



INSCRIPTIONS

The Newsletter of the Friends of the Egypt Centre, Swansea

Issue 9

December 2001

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Out of School Hours Learning

The Friends of the Egypt Centre has applied for NOF funding on behalf of the Egypt Centre for Out of School Hours Learning.

We applied for the maximum amount of £1800 but were pleased to be told that the Steering Committee that assessed and approved the bid were so impressed by the opportunities being offered to disadvantaged youngsters in Swansea they increased the grant by another thousand pounds!

A new account has been set up called the **Out of School Hours Learning** in order to manage the events.

The Egypt Centre aims to offer 15 children each month a two-day 'Young Egyptologist' fun-packed course, run over two Saturdays. We want to provide a fun-filled workshop for disadvantaged children who cannot normally attend the museum and would like to also provide transport and a packed lunch along with a folder of completed work and a certificate for each child to take home as a record of their achievement. We want to motivate children to learn and for them to develop a love of learning and to foster a more positive attitude to learning, increasing self-esteem and confidence through a greater sense of achievement. We aim to develop literacy, communication, investigative, observation and numeracy skills along with social skills such as sharing work, team building and encouraging positive behaviour. If any of you know of a school you think would benefit from the project let me know.

Without the support of the Friends and volunteers of the Egypt Centre this would not be possible and I know many of you have helped in many ways and also have supported the FUN DAY (Saturday 1st December). The FUN DAY is being held to raise funds for the project. I will let you have an update of how much we raised in the next Incriptions.

See page 7 for details of vacancies at the Egypt Centre for leaders for this project.

Wendy Goodridge

.... and another major funding success –

see **Millennium Volunteers** overleaf!



New Opportunities Fund
funded



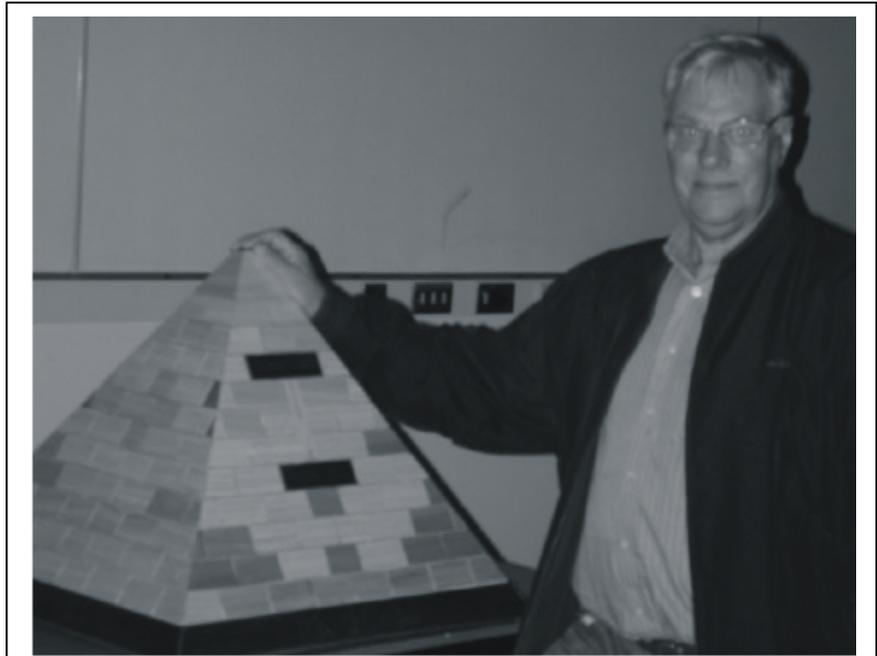


A new pyramid for the Egypt Centre!

The Friends of the Egypt Centre have a new donations box, thanks to the wonderful pyramid creation by Mr Les Evans, pictured right.

Mr Les Evans, a Friends member, built the spectacular pyramid in his spare time. In the past he has made replica period dolls houses and have donated many to charity. He thought the Egypt Centre could do with a 'house' too and came up with the idea of a pyramid donation box! Les has always supported the Egypt Centre and along with his partner, Margaret, were the first volunteers to ever serve on our shop during our first school visit. This was in the early days when we only sold pencils and a few postcards from one desk! The pyramid donation box has certainly raised interest and Sheila, our Treasurer, 'finds' lots of treasure buried in it every Thursday when she empties it.

Wendy Goodridge



The Friends of the Egypt Centre has a new donations box thanks to wonderful pyramid creation by Mr Les Evans

Your committee officers

- | | |
|----------------------|---|
| David Burch – | <i>Chairman</i> |
| Rebecca Shields – | <i>Vice Chair and technical Whizz-kid</i> |
| Vivienne Saunders – | <i>Secretary</i> |
| Sheila Nowell – | <i>Treasurer</i> |
| Ken Griffin – | <i>Membership Secretary</i> |
| Sandra Hawkins – | <i>Events Officer</i> |
| Lynn Garnett-Jones – | <i>Marketing/Press Officer</i> |
| Cliff Jones – | <i>Poster production</i> |
| Moodie Khaldi – | <i>Support Officer</i> |

Millennium Volunteers

The Egypt Centre has successfully applied to the Wales Council for Voluntary Action (WCVA) for £4,500.00 to introduce a new Volunteer programme at the Centre. Millennium Volunteering is a programme for 16-24 year olds. It is aimed at young people who would not usually volunteer in any capacity. The money awarded is to help pay for T-shirts, stationary, subsistence, and travelling expenses if they any distance from the Centre. There are also funds available to make visits to other museums with Egyptian Collections and museums that rely heavily on Volunteers. Millennium Volunteers receive a certificate from the Egypt Centre after 100 hours of Volunteering, and after 200 hours of Volunteering, Millennium Volunteers will receive a certificate from the National Assembly for Wales, signed by the First Secretary. There are 24 Millennium Volunteers signed up, so far, mostly from Swansea University but there are a number of Volunteers from Gorseinon College and some disadvantaged young people who are using Millennium Volunteering to enhance their job prospects.

Stuart Williams

ADVERTISE IN INSCRIPTIONS!

Inscriptions will now accept adverts for your business, club, charity or whatever. £5 for a half page advert, £12 for a full year. What better way to reach your public!!!!





Editorial

Welcome to the ninth issue of our Newsletter. We have a bumper issue this time and, once again, grateful thanks to all who have contributed. This issue contains a summary of the talks given at each of the last three meetings of the Friends, and we are hoping to continue this into the new year.

It is good to see that the Friends had such a successful year (see *Treasurer's Report*, opposite) and that the coming year holds the promise of more success and expansion for the Egypt Centre (see *Out of School Hours Learning*, page 1, and *Millennium Volunteers*, page 2). We are all indebted to those who have served tirelessly on the Committee, especially Stuart, our retiring Chairman, and Wendy, our retiring Membership Secretary. I understand that both were treated to a meal out as a gesture of thanks, together with Dr Kasia Szpakowska who stepped in at the last minute when one of our speakers failed to appear, and gave us a brilliant talk into the bargain!

Contributions to the next issue of *Inscriptions* will be gratefully received and should be sent to the Egypt Centre, marked for the attention of Mike MacDonagh. Don't forget that you can now place advertisements (for a fee of course - £5 for a half page advert, £12 to run for a full year).

And, now that we've solved a few technical problems, we're hoping to have back issues of *Inscriptions* published on the Friends web site shortly.

So it just remains for me to wish all our readers a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year. See you all in 2002!

Mike Mac Donagh

Treasurer's Report

For those unable to attend the AGM here is the Treasurer's Report so you can all see where your money has gone!

