

# INSCRIPTIONS

The Newsletter of the Friends of the Egypt Centre, Swansea

## Issue 41

September 2016

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## Next Friends' Lectures

Wednesday 21st September 2016 – 7.00 pm

**Dulcie Engel**

Independent Researcher and Egypt Centre Volunteer

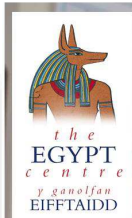
### Dylan Thomas and Ancient Egypt

Dylan Thomas's interest in Ancient Egypt is little known. He grew up in a period of great fascination with all things ancient Egyptian following Carter's discovery of the tomb of Tutankhamun in 1922. This is reflected in the fact that the first poem in his notebooks, dated April 1930, has an Egyptian theme, while Egyptian symbolism crops up throughout his early short stories, and plays a crucial role in such poems as 'My world is pyramid', 'Should lanterns shine' and 'Altarwise by owl-light'.

In this talk, Dr Dulcie Engel, an Egypt Centre volunteer and confirmed Dylan Thomas fan, discusses the significance of Ancient Egypt to Swansea's most famous son using examples from the Egypt Centre's collection.

Wednesday 19th October 2016 - 7.00 pm

October's lecture will follow the **Friends of the Egypt Centre AGM**, which begins at 6.30pm and is held at the same venue as the lecture. All Friends are welcome and are encouraged to attend. See Page 4 for details of October's lecture and the remainder of the lecture programme.



Megan, aged 11, our youngest volunteer

Are you aged 10 to 100+?

Are you interested in

volunteering with the largest collection of ancient Egyptian artefacts in Wales?

Drop a line to the Volunteer Manager, Syd Howells at [l.s.j.howells@swansea.ac.uk](mailto:l.s.j.howells@swansea.ac.uk)



# The father of British Egyptology

## Sir John Gardner Wilkinson (1797-1875)

We recently visited the tomb of Sir John Gardner Wilkinson in the churchyard of St Dingat, Llandovery. The tomb is a Grade II listed building, listed because he was one of the founders of Egyptology in Britain. It is an Ashlar pedestal monument with Italianate arcaded top and pyramid cap, with inscriptions on the pedestal. It was very overgrown when we were there and we were unable to get close but I believe Ken and Syd have been there and done some clearing so we hope to go back.



Wilkinson first arrived in Egypt in October 1821 and remained for 12 years. During this time he visited virtually every known Egyptian site making notes and copying paintings and inscriptions. Wilkinson published his researches in many publications but his most famous is probably *Manners and Customs of the Ancient Egyptians* for which he was knighted. He further travelled back to Egypt and other countries before returning to Britain.

In 1856, aged 59, he married Caroline Catherine Lucas of the Gower family and lived in Reynoldston. Lady Wilkinson edited her husband's manuscripts as well as writing several books of her own as she was an accomplished botanist. He died at Llandovery, his wife having connections with the Llanover family of that area and left his collections to his old school, Harrow. His papers are now held in the Bodleian Library, Oxford.

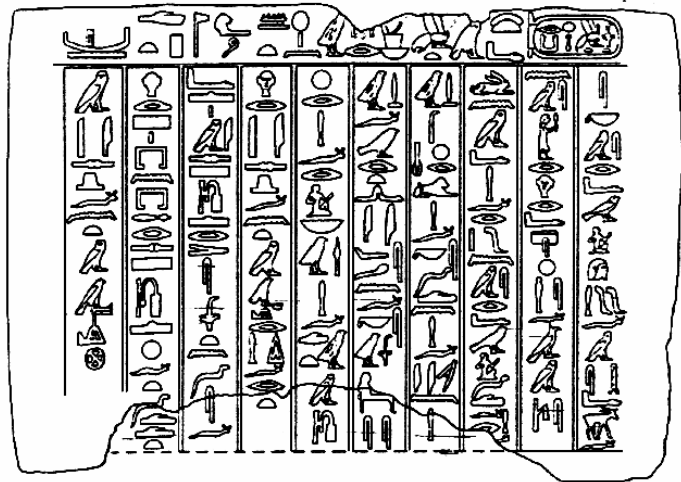
by Sheila Nowell

# Ra<sup>c</sup>-wer's Accident and an apology

This inscription appears on the 5th Dynasty mastaba of Ra<sup>c</sup>-wer at Giza. Further details can be found in *Allen, James P. (1992). "Re-wer's accident". In Lloyd, Alan B. Studies in Pharaonic Religion and Society, in honour of J. Gwyn Griffiths. London: The Egyptian Exploration society. pp. 14–20. ISBN 0856981206.* What follows is my own work.

