

THE OSTRACON



EGYPTIAN
STUDY
SOCIETY

© DMNH 1989

PUBLICATIONS COMMITTEE

Judy Greenfield	Frank Pettee
Sandy Kerns	Mary Pratchett
David Pepper	Cheryl Preyer
Jill Taylor	

ESS STAFF LIAISON

Dr. Robert Pickering

THE OSTRACON is published three times per year by members of the Egyptian Study Society. The ESS, a support group of the DENVER MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY, is a non-profit organization whose purpose is to study ancient Egypt. Articles are contributed by members and scholars on a voluntary basis. Member participation is encouraged. Nothing may be reprinted in whole or in part without written permission.

IN THIS ISSUE

Page	
1	<i>Hatshepsut's Recarved Sarcophagus</i> by Peter der Manuelian & Christian Loeben
8	<i>Murder In Memphis</i> by Leo Depuydt
16	<i>Featured Pharaoh: King Sneferu</i> by David Pepper
18	<i>Featured God/Goddess: Set</i> by Frank Pettee
19	<i>House of Scrolls:</i> <i>The Carnegie Museum</i> by Bruce Rabe <i>Kingston Lacy Conference</i> by David Pepper

©1996 Egyptian Study Society

Publication of *THE OSTRACON* is supported by a grant from
THE PETTY FOUNDATION

THE RECARVED EGYPTIAN SARCOPHAGUS OF QUEEN HATSHEPSUT AND KING THUTMOSE I

By

Peter der Manuelian and Christian E. Loeben

About the Authors: Peter der Manuelian is Assistant Curator, Department of Ancient Egyptian, Nubian, and Near Eastern Art, Museum of Fine Arts, Boston. Christian E. Loeben is Instructor of Egyptology, Humboldt-Universität, Berlin.

Abridged with the authors' permission from Vol. 5, 1993, the Journal of the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston.

Some objects are exquisite works of art, masterpieces that earn their own place in the realm of art history. Others are of critical historical importance but may be nothing much to look at. Still more objects enlighten us on the religious and philosophical development of a particular culture. Rarely, however, are all of these features found in a single piece. When this is the case, the object in question is a treasure indeed. It is no exaggeration to assign the Boston Museum of Fine Art's Egyptian royal sarcophagus (Figure 1) to this elite category.

The Boston sarcophagus is one of only three royal stone sarcophagi currently on display outside Egypt.¹ It is one of very few from the 18th Dynasty to show multiple alterations and phases of decoration. It was originally prepared for Queen Hatshepsut, and then recut for her father, King Thutmose I, in what turned out to be a shuffling of royal burials and reburials. The sarcophagus is an artistic masterpiece from a royal atelier, a prototype for the funeral beliefs and traditions of a millennium, and a pivotal historical piece of the complicated puzzle of early New Kingdom political history.

Historical background. The history of the New Kingdom began after a family of Theban princes expelled the last ruler of several generations of domination by the Hyksos (literally "Rulers of Foreign Lands"). The Thebans reunited the country and established their own dynasty, which came to be numbered the eighteenth.

One of the greatest (and earliest) of this family of warrior pharaohs was King Thutmose I (1524-1518 BCE). Royal inscriptions list his successful campaigns in Nubia and in Naharin, the land across the Euphrates river in the kingdom of Mitanni (modern Syria). In addition to his ambitious construction projects at the temples of Karnak at Thebes and Osiris at Abydos, he was the first of a long line of rulers to select the Valley of the Kings in Western Thebes as the site of his tomb. The tomb was constructed with "no one seeing, no one hearing," by the mayor of Thebes and first chief architect in the Valley of the Kings, Ineni.²

Thutmose I's son and successor, Thutmose II, married his half-sister, Hatshepsut, whose name means "foremost of the noble ones." She bore the title of "King's Great Wife" during the reign of Thutmose II and was destined to become a major figure in the struggle for succession following his comparatively uneventful reign and early death. Thutmose III, Thutmose II's son by a lesser queen, was still too young to administer the country, and his aunt Hatshepsut stepped in as co-regent. A few years later, she elevated herself to the position of pharaoh while her young stepson was relegated to the background.³ Only twice before in Egyptian history had a woman taken the throne,⁴ but this is possibly the first case of two "kings" occupying the throne simultaneously. Queen-turned-king Hatshepsut gradually introduced the radical step of representing herself as a man, complete with male torso and ceremonial beard.⁵ A female pharaoh was almost a contradiction in terms, and at the very least posed problems for the scribes of the administration in assigning the "correct" gender pronoun when referring to Hatshepsut.

Ineni chronicled the events of Hatshepsut's political "coup" in an inscription:

... having ascended up to heaven, he (Thutmose II) joined with the gods, and his son (Thutmose III) arose in his place as King of the Two Lands (Upper and Lower Egypt). [But] while he (Thutmose III) ruled upon the throne ... [it was] his sister, the god's wife Hatshepsut, who governed the affairs of the land, the Two Lands being under her control. Egypt was made to work for her with bowed head ...⁶

Supported by powerful administrators such as Hapuseneb the vizier and the high steward of Amun, Senenmut,⁷ "King" Hatshepsut completed just over two decades on the throne. Her reign was not the tranquil, campaignless eye-of-the-storm of 18th Dynasty militarism that is sometimes claimed in the literature. In fact, like many rulers of the Thutmosid House, she is also credited with military ventures of her own.⁸ Her best-known accomplishments, however, were the manufacture, transportation, and erection of a pair of towering granite obelisks at the Temple of Karnak,⁹ and the expedition she dispatched to the foreign Land of Punt, probably located on the Red Sea coast.¹⁰

After 21 or 22 years, Hatshepsut's reign came to an end; exactly how remains uncertain. Her death and the demise of her supporting cast of high officials left Thutmose III finally in charge of the country. He eventually erased, covered up, or otherwise obliterated the name of his aunt from countless monuments, and she was customarily omitted from subsequent King Lists.¹¹ The Boston sarcophagus presents, in microcosm, the events and priorities of the rulers of the age, with its complicated succession of pharaohs muddled by differing scholarly theories formulated at the beginning of this century, and by more recent reassessments of the tombs and tomb owners.¹² It plays a critical role in our decipherment of funerary politics at the beginning of the 18th Dynasty.¹³

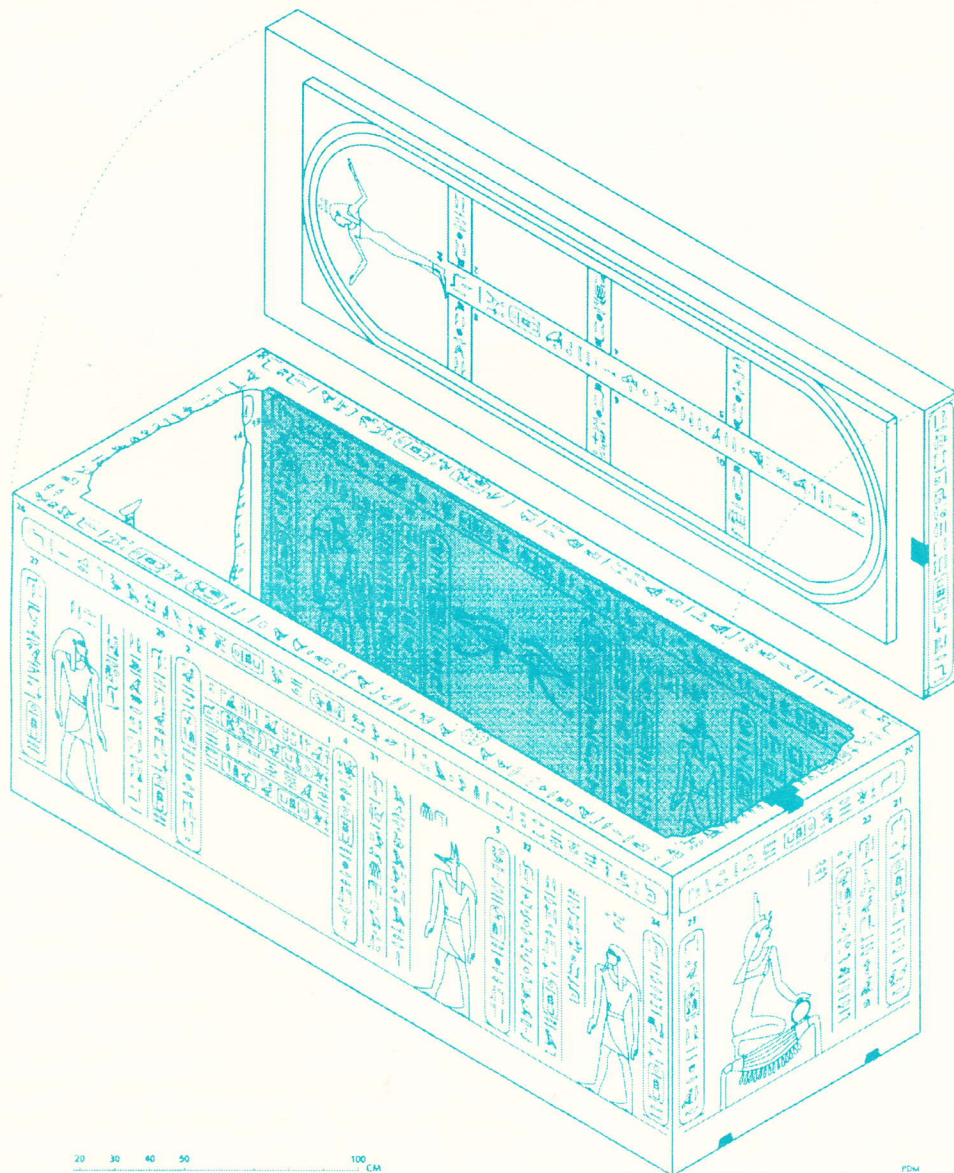


Figure 1. Hatshepsut's recarved Sarcophagus C.

