

Review of June Meeting

The June talk was given by Professor **Andrew Shortland** of the Cranfield Forensic Institute, Cranfield University. The title of his talk was *'Blue, Ancient Egyptian Glass and Glazes.'* Considering the scientific nature of Andrew's subject, his talk was accessible and not too technical. He began by explaining that glass and glazes are what are known as vitreous materials, and that a glaze is a thin layer of glass on a ceramic. The object of a glaze is to reduce the permeability of an object if it is to contain a liquid, like the fish-shaped perfume bottle from Amarna (below). It also has the effect of being decorative.



BM

The most well-known of ancient Egyptian glazed objects are those made of faience. Andrew talked about pigments, of which Egyptian Blue or cuprorivaite is the best known. Considered to be the first synthetic mineral pigment, calcium-copper-tetrasilicate, (CaCuSi₄O) was known as caeruleum to the Romans but knowledge of its manufacture was lost for centuries. The Egyptians liked this blue colour so much that they used it wherever they could and inlays can be 2 to 3 cm thick in temple scenes.

Andrew talked about the modern research into the vitreous materials used by the ancient Egyptians. This includes many disciplines, from the study of texts



and wall scenes to experimental archaeology and the use of equipment to analyse the chemical makeup of the object. The main components are silica, quartz and sand which melt at 1700°C, however ancient furnaces could only reach temperatures of 700-1100°C. To get the material to melt a substance known as a flux was added, and in most cases this was plant ash.



Imhotep Museum Saqqara (photo Glenn Worthington)

Glazing was used from the early dynastic period, such as the tiles from the subterranean passages of Djoser's Step Pyramid at Saqqara (above). In the New Kingdom new colours were added to the palette and the glass began to be inlaid in other materials. The blue stripes on the funeral mask of Tutankhamun are inlaid blue glass (below).

Andrew explained that the colour of materials also had magic properties. So that red for example could symbolise danger or evil, blue for life or rebirth, green for crops, and black for fertility. Important items would be made and inlaid in a solid colour such as the blue war crown.

Andrew's talk was informative and, as suggested by the title, colourful - an afternoon well spent.

Glenn Worthington

June Quiz Answers

The Eyes Have It: The eyes were from the following statues.

A: Djoser, Dynasty III, from the Step Pyramid, Saqqara, now in Cairo.

B: 'The Seated Scribe', Dynasty IV-V from the Saqqara tomb of Kai, Louvre.

C: Montuhotep II, Dynasty XI, from the King's mortuary temple at Deir el-Bahri, Cairo.

D: Queen Tiye, Dynasty XVIII, from the Harem Palace of Medinet Gurob, Berlin.

E: Nofret, wife of Prince Rahotep, Dynasty III/IV, from their mastaba tomb at Maidum, Cairo.

Review of the July Meeting

The July talk was given by our very own **Hilary Wilson**, SAES Chair. Her subject was '**Small Creatures**' and was split into two parts. The first was entitled '**Sink or Swim: Tortoises and Turtles in Ancient Egypt**', the second was '**Hedgehogs in Ancient Egypt: some matters of identification.**'

At the beginning Hilary said that this would be a personal look at these creatures, and introduced us to her tortoise, a female, who is called Tomato → and is estimated to



be over 100 years old, although Hilary was keen to say that she had only been looking after her for the past 12 years.

Hilary started by explaining the differences between tortoises and turtles. Tortoises are land creatures, with hard, domed shells and claws at the end of their feet. Turtles on the



other hand are aquatic, with flatter, leathery shells and have flippers rather than feet.

Egyptian tortoises are among the smallest species and do not appear to have been associated with any particular god or goddess and are difficult to identify in wall scenes. There are small amulets of tortoises dating back to the predynastic which are identifiable by their dome-shaped shells, crossed hatching on the shell and claws on the end of their feet. The shell has the technical name of a carapace and was used as the sound box on lutes, as the water bowl in a scribe's equipment and cut up to create bangles.

Turtles, which are larger than tortoises, appear more often in scenes and in the predynastic their form was used as a palette (right). Their use as amulets was



probably believed to protect the wearer from receiving a nasty bite from one. The ancient Egyptians considered them to be dangerous in some way because a line of text in the tomb of Nebwenenef (TT157) from dynasty 19 states 'May Re live and may the turtle die'. In the Book of the Dead of Neferwebenef, chapter 161 has lines repeating the same text.

There is possibly some confusion between tortoises and turtles as it is not always clear which is being shown. For example, in the tomb of Senenmut (TT353) the famous astronomical ceiling shows the constellation of the two tortoises or turtles. Also, in the

British Museum the wooden figure of a demon, Khentiamentiu has a turtle or tortoise for a head.

This ended the first part of the talk and after a short break for refreshment Hilary continued with hedgehogs.



Hedgehogs appear in scenes which show hunting along the desert edge (above) and being carried in small boxes or cages, both can be seen in the Saqqara tomb of Ptah-hotep of dynasty 5. In the same period, hedgehogs are shown as the figurehead on the prow of boats. The way in which they are shown is the same as when they curl up into a ball for protection.

Hedgehogs appear as amulets but are not a sacred animal although they are associated with at least one goddess, Abaset. Some hollow hedgehog-shaped faience objects contain pellets which rattle when shaken, so are these toys for children, percussion instruments for sacred ritual, or rattles to scare snakes and other nasties?

Another use for hedgehogs was in medical remedies, they are one of the ingredients for a cure for hair loss. The hedgehog shape was popular in the Late Period for the aryballos or oil vase for perfumes or valuable oils (below).



