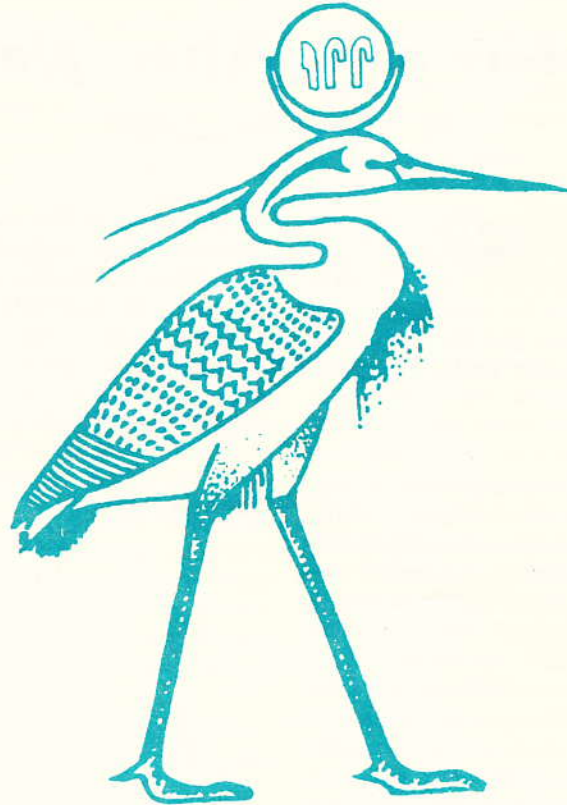


THE OSTRACON



EGYPTIAN STUDY SOCIETY

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IN THIS ISSUE

Page	
2	<i>Royal Mummies: Before and After, part 2</i> by Marianne Luban
8	<i>Dwarfs in Ancient Egypt</i> by Bonnie Sampsell
14	<i>Life on an Egyptian Expedition</i> by Dick Hardwood
16	<i>The Electric Papyrus: New Media Reviews</i>

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Royal Mummies

Before and After, Part 2

by Marianne Luban

About the Author

Marianne Luban is a life-long student of ancient Egypt who specializes in the royal mummies of the New Kingdom and in Egyptian language. She is a writer living in Minnesota, whose short fiction collection, "The Samaritan Treasure" is described in "500 Great Books By Women" (Viking/Penguin), and the moderator of an Internet discussion list called "ScribeList", devoted to ancient Egyptian topics.

continued from Vol. 9 No. 1

Personally, I had much rather something other than a single amulet had survived of Seti I - a good and true bust or statue. Oddly enough, the sculptured works are conspicuously lacking. One full-size statue from the "Karnak cache" is undoubtedly of the king and evidences great charm but various parts are missing, most regrettably the nose and the inlay of the eyes. Besides the maimed statue, all I can recall are a smaller piece showing the king kneeling (in the Metropolitan) and an unidentified head in the Louvre, wearing the blue battle crown, which looks like Seti to me I believe this void is one of the many mysteries of ancient Egypt in view of the fact that Seti's reign was not exactly a brief one. Fortunately for his legacy to us, the art of relief carving reached its highest point at this time, so that all connected with this pharaoh appears terribly elegant - mummy, portraits, buildings, and tomb. In my opinion, King Seti's fine face is worth any artistic masterpiece displayed in a museum and is surely superior to most in beauty and age. To me, the fact that this man and others like him were not returned to earth long ago gives us a human link to the past that ought to be as significant for us as it would have been to them had they been able to imagine the situation. Perhaps to Seti, dying in relative youth, it might have compensated for not making it to old age had he possibly known how much he is still admired three-thousand years later. The final thing I want to mention about Seti I is the "cervical collar" the priests fashioned of linen and resin for the decapitated Pharaoh. Sometimes I look at their bulky, clumsy effort and wish it gone from this noble mummy. Seti liked to wear those necklaces of "Egyptian blue" disks strung thickly together, which the fashionable crowd of his day put on over their flat, collar-type jewelry. How nice that beautiful blue must have looked against his tanned skin! These days Seti I is turned black as a boot, but Maspero claimed that, when first unwrapped, the king was still a shade of brown, although this was not his natural color. The ancient Egyptians came in several colors, of course, like their modern counterparts, but Seti, for one, was most likely of European complexion. We know this because, when his son, Ramses II, was taken to France to be cured of his fungus and insect problems, it was determined that he was a leukoderm, a white man with auburn hair and possibly even light eyes. Another clue to Seti's coloring is on the coffin he was found in. Originally part of the pharaoh's funerary equipment, the case had been ravaged and then altered to look serviceable, but the eyes of the coffin are of blue inlay.

The old saying is "Die young and leave a good-looking corpse," but Ramses II was happy not to comply. One can imagine several generations of his subjects feeling certain that the god-king would never die at all, having been around as long as anyone could remember - rather like Queen Victoria in her time. However, this pharaoh had the sad task of burying many of his children and heirs apparent, who themselves fulfilled the usual life expectancy. If one wanted to accomplish something in ancient Egypt, one had to do it quickly. As aged as the world is, real medicine, the kind that can keep the bulk of the populace alive past sixty-five, is less than a hundred years old.



Ramses II

Ramses II was the man who had so many children - over a hundred - that his genes must still be circulating in Egypt today. It is thought that the king lived to be ninety, but it is difficult to be sure about that. His mummy looks as well-preserved as that of his father, Seti I, but so very old as to seem almost reptilian of countenance. When I traced the profile of Ramses II (with the Ramesids the profiles are too exotic and interesting to do any other view), I was at first sure he would come out looking like that old actor, George Arliss, who played in *Disraeli*, but he didn't! Ramses II wasn't his father's son for nothing, it turns out. Winifred Brunton did a remarkable job portraying the elderly Ramses in many respects, yet I think she missed the boat when it came to understanding the near-impossible refinement of the features of this family. Brunton gave Ramses a prominent but ordinary nose because I feel she thought the nose on the mummy was too strange in its exquisite, Semitic way to be for real, that it was probably the result of the mummification process and, besides, failed to match the proboscis on the statues. But I have seen this sort of nose on the living and I know it exists. I also know that Seti I could not possibly have been the milk-fed wimp he appears in Brunton's painting of him. Sorry, Winifred.

Maybe I have too much imagination, but I am convinced that King Ramses II was at least as striking a man as Seti, his sire. At any rate, he was quite a bit taller, about six feet, seven when he wore the tall, blue *khepresh*. Seti was 5' 7" at the most, but perfectly-proportioned in the way that taller men seldom are. Still, all those formidable woman writers of the last century who traveled in Egypt seem to vote for Ramses II as the best-looking pharaoh as evidenced by his likenesses.

Just why the stonecutters who worked on Ramses' colossal monuments couldn't seem to carve out the king's very sharp, jutting nose is another mystery. Perhaps it really wasn't considered a handsome nose at the time, too reminiscent of the "wretched Asiatics" to the East, and so some of the usual "cosmetic surgery" was done via the statues making them conform to those of the pharaohs of the previous dynasty (but not those from Amarna, the gods forbid!). I, myself, like this sort of nose on a man, although I will admit that on the mummy of Ramses II it appears vulture-like now, its having been stuffed with peppercorns in antiquity to keep its shape not withstanding.

When I drew the mouth, it came out smiling automatically. Then I remembered that the black granite statue of the king in the Turin Museum is smiling, too. While somewhat idealized, the Turin statue seems to capture the real Ramses, a man very likely much more charismatic than one is able to gather from what is left of him.

Merenptah (Beloved of Ptah) was not the eldest son of Ramses the Great, but he was to eventually succeed him. By that time Merenptah was already in his fifties or sixties, and so he could not expect to have the long reign of his predecessor.

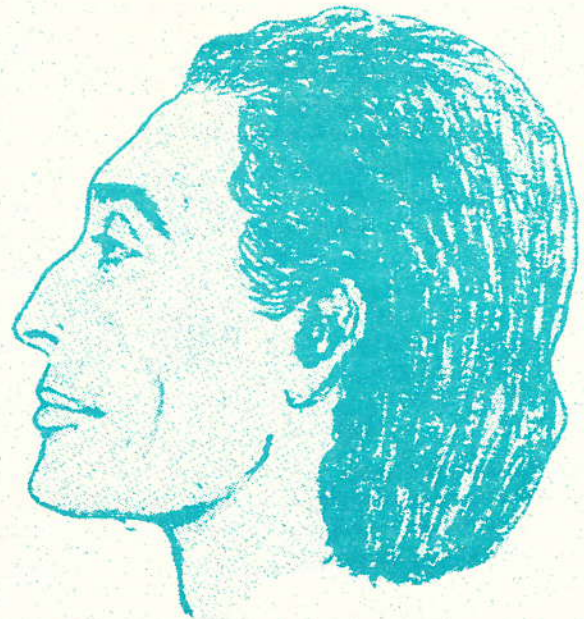
This king has been nominated by some scholars as the Pharaoh of the Exodus, one of the reasons being that his mummy was encrusted with a salty residue, implying that Merenptah had drowned in the Red Sea, which the Bible states was the fate of the enslaver of the Hebrews.

