

Ulster Medical Society
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Ramblings of an Amateur Egyptologist

Dr Stephen Boyd

Professor Mary Frances McMullin:

Okay, so if that's okay with everybody, we'll maybe make a start of this Ulster Medical Society meeting, which is the second and last one of this strange year. We had one two weeks ago online, which was actually very successful, and we're having another one this evening.

Just before we start, I will set a few house rules. Everybody should be able to see the screen at the moment, and should be able to hear. Whenever we start, if you're not muted already, I would be grateful if you would mute yourself, and you might want to put your camera off. Questions can be asked at the end, and at that point you can un-mute yourself, put your camera on again and wave at us or just ask a question or put your hands up. You can also put questions in the chat, and I'll keep an eye out for all of that, so hopefully when we get to the end we will have a bit of discussion.

Also, can I ask you, we can see a sort of attendance list, but we'd really like to get a record of everyone viewing, so can I ask everybody to send an email to Kathy at the Ulster Medical Society website and we will send out a CPD certificate.

Now I'd like to introduce our speaker tonight and it is my great pleasure to introduce Dr Stephen Boyd. Stephen is a haematology registrar, but very soon to be a consultant, but Stephen, unlike many of us, has actually had a life outside medicine and haematology. He came late to medicine, and he worked for some years as a civil servant in London, but on the way he developed lots of interests. He's very modest about them, but it ended up that he was actually giving gallery lectures in the British Museum on the subject of Egyptology, so despite his protestations, he is quite an expert in this area, and I know he gives a very good talk on this, and I asked him to come along tonight to give this talk, which he has titled, "Ramblings of an amateur Egyptologist", so Stephen—over to you, thank you very much.

Dr Stephen Boyd:

Thank you, Professor McMullin. I chose the title quite deliberately, because I suppose ramblings can have positive and negative connotations, but hopefully it's going to be more of a nice meander through looking at some sights and enjoying the journey, rather than trying to get to a destination; and amateur again has positive and negative connotations. I

suppose hopefully it'll be from the original French, meaning "lover", so a lover of Egyptology, and maybe hopefully less of the more 19th century pejorative terms of a dabbler and dilettante, so that's for you to decide.

In putting this talk together, I shuffled the slides and put things in a different order so many times over the last week-and-a-half, because I was trying to think of what, why am I interested in Egyptology? I suppose it sort of goes back many, many years, to being very young and reading about all these myths and legends about gods and goddesses and pharaohs and everything, so that takes me to what has remained the core of my interest in Egyptology, and the ancient world in general, and that's sort of the concept, or the story.

If we think of human civilisation going back, ever since we've been social, we've told each other stories, we can look at cave paintings. This one's from Brazil, from about 20,000 years ago. I'm not sure what the story's trying to say, but it shows that early humanity, and every eon since, has told each other stories about their past, about the future, and fanciful tales. Back in classical Greece, the Rhapsodes wandered the lands, telling the stories; the epic poems, the ones that have survived, the Iliad and the Odyssey, but I'm sure there are other stories that were told that haven't quite survived down to the modern age; the theatre, this is the wonderful theatre at Epidaurus, which is one of the few surviving original Greek theatres from the fifth century BC, which was the height of the Greek tragedians and comedians, and although we can't go there at the minute, in non-Covid times every summer the festival at Epidaurus still presented theatre, classical Greek theatre in the original classical Greek, for audiences in this beautiful environment. So it's a place to visit and a place to see, and we see the stories from the past, which connect us to that past in a more emotive and emotional way, I think, than any number of facts or numbers or dates, which I'm not as fond of, can.

Coming forwards, theatre has continued throughout history. We've even rebuilt old theatres, like the Globe reconstructed on the banks of the Thames, then obviously stories have progressed into cinema, or more recently, Netflix, and obviously there's these stories in the forms of books, whether these stories are history, fiction, fact or whimsy, from the old manuscripts copied laboriously by scribes. I'll mention the printing press. I suppose we have to remember, I guess, that for the vast majority of human history, most people have not been literate, and until mass publications, there wasn't the access to the books, so this sort of concept of visual and oral history was probably the predominant until the last few centuries. So thinking about that as a concept, and I'm diverting a little bit from Egypt, but what is

history? When I was thinking of this question, I thought, let's go back to the earliest historians, the people who are identified as having invented history, so a little bit of historiography, and the fellow at the top is Herodotus, and he's often titled "the father of history". Less generous people would call him "the father of lies", for reasons we'll get to in a second, and then the fellow below is Thucydides. Both of these are Greeks, both living in the fifth century; Herodotus from Halicarnassus, which was a Greek colony in what is modern day southern Turkey, and Thucydides, he was an Athenian, and their approaches to history were dramatically different. Herodotus was first, but in many ways he's more of a modern historian, and when I say modern, I'm talking over the last 20, 30, 40 years, because his book does read very much like a book of stories. You can imagine him sitting down with a bunch of friends, chatting these stories over, because he tells the stories from the perspective of the people he spoke to and the things he saw, and it was a very balanced, almost anthropological approach to history and the recording of history.

