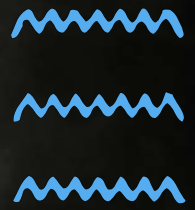
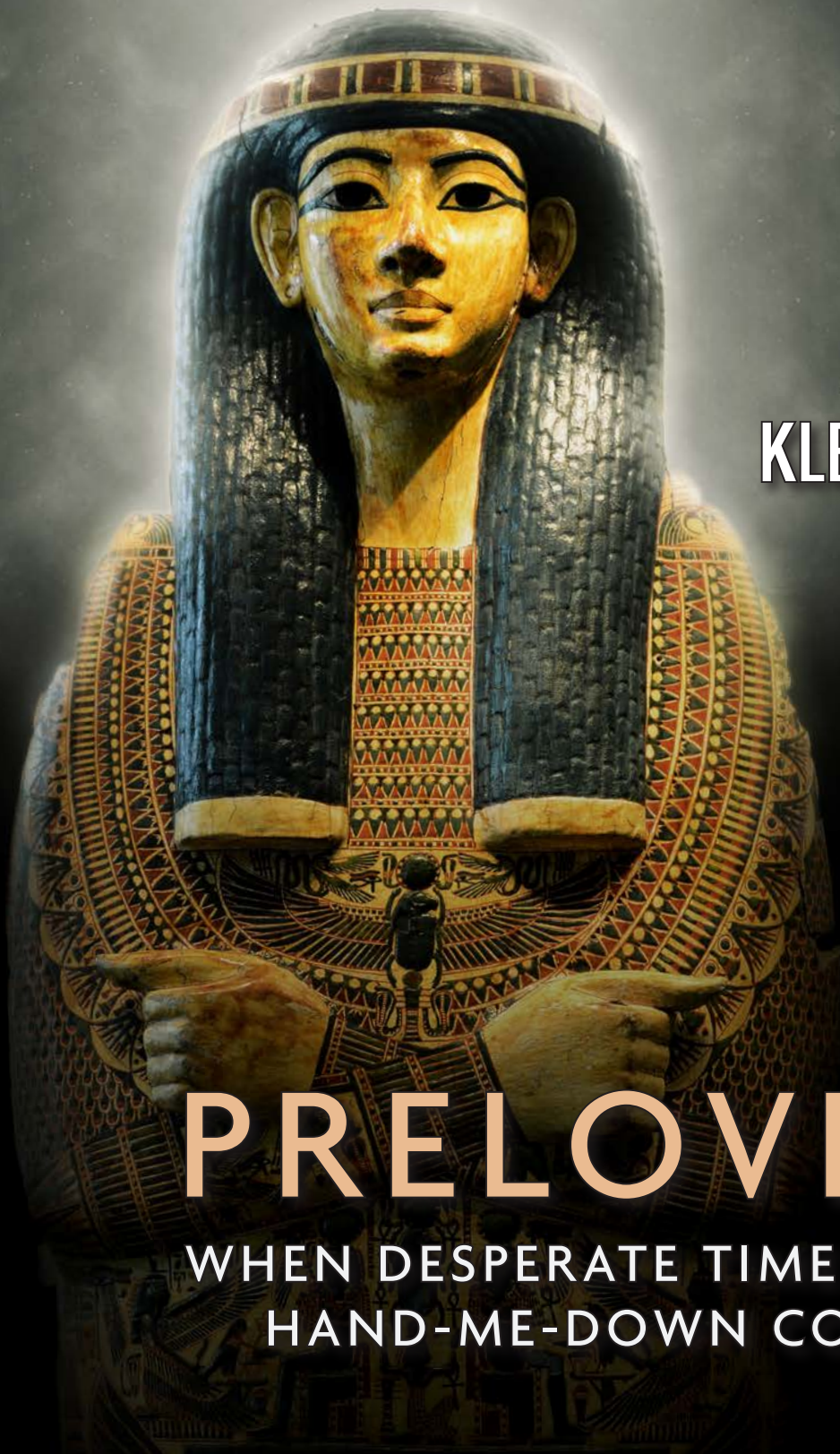


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The Latest
DISCOVERIES

KLEOPATRA SELENE
The Last Ptolemy

Going Underground
ROYAL TOMBS
of the 18th Dynasty

SPIRIT BIRDS

PRELOVED?

WHEN DESPERATE TIMES MEANT
HAND-ME-DOWN COFFINS





6

KLEOPATRA SELENE

Rebecca Batley

The melodrama of Cleopatra VII's political and not-so-private life has been well explored. What is less well known is that Cleopatra and Mark Antony had three children, including a daughter, Kleopatra Selene.



22

THE UNLUCKY MUMMY

Jane Mulder

So, you think you know the story of the Unlucky Mummy? Think again. **Jane Mulder** explores the myths and the surprising truth about *THAT* mummy board.



29

SPIRIT BIRDS

Lesley Jackson

Not only could Egypt's birds represent a specific deity, but also a number of concepts that were crucial to the Egyptians enjoying a successful afterlife.



40

THE ROYAL TOMBS

Aidan Dodson

In this final abridged instalment of Aidan Dodson's *The Royal Tombs of Ancient Egypt*, the New Kingdom pharaohs embrace Senwosret III's innovation, separate their tombs and temples, and head underground.



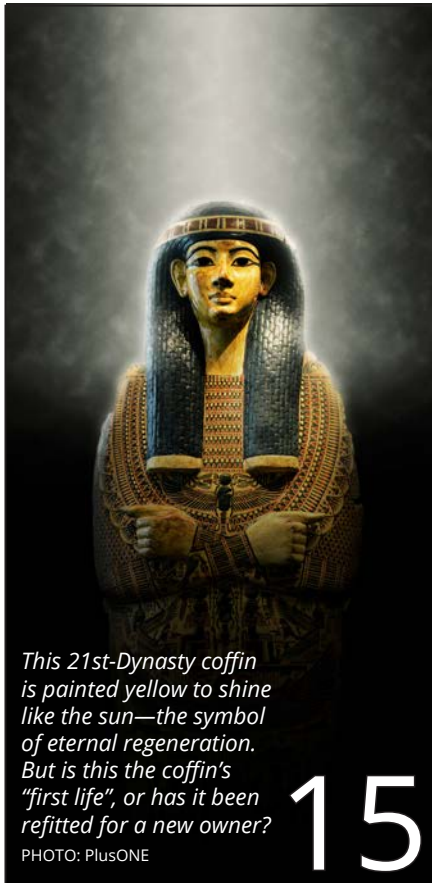
58

WHAT'S NEW?

Jeff Burzacott

Alexandria's "Big Black Sarcophagus" surprises with some impressed gold sheets, and the world's oldest cheese yet discovered turns out to be the *real* evil.

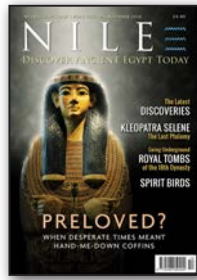
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This 21st-Dynasty coffin is painted yellow to shine like the sun—the symbol of eternal regeneration. But is this the coffin's "first life", or has it been refitted for a new owner?

PHOTO: PLUSONE

15



THE COVER

ARCE UPDATE: COFFIN REUSE

Jeff Burzacott

Was tomb robbery the lawless abhorrence we have always believed, or were there more sanctioned, but veiled, practices at work? In a special ARCE (*American Research Center in Egypt*) Update, we look at Kara Cooney's study into "legal" coffin reuse. (Spoiler alert: there's a lot of it!)

#16

OCTOBER–
NOVEMBER 2018

- 4 Map of Egypt
- 4 The NILE Crossword
- 5 Timeline
- 60 Looking Back
- 62 Exhibitions & Events
- 64 Coming Up
- 64 Contact NILE
- 65 Back Issues
- 65 Subscribe to NILE

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FROM THE EDITOR

WEHAD OUR OWN "Library of Alexandria" tragedy last month when the news broke about the catastrophic fire in the National Museum in Brazil.

It's heartbreaking to think that only an estimated 10% of the museum's collection has been spared. The entire Egyptian section is believed to have been destroyed.

I can't imagine an Egyptologist anywhere in the world who doesn't shudder when they think about what was lost. That's why it's important to safeguard what we have left: photographs. You've probably read the brief article on page 1. Please contribute with your own pictures if you can.

On the lighter side, I'm delighted to see that the humble NILE Quiz has been promoted to a fully-fledged crossword. I'm grateful to Keith Payne from *www.emhotep.net* for his creativity and hard work, and I invite you to give it a try on the next page.

Welcome to issue #16. I hope you love your NILE time!

Jeff Burzacott 
editor@nilemagazine.com.au



© JAAP JAN HEMMES

The goddess Hathor gifts eternal life to Thutmose IV (out of frame); a scene from the king's tomb (KV 43). It's one of the 18th-Dynasty royal tombs that Aidan Dodson explores from page 40.

KLEOPATRA SELENE

The Last Ptolemy



THE NAMES OF CLEOPATRA VII, Queen of Egypt, and her Roman Triumvir Mark Antony, echo throughout history. Their bloody and passionate love affair has been retold and reimagined almost as many times as that of their tragic end.

Their defeat at the Battle of Actium, and Cleopatra's subsequent suicide, in a final act of defiance against Rome, is the stuff of legend. What is less well known is that Cleopatra and Mark Antony had three children: twins Alexander Helios and Kleopatra Selene and another younger son Ptolemy Philadelphus.

ABOVE

Diademed and draped, this coin features Kleopatra Selene, the only daughter of Cleopatra VII.

As we'll learn, both Kleopatra Selene and her husband Juba II, came from families that had been destroyed by Rome. Yet while Juba embraced Roman culture, Selene was loyal to her family's Greco-Egyptian Ptolemaic line, and virtually ignored her father's Roman heritage.

Without fail, coins of Selene show her name and title in Greek (the language of the Ptolemaic rulers of Egypt), such as "ΒΑΣΙΛΙΣΣΑ ΚΛΕΟΠΑΤΡΑ" ("Queen Kleopatra"), as shown here—the same title used by her (in)famous mother.