One of the steps in the process of mummification, however, was to cover the body with a mixture of natron and sodium to dehydrate it. Perhaps Merenptah had simply had too much sodium heaped over him. At any rate, the embalmers did a good job on the king because the mummy is in a fine state of preservation. The only failure was to keep the shape of the stately Ramessid nose, yet it was not too difficult to determine its original contours. The eyes of this pharaoh appear quite sad in their downward slope, yet Merenptah has all the right facial attributes and it is safer to assume that this was probably a good-looking man than to speculate as to whether or not he was truly the Pharaoh of the time of Moses. For some reason, this king's scrotum is missing, the exposed wound covered with resin. His mighty sire, Ramses the Great, also lost his genitalia at some point.

There is a certain gentleman found in the Deir el Bahari cache who is called Nebseni, but that is probably not his name. I drew him because his face is so well-preserved and interesting. We know for certain that the "Nebseni", in whose coffin the mummy was found was a scribe, but it is not very likely that a scribe would have been placed alongside the monarchs of the Nile. The Egyptians of antiquity were not usually democratically inclined. Anyway, the mummy of this tall, dark, and probably handsome fellow (to be perfectly honest, if I were a mummy I wouldn't want to be seen by anyone except a person with the imagination of a Marianne Luban!) became "Nebseni", but Egyptologists seem to think the mummy and the case don't match in time. What else is new? Most of the



Merenptah



"Nebseni"

pharaohs weren't found in their own coffins. Ramses II, for example, had a very fine coffin, but it was most certainly intended for one of the Amarna group originally and was probably nothing compared with the one made for Ramses in the first place. The priests simply fixed him up with what they had on hand when they "relocated" him.

Nobody believes "Nebsemi" is a king, so who was he? Not all kings' sons get to be pharaohs - some have to be content with being royal dukes like that fashionplate, Montuirkopeshef. Likely "Nebsemi" was a prince, but who was his father? If and when DNA testing is done on the royal remains, this striking man will be tested with them, you may be sure.

At least there is no question that there really was a Nebsemi, even more than one. There is the Scroll of Nebsemi, one of the longest examples of the Book of the Dead. It is kept in the British Museum. Whether the scroll and the coffin belonged to the same person, no one knows. Yet when I viewed my finished reconstruction of Nebsemi's features, they struck me as very familiar. He does look like Montuirkopeshef as the prince is portrayed on the walls of his tomb! Could it be? Perhaps someone will be sufficiently convinced by my portrait to investigate this possibility further.

Then there is the problem of the mummies who were identified as kings by the priests of old, but whose authenticity is doubted by many.

As soon as I had drawn the pharaoh supposed to be Seti II, I knew that this couldn't possibly be the same man whose life-size quartzite statue is also on display at the British Museum. The sculptor did not seek to idealize his pharaoh but tried very successfully to portray him as the long-nosed, firm-chinned Ramessid he surely was. This does not describe the so-called mummy of Seti II at all. G. Elliot Smith dubbed this person a true Thutmosid and I couldn't agree more. That created the dilemma of who this man really was. I wouldn't want to guess, but he is not the grandson of Ramses II; of that I feel positive.



Seti II?

Some experts have gone so far as to say they don't believe the mummies designated Thutmose I and II are actually those two pharaohs, especially the first one, which appears entirely too young. Nevertheless, the face of the coffin of Thutmose I (later re-used by Pinedjem I) has, in my view, very much the look of the mummy. When I compared my drawing of Hatshepsut with the profile of the face of Thutmose I, I saw that they were very alike - the same flat brow with almost no occipital ridge, a similar nosebridge and the same receding chin. Therefore, Thutmose I, if he is not actually that pharaoh, could very well be Thutmose II, Hatshepsut's brother and husband. The mummies now designated Thutmose II and Seti II might be other sons of Thutmose I who predeceased their father.

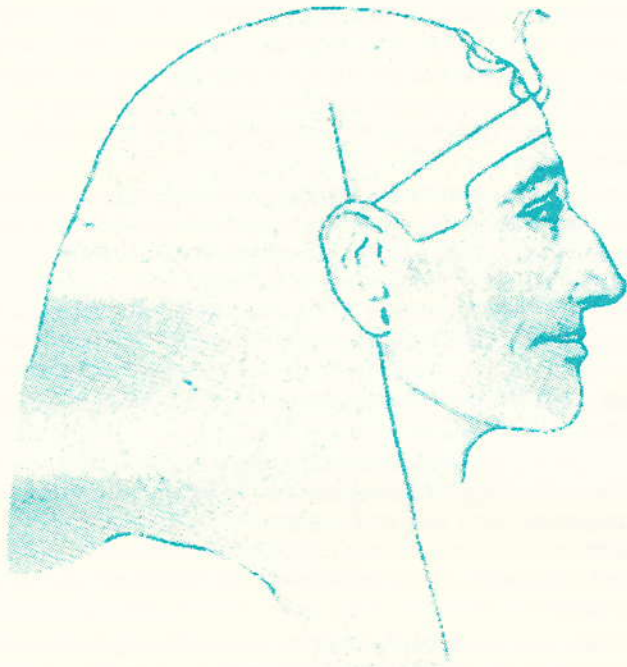
When it was seen that two mummies from the Deir el Bahari cache were labelled Thutmose II and III, Gaston Maspero, the then director of the Boulaq Museum in Cairo, felt reasonably sure that a certain anonymous corpse from the cache could be drafted to complete the set. In fact, Maspero fancied he saw a distinct family resemblance in the face of the nameless mummy to the pair of Thutmoses and so "Thutmose I" took his place with his peers - based primarily upon this perceived similarity. It is my impression, moreover, that Maspero was so anxious to have a complete succession of early 18th Dynasty kings that certain factors, which when combined would have presented a very strong argument against such an identification, were conveniently ignored.

The genes of the pharaohs were very strong, it seems. Take the Ramessids, for instance. No matter what wives or concubines were involved in procreating their heirs, those razor-sharp profiles just kept turning out like they had the patent on them. You may recall my mentioning Ramses IX of the 20th Dynasty. His kinship with Seti I is unclear and possibly even nonexistent, yet, from this tomb paintings, he is the spitting image of that pharaoh or at least wished he were. Even Ramses XI, who was the last Ramessid and the last king before the rather chaotic Third Intermediate Period, is portrayed with that same splendid cast of features. Meanwhile, whatever happened to Ramses IX? I have read that his mummy was in the Deir el Bahari cache, but have never seen a photo of him and neither have any of my Egyptophile acquaintances. Why is this Twentieth Dynasty man the great unphotographed pharaoh of the Twentieth Century? If anyone knows the answer to this mystery, please write!

Do you remember Karis of Karnak from those old horror movies? He and his sidekick, the man with the red hat, sought out and punished the desecrators (in their eyes) of Egypt's tombs as far away as England and the United States. When the make-up was created for Boris Karloff, one of the actors who portrayed the murderous mummy, an actual mummy was used as a model - that of King Ramses III.

It was a good choice, I suppose. The face of this mummy looks scary but, at the same time, doesn't turn your stomach. The embalming process of the time is at fault here. Too much liquid resin was poured upon the face which then hardened and obliterated the features. A couple of thousand years later, someone, perhaps Dr. Smith, himself, took a chisel to the rock-like mass in an effort to give Ramses III some sort of a face once again. The attempt was only marginally successful, leaving us very little the wiser as to what the pharaoh - perhaps the last great ruler of Egypt - had really looked like.

Had it not been for something called the Great Harris Papyrus (yet again in the British Museum), I would never have tried to draw this Ramses. This document, the longest known papyrus from ancient Egypt, is 133 feet in length and is dated to the day that Ramses III died. Ramses IV had it drawn up in order to set down his father's



Ramses III

good works. Most probably the papyrus was meant to be buried with Ramses III, yet it was mysteriously discovered in a small private tomb. Along with the text, the Great Harris Papyrus (named after the man who purchased it) contains some cleverly drawn vignettes showing the late king in full regalia. The drawings (or paintings, really) were obviously intended to be portraits, showing the pharaoh's distinctive, sloping nose, and very pale skin. From this papyrus, together with the mummy and one fine statue, I believe I was able to get a fairly good sense of the appearance of Ramses III.

The king evidently reached an advanced age for his time - about sixty. His reign is chiefly remarkable for an incident called the Harem Plot in which some persons close to Ramses, including a wife and children, sought to kill him and take power themselves. The plotters failed in their efforts and came to a bad end.

It seems the old man's time as king was marked by sadness and misfortune. Like Ramses II, the older he got, the more offspring he was forced to bury. One of these, a beloved little prince named Amenhirkopeshef, is shown in the boy's magnificently painted tomb being led into the presence of the gods by his sovereign father.

Indeed, many of the sons of Ramses III died young, but the one who lived to succeed him, Ramses IV, had a short and peaceful reign. This pharaoh's mummy is in a good state of preservation. Ramses IV was a typical Ramessid with the usual profile. Some points of interest about him are that he had excellent teeth, was well-endowed in the nether regions, and that little onions were used to replace his eyeballs during mummification. They look pretty realistic, too.

The other lady I have sketched appears to me to be a Ramessid, also. Her name is not known, nor are her title or position, but her mummy was found in the tomb of Amenhotep II; therefore, she was most certainly a person of consequence. The embalming technique used on her is one that is not seen before the end of the

19th Dynasty. One of its hallmarks is the questionable practice of stuffing the cheeks to lend plumpness to the face. The result was usually more negative than otherwise, sometimes distorting the mummy's facial aspect in remarkably odd ways.