I am pleased to report that we have had a good year. Thanks again to Debbie Williams our catering officer and Mrs Payne who donates ingredients. Also thanks to Mike and Daphne Mac Donagh for editing *Inscriptions* and our honorary auditor Bruce G. T. Rees. (All were presented with flowers or a small gift.)

The fundraising for Sunshine has gone through our accounts making the turnover look higher. The accounts show a surplus this year of £1,500 so we are achieving our objective of raising funds for the Egypt Centre. The £800 which we allocated for a new mummy last year was not needed as the mummy was not up to standard and was returned. We now have mummies which were made more cheaply and which were bought by the Egypt Centre. We are now putting two years' surplus together and as the curator has explained this past year they would like special display cases so the committee proposes to allocate £2000 to enable the Egypt Centre to purchase these.

As we are having more big name speakers (now that we are becoming more well-known!) we are proposing to charge non-members £1.50 entrance fee, which is still very cheap. We will accept advertisements in *Inscriptions*, the Friends' journal, for a small fee.

Our day out at the British Museum was very successful as well as raising funds, so do join us for our next trip as well as attending lectures, social events, buying cakes and raffle tickets and continuing to support us to further the aims of the Egypt Centre.

(There's an important notice about our next day out, March 17 2002, on page 16 – Ed)

Sheila Nowell
Hon. Treasurer
Friends of the Egypt Centre, Swansea

Hello ...

Congratulations to David Burch (new Chairman) and Ken Griffin (new Membership Secretary) and welcome to Moode Khaldi and Dr Cliff Jones who join us on the committee.

... and Goodbye

The committee would like to thank Stuart Williams, Wendy Goodridge, Ena Niedergang, Kathryn Edwards and Mair Bowen who are retiring from all their hard work. Especial thanks to Stuart (former Chairman) and Wendy (former Membership Secretary) who helped to found the Friends and who worked so hard (and will continue to work I hope!) to make it the success it is today. Also many thanks for their talk after the AGM which was both amusing and informative.

Sheila Nowell





If only all nightmares were like this!

The morning of the 17th October dawned bright and clear, but the blustery wind should have told me that we were in for a 'bumpy ride'. It was the day of our first talk of the new session, and spirits were running high - initially!! Then Stuart had to be sent home because he was unwell, Carolyn's car was 'off the road' so she wouldn't be able to come and Hazel, she of the wrappings and chief poster mistress, announced that the forecast was for heavy rain that evening. But the air of gloom was soon brushed aside and it was down to business. We couldn't have known that worse was to come!

7.00pm arrived, but there was no sign of our speaker. Mild feelings of anxiety were soon replaced by a growing sense of panic. Then rescue came in the form of Kasia Szpakowska, the University's newly appointed Egyptologist. Her speciality is Dreams and Nightmares in Ancient Egypt, and she volunteered to put an end to our nightmare by presenting a talk on Religion, Myth and Symbol in Ancient Egypt.

She told us that most of what we know about Ancient Egypt comes from artefacts found in pyramids and tombs, suggesting that the Ancient Egyptians were obsessed by death. But this was not the case. To them death was only "a moment of a dream", leading to eternal life. Their gods are representations of attributes rather than persons, and often god figures are a combination of attributes - a falcon head suggests a celestial deity, the sphinx power. Hathor is sometimes shown as a woman, the personification of beauty, love and marriage, but at other times we see her as a lioness, the hunter, when she is angry. It is not so much the animal that was worshipped as the power it represented. A prime source for Egyptian myth is the Roman author Plutarch writing around 120 AD long after the Egyptian period. Throughout all Egyptian myth there is a sense of duality eg. between the green land and the desert, and Egyptian religion seems to revolve around two basic myths:

1. The Sun, giver of life, its eternal cycles, and water. The world evolved from watery Chaos, as seen in illustrations of pairs of frogs, snakes etc. After the water receded mounds were left, out of which shoots grew, e.g. lotus flowers. The lotus flower and blue water lily became representations of the king and the Sun god. The Sun god was the first god and creator of all the other gods. He is shown like a falcon, the symbol of celestial power. At night the falcon passes through the Nether world, now aged like a ram and

emerges next morning from the sea like a scarab beetle pushing the ball of the sun across the sky. Wearing a scarab showed your connection with the Sun and gave divine protection. Such protection came when the scarab was placed over your heart after you died. The heart was the seat of will, intelligence and emotion, and was considered the most important organ. It remained inside the body after the other organs were removed because it was needed for judgement, when it was weighed against Ma'at the feather of truth and justice.

2. Osiris, Horus and Isis Seth, Osiris' brother, kept the world in motion. He was violent, powerful and strong. He was the enemy and murderer of Osiris god of the dead, fertility and resurrection. The djed pillar was the symbol of Osiris - it represented his backbone and the stability of the land. Isis was a goddess of healing and a great magician. Horus the son of Isis and Osiris was a celestial power as shown by his falcon/hawk's head.

After Osiris was murdered by Seth, Isis and her sister Nephthys turned into kites to look for him. Isis magically pieced his body back together again and brought him back to life. She conceived a son by him. Osiris was then resurrected as King of the Netherworld, the land of the dead. Isis bears her son Horus in the marshes to hide him from Seth. She uses her magic and healing powers to protect him from the bites of crocodiles, snakes and scorpions. In written medical texts we find that the patient is Horus and the healer is Isis. Also, in the Dreams book there is a spell to get over nightmares, where the patient in the nightmare is Horus calling out to his mother Isis for help. One of the scenes in this cycle of stories is the power struggle between Horus and Seth. It is probably the oldest part of the story. During one of many battles Seth pulls out Horus's eye. The eye is healed and becomes one of the most recognisable symbols - the blue/green wedjet eye - the symbol of rejuvenation. In a boat race between them across the Nile, Horus cheats (instead of using a stone boat, as was agreed, he made one out of papyrus painted to look like stone) and wins. Seth jumps out of the river and turns into a hippopotamus. Horus tries to kill him but the gods prevent him, for both of them are needed to keep Egypt unified. Horus is king but Seth is protector. These cycles of myths provide models for running Egypt of a) resurrection to a new life b) Isis defending Horus helps Egypt defend herself against her enemies c) Horus and kingship provides a model for the king of Egypt. The merger of both myths can be seen in illustrations in Nefertari's tomb, where Ra the Sun is seen as an aged ram with the body of Osiris. Isis and Nephthys stand either side of him, so that Ra rests in Osiris and Osiris rests in Ra.

Thank you Kasia for this fascinating glimpse into a very complex and riveting subject.

Anon

See Kasia's article *A Recipe Against Nightmares on page 12* - Ed.





A visit to the tomb of Nefertari

Nefertari, whose name means “the most beautiful of them all” was no ordinary queen. She was the beloved wife of the great pharaoh Rameses II and mother of his first born son and at least 3 other sons and 2 daughters. Nefertari participated in both political life and affairs of state and accompanied her husband in festive ceremonies. As a tribute to her beauty and to show his love for her he dedicated the small temple of Abu Simbel to her and Hathor (the goddess of love and joy) jointly , an honour never granted to any other queen. He also ordered a beautiful tomb to be built for his “great royal wife” and “sweet of love” in the valley of the Queens.

The tomb was discovered in 1904 by Italian archaeologist Ernesto Schiaparelli but since the years of its discovery the tomb paintings had suffered due to dehydration of the plaster and a build up of salt crystals under the paintings. However in 1986 the Egyptian Antiquities organisation together with the Getty Conservation Institute in the USA embarked on a programme to safeguard this majestic tomb. It cost an estimated US\$6 million and lasted 5 years. Devices to monitor temperature, humidity and salt levels were installed and wooden floors laid. A limit of 150 visitors a day was imposed and time limited to 15 mins as breathing can affect humidity levels. Some archaeologists feel these figures should be reduced further to protect it as it is possibly the finest tomb in all Egypt.