Probably the best example that I can recall is the story he tells of the Issedones people. They lived east of Scythia, which is probably somewhere in modern day Siberia, it's hard to be exact, but they had a cultural tradition of cannibalism, of eating their elders. It wasn't that they went round murdering people and eating them, it was a part of their society, whenever their elders died, the family got together and to celebrate their life, they ate their family member. This was quite abhorrent to the Greek people, as it is to us, but Herodotus is very balanced, because the response of the Issedones people to being told that other civilisations buried or cremated their relatives was as shocking to them as the idea of cannibalism is to us. So that's an example of how different perspectives can be presented in history, and that's probably more of the history that I'm interested in, whereas Thucydides took a sort of, what was probably the predominant approach to history over thousands of years. He wrote very specifically about a war, the Peloponnesian war. He presented everything very factually, he didn't quote any sources, and everything read very convincingly, so when you read his history, it all sounds very logical and informed, whereas Herodotus seems all over the place, and they both know their strengths and weaknesses. But it's just an illustration that, when we're looking back at the past, a lot of what we see or what we tell each other, or the lessons we learn, depend an awful lot on our own experience, the approach we're taking, what we're trying to achieve, and obviously our own hopes, expectations, prejudices—all these things are a factor of history, so history is definitely not fact. There's a lot of interpretation, but it remains extremely valuable. Looking at the past is enjoyable, and also enlightening about us

as human beings. I think earlier I mentioned that one of Herodotus's titles other than father of history, was father of lies, so there are certain inaccuracies in his book, and just reading this little extract from the second book. He's describing an animal here, "four-footed with cloven hooves like cattle, a blunt nose, with a horse's mane, visible tusks, a horse's tail and voice, big as the biggest bull. Their hide is so thick, that when dried, spears are made of it." I'm not sure what animal you're thinking of there, but there is a little hint; book two of Herodotus deals with Egypt. He had the very ambitious target, in a very short space, of describing the entire history of all, about 300 pharaohs throughout Egyptian history. He didn't quite manage that, but he gave it a go, so what he was describing there is this particular animal—some aspects maybe, but there's no real mane on a hippopotamus, and if we look also, the Greek word, hippopotamus, we see perhaps where he was coming from, so literally it means "river horse". That has led people to question whether Herodotus ever actually saw a hippopotamus as he claimed, but obviously we can never ... then perhaps thousands of years ago, hippos had manes—I don't know.

So before I get into the core part of the presentation, which is telling a few stories really, I'll start with a more traditional approach. We can have a little look at Egypt. This is a modern Egypt, from obviously a satellite, and we can see that the borders are sort of prescribed here in a very light colour, and they're very well prescribed. Probably that's not how the Egyptians in fact, we're pretty confident that's not how the Egyptians saw Egypt. That would probably have been more of what the Egyptians saw Egypt as, the habitable area around the Nile, the land that they called Kemet, the "black land". It was called the black land because, up until the construction of the Aswan Dam, every year the Nile would flood, and the flooded waters would carry fresh sediment down, and that fresh sediment would spread across the land, and it kept the area of the Nile as a really fertile area, and the Nile inundation, as they called it, supported life in Egypt, and in years where the inundation failed for whatever reason, life was very difficult for the Egyptians. The desert, which is included in the official portion of Egypt, it was called Deshret, it's the red land, and very few people lived there, obviously there were some Nomadic tribes, but generally the small area around the Nile is what the Egyptians thought of as Egypt.

So again, I'm not terribly fond of dates, but I'll do a quick run through, because one of the most exciting things about Egypt, if we think, is it's a civilisation that survived with recognisable motifs, language, culture, for about 3,000 years really. About 3,000 BC is where dynastic Egypt started. There's evidence for pre-dynastic phases. These were not literate phases, they

didn't record their history on walls or in temples or in tombs or in artefacts. What we really have from that period are some flints, some shapes, stone tools, so there's not an awful lot we can tell about that period. But the early dynastic period was, so this little picture at the bottom here is an engraving of one of the early pharaohs, Narmer. And he's in a very classical Egyptian pharaoh pose, and there's this man down here, he's grabbing him by the hair, and he's about to bash his head in, because that's what pharaohs do. Looking at the picture, we can see that he's wearing the white crown of Egypt, which represents Upper Egypt. Upper Egypt and Lower Egypt are a very important concept in Egyptian history. Upper Egypt refers to upstream, up river, so it's in the south of Egypt, and Lower Egypt is downstream of the Nile, so in northern Egypt, and he's wearing the white crown hedjet, which represents Upper Egypt—I will have a little picture of both of the crowns together in full colour later.

So basically this is the pharaoh smiting what is clearly in Egyptian iconography, if you look at enough pictures, this is a foreigner. Based on the style, it looks as if he's from the east or north-east of Egypt. At that time, the Egyptians really only identified four different types of foreigners: those that came from the north, the south, east and the west. The east, they called the Asiatics, the south the Nubians, the west the Libyans, and the north, the expression changed over time, and later on you'll have had something like the Greeks or the Romans, but the sort of Mediterraneanans really. So this is a classic pose of a pharaoh establishing the early dynastic reign of pharaohs.