AUGUSTUS

Roman historian Suetonius, born around 50 years after Augustus died, recorded his legendary appearance:

“Augustus was remarkably handsome and of very graceful gait even as an old man; but negligent of his personal appearance. He cared so little about his hair that, to save time, he would have two or three barbers working hurriedly on it together, and meanwhile read or write something. . .

“Augustus’ eyes were clear and bright, and he liked to believe that they shone with a sort of divine radiance; it gave him profound pleasure if anyone at whom he glanced keenly dropped his head as though dazzled by looking into the sun. . . .

“He always wore so serene an expression, whether talking or in repose, that a Gallic chief once confessed to his compatriots: ‘When granted an audience with the Emperor during his passage across the Alps I would have carried out my plan of hurling him over a cliff had not the sight of that tranquil face softened my heart; so I desisted.’”

This marble head of Augustus, is dated to the first century B.C.

THE J. PAUL GETTY MUSEUM, LOS ANGELES.
ACC. NO. 78.AA.261.
DIGITAL IMAGE COURTESY OF THE GETTY’S OPEN CONTENT PROGRAM.

debt-ridden Antony, who needed money to continue his Parthian campaign. Her decadent, self-indulgent, luxurious court, also appealed to his infamously hedonist nature and must have been a breath of fresh air after the serious political atmosphere of Rome.

Mark Antony stayed in Egypt until the spring of 40 B.C., and when he finally left to meet Octavian in Rome, Cleopatra was pregnant.

DAUGHTER OF EGYPT

Cleopatra had borne a baby by Rome before; her elder son Caesarion was the son of Julius Caesar, but this fact seems to have been disputed during antiquity, bestowing upon him an uncertain status in the minds of many Romans. No such doubts surround the parentage of her next three children— that Mark Antony was their father seems never to have been in doubt.

The exact date of Kleopatra Selene’s birth is unknown, but the date can be narrowed down to sometime in the autumn of 40 B.C. Kleopatra’s twin brother, Alexander Helios, was named for Alexander the Great, and Kleopatra

Selene, for her mother. Sun and Moon together, they were the embodiment of Antony and Cleopatra’s dreams for a new Egyptian Golden Age.

Antony did not immediately return to Egypt and would not meet his children for another three years. This meant that the earliest years of Kleopatra Selene’s life were spent with her mother at the Egyptian court, where she was established as one of her mother’s heirs.

In 37 B.C. Antony summoned Cleopatra to Antioch in Syria. It was the first time they had seen each other in several years, and it seems probable that Kleopatra Selene travelled with her mother to meet and be formally acknowledged by her father. Things for Antony had been going well, and over the next few years he and Cleopatra made plans for the rebuilding of the great Ptolemaic empire as it had been under the mighty Ptolemy I.

The next clear glimpse we get of Kleopatra Selene is three years later, in 34 B.C. Ultimately Antony’s military campaigns in Parthia were a failure, but he returned regardless to Alexandria in triumph, hailed as a conquering hero. Soon after his arrival he and Cleopatra held the Donations of Alexandria in the city’s gymnasium. Described by Greek

CLEOPATRA VII

It is sometimes said that once Egypt had succumbed to Rome, the Romans spent considerable effort to wipe out the memory and legacy of Cleopatra. In fact, once Octavian/Augustus had eliminated the threat to his power base (Marc Antony and Cleopatra) and the potential challenge to Julius Caesar's succession (Caesarion), he moved on.

Reminders of Cleopatra, however, remained in Rome for centuries. According to Greek historian Appian, writing in the second century, Julius Caesar had commissioned the Roman Temple of Venus Genetrix, and "placed a beautiful image of Cleopatra by the side of the goddess, which stands there to this day....", well over 150 years later.

As Edith Flamarion writes in Cleopatra: From History to Legend, "To the ancients, Cleopatra was an intriguing if incidental actor in the larger-than-life drama of Greece and Rome.... Today, popular culture has largely reversed that view: the splendid Egyptian queen tends to eclipse her Roman counterparts."

This limestone statue of a Ptolemaic Queen, with a mix of Egyptian and Roman influences, is widely thought to represent Cleopatra VII.

METROPOLITAN MUSEUM OF ART. GIFT OF JOSEPH W. DREXEL, 1889. ACC. NO. 89.2.660.



historian Strabo as the most beautiful of Alexandria's public buildings with a vast portico and a grove next to the courtroom, it was a magnificent setting.

The Donations was a public spectacle by Cleopatra VII and Mark Antony in which they distributed lands held by Rome and Parthia amongst Cleopatra's children and granted them many titles, especially for Caesarion, son of the late Julius Caesar.

Cleopatra was dressed as Isis and sat with Antony, enthroned on a dais alongside Caesarion, Alexander Helios, Kleopatra Selene and Ptolemy Philadelphus, Kleopatra Selene's youngest brother probably born sometime in 36 B.C. Her eldest brother Caesarion was declared King of Egypt; her mother the Queen to rule over Kings and Kleopatra Selene was made Queen of Crete and Cyrenaica.

To anyone watching, the dynastic ambition in these appointments would have been glaringly obvious. Still young children of around six, Kleopatra Selene and her brother were in no position to rule these lands immediately, but it was clear that it was intended they would be doing so as soon as possible.

The Donations of Alexandria enraged Octavian. Not

only was Antony distributing Roman territories without permission, but because they acknowledged Caesarion as the legitimate biological heir of Julius Caesar, Octavian's position as Caesar's adopted heir was undermined. He began to make plans to move against Antony and Egypt. Ten years of resentment and personal annoyance boiled over, and relations between the two men quickly fell apart, along with them any hope of an enduring peace between Rome and Egypt.

Preparations for a military confrontation were swift and less than thorough, but nevertheless, the forces of Antony and Cleopatra met those of Octavian at the Battle of Actium on the 2nd of September 31 B.C. Octavian won the day, and Antony and Cleopatra had no choice but to flee back to Alexandria. It appears Kleopatra Selene and her brothers were in Alexandria at this time and they would have heard the devastating news perhaps from a terrified nurse or a tutor commanded to apprise them of the situation.

Antony suffered a collapse following their defeat and retreated into solitude, but Cleopatra was already planning how best to appease Rome. She attempted to betray Antony to Octavian and then to abdicate, but it soon became



COURTESY OF GEOFFREY BELL AUCTIONS LTD.

This silver denarius featuring King Juba II on the left, and his son Ptolemy (by Kleopatra Selene) on the right, was minted around A.D. 24.

Juba outlived Kleopatra Selene by almost 30 years. He died around A.D. 23, having established a co-regency with Ptolemy during the last four years of his life.

In late 40, Emperor Caligula invited Ptolemy to Rome and welcomed him with appropriate honours. Ptolemy was

confirmed as king and an ally and friend of the empire, but he was soon assassinated by order of Caligula.

Why Ptolemy was done away with is unclear. Roman historian Dio Cassius later wrote that Caligula wanted Ptolemy out of the way to claim the wealth of Mauretania (which became a Roman province after Juba's death); others suggested that Ptolemy was implicated in a plot against the emperor, but ultimately no one knows.

heritage. Recently Algerian archaeologists have uncovered pyramid structures dating to Kleopatra Selene's reign; perhaps yet another Egyptian architectural echo.

Mauretania flourished under their rule as a trading and cultural centre. They re-established key trade routes and goods such as figs, purple dye, pearls and spices flooded into the kingdom. The court of Juba II and Kleopatra Selene also attracted scholars and artists from all over the Roman world; Juba II himself wrote many treatises, most notably on the natural world.

Sometime in around 10 B.C. Kleopatra Selene bore a son, Ptolemy—named for the maternal dynasty to which

he belonged. It was a distinctly Graeco-Egyptian name that spoke then, as now, to Kleopatra Selene's pride in her ancestry being reflected in every aspect of her rule.

There also exists an Athenian inscription by the Roman historian Tacitus which is dedicated to a daughter of Juba II, possibly named as Drusilla, granddaughter of Antony and Cleopatra. This girl could possibly be a daughter of Kleopatra Selene, however, the chronology for this is sketchy.

Kleopatra Selene and Juba II were two of the most successful client rulers to come out of Rome and they ruled over a rich, prosperous and peaceful kingdom for 20 years. Kleopatra Selene died at about the age of 35 in around A.D.

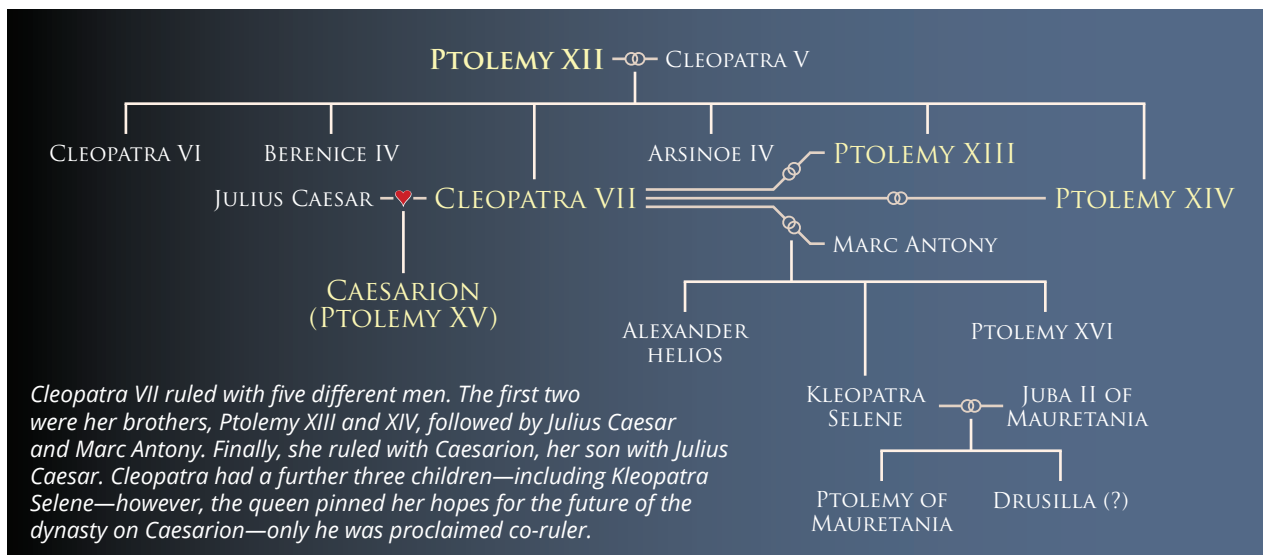


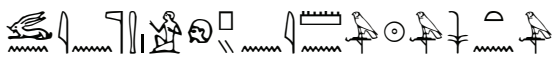
PHOTO: MARISSA STEVENS. BY KIND PERMISSION OF NATIONAL MUSEUMS SCOTLAND



ARCE's support of Kara Cooney's 21st Dynasty Coffins Project is helping to deliver surprising results. Just one example is at the National Museum of Scotland in Edinburgh, where 60% of the 21st-Dynasty coffins examined (above) showed evidence of reuse.