Hatshepsut's sarcophagi. The Boston sarcophagus was the second of no fewer than three sarcophagi prepared for Hatshepsut, and it is a peculiar irony that probably none of them ever actually held her mummy. Before taking the throne, Hatshepsut had prepared a tomb for herself in a secret cleft, south of Deir el-Bahari. Although neither completed nor used, her tomb contained a finished, crystalline sandstone sarcophagus. In the sequence of early 18th Dynasty sarcophagi established by Hayes, this first sarcophagus of Hatshepsut was designated "Sarcophagus A." It is a rectangular box with long sides divided into three panels, all of which are blank except for hieroglyphic *udjat* eyes (which magically allow the deceased a view out eastwards towards the Land of the Living). With the exception of a representation of the sky goddess Nut on top of the lid, there are no figures on the sarcophagus.

After having herself crowned senior pharaoh, Hatshepsut clearly felt that a new royal tomb was in order; this time, as befit a pharaoh, in the Valley of the Kings.¹⁴ The cleft tomb was abandoned and excavation work began to create what is now known as tomb KV 20 in the Valley of the Kings.¹⁵ The new tomb was provided with a new quartzite sarcophagus for the female king. This sarcophagus, Hatshepsut's second, is the Boston sarcophagus, now known as "Sarcophagus C" [ed. note: "Sarcophagus B" was the one carved for Hatshepsut's husband, Thutmose II]. This piece was cut, decorated, inscribed, and completely prepared for Hatshepsut. The situation should have been settled here. But many changes of plan were still to follow.

Early in her solo reign, Hatshepsut may have experienced difficulty legitimizing her claim to the throne. Probably between years four and seven,¹⁶ Hatshepsut decided to expand upon her association with her deceased father. She ordered the removal of the body of Thutmose I from his own tomb in the Valley of the Kings (KV 38) for reburial next to her sarcophagus in her own second tomb (KV 20), still under construction. She relegated her second sarcophagus (Boston Sarcophagus C) to Thutmose I, and ordered it to be refitted to house his mummified body and its original wood

anthropoid coffin. This called for a complete resizing and redesign of the piece.

Now two sarcophagi richer, but still lacking one for her own eventual mummification and burial, Hatshepsut ordered yet a third sarcophagus for herself, now known as "Sarcophagus D," which is presently located in the Egyptian Museum in Cairo. This piece is similar, although larger and more elaborate, to the Boston Sarcophagus C.¹⁷

Eventually, the excavation of Hatshepsut's tomb KV 20 was deep enough to allow both pharaohs, Hatshepsut and Thutmose I, to be buried in the innermost chamber.¹⁸ However, at some point during the reinterment of Thutmose I's mummy, it was suddenly discovered that his original anthropoid wood coffin was too large to fit inside Hatshepsut's newly altered Sarcophagus C. With apparent haste, the interior head and foot ends of the sarcophagus were widened from the inside. This resulted in the obliteration of the decoration added for Thutmose I, and damaged the texts on the tops of the sarcophagus walls which had been recently altered by Hatshepsut for Thutmose I's benefit. Decoration was hastily reapplied to the interior head and foot ends, the king's wooden coffin was placed inside, and the lid was closed over him.

In modern times, Howard Carter, working on behalf of Rhode Island lawyer and entrepreneur Theodore M. Davis, cleared Hatshepsut's tomb and discovered the two royal Sarcophagi C and D.¹⁹ The Egyptian Antiquities Service presented the recarved Sarcophagus C of Thutmose I to Davis, who in turn donated it in 1904 to the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston.

What became of the actual mummified bodies of Thutmose I and Hatshepsut? Neither were found in tomb KV 20. Thutmose I's travels did not end after his reburial by his daughter, Hatshepsut, in tomb KV 20. Thutmose III, finally in control of the country after Hatshepsut's death, sent his agents to reopen KV 20, lift the mummy of Thutmose I out of his Sarcophagus C, and move it back to that king's original tomb KV 38. Rather than use the altered Sarcophagus C, which still bore the names and titles of the female king, Thutmose

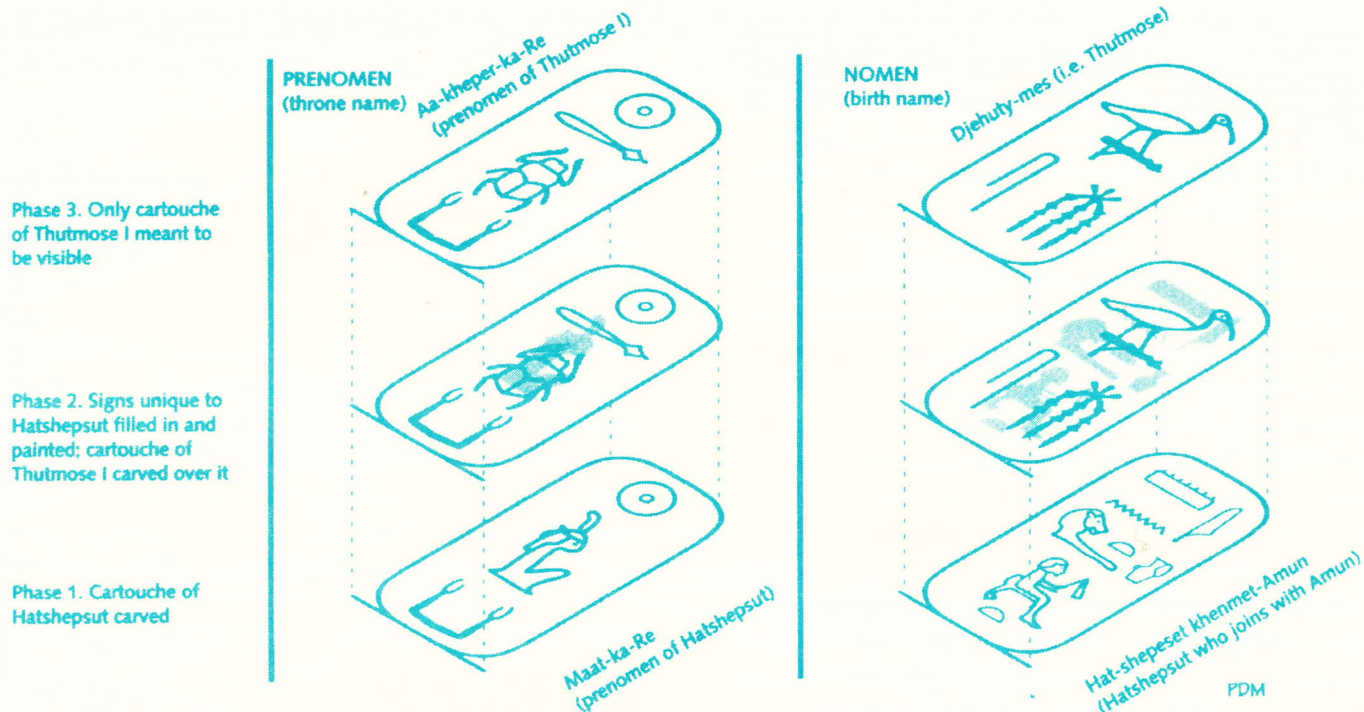


Figure 2. The recarved Cartouches of Thutmose II

III ordered another stone "Sarcophagus E," made for his grandfather. This had the effect of removing Thutmose I from any monument or site that could be associated with Hatshepsut. The king was moved again, however, and was eventually discovered in 1881 on the other side of the cliffs from the Valley of the Kings. His body was found in the royal cache of mummies at Deir el-Bahari, site of a secret reburial of numerous pharaohs and royal family members by the priests of Dynasty 21.²⁰ The body of Hatshepsut has yet to be definitively identified.²¹

The Decorations on the Boston sarcophagus.

The Boston Sarcophagus C is currently exhibited with its lid propped up to reveal the interior. It is made of brownish quartzite, the stone of choice for early 18th Dynasty sarcophagi. One solid piece was used for the lid and another for the box.

Hatshepsut's order for the alteration of the sarcophagus to accommodate the coffin of her father resulted in some surfaces being shaved and completely reinscribed, other (formerly blank) surfaces being inscribed for the first time, and still others being given only royal name changes and conversion of grammatical endings from feminine to masculine (Figure 2). The last-minute enlargement of the interior head and foot

ends for Thutmose I's unexpectedly large wooden anthropoid coffin called for the removal of up to 6 cm (two inches) from the interior, destroying parts of the inscriptions and figures.

The layout of the sarcophagus's decoration reflects the fundamental Egyptian concern with proper orientation. The land of the northward-flowing Nile was a strictly delineated country, where the east bank represented the Land of the Living and the rising sun, and the west bank the Land of the Dead and the setting sun. It is on the west bank of the Nile that most Egyptian necropolises are located, and this directional orientation assigned specific deities to the east and west sides of the sarcophagus. The east side generally belongs to the sun-god and the realm of the living, whereas the west side contains speeches by the God Of The Underworld, along with spells from the *Book of the Dead*. The placement of the sarcophagus in the tomb also followed suit, with the head end to the north, and the east and west sides oriented accordingly. Tomb KV 20 and its two Sarcophagi C and D were the exception to this rule. The head ends of these were found facing south, and the "mortuary" (i.e. west) sides facing east. Far from a break in Egyptian funerary tradition, this aberration may be explained by the fact that the excavators were

compelled to curve the sepulcher back around on itself due to the poor quality of the bedrock. Nevertheless, they seem to have treated the tomb as if it continued straight on its axis towards Hatshepsut's mortuary temple at Deir el-Bahari.