### Translation

The King of Upper and Lower Egypt Neferkare<sup>c</sup> was manifest in glory as King of Lower Egypt on the day of taking the prow-rope of the god's boat. Lo! the *sm*-priest Ra<sup>c</sup>-wer was at His Majesty's feet, in his dignity (office) of *sm*-priest and keeper of equipment. A royal staff, which was in His Majesty's hand, contended against the foot of the *sm*-priest Ra<sup>c</sup>-wer. His Majesty said to him: 'Be sound!' – so did His Majesty say. Lo! His Majesty said 'My Majesty desires that that he be very sound, without a blow for him', because he was more precious to His Majesty than any man. His Majesty commanded that it be put in writing on his tomb which is in the necropolis. His Majesty caused a document to be made of it, (which was) written (inscribed) beside the king himself, at the stoneworks of Pharaoh, in order that it should be written in accordance with what was said, in his tomb that is in the necropolis.



### Commentary

The story is very simple in that it describes an incident in the course of a royal ritual. It seems that the king's staff tripped the *sm*-priest and he may have dropped whatever ritual implements he may have been holding. In any event, the disruption to the exact observation of the ritual (especially one involving the king) would have been seen as introducing an element of the forces of chaos to the event. The Egyptians would have regarded the event as very dangerous for both king and gods and as a result for themselves. The priest might have expected punishment both in life and after death. The king's action was designed to protect the priest in both life and the afterlife. The inscription is an excellent example of the royal duty, to be just towards and to protect the Egyptians, in action. The king as a god in his own right did not have to apologise so publicly to anybody but what we have here is an illustration of the principles of *maat* in action.

by Mike Mac Donagh





## Editorial

Once again, welcome to our latest issue of **Inscriptions**. We have again had difficulty in amassing enough material, so I am reproducing in this issue some excerpts from one of my earlier courses. I hope readers will find this material of interest, and if so I will include more excerpts in future issues.

The Friends are once again fortunate to have an excellent programme to look forward to in the coming academic year. As always we have been able to engage some prestigious speakers from other institutions as well as showcasing our home-grown talent. See overleaf for details of the programme from October onwards.

Readers may have noticed that issues of *Inscriptions* are getting few and far between. That is because we are not getting contributions for inclusion. PLEASE LET US HAVE SOMETHING FOR THE NEXT ISSUE. It doesn't have to be Egypt-related (though that helps!) We'd love to hear about your holidays, your project or your special interests. Just pop them in the post or email to The Egypt Centre and we'll do the rest.

*Mike Mac Donagh*

**PHARAOHS CURSE  
A MURDER MYSTERY**

Its 1922 and Henry Wellcome has returned from Egypt for the grand opening of his first museum of Egyptian antiquities in Swansea. As guests explore the new collection of ancient Egyptian treasures now on display, a mysterious death shatters the evening's festivities! Did Henry Wellcome bring back more than ancient Egyptian artefacts? Could this be the Pharaohs Curse?

SATURDAY 29th OCTOBER  
~  
SUITABLE FOR AGES 18 +  
LIMITED PLACES—BOOKING IS ESSENTIAL  
6.30pm—9.30pm  
£25 PER PERSON

**For more information or to book, please contact us on:**  
Email: [egyptcentre@swansea.ac.uk](mailto:egyptcentre@swansea.ac.uk)  
or Call: 01792 602660

The Egypt Centre, Swansea University, Singleton Park, Swansea, SA2 8PP

## How to find us

The Friends of the Egypt Centre meet approximately monthly on Swansea University Singleton campus.

All lectures take place in Fulton House Room 2, unless otherwise stated. The charge per lecture is £3 for non-members and free to members. Doors open at 6.30pm with lectures starting at 7.00pm.

### By Car from the East:

1. Take the M4 heading West towards Swansea.
2. Leave M4 at junction 42
3. Take the A483 in the direction of Swansea Town Centre (passing Amazon on your right)
4. Cross the river bearing left, past Sainsbury's (A4067—Oystermouth Road)

5. Continue along A4067, upon passing St. Helens Stadium (on your right) move into the right-hand lane.
6. Straight on at traffic lights and right turn at the next set of traffic light (300m) to enter Swansea University.
7. Parking on-campus is free after 4.00pm
8. Fulton House is the central building facing the entrance to the university.
9. On entering Fulton House turn right and go through the first set of doors. Ahead is a second set of doors: go through these then up the stairs to level 2
10. Room 2 is first door on the right





# Public Lecture Programme 2016-2017

**Wednesday 19 October 2016**

**Dr Manuela Lehmann**

British Museum, Ancient Egypt and Sudan,  
Project Curator

## **Not just an Aftermath – Tell el-Dab'a after the New Kingdom**

Tell el-Dab'a is a settlement that is well known for its Second Intermediate Period and New Kingdom houses, temples and palaces. Less well known is that this site was settled extensively in the Late and Ptolemaic Periods as well. Changes in the traditional Egyptian architecture evolve into a quite different settlement layout. New research is giving insights into a typical Egyptian settle-ment in the time after the New Kingdom in the Delta.