Entry costs around £20 but in my view is worth every penny. On a recent holiday in Egypt we visited the tomb and this alone was worth coming for. As I have difficulty in walking, I found this to be “disabled friendly” with the wooden floor and handrails and as we walked through the entrance and down the staircase it just rendered me speechless. The paintings, which had no colours added during the restoration just took my breath away. The colours were as alive and vibrant as though they were painted yesterday. The decorations are religious-funerary and illustrate chapters from the Book of the Dead . Nefertari is shown wearing long, transparent garment and many jewels. She has a beautiful face , slim waist and royal posture. The walls in the tomb’s three chambers and connecting corridors are covered with colourful scenes of Nefertari in the company of gods and the ceiling is decorated with yellow stars on a blue background.

The whole tomb is breathtaking, a shrine to her beauty and a monument to a love for all eternity.

Bibliography

British Museum Dictionary of Ancient Egypt
Shaw and Nicholson.

Sheila Nowell



Egypt Centre Christmas Party

at

The President Suite
Swansea RFC
St Helen's Ground,
Bryn Road,
Swansea

Saturday 22nd
December
7.00pm -
12.00midnight

£10 a head for
buffet, disco and
karaoke

All welcome
If you would like to
come please
contact the Egypt
Centre before 14th
December





Egypt's relations with the Levantine World during the Middle Kingdom

The Middle Kingdom¹ could be deemed to be the era when Egypt was no longer divided into Upper and Lower Egypt after the collapse of the Old Kingdom, and so with re-unification the nation became stronger than ever. The rulers had a firmer basis at home to establish relations with neighbouring communities. Egypt, when building up its infrastructure, lacked many commodities which were needed for living – such as quality wood (e.g. cedar), resin and turquoise. They needed to acquire these materials from their source. The kings required precious stones such as lapis lazuli for embellishment of their treasures and their tombs. The foregoing provided the commercial reason for dealing with the “Asiatics” (so called by the Egyptians). The collapse of the Old Kingdom central government meant that just before this period the boundaries of the kingdom were open – and many Asiatics entered Egypt and encountered no resistance.

The relations with Byblos were non-aggressive. –The Temple of Hathor at Byblos shows this contact with Egypt: the Mistress of Byblos is credited with showing the Egyptians how to make oars.

But, inevitably, there would come a time when the king, if he was a strong one, and in favour of conquest, would not be content with trade, as such, but would favour a more aggressive attitude to the Asiatics or “men who lived beyond Egyptian land in the Sand”. The Asiatics who had entered Egypt, mostly living in the Delta, would have performed the more menial tasks, such as gardening, cleaning and nursing (by the women). Gradually some of them would enter the trading world and give up the menial work. At this stage the Egyptians would begin to think that their positions of power might be usurped, and their attitude to the Asiatics began to harden. A chain of forts called “The Walls of the Prince” was built between Egypt and Sinai in the reign of Amenemhat I (Dynasty XII). However, many Asiatics had already infiltrated Egypt, and it was not to be disputed that these foreigners from the lands across Sinai and towards the Levant would look upon the stability and wealth of Egypt as an incentive for settlement.

Before the Middle Kingdom this was evident in Dynasty X, as we can see from the Instruction addressed to King Merikare:

“Lo, the miserable Asiatic. He is wretched because of the place he is in – short of water, bare

of wood – its paths are may and painful because of mountains. He does not dwell in one place ...”

In other words the Asiatics lived a nomadic life, whereas the Egyptians, in contrast, lived settled lives.

In the Admonitions of Ipuwer (a sage) during the same dynasty we have an insight into the troubles which are blamed on the Asiatics²:

“The man of character walks in mourning on account of the state of the land.” “Every man fights for his sisters and protects himself. Is it Nubians? Then we will turn them back...”

It was clear that things had become a little lax because of the breakdown of authority and the infiltration. Whereas before in the Old Kingdom (as we can see from the Inscription of Weni from Abydos) Weni had taken care “so that no-one seized a loaf or sandals from a traveller ...”. It was safe to travel because Weni had “flattened the sand-dwellers’ land”.

It was thus evident that the Egyptians had taken steps to secure their land and, in the Prophecy of Neferti (Dyn. XII), the fear evidenced in the writings was the same: “The land is bowed down in distress – A strange bird will breed in the Delta marsh having made its nest beside the people ... All happiness has vanished...”

Obviously this was the propaganda of the day³, but it emphasises the Asiatic menace. In the Daybook entry from the reign of Amenemhat II (1929 – 1892 B.C.) Saqqara the “despatch of the Army to Kharty-Se (Lebanese coast) results in a list of the booty obtained from one of the sorties into Asia: silver, copper, battleaxes, scimitars, daggers, lapis lazuli, game – and bodes well for the King’s comfort and rewards for the military men. The slave markets⁴ were started at this stage and the slaves were given Egyptian names. It was profitable, as one man from the Delta had 77 domestics working on his estate, 48 of whom were Asiatics. After the Middle Kingdom and before the most glorious period of Egyptian history, came the period of weakness when Egypt was again infiltrated by foreigners known as the Hyksos.

Barbara Rees

¹ The Middle Kingdom is usually taken to begin with the re-unification in Dynasty XI under Mentuhotpe II Nebhepetre and to end with the close of Dyn. XII (2040 – 1782 B.C.). However, there is a case for regarding Dyn. XIII as part of the Middle Kingdom.

² Though scholarly opinion is divided as to the exact dating of Ipuwer’s text.

³ And it is easy to write a prophecy after the event, which seems to be the case here – *Ed.*

⁴ See the entry in the British Museum Dictionary of Ancient Egypt for an alternative view of “slavery” in Egypt. The article suggests that slavery as we understand it did not appear in Egypt until much later, in the Ptolemaic period.





Friends of The Egypt Centre Out of School Hours Project

Vacancies

Due to the start of a new project for Out of School Hours Learning, which will run on two Saturdays a month, the Friends of The Egypt Centre are looking to employ three members of staff to run the workshops for 15 children.

The **Saturday Leader** will be responsible for the smooth running of the project working closely with the Project co-ordinator to ensure the aims of the project are met. The two **Saturday Leader Assistants** will assist the Leader to ensure the smooth running of the project.

Aims of the Project

- Offer 15 disadvantaged children, who could not normally visit the museum, a two-day 'Young Egyptologist' fun-packed course each month.
- Work closely with local schools.
- Work closely with school curriculum.
- Develop children's literacy, numeracy, communication, investigative and observation skills.
- Motivate children to learn and to develop a love of learning.
- Increase children's self-esteem and confidence through a greater sense of achievement.
- Develop children's social skills such as sharing work, team building and encouraging positive behaviour.

Applicants for the Saturday Leader Vacancy must have a teaching qualification and experience working with primary age children. Applicants for the Saturday Leader Assistant Vacancy must have experience with working with primary age children. All staff are police checked.

The workshop starts at 11.00am and finishes at 3.00pm. The successful applicants will be required to work 10.00 am until 4.00pm with a lunch break with the children of 1 hour.

The rate of pay is £8 per hour for 6 hours a week for two weeks a month (£96 per month) for the Saturday Leader Vacancy. The rate of pay is £5 per hour for 6 hours a week for two weeks a month (£60 per month) for the Saturday Leader Assistant Vacancy.