The inscriptions fall into three basic categories: (1) dedications by the deceased on behalf of specific deities; (2) prayers for protection made by the deceased to specific deities; and (3) speeches by specific deities promising such protection for the deceased. Eighteenth Dynasty royal sarcophagi play a critical role in the development of early New Kingdom literature - that is, the evolution of the Theban version of the *Book of the Dead*, replacing the Middle Kingdom *Coffin Texts* and their counterpart, in turn, the Old Kingdom *Pyramid Texts*. Sarcophagus C provides some of the earliest versions of certain spells, particularly one of the first complete editions of Chapter 72, the *Book of Going Forth into Day and Opening Up the Tomb*.

There is an extremely important historical text on Hatshepsut's Sarcophagus C that says:

She [Hatshepsut] made it [the sarcophagus] as a monument to her beloved father, the perfect god, Lord of the Two Lands, King of Upper and Lower Egypt, Aa-kheper-ka-re, son of Re, Thutmose [I], justified.

On the exterior and interior sides of the lid, the sky goddess, Nut, stands atop a central vertical inscription which shows alterations from Hatshepsut to Thutmose I. Alterations also appear on the transverse bands of text which begin on the lid and continue down the long sides of the sarcophagus. On the lid the feminine "t" ending in the word *imꜣhy.t*, "the revered one," has consistently been filled in with resin to change it to the masculine form, *imꜣhy*. The vertical inscription down the center of the exterior of the lid contains a speech by the queen that has been modified and assigned to the king:

Recitation (by) the king of Upper and Lower Egypt, Aa-kheper-ka-re, justified. He says:
O' mother Nut, stretch yourself over me,

that you might place me among the Indestructible Stars which are in you, and I will not perish.

The second panel on the exterior long sides are filled with *udjat* eyes. In earlier coffins from the Middle Kingdom, the eyes occupy the first panel at the head end; by Hatshepsut's time they have moved one panel down, closer to the foot end.²² In the earlier Middle Kingdom coffins, the mummy lay on its side, with the head turned directly to the carved or painted *udjat* eyes. However, by the New Kingdom, with its larger coffins, the mummy lay upon its back. Thus, it was less important which panel contained the *udjat* eyes as long as they were on the side.

The short ends of the sarcophagus are decorated with inscriptions accompanying the typical kneeling figures of the goddess Nephthys (head end) and Isis (foot end). Each wears a tight-fitting dress and the so-called *khat* headdress. The goddesses kneel on the commonly shown *nbw* ("gold") sign, a beaded collar which here stands for Seth (the god of chaos and enemy of his brother, the resurrection deity Osiris). Seth is, thus, vanquished beneath the goddesses.

Egyptian sarcophagi came to emulate different elements and structures at various periods in their history. Several of these elements are conflated for the first time in the early 18th Dynasty corpus under discussion, with the Boston sarcophagus setting a developmental trend. These sarcophagi evolved out of the form of Middle Kingdom coffins. By the end of the dynasty, they had evolved from the exterior simple box concept and incorporated elements from anthropoid coffins. Like their anthropoid counterparts, the earliest royal coffins of the 18th Dynasty were probably also made of wood. The original sarcophagus of Hatshepsut as queen (Sarcophagus A) was probably the first stone sarcophagus of the series and represents a transition of the form from one medium (wood) to another (stone). The transverse bands of inscriptions derive from the anthropoid coffins of the 17th and early 18th Dynasties. They represent the bandage wrappings wound around the mummy itself.

The development of Hatshepsut's three stone sarcophagi also betrays her growing concern with bolstering her legitimacy on the throne. Each monument shows ever-increasing numbers of titles and epithets, a concern absent from the later sarcophagi of the 18th Dynasty.

Hayes has spoken of Sarcophagus C as representative, not of a reign, but of a period.²³ Perhaps no other monument embodies the fascinating period of the early 18th Dynasty as well as the Boston sarcophagus. With its superlative craftsmanship, complex political history, and developmental and religious significance, the sarcophagus is indeed a microcosm for a dynasty on the rise to an era of prosperity and prominence.

ENDNOTES

1. The other two sarcophagi belong to Seti I (made of alabaster and in the Sir John Soane's Museum, London) and Ramses III (made of red granite; the lid of which is in the Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge; the lower half in the Louvre Museum, Paris); see Bertha Porter and Rosalind L. B. Moss, *Topographical Bibliography of Ancient Egyptian Hieroglyphic Texts, Reliefs, and Paintings I, The Theban Necropolis, Part 2, Royal Tombs and Smaller Cemeteries*, 2nd ed. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1964), pp. 526, 643.
2. For the biography of Ineni, see Kurt Sethe, *Urkunden des ägyptischen Altertums IV* (Berlin and Graz: J.C. Hinrichs, 1961); cf. more recently Eberhard Dziobek, *Das Grab des Ineni; Theban Nr. 81*, *Archäologische Veröffentlichungen* 68 (Mainz am Rhein: Philip von Zabern, 1922), pp. 84, and 226.
3. On the coronation of Hatshepsut, see Roland Tefnin, "L'an 7 de Touthmosis III et d'Hatshepsout," *Chronique d'Égypte* 48 (1973), pp. 232-42; Siefried Schott, "Zum Krönungstag der Königin Hatshepsut," *Nachrichten von der Akademie der Wissenschaften zu Göttingen*, I Phil.-hist. Klasse 6 (Göttingen, 1955), pp. 195-219; Jean Yoyotte, "La date supposéé du couronnement d'Hatshepsout," *KEMI*, 18 (1968), pp. 85-91; William C. Hayes, *Varia from the Time of Hatshepsut*, *Mitteilungen des Deutschen Archäologischen Instituts, Abteilung Kairo* 15 (1957), pp. 78-80.

4. On the Queens Nitocris and Sobeknefru see Christiane M. Zivie, "Nitokris," in W. Helck and W. Wetendorf, eds., *Lexikon der Ägyptologie IV* (Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz, 1982), cols. 513-514; Jurgen von Beckerath, "Sobeknofru," in *Lexikon der Ägyptologie IV* (Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz, 1982), cols. 1050-1051; Alan H. Gardiner, *Egypt of the Pharaohs* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1961), p. 102. For a general introduction to the problems of Hatshepsut's reign see Emily Teeter, "Wearer of the Royal Uraeus: Hatshepsut," *KMT I* (1990) pp. 4-13, and 56-57. The same issue contains additional essays on the period by Catharine Roehrig and Dennis Forbes.
5. See Elisabeth Staehelin, "Zum Ornat an Statuen regierender Königinnen," *Bulletin de la Société d'Égyptologie Genève* 13 (1989) pp. 145-156.
6. Sethe, *Urkunden des ägyptischen Altertums IV*, 59.13-60.4 (=lines 16-17 of the ancient text); and Dziobek, *Das Grab des Ineni; Theban Nr. 81*, pp. 49-50, 54.
7. For recent discussions on Senenmut, see Dorman, *The Monuments of Senenmut*; idem, *The Tombs of Senenmut*; Meyer, *Senenmut: eine prosopographische Untersuchung*.
8. See Donald Redford, *History and Chronology of the Eighteenth Dynasty of Egypt: Seven Studies* (Toronto: University of Toronto, 1967), pp. 57-87; Walter-Friedrich Reineke, "Ein Nubienfeldzug unter Königin Hatschepsut," *Ägypten und Kusch*, *Schriften zur Geschichte und Kultur des Alten Orients* 13 (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 1977), pp. 369-376.
9. Labib Habachi, *The Obelisks of Egypt: Skyscrapers of the Past* (Cairo: American University in Cairo Press, 1984), p. 60.
10. Kenneth A. Kitchen, "Punt and How to Get There," *Orientalia* 40, pp. 184-208; Kemp, *Ancient Egypt; A Social History*, pp. 136-137.
11. Just how soon after his accession Thutmose III began his campaign of erasures is uncertain; see C.F. Nims, "The date of the dishonoring of Hatshepsut," *Zeitschrift für ägyptische Sprache* 93 (1966), pp. 97-100; W.Seipel, "Hatshepsut I" in *Lexikon der Ägyptologie II* (Weisbaden: Otto Harrassowitz, 1977), col. 1051, n. 72; idem, "Zur Verfehlung Hatschepsuts durch Thutmose III.," *Acts of the 1st International Congress of Egyptologists* (Berlin: 1979), pp. 581-582.

