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Volunteer Newsletter

Apr-Jun 2022

Museum of Egyptian Antiquities



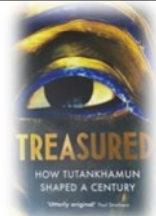
Museums of Lisbon

Searching for Egyptian artefacts
in Portugal's capital.



Beekeeping in ancient Egypt

Evidence of apiculture from
even predynastic times.



Book Review: 'Treasured'

How Tutankhamun
shaped a century.

egypt.swan.ac.uk



Welcome



**Syd
Howells**

Editor in Chief

Hello,

Another quarter, another fine Egypt Centre Volunteer Newsletter...

All your usual favourites can be found within. News, reviews, articles about bees in ancient Egypt; this issue has got it all. We are always looking for new material for the Newsletter, the incentive as ever remains a Newsletter Badge for any contributors.

A reminder also that once a month on a Friday we offer you the opportunity for any volunteer training you require – contact either me or Luke for further details.

Syd



Dulcie Engel
Associate Editor

A former French and linguistics lecturer, I have volunteered at the Egypt Centre since April 2014. I am a gallery supervisor in both galleries, and author of the Egyptian Writing Trails. Apart from language, I am particularly interested in the history of collecting. I won the 2016 Volunteer of the Year award.



Rob Stradling
Technical Editor

A volunteer since 2012, currently on extended sabbatical, to the great relief of all biscuit-lovers of TEC.

Still here in spirit, I bathe in reflected glory by assembling the fine work of others into this ever-popular journal.

If you would like to contribute to the newsletter or submit articles for consideration please contact:
dulcie.engel@icloud.com

The Newsletter will be published every three months - Next issue due **Sept 2022**.



Office News



Farewell to Carolyn after twenty-five years at the helm, steering the Egypt Centre through all kinds of waters. I believe I speak for all when I say it has been a pleasure to sail alongside you.

It was a joy to see so many turn out for Carolyn's leaving bash at the Taliesin, including many faces from past years at the museum. Good luck for the future, and hopefully a life of peace and quiet Carolyn!

And hello and congratulations to our new Curator, who most of you know already, Dr. **Ken Griffin**, who commenced post on June 1st.



At the end of July, we will be having a larger maths and writing case installed in the House of Life Gallery. This case will also be able to house temporary displays ensuring more of our collection is available to visitors. Therefore, if you see the old case gradually being emptied, I can confirm that we are NOT moving out!

Congratulations are due to one of our volunteers, **Jenna Heard** (below), for recently taking up a position of Archives Assistant with a Welsh Council – good luck for the future Jenna!



Meet the Volunteer



Egypt Centre Volunteer
Jade Price

I come from: Swansea.

I started volunteering: Nov 2021, once TEC had opened its doors again.

I chose to volunteer because: It gives me great pleasure to help others, plus learn new skills, history; the opportunity to gain experience without the extra pressure of a paid job.

My Favourite artefact is: EC1055 - Fragment of Cartonnage. I really like its illustrative qualities, it reminds me of different thicknesses of marker pens, even though it is from thousands of years earlier. Also, I love the amulets case and that they come in all sorts like animals, gods, and plants. Ancient Egyptians used good luck charms as much as people today, and I think we all need a bit of luck in our lives.

How volunteering at the Egypt Centre helps me: Socialising again (after being in lockdown for so long) and I get to meet new people and build friendships. It has made me consider working in museums in the future.



Former Volunteer
Peter Wheeler

I come from: London, now living in Bristol.

I started volunteering: Jan 2016.

I chose to volunteer because: TEC was friendly and welcoming and I have a deep interest in Ancient History, though I had never previously engaged with Ancient Egypt as a topic.

My Favourite artefact is: There is a small (maybe 3" high) seated female figure, (**W848**) headless, carved from black stone in the HoL, in the Plants Case. Though her proportions are not strictly realistic there is a real beauty in this little figure, good enough to be a goddess. I am only sad that she has no head!

How volunteering at the Egypt Centre helps me: Engaging with people of all ages, sharing interest and enthusiasm. Observing and assisting the skilled teaching of school groups. This was great fun, educational - and not just for the children. I have many very happy memories of working with the staff and other volunteers.



Fy Hoff Wrthrych

My Favourite Object

Helô! Angharad o Siop y Ganolfan Eifftaidd dwi i.

Fy hoff wrthrych yn yr amgueddfa yw Cloch **Bes (WK44)** sydd i'w gweld yn yr Oriel Tŷ Bywyd yn y cas cerddoriaeth a gemau. Dwi'n cofio clywed am y Duwdod Bes pan ddechreuais wirfoddoli yn y Ganolfan Eifftaidd tua 10 mlynedd yn ôl ac ers hynny mae wedi aros gyda mi.

Rwy'n dwlu ar fanylder yr arteffact hwn gan gynnwys y penaddurn pluog uwchlaw'r wyneb llawn mynegiant a'r ffaith ei fod wedi cael ei defnyddio fel cloch mwy na thebyg (y dystiolaeth yw'r ddau dwll ar y brig a bellach y dafod sydd ar goll a fyddai wedi taro y tu mewn i wneud sŵn, sy'n hollol ryfeddol i mi). Rwyf yn aml wedi meddwl sut byddai wedi swnio, ond oherwydd natur fregus y gwythrych (a wnaed o faience), ni fyddwn byth yn gwybod yn bendant.

O holl wrthrychau rhyfeddol yr amgueddfa dyma'r un sy'n sefyll allan gan fy mod yn dwlu ar hoffter cerddoriaeth a sain pobl yr Hen Aifft a'r ffaith fod y gwrthrych yn dweud wrthym fod cerddoriaeth yn mynd yn ôl mor bell mewn hanes!

