



# HOTEP

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July 2023

## Review of June Meeting

The June meeting was the provocatively-titled talk *'Freudian Dreams along the Nile: Sex and Dream Interpretation in Ancient Egypt'*, by Luigi Prada.

Luigi began his talk by describing the types of evidence which point to the interpretation of dreams, or oneiromancy, being the most popular form of divination in ancient Egypt. This practice was most evident from the Late Period into the Greco-Roman era, but some aspects of material culture, such as the decoration of beds and headrests with amuletic symbols in the Middle Kingdom and the inscriptions on New Kingdom personal votive stelae, show that Egyptians of all periods sought to understand their troubled dreams.

One of the earliest written sources of information regarding dream interpretation is the Dream Book of the Scribe Qenhirkhopshef at Deir el-Medina, ↓ (BM)



which appears to be a personal collection of random dream descriptions with a statement of what each dream portends for the dreamer. Other, later dream books are more conveniently organised in themes but their format is pretty similar, each dream

## The newsletter of The Southampton Ancient Egypt Society

introduced by a statement like, 'If a man sees himself in a dream...(then the outcome is)...'. The descriptions of dreams are cursory at best as is their interpretation. It is assumed that these documents were handbooks used by priests or professional diviners, who were consulted by people seeking explanations and reassurance, presumably for a fee.

Luigi listed several of the dream themes – involving plants or trees, food, or particular locations – but quickly reached the chief theme of this talk, sex. He described sex dreams as a universal fact of human life and a central topic for psychoanalysis across the world and over centuries.

The dreams in question, some more nightmarish than others, fell into three broad categories; natural/legal/customary sex, e.g with a spouse, illegal/antisocial sex e.g. adultery, and unnatural sex e.g. bestiality. However, anyone expecting an erotically charged, near-the-knuckle talk will

have been disappointed because, as Luigi explained, the material on which his research is based is more akin to the texts used by medical practitioners. In the same way that discussing a patient's physical symptoms, however distressing, was an essential diagnostic tool, there was no shame attached to the discussion of dreams.

Here are just a few of the aspects that struck me from amongst the wide range of Luigi's down-to-earth talk.

The Egyptians' attitudes towards sex changed over time and with different cultural influences, but dreaming about intercourse with a crocodile was generally not considered a good omen for the future. In Roman times, when the dream books

contained many more examples of sex dreams, 'riding the crocodile' was a misogynistic term for a woman of loose morals and was used to ridicule Cleopatra after her death. But we are not justified in projecting Roman values back on to the socio-psychological attitudes of Ancient Egypt.

In writing and depiction, a certain decorum applied to the way in which Egyptians of different status and life condition were described. In the non-real world of dream texts, that decorum was abandoned. Most of the texts relate to female dreamers



Crocodile-headed Ammit, the 'Devourer of Souls' Papyrus of Ani

though Luigi shared his discovery of a tiny fragment of a Demotic dream book in which the subject is male.

Assessment of the purpose and use of Egyptian dream books, especially with regard to translation, has been hampered by the prudish cultural attitudes of the earliest translators. Misinterpretations of terms such as 'sister', which could refer to a man's wife as well as his sibling, have portrayed the Egyptians' as incestuous and amoral. Anachronistic assumptions in modern scholarship, combined with the application of Christian ethics and moral standards, have portrayed Ancient Egypt as a depraved and misogynistic society.

Luigi presented this topic with a suitable degree of detachment, showing how modern scholarship is reviewing and re-evaluating this fascinating aspect of the Egyptians' way of thinking. This demonstrated how a very personal side of Ancient Egyptian life reveals the very human nature of the society, bringing us closer to the people of the past.

**Hilary Wilson**

### Review of July 2023 SAES Meeting

On 1 July 2023 the society held our second in-person meeting this year at Itchen College. The speaker was **Lee Young** who has previously spoken to the Society on her specialist subject of the archaeological artists and epigraphers who have recorded Egyptian sites in the past. Her talk this time

was titled ***'Howard Carter: An Alternative View of the Man Through His Art'***.

Lee began with a potted history of the Carter family. Howard's father (Samuel) was a well-known Victorian artist specialising mainly in animal paintings and Howard was the youngest child. Like most of his older siblings Howard inherited his fathers' artistic talents. Although Howard was born in Kensington London on 8 May 1874, he spent most of his

childhood in the Norfolk village of Swaffham, the family home. He had little formal education as he was a sickly child, but he did practice his artistic talents.