Egypt's 21st Dynasty saw her neighbours fall under a confederacy of invaders, and luxury wood imports halted. No coffin meant no rebirth, so now, reusing an ancestor's coffin became the only possible option for the spiritual well-being of one's loved ones.

At the same time, Theban elites abandoned the ostentatious tomb complexes that had become beacons to thieves. Instead, burials became communal and more easily guarded. Expensive tomb decorations and lavish funerary goods decreased, and the focus now went on the minimum essentials for rebirth: the coffin and the mummy. As tomb decoration decreased, coffin decoration increased, and the interiors of 21st-Dynasty coffins were decorated for the first time (above). Coffins effectively became discrete tombs into which the body was placed.



"The High Priest of Amun-Re, King



of the Gods, Khonsuemheb, sat down and wept..."

The High Priest was clearly rattled. He had just listened to a heart-wrenching tale from a man who had once lived almost 500 years earlier. In the late 20th-Dynasty tale known as *Khonsuemheb and the Ghost*, the High Priest is haunted by a distressed 17th-Dynasty *akh*, who appears to be cold, hungry and homeless, and faces a bleak eternity.

For the ancient Egyptians, this story reinforced a familiar warning of what happens when the living fail the dead: their name forgotten, their offerings neglected and their

coffin and tomb damaged or destroyed. The happy ending in this story is that Khonsuemheb promises the unhappy *akh* to rebuild his tomb, commission a replacement coffin of gold and precious wood, and reestablish his offering cult.

The importance to the Egyptians of a secure spot to become an aspect of Osiris and enjoy immortality was still powerful a thousand years later, when, in the 1st century B.C., Greek writer Diodorus Siculus wrote:

"For the inhabitants of Egypt consider the period of this life of no account whatever, but place the greatest value on the time after death when they will be remembered for their virtue... consequently they give less thought to the furnishing of their houses but in the manner of their burials they do not forgo any excess of zeal."



BRITISH MUSEUM. ACC. NO. EA 29579. PHOTO: REMY HIRAMOTO
COURTESY TRUSTEES OF THE BRITISH MUSEUM

The inner coffin lid of Muthotep was found in Thebes in the late 19th century and was soon shipped off to the U.K. and made its way to the British Museum. This wasn't, however, the first time that the coffin had been pulled into the daylight since first being interred.

One of the easiest ways to spot coffin reuse is by spotting old decoration underneath later styles. Here, the broken plaster on the coffin of Muthotep in the British Museum shows the older 19th-Dynasty decoration below the newer 20th-Dynasty surface.

THE MYSTERY

Today it makes headlines when a tomb is discovered that appears to be untouched: having escaped the ravages of tomb robbers and stocked with the necessary funerary assemblage to ensure a comfortable forever-after. However, ongoing research by Kara Cooney at the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA) suggests that even when an “intact” tomb is unearthed, it may not quite be as untouched as we had once thought.

A big part of ARCE's mission is to support leading research on Egyptian history and culture. Its important support of Kara Cooney's 21st Dynasty Coffins Project is helping to shift the long-established narrative surrounding tomb robbery in ancient Egypt.

Today, Kara Cooney is Associate Professor of Egyptian Art and Architecture at UCLA. As a PhD student, however, she became intrigued by something others had noticed before, but not explored to any great depth: the overwhelming number of surviving Egyptian coffins from the 21st Dynasty (ca. 1069–945 B.C.). Only about eighty 19th and 20th Dynasty coffins survive (from a period lasting some 225 years). In contrast, over 800 coffins dated to the 21st-Dynasty remain in museums around the world—and this was from a 120-year period known for political instability, economic crisis and rampant tomb plundering.

The intrigue deepened when it was observed that some of these 21st Dynasty coffins showed obvious signs of reuse: a new owner's name was inscribed over the original occupant. In the past, some of these coffins had been described as bearing an “archaizing” style, i.e. with antique design features. However, a closer look sometimes revealed the names of more than one owner, or a hint of old decoration

beneath later remodelling. Rather than being built in an old-fashioned style, it seems they indeed *were* old-fashioned coffins that had been reused. Were the great numbers of 21st-Dynasty coffins simply older coffins that had been reemployed?

THE 21ST DYNASTY COFFINS OF DB 320

In late 2016, Dr. Cooney's curiosity led to Cairo's Egyptian Museum to examine the most famous (and understudied) collection of 21st-Dynasty coffins anywhere: those of the High Priests of Amun from DB 320. Thanks to amazing access provided by museum staff, and assistance provided by ARCE for the volumes of paperwork and permissions required by multiple government agencies, “Team Kara” was able to study this assemblage of coffins more thoroughly than anyone had for over a century.

These belonged to the powerful clergy and their families who assumed control over Thebes and Upper Egypt when the last Ramesside king died at the end of the 20th Dynasty. The Amun priesthood shared strong family links with the new “official” dynasty—the 21st—which now ruled from the northern Delta, and the two connected houses entered into a power-sharing arrangement to govern the whole of Egypt. The Theban priestly elite became the effective kings of Upper Egypt.

Their communal family tomb, DB 320 in Western Thebes, eventually became a Royal Cache, also holding the battered mummies of many of the great New Kingdom rulers whose burials had been plundered by the Theban priesthood to fund their administration.

What Cooney and her team discovered when examining the coffins of the 21st Dynasty priestly elite was astounding.



Looks can be deceiving. The breasts on this anonymous mummy board were created in plaster, and appear, upon close examination to have been added after the headdress. However, this isn't necessarily a sign of reuse. It may be that the original craftsmen decided to switch the board's gender after much of it had been completed, or perhaps

that was simply the process they used: adding the breasts after the headdress.

Amber Myers Wells, research associate for "Team Kara", told NILE Magazine that this mummy cover "is an example of the nuance and attention to detail required in Kara's study of reuse."

Why did Pinudjem II feel the need to curtail the after-life powers of his deceased niece/wife? Cooney suggests that this Funerary Decree "could represent a rare written attestation of the kinds of verbal temple rituals performed when harm (intentional or not) was done to a given person's funerary ensemble or tomb."

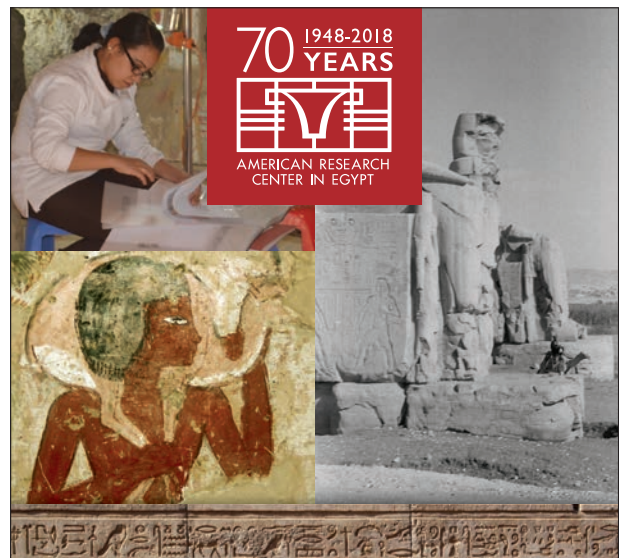
It appears that something might have happened (or was about to happen) to Nesykhonsu's funerary equipment, and Pinudjem II felt it was important to keep her afterlife self at peace. Whether this was out of guilt or self-preservation, we'll probably never know.

ARCE'S SUPPORT

Kara Cooney still has a lot of coffins to look at. Thanks to ARCE's Antiquities Endowment Fund and UCLA, her team headed back to Cairo's Egyptian Museum in September. This time it was to study the coffins into which the royals had been placed before being rounded up in the 21st Dynasty and hidden in DB 320. These coffins were replacements for the golden originals that the pharaohs and their family members were likely interred in.

We look forward to keeping you updated with Kara Cooney's research on "legal" coffin reuse in ancient Egypt, and how the Thebans adapted to one of the greatest crises their world had ever seen.

You can learn more about the conservation, excavation and research projects supported by ARCE's Antiquities Endowment Fund throughout Egypt at www.arce.org.



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THE UNLUCKY MUMMY

Strange myths abound, warning of the curse to be visited on those who disturb ancient Egyptian burials, the most famous “victim” being Lord Carnarvon, who died not long after Howard Carter opened Tutankhamun’s tomb. But there is an even older account of a mummy’s curse.

THE CURSE

JUST LIKE A FISHERMAN’S TALE of “the one that got away”, the story of the Unlucky Mummy grows with every telling. First published in a front-page article by a journalist named Bertram Fletcher Robinson (a close friend of the famous spiritualist, Sir Arthur Conan Doyle), the story appeared in London’s *Daily Express* in June 1904. It was cheerfully titled, “A Priestess of Death”. Today, it’s hard to find two versions that agree in the dark details, but this is generally how the story goes:

In the late 1860s, a “Mr. D.” and four friends arrived in Luxor while on a dahabiya cruise up the Nile. One night they were approached by a local, and offered a mummy case belonging to a priestess of Amun-Ra. The 1904 article explains they were “impressed by its remarkable beauty and by the curious face of the woman portrayed, a face that was filled with a cold malignancy of expression, unpleasant to witness.”

