



Issue 18: April 2017

### Review of the March meeting

On Saturday 18 March **Paul Nicholson**, Professor of Archaeology at the University of Cardiff, talked to us about **The Sacred Animal Necropolises of North Saqqara**. Speaking from his many years of first-hand experience of working on the Saqqara plateau, Paul described the history of the discovery of the catacombs containing millions of animal mummies. Most of these date from the Late Period and include hawks as well as the ibises and baboons, sacred to Thoth, which were believed to have been deposited as votive offerings by pilgrims visiting the shrine of Imhotep. He showed how these galleries were excavated below deserted Old Kingdom tombs so that the whole area became honeycombed with labyrinthine passages and chambers, some piled from floor to ceiling with jars containing animal remains. Forensic sampling and X-rays of the 'mummies' have revealed that not all were complete birds, with sticks and other rubbish used to create a 'packet' of the right shape. The elaborate wrappings, some with appliqué designs (see right), covered a multitude of sins. It is thought that there was a lucrative trade in the mass-production of these offerings.



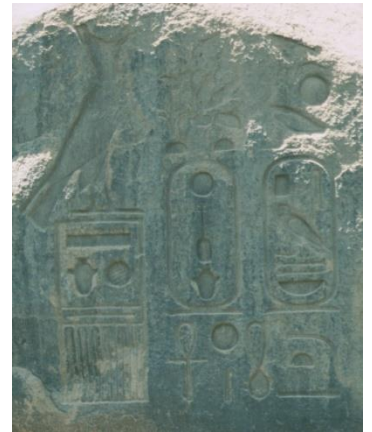
Paul's description of the conditions under which he and his fellow Egyptologists have to work in the confines of these galleries was not for the claustrophobic but gave us a wonderful impression of what life is like at the sharp end of archaeology. This was another excellent talk to a very appreciative audience.

## The newsletter of The Southampton Ancient Egypt Society

### March Quiz Answers:

There are so many modern variants of some Egyptian names, starting with the Greek forms used by Manetho, that it is difficult to be definitive as to spelling. However we usually find that the initial letter of a name remains constant, so here is the list of kings, i.e. those rulers who are known from their cartouches, whose names begin with P, silent or otherwise.

Royal names of  
Neferibra Psamtik II  
on Elephantine  
Island



Dyn 2: Peribsen  
Dyn 6: Pepi I, Pepi II  
Dyn 8(?): Pepyseneb  
Dyn 21: Pinudjem, Psusennes I, Psusennes II  
Dyn 22: Pimay, Pedubast II  
Dyn 23: Pedubast I, Peftyauiwybast  
Dyn 25: Piye (also known as Piankhy)  
Dyn 26: Psamtik I, Psamtik II, Psamtik III  
Dyn 29: Pasherenmut  
Macedonian: Philip III Arrhidaeus  
Ptolemaic: Ptolemy I – XV  
By my count that's **32**.

A comprehensive chronological list of pharaohs can be found in **'The Complete Royal Families of Ancient Egypt'** by Aidan Dodson and Dyan Hilton (2004) Thames & Hudson. This will also help to explain why Pedubast II seems to have ruled before Pedubast I (two dynasties ruling at the same time) and why there is still confusion about the dynasties of the so-called Intermediate Periods (e.g. Dyns 7-10).

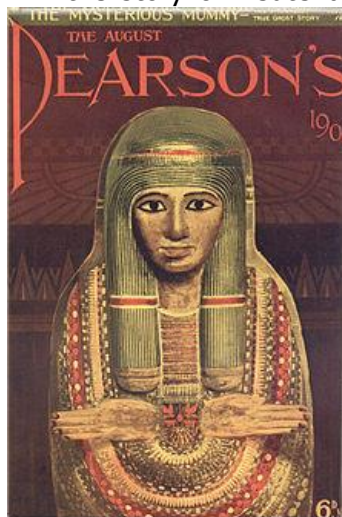
**Jane Brady reviews a radio programme she discovered last month. Look out for it on the BBC Radio I-player**

**TRUE TALES FROM THE CRYPT**

..or at least the basement in The British Museum, was a R4 Extra programme on Friday 10th March that sounded intriguing to me. Author Professor Roger Luckhurst presented a fact-filled half hour searching for the source of the mummy's 'curse.' The presenter thought this idea pre-dated Lord Carnarvon's encounter with a mosquito at the tomb of Tutankhamun in 1923, which all the newspapers sensationally reported on, especially since his death stopped *The Times* 'exclusive.'