Closing Date for applications 4th January 2002

Start Date 19th January 2002

Application forms are available at The Egypt Centre

Tel: 01792 295960





Another Splendid Evening with Martin Davies

Martin Davies made a welcome return visit to us on November 14th. His topic this time was Tomb Models from Daily Life. It was a fascinating theme. We were told that the purpose of these models was to aid the continuance of this life in the next life, and there were four main categories of models for:

1. The preparation and provision of food and drink
2. Clothing
3. Housing
4. Transport - boats

The earliest figures are usually single limestone figures, which were placed in the tomb chapel. In the middle period wood was used, and several figures or groups of figures are found, all employed doing useful work for the benefit of the deceased in the next world - millers, bakers, brewers, porters. These figures are a mine of information about the everyday life of ordinary Egyptians. Martin guided us so ably and seamlessly through a series of slides, pointing out features we might otherwise have overlooked - the woman kneeling to grind corn and the one squatting to sieve the flour are both wearing cloth caps to protect their hair. The baker, sitting on the floor, is baking his bread in conical moulds around a fire, and shields his face from the heat. A cook squats before a fire with the joint of meat in one hand and a fan in the other to fan the flames. We saw a lady kneading bread through a sieve to make beer.

It was amazing how much we are able to learn about the lifestyle and customs of these workers from these artefacts, because the attention to detail is quite breathtaking. For example, there are lots of figures grinding corn, some are shown kneeling on blocks as they grind because that allows extra pressure to be used and speeds up the process. Many of these figures are shown in procession, graceful ladies carrying baskets of food, or beer and wine, on their heads, which again are protected by a cloth. The joints of meat and loaves of bread are painted realistically and the appearance and clothing of the figures is carefully delineated - clear eyes, pale skin, patterned, body hugging dresses.



Boats, of course were the main mode of transport, and the Nile the main highway. We were shown how the sails would indicate the direction the boat was travelling in - the sail would be used to travel south, but would be furled, and the boat allowed to drift going in the opposite direction. One such boat showed all the rowers straining at their task. Even though the oars have been lost it looks very realistic. There were papyrus boats with models paddling, facing the direction of travel i.e. going downstream, with the owner sheltering under a cover. One group scene showed a regiment of Egyptian soldiers, complete with shields and pikes, and another showed Nubian mercenaries wearing red kilts and armed with bows and arrows. Both of these were pegged onto a baseboard.

But perhaps the most exciting of all are the figures from the tomb of Mekhetre, the treasurer of the king of Lower Egypt around 2,000BC. These were discovered in 1920 by the Herbert Winlock/ Ambrose Lansing expedition. They were engaged in plotting and measuring the tomb, but workmen found a crack in the pavement and when the dust had been cleared away they found a brick wall. When Winlock shone a torch in a miniature world of 4,000 years before was revealed. Among the most spectacular finds were two models of houses, complete with gardens and pools. The roofs had rainwater spouts long enough to allow the water to pour into the pool. There were sycamore trees bearing tiny sycamore figs, each one cleverly attached by dowels, and windows and doors were painted on the back. Other little masterpieces include the weaving shop with its horizontal looms, threads still intact, and the carpenters shop where individuals are sawing, sanding etc. It even has a miniature tools chest with a complete set of miniature tools in case anything breaks.

It is obvious that the Ancient Egyptians intended to ensure that their afterlife was as comfortable as they could possibly make it! Our sincere thanks go to Martin for bringing these scenes to life.

By ????





Plants and Trees in Ancient Egypt

If you visit the upstairs of the Egypt Centre you will see we now have a small display of plant related material (it's next to the interactive computers). We also have an information sheet on plant symbolism, part of which is reproduced here:

The use of plants for construction materials, pharmaceuticals, religious symbolism, etc. is common in Egyptian literature and iconography. However, identification of the particular plants used is very difficult, even if there are illustrations.

For the ancient Egyptian plants, in general, had properties of life and rebirth. Their greenness was associated with the annual rejuvenation of the Nile. Ptah in particular is often shown with a green face and is called *nefer her* (beautiful or perfect of face). Green faced deities, etc. can be seen in the *House of Death*.

The ankh (symbol of life) could be symbolised by floral bouquets and the papyrus swathe offered to the gods. The swathes were called *ankhu*. The flower or leaf of the lotus may also symbolise the ankh. Some 18th dynasty objects fuse the name of the king with the depiction of a lotus blossom in the form of ankh. The stem and leaf of this plant often appear behind the king in inscriptions promising life and the same plant is often found on offering tables.

Flowers were often placed in holders in the shape of an ankh. A compilation of floral offering dedicated at the great Temple of Amun at Karnak shows over a million such offerings each year.

The Sema Sign

The *Sema* sign incorporates the papyrus of Upper and the lily (sometimes identified as a reed or lotus) of Lower Egypt. This sign is found on the sides of thrones from the fourth Dynasty. You can see it on the black stone statuette in the plant case in *The House Of Life*.

Trees

The Egyptian name for the sycamore, *nht* also suggests shelter or protection. The word can also mean tree in more general terms. Trees symbolise eternal life. Their roots go down into the primeval water from which all natural life has sprung.

In the Egyptian love poem 'The Orchard' the lovers are shown as two trees (fig sycamore and persea). This is an idea that occurs in various cultures. Trees are often meeting places for lovers.

Various trees, particularly the sycamore, are associated with tree goddesses. You can see a picture

of a tree goddess on a coffin fragment in the *House of Death*. Other trees were sacred to gods. The willow was sacred to Osiris. Horus was connected with acacia and Wepwawet with tamerisk.

Wood was also of course used in construction and furniture making. The tamarisk or zizyphus was to be used for the making of shabtis. Burial in a wooden coffin could be regarded as a return to the womb of the mother. Coffins were associated with the goddess Nut.

Ished / Persea (*Mimusops laurifolia*)

The persea is a medium sized tree of up to 20m high usually connected with the Egyptian *ished* tree. The edible fruit is about 4cm long, rounded with a pointed tip. Despite a law to stop it being cut, the tree died out in Egypt in Roman period. The fruit have been found in tombs e.g. Tutankhamun. Leaves of the tree have been identified in New Kingdom mummy garlands e.g. Ramessess II.

In representations the fruit is difficult to distinguish from the mandrake though the sepals of the persea are shorter than those of the mandrake. The fruit of the persea comes to maturity at the time of the Nile's rise and so is associated with fecundity (the annual flooding of the Nile brought re-growth to Egypt).

The *ished* was associated with kingship from at least the New Kingdom and the tree is shown protecting kings. An *ished* was also the holy tree that grew in the temple at Heliopolis.

The tree may have been related to creation myths as its fruit resemble a heart and its leaf a tongue. In Egypt, creation was considered an act of will (represented by the heart) effected through the utterance of the word (tongue). The cartouche was sometimes considered a persea leaf because it was on a leaf of this tree that the god Thoth wrote the king's name on accession to the throne. The inscribing of the king's name on its leaves linked to the prosperity of his reign and remembering of his deeds. Non-royal individuals later inscribed their names on pendants in the same way.

Spell 17 of the Book of the Dead has Re in the form of a cat slaying the Apophis serpent in front of the *ished* tree. Spell 335 of the book of the Dead reads 'I am the Great Tomcat which split the *ished*-tree on its side in On (=Heliopolis) on the night of making war and warding off the rebels, and on the day of destroying the foes of the Lord of All'. The tree splitting is also mentioned in the Coffin Texts. The *ished*-tree was the sacred tree of the sun-God at Heliopolis but the precise meaning of its splitting is unknown. Malek suggests it might be to allow the sun to rise. The splitting of the *ished* tree is also sometimes known as 'the Mut ritual'.





Date Palm (*Phoenix dactylifera*)

The branch of the date palm stripped of its leaves and notched annually appears to have been used as a standard method for recording years. The palm branch hieroglyph was used for words such as year, time and season. It was also the symbol of the God Heh, the personification of eternity (a depiction of Heh can be seen in *The House of Life*). Palm branches were also used in jubilee *sed* festivals.