12. See Kurt Sethe, *Das Hatschepsut-Problem noch einmal untersucht ...* (Berlin: Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1932); W.F. Edgerton, *The Thutmosid Succession* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1933); Hayes, *Royal Sarcophagi* pp. 141-146; idem, "Egypt: Internal Affairs from Tuthmosis I to the Death of Amenophis III," in *The Cambridge Ancient History II, Part I* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1973), chapter 9, pp. 315-322. On reassessments of royal tomb ownership, see Romer, "Tuthmosis I and the Bibân el-Molûk: Some problems of Attribution," *Journal of Egyptian Archaeology* 60 (1974), pp. 119-133.
13. One of the first scholars to sort out the history behind the evidence of the sarcophagi was H.E. Winlock, "Notes on the Reburial of Tuthmosis I," *Journal of Egyptian Archaeology* 15 (1929), pp. 56-68.
14. The best plan and section of KV 20 may be found in Kent Weeks et al., "The Berkeley Map of the Theban Necropolis, Report of the Third Season, 1980," *Newsletter of the American Research Center in Egypt* 113 (1980), pp. 38-39. Photographs of the interiors of both tombs KV20 and 38 are now published by George B. Johnson, "No One Seeing, No One Hearing: KV38 & KV20: The First Royal Tombs in the Valley of the Kings," *KMT* 3 (1992-93), pp. 64-81.
15. Porter and Moss, *Topographical Bibliography II*, 2, pp. 546-47; Davis et al., *The Tomb of Hâtshopsîtû*, pp. 77-80, pl. 8; Elizabeth Thomas, *The Royal Necropolis of Thebes* (Princeton: Moorman, 1966), pp. 75-77; John Romer, *Valley of the Kings* (New York: William Morrow and Company, 1981), pp. 192-195; Eric Hornung, *The Valley of the Kings*.
16. See Hayes, *Royal Sarcophagi*, pp. 146-149.
17. For a color photograph of the exterior foot end and a succinct description of Sarcophagus D, see Mohammed Saleh and Hourig Sourouzian, *The Egyptian Museum Cairo, Official Catalogue* (Mainz: Philipp von Zabern, 1987), cat. 131.
18. For notes on the architect of Hatshepsut's tomb, KV20, whose statue is now in the Louvre, see P.E. Newberry, "A statue of Hapu-senb: Vezir of Thothmes II," *Proceedings of the Society of Biblical Archaeology* 22 (1900), pp. 31-36, and James Henry Breasted, *Ancient Records of Egypt II*, (New York: Russell & Russell, 1906), pp. 160-162, esp. § 389.
19. Davis et al., *The Tomb of Hâtshopsîtû*. Carter included a watercolor in the publication showing Sarcophagus D as found, pl. 9 (facing p. 78), reproduced in black and white in Romer, *Valley of the Kings*, p. 193. See also Reeves and Taylor, *Howard Carter Before Tutankhamun*, pp. 78-79.
20. Gaston Maspero, *Les Momies Royales de Déir el-Baharî* (Paris: Ernest Leroux, 1889), pp. 581-82, pls. 7B, 8B; G. Elliot Smith, *The Royal Mummies* (Cairo: Institut français d'archéologie orientale, 1912), pp. 25-28; pls. 20-22. See also J.R. Harris and E.F. Wente, *Royal Mummies of the Eighteenth Dynasty: A Biologic and Egyptological Approach*, in C. Nicholas Reeves, ed., *After Tutankhamun. Research and Excavation at the Royal Necropolis at Thebes* (London: Kegan Paul International, 1992), pp. 2-20; Reeves, *Valley of the Kings*, pp. 183-92.
21. On the female occupant of KV60, see Donald B. Ryan, "Who is buried in KV60?" *KMT* 1 (1990), pp. 58-59.
22. Hayes, *Royal Sarcophagi*, pp. 64-66.
23. Hayes, *Royal Sarcophagi*, pp. 136-137.



Glazed Amphora from the 18th Dynasty
Metropolitan Museum of Art, NY

**MURDER IN MEMPHIS:
THE STORY OF CAMBYSES' MORTAL
WOUNDING OF THE APIS BULL**

**By
Leo Depuydt**

About the Author: Leo Depuydt was educated at Yale University, the University of Tübingen, the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, the Hebrew Union College in Cincinnati, and the University of Louvain. After teaching two years at Yale, he has been with the Department of Egyptology at Brown University since 1991.

Reprinted from the *Journal of Near Eastern Studies* 54 no. 2 (1995), The University of Chicago; edited with the author's permission.

This report reopens the investigation into one of the great crime cases of antiquity, the alleged murder of the sacred Apis bull by Cambyses in the Ptah Temple at Memphis soon after the Persian conquest of Egypt, circa 525 BCE. The case owes its fame to the stature of both the accused and the presumed victim. The former, Cambyses, had shortly before the conquest become ruler of the largest empire that the world had hitherto seen. The latter, the Apis bull, emanation and embodiment of the god Ptah, inspired a cult that most vividly stirred the Egyptian religious imagination.¹ The accusation of murder, hence, carried with it a grave count of sacrilege. The principal question has always been whether the heinous crime did or did not take place, and the answer to this question has varied over time. It is the focus of the following inquiry.

This is the third time that the case has been reopened. The episode is so often mentioned in historical writings over the last two and a half millennia that citing every reference, if I had been able to do so, would have been tedious. However, three periods, which partly overlap, can be distinguished in the continuing interpretation of this historical tradition. The first period is by far the longest and runs from the earliest references a few decades after the event to about 1850; the second period spans from about 1850 to roughly 1900; and the third period covers from roughly 1900 to the present.
Spring 1996

If a trial had been held at any time in the first period (up to 1850), the jury would not have needed much deliberation to reach a resounding "Guilty" verdict! The most often-cited report of what allegedly happened, that which stands closest to the events, is that of Herodotus of Halicarnassus, who wrote around 450 BCE.² Not long after his conquest of Egypt, Cambyses undertook an expedition southward which ended in disaster. Upon his return to Memphis, Herodotus says the following happened:³

(III, 27) When Cambyses came to Memphis, Apis appeared among the Egyptians ... On his appearance, the Egyptians immediately put on their best clothes and engaged in festival. At the sight of the Egyptians doing this, Cambyses formed the suspicion that they were making merry at his misfortunes. He ... asked them how it was that when he, Cambyses, was in Memphis before, the Egyptians had done nothing of this sort, but only for now, when he was there after having lost most of his army. The Egyptians told him that their god was wont to appear only at very long intervals of time and that, whenever he did so appear, all of the Egyptians rejoiced and kept festival ... Cambyses said: "What! Some sort of tame god has come to the Egyptians, and I am not to know of it!" and so he bade the priests bring Apis to him ... When the priests brought Apis to him, Cambyses was nearly lunatic. He drew his dagger and made to stab Apis in the belly but struck the calf in the thigh. At this he burst into laughter and said to the priests, "You miserable wretches, is that the kind of your gods, things of blood and flesh and susceptible of iron? Surely this god is worthy of the Egyptians; but, all the same, you will not lightly make a mock of me." ... The festival among the Egyptians had broken up ... and Apis, wounded in the thigh, died as he lay on the floor of the shrine. After he died of his wounds, the priests buried him in secret from Cambyses. It was directly as a result of this, say the Egyptians--this deed of wrong--that Cambyses went mad, though indeed he was not in true possession of his wits before.

The image of Cambyses as a cruel madman persisted throughout classical antiquity and down to early modern times, in Egypt and elsewhere. But two events in the 19th century bore the seed of change. The decipherment of hieroglyphic writing by J.F. Champollion in 1822 finally allowed the ancient Egyptians to speak

for themselves. The discovery of the Serapeum (Figure 1), burial place of the Apis bulls, by A. Mariette in 1850, was the first great archaeological find in the young discipline of Egyptology. It was located in the desert at Saqqara, a few miles from the ancient capital of Memphis in the Nile Valley. The living Apis resided in the Ptah temple in nearby Memphis itself where the celebrations reported by Herodotus were held.

The evidence from the Serapeum is still not fully published,⁴ but as it began to come to light in the last century, a second epoch in the interpretation of the Apis murder case was inaugurated. It was only natural that scholars would try to confirm Herodotus' account by finding the Apis he mentions among those buried in the Serapeum. Commemorative stelae placed in the Serapeum on the occasion of Apis burials reveal that two Apis bulls had lived at the time of Cambyses' conquest in the fifth year of his reign (530-522 BCE). Around that time, Apis XLII had died and Apis XLIV was born. (The numbers of the bulls are those assigned by Mariette; and although the numbers are not successive, the bulls certainly were).⁵

Apis XLIV was born in Year 5, Month 5, Day 29 of Cambyses' reign (May 29, 525 BCE) according to stele Louvre IM.4187.⁶ Having lived 7 years, 3 months, and 5 days, rather less than the average life span of about twenty years, this bull died in Year 4, Month 9, Day 4 of Darius I's reign (August 31, 518 BCE). As tradition required, it was buried 70 days later in Year 4, Month 11, Day 13 (November 8, 518 BCE).⁷

The predecessor of Apis XLIV was Apis XLII. Apis XLII was buried in Year 6, Month 11 (October 28 - November 26, 524 BCE) of Cambyses' reign according to stele Louvre IM.4133.⁸ Its date of death is unknown, but since a new bull is, as a rule, born only after its predecessor has died, it may be assumed that Apis XLII died before the date of birth of its predecessor, Apis XLIV--Year 5, Month 5, Day 29--under Cambyses.

That a new Apis is born after its predecessor's death is one of three rules pertaining to the Apis

cult derived from all the available evidence (see below). No two Apis bulls were, therefore, ever alive at the same time. What took place, then, shortly after the Persian conquest was an Apis succession.

To learn from excavations that a bull had indeed died around the time of Cambyses' conquest, as Herodotus reported, was too good to be true. Apis XLII was, therefore, readily accepted as Herodotus' bull, and this is the opinion found in standard works on Egyptian history in the second half of the 19th century.⁹ Thus, the guilty verdict handed down in the classical sources seemed confirmed by the archaeological evidence, and hence there were no grounds for appeal.