So following the early dynastic period, we have the Old Kingdom, and that's when Ancient Egypt really began to form as a cohesive entity, unification of Upper and Lower Egypt. Construction of the Pyramids happened there, the great Pyramid at Giza. There are other pyramids just over the hill at Saqqara, including the Bent Pyramid, where obviously they were learning how to make pyramids, and so the angle started off all wrong, and they had to adjust half-way up, and that probably is the most convincing reason why aliens did not build the Pyramids. It was a hard-won process by innovative and hard-working people.

So the Old Kingdom, as I said, the pharaohs built their tombs and pyramids. That didn't last much beyond the Old Kingdom, because pyramids not only are expensive, but they're also giant adverts for, 'please rob the tomb which is right here', so after this period, they tended to move towards underground tombs, although that wasn't entirely successful, or at all successful, in hiding them from thieves. So although I say that there's a sort of continuity in Egyptian history, starting quite early on, there are breaks in that continuity. So the first intermediate

period was a period where there was chaos, likely initiated by a foreign invasion, probably from the Nubians to the south, where modern Ethiopia and Eritrea is, and during that sort of about 150-year period, there were about 120 different pharaohs that ruled. You really probably couldn't call yourself a pharaoh in Ancient Egypt until you truly had united Upper and Lower Egypt. That concept, that idea, is very much focal in what it is to be a pharaoh. If you don't control both parts of Egypt, then you aren't truly a pharaoh, and during the intermediate periods, there often was a pharaoh for Upper and a pharaoh for Lower, and so they wouldn't really have been truly considered pharaohs: from their descendants looking backward, would not probably have considered that quite proper.

So following the first independent period, there was a consolidation again, a unification of Egypt, Upper and Lower Egypt, into the Middle Kingdom. The Middle Kingdom's an interesting phase. There were certain transitions, as I say, from pyramids to underground tombs. A lot of the writings, which had been quite limited in the Old Kingdom, because a lot of the temples don't survive intact, the temples that perhaps would have told us all the stories of the Old Kingdom were repurposed by later pharaohs, so the only literature that really survives, that we can genuinely see from the Old Kingdom are the pyramid texts, which I'll discuss a little bit later.

So from the Middle Kingdom were the coffin texts, there was some surviving papyrus, just because Egypt is such a dry place, if you were anywhere else, papyrus would have decayed. And the coffin texts, and there was a developing theme, the pharaoh was a living god, had been established long ago, and that continued to be refined throughout the Middle Kingdom, and it was at this point during the Middle Kingdom that the hieroglyphic language reached its apex. At that point, it became fixed, but prior to that, there were certain evolutions and progressions in language, as you'd expect with any natural language, but this was sort of the point at which that froze and no further Egyptian hieroglyphs were fixed into Middle Egyptian. And that's the sort of language we learn, if you go and do some courses in hieroglyphs, you learn Middle Egyptian, because that is the majority of text that survives, albeit that it was still a very elite text, given its context, and how few people could actually read it, even in Ancient Egypt.

Then we come to the second intermediate, another breakdown, a slight breakdown in order, but again, the general themes of divine kingship, the gods, the goddesses, the temples, all the beliefs that hold a civilisation together, hold the people together, remained, and it was recreated in the New Kingdom, and the New Kingdom is where a lot of our evidence for Ancient Egypt comes from. Most of the famous

pharaohs, Ramses, the multiple Ramses; Amenhotep III, you may or may not have heard of him, he's my favourite pharaoh; and Tutankhamun, we've all heard of, because of the accidental survival of his tomb, which is an illustration, and the fact that we've heard of Tutankhamun, a pharaoh who didn't rule for very long, is very much by accident. We wouldn't have heard of him if his tomb hadn't survived intact with all the materials inside, whereas all the other tombs that have ever been discovered had all been robbed. So this New Kingdom was at the heights really, of Ancient Egyptian power.

The picture down the left side there is the temple of Deir el-Bahari, the mortuary temple of Hatshepsut. She's very interesting, because she's one of very few female pharaohs, although if you see any of her images and iconography, she has the same iconography as any of the other male pharaohs, with little fake beards and the headdress, it's very much the same, and we'll come back probably to a lot more to do with the New Kingdom shortly. Then the third intermediate period, another slight breakdown, and then it was restored briefly for the late period, up until the conquest of Egypt by the Greeks under Cambyses. Cambyses and the Greeks didn't keep Egypt for very long, it was subsequently conquered by the Persians, then conquered by Alexander the Great, and then following Alexander the Great's death, his general Ptolemy went back to Egypt and established a Ptolemaic dynasty, and in many ways the Ptolemaic dynasty behaved exactly like the Egyptian dynasties, the pharaohs of old. They assumed the line kingship, they followed the same rituals and the same gods, albeit they integrated the Greek pantheon and the Egyptian pantheon together, with all gods being associated with each other, Zeus being associated with the god Amun; and then it was really the Roman conquest during the reign of the last probably true Egyptian pharaoh, albeit of great descent, Cleopatra, and what we recognise as Egypt was never re-established following that point.