Sycamore Fig (*Ficus sycomorus*) nehet

The sycamore fig is sometimes called the Egyptian mulberry but is not the same plant as the North American or European mulberry. The sycamore fig is a taller tree than the true fig but produces smaller fruits. It has pear shaped leaves.

The cultivation of the sycamore fig is almost exclusive to Egypt where it seems to have been first domesticated. It cannot produce spontaneously due to lack of the correct species of bee to fertilise it. In the south the tree grows wild thanks to the existence of the bee. Cultivated sycamore figs go back to the Neolithic with sycamore represented on tomb walls and on reliefs. The young fruit must be gashed to induce ripening.

Hathor was 'Lady of the Sycamore' and like Nut was depicted as a sycamore. Sycamores were also trysting place (Brewer et al p 146) – even today Egyptian women with marital problems linger under the tree. Tree goddesses are sometimes shown amongst the branches pouring liquid into the hands of worshippers (A tree goddess in the form of Maat can be seen on the 21st Dynasty coffin in *The House of Death*). Some representations show the tree in skeletal form from which the goddess raises. There was a long Memphite tradition of a bare sycamore tree in contrast to the fruit bearing tree which shelters the deities with 'branches dried up, its interior burnt'. The *Pyramid Texts* describe a tree. Hathor is the tree goddess of Memphis. The milky juice of the sycamore was used to heal wounds and abscesses. Hathor as Lady of the Sycamore heals the eye of Horus with milk from a gazelle, according to a New Kingdom story.

The Book of Dead Chapters 109 and 149 states that twin 'sycamores of turquoise' stood at the eastern gate of *heaven* from which Re emerged every day. Sometimes such trees appear on New Kingdom tomb paintings with a young bull or calf emerging from them symbolising Re. While the cosmic tree could be Re Horakhty, the sycamore was usually, Nut, Isis or more usually Hathor. Sycamore leaves were also used as funerary amulets.

Lily (*Lilium candidum*)

Egyptian reliefs from about 500 BC show the gathering of a plant which looks like a lily. Recipes for

perfume are known. The heraldic lily is the plant of Upper Egypt. Lily amulets can be seen in *The House of Life*.

Papyrus plants (*Cyperus papyrus*)

In Egypt, papyrus reeds were used for: stalks bundled together to make boats, inner bark used for sail cloths, matting, blankets and ropes; cattle grazing; paper; medicine. The plant was so associated with Egypt that in the *Tale of Sinuhe* the hero says 'what can fasten the papyrus to the mountain?'. He thinks of himself as a papyrus lost in the mountains of foreign lands. The *Land of Papyrus* specifically was used to mean Lower Egypt.

Papyrus pillars were said to hold up the sky. Hathor, Bastet and Neith were associated with papyrus. Hathor sometimes appears as a cow with papyrus between her horns. The *ukh* staff, a papyrus stem crowned with two feathers was a fetish associated with this goddess.

Papyrus amulets were used by the living as well as the dead. They have been found at the town sites of Ashmunein and Balamun. There are examples on display in *The House of Death* and in *The House of Life*.

In temple and tomb scenes papyrus stalks are shaken in rituals. The sound of the sistrum was also said to be like that of rustling papyrus.

Flax (*Linum usitissimum*)

Flax was used for linseed oil and linen. Left over seed residue may be used as a cattle feed. Flax stems were pulled rather than cut as cutting might stain the inside fibres.

Flax fibres are stronger than cotton or wool.. The earliest Egyptian flax is from the Neolithic Fayum and Merimde (c 4400 BC). Egyptian linen could be very fine (100 threads to the centimeter) but the examples on display in *The House of Life* and *The House of Death* are much coarser.

Grape Vine (*Vitis vinifera*)

A wine jar was found in tomb of king Den and by Dynasty V and VI grape vines were often shown on tomb motifs. Wine was associated with Osiris, who in mythology brought wine to Egypt. There is some evidence that black wine was specific to funerary rituals in the Old Kingdom. The vine was used to symbolise rebirth, possibly because the vine appears to die and be reborn annually. Vine plants are shown decorating tomb walls, particularly in the New Kingdom, faience grape clusters hung in homes and grape amulets were worn. Amulets and a grape cluster can be seen in the Egypt Centre. A wine jar is on display in the Amarna case in *The House of Life*.





It has been suggested by some Egyptologists that hallucinogenic drugs such as mandrake or lotus was mixed with wine. Banquet jars are often shown wrapped in blue lotus.

Mandrake

The *rmmt* occurs frequently in Egyptian love poems often identified it with mandrake fruit. In these poems, the mandrake is said to resemble breasts. In Egyptian iconography it is used in a similar way to the lotus, that is people are shown smelling it. Mandrake amulets can be seen in the Egypt Centre.

Lotus

Two species of lotus (water lily) were native to Egypt, the white *Nymphaea lotus*, and the blue *Nymphaea cerulea*. The first has rounded buds and petals second more pointed. The blue lotus, which appears more frequently in Egyptian iconography is the more frequently illustrated. In the late period a red lotus was introduced.

The water lily sinks down into the water and re-emerges with the rising of the sun, thus linking it to the sun god Re. One of the creation myths describes how the new-born sun rose out of a lotus which floated on the waters of Nun. The plant seems to flower for three days, a significant number in Egypt. The blue lotus also had a strong scent which was associated with sexuality. Sexuality was necessary for rebirth.

The Four sons of Horus often appear on a lotus. Horus and Re are also shown as children raising out of the lotus. Despite the fact that Nefertum was the god of this flower he is never shown rising out from it. There is a statuette of Nefertum in *The House of Death*. In the pyramid texts Nefertum is called ‘The Lotus Blossom which is at the Nose of Re.’ He is also called ‘Lord of perfumes.’ From the New Kingdom he was worshipped at Memphis. In votive statues usually shown in human form wearing the lotus flower as a crown.

Situlae, used in temple rituals, were shaped like the lotus. Bronze model situlae can be seen in *The House of Death*. They are mainly known from Late Period and Ptolemaic Period and are found in temple area and courtyards of the sacred animal necropolis at Saqqara, probably dedicated as votive offerings by pilgrims.

Osiris

The Osiris character as a tree spirit is known from Firmicus Maternus, a classical writer. He describes a pine tree hollowed out the making of an image of Osiris which was then buried in the hollow of the tree. The image was kept for a year and then burned. This perhaps this alludes to the mythical discovery of the coffin and body of Osiris in the erica tree (in some versions of the myth describe a tamarisk). At Dendera

the tree of Osiris was a conifer and a pine cone often appears on the monuments as an offering to him. A manuscript in the Louvre speaks of a cedar as having sprung from him. In inscriptions he is referred to as ‘the one tree.’ He is also associated with the sycamore.

Osiris is often shown as a god of vegetation. The Greeks said he discovered the vine and taught men to cultivate corn. The death of Osiris was said to be at the same time as the sinking of the Nile. Figures of Osiris in which grain was placed in graves so that the grain would sprout.

Daisy or Chrysanthemem or Mayflower

The symbolism of these seems to have been similar to the lotus. Daisy inlays were common in 20th Dynasty. They were used to decorated houses but it seems they also had religious significance.