Both talks were informative, and entertaining. It was a pleasant way to spend a hot afternoon.

Glenn Worthington

'Immersive' Tutankhamun Experience



When visiting Washington DC last month, I found the National Geographic Museum had an exhibition running named '**Beyond King Tut: The Immersive Experience**', (17th June 2022 – 6th February 2023). I wasn't sure what to expect from this as the exhibition is described as an immersive cinematic experience, however I found that I really enjoyed it. The exhibition covered many aspects of Tutankhamun's popularity, from an introduction to the king and his place in history, to the discovery of his tomb by Howard Carter 100 years ago, with displays on the gods of Ancient Egypt and their mythology.



Starting the exhibition is a short video on the discovery, with further information panels with photos. Following this was a recreation of Tutankhamun's tomb featuring a replica of one of the golden shrines, two sides featuring a panel which highlighted details within the tomb. The walls change to show the artwork in the tomb plus themes of the afterlife whilst some of the

hieroglyphic text is spoken. Further rooms gave information about the years prior to Tutankhamun (mainly featuring Akhenaten), then an overview of the mummification process.



The next area was, for me, one of the highlights, was a recreation of the King's journey after death through the twelve hours of the night with illustrations and narratives of the challenges he faced. The assistance received from the gods to ensure the rebirth of the sun and the King's final journey to the Field of Reeds, were displayed in a way which was clear and accessible regardless of the audience's prior knowledge of Egyptian history. Even children present found the story entertaining (especially the part where Tutankhamun is shown on the back on Apophis defeating him with a dagger!).

Emily Hale

This is one of the many events and exhibitions planned to celebrate the centenary of Howard Carter's discovery in November 1922. The other anniversary recognised this year is the bicentenary of Champollion's publication of his work on the decipherment hieroglyphs in 1822.

With the Rosetta Stone (right) being at the centre of this work, the British Museum exhibition '**Hieroglyphs: Unlocking Ancient Egypt**' starts 13 October 2022 and runs until 19 February 2023.

For further information and booking details see:

<https://www.britishmuseum.org/exhibitions/hieroglyphs-unlocking-ancient-egypt>

Summer Quiz

The following anagrams all have a connection with this year's special Egyptological anniversaries.

1: POOCH IN MALL

2: TASTE IN STORE

3: SLIGHT ACRE LEECH

4: NAUGHTY MOOS

5: CLING TO YANKS

6: TREAD ARCH ROW

(here's a little picture clue)



Answers in the next edition of **Hotep**



Forthcoming Meetings

Further details of our Zoom meetings are published on the website www.SouthamptonAncientEgyptSociety.co.uk

Registration is required for all meetings.

Registration links will be released on a meeting-by-meeting basis and priority will be given to SAES Members.

All the following events will be delivered by Zoom

Thursday 15 September 2022 AGM

evening meeting 18.45 for a start at 19.00

All Members are welcome to join this meeting where we will discuss future plans and the disbursement of funds to Egyptological causes.

No fee is payable but registration is required, using the link below.

<https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZclcuqprjggEtF01BOidMn51rvaxhHf92r>

Saturday 17 September 2022

13.30 for a start at 14.00



'Who Was Who at the Court of Tutankhamun'
by Hilary Wilson

Register in advance for this meeting:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZ0qdO6gqzguGNV257S9qmAJbFEqFsC1aPo4>

Registration links for each of the following meetings will not be released until after the previous meeting.

Saturday 15 October 2022
13.30 for a start at 14.00



'Heit el-Ghurab and Wadi el-Jarf: Landscape and Waterscape at Giza When the Pyramids Were Built'

by Mark Lehner

Saturday 19 November 2022

13.30 for a start at 14.00

'Karnak: Most Select of Places'
by Ken Griffin



Thursday 24 November 2022

evening meeting 18.45 for a start at 19.00



'From subscription or conscription: Egyptian artefacts in Aotearoa, NZ'

by Joshua Emmitt

Saturday 19 December 2022

13.30 for a start at 14.00



'Dewatering systems for wastewater & rain in Ancient Egypt'
Heidi Kopp-Junk

Saturday 18 February

13.30 for a start at 14.00

'The Amarna Letters'

by Irving Finkel



Further information on these and other meetings will be available on the website:

www.SouthamptonAncientEgyptSociety.co.uk

or through the Secretary

saesinfo55@gmail.com

Saturday 21 January 2023

13.30 for a start at 14.00



'Nefertiti's Face: Investigating Egypt's Most Famous Queen'

by Joyce Tyldesley

Zoom Protocols

These guidelines on the thoughtful use of Zoom have been adapted from those promoted by our friends at TVAES. We think they are worth repeating here.

In our zoom meetings we make use of the chat feature and would like to ask members and visitors to follow these guidelines:

1: You may use the chat function to introduce yourself and chat generally before the lecture, but please avoid frivolous comments, jokes and any other comments that may not always translate to other cultures or those in different circumstances. Remember, we now have an international audience.

2: Please do not use the chat function during the lecture itself as the pop-up messages can prove distracting for both speaker and audience.

3: After the lecture, please focus your use of the chat on Questions and Comments re the lecture itself. This will help us to navigate and run the Q&A session. If you would like to ask your question live via audio (and video too if you wish), please use the raised hand (in Reactions) and wait for one of the co-hosts to call on you.

Wed/Thu February 2023
evening meeting 18.45 for a start at 19.00

'Gebel el-Silsila Update'
John Ward & Maria Nilsson