Close to Swaffham was Diddlington Hall, home of Lord Amherst for whom Howard's father had worked. Amherst also had a large Egyptian collection and it was this connection that led to Howard being put forward as artist to Percy Newberry's team working for the Egypt Exploration Fund at Beni Hassan. Before colour photography, watercolour painting was the most accurate means of recording tomb and temple decoration. Howard was 17 when he left for Egypt in the autumn of 1891.

Lee outlined Howard's career in Egypt during which time he progressed from just reproducing the tomb scenes to directing archaeological

excavations. During this time Howard produced some exceptional paintings of tomb scenes and Egyptian wildlife. → Lee showed the work of other artists of the time to demonstrate

Egyptian Vulture (Griffith Institute Oxford)





the accuracy of Carter's work. He preferred to work freehand rather than from tracings saying that he wanted to better represent the spirit and skill of the ancient artist. He faithfully reproduced what he saw in both line drawings and delicate watercolours, his work comparing favourably with that of other artists, even those who were his superiors at Beni Hassan. Many of the scenes Carter recorded, like the dragging of the colossus in Djehutihotep's tomb, have since deteriorated or been damaged to such an extent that his paintings are now the best reference sources for those images. After a season working with Petrie at Amarna, Carter joined Edouard Naville's expedition at Deir el-Bahari, as chief artist, producing some of his most beautiful work.↓



Horus Falcon, Howard Carter Deir el-Bahari (Griffith Institute Oxford)

Appointed to the Antiquities Service as Inspector of Monuments for Upper Egypt, Carter worked with Theodore Davies in the Valley of the Kings and continued on a freelance basis even after he had resigned from the French-run Service over an incident involving rowdy French visitors at Saqqara. During those wilderness years, Carter made a respectable living selling his own paintings to tourists.→

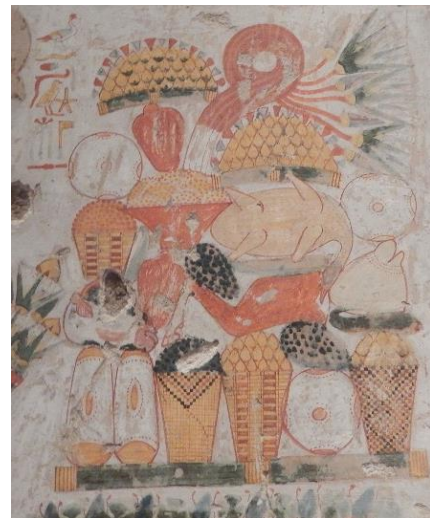
In 1907 Howard started working for Lord Carnarvon and in 1917 they began work in the Valley of the Kings. In 1922 the Tomb of Tutankhamun was discovered, and Howard spent the rest of time in Egypt recording and clearing it. His artistic talent was well used as he sketched each artifact on individual record cards that recorded

each item. These can be viewed online at, <http://www.griffith.ox.ac.uk/discoveringTut/>

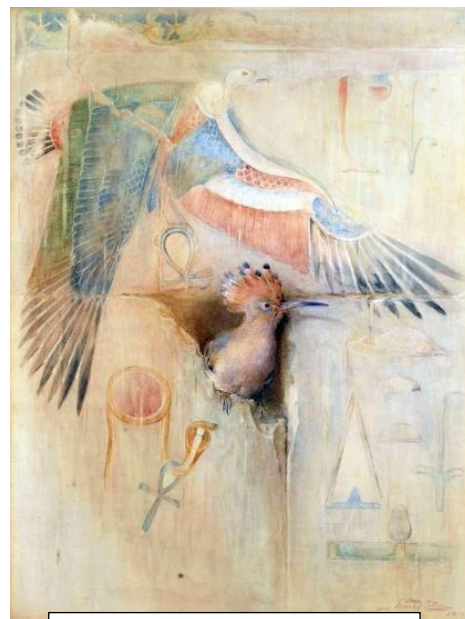
It was a refreshing change to look at Carter's work pre-Tutankhamun and to get a glimpse of his lesser-known but substantial talents.

**Glenn Worthington**

**June Quiz Answer**



The heaped offering table can be seen among the Nebamun paintings in the British Museum.