As each was keen to acquire the masterpiece, they drew lots, and the winner, “Mr. W.,” paid several thousand pounds

for it. This trip of a lifetime now took a sudden turn for the worse. The next day one of the men inexplicably walked out into the desert, never to return. One of his companions was accidentally shot in the arm, which was so badly damaged that it had to be amputated. The “lucky” bidder of the coffin was not to enjoy his acquisition for long. According to the 1904 *Daily Express* story, “Mr. W.” arrived in Cairo to find he had “lost a large part of his fortune. He died soon afterwards.” Later versions of the story talk of another of the party becoming so ill that he could no longer work and was reduced to selling matches on the street.

Eventually, the coffin arrived in England and was given to “Mr. W.’s” sister. “From the day the case entered the house misfortune followed misfortune,” wrote Robinson in the *Daily Express*.

A photograph taken of the mummy case revealed instead “a living Egyptian woman staring straight before her with an expression of singular malevolence.” The photographer died shortly afterwards.

(FACING PAGE)

The “Unlucky Mummy” in the British Museum is really a wooden cover, sometimes called a “mummy board”. Covers like this were placed on top of the mummy, which would lie inside one or two wooden coffins decorated in a very similar fashion. No inscriptions on the board identify the deceased, presumably because that task would have been performed by the outer coffins.

The British Museum states that “the wooden board was covered in plaster... with many of the decorative elements modelled in the plaster to give the appearance of raised relief... On the shoulders of the mummy-board is a massive coloured collar, below which is a series of complex scenes... One of the coffin’s functions, other than to

act as a container for the body, was to serve as a microcosm, setting the deceased within the larger environment of the universe itself; thus the plentiful solar and Osirian symbolism, essential to assist the person’s rebirth, figures prominently. The decoration, usual in the 21st Dynasty, is perhaps the most elaborate example of this.”

The “Curator’s comments” section for the mummy board on the British Museum website addresses the “Unlucky Mummy” phenomenon, and states that it is “perhaps best known for the strange folkloric history attributed to it... None of these stories has any basis in fact, but from time to time the strength of the rumours has led to a flood of enquiries.”



COURTESY TRUSTEES OF THE BRITISH MUSEUM
ACC. NO. EA 22542.

An Egyptian Mummy, two of which are said to be lately brought from Grand Cairo, and consigned to a Merchant of this City.



THE ancient Egyptians had three ways of embalming their dead, and artists were particularly trained up for that purpose: the most costly method was practised only upon persons of high rank; of which sort are all the mummies that have remained entire to the present times: It was done by extracting the brains thro' the nostrils, and injecting a rich balm in their stead; then opening the belly, and taking out the intestines, the cavity was washed with palm wine impregnated with spices, and filled with myrrh and other aromatics; this done, the body was laid in nitre 70 days, at the end of which it was taken out, cleaned, and swathed with fine linnen, gummed and ornamented with various hieroglyphics, expressive of the deceased's birth, character and rank. This process completed, the embalmer carried home the body, where it was placed in a coffin, cut in human shape, and then enclosed in an outer case, and placed upright against the wall of the burying place belonging to the family.—Another less expensive method of embalming was, by injecting into all the cavities of the body a certain dissolvent; which, being suffered to run off after a proper time, carried with it whatever was contained therein liquified; and then the body, thus purged, being dried by the nitrous process as before, the operation was closed by swathing, &c. By the third and lowest method of embalming, which was only in use among the poor, they drenched the body with injections, and then dried it with nitre.—The Egyptians had a custom among them of pledging the dead bodies of their parents and kindred, as a security for the payment of their debts, and whoever neglected to redeem them was held in the utmost abhorrence, and denied the rites of burial themselves.—They paid extravagant honours to their deceased ancestors; and there are at this day to be seen in Egypt pompous subterranean edifices, called by the Greeks Hypogees, representing towns or habitations under ground, in which there are streets or passages of communication from one to another, that the dead might have as free intercourse as when alive.

MR URBAN,

Kent, Aug. 5, 1751.

I Am not able to assign myself a reason why so many men's ages are recorded in scripture, and but one woman's. If some of your correspondents would give one, it would much oblige,

Your constant Reader G. P.

P.S. Abraham's wife is the only woman whose entire age is recorded in scripture.

* Our learned correspondent E. Bute, in order to bring the long controversy he has been engaged in to a conclusion, reits the whole of the question in dispute upon one

THE EGYPTOLOGY LIBRARY OF PEGGY JOY

The article on the left was published in the August 1751 issue of London's The Gentleman's Magazine. It provides a thorough explanation of the mummification process, and describes the "pompous subterranean edifices" into which the deceased were buried. Pictured is "an Egyptian Mummy, two of which are said to be lately brought from Grand Cairo, and consigned to a Merchant of this City."

It's easy to understand how a body that seems to be defying the natural order of decay could be seen as unnatural—and very spooky. So it's no wonder that those who breach their tombs do so with racing hearts!

Over a thousand years before the above merchant arrived in London with two mummies amongst his luggage, the visit to an Egyptian tomb by a 7th century governor was so terrifying, that the tale was still being told in the 10th century, to the Iraqi traveller and historian, al-Mas'ūdi.

The story goes that upon being told that the tomb was piled high with treasure, the governor ordered an expedition to break in. As Prof. Michael Cooperson, writes in "The Reception of Pharaonic Egypt in Islamic Egypt" (2010), "His men uncover... steps leading down to a pedestal topped by the statue of rooster. When one of the workmen places his foot on the step, two swords pop out of the ground and cut him in half... the work continues but the curse cannot be beaten."

To quote al-Mas'ūdi: "Of the thousand men involved in digging, working, hauling earth, surveying the ground, and issuing orders, all died. Terrified, 'Abd al-Malik said, 'This is a strange ruin, and an unbreachable one....'"

of Egyptian Funerary Archaeology, stated that "this board was presented to the British Museum in 1889 by Mr. A. F. Wheeler and has been the subject of many paragraphs in the newspapers."

The board's lifelike face and beautiful, painted embellishments indicate a person of high rank. As no name appears on the coffin, it is not known to whom the coffin belonged, though the placement of the hands with extended fingers indicates that it was a woman. Although it was never proved that she was a priestess of Amun-Ra, early museum publications gave her that appellation.

The only occasions when the object was removed from the museum were during the two world wars (for safety), and decades later when it was included in temporary exhibitions in Australia and Taiwan.

The Unlucky Mummy was never in America, shipped on the Titanic, or sold to anyone at all. Indeed, the Trustees

of the British Museum are not empowered to sell or dispose of any of the museum's objects.

For the man who helped propagate the story of the curse, however, his cruise on the Titanic was unlucky. While the Unlucky Mummy was safe and sound in the British Museum on the night the Titanic sank, the body of W. T. Stead lay, as the 1912 *New York World* put it, "lifeless beneath 2000 fathoms of water."



JANE MULDER is a freelance travel writer with numerous published articles. She has been a member of The Egyptian Society of South Africa for over 20 years and coordinated Dr. Zahi Hawass' South African lecture tour. Jane also writes articles on ancient Egypt for the Society's newsletter, *SHEMU*.

CURSES IN ANCIENT EGYPT

Jeff Burzacott

THE ANCIENT EGYPTIAN DEAD faced a dilemma. On the one hand, they were reliant on the goodwill of the living for the maintenance of their funerary cult. On the other, attracting attention to one's tomb ran the risk of receiving another kind of attention: the unwelcome, tomb-desecrating kind.

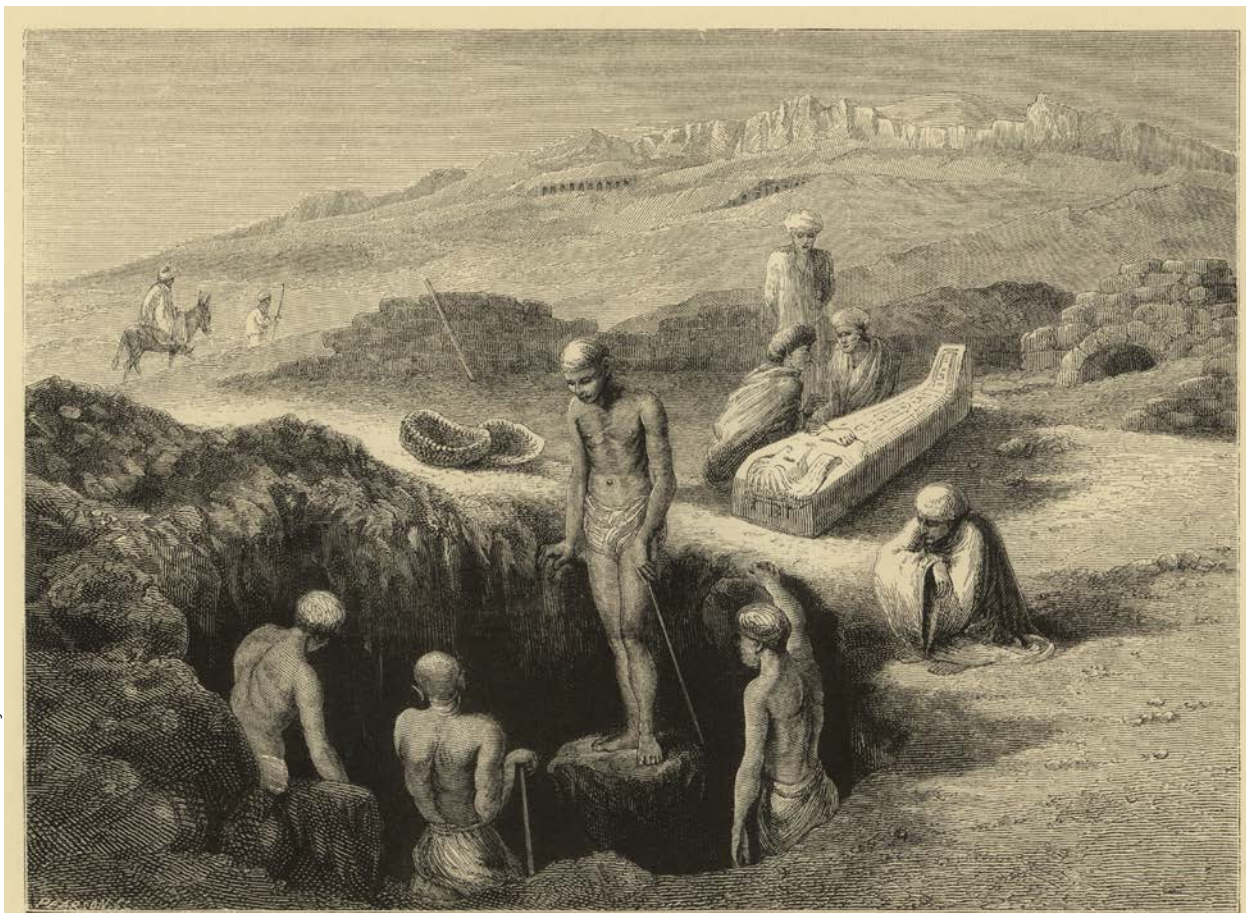
It may have been a response to the less-than-reliable manner in which previous funerary cults had been carried out, that wealthy tomb-owners began equipping their tombs with what are known as “appeals to the living”. These “appeals” were carved into the walls of accessible parts of the tomb, or on stelae, and were designed to catch the at-