This is what happened to the Unknown Woman, who is quite nicely preserved in most respects. She now wears an eternal pout due to this tendency toward over-stuffing and her fine nose has become misshapen due to the bandages. I think that, in life, she had a pleasing if not exactly pretty appearance. What is outstanding about this aristocrat (some believe she is Tausret, Queen of Siptah and Seti II) is her hairstyle. It is an upswept coil with what used to be called "sausage curls," a style popular in the 19th Century but never encountered by us in the 19th Dynasty - except on this elegant woman.

I don't believe the hairdo is the anomaly it appears to be. The ancient Egyptians were a sophisticated and inventive nation, but their art was static, to say the least. Apparently, the Egyptians did not always deck themselves out as they are represented in their paintings and sculptures. It is the mummies, themselves, like the Unknown Woman, who tell the real story.

People have asked me - do the royal mummies wear any clothing? Rarely. We don't have all that many articles of ancient Egyptian clothing, in any case, but most of what has come down to us is the same easy-to-make linen shirt, which consists of a piece of cloth doubled over, stitched up the sides with holes left for the arms and a round piece cut out in the center for the head. Sometimes this shirt was duded up with embroidery (which the Egyptians did masterfully, by the way) and I am sure it is what all men wore most often, from pharaoh to farmer, yet this shirt is rarely drawn. King Seti II was discovered to be wearing two of these shirts, embroidered with the cartouche of his father, Merenptah, but, alas, the monogrammed garments have disappeared. Also, no sovereign has been shown wearing a scarf, a robe with sequins, or a skull-cap, yet Tutankhamun was buried with all of these items, including some embroidered shirts. Even his underpants (tied on like a diaper) were not left out of his afterlife wardrobe. Both Tutankhamun



Unknown Woman, from the tomb of Amenhotep II



Hatshepsut

and King Ay have been depicted wearing gloves, the examples of which found in Tut's tomb being quite modern in design - only more ornate, of course.

Kings and queens have been portrayed in fancy garments throughout the ages, yet, somehow, I don't think anyone has ever looked as majestic, manly or as elegant as the Pharaoh of Egypt in his pleated, bleached kilt, his streamlined crowns, the cobra rearing on his brow, his body covered with gold and bright stones, blazing like the sun, his belt and apron heavily encrusted with gleaming threads, sequins and studs - even his sandals being works of art.

Beneath the empty tomb of King/Queen Hatshepsut in the Valley of the Kings is another tomb (undecorated) called KV60. In it were found the mummies of two women, one being identified as Sitre, a nurse of Hatshepsut. The other remains a complete mystery.

Sitre, the servant, was taken away to Cairo. The other occupant, her left arm tantalizingly raised in the queenly position, has inexplicably (to me) been left in the re-sealed tomb.

The late Egyptologist, Elizabeth Thomas, made the tentative proposal that this might be the mummy of Hatshepsut. She asked Donald Ryan, an archaeologist associated with Pacific Lutheran University, to try to relocate the lost KV60, which he did with little trouble. This leaves Ryan between a rock and a hard place, a position not unfamiliar to Egyptologists working in the field.

Now Ryan has a very well-preserved mummy, looking suspiciously like an 18th Dynasty royal lady but with nothing to give any clue to her identity - except being discovered beneath the tomb of the great Hatshepsut with nurse of same!

In my opinion, two things about this mummy conflict: Her ears are

unusual in the same way that Hatshepsut's ears are in many of her portraits. They are very similar to the ears of the mummy of Thutmose I. Also, she is an older woman, as Hatshepsut would likely have been at death. However, the mummy's jaw appears very strong for a woman and Hatshepsut is portrayed with a receding chin on many of her likenesses. I drew her from the statue I trust most, the rose-colored one in the Metropolitan in New York, where the sculptor gave her a real face without any conventional beauty whatsoever.

The mummy in KV60 was probably obese in life and certainly long past youth. Her few remaining white hairs are golden from henna and her nails are painted red edged in black. It is possible this queen was too old at death to fit in with the chronology of Hatshepsut. Whoever she is, this grand lady (her reconstructed profile looking more like a 20th Dynasty Ramessid individual) is definitely someone who should be in the Cairo Museum with the other royals and certainly should be tested for any blood connections with the Thutmosids.

People are so captivated by the glamour connected with the title "Queen of Egypt" (although it did not really exist in the Egyptian language) that I was prompted to do portraits of some of them - with or without the mummy. One female mummy, so far unidentified, I subjected to an experiment (on paper) with rather startling results!

When Victor Loret found a trio of unidentified mummies lying side-by-side in the tomb of Amenhotep II, he described them as an older woman, a little prince and a young man. Later, it was determined that the "young man" was, in fact, a young woman, her baldness having confused even a Frenchman like Loret.

The exact age of this female cannot be positively fixed, but the body is not entirely without clues as regards its place in the chronology of ancient Egypt. The process by which this woman was mummified seems to date her to the latter part of the 18th Dynasty. The unusual shape of her skull puts her in the Amarna period, where this type of cranial formation was either artificially fostered or a genetic condition. The skull of the "Younger Woman" from KV35 corresponds closely to those of Tutankhamun, the putative Smenkhare and representations of the Amarna princesses.



Unknown Woman from KV60

The mummy in question has suffered badly at the hands of robbers. When found, a linen strip protruded from the gaping hole that is its mouth and cheek. I suppose it has been difficult to imagine this hairless, battered corpse as having once been a beautiful anybody, much less an Egyptian queen of legendary loveliness.

I think it is safe to assume that, were the mummy of Queen Nefertiti to be discovered, it would probably have little remaining of the exquisite beauty of the famous bust in the Berlin Museum. Yet, in my view, the bone-structures of the "Younger Woman" and Nefertiti, as immortalized in stone, are remarkably similar. Each has a slender neck of extraordinary length and a jaw that extends from the throat at almost a right angle. When I did a regressive sketch of the mummy's head, I lifted the jaw to what it would have been with the mouth closed and it looks strikingly like the jaw of the limestone bust. Seen from the front, the mummy's jaw appears square in the manner of the likeness of Nefertiti. Also very alike are the flat-bridged noses and the angle of the eye sockets in relation to the nose. The eyelids are long in both cases. The mouth of the mummy is now impossible to guess at, so I gave her the full lips of the sculpture, which seem to fit the face quite well.

There is little doubt in my mind that Nefertiti's tall, blue crown was meant to conform to a head shaped just like that of the "Younger Woman" from KV35 and that the skull would be shaved like that of the mummy in order to facilitate the wearing of this tight, narrow head-dress.

In one photograph, "The Elder Lady" (who is now styled Queen Tiye, mother-in-law of Nefertiti) the prince and the younger female (if, in fact, she is actually younger) all seem to be arranged in family, candles burning at their heads. I believe this is no accidental grouping. It is my theory that the boy very much resembles "The Elder Lady" and is likely her son (Crown Prince Thutmose?). The mummy whose face I have tried to normalize must seriously be considered a possible Nefertiti or someone very closely related to this queen. While it is true that the mummy's left arm is not raised in the queenly attitude, this does not necessarily disqualify her from being a king's wife in the chaotic Amarna era. Nefertiti, it is to be remembered, suddenly disappears from the pictorial records of the reign of Akhenaten, her husband. Since there are no reliefs showing her funeral or nothing more written about her, it has been assumed that she fell from favor for some reason and was supplanted by her own daughter. Yet we know she was given at least a standard royal burial, ultimately, because ushabti figures bearing her name have been found. If the "Younger Woman" is, indeed, Nefertiti, the idea of her being "disgraced" might account for the arm not being raised.

No one knows how old Nefertiti was when she died or exactly where she was (originally) buried. Even though she was a mother many times over, she may have begun her child-bearing very early and been no more than thirty when her eldest daughter was fifteen.

Also, it makes sense that a refuge for the body of Queen Nefertiti, the wife of a reviled heretic, should be in the tomb of a powerful ancestor of this family, Amenhotep II, still in his sarcophagus and ruler over a growing number of displaced persons.

Perhaps we ought to let go of our romantic notions about this royal lady, Nefertiti (The-beautiful-one-comes), take another look at the younger female from KV35 and concede that death is something against which even the greatest beauty rarely prevails.

The first thing that must be said about Cleopatra VII (and most famous) is that she looked nothing like Elizabeth Taylor or any of the actresses who have portrayed her on film. They were all pretty, photogenic women. None of the portraits of Cleopatra, Queen of Egypt, actual or supposed, imply that she was a pretty girl.

But, of course, that doesn't necessarily mean that Cleopatra wasn't beautiful. She simply wasn't beautiful in the old Hollywood traditional way. None of the moguls of yesteryear would have cast the real Cleopatra as a *femme fatale*. Mostly Jewish, themselves, they were nevertheless leery of putting people with obviously ethnic faces in leading roles.

While Cleopatra's family, the Ptolemies, were of Greek-Macedonian stock like their hero, Alexander the Great, she had a definite oriental look about her and was probably part Egyptian. Her long, curved nose is of a type found on more than one mummy case from the centuries before the Greeks ever came to the Land of the Pyramids. One fine example of this noble profile is on the wooden coffin of Lady Shaamenensu of the 22nd Dynasty in the National Museum of Rio De Janiero.

Cleopatra, whose Egyptian throne name was Netjeret Merites (Goddess, Beloved of Her Father) had herself cut in relief wearing the old Egyptian costume for the sake of tradition. In truth, nobody in Egypt dressed that way by 50 B.C. The classic style was in fashion then, probably some hybrid of Greek and Roman influences.