So I had mentioned a little bit that, although Ancient Egypt, the pharaonic dynasties had never really been established, old myths, old legends, they don't just die and go away. So this is the Temple of Hathor at Dendera. Hathor as a goddess, we'll come back to in a minute, but she's a goddess of motherhood, of childbirth, and even to this day, despite obviously Egypt being an Islamic country, obviously very different religion than the polytheistic Egyptian pantheon, women who have difficulty conceiving still to this day visit the Temple of Hathor at Dendera, to some of the pools there that were sacred to that goddess, to try to help them get pregnant, so even though obviously they don't believe in the goddess Hathor, some old beliefs, old traditions, old thoughts just don't die, they can survive for thousands of years,

often passed down orally through families, even if officially something is gone.

So as I said, my real fascination with Ancient Egypt comes with a story, so I thought it was about time I told a story, this is my favourite one. Anyone who's seen any of my presentations before will probably recognise this, because I like it. We'll start our story, a long, long time ago, back when Ra was getting quite old in his time on earth, and by the [standard?] of the heavens, and the people of the earth, however, were getting a little bit bored with Ra, and were talking about a revolt, a revolt against the Sun God. So Ra, obviously, being a deity, was furious at this idea that these mortals would try to succeed from him, and so he had a clever idea to call one of the Eyes of Ra, Hathor, who we've mentioned before, and commanded her to go and smite these pesky mortals and teach them a lesson. As already mentioned, Hathor is generally more of a nurturing goddess, but Ra insisted, and so off Hathor went, down to Earth, to do his bidding. So for reasons I don't quite understand, all these people were gathered in a desert, possibly in a festival, potentially my theory is that maybe the Egyptians invented tai chi, that's got no real evidence for it, and she set about doing what Ra told her, and smiting all these pesky mortals that had mocked and tried to revolt against the Sun God, and in doing so, she transformed into Sekhmet. Sekhmet is my favourite goddess, for a variety of reasons, but she's the goddess whose name literally translates as "she who is powerful". She's obviously a lion-headed goddess, the sun disc on the Uraeus above her head shows that she's a sun god, because often they're differentiated into sun and moon associations, on the Uraeus a little snake, indicates that she's a daughter and Eye of Ra, and so an instrument of his wrath. So because polytheistic religions historically, ancient religions, often like to have a sense of balance, she's the goddess of often war or destruction, pestilence, but she's also, to balance that up, the goddess of healing. That which she can cause, she can cure, and that's demonstrated in her iconography. In her right hand, in most of the iconography, she holds a staff; in her left hand, she holds an ankh, representing her power to destroy and her power to heal and create. So she continued her job, smiting all the people, and Ra was a little bit perturbed, because obviously if there were no people on earth, who was going to worship him and do what he said? So he came up with the bright idea, and because he noted that Sekhmet had become bloodthirsty, he took some beer and dyed it with red ochre to look like blood, and sure enough, Sekhmet saw this, and being the bloodthirsty deity that she was in her wrath, consumed what she thought was blood, but unfortunately there were a few side-effects, and she was rendered to the point where she could no longer destroy humanity, and that

is obviously why we're all still here, and why there wasn't an apocalypse all that time ago.

So where did that story come from?—this is interesting, because this story comes from one of the, we call it books, even though it wasn't physically a bound book, and the Book of the Heavenly Cow, which is one of the texts that's inscribed in the New Kingdom tombs. This is an illustration. There are multiple versions. This illustration is from Seti I, one of the New Kingdom pharaohs, and it doesn't quite tell the same version of the story that I've just told you, that's just my favourite version. There are multiple slightly different versions, and these tombs in the Valley of the Kings and the Valley of the Queens are covered in these stories, these pictures. Here is one of the earliest stories, Amduat, it's a story that's divided into twelve sections covering the twelve hours of night, and it tells the story of the Sun God as he traverses the Underworld during the night time. So the Egyptians believed that whenever the sun set in the west, the Sun God entered the Underworld, traversed it overnight, battling demons and monsters, and then arose triumphant in the east in the morning. You can tell that the Sun God is in the Underworld in this image, because in iconography in Ancient Egypt, at least during the New Kingdom, the Sun God during the day is represented as having a hawk head, much like the god Horus, but in the Underworld he is represented as having a ram's head. So this is a solar barge, and he's sailing through the Underworld, fighting off all the monsters that would threaten the people because, obviously, the pharaoh was strongly associated with the Sun God, this would represent to people that the pharaoh was there to protect the people and obviously without them, they'd be terribly doomed.