**Wednesday 9th November 2016**

**Dr Lidija McKnight**

University of Manchester

## **Gifts for the Gods: animal mummies revealed**

Votive animal mummies were produced in their millions by the ancient Egyptians as a means of communication between man on earth and the divine. The paucity of literary evidence from the time for the purpose and motivation behind this practice mean that the mummies themselves remain our best source of information.

At the University of Manchester, cutting edge non-destructive scientific analysis is being used to help unravel the secrets of these ancient animal mummies. X-rays and CT scans help to tell us about the contents of the bundles, as well shedding light on how the mummies were manufactured. The award-winning touring University of Manchester exhibition, 'Gifts for the Gods: Animal mummies revealed' tells the stories of some of these mummies from the time of their manufacture c.700BC to their scientific study today.

Focusing on the role of the British in the discovery, excavation, collection, curation and study of these artefacts, researchers are able to reconstruct the post-excavation histories of these mummies, helping to reveal their stories thousands of years after they were made.



**Wednesday 14th December 2016**

**Professor Alan Lloyd**

Swansea University

## **Akhenaten: What was he trying to do?**

Some years ago Nicholas Reeves published a book entitled Akhenaten: Egypt's False Prophet. Other writers have treated Akhenaten more positively as a cross between Socrates and Jesus Christ. In this lecture I want to analyse the written and archaeological evidence to determine the origins of his religious agenda and its precise nature. It will emerge that, despite deficiencies in our evidence, it is possible to gain a clear picture of these issues, even though problems still remain which are insoluble without the discovery of fresh data.

### **Christmas Get Together:**

After Professor Lloyd's lecture there will follow the Friends' Christmas get together. Don't forget to pop this event into your diary!



**Wednesday 18th January 2017**

**Dr Ken Griffin**

Swansea University

## **Recent Excavations on Sai Island: Pyramids, Pounders, and Nimiti**

This lecture will discuss the work (2014-15) of the AcrossBorders Project at Sai Island, Sudan. Excavations conducted within the New Kingdom town and cemetery, including the discovery of a new pyramid, will be presented alongside highlights of the material culture from the site.



**Wednesday 22nd February 2017**

**Dr Kasia Szpakowska**

Swansea University

## **“Child in the Nest”: Children as Agents and Patients in Pharaonic Egyptian Rituals**

Children are a ubiquitous feature in Ancient Egyptian tomb scenes, where their role is sometimes described as passive (acting as offering bearers) and sometimes active (as mourners). Less visible is their role in household religious activities performed on behalf of the living. The young were thought to be vulnerable to the persistent onslaught of ailments, diseases, and malignant





demonic entities, necessitating a range of protective spells and paraphernalia. Children could also participate in household rituals or act as malignant manifestations themselves. This presentation explores the role of children as patients and agents of religious activity in pre-Hellenistic Egypt, particularly in rituals for the living.



**Wednesday 22nd March 2017**

**Tess Barber**  
Cardiff University

### **The ‘Mummy Pits’ of Ancient Egypt: The Long-Kept Secret of Early Travellers**

A little over a century ago, burials known simply as ‘mummy pits’ were a common and characteristic feature of Egypt’s burial landscape.



These ‘pits’ contained mass burials of mummies piled-up in such great numbers, that it is surprising that they now appear to have disappeared from the archaeological record. The only sources which appear to describe these burials are the accounts left by early travellers who ventured to Egypt between the 16th and early 20th centuries.

These accounts reveal that the mummy pits were long-exploited as a source of souvenirs and for material to manufacture mummy-based products such as paper and fertilizer, providing some explanation as to why so few of these burials survive to the modern day. Although this exploitation has led to a significant loss of data, these early travel accounts provide sufficient detail to permit the reconstruction of this burial rite, as well as potentially allowing for the relocation of a number of mummy pit burials in the field.

This talk presents the results of an ongoing research project into the nature of the mummy pits, and considers whether they simply represent a collection of mass-burial events - perhaps the result of conflict or epidemic,

or whether instead they may provide evidence for a now long-forgotten burial custom used by the poor in the latest periods of ancient Egyptian history.



**Wednesday 5th April 2017**

**Professor Salima Ikram**

Title and Abstract: T.B.A.



**Wednesday 17th May 2017**

**Alice Williams**

University of Oxford

### **Exhibiting Ancient Egypt: The Annual Exhibitions of British Archaeological Societies 1884-1939**

Between 1884 and 1939 the Egypt Exploration Fund (later Society) and the British School of Archaeology in Egypt held a series of annual exhibitions in London to showcase the finds of each archaeological season. These popular pop-up exhibitions drew large crowds of visitors from across British society, keen to see artefacts excavated just weeks before and to hear about the new theories and adventures of high-profile archaeologists like Flinders Petrie and John Pendlebury. Using material from the archives of the Petrie Museum of Egyptian Archaeology and the Egypt Exploration Society, this talk will explore this exhibitionary practice in greater detail, examining what it would have been like to visit these displays and the crucial role they played in constructing a public image of ancient Egypt and Egyptian archaeology.