tention of literate visitors to the tomb—or just anyone (again, literate) who happened to be passing—to say the offering formula. To the Egyptians, the power of words was almost palpable, and merely uttering the formula was enough to conjure up the necessary bread, beer, oxen and fowl, for the deceased's continued enjoyment in the afterlife.

These “appeals” are occasionally accompanied by threats or “curses”, warning of dire consequences to those who cause harm (or “evil”) to the tomb.

Many of the examples used when discussing ancient Egyptian “curses” come from “Appeal to the Living” texts.

The tradition began with late 5th-Dynasty government



DIGGING FOR MUMMIES.

"In this season of the year, the Egyptians, having little occasion to employ their time in the labours of the field, devote themselves to opening and plundering the tombs of their ancient countrymen, of every article that can tempt the European traveller to make it his own. The grave-clothes, bones, bitumen and mummy-chest, they leave exposed in the open air."— Robert Richardson, *Travels Along The Mediterranean, and Parts Adjacent...* (London, 1822).

Sadly, the ancient Egyptians' "Appeals to the Living" and

their accompanying threats against those who would disrespect their tombs, were powerless against the attentions of modern tomb robbers.

This image comes from A Thousand Miles up the Nile, published in 1877 by Amelia B. Edwards. During her own Nile adventure four years earlier, Edwards was unsettled by the desperately vulnerable state of Egypt's tombs and temples after years of tomb robbing and treasure-seeking by local dealers and foreign tourists. Her disquiet led to the formation of the Egypt Exploration Fund (now Society) to help study and protect the monuments.

LESLEY JACKSON

SPIRIT BIRDS



Ancient Egypt was a land blessed with an abundance of birds. As well as the resident species, huge numbers passed through the country during the spring and autumn migrations. As the Egyptians believed that this world was a reflection of the divine realm, birds provided an important source of symbolism. Not only could they represent a specific deity, but also a number of concepts that were crucial to enjoying a successful afterlife.

This is the third of Lesley Jackson's four-part series on bird symbolism. Parts one and two were in issues #10 and #13 respectively.


(ABOVE)

THE BA-BIRD OF INHERKHAU PRAISES THE DECEASED (OUT OF FRAME) IN HIS TOMB (TT 359).
FOR MORE ON THE BA-BIRD, SEE PAGE 32. PHOTO © JAAP JAN HEMMES

The presence of the *benu* bird aligns the deceased with Ra and the powers of regeneration and rebirth, as well with freedom of movement that any flying bird can symbolise. In the tomb scene opposite, the text above the heads of the two representations of Irynefer is a vignette from the Book of the Dead, providing a spell for becoming *benu*.

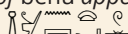
The heron's preferred method of hunting, perched on isolated rocks or standing in shallow water, suggested a link to the moment of creation when the primeval land first rose out of the pre-creation waters of *nun*, and life, in the form of the sun god, appeared. This sacred moment of creation was re-enacted each year when the waters of the Nile inundation began to recede, and land appeared from beneath the waters. From the Egyptians' point of view, the heron's association with the sun god and continual rebirth was a logical one. But how did the Greeks manage to reinterpret this as the phoenix?

Greek historian Herodotus, living in the 5th century B.C., said he had only seen the phoenix in paintings, "for it is very rare and visits the country... only at intervals of 500 years, on the occasion of the death of the parent bird... To judge by the paintings, its plumage is partly golden, partly red, and in shape and size it is exactly like an eagle." While that description sounds more like the Horus falcon than a heron, without knowledge of the heron's link with the inundation and the moment of creation it is easy to see how someone could envisage a self-generating solar bird to be a fiery-coloured creature.

When water levels or food supplies dwindle, herons move away in search of food, so the heron became associated with plenty. Chapter 110 of the Book of the Dead refers to the Field of Reeds (*sekhet-aru* , a lush, idealised version of Egypt, with boundless fields of wheat, intersected by waterways bursting with life. This place of abundance was symbolised by another heron: the "Heron of Plenty", who provided food for the spirits of the justified deceased.



© JAAP JAN HEMMES

This beautifully-detailed image of *benu* appearing as a heron is from TT 359, the Theban Tomb of Inherkhau . Here the *benu* bird is wearing the Atef crown, therefore identifying Inherkhau with Osiris, as well as Ra. Accompanying this vignette is hieroglyphic text announcing the "Spell for becoming the *benu*, entering and going forth by Osiris, Overseer of the crew in the Place of Truth, Inherkhau, true of voice".



© JAAP JAN HEMMES

Chapter 89 of the Book of the Dead allowed the *ba* of the deceased, after a day of enjoying the sunshine, to rejoin the mummy in the tomb. A vignette typically shows the *ba*, represented as a bird with a human head, flying over a mummy, symbolically uniting with it.

This scene comes from the Theban Tomb of Ameneminet

TT 277), a priest in the Memorial Temple of Amenhotep III during the 20th Dynasty.

Ameneminet's coffin has been placed on a funerary couch in the form of a lion. Beneath the couch are his funerary goods: four vases, a bag and some fabric. Hovering over the deceased is Ameneminet's *ba*.

THE BA BIRD

WHILE THE *BA* IS OFTEN DESCRIBED as the “soul” of a person, as already mentioned on page 30 it is probably more accurately described as a “manifestation” or “form” of the deceased. In effect, it is the essence of the person without any physical attributes or constraints.

In iconography, a person's *ba* was represented as a human-headed bird. The human head denotes an individual, and the bird's body depicts the freedom of movement of the deceased, able to leave the netherworld and soak up the sun's creative energies.

Depictions of *ba*-birds vary, but they are often in the form of a falcon as this aligns the deceased with Horus. It is possible that the sight of swallows (or a similar species) nesting in tombs helped crystallise the concept of the *ba*-bird, with its freedom to leave the tomb, but always returning each night. This paralleled with the sun god Ra entering the underworld each night and reuniting with the corpse of Osiris, prior to the sun's rebirth at dawn. Naturally, there

are funerary spells for a human-swallow transformation:



“Spell for being transformed into a swallow.”

(The Book of the Dead, Chapter 86)

It was considered essential for the *ba* to reunite with the body at regular intervals. To ensure this occurred, the vignette to Spell 89 of the Book of the Dead featured a *ba*-bird shown hovering over the mummified body of the deceased (see above).



“Spell for enabling the *ba* to rest on one's corpse in the god's domain.”

(The Book of the Dead, Chapter 89)

Tomb reliefs also show the *ba*-bird fluttering above the deceased in the tomb chamber (above) or outside the tomb as it returns to the body (see opposite).



Pictured is a vignette from Spell 92 from the Book of the Dead, titled, "Spell to open the tomb for the ba and shadow of the deceased, so that he may go forth by day and have power in his legs".

This scene comes from the Tomb of Irynefer (TT 290) at Deir el-Medina, the royal tomb-builders' village near the Valley of the Kings. Irynefer served under two kings: Seti I and Ramesses II in the early 19th Dynasty. It seems that Irynefer had a lot of talented friends in the village and his tomb is one of the most colourful there.

The detail (left) shows Irynefer's Ba descending from heaven to join its mummy in the tomb.



© JAAP JAN HEMMES

(ABOVE and RIGHT) Irynefer's ba, wings folded, leaves the netherworld, represented by a black disk.


The dark silhouette standing in front of Irynefer's tomb chapel is his shadow (shewt 𓆎𓅓𓏏𓏏). In his book, Middle Egyptian, James P. Allen describes the shadow as "an essential adjunct to the body, since every body casts one. Because the shadow derives from the body, the Egyptians believed it had something of the body—and, therefore, of the body's owner—in it.

The shadow was said to accompany the deceased's ba when it emerged from the tomb each morning to share in the rising sun's rebirth.





© JAAP JAN HEMMES

TT 255 is the Tomb of Roy , who was a Royal Scribe during Horemheb's reign in the late 18th Dynasty. Pictured inside are Amenemipet and his wife Muty (whose

relationship to Roy is unknown) being welcomed into the afterlife by Maat (above). Maat's hair is dark blue to imitate the lapis-lazuli of which the hair of gods is made.

(OPPOSITE) For the pharaohs, this was their primary role: to deliver and maintain order in the world. Offering maat to a deity expressed the king's conviction to uphold the principles of cosmic order. Scenes featuring a non-royal person presenting maat to a god or goddess are rare.

One such example is in the Theban tomb of Irynefer (TT 290). Here the deceased is shown kneeling before an offering table which supports a figure of maat clutching an ankh. Irynefer offers the image of maat to Ptah (out of frame), the preeminent god of Memphis.

In theory at least, truth, justice and order governed the lives of everyone from king to peasant. For those who escaped justice in this life, there was still the Judgement Hall in the afterlife where the deceased's heart was weighed against Maat's feather of truth. The ostrich feather alone could represent both the goddess and the concept of *maat*.