However, around the turn of the century, serious doubts arose as to whether Apis XLII could in fact have been the one meant by Herodotus. A third phase in the history of this problem commenced. Two arguments were put forward against identifying Apis XLII with Herodotus' bull. It should be noted that the second, more conclusive, argument had to wait for G. Posener's publication of Louvre stele IM.4133 in 1936.¹⁰

First, Apis XLII received a regular burial and the sarcophagus was even a personal gift of Cambyses as its inscription indicates.¹¹ In support of this first argument, one might add that Cambyses' piety was praised in glowing terms by Udjahorresne, one of his Egyptian counsels. But Udjahorresne was after all a "collaborator."¹²

Second, a year-date of 27 can still be read in Louvre IM.4133. Since this must be the year of birth of Apis XLII in Amasis' reign (that is, 544/43 BCE), Apis XLII would have been nearly 20 years old when it died. It could, therefore, hardly have been the $\mu\omicron\sigma\chi\zeta$, "calf," mentioned by Herodotus (III 28).¹³

Since only a single Apis is alive at any one time, and Apis XLIV died only in 518 BCE, no other bull was available to replace Apis XLII as the one referred to by Herodotus. As a result, Herodotus' report was rejected as fictional and with it the entire related classical tradition. The



Figure 1. Inside the Serapeum. (From Mariette)

Egyptian story of the murder of the Apis bull had now been “stripped from all foundation in fact,”¹⁴ and “the entire tradition about Cambyses’ abhorrent and sacrilegious crime [had] collapse[d] into nothing.”¹⁵ It became common to think that “Mariette’s excavations had brought the proof that Cambyses could not have committed the crime.”¹⁶

Therefore, the guilty verdict had been overturned on appeal. The view that the Egyptian evidence contradicts Herodotus now prevails. Its dominance may be illustrated by statements in three valuable survey articles of an encyclopedic nature in the fields of Achaemenid studies, ancient history, and Egyptology (further bibliography is found in these contributions). In *CAMBRIDGE ANCIENT HISTORY*, one reads that “tradition adds to the wounding of the Apis the animal’s lingering death and clandestine burial. The hieroglyphic record scarcely bears this out ... It is a piece of folklore. ‘Not proven’, or even ‘not guilty’, is the necessary verdict.”¹⁷ The *LEXICON DER ÄGYPTOLOGIE* notes that “[t]his unsympathetic picture painted by the Classical authors of the atrocities inflicted upon the Egyptians by Cambyses and his agents must now be *Spring 1996*

somewhat tempered. The Apis bull, which Cambyses allegedly murdered, actually died in Year 6 of his reign and was ceremoniously interred.”¹⁸ According to the *CAMBRIDGE HISTORY OF IRAN*, Herodotus’ account is “disproved by a stele from the Serapeum ..., which testifies to the solemn burial in that year of the Apis bull born in the twenty-seventh year of Amasis.”¹⁹

With these eloquent defenses, the Apis murder case would seem to be closed and Cambyses vindicated from the accusation brought against him by the classical tradition. However, a reconsideration of the evidence, presented here, creates firm grounds for higher appeal. It will be demonstrated below that the archaeological evidence does not contradict Herodotus. If anything, it rather confirms him.

M. Miller has already observed that “the Apis story in Herodotus seems to be pure fiction, yet it is the hinge of the whole narrative, and it is most difficult to believe that there was not some remote foundation for it.”²⁰ This general consideration is reasonable but can hardly count as proof.

Proof can be derived from an understanding of the Apis career. The four principal events in the career of the Sacred Apis are birth, installation, death, and burial. Some stelae give precise dates for all four events as well as the exact life span of the bull. Three rules regarding the relationships between these events can be derived from the available evidence as working hypotheses.

- (1) A new bull is born after the death of its predecessor.²¹
- (2) Death and burial of a bull are separated by 70 days, the time allotted to an elaborate ritual including the embalming.²²
- (3) A bull is buried before its successor is installed.

The expected sequence of events in any succession of Apis A by Apis B would, therefore, be as follows.

1. Apis A dies.
2. Apis B is born, and Apis A is buried.²³
3. Apis B is installed.

In view of the following discussion, it may be kept in mind that the *installation* of a new Apis is preceded by a matter of months by the *burial* of its predecessor.

A harmonization of the archaeological evidence from the Serapeum and Herodotus can now be attempted. In rehabilitating Herodotus, A. Klasens, in a well-documented study, has taken the lead,²⁴ but though occasionally quoted, he seems to have found no following.

Klasens makes two suggestions regarding the succession of Apis XLII by Apis XLIV - the first false, the second correct. First, he assumes that the two bulls could have lived simultaneously as long as they did not reign at the same time²⁵ and he cites an instance mentioned by Otto.²⁶ However, Apis XLIV was born on Month 5, Day 24 of Year 28 of the Ptolemy VIII Euergetes II, after its predecessor died in Year 27.²⁷

Klasens' second suggestion, however, is on the mark.²⁸ At III 27, Herodotus stated, "When Cambyses came to Memphis, Apis appeared (εφάνη) among the Egyptians." In terms of the four principal events in the Apis career (see Page 11

above), this event has always been interpreted as the birth of an Apis. After all, the Apis is described as a "calf." However, the birth of the Apis was not celebrated nationwide, and the Apis was usually not even born in Memphis.²⁹ Yet Herodotus described how the Egyptians, upon Cambyses' inquiring about the cause for these festivities, explained that "their god would appear at very long intervals of time and that, whenever he did so appear, all the Egyptians rejoiced and kept festival" (III 28). Since Apis bulls lived on average 20 years, one might expect to experience only about two to three appearances in a lifetime.

Of the three other landmarks in the career of the Apis, death and burial have no cause for joy. The only event to which Herodotus can, therefore, have referred is the installation. The verb φαίνεσθαι, "appear," used by Herodotus to refer to the event, is in all probability a Greek equivalent of Egyptian *ḥꜥy*, "appear," denoting the pharaoh's installation.³⁰

It has already been concluded that the Apis calf whose death is described by Herodotus cannot be Apis XLII or Apis XLIV. Apis XLII was not a calf but rather a bull about 20 years old, and Apis XLIV did not die around the conquest but later, in 518. Any attempt to harmonize Herodotus with the archaeological evidence must be based on the assumption that three different bulls played a role in the events during the first couple of years after the Persian conquest. Importantly, there is no overlap between Herodotus and the evidence from the Serapeum with regard to these three bulls: two (Mariette's XLII and XLIV) are only known from the Serapeum; the third, a bull that died young at the time of its installation, is only known from Herodotus. Then, however, Herodotus would have been more interested in the highly unusual incident of a king murdering an Apis than in the ongoing and uneventful successions of Apis bulls over the centuries.

These three bulls may now be considered separately to establish whether the archaeological evidence and Herodotus contradict one another.



Figure 2. Apis Sarcophagus at the Serapeum. (From Mariette)

1. As to the calf mortally wounded by Cambyses, Herodotus states that it was buried *λαθρη*, "secretly." Consequently, one might expect not to find a trace of this bull in the Serapeum, which is indeed the case. Herodotus and the silence of the archaeological evidence are, therefore, not at variance, and Klasens is justified in postulating an Apis x.³¹
2. Herodotus does not mention other bulls, but the existence of two more can be inferred from his report and what is known about the Serapeum's traditions. He does record the installation of an Apis, and according to the rules outlined above, an installation was generally preceded by the burial of the previous bull.³² An official burial should, therefore, have occurred around this time. In fact, the records from the Serapeum confirm that Apis XLII received a stately burial under the auspices of Cambyses. This burial must have taken place when Cambyses was away in the south on his ill-fated expedition or perhaps during the period between the conquest and the expedition. It is not known how long after the conquest (around 525 BCE) Cambyses returned to Memphis for the second time, but judging from the events described by Herodotus (III 14-26), many months must have passed.³³ Sometime in that period the burial of Apis XLII occurred. The known burial date in Year 6 suits this scenario.
3. From Herodotus' report that the Apis had died of a wound inflicted by Cambyses, the finding of a new bull can be inferred. Having to find a replacement was very

exceptional, but so was the murder of an Apis.³⁴ There is no record as to how this was done, or whether a procedure existed for replacing elected Apis bulls that had died young before or during the installation ceremony. Sacred herds were kept throughout Egypt and a substitute would presumably have been found whose record showed that it was born after the death of Apis XLII. This would be Apis XLIV. The installation of this Apis is mentioned in its epitaph,³⁵ but the text breaks off tantalizingly before the date. One expects this date to have fallen after the date of burial of Apis XLII in Year 6, Month 11 of Cambyses, as the Serapeum's customs require. The birth date of Apis XLIV is Year 5, Month 5, Day 29 of Cambyses. As mentioned earlier, this implies that Apis XLII died before that date. The result would be a gap of a year and a half between the death and burial of Apis XLII, rather than the required 70 days. This gap is highly irregular and it has often been discussed.³⁶ Perhaps the irregularity is somehow related to the incident of the Apis murder. However, since the Serapeum's administrators would probably have found a bull that was born after the death of Apis XLII, or at least have so dated its birth, the year and a half gap could well be *bona fide*.³⁷

In summary, the circumstances in which the substitute could have been found are unknown. Again, there are no incongruities between Herodotus and the archaeological record.

Conclusion. Did Cambyses mortally wound the Apis? Ultimately, this depends on whether one believes what Herodotus and his informants said that Cambyses did. The preceding lines have at least shown that no essential points in his account are "demonstrably false,"³⁸ as is commonly assumed.

On the whole, Herodotus faithfully reported the information he gathered, but he did not screen it. When telling fantastic stories, he hardly concocted them himself. However, in recording them, he was "probably indifferent to the Thucydidean question 'But *did* they happen?'

because, like Plato, he knew very well that men's fantasies and deeds live terribly close to each other and often move interchangeably."³⁹

Accordingly, Herodotus probably heard the story of the Apis murder in Egypt from Egyptian informants. When Herodotus was a young man, people who had themselves been young adults when the murder allegedly happened must still have been alive. Herodotus could easily have met someone who was in Memphis at the time of Cambyses' return from the south. In this light, it is also noteworthy that a detailed examination of Herodotus' treatment of the preceding Saite Period (664-525 BCE) has shown that he is generally trustworthy.⁴⁰

After the discovery of the Serapeum, Herodotus' veracity in the Apis case was subordinated to the question of whether the bull he mentioned can or cannot be identified among those found in the Serapeum. Scholarship has not distanced itself from this question's priority ever since. Whether answered negatively or affirmatively, the question owes its enduring priority in part to the original delight that must have accompanied the archaeological discovery that there had indeed been an Apis succession around 525 BCE. However, because the truth of Herodotus' story was thought to hinge on it, scholarship of the third stage, while rightly rejecting the theories of the second stage regarding the identity of the Apis mentioned by Herodotus, had to extend this rebuttal to Herodotus' account itself. Thus, the baby was thrown out with the bath water.

The way in which the above question hardened in the middle of the last century reminds one of certain trends in biblical archaeology. If the Bible mentions a hill, there must be a hill. If Herodotus says there is a bull, then where is the bull?