**Wednesday 7th June 2017**

**Dr Stephen Buckley**

Research Fellow, Department of Archaeology,  
University of York, and

**Professor Joann Fletcher**

Honorary Visiting Professor, University of York

### **From Kings’ Valley to Kings College: the Makings of a Modern Mummy**

Dr Stephen Buckley and Professor Joann Fletcher discuss ancient Egyptian embalming, their mummification of a human body donor and the results of this project to date.





# Ancient Egypt: Geography, resources and sources

(These notes are reproduced from a handout from an introductory extramural course I ran at the Glynneath Training Centre some years ago – Ed.)

## The geographical context

### The ancient Egyptian world view

The ancient Egyptian view was that Egypt was the Nile valley from Aswan to the Mediterranean Sea, including the Delta and the Fayy<sup>m</sup>. Their basic attitude was one of happiness. The overall impression from the literature is that they enjoyed life and wanted to enjoy themselves beyond the grave.

The Egyptians thought of Egypt as having two major divisions:

- **Upper Egypt** (The southern part)
- **Lower Egypt** (The Delta)

There were, and still are, major differences between the two lands in terms of geology, culture and dialect.

## Land and river

### The Nile

The River Nile was critical to the development of Ancient Egypt. **Herodotus** wrote that Egypt was “the gift of the Nile”.

The major elements of the Nile are the **White Nile** and **Blue Nile** (which join at Khartoum in Sudan, beyond the southern border of ancient Egypt) and the fertile plain of the **delta** where the river joins the Mediterranean. There are **seven cataracts**. The **cataracts** were major obstacles to movement from the south and so provided **protection** for Egypt from invasion from there. The **ancient boundary** of Egypt was at the **First Cataract at Aswan**.

At the southern-most end of ancient Egypt and in Sudan, the Nile flows through a **sandstone** plateau, which causes the valley to be very narrow. Sandstone continues along the Nile valley as far as **Gebel es-Silsileh**. Then the rock changes to **limestone** and the river develops a much wider valley. The shape of the valley resembles that of the lotus flower.

The Nile has created both the valley and the delta.

### Upper Egypt

The valley is never more than 15 miles wide and is bounded by cliffs and desert.

Cliffs were important in the development of art, because **sandstone** and **limestone** were immediately accessible and blocks of stone could be transported on the Nile Flood. Therefore, high quality stone was available for architecture and sculpture. **Granite** was also available at **Aswan** and was used from a very early stage for royal sarcophagi, roofing pyramid chambers, bowls and statues. Granite is a hard stone which is very difficult to work and does not take a very fine polish, but it is strong and durable.

*Note:* The Egyptians regarded stones as having magical potency.

### The Eastern Desert

**Alabaster** was obtained from the Hatnub quarry in Middle Egypt. The stone can be cut so finely as to be translucent. Large alabaster statues and colossi were made. Transport was by

water. Transport sleds were used on mud slipways to the river bank (or canal bank).

**Diorite**, a hard stone which takes a very fine finish, was widely used especially for statues (e.g. ‘**hawk-stature**’ of Khafre).

**Metals:** The Eastern Desert was a major source of **copper**. Small amounts were imported from Sinai. Copper was used down to the Second Intermediate period and was hardened with arsenic. **Gold**, which was believed to be a life-giving, divine substance, was found in the desert east of Egypt and also south of Egypt in Nubia. It was not always of the highest quality and could contain large quantities of **silver**. When the silver content was very high the gold can look whitish or silvery. It is then called **electrum** and was artistically important.

### Wadi Hammamat

The Wadi Hammamat, which runs through the Eastern Desert between the Nile valley and the Red Sea, was a source of a high-quality, fine-grained, hard stone, sometimes called **greywacke** (it was called ‘**bekhen-stone**’ by the Egyptians). This stone was regarded as having life-giving qualities. Inscriptions in the region are highly charged with religious language. The region was also a source of good gold and copper. The mining tunnels are, in some cases, so small that children must have been used.

The wadi was, and still is, a good access route to the Red Sea and onwards to **Punt** (Somaliland and Eritrea). The Deir el-Bahri inscription of Hatshepsut mentions her Punt expedition as fetching:

- **incense** (frankincense and myrrh) used for rituals
- **gold**
- **ebony** (expensive, only given to the best craftsmen)
- **slaves** not a major economic element in Egypt where local citizen conscription was used. Slaves tended to be used for domestic duties and were a luxury item (Note sometimes dwarves were highly prized).
- **animal skins**
- **animals** (e.g. giraffes for zoos and monkeys as pets)

### The Delta

‘The Marshland’ or ‘The Northern Country’ is a relatively recent geological phenomenon. In ancient times there were many more than the present two natural branches of the Nile at Rosetta and Damietta. The Delta was, and still is, the most developed region. It is not well endowed with accessible ancient remains.