When Cleopatra died, she very likely was embalmed using the method of her day, which resulted in very ornately packaged mummies, arms wrapped separately from the body and facial features carefully molded in the linen with the aid of plaster. Cleopatra and Mark Antony were interred together in the royal mausoleum at Alexandria, but, today, no mummy of a ruling Ptolemy exists that we know of. Nevertheless, seven outstanding mummies of the Roman period, wrapped so identically as to suggest they are of the same family, are on display in various museums throughout the world. Only recently, other richly-adorned mummies from this same era have been uncovered, so it is not impossible that the remains of the Serpent of the Nile may yet one day surface.

Erratum: in Part I of this article, the picture of Amenhotep II was incorrectly captioned as Amenhotep III.



Cleopatra

Dwarfs in Ancient Egypt

by Bonnie M. Sampsell

About the Author

From Chapel Hill, NC, Dr. Bonnie Sampsell is a corresponding member of ESS and a regular contributor to the *Ostrakon*. She is a retired professor of genetics, a member of ARCE, and has visited Egypt five times. She has a special interest in Old Kingdom art and architecture.

Introduction

Dwarfs have fascinated people throughout history. Such genuine "little people" may have inspired myths and folk tales about elves or fairies. As a numerical minority and a variant of the typical human body, dwarfs have generally been marginalized by the societies in which they lived. Ancient Egyptians may not only have tolerated dwarfs; they seem to have given them more prominence and genuine respect. Pictorial representations of dwarfs are abundant in Egyptian art of some periods. In this article, I will explore some examples of these and explain the deductions that we can draw about the special role of dwarfs in the Egyptian society.

Human height is a continuously variable trait and is the result of the interaction between many genetic and environmental factors. The distribution of heights is nearly that of the bell-shaped normal curve. A dwarf is defined as a person of smaller than average stature who is at least 3 standard deviations below the mean height of the population of the same age and sex. This definition encompasses the shortest 0.13% of the population, and in the modern western world that would include persons with mature heights below 58 inches¹. While some of these small individuals simply were dealt a handful of "small genes," in most cases, there is a specific genetic or physiological reason for the individual's extreme shortness.

More than 100 forms of dwarfism have been identified which vary in their cause and features. In some of these forms, the body while small retains its usual proportions between torso and limbs. In other forms these proportions are dramatically altered. Although modern physicians can readily diagnose true dwarfism and distinguish among these forms in an actual patient, it is more difficult to do so in ancient representations in which the size of an individual may vary for symbolic reasons. Additionally it may be impossible to distinguish a well-proportioned adult dwarf from a child unless the latter displays such features as youthful side lock of hair, finger to mouth, or nakedness, to mention just some of the conventions employed in Egyptian art. Only in those forms of dwarfism in which the proportions are clearly altered and adult features are included is identification relatively certain. One disorder of this type, called achondroplasia, will be the focus of this article.



Achondroplastic Dwarfs

In an individual with achondroplasia, the torso is of about average size, while the length of the upper part of both arms and legs is reduced. As a result the tips of the fingers may reach only to the top of the thigh or just to the hips. The short legs are slightly bowed. The skin of the reduced arms and legs appears in excess and forms soft folds. Another common feature is an exaggerated lumbar lordosis or forward curving of the lower back leading to prominent buttocks and abdomen. (This same feature may be observed in small non-dwarf children, but was never used as a stylistic key in Egyptian art.)

In achondroplasia, the cranium is large, but the face is small, thus the forehead protrudes, while the nasal bridge is set back. The wide range of effects in this disorder appears to spring from a defect in cartilage growth and ossification. It can be observed in the developing fetus and diagnosed at birth. Physical strength and intelligence are normal as is sexual development.

This condition is now known to be caused by a genetic mutation which is inherited in an autosomal dominant fashion². The incidence is about one in 40,000 live births. As many as 87% of the cases are the result of a new mutation occurring in the germ cell of a parent of the affected child. The incidence increases in the offspring of older fathers as does that of other autosomal dominant disorders.

There is another form of dwarfism, called hypochondroplasia, which probably results from a mutation in the same gene causing achondroplasia. The developmental consequences are less severe, however. The limbs are short, but the legs are not bowed. The face and skull are unaltered, and the pelvis is normal. In fact, an affected child may appear nearly normal until it is two or three years of age. It is probably just as common as true achondroplasia. In her comprehensive study of more than a thousand representations of dwarfs in Egyptian, Greek, and Roman art, Dasen (1993) identified several forms of dwarfism, but achondroplasia was the one most frequently depicted.

Dwarfs in ancient Egyptian society

Portrayals of dwarfs in writing and inscriptions

Dwarfs can be identified in tomb paintings, statues, and from skeletal remains from Pre-dynastic times to the Roman period. There were several hieroglyphic words for dwarf. One of these, *nmw*, employed a determinative which clearly represents a man with short arms and legs. *Dng* is also translated as dwarf and has a similar determinative, but it may also have meant pygmy. Pygmies have a constitutionally low level of growth hormone, which accounts for their small, but well-proportioned stature.

Debate about the meaning of the word *dng* has been fueled by the use of this term to describe a person being brought from the south to the court of the young Pepi II. Pepi showed considerable interest in this *dng* saying he was more eager to see it than all the other treasures and commanding the expedition's leader to guard the *dng* so he cannot fall overboard and to keep watch while he sleeps. Since the *dng* came from the interior of Africa where pygmies were often kept at royal courts and exchanged between rulers, it has been argued that this *dng* was a pygmy, not simply a dwarf.

Portrayals of dwarfs in art

Portrayal of the human figure in Egyptian art was regulated by a rigid canon of proportions. Most figures of kings, gods, and nobles appear as tall, young, and healthy. According to Dasen, the most obvious way in which these figures deviate from reality is in their slightly longer lower leg and slightly smaller buttocks. The relative sizes of individuals within the same scene were highly symbolic: larger size implied greater power within a hierarchy. Thus a king might be portrayed at the same size as a god to imply his equality. But men were shown larger than their servants and sometimes their wives. Given this convention, how would the ancient artist have portrayed an important individual who was short and disproportionate? As it turns out, with skill and care.

Dwarfs were depicted so often in the Old Kingdom art that a standard form was adopted which seems to be based on achondroplastic dwarfs. These depictions show a keen eye for the large head; long torso, short bowed legs, and heavy thighs and buttocks. Dasen found, however, that this standard form for representing a dwarf had some features which were not realistic, but conveyed an iconographic message. As stated, arms and legs are shown as short compared to torso length. But both the lower and upper legs are shown reduced, perhaps to emphasize their contrast with individuals of average height in which the lower leg was exaggerated in length. The faces of some dwarfs in paintings show distinguishing features like the bulging forehead, and some are shown with the hunchback that persists into adulthood in about 20% of the cases. Interestingly, all known statues of dwarfs have normal faces. While this might be the consequence of hypochondroplasia rather than true achondroplasia, Dasen considers it more likely to have been an attempt to avoid caricature in a respected individual. She thinks it may have been caricature, however, to show dwarfs of subordinate status even smaller than their true heights compared to average individuals in the same scene.

Dasen concludes that the manner in which dwarfs were generally portrayed, as well as the fact that some dwarfs achieved considerable social status, provide evidence that Egyptians had a tolerant even affectionate attitude towards them. The exaggeration of the smallness of a dwarf compared to an average size person may indicate that "smallness was an important part of their attractiveness," especially to "the elite who kept them in their households³."

Occupations of Dwarfs

The large number of representations of dwarfs (more than 50 in Old Kingdom tombs at Giza and Saqqara, for example) lets us draw conclusions about their role in society during that period. The repetition of certain scenes suggests that dwarfs specialized in a limited range of occupations. These included attendant to royalty or in elite households, pet handler, supervisor of clothing and linen in royal or elite households, entertainer/dancer/musician, and jewelry maker.

In many nobles' tombs, a male dwarf appears behind the tomb owner's chair or under his sedan with a dog or monkey. In some cases the animal towers over its dwarf handler in an amusing manner. This suggests that the dwarfs themselves may have been considered almost as pets. This may imply a role for dwarfs similar to that of court jester as occurred during the Middle Ages and even later at some European courts. Until recently many dwarfs faced various forms of discrimination when they tried to apply for jobs, and many could only find employment in the entertainment industry.

Both male and female dwarfs were employed as personal attendants to elite men and women. Male dwarfs appear with titles such

as "overseer of linen." Dwarfs of both sexes are included in the rows of offering bearers carrying boxes which may have contained clothing or jewelry. Female dwarfs served as nurses to young children, a role not depicted in tomb paintings, but in small figurines. They may also have been employed to assist at births.

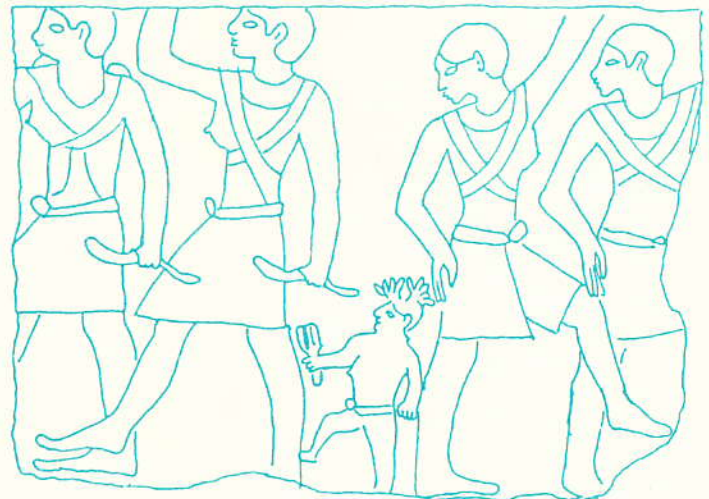
Although most achondroplastic dwarfs enjoy generally good health, and some may even engage in sports and other vigorous activities, the physical deformities in their legs and back may restrict the range of occupations. This may explain why among all the crafts portrayed in tomb art, the most common one pursued by dwarfs is that of goldsmith. Groups of male dwarfs are shown making gold necklaces in scenes in several Old Kingdom tombs. El-Aguizy remarked that the small and deft hands of dwarfs may have been especially suitable to tasks like stringing beads.