Further Reading

Brewer, D., D.B., Redford, and S. Redford. 1994. *Domestic Plants and Animals*. Aris and Phillips, Ltd.
 Malek, J., 1993. *The Cat In Ancient Egypt*. London: British Museum Press
 Manniche, L., 1999. *Sacred Luxuries*. London: Opus Publishing
 Poo, My-Chou 1995. *Wine and Wine Offering In The Religion Of Ancient Egypt*. London and New York : Kegan Paul
 Wilkinson, A., 1998. *The Garden in Ancient Egypt*

Carolyn Brown

Numerology readings

Sandra Hawkins has kindly offered to help us raise money by drawing up Numerology charts for any of you who would like one done. The cost will be £5 per reading, and the money will go towards the Egypt Centre’s case fund. What Sandra needs from you is your full name, including any middle names you may have, spelt correctly with no nicknames, plus your date of birth. What she also needs is a contact number so that you can be notified when your chart is done. You can send the information to Sandra care of the Egypt Centre, or you can give us a ring, or you can pop into the centre and see us. The charts are very revealing and very accurate!

Please support us in our quest for new cases!





A Recipe Against Nightmares

By Dr. Kasia Szpakowska

In honour of the opening of the new Harry Potter movie I thought I would share with you a fascinating little spell I came across in my research. It can be found on Papyrus Chester Beatty III, which contains lists of dreams and their interpretations.ⁱ This manuscript is particularly important, for it is currently the only known Egyptian book of dream interpretation dating to before the time of the Greeks. While we might never know the identity of the original author, we are familiar with its owner, and its provenance.

This collection was part of the library of the well-known scribe Qenherkhopshef, a craftsman from Deir el-Medina.ⁱⁱ The set includes letters, memoranda, documents related to family and domestic affairs, exercises, belles-lettres, medical prescriptions, spells, incantations, and the dreambook. Many of the texts were written in Qenherkhopshef's distinct handwriting, but not the dream-book. We don't even know if the book was used, or if it is simply kept as a curiosity. After he died childless, his wife remarried, and the library was passed down to her son Amunnakht, son of Khaemnun. This Amunnakht added a colophon to the dream-book, attributing its creation to himself. He also added some love poetry, a literary narrative, and letters addressed to himself.ⁱⁱⁱ

That was the last known owner of the text until 1928, when archaeologists in Deir el-Medina discovered an assemblage of religious, magical, documentary, and literary papyri in the superstructure of a tomb between the base of a pyramid and the vault of a chapel, in a small trapezoidal space.^{iv} It has been suggested that this collection may have been placed in this particular area in order to protect the important documents during the chaotic period at the end of Dynasty XX. It may even be the very collection referred to in a later Egyptian document, which discusses the unrolling, drying, and later hiding of a group of papyri which had become wet!^v Today, the Papyrus Chester Beatty III can be seen in the British Museum in London.

As fascinating as the history of the text may be, it is now time to focus on just one small section.^{vi} (see panel opposite)

This spell is to be spoken by a man who wakes up on his own place, after he has first been given pesen bread and fresh herbs, which have been marinated in beer and myrrh. The man's face should be rubbed with them; and all the bad dreams that he has seen will be driven out.

In essence, if you wake up from a horrible dream, then you should immediately locate your local

Invocation to Isis

Words spoken by a man who wakes up on his own place:

(Dreamer as Horus):

Come to me! Come to me my mother Isis! Behold, I see something far away from me, while I'm still in my own neighbourhood."

(Healer as Isis):

"Here I am, my son Horus! Do not divulge that which you saw, in order that your numbness may be completed, your dreams retire, and fire go forth against that which terrifies you.

Behold, I have come that I may see you, that I may drive out your bad things, that I may get rid of all the red things."

(Dreamer as Horus):

"Welcome, o dream, the one of goodness, which is seen in the night and in the day. Drive out all the red things and bad things which Seth, son of Nut, created. As Ra is vindicated against his enemies, I am vindicated against my enemies!"

This spell is to be spoken by a man who wakes up on his own place, after he has first been given pesen bread and fresh herbs, which have been marinated in beer and myrrh. The man's face should be rubbed with them; and all the bad dreams that he has seen will be driven out.

magician-healer. Be sure not to mention any details about your nightmare, or else it might become real! This spell should then be carefully recited, for by speaking the words, you will be able to overcome the nightmare-causing demons in the same way that the sun god Ra was able to overcome his. Then, slather your face with this sticky fragrant poultice, and you are guaranteed to forget all about your bad dreams!

If you would like to learn more about nightmare AND good dream s in Ancient Egypt, please come to my Friends of the Egypt Centre lecture on June 12!

Dr. Kasia Szpakowska

P.S. If anyone actually tries this, do let me know!





ⁱ The spell I have translated can be found in P. Chester Beatty III, r. 10.10–10.19, British Museum 10683. It was originally published in A. H. Gardiner, *Hieratic Papyri in the British Museum, Third Series: Chester Beatty Gift*, (London: British Museum, 1935), pl. 5-12a.

ⁱⁱ Egyptians for whom we have a fair amount of evidence. Not only do we have his own library, but we have mentions of him in other unrelated texts. For more information on this intriguing family, please see M. L. Bierbrier, *The Late New Kingdom in Egypt (c. 1300 - 664 B.C.): A Genealogical and Chronological Investigation*, (Warminster: Aris & Phillips Ltd., 1975).

ⁱⁱⁱ K. Nordh, *Aspects of Ancient Egyptian Curses and Blessings*, ed. R. Holthoer and P. Hellström, (Acta Universitatis Upsaliensis. BOREAS. Uppsala Studies in Ancient Mediterranean and Near Eastern Civilizations 26; Uppsala, 1996). 166-7.

^{iv} J. Černý, *Papyrus Hieratiques de Deir el-Médineh*, ed. G. Posener, (I; Paris: L'Institut Français d'Archéologie Orientale, 1978), vii. In Posener's preface to this work he suggests that the papyri may in fact have been stolen from the excavations of Bruyère, for he cites a similar find in a similar space, part of which was subsequently stolen (xv–viii.)

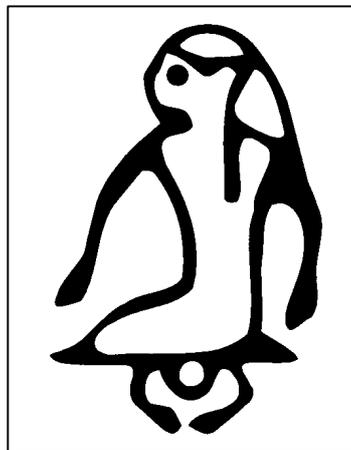
^v Y. Koenig, "Notes sur la découverte des papyrus Chester Beatty," *BIFAO* 81 (1981), 41-3.

^{vi} For more information on this text and dreams and nightmares in general, the reader will soon be able to read this author's research on Ancient Egyptian dreams and nightmares (currently under revision for publication.) A brief overview can also be found in K. Szpakowska, "Through the Looking Glass: Dreams and Nightmares in Pharaonic Egypt," in *Dreams: A reader on the religious, cultural, and psychological dimensions of dreaming* (ed. K. Bulkeley; New York: Palgrave, 2001), 29-43.

Childbirth in Ancient Egypt

By Professor Geoffrey Chamberlain MD

Earlier this year, an excellent exhibition was held at the Egypt Centre in Swansea on the Place of Women in Egyptology. One of the important times in a woman's life is giving birth to children; indeed, it is often said by anthropologists that there are three critical events in a woman's life: being born, giving birth and dying. She knows little about the first or often the last, but to her baby's birth she pays great attention. In all folk cultures, birth is an important time; it is only in the last century in the Western World that the antenatal nine months of pregnancy which lead up to the birth process have been thought to have any importance.