Hello! Angharad here from the FOH Egypt Centre Shop!

My favourite object in the museum is the **Bes Bell (WK44)** which you can see in the House of Life Gallery in the music and games case. I remember first hearing about the deity Bes when I began volunteering at the Egypt Centre about 10 years ago now and ever since it has stuck with me.

I love the detail of this artefact including the feather headpiece above the expressive face and the fact it was most likely used as a bell (the evidence being the two holes on top and the now missing tongue that would have struck inside to make a sound, is just magical to me). I have often wondered what it would have sounded like but of course due to the fragile nature of the object (being made of faience) we will never know for certain.

Out of all the museum's amazing objects this is the one that stands out the most in my eyes as I love the Ancient Egyptian fondness for music and sound and the fact the object tells us that music really does go back so far in history!



Ysgrifennwyd gan / Written by: Angharad Gavin



Changes in the House of Life

In March, I returned to the EC in person for the first time in two years, and Dr. **Ken Griffin**, Collections Access Manager (now our newly-appointed Curator), was kind enough to give me a tour of the various changes in the HOL. These are part of a process which started before the pandemic, with the installation of bilingual explanatory panels in the Predynastic and Metalwork cases. There are now additional panels in the Votive Offerings Case and the Fakes, Forgeries & Replicas case, as well as in the two cases discussed below. Eventually, all the cases in the gallery will have such panels. Furthermore, there is an extra explanatory panel next to the new Amarna case illustrating the conservation process at *Cardiff University* for the large Amarna pot (**W193**), including a QR code linking to a video.

Egypt and its neighbours case

Student volunteer Lucy Elford wrote a review of this new case in the last edition of the Newsletter (Jan-Mar 2022), accompanied by photos by Syd Howells. She highlighted some eye-catching Greco-Roman pottery and items from **Meroe** in **Nubia**. I would just like to mention two other items in the case in which I am particularly interested. **EC309** is a black copper alloy statue of a lamassu (most likely a 19th century replica), a Mesopotamian mythological beast with a human head, the body of a bull or a lion, and sometimes eagle wings. Similarities can be seen with the Egyptian sphinx (most usually with a human head, the body of a lion, and sometimes eagle wings). I wrote about the lamassu and the sphinx in a previous Newsletter (Apr-Jun 2018). Our lamassu has wings and the body of a bull, and was kept in storage for many years. It has already proved popular with children who visit.



The other piece I would like to highlight is **GR9**, a terracotta female figure from **Boeotia** (probably a goddess) with a board-like body, and pointed arms. Her hair is styled in a big curl over the nose, and she wears a *polos* (truncated cone) on her head. The details are picked out in black paint. It dates to the sixth century BCE. Such figures were placed as gifts in temples or could be put in tombs. Boeotia was an ancient region of central **Greece** and included the important city of **Thebes** (the Greek one, not the Egyptian one!). This piece was a favourite of the first curator, **Dr. Kate Bosse-Griffiths**, who mentions it quite often in her daybooks, and it was one of the artefacts she selected to be made into a postcard, which she used to send to correspondents around the world (as well as selling them in the museum).



If you are familiar with the history of our museum, you will know that before the Wellcome Loan, there was a small teaching collection of mainly Greek artefacts in the Classics department: it is lovely to see so many of them back out of storage, and



contributing to our understanding of the relationship between Egypt and its neighbours (see blog 1). I should also mention that there is a QR code on the side of the case, which links to further information on the artefacts.

The case used for Egypt and its Neighbours formerly housed artefacts from Amarna: these have now moved to what was the Technology case (some of the technology items have been moved into other cases).

Amarna case

In its new, larger case, the Amarna display has been expanded to include more objects from storage (see blog 2). I have already mentioned the newly conserved **W193**, which has its own special panel, and it is a truly impressive piece. It is a large storage jar of red pottery, with decorative bands of leaves and fruit in blue, black and red. It was stored near a window for many years, which resulted in one side being badly damaged by the light, while the other side is well preserved.



W193

There is more space to display objects (for example, a whole shelf for the pieces of decorated plaster). In particular, there are more ring bezels on display (with more to be added in the next few weeks). My personal favourite is a Tilapia fish bezel (**W1152**). The Tilapia was considered a symbol of rebirth as the female shelters hatchlings in her mouth, so when they emerge, they appear to be 'born' spontaneously as small fish. There is also a lovely ring bezel fragment (**W1153**) showing an open work eye in purple and white. And newly on display we have: **EC285** fragment of a black granite statue showing the back of a head and part of a wig; **EC868** fragment of blue glazed faience; **EC1979** fragment of limestone relief showing part of a face and hair with finely carved rows of curls; **W153** fragment of a limestone statue showing a draped elbow and forearm; **W1265** fragment of a green glaze faience tile with holes for a daisy inlay; **W155c** fragment of limestone architectural relief with fluted carving; **W155f** fragment of limestone showing parts of 2 columns of hieroglyphs, including cartouches of the **Aten**. The finely curved surface suggests it is part of a limb from a small statue.



W155f



EC1979

Some other additions to cases

The Metalwork case has been rearranged so the lower shelf displays **EC156**, a large iron blade from **Armant** (possibly modern), and a collection of Roman iron keys (**W986** - **W998**). These too have proved popular with children.





There is also a wooden throwing cup (**EC1448**) next to the dice in the Games case (see blog 3).

Further plans

Once the tunic is back from conservation, it will be displayed upright on a dummy in the Textiles case. The Writing and Maths case will be replaced by a taller unit. Half may be used for temporary exhibits (for example, to coincide with the EES conference in September in Swansea), and possibly later for a new theme of 'Health and Well-being'.