Another occupation employing dwarfs, which may seem surprising in view of their short bowed legs and limited hip and elbow mobility, was that of ritual dancer. Ablon, however, remarks that among some dwarfs, agility is highly developed. Dance was an essential element of everyday celebrations as well of religious ritual in ancient Egypt. Rows of dancers frequently depict a single dwarf among the average-sized figures.

The paintings in the Old Kingdom tombs thus show the dwarfs employed in a variety of ways in elite households. The practice of having dwarf retainers in the king's court apparently dates back to the beginning of dynastic history. Skeletons of dwarfs and stelae showing dwarfs have been reported from a number of royal or nobles' tombs at both Abydos and Saqqara. In fact, a number of dwarfs were buried in subsidiary tombs within the funerary complex of kings of the First Dynasty: three with King Djer, one with King Wad, four with King Den, two with King Semerkhet, and two with King Qa'a⁴. Unfortunately these human remains did not receive the benefit of modern study when the confirmation of dwarfism and identification of its type might have been possible.

Dwarfs continued to be included in scenes on the walls of tombs of Middle Kingdom nobles. Their functions seemed to be primarily that of personal attendants or nurses. They also appear in a wide variety of figurines only a few of which represent specific individuals; most represent types of servants such as nurses or entertainers. Some Middle Kingdom statuettes of dwarfs supported a bowl or dish and served as offering stands.

During the New Kingdom, dwarfs were no longer included in the scenes of daily life in which they appeared in the Old and Middle



*From the mastaba of Niunehtjer, Giza, Dynasty VI.
Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna*

Kingdom. Does that mean they were no longer employed as retainers? Several depictions of dwarfs are found in conjunction with the royal sed-festival. Possibly they were dancers - a religious role that occurred throughout the Pharaonic period. Several representations of dwarfs occur in the Amarna Period. A pair of dwarfs named "The Sun" and "For ever" appear in several tombs - usually attending Mutnedjmet, sister of Nefertiti. While they may have been simply jesters, there may also have been an association with the Aten cult. Figurines of dwarfs have been found carrying cosmetic jars, and one appeared on an alabaster boat in the tomb of Tutankhamun.

Dasen reports only three examples of dwarfs in Late Period material. Thus it seems that the prevalence of dwarfs as members of elite Egyptian households reached a peak during the Old and Middle Kingdoms. After that, two gods in the form of dwarfs, Bes and Ptah-Pataikos became very popular and may have replaced real dwarfs in certain capacities.

Some Individual Dwarfs

We know the names and histories of some individual dwarfs because statues or other representations of them have been found. From these we learn about several dwarfs who led independent lives with a status similar to those of average-sized men within the Egyptian society.

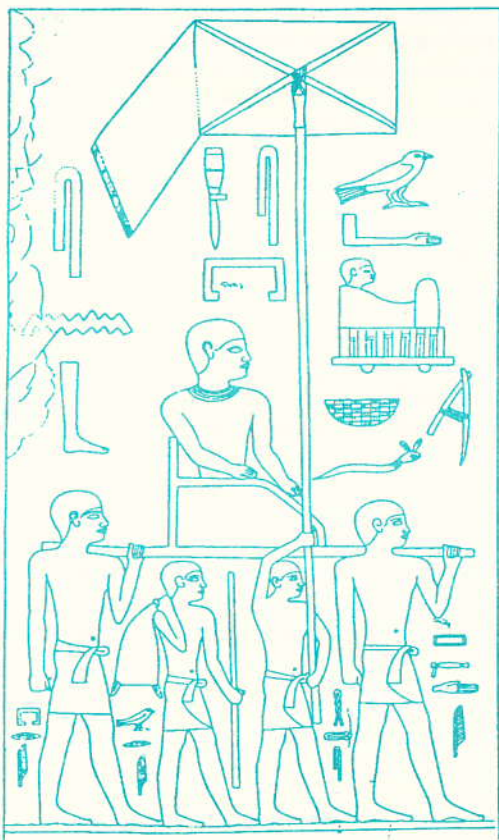
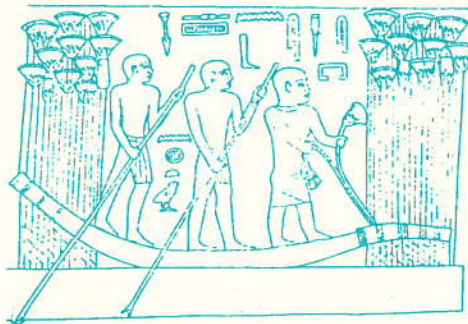
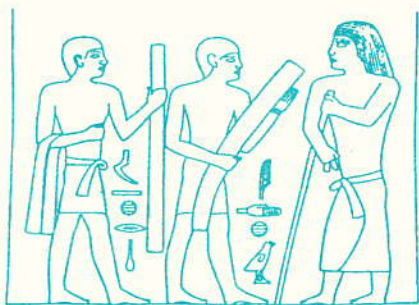
Khnumhotep

A painted limestone statuette of Khnumhotep was found at Saqqara. The 18-inch figure, now on display in the Cairo Museum, has a stocky torso with arched back and protruding stomach. The arms and legs are short. The head is slightly flattened, but otherwise normal in appearance. According to the inscriptions on the base, he was the overseer of the clothing and a *sem*-priest. The statuette has been dated to Dynasty V. The existence of this statue, so similar to that of other Old Kingdom officials suggests that he may have had his own tomb at Saqqara. Unfortunately, this tomb has never been excavated, so any further information it could have provided is lost to us.

Seneb

We know more about the dwarf, Seneb, [Snb, Sonb] who was buried at Giza. His tomb was excavated in the early 1900's by Junker and provides a great deal of information in the form of inscriptions and statues. For example, the charming statuette of Seneb and his family is well-known from pictures or visits to the Cairo Museum. This statuette provides an interesting example of how the Egyptian artist dealt with the problems of portraying an important individual who did not conform to the Egyptian canon of ideal proportions. Seneb is seated next to his average-sized wife with his legs folded in a dignified scribal position. In front of him, in place of his legs, stand his small son and daughter. I disagree with Wilkinson's suggestion that, "his head [was] artificially raised to the exact level of the head of his wife⁵." In fact, their torsos were probably very similar in length. His short arms and legs are clearly depicted. His face, however, is quite unremarkable, with none of the distinguishing features of achondroplasia. While it is possible that Seneb was a hypochondroplastic dwarf, it is also likely, as Dasen suggested that Seneb's high status made it desirable not to dwell on any other abnormal features.

Depicted in Seneb's tomb are three (apparently) average-sized children. Thus, it might be appropriate at this point to discuss some features of the heritability of dwarfism and its effects on reproduction. Achondroplasia is a heritable condition. Since it is caused by a dominant gene, only one altered copy is necessary to produce



From the false door of the Tomb of Seneb, Giza, Dynasty VI
Cairo Museum

the condition. As previously noted, the majority of cases of the disorder are the result of a new mutation in the germ cell of a parent. But a child may also inherit a mutant gene from an affected parent of either gender. The chances of a child of such a parent being affected is 50%.

In modern society many dwarfs have a spouse who is also a dwarf. (Ablon says 95% of dwarfs' spouses are also dwarfs). The marriage of two achondroplastic individuals would have a 25% chance of producing entirely normal children who have inherited a normal gene from each parent. There would be a 50% chance of producing an achondroplastic dwarf who has inherited one mutant and one normal gene. Finally there would be a 25% chance of having a child who had inherited a mutant gene from each parent. A child with two mutant genes generally dies in early infancy. The cause of death is respiratory insufficiency due to a small rib cage or neurological deficit due to hydrocephaly.

An achondroplastic female may experience complications during pregnancy and childbirth due to her small pelvis. The large head of some achondroplastic fetuses (caused by hydrocephaly) may also create an increased risk of intracranial bleeding during delivery to a normal-statured mother. Today the head growth of a potentially-affected fetus would be monitored by ultrasonography and the delivery would be by Cesarean section. One wonders how an ancient Egyptian midwife would have managed such a case.

Seneb was a high official with many court appointments. His titles reflected a range of duties and included "Director of dwarfs in charge of dressing, Overseer of *jwhw'* (animal handlers?), and Director of weaving in the palace." He was also called a "Tutor of the King's sons," perhaps a role similar to the female nurses⁶. He was a priest in the mortuary cults of Khufu and Djedefre. He was also a priest of two cults relating to sacred bulls.

That Seneb was clearly a royal favorite is shown by his occupying a tomb at Giza which would have been assigned to him by the king and by his many honorifics. These included "friend of the king, friend of the house, and beloved everyday by his Lord." Finally, Seneb's wife, Sentiotes, like so many wives of high officials was a priestess of Hathor and Neith.