Perhaps the size and appearance may have been the biggest factors for the use of the ostrich feather for *maat*. One could argue that using the heaviest feather to be found would be a distinct advantage when it came to improving your chances in the afterlife!



LESLEY JACKSON writes about Egyptian deities and is the author of *Thoth: The History of the Ancient Egyptian God of Wisdom, Hathor: A Reintroduction to an Ancient Egyptian Goddess* and *Isis: The Eternal Goddess of Egypt and Rome*.




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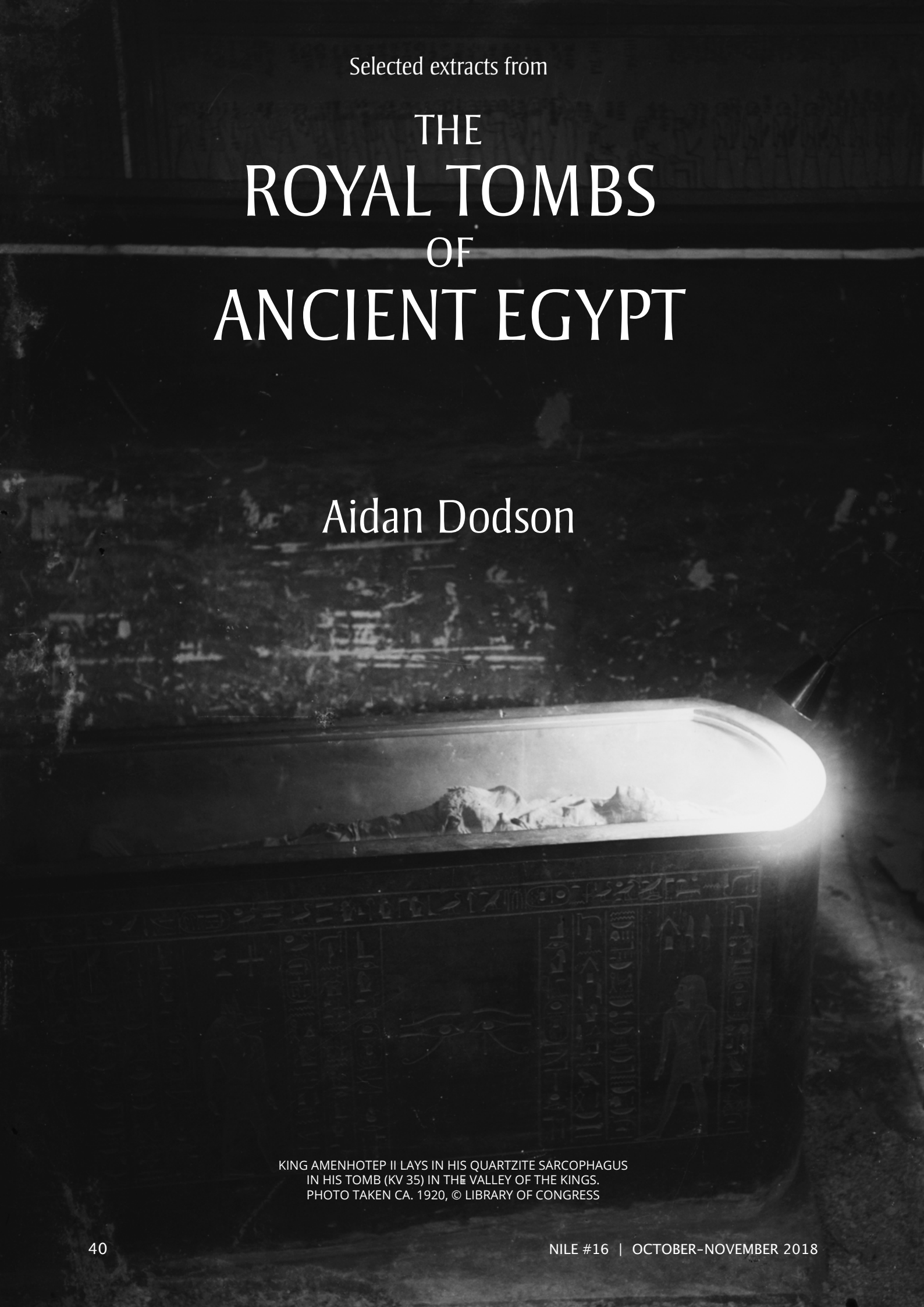
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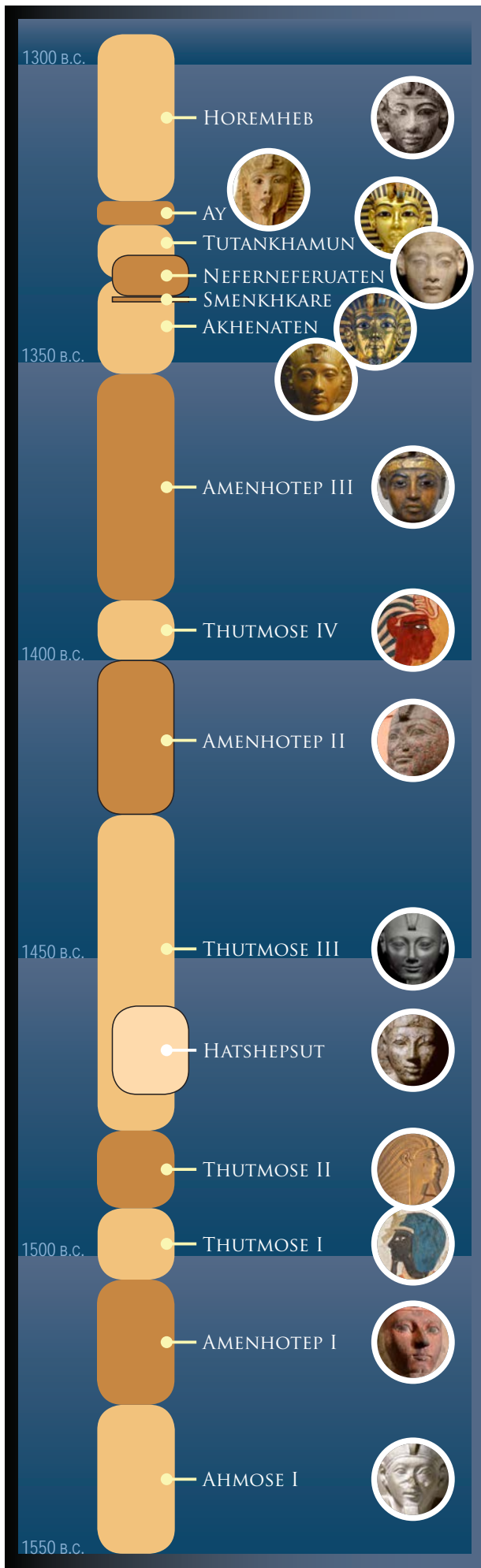
Selected extracts from

THE ROYAL TOMBS OF ANCIENT EGYPT

Aidan Dodson



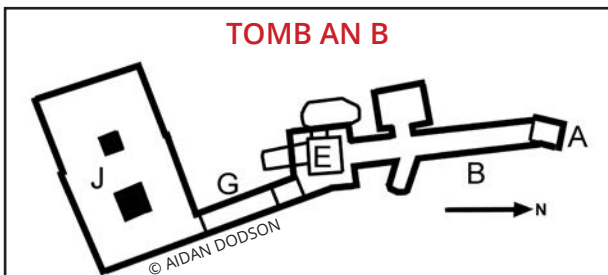
KING AMENHOTEP II LAYS IN HIS QUARTZITE SARCOPHAGUS
IN HIS TOMB (KV 35) IN THE VALLEY OF THE KINGS.
PHOTO TAKEN CA. 1920, © LIBRARY OF CONGRESS



Papyrus Abbott states that the tomb lay 120 cubits below some elevated element (the exact translation of which remains moot) and north of the “House of Amenhotep of the Garden”. Unfortunately there is no clarity on the location of the latter, and it has been variously identified with a number of buildings. Candidate tombs to the north of one or more of these loci have included: KV 39, a rock-cut tomb above the southern end of the Valley of the Kings; a putative yet-undiscovered tomb in the cliff above the temples at Deir el-Bahari; a tomb in the wadis behind Dra Abu’l-Naga (AN B, see opposite); and a rock-cut tomb-chapel high up at Dra Abu’l-Naga (K93.11, also opposite). Both the latter candidates lie close to the north-south axis of a temple constructed in the names of Amenhotep I and his mother Ahmes-Nefertiry in front of the hill, apparently originally built for the king’s *heb-sed*.

However, while probably originally constructed early in the 18th Dynasty, both K93.11 and the adjoining K93.12 were extensively modified by the high priests of Amun Ramesesnakht and Amenhotep G during the later 20th Dynasty. This is precisely the period during which the tomb of Amenhotep I was reported by Papyrus Abbott as being “intact” in Year 16 of Ramesses IX, making it seemingly impossible to identify K93.11 with a tomb in the process of being transformed into a private sepulchre.

AN B contained many items bearing the names of Amenhotep I, Ahmes-Nefertiry and also of Ahmose I. Although originally argued to be that of Amenhotep I, it was subsequently generally regarded as actually that of Ahmes-Nefertiry, but since it seems likely that the latter’s tomb was elsewhere, its ownership by Amenhotep I seems most likely.



Tomb AN B comprises a vertical shaft leading to a corridor (with two annexes), then a deep pit, followed by a further corridor leading to a burial chamber. The latter seems to have been cut in two phases, perhaps to allow a second burial to be included—possibly that of the mummy of Ahmose I, “repatriated” from Abydos. The pit is a feature found in many later New Kingdom royal tombs (including that of Amenhotep I’s wife, Meryet-amb B), and was known, at least in later times, as the “hall of hindering”. It thus seems most likely to have had a protective purpose, to frustrate robbers and to prevent any water that penetrated the entrance from entering the innermost chambers.

(LEFT) Egypt’s 18th Dynasty: fourteen kings ruling for almost 500 years. Even when the royal palace moved to Memphis during the reign of Thutmose I, the 18th-Dynasty pharaohs (as well as those of the 19th and most of the 20th) returned to Thebes to spend eternity.