And what about the House of Death? Well, you may have spotted some new servant figures, re-assembled thanks to the detective work of **Sam Powell** (see blog 4). There is a new explanatory panel on the coffin of Iwensenhesetmut (**W1982**), who is currently re-united with one of her very own shabtis (on temporary loan from the private *Kemehu Collection*; see blog 5). Further refurbishment of the HOD is planned at a later date.

Written by: Dulcie Engel

With thanks to Ken Griffin.

Object details and photos from the Abaset catalogue (except "Roman Keys (W986-W998)" by Dulcie Engel)

<https://egyptcentre.abasetcollections.com>

The following EC collection blogs discuss some of the objects and cases mentioned here:

1. egyptcentrecollectionblog.blogspot.com/2020/08/egypt-and-its-neighbours-object-centred.html
2. egyptcentrecollectionblog.blogspot.com/2021/05/an-introduction-to-amarna-collection-at.html
3. egyptcentrecollectionblog.blogspot.com/2021/09/more-than-just-load-of-old-dice.html
4. egyptcentrecollectionblog.blogspot.com/2020/01/turns-out-you-can-have-your-geese-and.html
5. egyptcentrecollectionblog.blogspot.com/2021/11/the-funerary-equipment-of-chantress-of.html

Meet the Volunteer



Young Volunteer *Ifan*

I come from: Swansea.

I started volunteering: Aug 2019.

I chose to volunteer because: I wanted to learn more about ancient Egypt.

My Favourite artefact is: Coffin of **Iwensenhesetmut (W1982)**

How volunteering at the Egypt Centre helps me: Learning about the ancient Egyptians and how they lived.



Book Review

Christina Riggs

Treasured: How Tutankhamun shaped a century

(London: Atlantic Books, 2021)

'A century on from that November day in 1922 when Tutankhamun made his debut in the modern world, our fascination with the golden king shows no sign of waning...' (p.345)

Christina Riggs is Professor of the History of Visual Culture at *Durham University*. She is an expert on the history of the **Tutankhamun** excavation, and author of various Egyptology books, including *Photographing Tutankhamun* (2019). Riggs was born and brought up in **Ohio**, and studied Egyptology in the USA and the UK, so has an inside knowledge of both American and British Egyptology research.

Treasured is a wide-ranging, fascinating journey into Tutankhamun's 'afterlife' as a modern icon, illustrating how he has been used to shape people's lives and ideas. Riggs includes some very personal testimony of her own encounters with the boy pharaoh.

The book also tackles some big issues: colonialism (Why do we know more about Western archaeologists? Why did Westerners in Egypt make the big decisions about the excavation and its aftermath? What was and is the role of Egyptian archaeologists and researchers?); racism (How did/do Westerners view ancient and modern Egyptians? Was Tutankhamun black? How did he become a symbol of Black pride?); sexism (Why are the women who did vital work on the tomb artefacts and photographs so little known? How important was the work of **Christiane Desroches-Noblecourt** ?*)

Riggs gives us detailed insight into the key players and all the stages of the excavation, including record-keeping and photography; what happened to the artefacts; early publicity and books, and the rise in tourism. The importance of Egyptian politics and policies is not neglected (including terrorist attacks on Egyptological sites, the looting of

the *Egyptian Museum* during the 2009 uprising, and the role of **Zahi Hawass** as the Egyptian 'face' of archaeology).

The various touring exhibitions of Tutankhamun artefacts are examined in detail, in particular, those which took place in the 1960s / 70s across North America, Europe and Japan, where Tutankhamun was used as an important diplomatic tool, raising money to save **Abu Simbel** and Egyptian antiquities in general. Volunteers of my vintage may recall the 50th anniversary tour in 1972, which included the iconic golden mask, and involved a lot of queuing outside the *British Museum* (which I remember doing as a child)... but Riggs comes right up to date with the 2005 exhibition (the London venue then was the O2 dome), and the 2018 tour, which was showing at the *Saatchi Gallery* in **London** when it was sadly cut short by the Covid pandemic. This last tour was to generate money for the *Grand Egyptian Museum* at **Giza**, due to open later this year, which will bring together all the artefacts from the tomb, amongst many other treasures.

Riggs also addresses the issue of hyper-reality in interpreting the past: the colourisation of **Harry Burton**'s original photos of the excavation; and the recent digital recreation of Tutankhamun's tomb by *Factum Arte*. She looks at conservation (including the famously 'botched' re-attachment of the beard), reproduction (such as the *Dorchester Tutankhamun Exhibition*), and the persistence of tall tales and unfounded claims.

Written in an approachable style, with well-chosen photographs, comprehensive notes and bibliography, I highly recommend this book to anyone with more than a passing interest in Egyptology. *Treasured* is indeed a book to be treasured.

Written by: Dulcie Engel

(* CDN: French Egyptologist (and a member of the French Resistance), 1913-2011, she published her illustrated book on Tutankhamun in 1963, and was closely involved in the Aswan Dam project, taking an inventory of the threatened historical sites for UNESCO, which led to the raising of the Abu Simbel temple in 1968)



An Introduction to Ancient Beekeeping

Predynastic and dynastic evidence of ancient Egyptian Beekeeping

The apiculture, or beekeeping industry is one that was significant to ancient **Egypt** with the products provided by beekeeping having an extended range of influence throughout pharaonic history. The consumption, range, and use of bee products, such as honey, beeswax, and honeycomb, were endless in ancient Egypt. From carpentry, wig making, painting, baking, as offerings, used in temples, and more, bee products and the apiculture industry held an important place in ancient Egyptian society.