This is another common illustration, it's the Book of Days. We can tell this is a slightly different version. It's where the Sun God's barge is traversing the sky during the daytime. This lady up here is the Goddess Nut, who is the sky, quite literally, and similarly there was also the Book of Nights, but that tells a very similar story to the Amduat, then there's the Book of Earth, and again if we have a little peek, you can probably guess where the Sun God is in this particular, if we look at this little section, hopefully you can see the arrow. He's got a little ram's head, so we know that at this point the Sun God is again in the Underworld, and we see here the snake, which is the monster Apophis, who wants to devour the sun and end the world, which seems to be a theme in ancient mythology, about serpents devouring the sun to end the world.

So those were the illustrations, the stories on the walls of the tombs in the New Kingdom. Going a bit further back, this is the Pyramid texts. There's not as many pictures, but there's still stories, there's still

spells, to allow the transition of the pharaoh from the living world to the afterlife. So this was found inside this particular pyramid. It obviously has seen better days, but there are very few inscriptions actually within Khufu's pyramid, which is the largest on the Giza plateau, so it's generally some of the other pyramids where you get the pyramid texts. And then as I say, during the Middle Kingdom, there were the coffin texts where most of the work was on wooden coffins, and it was at this stage where things started to shift between only the pharaoh gets to have an afterlife, to some other people get the afterlife obviously, if they have the means to have a tomb constructed, to be mummified. And this is just the scene of the weighing of the heart ceremony, where Anubis weighs the heart of the deceased against the feather of the goddess Maat, who's basically the goddess of universal harmony, and if the heart weighed no more than the feather, they were allowed into the afterlife, otherwise this lovely little fellow here would eat them.

So before I move on to discuss the crown of Egypt, the interesting thing about all of these texts, all of these illustrations is, that they were put inside tombs, and really the pharaohs didn't want visitors to their tombs, because anyone who visited their tomb seemed to steal their stuff, so the question is, although a lot of it is about displaying the power of the gods in relation to the pharaoh, it's hard to know who the audience was supposed to be. It seems to convey a certain idea that these illustrations were done in the genuine belief that they would empower the pharaoh into the afterlife.

A lot of people look back on history and see visual representations and say that this represents something that they're trying to convey to their people, but that's very difficult to say for the tombs, because no-one was meant to be there. Obviously as a tourist in modern times, you can go and visit them, but that was not their purpose. Their purpose was a lasting eternal resting place for the physical body of the pharaoh, so this seems to suggest that, at least for this particular aspect of the stories and the spells, that the imagery was really, because of a belief that in doing all this ritual and creating all these beautiful works of art really, that were hidden away for thousands of years, that the pharaoh would transcend death to live as a god in the afterlife, and as I say, that may not be the case for a few things we'll discuss later.

One example is, the symbolism of certain very common and prevalent artefacts in Ancient Egypt, so here we have basically the crown that the pharaoh wore. In the middle here, we've got the white crown, the Hedjet, and then the red crown, the Deshret. Strangely enough, Deshret's the same word they use for the Red Land, where people didn't tend to live in Egypt. So the white crown here represents Upper

Egypt, so in the south, and the Red Crown represents Lower Egypt in the north, and in wearing this crown, the pharaoh was symbolising what became, very early on in early dynastic Egypt, the defining characteristic of what it was to be a true pharaoh, and that was that you had united the two lands of Egypt into one. The two lands of Egypt were viewed separately, but as two important components to a whole, and which had to be maintained and preserved and protected, so the crown wasn't simply a crown saying, 'look—I am the king'; it's representing, saying to the people, 'look—I am the pharaoh, I've united the two lands, and I am the protector of the two lands, so obviously I have a legitimate right to rule over you.' 36'10.39

This illustration also has something similar, a similar message, if you know a little bit about the iconography. This also is focusing on the importance of the pharaoh in uniting and keeping together the two lands. This little symbol here, a little 'T' with a little funny heart shape at the bottom, that's a symbol, a hieroglyphic, 'sma', which translates quite literally as 'unite', and you see the two plants here?—these are two different plants, are woven, tied around the symbol sma. One's papyrus and the other lotus, which were the symbols, the floral plant symbols of Upper and Lower Egypt, and this sort of iconography which we'll see later again, is also saying, and this obviously is an inscription at the bottom of a statue, because you can see a leg here on the left, so this was for public display, and this is saying, here is the pharaoh uniting the two lands, and you can see that he's physically tied the two lands together, these two representing the two aspects of the pharaoh, and on his head, the same flowers, the same plants are represented, so this is saying, "Here I am, I'm keeping the place together, protecting you from all those terrible foreigners, so I'm good for you, so keep listening to what I say."

Again, that is where the pharaoh was ruling in the world, very physically, advertising in a very practical fashion what they were doing for people, and that was reinforced in the associations between the pharaoh and their gods, so the concept of divine rule was very literal back in Ancient Egypt. We all know that divine rule and the concept of English history and Henry VIII and the head of the church, that was a very different thing, that was a representative of God. This very literally, in an Ancient Egyptian sense, was that the pharaoh in life was this fellow on the left, the god Horus, so he was the living Horus, and on death, on transition to the afterlife, he became the God Osiris, who was basically the god of the afterlife. So in life, the pharaoh was Horus, and in death the pharaoh became Osiris, so strongly associating and reinforcing this link, that the pharaoh had not only practical benefits of keeping the place together and protecting the people, but also had the divine right, as living gods, to rule over Egypt. And there's a very interesting

story about how Osiris became god of the dead, but it's not family friendly. Apparently, according to Ancient Egypt, if you lost your phallus, say it was eaten by a crocodile after you brother had cut you up into little pieces, as Set had done to Osiris, you couldn't come back into the world of the living, so you had to go and rule the dead. But because of all this, this is family friendly, I didn't turn that into an animation.