Enter earlier 'mummy pit raiders' like aristocratic Thomas Douglas Murray who 'accidentally' shot his arm off in the desert, and the story of Lieutenant Walter Ingram who in 1888 was trampled to death by an elephant. The latter's exploits were read in the newspaper by Rudyard Kipling who told his friend H. Rider Haggard, leading to such interesting bedtime stories as '*Cleopatra*' 1889 by H. Rider Haggard, and '*The Jewel of Seven Stars*' 1903 by Bram Stoker. Inevitably films followed with '*The Mummy*' (1932) being a prime example.

A psychologist interviewed was not reassuring and maintained that the idea of a 'curse' is a powerful part of the human psyche and not to be scientifically explained away. Visitors to tombs were often asked by ancient inscriptions to 'behave' and Salima Ikram, Egyptian archaeologist said she always shows respect when going in them by reciting the traditional offering prayer of "... a thousand of everything." Then recently when the U.S. complained to Egypt because pictures of the dead bodies of U.S. airmen were broadcast, Egypt's response was to withdraw mummies from display in The Cairo Museum.



Cover of Pearson's Magazine from 1909 featuring the 'unlucky mummy' story

So did Lot 22542 the 'cursed' mummy case sink the Titanic by being on board in 1912? Well, The British Museum did receive enquires in 2012 (the year this programme was originally broadcast) and the peaceful looking lady painted on the mummy case does receive a Valentine's card, sent by one of the Murray descendants.

The photo (right) and the description below come from the 'Search the Collection' page of the British Museum website.

[http://www.britishmuseum.org/research/collection\\_online/collection\\_object\\_details.aspx?objectId=117233&partId=1](http://www.britishmuseum.org/research/collection_online/collection_object_details.aspx?objectId=117233&partId=1)

'This object is perhaps best known for the strange folkloric history attributed to it: it has acquired the popular nickname of the 'Unlucky Mummy', with a reputation for bringing misfortune. None of these stories has any basis in fact, but from time to time the strength of the rumours has led to a flood of enquiries.

The mummy-board is said to have been bought by one of four young English travellers in Egypt during the 1860s or 1870s. Two died or were seriously injured in shooting incidents, and the other two died in poverty within a short time. The mummy-board was passed to the sister of one of the travellers, but as soon as it had entered her house the occupants suffered a series of misfortunes. The celebrated clairvoyant Madame Helena Blavatsky is alleged to have detected an evil influence, ultimately traced to the mummy-board. She urged the owner to dispose of it and in consequence it was presented to the British Museum. The most remarkable story is that the mummy-board was on board the SS Titanic on its maiden voyage in 1912, and that its presence caused the ship to collide with an iceberg and sink!

Needless to say, there is no truth in any of this; the object had never left the Museum until it went to a temporary exhibition in 1990. This mummy-board is both a remarkable ancient object and an example of how Egyptian objects can develop their own modern existence.'

(Nigel Strudwick)



## Glenn Worthington reports on Ancient Egyptian Space Missions

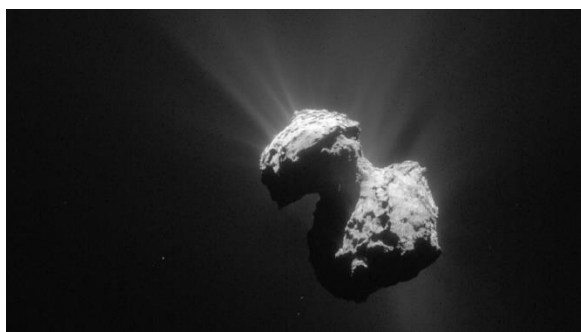


Artist's impression of Rosetta and the just released Philae lander.

In March 2004 the European Space Agency (ESA) launched its ambitious mission to land a spacecraft on the surface of a comet. The mission is Rosetta, and this is the name of the vehicle carrying the little craft that would land on comet 67P / Churyumov-Gerasimenko which is called Philae. So how did this mission into deep space come to have names associated with ancient Egypt?

The mission is named after the Rosetta stone that is today in the British Museum, and like the stone unlocked the secrets of Egyptian hieroglyphs the mission to the comet will unlock the secrets of the early solar system. The lander is named Philae after the obelisk from the temple of Isis at Philae which was also used to decipher hieroglyphs. This is the obelisk that can be found a Kinston Lacy in Dorset.