### Fayyum oasis

Geologically recent, the Fayyum oasis has been formed by wind erosion. The **Bahr Yussuf**, a branch of the Nile, broke through in prehistoric times and created a great lake (*mr wr* which became *μοερισ* in Greek). In modern times it is much reduced and is **Birket Qarun – The Horned Lake**. The lake has no exit point and is balanced by evaporation. The oasis was economically important for agriculture and fishing. It contains many ancient remains – especially Greek and Roman.





## Resources

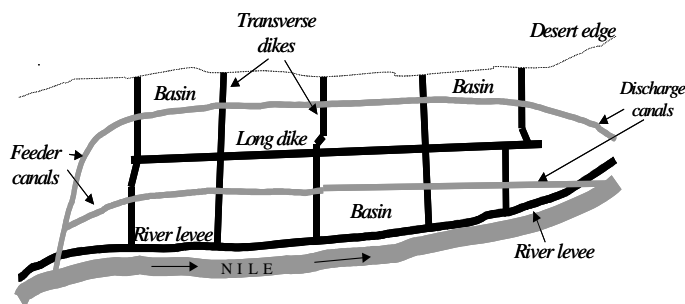
### Irrigation and fertilization

As stated earlier, the Nile is critical to the development of Egypt. It provided **mud** and **water**.

**Mud** came from central Africa on the annual flood. Before the Nile dams were built (especially the Aswan High Dam which now holds back the mud and the flood) the river would begin to rise, in Egypt, in July. It would reach a maximum in September / October and would drop its mud and return to its original level in January. Therefore, it provided natural fertilization and the black land resulting from the mud gave the country one of its names (*kmt* = the black land).

The natural climate of the bulk of Egypt is desert, and the major water source is the river which in the course of its flood also gave a major irrigation to the land. Ancient writers like **Herodotus**, who visited in 450 BC, wrote of an easy life in comparison to Greece. This simplistic view ignored the effort required to maintain and run the irrigation system.

Egypt was irrigated by a **basin system** (see illustration below) which got its feed pressure from allowing the water level to rise above its natural level. As a result, agriculture was highly efficient and productive, sometimes producing two or three main crops a year, giving substantial surpluses.



Basin irrigation - reconstructed plan, from <http://www.depaul.edu/~sbucking/egyptlink.html>

If the Nile rose too high there would be destruction of property and if it was too low there would be inadequate fertilization, irrigation and reduced production. However, the Nile was more predictable than other rivers, and a system using **Nilometers** was developed, very early, to predict the likely level of the flood. Records were kept of the position of the level of the river- on a given day together with records of floods, damage and production. As a result, forward planning was possible and flood protection works or rationing plans could be put in place as needed.

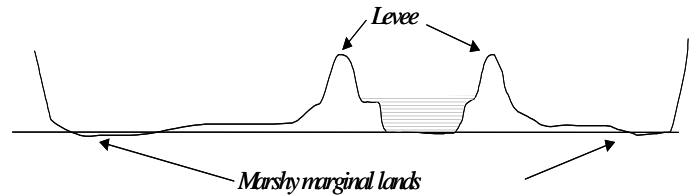
### Crops

There were **three main crops**:

- barley** for beer and bread
- emer** (a primitive wheat) for bread
- flax** for linen and oil (the Egyptians preferred vegetable oils)

### Market gardening

Market gardening was also undertaken in the marginal areas of the valley (see diagram).



Produce from market gardening included:

- lentils** (a surplus for export)
- onions** very good (and still popular in Egypt)
- garlic** very popular
- fruit, beans, leeks** etc.

### Diet

The **diet** was mainly vegetarian and meat was a luxury most of the time. **Fish** was a major source of protein (fresh, dried, pickled etc.).

### Wild animals

The hippopotamus is found throughout the country from ancient times up to about 1700 AD, and was used as a source of leather and ivory. It was also important in religion – a negative force linked to Seth and a positive force, as Tauret (*B-wrt* = The Great Pregnant One), linked to all things feminine.

The **crocodile** was virtually wiped out, in Egypt, during the Nineteenth Century. Nowadays crocodiles cannot come north past the Aswan High Dam, but above the dam their population density has reached such a level that it prevents the use of the lake for water-sports. Crocodile hide was used on occasion for armour. The crocodile was also important in religion: it was a negative force associated with Seth **and** a positive force, as Sobek, associated with the beneficent force of water. In later periods it was an honour to be eaten by a crocodile.

All the ancient **snakes** (especially the cobra and the horned viper) are still present. The cobra is the most dangerous: it is partial to corn fields and associated with Renenutet the goddess of corn. It was a danger which, as a protective force, was associated with Wadjet the protectress of the king.

### Domesticated animals

Large herds of **cattle** were kept in the Delta and in the marshy lands at the margins of cultivation. Cattle were used for beef (expensive), leather and milk.