Dasen speculates on whether Seneb rose to his supervisory positions by virtue of merit after entering the royal household like any other dwarf or whether Seneb might have been born into a noble family - perhaps one of those rare sporadic new mutations. In which case his appointment to supervise other dwarfs might have seemed especially appropriate. One clue that may be relevant is that Seneb's tomb was next to that of an official named Ankhu who held two titles also possessed by Seneb: "Director of weaving in the palace and Tutor of the King's sons." Offices and titles were often passed from father to son. There is no evidence of which I am aware that Ankhu was a dwarf.

Other scenes in Seneb's tomb show us how the ancient artist observed conventions while portraying Seneb's unusual body according to another standard. We have already noted that in the statuette of Seneb and his family, his short legs are disguised by his pose and the position of the children. Other devices were employed in scenes from the false door in his tomb. Scenes in which the tomb owner would be expected to be taller than his servants, for example, show Seneb as the same height, hence indicating he was actually shorter than they! The artists avoided including Seneb's wife in these scenes since she would have had to be taller than the servants and would have towered over Seneb. In these scenes the relative shortness of Seneb's arms and legs is clearly indicated.

I have said that Seneb's three children were apparently average-sized for that is how they are portrayed in the paintings and statu-

ary in his tomb. I recently noticed, however, that there is a dwarf by the name of Djedefre-ankh depicted in the tomb of Nefernesut, a high official who probably lived near the end of Dynasty V. The dwarf seems to have been a personal attendant since he is shown carrying a headrest. Seneb's son was named Djedefre-m-ankh - in recognition of Seneb's position as a priest of Djedefre. The names are very similar and no one else with a similar name is known from the Giza cemeteries⁷. Perhaps, both Seneb and Djedefre-ankh suffered from hypochondroplasia, as already suggested, and the latter's affliction was not manifest at the time that Seneb's tomb was being decorated because he was still quite young.

Perenankhu

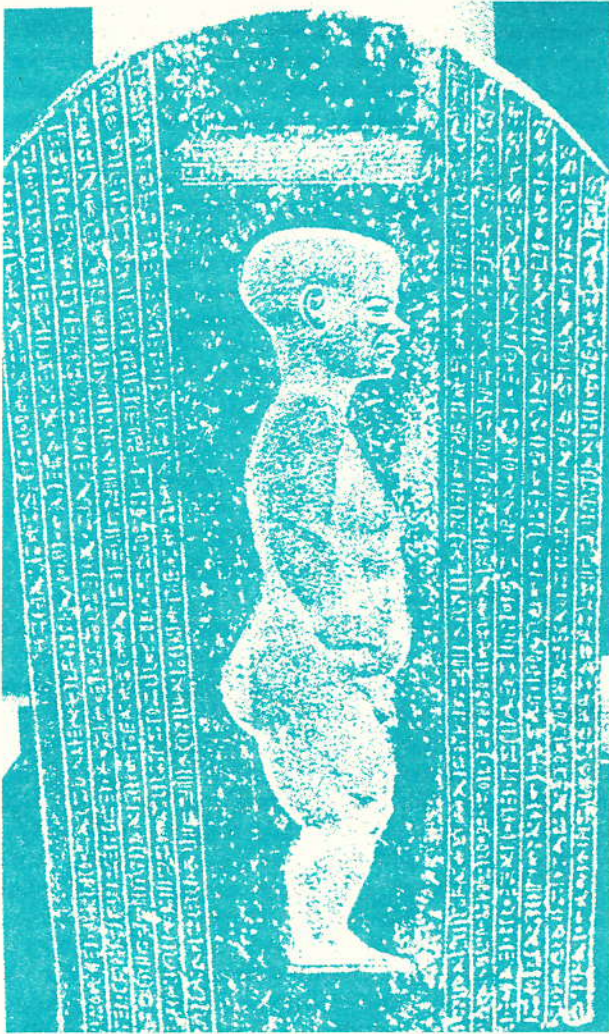
The tomb of another dwarf has been discovered recently in the Western Cemetery at Giza during excavations under the supervision of Zahi Hawass. A statue of the owner, Perenankhu, was found in an external serdab, while his skeletal remains and those of two average-sized women were located in the burial chambers. The basalt statue is beautifully carved and captures several of the dwarf's deformities (short upper arms, slightly hunched back, bowed legs) without detracting from his dignity. Like Seneb, Perenankhu's face appears normal. Again, this may indicate that hypochondroplasia was involved, or may be a stylistic convention. Examination of the skeletal remains which have been handed to a physical anthropologist should be able to resolve this puzzle. It could also show whether Perenankhu suffered from elephantiasis (as suggested in Hawass's report), or whether the deformity of the left leg reproduced on the statue was associated with his dwarfism. A variety of leg problems are experienced by modern day dwarfs, many of which require surgery to correct.

The inscription on Perenankhu's statue claims that he was a "King's acquaintance," and "One who delights his lord every day, the king's dwarf of the Great Palace⁸." In this statue he holds a sekhem scepter and another staff of office. Hawass likens the quality of the piece to the famous diorite statue of Khafre and suggests a Dynasty IV date for the tomb. If he is correct, this may indicate that Seneb should also be dated to Dynasty IV rather than Dynasty VI, an idea that has already found some favor. Hawass also notes the fact that Perenankhu's tomb is just north of that of Seneb and posits a "cemetery of dwarfs" in this section. Another explanation, which seems more likely to me, is that the two dwarfs might be related, since it was the custom for people to try to place their tombs in close proximity to that of their ancestors. The finding of the name of Seneb's wife in another tomb north of Perenankhu's tomb may support this hypothesis.

Perenankhu's wife, Nihathorankhu, was a priestess of Hathor and was apparently of average stature. This raises some interesting questions about the marriages of high-ranking dwarfs. Ablon has noted the importance of marriage to modern dwarfs. "Marriage constitutes a symbol of achieving normal status, quite apart from the individual's need for a life companion and coparent for his or her family⁹." Certainly marriage was highly desired by all ancient Egyptians, and a high official especially would want to pass on his acquisitions to his sons. Given the complications of pregnancy and childbirth among female dwarfs, it is worth asking whether male dwarfs might have sought average-sized women for wives rather than other dwarfs to avoid such problems, which might have become familiar to the Egyptians through sad experience.

Djeho

Seneb and Perenankhu were both Old Kingdom officials, held in high regard by the kings they served. Another sort of career which could be pursued by a dwarf and another sort of relationship with a patron are illustrated by the example of Djeho. This dwarf who lived during the reign of Nectanebo II in Dynasty XXX is known



*Sarcophagus of Djeho
Cairo Museum*

from his large stone sarcophagus. A picture of a naked Djeho, of almost clinical accuracy, is carved on the lid of the sarcophagus and leaves little doubt that he was an achondroplastic dwarf.

The lid also carries a long inscription from Djeho's "Osiris" or dead body. It states that Djeho had been a dancer who "danced in Kem [Saqqara] on the day of the interment of the Apis-Osiris, the great god, king of the gods; who danced in Shenqebah [Heliopolis] on the day of the festival of the everlasting of the Osiris of Mnevis, the great god¹⁰." In other words, Djeho performed ritual dances during the funerals of two sacred bulls, and this may have given him the right to a tomb within the Sacred Animal Necropolis at North Saqqara.

Buried with Djeho in the same tomb was his patron, Tjaiharpta, who was a "Count, Overseer of Upper Egypt, Overseer of the bank (treasurer), and Overseer of fields." These duties may have entitled him, with the king's permission, to a burial in this sacred precinct. Evidently his patron paid for Djeho's burial and funerary equipment, since the inscription on Djeho's sarcophagus includes a request to the Apis-Osiris to bestow blessings on Tjaiharpta. He further asks that "I remain beside him, within his tomb...in exchange for what he has done for me¹¹." Baines concludes that "Although Djeho was subordinate to Tjaiharpta, his status was such that his presence in the tomb with his [magnificent] sarcophagus cannot be reduced to that of a retainer¹²."

Djeho's occupation as a dancer in a religious cult seems to continue a practice that dates back to the earliest dynasties. A Pyramid Text refers to the use of dwarfs in "god's dances." The pygmy (?) who was being brought to Pepi II in Dynasty VI was destined to be a "dng of the god's dances." His occupation may also reflect an ongoing association between dwarfs and the cults of sacred bulls; remember that Seneb was priest in two bull cults.

Dwarfs and Religion

Apparently from the earliest times, dwarfs, in spite of their physical deformities, were associated with various god and goddesses, particularly with the sun god. Dasen suggests that the shape of the body of the achondroplastic dwarf with its short arms and legs may have reminded the Egyptians of the scarab beetle, which was one form in which the sun god, Re, appeared. She concluded that, "Their silhouette was assimilated to that of the sacred scarab-beetle Khepri; their physical malformation was not regarded as a disquieting attribute, but as a divine one¹³."

Dasen reviews many instances of dwarfs mentioned in magical literature and spells. One spell, for example, was to be recited four times over a clay statue of a dwarf which was then placed on the brow of a woman in labor. El-Aguizy reports that dwarfs were invoked in many magical texts of the Late and Graeco-Roman Periods as a protective deity concerned with the protection of the body of the dead as well as of the living against diseases, dangerous animals, and evil spirits. Under these circumstances, perhaps it is not surprising to find that the Egyptians had at least two gods who had the bodies of dwarfs and whose functions were primarily to ward off evil.