So I'm going to come to a few of the pharaohs that ruled during the New Kingdom. This image on the left represents someone you may or may not recognise, probably not, it's Amenhotep III, and on the right is an image you probably do recognise, which is Tutankhamun. They were quite closely related, Tutankhamun was Amenhotep III's grandson, but it was interesting that a lot of people have heard of Tutankhamun, and not that many will necessarily have heard of Amenhotep III, despite the fact that Amenhotep III ruled for over 40 years during probably the highest point in Egypt. He constructed so many temples, Egypt was at the height of its power, it was peaceful, other than a very brief battle with the Nubian during its fifth regnal year; whereas Tutankhamun did not live very long unfortunately, and did not rule for very long, so this again shows that a lot of what history is to us, is what has survived. What has been passed down to us is what we know, and the things we can't possibly know are potentially as interesting, but unfortunately a lot of that is lost, and we have to piece it all together.

So looking at those two pharaohs, this is a schematic of the tomb of Amenhotep III. It is quite a large and complex, elaborate construct. Down here at the bottom is where his sarcophagus was kept, and then by comparison, despite being more famous, this is the tiddly tiny tomb of Tutankhamun. A lot of this obviously had to do with the fact that Amenhotep lived so long, and what tended to happen with these tombs in the Valley of the Kings is, they were started once the pharaoh became pharaoh, and they stopped being constructed as soon as they died. So generally there's a very close correlation between how old the pharaoh got and how big their tomb is, but it's also an indication obviously of how important the pharaoh was in many ways, although it's not something that was advertised to the people at the time, it's only something that's been clear to us, because we wander round exploring tombs.

So I've mentioned Amenhotep III, there's another image of him there on the left, very much classically represented, as all pharaohs were represented, sort of physically fit and well, wearing the kilt, wearing the Crown of Egypt and the Uraeus, the cobra, representing them as a representative of the Sun God Ra, and with that a little beard on there, that probably wasn't something they grew, but was probably something

they stuck on. Certainly it wasn't in the case of Queen Hatshepsut. Then, we've mentioned obviously Amenhotep and his grandson, Tutankhamun, but in between those two, there's the fellow on the right, he was originally Amenhotep IV, but renamed himself Akhenaten, and you may have heard of Akhenaten, because he's quite unusual in terms of the pharaohs. He basically abolished, which shows the power of the pharaoh, the entire pantheon of Egyptian gods, and started to worship a single god, the Sun Disc, Aten. He is quite unusual in other ways, because you can obviously see that the physical form here is quite different from the perfection on the left, but they're still very stylised. There's no evidence he actually looked like this. There still is lots of the paraphernalia of a pharaoh. We see that he's holding the flail and the crook over here is broken down, so he's definitely still smiting the foreigners in defence of the Egyptian people, as was required by the pharaohs; but the imagery there is dramatically different from any of the imagery shown for any of the other pharaohs. And again that's shown in this representation of the Sun Disc, the Aten, the single god feeding the pharaoh on the left, Akhenaten, and his queen, Nefertiti, who had the famous busts. Obviously she was represented quite differently, so when I say busts, I mean obviously the bust of her head that's kept in the Louvre, for lack of confusion there. She's represented very differently in different art forms.

This change, this move from multiple gods to a single god, and the movement of the capital from Thebes, where modern day Luxor is, to Amarna, which is east of that in the desert, it didn't last beyond Akhenaten's lifetime—his son, Tutankhamun, restored everything back to the way it had been before.

So now, I'm coming back a little bit, through circles to Sekhmet. We've told the story of how Sekhmet came to be, at least in myth, and these are some of the statues. I'm sure anyone who's ever been to any museum with any sort of Egyptian collection can probably remember seeing statues something like this around. And the talks I gave in the British Museum often revolved around these particular statues because they're very ubiquitous, there's lots of them sitting all around the British Museum. There are some estimates that there were approximately some 750 statues of Sekhmet built by Amenhotep III during his reign, and these are not small statues, these are enormous statues. These statues, if you're standing next to them, your head would probably come to somewhere around the shoulder, so they weighed many tonnes. They're made of granodiorite, that is quite a hard stone. It's a phaneritic igneous rock. Phaneritic means that you can, if you look very closely, you can see that there are visible grains, and igneous just means it was formed from cooled magma, and it's predominantly of quartz and feldspar.

The colour itself, the very black colour, is very important in Egypt. As I mentioned before, the fertile part of the Nile was called Kemet, and the stone itself, the granodiorite, was also called Kemet, and that associated this statue with the life-giving powers of the Nile.