Evolution of Egyptian Beekeeping: Predynastic Evidence

Humans have interacted with bees long before beekeeping existed or honey hunting began. Predynastic evidence of human interaction with bees lies in the form of rock art and drawings. Beekeeping, or true apiculture, has been defined by **Kritsky** (2007: 64) and **Crane** (1985:1) as *"providing honey bees with artificial or man-made hives in which to maintain their colonies."* Apiculture as we know it today, was preceded by honey hunting. Primitive ways of obtaining honey or honey hunting included tending wild hives, and honey and brood gathering.

Fluehr-Lobban (2018, p.1) suggests that apiculture developed over time, in line with the domestication of plants and animals along the entire Nile valley (including the Blue Nile in **Ethiopia** and the White Nile in **Uganda**). As apiculture is essentially a form of 'domesticating' or managing bees in an organized way, it is highly likely that it was grouped with other agricultural tasks and became a major operation in ancient Egypt. Thus, beekeeping progressed with other tasks such as farming, hunting, fishing and more, as the predynastic society grew. Along with Egypt, ancient

Nubia, Syria and Palestine also progressed quickly in the organization and tending of bees. During the Old Kingdom, Nubia became a major centre of high-quality honey production and fermented honey. With the domestication of plants and animals came the study of the different seasons and when the native trees and plants flowered. Fluehr-Lobban (2018, p. 1) suggests that hives were transported from south to north as crops, fruit and nut trees came into flower. This shows that as the beginnings of beekeeping started to form, the Egyptians were treating them as crops and harvesting the honey at the most optimal time. From the Predynastic Period onward, harvesting honey and beekeeping knowledge increased. The exact shift from collecting wild honey to harvesting man-made hives is unknown. However, it can be assumed that by the 3rd dynasty the apiculture industry began to gain traction and refine quickly. The first attestation of beekeeping and hive tending dates to the 5th dynasty of the Old Kingdom.



Figure 1: Bee hives from the Tel Rehov apiary (modern Israel). Their shape & size are considered similar to ancient Egyptian hives. These pottery hives have a removable lid; also a suggested characteristic of Egyptian hives. (Mazar & Panitz-Cohen, 2007, p. 206)



Dynastic Evidence

The most notable evidence of beekeeping is found in tomb and temple reliefs. Each major period of pharaonic Egypt sees different examples of beekeeping reliefs that help us to identify how ancient Egyptian apiculture was practiced and characterized.



Figure 2: Reconstruction of the beekeeping relief from the Sun Temple of Neuserre at Abu Ghorab (Kritsky, 2007, p. 64)

The oldest beekeeping relief dates to the 5th dynasty from King **Neuserre's** Sun Temple at **Abu Ghorab**. This relief (pictured above) depicts an 'assembly-line' style of beekeepers performing their tasks in order from left to right. The figure on the far left is shown collecting the honey from the hives while the figure behind pours the collected honey into a large storage pot. The next two figures are shown pouring honey into a large pot filled with water, in order to separate and filter the honey (the honey would homogenize and the remains of comb, dirt, etc. would settle at the bottom). Unfortunately, the next two figures are badly damaged therefore it is hard to tell exactly what is happening. However, the caption above this scene alludes to the figures pressing and separating the honey from the wax. The final figure on the far right is shown sealing the honey in a large storage jar. Details such as these allow us to see how the Egyptians collected honey, processed and cleaned it, and stored it for distribution. This relief is incredibly important as it indicates an intricate beekeeping process had already been established during the mid-late 5th dynasty.

Depictions of beekeeping and the apiculture industry continued throughout pharaonic Egypt. The small number of reliefs, seven in total, date to the 5th, 12th, 18th, and 26th dynasties. Although these depictions are sparsely spread-out, they

show us that the apiculture industry held its importance throughout Egyptian history and was still widely practised. Whereas depictions are hard to come by, other evidence, such as temple food and offering logs, import and export records, inscribed honey storage jars and pots, and much more, further support the continued presence of beekeeping in ancient Egypt. The economic scale of the apiculture industry was vast, with bee products (honey, honeycomb, and beeswax) utilized by almost every section of Egyptian society. Some of the most popular uses of bee products include consumption of honey and honeycomb raw and baked into honey cakes, medicinal use of honey as a natural antiseptic, honey as offerings for the gods in festivals and temples, and the use of beeswax as furniture polish and on wigs to set the desired hairstyle (ancient hairspray!).



Figure 3: Offering scene from the tomb of Tjener (TT 101). Honeycomb in bowl with two bees on top, presented as an offering.

Among the surviving archaeological material related to apiculture, is the presence of beekeeping titles. These titles give insight to the internal organization of the apiaries themselves. Examples of titles include Beekeeper, Sealer of Honey, Overseer of Beekeepers, Chief Beekeeper, and Overseer of Beekeepers in the entire land. From these examples, we can assume that most apiaries (likely depending on size and location) had an overseer/overseeing



beekeeper who was accompanied by other beekeepers. Therefore, it is likely that larger apiaries had multiple people working inside at the same time. Each worker either collected the honey and comb from the hives, pressed and filtered the honey, or sealed the honey in storage jars. It is also possible that apiaries had a designated person to trade/distribute the bee products.



Figure 4: 13th dynasty scarab belonging to a man named Intef who held the title 'chief beekeeper'.
(British Museum, 2022, object number, EA30550)

A large aspect of the apiculture industry is trade. Internal and foreign trade of bee products played a huge role in increasing the economic scale of beekeeping. Widespread consumption of bee products in both local and foreign markets created an extremely high demand that was met by establishing more apiaries and foreign trade. Other factors, such as environment, also affected the availability of products, thus supporting the use of product trade and transportation of hives to better accommodate demand.

