history>

In the second part of the broadcast Ahmed discussed the ethics of antiquities collection, including issues of ownership and cultural appropriation, with contributions from Egyptian Egyptologist Heba Abd el-Gawad, Chris Naunton and Alice Stevenson. She also spoke to two professional archaeologists who had been inspired as children by visiting and volunteering at their local museums. The enduring popularity of ancient Egypt is demonstrated by the revitalisation of exhibits with municipal and Lottery funding, especially at Bolton where Ahmed talked to staff about the positive public reaction to the recent refurbishment of the City Museum. (Curator Ian Trumble gave us a talk about this project in December 2017 and some of our members attended the official opening of the refurbished galleries in September 2018). The *Bolton's Egypt* gallery now houses the Factum Arte replica of the burial chamber of Thutmose III. When I visited Bolton recently, I was particularly keen to see this tomb facsimile which I had seen some years ago in Edinburgh. I mentioned to one of the gallery attendants that it was so satisfying to be able to spend a decent amount of time examining the wall paintings without the oppressive heat and humidity of the real thing and without the constant hassle of guides telling me what they thought I wanted to see. If you get a chance to listen to this programme you will hear one of the gift shop staff telling Samira Ahmed about visitor reaction and – yes – that lady was me!

Check out some behind-the-scenes details of this radio programme at:

<http://www.samiraahmed.co.uk/how-we-made-the-victorian-queens-of-ancient-egypt/>

Hilary Wilson

Upcoming events

Friday 1 March 2019, 7.30-9.00 p.m.

An **informal evening meeting** where **Mike Hollis** will give us his talk about **'The Tomb of Nakht'**



This will be held in a classroom at the Oasis Academy. We gather from 7.30 p.m. for a start at about 7.45p.m. The fee for this meeting is £2 to cover light refreshments.

Saturday 16 March 2019



Paul Nicholson of Cardiff University is making a welcome return visit to give his talk,

'Going to the Dogs: New work at the catacombs of Anubis, North Saqqara'

No serious work had been carried out at the North Saqqara Catacombs of Anubis, known since the late 19th Century, before Nicholson's present project. The re-mapped galleries have been reinterpreted and the number of animals they might have held is very much higher than previously believed, now thought to number in the millions. This talk reviews the history of the catacomb and the new work carried out there.

We are taking bookings (and fees!) for the following:

Informal Evening Course

'The Seasonal Round' is a study of the Egyptian calendar and the events and religious festivals that marked the annual cycle. This will start after Easter and run for five weeks on Friday evenings, 7.30-9.00p.m.

Study Day, Saturday 20 July 2019

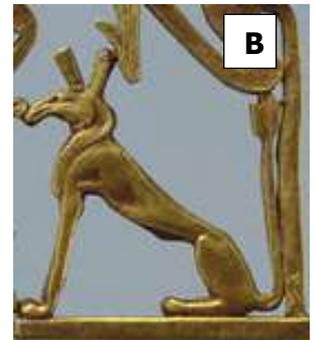
'The Valley of the Kings' by **Aidan Dodson**

**Fees for each event: Members £20
Non-Members £25**

To book places on either or both of these events, please contact the Secretary

And finally: Quiz Time

Which canine is which?



Answers in the next issue of **Hotep**.