It's very strange, because we have probably about 360 statues standing, as the ones on the outside here, and about 360 sitting, although we can't be entirely sure about the precise numbers, because for a long period of time obviously things were taken out of Egypt without any records necessarily existing, but there are a lot of them around the world. And it's really interesting, what really interests me about this is, there's a lot of work that goes into building 700 enormous statues out of a very hard rock, that in theory, the bronze tools that the Egyptians were using at the time would not have been sufficiently hard enough for them to cut or engrave this stone, so there's a certain mystery surrounding how the stone was cut and how it was made, so there's obviously some evidence missing that would link to it. There are a lot of theories, that the rock was cut originally into the blocks by sticking in wooden wedges, and then wetting the wedges so that the wood expanded and in doing so cracking the rock, and then there was some suggestion that hardened other rocks were used for the carving, rather than the bronze tools that were widely available at the time. But they're obviously works of art, and they were found originally, the majority of them, in two places: in the temple of Karnak, which is on the east bank of the Nile at ancient Thebes, which is modern day Luxor, and at Amenhotep III's mortuary temple. So they were found, a lot of them in the mortuary temple were found buried, so a lot of them weren't actually displayed, and although we know that they were constructed during the reign of Amenhotep III, quite a lot of the statues have slightly edited hieroglyphs to replace Amenhotep's name with a later pharaoh. Ramses II was famous for crossing people's names off monuments and putting his own name on, which maybe he had some sort of self-esteem issues, it's hard to know.

So looking a little bit close at one of the statues of Sekhmet, so we can see, if we're looking at it, that there's quite a lot of detail on. There's obviously the sun disc at the top, the Uraeus, obviously the lion-head goddess. It's a little bit bizarre, because they've got a mane, so even though she's obviously female, being a goddess, they tend to like putting a mane around her. In her hands, she has the ankh. She doesn't, in this particular statue, have the staff, which she does in the standing statues. This little sitting statue seemed to represent her more benign form as the goddess of healing, and down each side we see there are some hieroglyphs inscribed. Now, not all of these statues were obviously finished by the time

Amenhotep III died, because some are found in different stages of development, because how it happened was, the general shape was formed first, then the decorations on the head and the dress were put on next, and only lastly were the hieroglyphs, and then the illustrations on the side. So this little, on the top right you see an illustration of what the side of the statue shows on each side, and we see again this motif we've seen before, the symbol sma, this 'T' with a heart at the bottom, with the lotus and the papyrus entwined about it, sort of associating with Amenhotep with the unification of Egypt. And down the side I'll look at the hieroglyphs, so here we see what's written on the left-hand side, and I've just changed, although on the statue it's up and down, I've just changed it, left-right, so that we can, because we read from the left to the right.

Actually, the interesting thing about the hieroglyphs was, that it's a language that could be written and read from either the left to the right, the right to the left, or top to bottom. If you look, for example, at any of the faces, so whichever direction, say, if something is written horizontally, whatever way the face is looking is the direction you start reading from. So if the face were looking the other way, you'd start reading from right to left, but in this case, the face is looking over to the left, so you start on the left. So these are my own translations, so they aren't terribly elegant, but it's always, I suppose the difficulty with translation is that it's about trying to capture accuracy but trying to get a little bit of fluency into the language, because if you do a very literal translation, it doesn't necessarily make a lot of sense. So here on the left is written: "Good God, who is strong and vigilant of head and arm, Lord Nebmaatre"—and that's one of the names of Amenhotep III—"beloved of Sekhmet, who smites the Nubians given life", and then on the right-hand side we have written, "Son of Ra, who justly rules Upper Egypt, arising in splendour, Lord Amenhotep, ruler of Thebes, beloved of Sekhmet who smites the Nubians given life", and some of those phrases don't necessarily make sense. "Given life", whenever you're talking about the pharaoh, at the end of the sentence, these two hieroglyphs are always there, and that translates into "given life", because in honour of the pharaoh. The names of the pharaoh are always surrounded in these cartouches. Names of gods are never represented in cartouches, and "arising in splendour" is a common phrase that you see in hieroglyphs. If you think about any stylised language like hieroglyphs, or any stylised form, say like the epic poems attributed to Homer, they have a lot of repetitive phrases in them, largely to allow the people who were reciting them to remember, but in these representations, there's also forms that you have, so "arising in splendour" is commonly placed prior to the name of a pharaoh, just like "given life", and we can

see obviously here that smiting the Nubians was obviously a popular pastime.

Of all the foreign peoples that the Egyptians contended with, the Nubians of the south were probably the ones that caused them the most trouble, probably invaded them the most frequently, and during certain of the intermediate periods actually ruled parts of Egypt, so there was a particular dislike between the Egyptians and the Nubians, and that is very clear in a lot of the inscriptions because they're smiting Nubians left, right and centre.