Comparisons to Modern Apiaries

The basic techniques used in ancient Egyptian apiaries are quite similar to modern Egyptian practices. Sources from the early 20th century state that the modern beekeepers of Egypt, at the time, kept bees in "simple, small tubes made of Nile mud, which are piled up either loose or joined together" (Rotter & Betts, 1920: 81). Traditional hives during this time were made of sun-dried mud with the aid of matting or a piece of miniature paling. Comparison of the Egyptian hives from the

1900s to those within the ancient depictions, shows that the hives are quite similar in shape and size and are also stacked in a very similar fashion. This can suggest that hive type and shape stayed consistent throughout history along with some of the techniques.

Modern harvesting of beeswax and honey took place twice a year in Egypt with the first collection around April and May and the second principle harvest in November. However places in southern Egypt, such as **Girga**, **Qena**, and **Aswan** only had one principle harvest in September. This shows that in modern times, different geographic locations within Egypt took part in different harvesting times based on climate. This can help provide context regarding ancient apiaries located in both the Delta and **Thebes** and potentially give a rough estimate of when the harvest took place. Therefore, in some cases, beekeeping practices from the early 1900's can potentially help analyze ancient techniques and depictions and bring them to life. However, it is important not to heavily rely on modern beekeeping as it not the same as the ancient practice, but some pieces of modern context are useful.

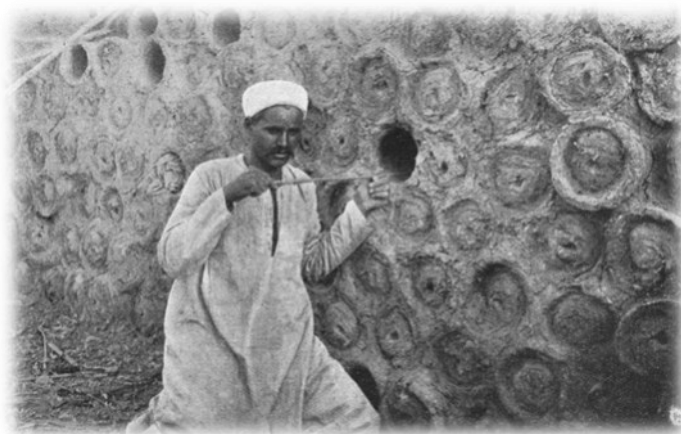


Figure 5: Modern Egyptian hives from Cairo, c1900. The shape and size of these hives are thought to be very similar to ancient hives. (Rotter & Betts, 1920, p. 78)

Conclusion

Reliefs, archaeological material, titles and trade are the key factors in determining the economic scale of the apiculture industry throughout pharaonic Egypt. Although each period characterized different aspects of the industry, a steady increase of beekeeping



can be seen over time resulting in constant change and adaptation based on environmental and societal circumstances.

The economic scale of the apiculture industry experienced constant growth over the ancient Egyptian civilization. It grew and expanded to accommodate the societal demand over time, becoming a very important operation in Egypt. The economic scale adjusted each period to support societal and trading needs. This change in the economic scale is represented through beekeeping reliefs (which show technique advancement and understanding of apiculture), titles (showing the internal structure and organization of apiaries ensuring societal requirements are met) and trade (demonstrating the wider impact of the apiculture industry through product availability). Archaeological material indicates the adapting of apiculture through providing what is needed and changing with demand over time. And lastly, the individual people directly involved with apiculture and the ones whose reliefs are located in their tombs, indicate the availability of the industry to society, the constant changing and shifting of the demand of product, and the wider impact of the apiculture industry on Egyptian society.

Written by: Mollie Beck

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Early Photographs of Egypt at the National Library of Wales

Besides the early 20th century photographs of Egypt within the Egypt Centre Collection (for example the images made by **Lance Sergeant Johnson** of **Carmarthen**), other examples are available in Wales. The National Library of Wales in Aberystwyth holds a variety of 19th century and early 20th century examples. If this is your kind of thing, please visit here for more details:

<https://www.library.wales/collections/learn-more/photographs/ancient-egypt>

Ffotograffau Cynnar o'r Aifft yn Llyfrgell Genedlaethol Cymru

Heblaw am ffotograffau o'r Aifft o ddechrau'r 20fed ganrif yng Nghasgliad y Ganolfan Eifftaidd (er enghraifft y delweddau a wnaed gan y **Rhingyll Johnson** o **Gaerfyrddin**), mae enghreifftiau eraill ar gael yng Nghymru.

Mae'r Llyfrgell Genedlaethol Cymru yn Aberystwyth yn cadw amrywiaeth o enghreifftiau o'r 19eg ganrif a dechrau'r 20fed ganrif. Os mai dyma'ch peth, ewch yma am fwy o fanylion:

<https://www.llyfrgell.cymru/casgliadau/dysgwch-fwy/ffotograffau/yr-hen-aifft>

Ysgrifennwyd gan / Written by: Syd Howells





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y ganolfan
EIFFTAIDD



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Friends of the Egypt Centre



Our April speaker was **Dr Don Ryan**, of *Pacific Lutheran University*. Don has been a great supporter of the Egypt Centre, and was kind enough to step in after the scheduled April speaker was unable to present.

This month, we had two topics for the price of one, with **Cords and Cones: Two Fascinating but Unrelated Topics in Egyptian Archaeology**. Don started by giving us an overview of his research into ancient Egyptian cordage. Considered by many a mundane object, we were reminded that without rope to help move blocks, there would be no pyramids! Don's interest in cordage arose due to his background in mountaineering. We covered the main sources of evidence: tomb scenes, archaeological specimens, and experimental archaeology.