The ancient Egyptian connection does not stop there, as 19 regions on the comet have also been named after Egyptian deities. Famously when the first pictures to clearly show the shape of the comet were processed it was said to look like a rubber duck, so the names given to regions on the 'head' are from female gods and those on the 'body' are named for male gods.



The gods names used are: Maat, Ash, Babi, Set, Hatmehit, Nut, Aten, Hapi, Imhotep, Anubis, Mafdet, Bastet, Serqet, Hathor, Anuket, Khepry, Aker, Atum, Apis.

The comet was discovered in 1969 and is only 2.7 by 2.5 miles at its longest and widest, has an orbital period of 6.44 years and a rotational period of 12.75 hours.

The link below gives more information on the mission;

[http://www.esa.int/Our\\_Activities/Space\\_Science/Rosetta/Comet\\_67P\\_Churyumov-Gerasimenko](http://www.esa.int/Our_Activities/Space_Science/Rosetta/Comet_67P_Churyumov-Gerasimenko)

## OSIRIS-REx

On September 8 2016 NASA launched OSIRIS-REx, its mission is to an asteroid called Bennu where it will collect a sample and return it to Earth. The spacecraft is due to arrive at Bennu in August 2018 and spend a year surveying its surface so that a suitable site can be found from which to sample the surface. The return journey will begin in March 2021 and arrive back at Earth in September 2023.



OSIRIS-REx stands for; O – Origins, SI – Spectral Interpretation, RI – Resource Identification, S – Security, REx – Regolith Explorer. Bennu was chosen for this mission because it is close to Earth and is believed to date from the formation of the solar system and so have organic compounds and water-bearing minerals.

Follow this link for more information:

<http://www.asteroidmission.org/>

**If you are interested in ancient astronomy you might like to look at the MOOC 'Archaeoastronomy' recently offered (in English) by the Politecnico di Milan. Browse the Coursera website at**

[www.coursera.org](http://www.coursera.org)

**And of course you could sign up for our Study Day.....**



**Study Day 15 July 2017**  
**An Introduction to Egyptian Astronomy**

presented by **Dr Bernadette Brady** from the **University of Wales Trinity Saint David** School of Archaeology, History and Anthropology.

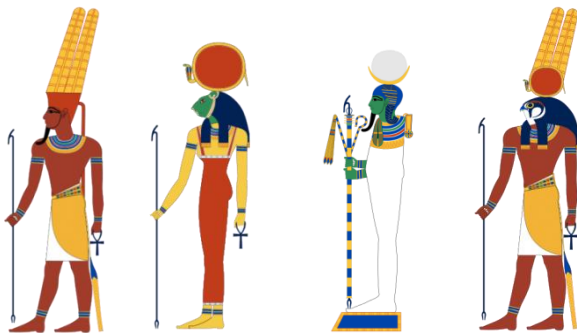
This Study Day is designed to introduce you to the Egyptian sky with its mythic, religious, and civic role in Egyptian society. It will begin with the pyramids of the Old Kingdom and carry through to the Hellenistic period.

By the end of the day you should be able to look at a piece of Egyptian astronomical art or design and recognise its probable intentions and major themes. Handouts will be provided to aid your own study after the event.

**Fee for the day:**  
**£20 for SAES Members**  
**£25 for non-Members**  
**Book your place now.**

**Places are still available on the 5-week informal evening course starting Friday 28 April 7.30 – 9 p.m.**

**The Gods of Thebes**



This course will provide an overview of the deities associated with the city of Thebes, modern Luxor, their origins and mythology. It will include a study of the names, titles and iconography by which these deities may be recognised. Fully illustrated and with no formal assessment this is a course for interest and entertainment only.

**Fee: Members £20 Non-Members £25**  
**Places still available**

**Next Meeting: Saturday 20 May**



**Dr Campbell Price** from the **University of Manchester** where he is **Curator of Egypt and Sudan** at the **Manchester Museum**, one of the largest Egyptological collections in the UK, will be talking to us about **'Statues, Sailors and Strategy in Saite Egypt'**

Egypt's 26<sup>th</sup> Dynasty, based at the Delta city of Sais, saw a resurgence of international military activity. High ranking officials, notably those in the newly-formed navy, have left numerous monumental records of their participation in royal campaigns. This lecture reviews some of these figures, and their motivation for setting up monuments

**Quiz Time**

Can you identify the species of birds represented in these images? Common names or Latin names accepted.



Answers in the next edition of Hotep