The Women

Women in Ancient Egypt were equal partners with the man in the family; they shared with him (and often exceeded) the work done in the fields and some craft rooms as well as doing most of the hard work in the household - weaving, cooking and child rearing. They were respected in society, and although they had no vote, neither did the men for democracy did not exist as

such. It must be remembered that much of what is recorded of the history of Ancient Egypt refers to the upper class; the middle and lower classes are only referred to peripherally in either papyri or tomb decorations. For the poor, particularly in the rural areas, life in Egypt was hard but healthy, diet was healthy, tending towards vegetables and grain rather than meat or fish although both were available to all classes. The marriage contracts were financial not legal and therefore divorce, when it took place, was a private event rather than a legal one. Women married soon after puberty (*The Rising of the Red Moon*); they had large families but many babies died of infant diseases while the life expectancy for women was not much beyond forty.

Most Egyptians lived along the narrow strip of land on either side of the Nile; both their water supply and sewer. It flooded bringing nitrogen-rich mud onto the fields and so often two crops a year were harvested. These are the same crops that are found growing now and in many cases the cultivation methods are the same.



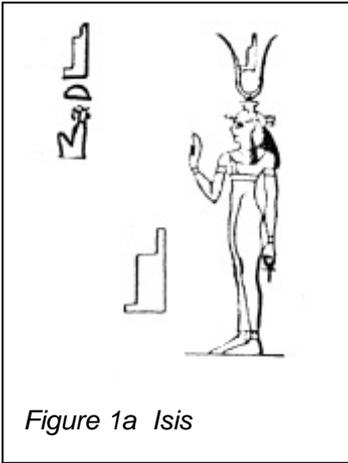


Figure 1a Isis

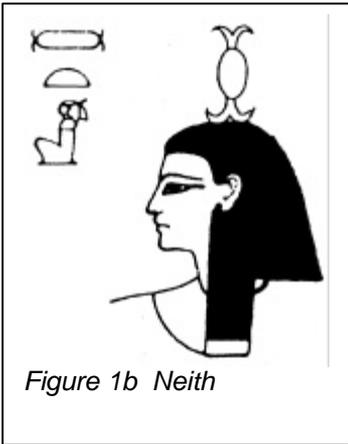


Figure 1b Neith

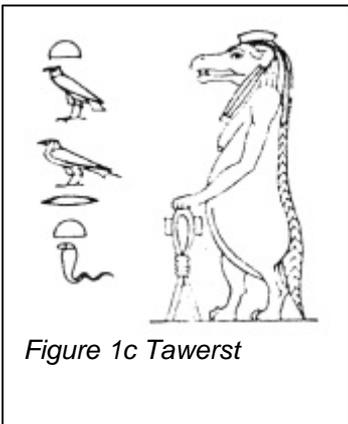


Figure 1c Tawerst

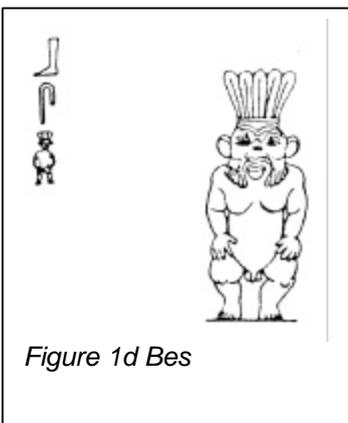


Figure 1d Bes

Ancient Medicine

As we have seen in previous articles in INSCRIPTIONS, ancient Egyptian medicine was well advanced. They had specialists in many subjects but nowhere can one find any record of obstetricians. Birth was considered to be a normal event not needing professional help. It took place mostly in the home and was maybe attended by a *guid woman* from the village who had a reputation of having attended a few deliveries before. These were dignified by the name of midwives but they had no formal training or certificates of recognition. If anything went wrong, nothing could be done so there were no specialists to do it; nature had to take its course.

The lack of doctors was made up for by the profusion of divinities who guarded the mother. These included:

Isis who was the senior goddess who looked after all the healing arts

Neith, the female goddess of reproduction, who provided overall care for pregnant women

Tawerst was represented as a pregnant hippopotamus. She was a protector of women during pregnancy and guided towards safe childbirth

Bes was there to frighten away demons to ensure that childbirth went well

Hathor, shown as a cow or a woman with cow's ears, gave overall protection to the baby being born and also protected the newborn child

Heqet, shown with a frog's head, helped women in childbirth itself

Meskhenet was identified with the bricks used at most births

There was no antenatal care; when the woman became pregnant she went on working in the home and the fields. If there were difficulties in conceiving, the god Amen was prayed to; there were also treatments to keep the baby in the uterus:

Eber's Papyrus Prescription 809

To prevent miscarriage. The dried liver of a swallow with a sticky liquid from fermented drink to be placed on the breasts, abdomen and all other parts of the body of a woman.

Similarly, other therapy was used to release the child from the belly of the mother when the time had come, for example:

Eber's Papyrus Prescription 807

Ground tortoise shell, turpentine, beer and oil. To be ground together and used as an ointment.

...continued overleaf

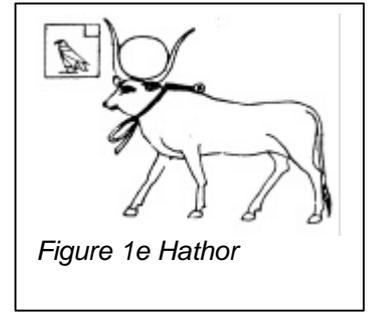


Figure 1e Hathor

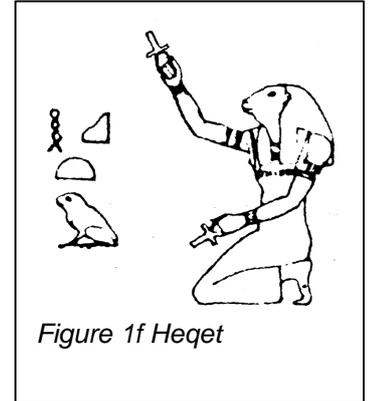


Figure 1f Heqet

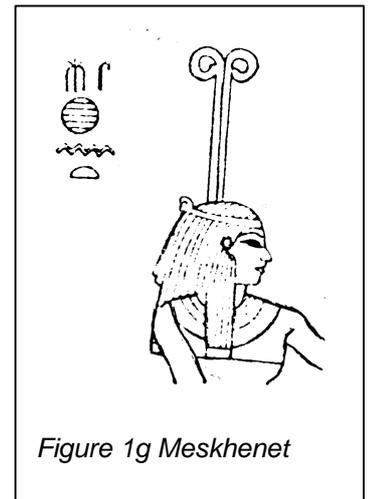


Figure 1g Meskhenet



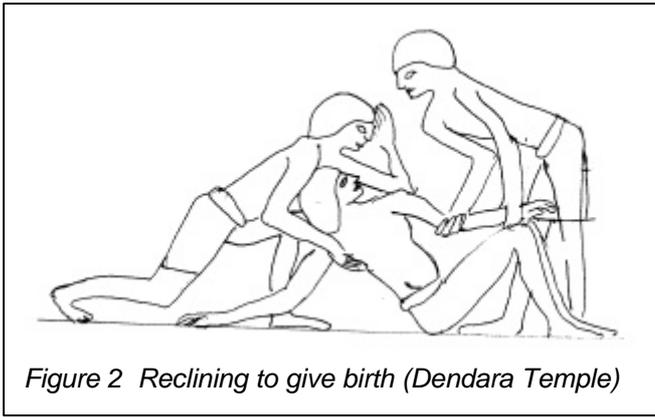


Figure 2 Reclining to give birth (Dendara Temple)

Birth

The birth itself was usually in a natural position, with the woman either lying back supported with assistance (Figure 2) or squatting (Figure 3); these are methods that are used widely in Africa still. The use of a birth chair by ordinary folk was much less common than the Victorian Egyptologists thought; they were misled by artefacts indicating what the gods and pharaohs' wives did when having their babies. Many of the objects labelled as birth chairs were actually portable commodes. A good example of this is still to be seen in the Cairo Museum on the first floor exhibited as a stone birth chair. A normal sized baby having negotiated the mother's pelvis would not have enough room to pass through the stone sides of the cavity in this chair. Squatting, often on two bricks to allow space for the baby, was common: it appears in several of the bas reliefs and the phrase *two bricks* was often used as a synonym for giving birth.