Don had some great stories to tell us about his experience collecting botanical samples from Egypt in order to carry out analysis of the anatomical structures of the fibres, and illustrated his lecture with some great images too. Some examples of cordage held in the Egypt Centre can be viewed in the online catalogue:

<https://egyptcentre.abasetcollections.com/Objects>

For the second part of the lecture, Don discussed funerary cones. The objects have been found in funerary contexts in their thousands, but their function is still unclear. The stamped end typically includes a biographical text about the deceased. These cones are typically found scattered across the ground, but the few examples found in situ suggest they may have been placed in rows above the doorway in the courtyard of the tomb entrance. Other scholars have suggested given the conical shape that they may represent a symbolic bread offering.

Don's entertaining style and large quantity of anecdotes kept us all enthralled throughout the lecture, and the Friends would like to once again extend our thanks to him for providing this lecture.

On 18th May, **Olga Zapletniuk** presented '**Gender and War: The Belligerence of Ancient Egyptian Queens**'. Olga holds a PhD in History from *Kyiv National Taras Shevchenko University, Ukraine*, and is a PhD candidate in Egyptology at Swansea University.

Abstract: The study of the military activity of women has become an important aspect of modern historical research. The ancient Egyptian women had been known to enjoy extensive legal rights in comparison with other regions of the ancient Near East, apart from war, which was considered as exclusively masculine domain. Being a female king of Egypt, or even a temporary regent, has always meant engaging in warfare or military propaganda, especially during the New Kingdom. However, this important aspect of the internal and foreign policy of female rulers is poorly documented. The main purpose of the lecture is to discuss the influence of queens on the military history of Ancient Egypt.

Written by: Sam Powell

Upcoming...

15 Jun 2022

Sam Powell (TEC)

Seeing Double: Wooden Ka Statues

This talk will provide an overview of these statues and their possible function, drawing on examples found in the Egypt Centre collection amongst others.

Check the Friends' website for further information, and more dates:

egypt.swan.ac.uk/about/friends-of-the-egypt-centre/



For further information or to become a member please contact:
Membership Secretary Wendy Goodridge:
01792 295960 w.r.goodridge@swansea.ac.uk



Object Showcase

In each issue we would like to highlight one item from the collection, and we welcome readers' suggestions: just email [Syd](#) or [Dulcie](#). Here's one chosen by Dulcie to start off:

W445 This is one of five squatting wooden funerary figures. These figures were likely involved in food production, and are similar to more complete models of preparing food. As part of volunteer **Sam Powell's** MA, this figure has been reunited with its arms, as well as a goose roasting over a fire (**W699**), and a possible brazier (**W697**).

Middle Kingdom, 12th dynasty (ca. 1938 - 1759 B.C.E.)



Written by: Dulcie Engel
Photo by: Dulcie Engel



The Museums of Lisbon

The *Gulbenkian museum* is described as **Portugal's** only truly world-class museum. It was built in 1969 to house the extensive collection of Armenian oil financier **Calouste Gulbenkian** (b. **Istanbul** 1869, lived London & Paris, d. Lisbon 1955). Gulbenkian collected antiquities and art from Ancient Egyptian figures up to early 20th century Art Nouveau. They were originally housed in his elegant Parisian townhouse but were bequeathed to Lisbon, where he spent the last years of his life.

The Egyptian gallery is fairly small, but the items are of stunning quality. Gulbenkian acquired some items directly from **Howard Carter**, and consulted **Flinders Petrie** on auction acquisitions. He visited Egypt in 1934. The most famous piece is an exquisitely carved small obsidian head of **Senwosret III** (MK, Dyn 12, c. 2860 BCE), acquired from the *MacGregor Collection*

There is also a beautiful gilded silver funerary mask (Late P, Dyn 30)



Senwosret III



Funerary Mask

Both these objects were once loaned to the *British Museum*. A favourite of mine was a bronze statue of a cat with kittens, with a hollow base to accommodate a cat mummy (Late P):



Cat Sarcophagus

Also of note: an intricate ivory cosmetic spoon carved in the shape of a date palm, with monkeys eating the fruit (NK Dyn 18);



Monkey Spoon

a bronze torso of King **Pedubast** (3 IP Dyn 23) encrusted with gold & copper; a fine limestone statuette of the official **Bes** (Late P, Dyn 26); a bronze solar barque of **Djedhor** (Late P); and a fine Breccia bowl (Ptolemaic). The Greek & Roman sections are of interest too; indeed his Greek coin collection is believed to be the largest ever in private hands,

and their condition is pristine! In the *René Lalique* gallery (Art Nouveau glass & jewellery) we see the Egyptian influence in scarab jewel designs and the 1925 *Cluny* glass vase decorated with bronze Egyptian style heads.

My next port of call for Egyptian items was the lovely *Pharmacy Museum*. I ended up chatting with the curator who had researched at the Wellcome Collection London before setting up this museum in 1996. It was great to tell him about our Egyptian Wellcome collection in Swansea!



The poster boy for the museum is the coffin of **Irtierut** (Late P 25-26 Dyn, wood & painted gesso):



Irtierut Coffin

I also spotted a French 19th century pharmacy jar for holding 'Egyptian ointment' (whatever that may be!), and a Portuguese early-20th century box for cough medicine with an Egyptian design.



Cough Medicine

There is a nice basalt head of **Sekhmet**, patroness of doctors (Late P), a limestone relief of a couple wearing perfume cones on their heads (NK), a large limestone shabti of **Huy**, ointment preparer of **Amon** (NK Dyn 19), a soapstone **Horus** cippus (Late P), and many travertine and glass ointment jars.