**Goats**, which are omnivorous, were kept for their meat and milk.

**Sheep** were kept for meat and milk. There was a prejudice against wool: it could not be worn going into a temple and was not normally used for burial (though there were some exceptions). But Egypt can be **very cold** in winter so wool was used in non-ritual situations.

**Pigs** were regarded as ritually impure but were kept in large numbers and used in non-ritual situations. Pig bones with human teeth marks have been found in rubbish tips.

**Fowl**: Geese were kept in very large numbers and varieties, and ducks and cranes were kept for the table. Chickens appear in Egypt around 1700 / 1600 BC during the Second Intermediate Period (their origin is in the eastern jungles).

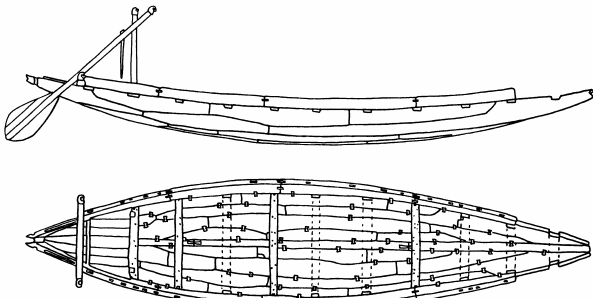




## Timber and papyrus

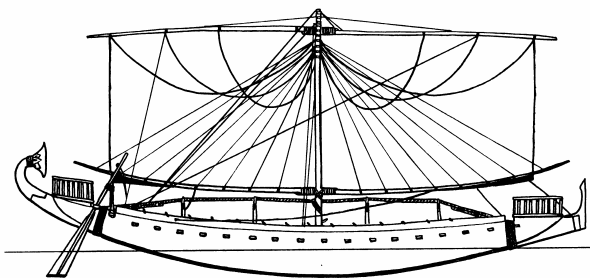
**Egypt produces no high quality timber.** The need to import high quality wood was an important factor in Egyptian trade. Many expeditions were sent to **Byblos** to trade for Lebanese **cedar** and **pine** in exchange for such things as gold and papyrus. Expeditions to **Punt** had trading for **ebony** as part of their objectives. Ebony was used mainly for luxury furniture and statues. High quality timber was very expensive and available only to kings, temples and upper reaches of society.

Otherwise people had to make do with local resources and learn to use them to best advantage, or to use substitutes or special techniques, at which they were very successful. Local timber (acacia and tamarisk) could only supply short planks so the Egyptians learned to build boats using them. We have representations of the construction method, there are descriptions in late authors (e.g. Herodotus “after the manner of brickwork”) and we have surviving examples.



Plan and elevation of a Middle Kingdom boat from Dahshur in the Cairo Museum (Partridge, R., *Transport in ancient Egypt*, p. 29)

Planks were pinned together with pegs let into mortise holes (like modern biscuit joinery). Where there was a need for strengthening (e.g. in a keelson) they used dovetails. For lateral strength they used cross thwarts which projected through the side of the hull, sometimes in more than one layer, which could then be used as a basis for decking or as seats for rowers.



46. Drawing of a boat from Queen Hatshepsut's expedition to Punt (Partridge, R., *Transport in Ancient Egypt*, p. 60)

Longitudinal strength (needed in the open sea where otherwise the ship could snap around the central point) came from the use of a hogging truss from bow to stern over queen posts. The truss was tightened using a piece of timber which was anchored to the mast to make sure it did not unwind.

The Egyptians were so skilled in the techniques of using short local woods that for seagoing vessels built from high-quality imported timber they still cut it into shorter lengths (e.g. Khufu's funeral ship). The Egyptians built and used very large vessels capable of transporting loads of over 1000 tons (e.g. Hatshepsut's obelisk).

**Papyrus**, now cultivated for the tourist industry, used to be common in ancient times. A **major use** of papyrus was the manufacture of paper from the white pith. Paper had a major advantage over the other Middle Eastern writing material (clay tablets). Modern research suggests that paper may have been quite **cheap**.

The green outer part of the plant could be woven to make mats and sails. Papyrus could be used for boat building as a substitute for wood: bundles were tied together tightly and used to make rafts of various sizes for river and lake transport. Papyrus could also be used for building and roofing. Pillars were made by tying bundles tightly together and plastering with mud, and the same form was kept when building moved to stone. Papyrus was also used as a roofing material when it was also mud covered. Boxes were also made from the plant. Sandals made from papyrus were thought to be ritually pure and essential for some rituals.

## Environmental factors

The ancient Egyptians were well off in environmental terms and developed a feeling of permanence and benignity in the natural order.