The birth houses (Mammisi) found in some temples were not used, as the Victorian Egyptologists thought, for the women of the village to give birth. They were for the goddesses. Most women delivered their babies in a room set aside in their mud houses often raised above the other rooms. The placenta was separated from the baby with a magic knife, and was commonly buried under the threshold of the house to bring good fortune in the next pregnancy. They may have used a special forked knife - a *psš kf* that would steady the slippery umbilical cord allowing it to be cut (Figure 4). The magic of birth mirrored that

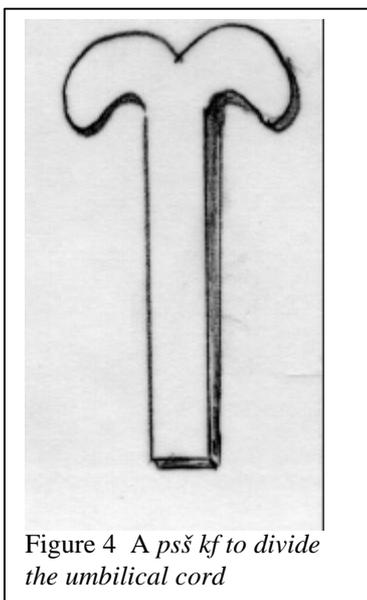


Figure 4 A *psš kf* to divide the umbilical cord

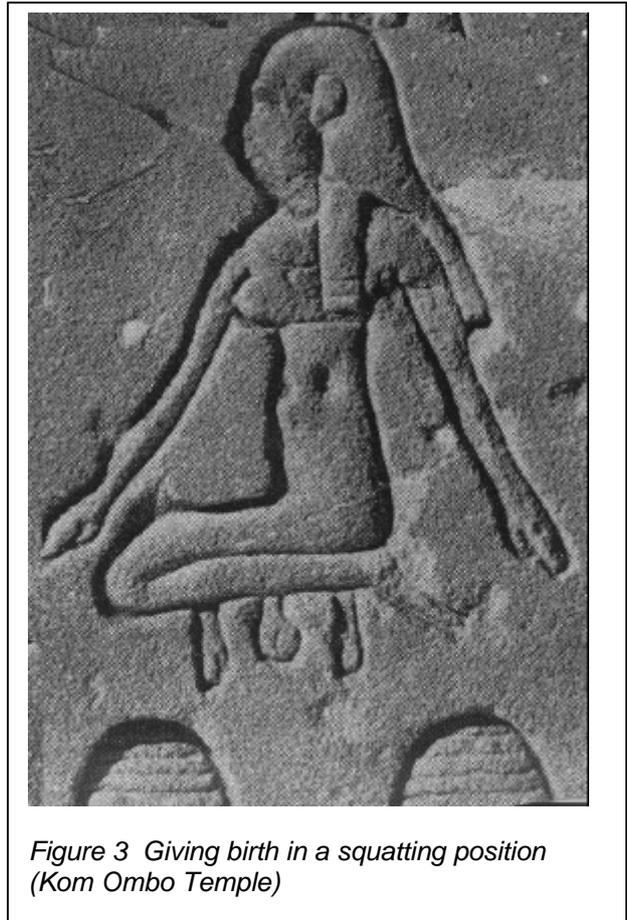


Figure 3 Giving birth in a squatting position (Kom Ombo Temple)

of death. The *psš kf* is the same tool as was used for the *opening of the mouth* ceremony before a mummified person was entombed. Little pharmacological pain relief was used and distraction therapy was the norm. This consisted of a large crowd of women from the village, crowding into the birth room and shrieking loudly in sympathy with the woman during her contractions thus making a noise to keep away demons (and men). This still happens.

After the Birth

The babies were breast fed ideally for three years for there were no milk substitutes, if milk did not come through again there were spells and potions to help it but none of them seemed to be very lactogenic. For example,

Eber's Papyrus Prescription 836

To induce milk on the woman breast feeding a child: The back bone of a fish to be baked in oil and rubbed on her back.

The mother would be recommended to rise from her bed and leave the childbirth room after fourteen days. She would often be back in the fields two weeks later. There was little effective contraception available and prolonged breastfeeding was probably the most effective method. Most of the artificial methods of contraception used involved various unguents (eg: honey mixed with crocodile dung) placed in the





vagina. This perhaps worked better by putting the husband off having intercourse rather than from any biochemical action.

Birth Mortality

We have no idea of the numbers of babies and mothers lost at childbirth. It was certainly higher than occurs in modern Egypt with its antenatal and delivery service but there is no reason to believe maternal or baby death rates were any worse than those in the rest of Africa as late as the early 20th century. Then the loss of mothers was about three or four times that of the western world but still the vast majority survived. Again, the babies mostly survived the process of birth (90%) but infant mortality rates afterwards, particularly from diarrhoeal diseases, was high.

Conclusion

This account of childbirth in Ancient Egypt is based upon many sources. Most of them are secondary interpretations of temple paintings or carvings and of papyri with some extrapolations from what is going on currently in middle Africa.

Geoffrey Chamberlain MD FRCS FRCOG
Emeritus Professor of Obstetrics
Singleton Hospital

Important Notice Next Trip

Having decided that a trip to Liverpool wasn't practicable, we tried to arrange a trip to the Petrie Museum in London instead - but have now discovered that it isn't open on Sundays. So we have spoken to Birmingham which has a collection of over 400 antiquities plus other things of interest. The museum is 5 minutes' walk from the shopping centre. We think this will be the likely venue on the same date as originally planned, i.e. 17 March 2002.

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Giggle Page!

Courtroom Humour!

- Q: She had three children, right?
 A: Yes
 Q: How many were boys?
 A: None.
 Q: Were there any girls?
 Q: So the date of conception (of the baby) was August 8th.
 A: Yes
 Q: And what were you doing at that time?
 Q: How many times have you committed suicide?
 Q: How was your first marriage terminated?
 A: By death.
 Q: And by whose death was it terminated?
 Q: Were you present when your picture was taken?
 Q: Can you describe the individual?
 A: He was about medium height and had a beard.
 Q: Was this a male or a female?
 Q: You were there until the time you left, is that true?
 Q: Doctor, how many autopsies have you performed on dead people?
 A: All my autopsies are performed on dead people.
 Q: Now doctor, isn't it true that when a person dies in his sleep, he doesn't know about it until the next morning?
 Q: What gear were you in at the moment of impact?
 A: Gucci sweats and Reeboks.

The Joys of the Spelling Checker

Eye halve a spelling chequer
 It came with My pea sea
 It plainly marques four My revue
 Miss steaks eye kin knot sea
 Eye strike a quay and type a word
 And weight four it two say
 Weather eye am wrong or write
 It shows me strait a weigh
 As soon as a mist ache is maid
 It knows bee fore two long
 And eye can put the error rite
 Its rare lea ever wrong
 Eye have run this poem threw it
 I am shore your pleased to no
 Its letter perfect awl the weigh
 My chequer tolled me sew
 (The sophisticated software we have for punctuation is also a great advantage, especially with apostrophe's
 From C.A. News, with thanks!

*The Egypt Centre
 closes at 4 p.m. on
 Friday 20 December 2001
 and re-opens at 10 a.m. on
 Wednesday 2 January 2002.*





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