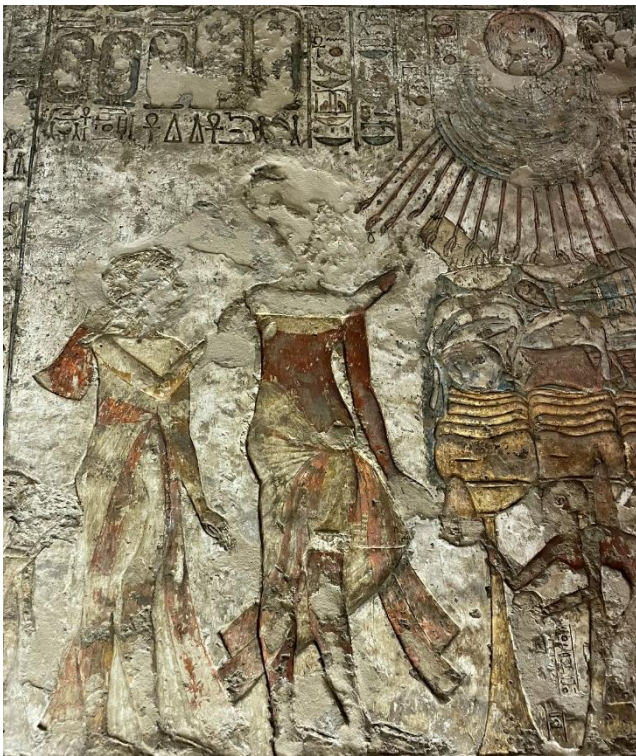
'Under the Protection of the Gods', Howard Carter 1908 (Internet image)



## Emily Hale's Visit to Amarna

There isn't too much left at the site of Amarna and the tombs have suffered damage over the years but there are still interesting features to investigate at the site.

The tomb of Meryre has a scene → where Akhenaten and Nefertiti are in horse drawn chariots under the rays of the Aten and in another scene standing in front of offerings. ↓



This tomb also has the scene of the famous blind harpists ↓.



We also visited the Royal Tomb, and luckily for us a research group were also in the tomb so the people managing the tomb turned the generator on to power the lights (our guide tells us when he visited a few

days ago they had to use phone torches to light the way as it didn't seem worthwhile turning the generator on!). The tomb is in poor condition but some scenes can still be made out, such as the royal palace.



## Important Notice!

Circumstances have led to our postponement of the Silsila Fundraiser. This will now take place on Sat 9 and Sun 10 December 2023. A new registration link for this event will be released before the end of September.

Even if you registered for the July dates, you will need to re-register using that new link.





**Yes!** This September we are celebrating our twenty-fifth anniversary. As well as a silver-themed talk to start off our new season (**see right**) we would like to hear from our

Membership how we might otherwise celebrate our success. One suggestion is that we should make donations to some of the Egyptological causes supported by speakers who have entertained us during our quarter century. If you have a particular cause which you think is worthy of such support, please let us know through the usual channels. Decisions about the Silver Jubilee share-out will be made at the **AGM** in September (**details below**).

With fewer opportunities for face-to-face meetings and the school's own demands on storage space, we will also have to discuss what to do with our library of book which is currently stored at Oasis. If anyone can offer a safe, dry storage space for some or all of the boxes, please let us know. In the meantime, please give some consideration to whether and how we should sell, donate or otherwise dispose of the books.

## **Annual General Meeting**

**Thursday 14 September 2023**

**18.30 for 19.00 start**

**(London time = GMT +1)**

This Zoom meeting is open to all Members, home and overseas, free of charge. Registration is still required so that you can be sent the joining link.

**Register in advance for this meeting:**

<https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZEsd-CurjouG9aWhQt7uBYILXb9rSIckOkp>

**For details of any SAES event, please contact the Secretary:**

[saesinfo55@gmail.com](mailto:saesinfo55@gmail.com)

or see the website

[www.SouthamptonAncientEgyptSociety.co.uk](http://www.SouthamptonAncientEgyptSociety.co.uk)

Please note, the SAES emails are not monitored 24/7 so instant response to messages cannot be expected.

**Our next Zoom meeting is on**

**Saturday 16 September**

**13:30 for a start at 14:00**

**(London time = GMT+1)**

**Admission from the virtual waiting room from about 13:45**

**'Silver in Ancient Egypt: Sources and Uses'**

by **Hilary Wilson**



The sun-god Ra was described as having flesh of gold, bones of silver and hair of real lapis lazuli, associating his immortality with the incorruptibility of precious metals and stones. While being famous for their lavish exploitation of gold, the Egyptians' use of silver is less well-known. As part of SAES Silver Anniversary, Hilary Wilson's presentation will explore the origins of the pharaohs' silver and look at some of the decorative and funerary purposes to which it was put.

**Register in advance for this meeting:**

[https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZwkdeuqrzkiH9WVWw\\_9OMw09DY\\_WjFIgpAB](https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZwkdeuqrzkiH9WVWw_9OMw09DY_WjFIgpAB)