If Cambyses were tried in a modern U.S. court on the basis of the existing evidence, he might well walk away a free man, being able to afford the best lawyers money can buy and benefiting from the advantage of the principle of presumed innocence or the requirement to prove guilt beyond a doubt. However, unlike juries, ancient historians do not need to reach verdicts and can

calibrate plausibilities in an ongoing process. In light of the evidence, I would personally rather believe that Cambyses is to be presumed guilty until proven innocent.

ENDNOTES:

1. For a recent survey of this Memphitic cult, with focus on the Ptolemaic period, see D. J. Thompson, *Memphis under the Ptolemies* (Princeton, 1988), pp. 190-211. At Memphis the burials began in the 13th century BCE, but the cult is already attested in the earliest records (cf. W. K. Simpson, "A Running of the Apis in the Reign of Aha and Passages in Manetho and Aelian," *Or.*, n.s., 26 [1957]: 139-42).

2. For a list of classical sources, see E. Kießling, "Die Götter von Memphis in griechisch-römischer Zeit," *Archiv für Papyrusforschung* 15 (1953): 28, n. 8. A distinctive variation on the literary theme of Cambyses and the Apis is found in the Coptic story of Cambyses' invasion of Egypt, preserved in fragmentary form in six parchment leaves, now in Berlin (see H. L. Jansen, *The Coptic Story of Cambyses' Invasion of Egypt: A Critical Analysis of Its Literary Form and its Historical Purpose*, Avhandling utgitt av det Norske Videnskaps-Akademi i Oslo, II: Hist. Filos. Klass., no. 2 [Oslo, 1950]).

3. The translation is taken from D. Green, *Herodotus: The History* (Chicago, 1987), pp. 222-24.

4. See M. Malinine, G. Posener, and J. Vercoutter, *Catalogue des stèles du Sérapéum de Memphis*, 2 vols. (Paris, 1968); Vercoutter, *Textes biographiques du Sérapéum de Memphis: Contribution à l'étude des stèles votives du Sérapéum*, Bibliothèque de l'École des Hautes Études, IV^e Section (Sciences historiques et philologiques) (Paris, 1962). Recent contributions are A. Farid, "Neun demotische Inschriften aus dem Serapeum von Memphis im Louvre-Museum," *Mitteilungen des Deutschen Archäologischen Instituts, Abteilung Kairo* 49 (1993): 69-91; P. Prévot, "Observations sur des stèles du Sérapéum de Memphis," *Revue d'Égyptologie* 43 (1992): 215-21.

5. For bibliographical references on Apis XLII and Apis XLIV, see B. Porter and R. L. B. Moss, assisted by E. W. Burney, *Topographical Bibliography of Ancient Egyptian Hieroglyphic Texts, Reliefs, and Paintings, III²: Memphis. Part 2, Saqqâra to Dahshûr. Fascicle 3 (III² 777-1014)*, 2d ed. rev. by J. Málek (Oxford, 1981), pp. 799-800.

6. G. Posener, *La première domination perse en Egypte: Recueil d'inscriptions hiéroglyphiques*, Bibliothèque d'Étude 11 (Cairo, 1936), pp. 36-31.

7. For the stelae in which this information is contained, see Posener, *La première domination perse*, pp. 38-39.

8. *Ibid.*, pp. 30-35. The day-date is damaged.

9. Cf. F. K. Kienitz, *Die politische Geschichte Ägyptens vom 7. bis zum 4. Jahrhundert vor der Zeitwende* (Berlin, 1953), p. 58 with n. 2, referring to works by such

pioneers in Egyptian history as E. Meyer and A. Wiedemann.

10. Posener, *La première domination perse*, pp. 30-35. This needs to be taken into account when evaluating discussions of this problem dated before 1936, including the influential entry "Kambyses" in A. Pauly and G. Wissowa, *Realenzyklopädie der classischen Alterumswissenschaft* (Stuttgart, 1917).

11. See J.V. Prášek, *Kambyses u[nd] die Überlieferung des Altherthums*, Forschungen zur Geschichte des Altertums I (Leipzig, 1897), pp. 10-11; Posener, *La première domination perse*, p. 174; Kienitz, *Die politische Geschichte Ägyptens vom 7. bis zum 4. Jahrhundert*, p. 58.

For the text of the inscription, see B. Gunn, "The inscribed Sarcophagi in the Serapeum," *Annales du Service des Antiquités de l'Égypte* 26 (1926): 82-94, at 85-86; Posener, *La première domination perse*, pp. 35-36.

12. A.B. Lloyd, "The Inscription of Udjahorresnet, a Collaborator's Testament," *JEA* 68 (1982): 166-80.

13. Posener, *La première domination perse*, p. 174 with n. 4.

14. Prášek, *Kambyses u[nd] Geschichte Ägyptens vom 7. bis zum 4. Jahrhundert*, p. 59.

15. Kienitz, *Die politische Geschichte Ägyptens vom 7. bis zum 4. Jahrhundert*, p. 59.

16. I. Hofmann, "Kambyses in Ägypten," *Studien zur altägyptischen Kultur* 9 (1981): 179. Hofmann cites many literary parallels from other Near Eastern literatures, interesting in their own right, in order to explain how the fictional account of the bull's killing might have come into existence.

17. J. D. Ray, "Egypt 525-404 BC," *Cambridge Ancient History*, 2d ed., vol. 4 (Cambridge, 1988), p. 260.

18. R. S. Bianchi, "Perser in Ägypten," *Lexikon der Ägyptologie*, vol. 4 (Wiesbaden, 1982), p. 943.

19. E. Bresciani, "The Persian Occupation of Egypt," *Cambridge History of Iran*, vol. 2 (Cambridge, 1985), p. 504.

20. M. Miller, "The Early Persian Dates in Herodotus," *Klio: Beiträge zur alten Geschichte* 37 (1959): 35.

21. J. Vercoutter, "Une épitaphe royale inédite du Sérapéum (contribution à l'histoire des Apis et du Sérapéum de Memphis)," *Mitteilungen des Deutschen Archäologischen Instituts, Abteilung Kairo* 16 (1958): 341. Moreover, the new Apis was very often found shortly after the death of its predecessor (*ibid.*, p. 343).

It cannot be discounted that the Serapeum's administrators occasionally tampered with the numbers to

make them match the rule if a suitable bull had been born slightly earlier.

22. For this ritual, see Vercoutter, "Apis," *Lexikon der Ägyptologie*. vol. 1 (Wiesbaden, 1975), pp. 338-50. The principal source is a bilingual papyrus, in Hieratic and Demotic, edited by W. Spiegelberg, "Ein Bruchstück des Bestattungsritual der Apisstiere (Demot. Pap. Wien Nr. 27)," *Zeitschrift für ägyptische Sprache und Altertumskunde* 56 (1920): 1-33, now re-edited by R. L. Vos, in *The Apis Embalming Ritual: P. Vindob. 3873*, *Orientalia Lovaniensia Analecta* 50 (Leuven, 1993).

23. The order of these two events seems to vary, but it is not crucial to the following argument. Two contrastive examples may suffice. In the case of the succession that occurred in Year 16 of Necho II (Kienitz, *Die politische Geschichte Ägyptens vom 7. bis zum 4. Jahrhundert*, p. 155), Apis B was born before Apis A was buried: Apis A died in Year 16, Month 2, Day 6; Apis B was born in Year 16, Month 2, Day 7; and Apis A was buried in Year 16, Month 4 Day 16. However, in the succession of years 27 and 28 of Ptolemy VIII (Euergetes II), Apis A died in Year 27, Month 10, Day 26 (H. Brugsch, "Der Apis-Kreis aus den Zeiten der Ptolemäer nach den hieroglyphischen und demotischen Weihinschriften des Serapeums von Memphis," *Zeitschrift für ägyptische Sprache und Altertumskunde* 24 [1886]: 20-22) and was, therefore, presumably buried 70 days later on the last day of Year 27 or the first day of Year 28, depending on how the 70th day was counted; Apis B was born after that in Year 28, Month 5, Day 24 (E. de Rougé, "Mémoire sur quelques inscriptions trouvées dans la sépulture des Apis [suite]," *Revue égyptologique* 5 [1887]: 2).

24. A. Klasens, "Cambyses en Egypte," *Jaarbericht van het Vooraziatisch-Egyptisch Genootschap, Ex Oriente Lux* 3/9-10 (1945-48): 347-48.

25. *Ibid.*, pp. 346-47.

26. E. Otto, *Beiträge zur Geschichte der Stierkulte in Aegypten*, *Untersuchungen zur Geschichte und Altertumskunde Aegyptens* 13 (Leipzig, 1938), p. 15.

27. See Thompson, *Memphis under the Ptolemies*, pp. 289-90. This was first established by Brugsch, "Der Apis-Kreis," pp. 19-24.

28. Klasens, "Cambyses en Egypte," pp. 347-48.

29. For the birthplaces of the Ptolemaic bulls, see Thompson, *Memphis under the Ptolemies*, pp. 284-96.

30. Klasens, "Cambyses en Egypte," p. 347, n. 65.

31. *Ibid.*, p. 314. This proposal of an Apis x has been described as a somewhat desperate attempt to hold on to the historicity of the Apis murder (Hofmann, "Kambyses in Ägypten," p. 180), but it should be remembered that such a rebuttal is inspired by the confidence that the archaeological evidence contradicts Herodotus.

32. When the *Cambridge History of Iran*, following common opinion, states that Herodotus' report that Cambyses "incensed at finding the people of Memphis in a festive mood due to the appearance of the new Apis, ... mortally wounded the sacred bull which was then buried secretly by the priests" is "disproved by a stela from the Serapeum..., which testifies to the solemn burial [in Year 6 of Cambyses] of the Apis bull born in the twenty-seventh year of Amasis" (Bresciani, "Persian Occupation," p. 504; italics mine), then this is a non sequitur because an "appearance" of one bull is not disproved by, but, rather, presupposes and is even confirmed by the slightly earlier occurrence of the "solemn burial" of another bull.