Because of the lack of sufficient rainfall, they developed, from a very early stage, the ability to manage the very predictable flood and its attendant fertilization of the valley. The result was the development of the **administrative** apparatus, the organizational skills and the technological skills needed. The outcome was the central royal authority to organize and control the works. Egypt was **not** a slave society but relied on local conscription to raise the labour required. The central authority fed and cared for the conscript and his family in exchange for his labour. A habit of **obedience** developed in the population, and the fact that much of the land was inundated for several months of the year meant that a **workforce** existed that could be deployed on state projects.

Egypt has two strong local differences: the narrow valley, bounded by cliffs, in the south and the broad plain of the delta in the north. Egyptians speak of “Upper and Lower Egypt” and “Two Lands”. So, there is a **unity made from duality**. The Egyptians also saw the universe as a unity made of duality.

Living in the valley was like living in a tunnel with north–south contact (and in the early stages nothing east–west). There was therefore a strong sense of local patriotism breaking into warfare with immediate neighbours to north and south. In later times when central authority broke down, local authority also decayed.

The Nile was a great highway giving ease of transport and was used by central authority to pull the country together.

## Cultural factors

Egyptians tended to think of foreigners as inferior. However, there is no evidence of racism. A foreigner only needed to take up Egyptian culture to become Egyptian. There is speculation that their view of their own superiority arose from contrasting their settled, orderly and highly cultured life with that of the desert nomads.

Egyptian conservatism also developed. The culture lasted almost 4000 years and gives the impression of not changing quickly. If something suited them they stuck with it, although they could take on board foreign influences (and improve on them,







e.g. the chariot). The conservatism may have been influenced by the monotonous landscape and ‘uniform’ climate.

## Archaeological sources

Archaeological sites are unevenly distributed throughout Egypt, with most being found in south. The sites can shed light on the historical implications of texts. Building sequences can help sort out the order of kings. Sometimes datable material can give us clues as to timescales and dates. Artefacts can provide information on trade, culture, society technology etc.

Prime examples of archaeological sites are Tutankhamun’s tomb and Khufu’s boats. Latest finds tend to confirm the traditional Egyptian view about the existence of the ‘Two Lands’ and their eventual unification. The Amarna Tablets (a cuneiform archive found at Tell el-Amarna) give valuable information on the state of Middle East during the late 18<sup>th</sup> Dynasty.

Hittite references are seen on Ramesses II’s temple walls. Archaeology in other lands can give supporting evidence for Egyptian material and vice versa.

## Written sources

Written history begins around 3200 BC and Egyptian has the longest recorded history in world. There is a **lot of written material**; we have ancient texts in **Egyptian, Greek, Hebrew** and **Cuneiform**.

### In Egyptian

#### King-lists

King-lists provide a historical framework but need to be used with care. They were kept from the beginning for dating purposes and some have survived into modern times in various stages of preservation. Five are of particular importance.

Turin Canon (Dyn. 19)

Palermo Stone (Dyn. 5)

Karnak King-list (Dyn. 18)

Abydos King-list (Dyn. 19)

Saqqara King-list (Dyn. 19)

#### Historical inscriptions

Temple walls – reflecting the official view of the temple.

Tomb walls, grave-stones, stelae – religious material only in royal tombs, biographical and historical material in non-royal tombs.

Quarries – official and unofficial material.

Unofficial – of the ‘Kilroy was here’ variety.

In official inscriptions the Egyptians were not concerned with historical truth but with the balance between order and chaos.

## Documents

Documents are available in vast numbers and kinds in various stages of preservation. Middle and Old Egyptian are best represented at present.

### Literary Texts

Some examples of texts which we have are:

**Wisdom** texts – aimed at giving advice, e.g. Ptahhotep

**Royal Propaganda** texts – e.g. Instruction / Prophecy of Neferty set in the Old Kingdom (but written in the Middle Kingdom) to justify Amenemhat I in Middle Kingdom

**Stories** – e.g. Khufu and the Magicians, Sinuhe

### In Greek

**Manetho** (c. 305 – 285 BC) wrote a history of Egypt in the Greek period but only quoted excerpts (in various stages of inaccuracy) have survived in other ancient authors. The major surviving element is his king-list which is the source of our current dynastic divisions.

**Josephus** (37 – 93 AD) a Jewish writer in ‘Contra Apionem’ used Manetho to link the Exodus to the Hyksos. He quotes a long passage from Manetho on the Hyksos. The Egyptians, on the whole, ignored the Hyksos.

**Herodotus** visited Egypt c. 450 BC, when the country was part of the Persian Empire, and produced quite a detailed account which has survived.

**Diodorus Siculus** (at the end of the First Century BC) did not visit Egypt but produced encyclopaedic works using other authors. Somewhat limited accuracy.

**Strabo** (c. 63 BC – 21 AD) A geographer and contemporary of Augustus. Visited Egypt with the Imperial Prefect. Book 17 of his geography concerns Egypt and Nubia. A lot of information on towns and monuments.