Dwarf gods

Bes

The origin of Bes has been much debated; his form is clearly a hybrid combining elements of human and animal traits including the body shape of a short-limbed dwarf and the ears, tail, and mane of a lion. He first appeared in Egyptian history during the Middle Kingdom and increased in popularity from the New Kingdom onwards. During this time his figure became more dwarfish and more grotesque. Any prolonged discussion of Bes would take us too far from the basic theme of this article. Perhaps it is really only necessary to comment on the fact that among Bes's roles is that of protective attendant to the lady of the house - a role formerly played by dwarfs in some elite households. His figure is commonly found adorning cosmetic tubes, mirrors, and similar beauty aids.

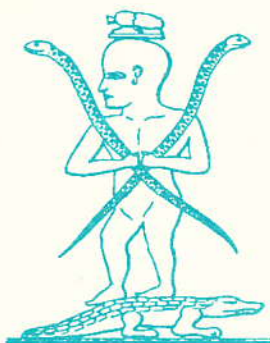
A second and well-known function of Bes was as protector and assistant in pregnancy and childbirth. Again we might recall that female dwarfs were shown as nurses and perhaps served as mid-wife assistants in earlier periods. Bes amulets are abundant, and his figure appears as a decoration on a variety of household furniture. It would appear that Bes's popularity rose as that of real dwarfs as household retainers declined - at least to judge by their absence from scenes of daily life from the New Kingdom forward. Perhaps Bes amulets were more readily available to women at all



social levels, while the supply of dwarfs was limited. The increased role of Bes may say more about the Egyptians' progressive interest in magic, however, and less about their employment of or attitudes towards real human dwarfs. Bes was also a god of music and dance, and we have already remarked on the fact that dwarfs (and pygmies) were particularly sought out as dancers before certain gods and for certain rituals.

Ptah-Pataikos

This is the term used by Dasen to refer to a dwarf god found from the end of the New Kingdom. Taking the form of an achondroplastic dwarf, he apparently was related to the ancient Egyptian god, Ptah. Herodotus called it Pataikos because of the similarity to a Phoenician god of the same shape. This god appears almost exclusively as amulets whose origin and symbolism is complex and controversial. Their function was probably as a protection against a variety of dangers thus retaining the magic properties of dwarfs.



NOTES

1. Ablon, 1984; Dasen, 1988.
2. A disorder is defined as autosomal if the mutant gene is located on one of the 22 pairs of chromosomes which occur in matching pairs in both sexes. The mutant is dominant to the normal form of the gene if it produces the abnormal condition when present in only a single copy - that is, while paired with a normal form of the gene on the other chromosome. If a mutant gene has little or no effect when paired with a normal gene, it is considered recessive. Genes on the X or Y chromosome would be called X-linked or Y-linked rather than autosomal. In 1994, the gene for achondroplasia was identified on chromosome #4. There is now a prenatal DNA test for the condition.
3. Dasen, 1988, p. 268.
4. Dasen, 1993, p. 107.
5. Wilkinson, 1994, p. 57.
6. Porter and Moss translate the hieroglyphs of this title as "Tutor of the King's sons" while other authors, for example Dasen, call it "Great one of the Litter [Sedan chair]." The latter title seems to accord better with the hieroglyphs. In any case, the title was clearly one of the most prestigious ones that Seneb held for it appears repeatedly in the scenes on the false door.
7. Porter and Moss, 1974
8. Hawass, 1991, p. 160
9. Ablon, 1984, p. 55.
10. Baines, 1992, p. 245.
11. *ibid.*, p. 244.
12. *ibid.*, p. 251.
13. Dasen, 1993, p. 53.
14. Butzer, 1976, pp. 81-85.

Conclusions

Let us assume that the incidence of achondroplasia among newborns was about the same in the Old Kingdom as it is today. It may have been lower if there were fewer older fathers and perhaps fewer environmental mutagens. In a population of perhaps one million, there would have been 25 achondroplastic dwarfs¹⁴. Of course these would be spread throughout the population of Upper and Lower Egypt. The apparent abundance of dwarfs in royal and elite households may suggest that dwarf children, born anywhere in the kingdom, were sent to Memphis or provincial capitals where their expectations for success would have been greater. Jewelry workshops employing several dwarfs may speak of a family in which dwarfness was inherited, since most craftsmen probably pursued their father's trade. Other dwarfs may also have had dwarf parents, as suggested by the finding of the tombs of Seneb and Perenankhu in close proximity and the presence of a dwarf named Djedefre-ankh in another tomb.

Dwarfs were apparently associated with various divinities from an early stage in Egyptian religious beliefs, and from this association arose people's tolerance for them as atypical humans and their adoption as the form of two protective gods: Bes and Ptah-Pataikos. As I reviewed the literature, it seemed me that there was a trend away from real dwarfs as personal attendants and participants in religious rites to a dependence on magic and dwarf god/amulets over the course of dynastic history. In probably no other culture, however, have dwarfs played a more visible role.

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LIFE ON AN EGYPTIAN EXPEDITION

BY DICK HARWOOD

About the Author: Dick Harwood is a long time member and current Chairman of the Egyptian Study Society. An attorney and banker, he retired in 1995 to devote more time to a number of interests, including Egyptology. Dick is a member of the University of Arizona Egyptian Expedition, and a trustee of the Amama Research Foundation. His lecture on the Expedition's work - given before he set out for the 1998 season described here - is covered in Vol. 9 No. 1.

For the past few years, I've had the good fortune to work as a member of the University of Arizona's Egyptian Expedition. Being an Egyptophile but by no means an Egyptologist, the experience can only be equated to the excitement of a child let loose in a candy store and the nervousness of a prostitute at early Mass.

The Expedition has several projects. The one we've been working on for the past three years has two main purposes. The first is to compare, contrast, and show the evolution of the wall scenes within the 19th and 20th Dynasty Ramesside tombs in the Valley of the Kings. The second is to record and publish those scenes before they disappear entirely.

Ours is a comparatively small team for a major expedition in Egypt. The expedition leader is Dr. Richard H. Wilkinson, renowned Egyptologist, professor at the University of Arizona, and author of such books as *Reading Egyptian Art*, *Symbol and Magic in Egyptian Art*, *Valley of the Sun Kings*, and *The Complete Valley of the Kings* (with Nicholas Reeves). In addition to Dr. Wilkinson, we have a computer expert and a graphics expert, employees of the University of Arizona; a practicing attorney and past Trustee of the American Research Center in Egypt, who has also worked with Dr. Mark Lehner at Giza and with Dr. Kent Weeks at Thebes; an epigrapher and an iconographer, both from the University of Toronto; and me. My position is that of photographer for the project. A politically correct team of three men and four women, all of whom have become close friends as well as colleagues over the years.

All teams working in Egypt are required to have an Egyptian Inspector with them whenever they're working to make sure the sites are not damaged and to record anything of intrinsic value that might be discovered. These Inspectors are generally very friendly and helpful, pitching in with the carrying, placement and storage of equipment, arranging for special needs, etc. For security reasons, no Inspector can be assigned to the same project in successive years.

One of the most important people on our extended team is the Egyptian electrician assigned to us by the Chief Inspector of the Valley of the Kings. Existing lighting in the tombs is dim and fluorescent, making photography, epigraphy and iconography extremely difficult. Consequently, we set up floodlights inside the tombs on five-to-seven foot stands for better lighting. Unfortunately, the electricity within a given tomb cannot be turned off without throwing other tombs in the Valley into complete darkness, - an event that tourists inside those tombs tend to find a little disconcerting. So the only way to set up our equipment is to disconnect the fluorescent tubes and work with the live wires.

That's the job of our electrician, Hamde Ahmed Hassan Hamdan. With his bare hands, he separates the live wires and splices in our extension cords and electrical converters. The first time I watched him, I saw a stream of sparks fly about twelve inches between his two hands and his whole body actually seemed to glow. After that, I gave up watching.

We spend about a month in Egypt each year and there's a substantial amount of time spent on the project both before and after the actual season. But being on an expedition team is not a full-time job. Due to other commitments, not all members of the team can spend that much time in Egypt each year. Rather than working with replacement staff, everyone who is able to be there pitches in willingly to cover the jobs of those who cannot.

As with many archaeological expeditions, our team members are not salaried. While the University of Arizona picks up some expenses and helps support student workers when they are present, team members usually pay their own costs of accommodations, transportation to and from Egypt, food, extraneous travel, and incidentals.

Many of the American archaeologists in Upper Egypt work there during the summer. Modern archaeologists tend to be associated with universities and their jobs usually require them to be on campus during the academic year. Equally compelling, summer in Egypt is the time of fewest tourists and more work can be accomplished without interruption.

But make no mistake: the summer heat in Upper Egypt is intense. In the narrow wadis of the West Bank, where the blinding sun radiates off the barren cliffs, the thermometer on my backpack often tops out at 120° F by the middle of the afternoon. That, combined with almost 0% humidity, makes dehydration a constant problem. Many of us set the alarms on our watches for every 15 or 20 minutes to remind ourselves to drink some water. Others hire Egyptian children to keep track of the time. I've learned the hard way that when you become dehydrated, you actually lose all sense of thirst and time can get away from you until it's too late.