33. Another factor is that a bull is not usually installed earlier than the age of nine months, and two years is not abnormal (Vercoutter, "The Napatan Kings and Apis Worship [Serapeum Burials of the Napatan Period]," *Kush* 8 [1960]: 74).

34. There is a tradition that, in 343 BCE, Artaxerxes Ochus also murdered an Apis (Kienitz, *Die politische Geschichte Ägyptens vom 7. bis zum 4. Jahrhundert*, p. 108; A. B. Bosworth, *A Historical Commentary on Arrian's History of Alexander* [Oxford, 1980], p. 262; Thompson, *Memphis under the Ptolemies*; p. 106, n. 3).

35. For the text, see Posener, *La première domination perse*, pp. 36-41.

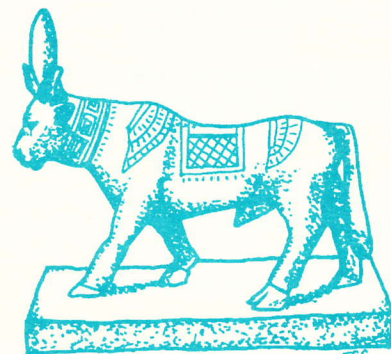
36. For a remarkable case in which a burial was apparently delayed for years, see Thompson, *Memphis under the Ptolemies*, pp. 199, n. 53; 295.

37. For a discussion of this problem and attempts to explain it, see my forthcoming article in *JAOS*, "Evidence for Accession Dating under the Achaemenids," esp. *Excursus* 2.

38. Kienitz, *Die politische Geschichte Ägyptens vom 7. bis zum 4. Jahrhundert*, p. 58.

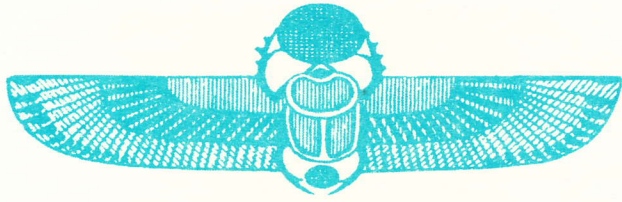
39. Green, *Herodotus: The History*, p. 11.

40. H. de Meulenaere, *Herodotus over de 26ste Dynastie. Bijdrage tot het historisch-kritisch onderzoek van Herodotos' gegevens in het licht van de Egyptische en andere contemporaine bronnen*, *Bibliothèque du Muséon* 27 (Leuven, 1951).



Apis bull from the tomb of Khnumhotep, 12th Dynasty

WHO'S WHO IN ANCIENT EGYPT



From Newberry, Ancient Egyptian Scarabs

FEATURED PHARAOH

KING SNEFERU

By David Pepper

About the Author: David Pepper is a professional engineer and commercial pilot and has a BS in Physics, an MS in Aerospace Engineering, and a Masters in Business Administration. He has served on the ESS Board as treasurer and is currently chair of the publications committee.

Sneferu was the birth-name of the son of King Huni, the last pharaoh of the Third Dynasty. On the Papyrus Prisse it is written, "And it came to pass that the Majesty of King Huni died and that the Majesty of King Sneferu arose as a beneficent king over all the earth." According to Manetho's List of Kings, Sneferu is considered to be the first king of the Fourth Dynasty.

Sneferu's reign began about 2620 BCE, and according to the Turin Papyrus, he reigned for 24 years. When he was crowned, Sneferu took on the Horus name *Nebmaat*, "Lord Of Truth." Historians recorded that he was a beneficent king who founded cities and built many temples.

There is a relief in the Egyptian Museum in Cairo which was collected by Flinders Petrie at the site of the turquoise mines at Wadi Maghara, in the Sinai. It shows the king dressed in a plaited kilt and wearing a divine crown of double plumes and double horns set upon a rounded

wig. Sneferu brandishes a mace in his right hand and, with his left hand, grasps the hair of a defeated Asiatic prisoner who begs for mercy.

At a neighboring site in the Sinai, Sneferu was depicted with Hathor, the mistress of turquoise. From the Third Dynasty onwards, royal expeditions visited the Sinai mines and records of successful missions were carved onto cliff faces to glorify the king.

Three famous Egyptian artifacts date from Sneferu's reign:

1. The "Geese of Meidum" fresco was found at the mastaba of Nefer-maat who was buried near the Pyramid of Huni, Sneferu's father, at Meidum. It was Sneferu who completed the construction of Huni's pyramid, as recorded on a commemorative stele found next to the pyramid.



King Sneferu. (From Fakhry)

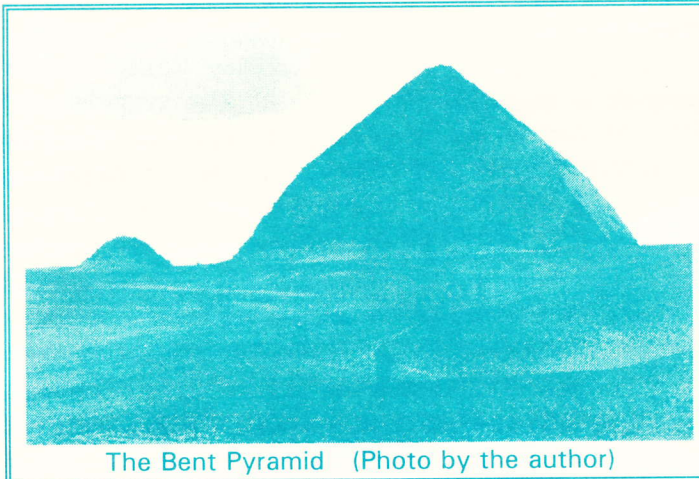
2. The twin statues of Prince Rahotep (probably a son of Sneferu) and his wife Nofret are now in the Cairo Museum. These life-sized statues are masterpieces of art with inlaid eyes of opaque quartz and pupils of rock crystal. Rahotep sports a dapper mustache, and his wife has a heavy shoulder-length wig and painted diadem.

3. The reconstructed furniture of Queen Hetepheres, wife of Sneferu, is now on display in the Cairo Museum. This furniture was found by Reisner in a tomb shaft next to Khufu's pyramid. Khufu was the son and successor of Sneferu, and the builder of the Great Pyramid at Giza.

Sneferu was often mentioned in legends that were copied by scribes in later eras. In the Papyrus Westcar, which was written during the later Hyksos Period, there is the story of "The Lady of the Lake." It is the tale of how the king

summoned the magician Djedemankh to suggest an activity to relieve his boredom. Soon afterward, Sneferu was being rowed around by 20 beautiful maidens, clad only in fishnet gowns. A turquoise charm was subsequently lost in the water, and the magician cast a spell to retrieve it from the bottom of the lake.

In another literary work, "The Prophecy of Neferti," Sneferu summons a prophet to foretell the future. The king supposedly hears a tale that predicts the coming of the First Intermediate Period and the accession of a strong king, Amenemhet, who will re-unite the Two Lands into one country. Modern scholars think this tale, which dates from the Middle Kingdom, was a "justification tale" written by Amenemhet to justify his usurpation of the throne.



The Bent Pyramid (Photo by the author)

Almost every Old Kingdom pharaoh built a pyramid, and Sneferu was no exception. It is known from Old Kingdom inscriptions that Sneferu had at least two pyramids. Evidence has been found that the Bent Pyramid at Dashur was called the "Southern Pyramid of Sneferu." It is felt that Sneferu's "Northern Pyramid" must have been the one that is located one mile north of the Bent Pyramid, and which is now called the "Red" Pyramid.

The Bent Pyramid gets its name from the sudden change in slope from the steep 54 degrees at the bottom, to a shallow 43 degree angle about half-way up. The Bent Pyramid is a very large structure, 335 feet in height, that still has most of its smooth casing stones *in situ*. This pyramid is also unique in that it has two entrances: the usual northern entrance, and another high up on the western side. There are high corbelled ceilings in its two large chambers, and the upper chamber has large beams of cedar wood still in place.

Sneferu's mortuary temple was found in 1951 by Ahmed Fakhry. It was buried under the sand

and attached by a causeway to the Bent Pyramid. Inscriptions found in this temple describe the many temples Sneferu erected to honor the gods throughout Egypt; There is evidence that the temple supported a cult center dedicated to Sneferu up through the Middle Kingdom and on into Ptolemaic times. Fakhry says, "We found [ancient incense altars] there, still standing upright and unharmed. On one was a bowl of charcoal, waiting in vain for the attendant priest to come and sprinkle incense upon the embers."

The Red Pyramid is larger than the Bent at 340 feet in height and contains more material due to its shallower 43-degree slope, which runs all the way up to the top. Although its casing stones are missing, several blocks inscribed with Sneferu's name were found at the Red Pyramid. This pyramid also has high corbelled ceiling chambers.

The Red and Bent Pyramids are the third and fourth largest pyramids in Egypt, second in size only to the two pyramids of Sneferu's successors, Khufu and Khafre, at Giza.

On the Palermo Stone it is recorded that in year 13 of Sneferu's reign, a giant ship of state, 100 cubits in length, called *The Adoration of the Two Lands*, was built. The construction of another 60 smaller ships is also mentioned, all built with 40 shiploads of cedar wood imported from Lebanon.

REFERENCES

Clayton, Peter A. *CHRONICLE OF THE PHARAOHS*. Thames and Hudson: London, 1994.

Fakhry, Ahmed. *THE PYRAMIDS*. University of Chicago Press: Chicago, 1961.

von Zabern, Philipp. *THE EGYPTIAN MUSEUM CAIRO*. Prestel-Verlag: Munich, 1987.

FEATURED GOD/GODDESS



SET

by Frank Pettee

About the Author: Frank Pettee is one of the most active members in the ESS. He has served on the ESS board and is currently an editor on the Publications Committee. Pettee also gives lectures to local school children and volunteers for many DMNH activities.