### Hebrew Scriptures

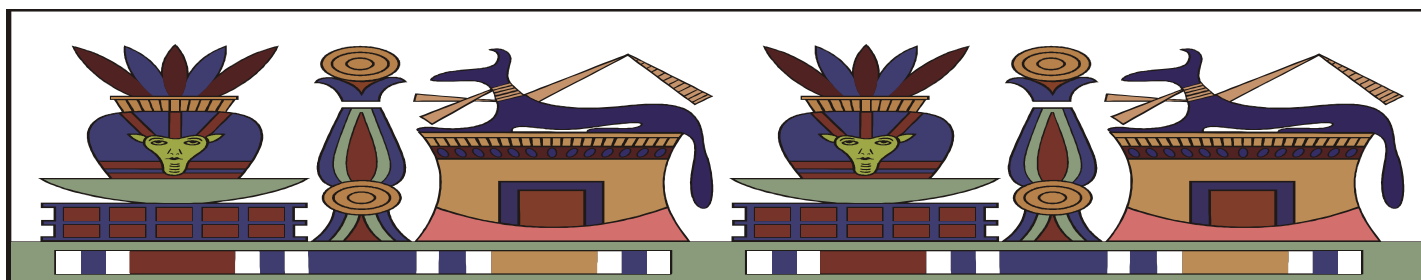
These are more use for the Late Period (especially after 664 BC). The story of Joseph shows personal knowledge of Egyptian system in operation.

### Cuneiform documents

**Cuneiform** was written on clay tablets which were very cumbersome but, when baked, are very durable. The best sources for Egypt are those in Akkadian, Hittite and Hurrian. All relate to New Kingdom. Two main archives with major survival are **el-Amarna** and **Boghaz Köy** (Hattusas).

The tablets in the Amarna Archive are in **Akkadian Cuneiform** which was the diplomatic language of the Near East. The language used is a construct and there are some problems in interpretation; and some tablets are broken.

*by Mike Mac Donagh*





## Egypt Centre Gift shop

It's never too early to start thinking about Christmas! And what better place to find unusual gifts than the Gift Shop at the Egypt Centre, located on the ground floor of the museum, and open Tuesday to Saturday 10 am to 4 pm.

Friends members get 10% off all items at the Egypt Centre Christmas Sale. A perfect opportunity for you to buy unique gifts at great prices! We will also have wine and mince pies to get you in the festive mood while you browse. There's plenty to keep the children occupied including a range of stationery, statues, toys, books, games and much more. For adults we have beautiful jewellery including our exclusive Sarah Elam range inspired by the styles and materials used for thousands of years. You can find fine scarves, recycled Egyptian glassware and replica Egyptian statues just like the ones on display in our gallery.



## AGM Agenda 19th October 2016

Just a reminder – the Annual General Meeting of the Friends of the Egypt Centre takes place at 6.30 pm on Wednesday 19 October, before the lecture by Dr Manuela Lehmann. It's only half an hour, and is your opportunity to have some say in how the Friends operate. Please attend if at all possible.

### Agenda

- 6.30 pm Welcome and Chairman's report
- Treasurer's report  
*Accounts proposed as accurate by ...*  
*Seconded by ...*
- Membership secretary's report
- Election of officers

Those marked \* need to be re-elected or replaced. There can be up to 14 members of the committee, so **there are vacancies**. Members may stand for one of the three co-opted places. A postal nomination form is attached to this issue of *Inscriptions*.

### List of present committee members:

Chair	- Syd Howells*
Vice Chair	- Gareth Lucas*
Secretary	- Amber Furmage
Treasurer	- Sheila Nowell*

### Other (co-opted members):

Membership Sec	- Wendy Goodridge
Events Officer	- Beverley Rogers
Marketing Officer	- <b>Vacant*</b>
	Diane Rowden*
	Peter Jones
	Tony Nowell

- 7.00 pm End of AGM

Followed by lecture: **Not Just An Aftermath- Tell El Dab'a After The New Kingdom** by Dr Manuela Lehmann.



## Come dine with the speaker!

After most talks we take the speaker for a meal. The Patti Raj is the usual restaurant and we would love it if you could join us and come along and mingle with the speaker. If you would like to attend a meal let one of the committee know beforehand and we will book you a place.



# Friends of the Egypt Centre

## AGM 19.10.16

The AGM will be held at Fulton House 2 at 6.30pm on Wednesday 19<sup>th</sup> October 2016 and is open to all Friends members, followed by a lecture by Dr Manuela Lehmann at 7.00pm, which is open to non-Friends for an admission fee of £3.00. There are vacancies on the committee.

Nominations for committee posts need to be received by 5<sup>h</sup> October 2016.

### *Postal Nomination Form*

.....

I.....wish to be put forward for position of  
.....

Nominated by .....

Seconded by .....

*Please return to Secretary of the Friends of the Egypt Centre, Swansea University, Singleton Park,  
Swansea SA2 8PP. 01792 295960*