FRANCIS DZIKOWSKI, © AND COURTESY THEBAN MAPPING PROJECT

Although KV 42 contained a sarcophagus of royal dimensions, a kheker-ornament dado and yellow-starred blue ceiling, the tomb was unfinished, with no signs of a primary burial and no inscriptions found. Outside were found foundation deposits, naming Meryetre, a wife of Thutmose III, and thus

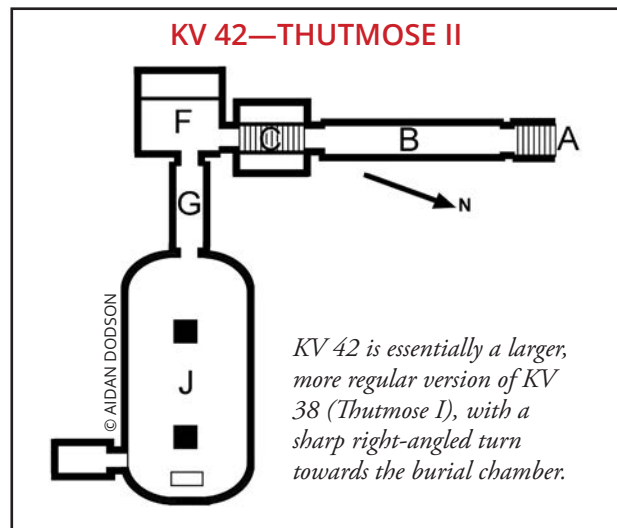
KV 42 has been proposed as having been founded for her—although it is perfectly possible that the deposits may represent a secondary appropriation of an unused tomb for the queen, but apparently not used for her burial, as the sarcophagus shows no signs of having been closed.

stone example. Then, the tomb will have been taken over by Hatshepsut (adding foundation deposits outside) and extended, the new burial chamber housing both monarchs. Subsequently, Thutmose III will have removed Thutmose I to a new tomb, equipped with a stone sarcophagus and canopic chest.

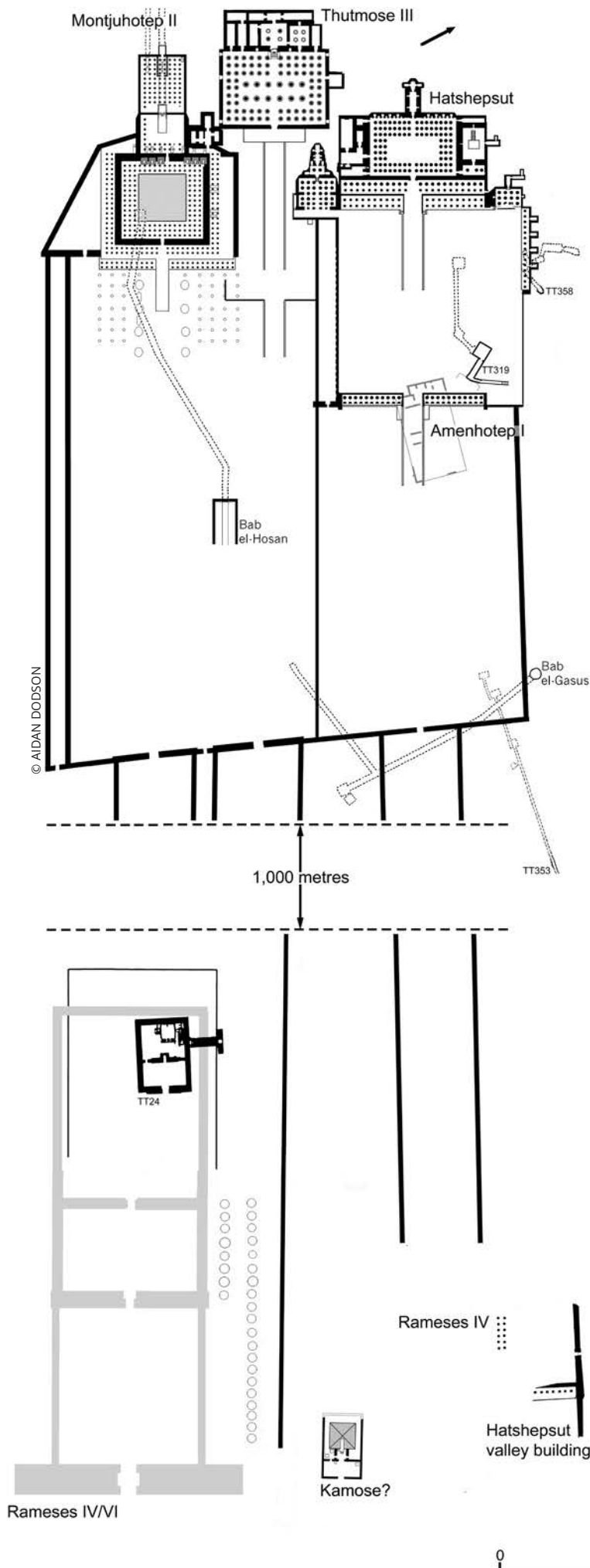
On the alternative scenario that KV 38 was cut from the outset for Thutmose I, he will have been originally interred there, removed by Hatshepsut, and returned by Thutmose III, at which point he provided the new items of stone furniture. Either way, the king's mummy appears to have been destroyed by the early 21st Dynasty, when his outermost coffin was usurped by Panedjem I (see page 19).

THUTMOSE II

The question of the tomb of Thutmose II has long been problematic since, unlike the case of his father, no known tomb contains material bearing his name. The most oft-cited candidate has been KV 42 (above and right) in the Valley of the Kings. The walls of KV 42's burial chamber had been plastered and given a dado of *kheker*-motifs, clearly with the intention of adding a hand-drawn copy of the Book of *Amduat*, found in a number of later royal tombs. The tomb also contained an unfinished quartzite sarcophagus of a size and design consistent with it being the earliest of the sequence of such containers known from kings' tombs of the 18th Dynasty.



As already noted, another option could be that KV 20 was founded for Thutmose II, which might be further supported by the fact that the final burial chamber has three annexes—potentially one for each king buried there. However, one might, in this case, have expected a stone sarcophagus to have been provided by either Hatshepsut or Thutmose III, unless this is still concealed in an as-yet-undiscovered “final” tomb of Thutmose II (which must, however, have been plundered, given the presence of his mummy in TT 320). The question of where Thutmose II was interred remains for the time being a mystery.



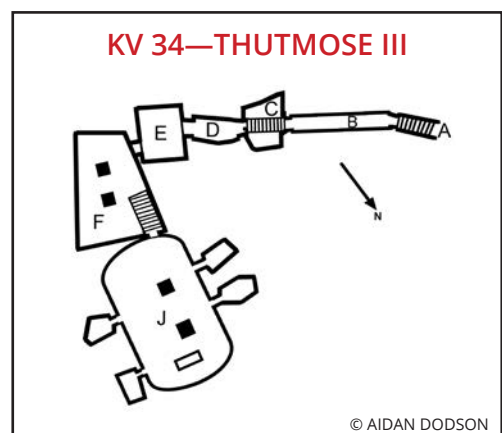
The upper terrace of the temple, fronted once more by a pair of colonnades, was occupied by a peristyle court. At the back of the court, on the main axis of the temple, was the principal sanctuary (A) of Amun of *Djeser-djeseru* (the temple's ancient Egyptian name: "Holy-of-Holies"). Originally comprised of two rooms, a third was added in Ptolemaic times, under Ptolemy VIII Euergetes II, dedicated to two deified mortals: Imhotep, architect of the Step Pyramid of Saqqara, and Amenhotep-son-of-Hapu, a celebrated official of Amenhotep III.

To the north of the peristyle court, a columned vestibule gave access to a court with an open-air altar dedicated to the sun-god in his manifestation of Horemakhet.

A doorway in the south wall of the peristyle led into a vestibule giving access to two chapels, the smaller having been dedicated to Thutmose I, the larger to Hatshepsut herself. This linking of the owner of the temple with their father is found in a number of other such structures (e.g. of Sethy I), but it is unclear whether it was an invariable feature of a memorial temple, since the memorial temples of the remaining kings of the 18th Dynasty are all in very poor condition, making assessment problematic.

THUTMOSE III

Thutmose III's tomb (KV 34) was cut high above the floor of the Valley of the Kings in a "chimney" in the rock, apparently to encourage the obliteration of their precise position by the deposition of debris by floodwater running off the high desert and emptying into wadis such as the Valley. KV 34 had the same "bent" plan seen in a number of other contemporary royal tombs (below), starting with two sets of steps and two corridors, leading to a chamber whose floor was cut away after the funeral to form a shaft some 19 m deep (E, below):



A once-sealed doorway, painted over to match the rest of the wall, led into the antechamber (F), its roof supported by a pair of pillars. The shape of the room was rather odd,

Amenhotep II's burial chamber in KV 35 was the only room of the tomb to be decorated, its walls carrying the Amduat in the same cursive style as found previously. The pillars, however, were now six in number and showed the king receiving life from various deities. The floor of the chamber was apparently originally intended to be on one level, as in earlier tombs, but at a relatively late stage in construction, its south end was lowered by around 1.5m, thus forming a kind of crypt. In this was placed the king's sarcophagus, similar to that of his predecessor, but somewhat larger and less elegant.

The construction of the crypt may be explained by an emerging desire to surround the sarcophagus with one or more wooden shrines. Four or more were employed during the late 18th and 20th Dynasties, and the sunken floor was probably the easiest way of gaining the requisite vertical clearance.

The king's mummy remained in the tomb until modern times, KV 35 having been used as a cache for royal mummies removed from their own tombs during the 20th/21st Dynasty.

When discovered in 1898, Amenhotep II was the first king to be found in the Valley of the Kings in his own sarcophagus, albeit in a replacement cartonnage coffin.

The king's body was left in place in his tomb (see page 40) until 1931 when it was moved to Cairo for security. Today, Amenhotep II's mummy is on display in the Royal Mummies Gallery in Cairo's Egyptian Museum.