Huy Shabti

On the Wellcome connection: a travelling medical kit, and a first aid kit used on **Ernest Shackleton's** Antarctic expedition, both made by the *Burroughs & Wellcome* company.

Written by: Dulcie Engel
Photos by: Dulcie & Gaby Engel



Gulbekian Museum: "Hall With Winter Garden"
by [Paulo Valdivieso](#)



Egyptology in The News



Tutankhamun's dagger: new chemical analysis

Planetary scientist **Tomoko Arai**, from the *Chiba Institute of Technology* in **Japan**, led a team which recently conducted non-contact, non-destructive chemical analysis on the dagger, already known to be made from meteoric iron. They found a *Widmanstätten structure*, typical of an octahedrite iron meteorite. This suggests a crafting temperature below 950°C. Furthermore, the decorative stones on the hilt seem to be attached with lime plaster, a technique uncommon in Egypt at this period, pointing to a foreign origin. Indeed, the Amarna letters say that an iron dagger with a gold hilt was given by the king of **Mitanni** (Anatolia) to **Amenhotep III**, grandfather of **Tutankhamun**.

Royal plaque found at Luxor Temple

An Egyptian archaeological mission recently uncovered objects including a black granite funerary plaque dating to the New Kingdom, and a Roman-era offering table. The plaque depicts for the first time **Thutmose IV** and **Amenhotep II** together, presenting offerings to **Amun**. The limestone table had been re-used as part of a lintel for a shrine or temple doorway.

Impressive grain silo discovery at Kom Ombo

A team of Egyptian and Austrian archaeologists have found a 4,000 year-old complex of 20 grain silos at the **Kom Ombo** Temple near **Aswan**. They date from the First Intermediate Period (c. 2180-2050 BCE), and were found inside a Ptolemaic Period temple at the site. Many of the excavated silos included almost intact vaults, stairs and storage rooms. Kom Ombo was an important commercial and agricultural site during the politically unstable First Intermediate Period.

Five wells uncovered in Northern Sinai

An Egyptian archaeological mission has discovered five water wells believed to be from the 13th century BCE. The wells are situated outside the **Tell El Kedwa** fortress, a control point along the ancient Horus Military Road connecting Egypt to **Palestine**. Four of the wells were filled with sand, probably as a defence against the **Persian** invasion of 525 BCE. Inside the fifth, archaeologists found pottery rings and clay pots dating back to the 26th dynasty (664-525 BCE).

Demi Lovato criticised for 'Egyptian antiquities' collection

The singer revealed on *Instagram* a box of shabtis, ankhs and clay tablets, along with certificates of authentication. However experts were quick to point out that the certificates appeared to be faked. As for the artefacts; they may be fakes, or possibly illicitly smuggled items.

Ancient Egyptian style inspires the catwalk again, 100 years on

The French fashion house *Lanvin* has just launched its autumn/winter 2022 collection, drawing inspiration from the house archives, whose Art Deco styles of the 1920s were influenced by Egyptomania. Its founder, **Jeanne Lanvin** travelled to Egypt in the aftermath of Carter's great discovery of 1922.

Saqqara: discovery of five tombs unveiled

The tombs, situated northeast of the pyramid of King **Merenre I**, are adorned with well-preserved paintings, and belonged to senior officials of the Old Kingdom and First Intermediate Period. They contain stone sarcophagi, wooden coffins, and many smaller artefacts (statues, pottery etc).

Eastern Desert: prehistoric carving discovered

Archaeologist **Mahmoud Tony** has found a marble stone depicting a hunting scene. A hunter holding a weapon is carved into the stone, along with two hunting dogs, and their prey: an ibex and an Arabian oryx.

Ancient Egyptian themes on screen (1)

Director **Mohamed Diab** is bringing a more authentic representation of ancient Egyptian mythology to the screen with the new Disney+ series *'Moon Knight'*, based on a *Marvel* comic book. In the story, the hero Spector dies, and is revived by the Egyptian moon god **Khonsu**. The god wants him to be his 'moon knight', and atone for his previous life of violence by protecting and avenging the innocent.

Ancient Egyptian themes on screen (2)

'Theodosia', an Egyptology-themed children's adventure series, has been acquired by the *BBC*. Theodosia (Theo) is the teenage daughter of two Egyptologists excavating in the Valley of the Kings. Theo and her younger brother Henry find a magical artefact, the 'Eye of Horus', in a hidden tomb. Using the amulet, Theo is able to see and perform magic, which she uses in a series of mysterious and dangerous adventures.

Something smells fishy...

Ancient Egyptian provisions for the afterlife included jars of dried fish, beeswax, and ritual ointments, according to Italian researchers. They used non-invasive SIFT mass-spectrometry to analyse the scent of foods left in 50 intact vessels from the 18th dynasty **Deir el-Medina** tombs of the foreman **Kha** and his wife **Merit**, whose burial assemblage is housed in the *Museo Egizio*, **Turin**. As researcher **Francesca Modugno** of the *University of Pisa* explained: "We concentrated the released volatiles by enclosing the vessels in inert plastic bags for about one week before the measurements."

Engineer creates life-size coffin for son's school project

Richard Briggs built the life-size anthropoid coffin, complete with bandaged mummy inside, for his son's year 3 class in **Lancaster**. Taking tips from the composition of one of Tutankhamun's three coffins, he constructed it from foam-board, polystyrene and papier-mâché. It took him 60 hours to complete the project, which has been a great success.