The logistics of each season begin many months before the team actually arrives in Egypt. The work of the team, as well as each individual on it, must be approved every year by the Supreme Council for Antiquities. This requires the advance submission of a formal, written application, security documents accompanied by numerous passport photos, and biographical information on each team member. Once in Cairo, at least a full day is required at the SCA headquarters to carry the paperwork from one department to another, obtaining the necessary approvals from each. The governmental bureaucracy in Egypt is infamous. In 1996, the permission forms were finally obtained, only to discover that all of our team had been assigned to work with Kent Weeks on his KV 5 project (the tomb of Ramses II's sons), and all of Dr. Weeks's team had been assigned to Dr. Wilkinson. In typical fashion, it took another full day back at the SCA offices to correct the error.

On to Luxor, where there are at least another two days of red tape, meeting and consuming countless glasses of scalding tea with the authorities responsible for the antiquities of all Upper Egypt and for the specific sites on the West Bank.

In return, we not only obtain the necessary approvals from the officials but also their friendship, trust, help and goodwill, all of which are even more important than the actual forms. At the Director's discretion, we also receive a wonderful little piece of paper. Hand-written in Arabic and signed by the Director of Egyptian Antiquities for Upper Egypt, it identifies each of us as members of the Expedition and admits us to any open archaeological site in Upper Egypt without charge. It also works wonders on site guards bent on *baksheesh!* Considering the size of the piece of paper, to say that it's worth its weight in gold is a drastic understatement.

Flexibility is as necessary when working in Egypt as it is when traveling. This past season, we had to delay the start of our work by a day in order to fulfill a last-minute request by the authorities to take some "publicity shots" of a couple of wonderful 18th Dynasty tombs at Dra Abu el-Naga that the government hopes to open to the general public by the end of 1998. A delay, but definitely not a hardship since none of us had ever been inside either of the tombs.

For most projects, at least near the major population centers in Egypt, archaeologists no longer live in tents at the sites they are working, emptying scorpions from their boots each morning and watching for snakes that might have slithered in during the night. With the exception of a few European archaeological missions that have their own houses on the West Bank, almost all who work in the Luxor area stay in one of the city's hotels. This past season, the University of Arizona generously provided a small stipend that allowed us to upgrade from the hotel where we had stayed in previous years. There's a lot to be said for an air-conditioned room, reliable electricity, a cool shower, clean sheets and a well-stocked bar after a day of eating dust in an Egyptian tomb!

We get up before dawn, wake up the hotel's kitchen staff, grab a quick breakfast of boiled eggs, local bread, and strong coffee or tea, and take an early ferry across the river. There our regular driver meets us and drives us to the Valley of the Kings, about fifteen minutes away. We get to the Valley shortly after dawn and collect our equipment that's been stored for the night in one of the several closed and unidentified tombs.

One of the main problems we face is that many of the tombs where we work are open to the public. The Egyptian government allows us to close the tombs for only four hours a day. Luckily, because of the heat at that time of year, there aren't a lot of tourists. Those who do come to the Valley usually don't start arriving until about 7:00 am and don't get to the tombs where we're working until about 8:00. So we post one of our Egyptian workman at the top of a hill overlooking the path leading to the tomb. As soon as he sees tourists approaching, he runs down the hill to the entrance of the tomb and yells "Antagonists coming! Antagonists coming!" At that point, we drop a black bedsheet over the entrance and begin our four "official" hours of work.

But even the bedsheet doesn't always work. One morning we were working in KV 8, the tomb of Merenptah. Around 9:00, a tour of twenty French tourists arrived at the entrance and the guide demanded that she and her group be allowed in. We explained that the tomb would be closed until noon because we were doing archaeological work. The electric cords attached to the floodlights were stretched out in the middle of the corridors and would endanger anyone who tripped over them, to say nothing of damaging expensive equipment. In addition, the dust stirred up by the group would make photography and close epigraphic work on the wall scenes impossible for the rest of the day.

Indignant, she kept her tour waiting at the entrance, in the blazing June sun, for almost an hour, demanding admission. By 10:00 am, we had finished our work in the first two corridors and moved our equipment to the First Pillared Hall. Realizing she was not going to leave, we agreed to let the group in on the condition that they could only enter as far as the second corridor. Once inside, the guide gathered the group in the first corridor and proceeded to give a ten-minute lecture on... the Rosetta Stone! Then, without a word about Merenptah or his tomb, she marched the group straight down to the burial chamber, pushing all of us aside in the process. After they finally left, we had no choice: packing up our equipment amid the swirling dust, we followed them out of the tomb.

By about noon, we can no longer keep the tourists out of the tombs so we knock off for the day. After a quick lunch back at the hotel, a much-needed shower, and dancing the "Great American Bathtub Stomp" to wash our clothes, the rest of the afternoon is usually spent resting and working on our notes.

Since I have the easy job and it only takes me an hour or so to complete my notes and clean my camera lenses for the next day, I will often stay over on the West Bank to prowl around other archaeological sites. Despite (or because of) the heat, summer afternoons are a wonderful time to visit sites in Egypt. There are very few tourists, and even the guards are more interested in lying in the shade of a wall or under one of the scarce trees than paying much attention to a one or two crazy people wandering around the site.

Egyptologists working in Egypt at any given time comprise a fairly small community and most either know each other already or become friends very quickly. One of the highlights of an expedition is the opportunity to visit the sites of other projects, to socialize with the archaeologists working them, and to discuss each other's work and ideas.

Similarly, because we are in the same area each year for an extended period of time, we have the opportunity to get to know a number of the local Egyptians and their families. The food and ambiance in Egyptian hotels and tourist restaurants is good but it can never compare with sitting cross-legged on the dirt floor of a mudbrick house in a local village, sharing a meal with an Egyptian family.

As each season draws to a close, our thoughts inevitably turn to being back with our families and friends, sleeping in our own beds, and to such modern conveniences as washing machines and microwave ovens. With hearty goodbyes to Egyptian friends and colleagues, and with promises to stay in touch, we begin to trickle out of Luxor. But halfway over the Atlantic, we're already making plans and dreaming about our next season in The Great Egyptian Sandbox.



Donald Kunz and Dick Harwood in KV8, the tomb of Merenptah, June 1996

The Electric Papyrus

Egyptology in the New Media



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Pharaoh's Ascent

<http://www.ambertec.com/>

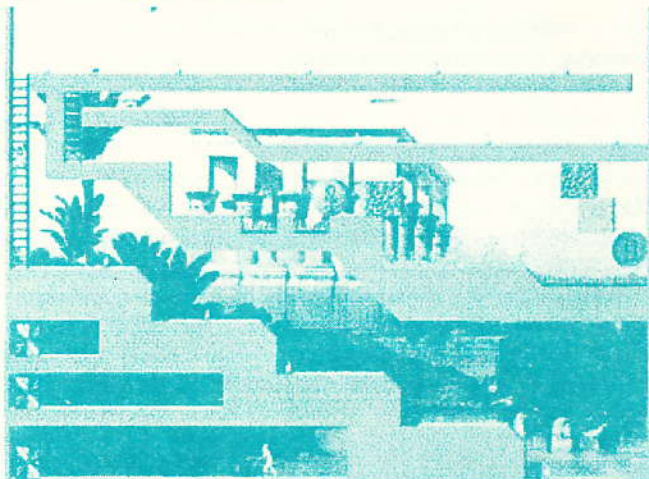


Image © Ambertec

Pharaoh's Ascent is a straightforward but challenging puzzle game, where you have to guide the recently-dead Pharaoh through all sorts of diabolical traps and mazes set by Seth, and bring him into the presence of Osiris. It consists of over 90 levels filled with stone blocks - some you can push out of the way, some you can tunnel through, some you can blow apart with an energy bolt from the fabled Staff of Ra, and so forth. To escape from a level, you have to move a circular stone slab marked with an ankh to the exit, which then becomes a magical gateway transporting you to the next level. Along the way, you must avoid hazards like flame traps, deadly spiders and wandering mummies.

The levels on the demo version (downloadable from the Web address above) look simple enough, but this appearance is deceptive. Take things in the wrong order, destroy a block that you need to move and climb over, and you'll find yourself completely stuck, with no option but to use the thoughtfully-provided restart command and try again!

As you might imagine, the actual Egyptological content of this game is slim to say the least, but provides pleasing background graphics to a simple but infuriating and addictive little game. It's a pleasing diversion for a few minutes at a time, and one at which younger relatives are sure to excel!

Review by Graeme Davis

The Egyptologist's Electronic Forum

<http://www.netins.net/showcase/ankh/eefmain.html>

On a more serious note, the Egyptologist's Electronic Forum is a very active email mailing list devoted to Egyptology. It is an excellent forum for discussion, contact building and searching for information on just about any aspect of ancient Egypt. Just to take a sample from one day's traffic on the list, the subjects included Senenmut's tomb (with side-discussions of astronomy), Anen's chapel, Pyramid texts referring to the raising of the Djed pillar, Egypt's northern border, where to find satellite photographs of the Nile delta, and where to find a Hieratic primer!

List members hail from all corners of the world, but the forum's business is conducted in English, and the discussions are always stimulating. The forum's Web site (address above) includes links to the forum's archives, its charter, and instructions on signing up. Subscription is free, and the information and access to other Egyptophiles worldwide is absolutely priceless.

Review by Graeme Davis

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If you've seen a Web site, CD-ROM, video, laserdisc, DVD or other electronic publication that you think would be of interest to fellow ESS members, the Electric Papyrus needs you! Send a brief review - as long or as short as you like - by email to Graeme Davis at graemed@vr1.com, or type it up and hand it to any publications committee member at an ESS meeting.



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HOUSE OF SCROLLS
will return in the next issue