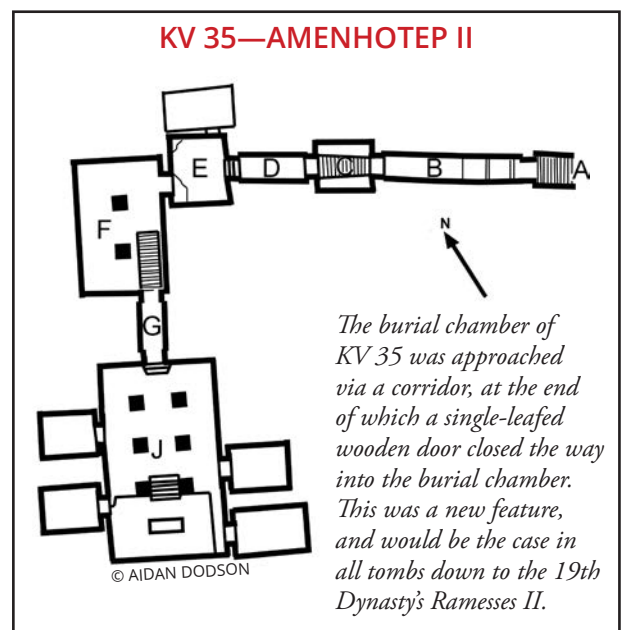


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below an occasional waterfall. Its plan (right) followed the general arrangement of KV 34, but was more regular and, most importantly, abandoned the cartouche-form burial hall (J) in favour of one of rectangular plan.

Although comprehensively robbed in antiquity, large quantities of funerary equipment was found surviving when the tomb was opened. These included fragments of Amenhotep II's canopic chest, which differed completely from those of Hatshepsut and Thutmose I, which had been made from the same material as their sarcophagi. In Amenhotep's case it had been carved from a block of translucent calcite (Egyptian alabaster), and at each corner bore the raised figure of one of the protective goddesses, Isis, Nephthys, Nut and Selket. Inside, canopic jars were carved as one with the box, each stoppered with a small head of the king. This basic design was retained for royal canopics down to the middle of the 19th Dynasty.

As a further innovation, the king was equipped with multiple shabti figures, replacing the single shabti that had been used in burials prior to Amenhotep II's reign.





Horemheb's unfinished crypt in the burial chamber of KV 57 in the Valley of the Kings. The red granite sarcophagus is beautifully carved with four goddess at the corners, their wings stretched out in protection. This sarcophagus was the last of the "corner goddess" type known to have been made.

The corner closest to us shows Serket, the scorpion goddess,

whose job is to protect the canopic jar containing the intestine. Her wing on the sarcophagus' long side reaches protectively over the jackal-headed deity Duamutef, one of the four sons of Horus, charged with guarding the king's embalmed stomach.

The north wall shows a seated Osiris presiding over the judgement scene of the Book of Gates, used here for the first time.

The outer galleries of KV 57 were undecorated, with the exception of the well-chamber (E), the walls of which showed the king before the usual Theban mortuary deities. The fundamental difference between these scenes and the corresponding ones in earlier tombs is that, as well as being painted, they were carved in low relief (see page 41). Thus, unlike earlier tombs where decoration could be applied after the burial had taken place, the adornment of KV 57 had to be carried out at the same time as its cutting. Scheduling and resourcing implications following on from this innovation may explain why the decoration of the tomb was still incomplete at the king's death.

The antechamber was the next room to possess decoration, with the well-room motifs repeated. In addition to the wooden door leading from it into the burial chamber (J), a door lay at the antechamber's own entrance for the first time, a feature that continued in later tombs. The reliefs in the burial chamber, comprising parts of the new Book of the Gates, replacing the *Amduat* of earlier tombs, were never finished.

Many fragments of the royal funerary equipment remained in the tomb when discovered, including a granite sarcophagus (above), fragments of the canopic chest and guardian and divine figures of the kind found complete in the tomb of Tutankhamun. A quantity of skeletal material has been found in the tomb, possibly suggesting use of the tomb as a cache during the Third Intermediate Period: certainly, graffiti in the sepulchre show that there was official activity there around the beginning of that period.

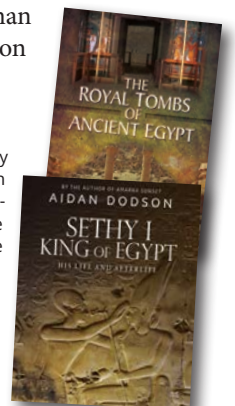
As noted above, Horemheb took over the unfinished memorial temple of Ay, enlarging it by the addition of a peristyle court and an extra pylon, extending the axis to nearly 300m long, and usurping its sculptural programme.

Although he ruled for almost 30 years, Horemheb appears to have died without a direct heir. His successor was his former vizier, Paramesse—an army officer and scion of a military family from the eastern Delta; probably of advanced years, he reigned as Ramesses I for probably less than two years.

And that is where we must wrap up this five-part series of abridged excerpts from *The Royal Tombs of Ancient Egypt*, which covers the entire range of burial places of the rulers of Egypt—and their families—from the very dawn of history down to Egypt's absorption into the Roman Empire. Grateful thanks to Aidan Dodson for his kind permission and help.



AIDAN DODSON is Honorary Professor of Egyptology in the Department of Anthropology & Archaeology at the University of Bristol, where he has taught Egyptology since 1996. His latest book, *Sethy I, King of Egypt: his life and afterlife* is due to be published by the American University in Cairo Press in October 2018.



ALEXANDRIAN GOLD AND SAQQARAN CHEESE

THERE WAS NO SARCOPHAGUS CURSE, BUT THE CHEESE IS DEADLY



© EGYPTIAN MINISTRY OF ANTIQUITIES

(LEFT) One of the small gold sheets discovered inside the enormous 30-tonne, black granite sarcophagus in Alexandria.

Live Science writer Owen Jarus contacted Jack Ogden, president of the Society of Jewellery Historians, who noted that unhooded snakes such as this “were seemingly connected with the goddess Isis,” and “had connotations of rebirth.”

“As a rule of thumb,” Ogden stated, “it would seem that snake jewellery was primarily a female thing,” but wasn’t sure whether the snake could be confidently connected with the female remains found in the sarcophagus.

Three skeletons were discovered in the sarcophagus: a woman, around 25 years of age, and two men in their 30s and 40s. A hole in one of the skulls led to speculation that at least one of the skeletons belonged to a soldier who had died valiantly in the service of the king. Subsequent examination revealed that the “wound” was more likely a rare case of trepanning, whereby a small hole was drilled into the skull in an emergency medical or mystical situation. DNA tests are being conducted to try and determine if the tomb occupants were related.

THE SARCOPHAGUS WAS OPENED. The world didn’t end. No one drank the sarcophagus juice. In the last issue (NILE #15, Aug–Sept ’18) we reported on a “big black sarcophagus”, discovered intact in Alexandria, and the brouhaha surrounding the find.


The sarcophagus was likely a Late Period (ca. 30th Dynasty) piece reused in the Ptolemaic Era (332–30 B.C.). Some speculated that the resting place of Alexander the Great had been uncovered, while the sarcophagus’ foreboding appearance inspired the more nervous corners of the internet to dread what would happen when it was opened. In the end, the sarcophagus *did* contain something pretty evil: sewerage, and the rotted remains of three individuals.

Bizarrely, the Egyptian authorities were petitioned by a group of people wishing to be allowed to drink the sludge in the sarcophagus in order to “assume its powers”. But that, it seemed, was that.

However, there *was* more to be found inside the coffin: three small gold panels, just over three centimetres wide, each embossed with an image (above and opposite). These are described in the accompanying picture captions.

Another big August announcement came from Saqqara. A joint Egyptian-Italian team from the universities of Cairo and Catania have been working in the New Kingdom

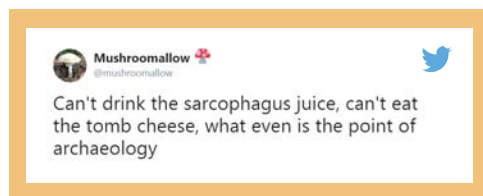
cemetery south of the causeway of Unas. On August 18 the joint team announced a unique discovery: cheese.

The team had been clearing the tomb of Ptahmose , a 19th-Dynasty Mayor of Memphis. It was first discovered (and plundered) in 1885 before being lost under drifting sands. Ptahmose’s tomb was rediscovered in 2010 by a Cairo University mission led by Prof. Ola El-Aguizy. During the 2013/2014 excavation season, some broken jars were found, with one jar containing a solidified whitish mass, as well as some canvas fabric, which was possibly used to cover the jar to preserve its contents.

In a study published in the journal *Analytical Chemistry*, the lead author, Enrico Greco (University of Catania) revealed that the whitish substance was a dairy product made from a mixture of cow milk and that of a sheep or goat. There was no trace of proteins from natural milk fermentation, Dr. Greco wrote. “For this reason, we can say that it is the oldest solid cheese ever found to date.”

Significantly, found inside the cheese were signs of a bacterium that caused brucellosis. This is an occasionally fatal disease transmitted to humans through the consumption of unpasteurized dairy products.

While the brooding black sarcophagus turned out to be benign, the cheese, it turns out, was potentially deadly.



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ETERNAL EGYPT NEW ANCIENT EGYPT GALLERY OPEN



Bolton Museum, Bolton

Ongoing

A new gallery, entitled Bolton's Egypt, is now open, with a full size reproduction of the burial chamber of Thutmose III.

GIFTS FOR THE GODS ANIMAL MUMMIES REVEALED



Lyme Park, Cheshire

Showing until 4 November 2018

Manchester Museum's travelling exhibition answers why the Egyptians mummified millions of animals.

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College London**

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Fascinating and entertaining insights into daily life in ancient Egypt from freshly-translated and conserved papyrus.

EGYPT GODS, PHARAOHS, MEN



**Spazio Aquileia 123 exhibition
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GODS OF EGYPT



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Leiden**

12 October – 31 March 2019

Over 500 objects on show from Dutch and international museums to bring the ancient Egyptian pantheon to life.

IMAGES OF EGYPT



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