Karnak: Hatshepsut obelisk restored and re-erected

The 11 metre high, 80 tonne pink granite obelisk depicts Queen **Hatshepsut** and Amun. It had collapsed in ancient times, possibly during an earthquake, and its remains ended



Czech exhibition opens: 'Tutankhamun: his Tomb and his Treasures'

Bird mummies and museum display technologies

Egyptian archaeologist **Zahi Hawass** has opened the exhibition in **Brno, Czech Republic**. It contains 1000 replicas of Tutankhamun's tomb artefacts and a reconstruction of his tomb. The exhibition runs from 26th Apr 2022 - 8th Jan 2023. There is a very informative website at tut-ausstellung.com

Carol Anne Barsody, an archaeology research student at *Cornell University (USA)* is using an Ancient Egyptian bird mummy as the object for her study. A CT scan has shown it is a male sacred ibis, and DNA will be extracted to enable identification of its age and region of origin. Co-referencing with other DNA samples from a database should also determine the temple where it was found. A 3D rendering of the ibis will form part of an exhibition (plus online access), allowing a comparison between reception of the hologram as opposed to the actual mummy. Technical approaches like this allow exhibits to be shared more widely.

Forthcoming French-Portuguese exhibition: Pharaohs Superstars

This two-centre exhibition will take place from 22nd Jun - 17th Oct 2022 at the *MUCEM (Musée des Civilisations de l'Europe et de la Méditerranée)*, **Marseille**; and from 25th Nov 2022 - 6th Mar 2023 at the *Calouste Gulbenkian Museum*, **Lisbon**. It focuses on the status of pharaohs in Ancient Egypt and their continuing role as celebrity icons. It will bring together ancient artefacts, historical and contemporary pieces to trace the reception of Ancient Egypt up to the present day. 250 items will be on display from important European collections, including the *British Museum*, the *Musée du Louvre* (Paris), the *Museo Egizio* (Turin), and the *Ashmolean Museum* (Oxford). The exhibition will also commemorate the bi-centenary of the decipherment of hieroglyphs by **Jean-François Champollion** in 1822; and the centenary of the discovery of Tutankhamun's tomb by Howard Carter in 1922. Carter was a close advisor to collector **Calouste Gulbenkian** on his purchases of Egyptian antiquities.

Researchers analysed the contents of 11 kohl containers from the *Petrie Museum* in **London**, covering a broad range of locations and periods from Ancient Egypt. Using Fourier Transform Infrared Spectroscopy (FTIR), Electron Microscopy/Energy Dispersive X-Ray Spectroscopy (SEM/EDS), Powder X-Ray Diffractometry (PXRD) and Gas Chromatography/Mass Spectrometry (GC/MS), the team were able to analyse the inorganic and organic components. It turns out that kohl mixtures were very diverse. The inorganic minerals used apart from galena include biotite, paralaunite, lizardite, talc, hematite, natroxalate, whewellite and glushinskite. Organic materials included pine resin and beeswax.

Ancient emerald mines surveyed

The *Greco-Roman Museum* has received ten heavy artefacts to be put on display ahead of its opening. Most of the pieces had been in various museum storerooms. One of the largest is the **Isis Pharia** statue, previously housed in the *Maritime Museum*. It is carved from pink granite and currently is in three parts: a crown of the sun disc, topped by the two feathers of Isis; an upper part (head and chest), and a lower part. The three sections will be restored and joined together before being displayed in the museum's garden.

A recent study of the emerald mines in the Eastern Desert by researchers from the Polish *Centre for Mediterranean Archaeology* at the *University of Warsaw* found evidence of "funeral rites and social organization of local workers". Below the surface, the mines were composed of many closed rooms, tunnels and sacred places dating back to the Greco-Roman and Byzantine periods.

Sinai Peninsula: temple to ancient Greek god uncovered

Social media gets it wrong!

The remains of a temple dedicated to **Zeus-Kasios** (referencing **Mount Casius** on the Syrian-Turkish border, where **Zeus** is said to have once worshipped) have been excavated at **Tell el-Farma**. This site is also known by its ancient name of **Pelusium**, and lies about 30 km southeast of the modern city of **Port Said**. Ancient Pelusium was known for its quality beer production. The site was first identified by French Egyptologist **Jean Clédat** in 1910.

A picture of a sarcophagus circulated recently on social media sites, along with claims that a) it could only have been carved using laser technology; b) it was 4000 years old; and c) it was made of granite. In fact it is a diorite sarcophagus made for minister **Jimenvirbak** who lived during the 26th Dynasty (i.e. 2,700 years ago), and it is perfectly possible to carve diorite with the hand tools and techniques available to Ancient Egyptian stonemasons. The sarcophagus is on display at the *Museo Egizio* in Turin.

Sohag: Ptolemaic border checkpoint found

An Egyptian archaeological mission has discovered a mud-brick building from the reign of **Ptolemy**, used for inspection and monitoring of traffic between different regions. It was also a temple was dedicated to Isis. Finds at the site include a limestone purification basin, a votive plaque, five ostraca with Demotic inscriptions, 38 Roman coins, and a small part of a limestone column. Furthermore the archaeologists excavated the house of a foreman, and nearly 85 cemeteries dating from the end of the Old Kingdom up to the end of the Ptolemaic era. This area of the **Haridi** mountains was used for stone quarrying.

Compiled & Summarised by: Dulcie Engel





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ar gyfer y gwanwyn yn Siop Anrhegion
y Ganolfan Eifftaidd nawr!**

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eitemau ar gyfer y gwanwyn, megis
sgarffiau, crogdlysau, gwydr wedi'i
ailgylchu, cerfluniau, aroglarth a
gemwaith a wnaed â llaw.

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Y R B T Z K J M X R S E G I T L
J R S B U V A O U A C A P Z U L
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