Was he given a raw deal, or did he deserve the bad reputation given him in later years?

Set (or Seth) was an early god, portrayed with a nondescript animal head, endowed with long ears and a large beak-like snout, on a human body. His hieroglyphic determinative is either the figure of

an animal  or a stone  symbolizing the desert country on either side of the Nile. He was considered the god of the south, in contrast to Horus, the god of the north, which was held to be a friendly division during the early dynasties.

Set's chief cult center was at Ombos, near Nekhebet, and he was considered Lord of Upper Egypt by his followers. The original "role" of Set was not the evil personification attributed to him in later years. In the *Pyramid Texts*, he acted as a friend of the dead and even assisted Osiris to reach heaven. He also held an important part in the coronation ceremonies. Both Set and Horus are depicted in carvings and paintings as pulling on opposite ropes thus uniting Upper and Lower Egypt.

Set was the third offspring of Nut and Geb following Osiris and Isis, and was born on the third of the five intercalary days of the Egyptian year. (The calendar of ancient Egypt consisted of 12 months of 30 days each, with five intercalary days left over). Ra, the sun god, had forbidden Nut to marry Geb. When she disobeyed, Ra ordained that she would be unable to bear children in any month of the year. Thoth felt sorry for her and, by playing a game of draughts with Khonsu, the moon god, won from him one seventy-second part of his light, amounting to those five days. On each of these days Nut was able to give birth to a child: Osiris, Horus, Set, Isis, and Nephthys.



Set. (from Rohl)

Set married his sister, Nephthys, and was said to be the father of Anubis. Desert animals, those that live in the water, and any animal with red hair or red skin were considered children of Set.

His evil reputation probably began about the time of King Menes, (First Dynasty, 2920 BCE). The followers of Set were at odds with those followers of Horus who lived in the south. This strife

resulted in the re-writing of the Osiris myth to include the feud between Horus and Set over the murder of Osiris. As the story goes, the character of Set was blackened by the followers of Osiris, who believed he was born at the wrong time and in the wrong place. They claimed Set had torn himself from the womb of his mother and burst through her side. This did not impede her and the myth goes on to say that Nut had numerous children, for she was a mother-goddess as well as the goddess of the sky.

Although Set was the murderer of Osiris, and the Tribunal of God's judgment had been in favor of Horus, Ra sympathized with the claims of Set. Ra depended on Set who stood in the solar barque to defend it against the enemies of Ra, especially the serpent Apep (Apophis). As consolation to Set for the loss of his throne, he was exiled to the sky and became the Great Bear constellation.

Set regained some of his status in the 19th Dynasty when some of the Ramesside kings included "Beloved of Set" in their royal titles. In the 20th Dynasty, the worship of Osiris became predominant, and Set was forever demoted to the personification of Evil. The representations of him on monuments and paintings were erased and replaced with that of Thoth or Sobek.

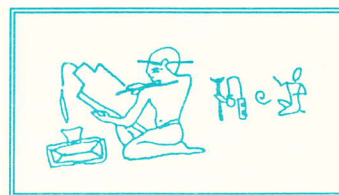
Both good and evil are attributed to Set, and more of his story can be researched by those who are interested.

REFERENCES:

Ions, Veronica. *EGYPTIAN MYTHOLOGY*. The Hamlyn Publishing Group: Feltham, Middlesex.

Spence, Lewis. *ANCIENT EGYPTIAN MYTHS AND LEGENDS*. Dover Publications Inc.

HOUSE OF SCROLLS



The Egyptian Collection of the Carnegie Museum of Natural History

by
Bruce Rabe

The Carnegie Museum of Natural History in Pittsburgh houses a small but select collection of Egyptian archaeological material in the Walton Hall of Ancient Egypt. With no "superstar" pieces (except the famous Carnegie Boat), the museum wisely chooses to concentrate on more prosaic artifacts that illustrate various aspects of Egyptian culture. This approach is very successful; the artifacts are skillfully integrated into dioramas, murals, videos, a computer station, and other displays.

The centerpiece of the collection is the Carnegie Boat. It is amazing that a piece so important, discovered relatively late in the history of Egyptian archaeology, should lack documentation. Inexplicably, the exact provenance of the boat is uncertain. Based on the similarity to other boats at the Field Museum in Chicago and at the Cairo Museum, it is almost certainly one of four boats excavated by de Morgan at the pyramid of Senusert III at Dashur during the 1894-95 field season. The boat was purchased by an agent of Andrew Carnegie as a surprise gift for the museum; even the museum director did not learn of the gift until the boat arrived in 1901! The 30-foot vessel now occupies an entire wall in the collection, where it is incorporated into an exhibit on the nautical tradition of Egypt.

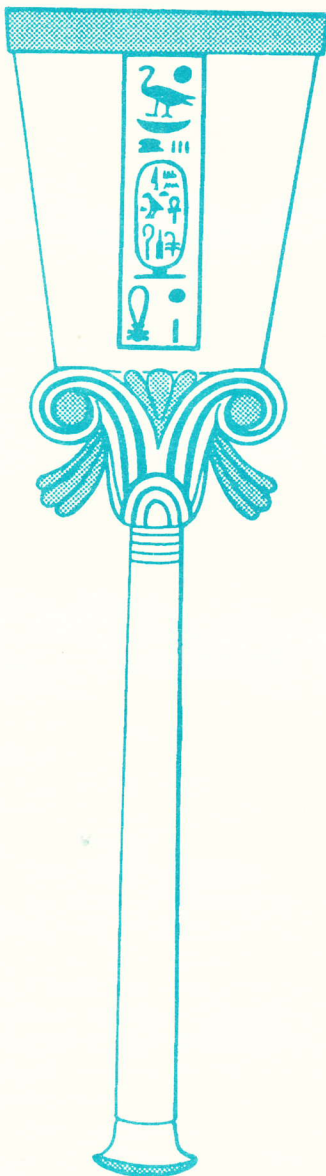
Another highlight is the Funerary Religion Exhibit. This showcases artifacts collected by the museum during excavations of 17th Dynasty tombs in Abydos. The items are displayed in a simulated tomb, which includes wall paintings copied from the originals by projecting slides onto the exhibit walls. The result gives the feel



Set and Horus pouring libation over Seti I.
(from Budge)

of an actual tomb while still allowing the inspection of individual items.

The Carnegie Museum publishes a well-known series of popular pamphlets on various Egyptological topics, including one on the royal boat; these, and a well-illustrated exhibit catalog, are available in the museum bookstore. The Natural History Museum building connects to the Carnegie Museum of Art, which also has a few Egyptian items on display. Both museums are at 4400 Forbes Avenue, Pittsburgh. Museum hours are 10-5 Tuesday through Saturday and 1-5 Sunday.



Papyrus burnisher in ivory from the tomb of Tutankhamun, 18th Dynasty, Cairo Museum.

The Life and Times of William John Banks Conference

by
David Pepper

At the 1995 Colloquium held at Kingston Lacy, the former Banks estate near Wimborne Minster in Dorset, 12 speakers presented papers outlining the life and times of William John Banks and his contemporaries. Early sketches were shown and quotations from journals were read. Papyri that were collected were translated, and discoveries were put into their historical perspective.

Banks, the lord of the manor house of Kingston Lacy in Dorset, England, lived during very interesting times. The French had just capitulated Egypt to the British, and the lands of the Near East and their ancient cities had just become accessible to foreigners. A contemporary and friend of Lord Byron, Henry Salt, J.L. Burckhardt, and Giovanni Belzoni, Banks was an English country gentleman who set off to explore the world in the early 19th century. His privileged upbringing had trained him well for the skills he would need as an explorer. He was intelligent, very well read in ancient Latin and Greek texts, and he had been trained as an artist and copyist as part of his schooling.

Banks also had an eye for collecting. After serving as a member of the British Parliament from 1810 to 1812, he began his travels which would last eight years. During his travels he regularly sent *objects d' arts* home for display in his private collection. Banks acquired paintings and portraiture from famous schools of art in Spain. He traveled widely in Syria and made two expeditions up the Nile beyond Abu Simbel.

Banks visited Egypt in 1814-15 and then again in 1818-19, copying the scenes he saw on monuments. Often working for days, or even months, on end, he would climb ladders and sketch by candlelight, sometimes for many hours without a break. Some of his drawings are the only remaining evidence we have today of wall paintings which have suffered irreparable loss. Banks also collected stelae and papyri, as did many of the other early explorers; at this

time the hieroglyphic script had not been fully deciphered, and it was hoped that bringing the actual artifacts back to scholars would enable the hieroglyphs to be decoded.

His house at Kingston Lacy still contains his collection of antiquities. With objects such as a large obelisk removed from Philae with the help of Belzoni, a giant stone sarcophagus, and smaller objects like perfume jars and ushabtis, the collection is an important glimpse into Egypt's past. The collection is now displayed in the former billiard room of the house, and 25 stelae from the workmen's village at Deir el Medina look down onto the pool table!

Banks should best be remembered, however, as an exacting draftsman who painstakingly took measurements and made meticulous drawings of the tombs and temples he visited. He was one of the few early visitors who tried to faithfully reproduce the monuments he saw, instead of doing a series of rough sketches in the field, and then later using artistic license to dramatize the scene when back in England.

The contributions of these early explorers should not be underestimated. These pioneers produced volumes of notes and reference books that excited the next generation of scholars and explorers and helped to found the new science of Egyptology.

Speakers at the Colloquium included Egyptologists T.G.H. James, Stephen Quirke, and Lise Manniche. Other speakers included art historians, biographers, and archivists. The conference was excellent, the subject material fascinating, and the location was in one of the most elegant houses in Britain; hence, it was truly a memorable event.



THE DENVER MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY

2001 Colorado Blvd.
Denver, CO 80205



EGYPTIAN
STUDY
SOCIETY

© DMNH 1989