I suppose we couldn't really talk about hieroglyphs without a very brief mention of this stone, which is very famous—the Rosetta stone, so it's actually a rather interesting proclamation, well it's not a terribly exciting proclamation, but it's a proclamation by one of the Ptolemaic pharaohs, that he was pharaoh and was now the living god. The reason obviously it could be used as a way of turning what had, for thousands and thousands of years, been the mystery ... one of the reasons, I think, that Egyptian iconography, Egyptian language, Egyptian culture remains so important throughout thousands of years of history is the mystery that surrounded it, because up until the 19th century, no-one could read Egyptian hieroglyphs, no-one knew what they said, and so people imagined all sorts of things, if they could decipher these hieroglyphs. They could learn the secrets of eternal life, that sort of thing—there was lots of mysticism going around, it was very popular, particularly in the 19th century. So this allowed, over quite a long period of time by a lot of very clever people, to come up with a way to read hieroglyphs. The top is inscribed in hieroglyphs, the middle section is inscribed in the cursive form of the Egyptian language, sometimes called demotic, other times called hieratic, and then the bottom's written in Greek, classical Greek. So obviously people have known how to read classical Greek for some time, so using this, despite it being broken, somehow these smart individuals managed to interpret the hieroglyphs and learn how to read them, which gave us a lot more information on how the Egyptians lived, at least how the pharaohs and the rulers of Egypt wanted to convey the life and times of that particular pharaoh.

We've seen in that previous one, this hieratic, this cursive script, because as I mentioned, hieroglyphs, the hieroglyphic language came to a stop during Middle Egyptian times, and remained static largely as a ceremonial language for temples, and sometimes important treaties or declarations, as on the Rosetta stone, but even those people who were literate didn't spend their time writing letters, inscribing very careful pictograms. That would have taken forever, so hieratic was, like I say, the cursive form of Egyptian, and you see that some simple hieroglyphs remained in demotic/hieratic. That little zig-zag is a hiero-

glyph, so they kept some aspects and simplified others that were much more difficult to draw.

This is the remnant of a pot shard, so if you think back to Ancient Egyptian times, paper didn't exist, papyrus wasn't that common. It was only really accessible to temples, to scribes, to pharaohs, so what people who were fortunate enough to be literate used to write little notes to each other on, were little bits of broken pot, and this was a little bit of broken pot that was found in Deir el-Medina. This was a very small village on the west bank of the Nile at Thebes, and this is important because obviously not everyone could read and write, but this was the village where the workers, and the very skilled craftspeople who built the tombs of the pharaohs and the tombs of the queens, lived, and so a lot of these pottery shards with little bits of hieratic have been found in this village, and the hieratic gives us much more of an idea of what the people did on a day-to-day basis, which historically people weren't very interested in, but over the last 30, 40, 50 years or so, the very personal histories of people who weren't famous, who weren't considered important, have become of much more interest to historians, and so these little shopping lists, these little notes from husband to wife or the other way around, gave us an insight into how they lived.

I will come now to this gentleman. He's called Jac Janssen, and the reason I'm coming to him, following hieratic, is, he was one of the foremost experts on hieratic, and he did a lot of work on the village of Deir el-Medina, the craftspeople's village, and I had the very good fortune to meet him, because one of my teachers in Egyptology, when I was learning it, was his wife, who was also a very eminent Egyptologist, Rosalind Janssen. And the reason I'm highlighting Jac Janssen is not just because he was an expert in hieratic, and so he wrote a lot of books about things that maybe a lot of people weren't interested in, an entire book about the importance of donkeys in Ancient Egypt, which is wonderful. Both he and Rosalind have written a book on getting old and ageing in Ancient Egypt, which isn't something you can read on a tomb, you can't read it on a temple wall, and also little bits about other things, but his story in itself is fascinating. He was born in the Netherlands in 1922, and at the age of 17, obviously the Second World War started, and because he was Jewish, whenever the Nazis invaded the Netherlands, like many people he was hidden in an attic by friendly people who wanted to protect him. Obviously the most famous of these people is Anne Frank, whose diaries have survived, but prior to this, he hadn't really decided what he was going to do with his life, and perhaps he hadn't really even considered necessarily Egyptology, but one of the very few books he had in the attic with him at that time was Alan Gardiner's seminal work on Egyptian grammar. The first edition was published in 1927, and

Alan Gardiner was very interesting, because the last edition of his book that he was involved in, he kept going right up until the end, it was published in the year he died, in 1963. So Jac Janssen, during one of the most horrible, frightening times of his life, learned the hieroglyphic language as probably the only thing to occupy his time. But then, as his interest progressed, he progressed to become one of the very, very few people in the world that could read fluently the hieratic language, because whereas there maybe are hundreds of people who can fluently read Egyptian hieroglyphs, there are only tens of people who can fluently read and interpret hieratic, just because of the relative importance placed on those two things, the grand, impressive hieroglyphs compared to the humble but equally important hieratic.

Those are some of the books that they published on everyday things, like furniture at Deir el-Medina, the dress, household animals, grain transport, and as I said, getting old in Ancient Egypt. So if you want, say, whilst no-one can visit Egypt to have a little look at the tombs that these craftspeople from Deir el-Medina built, the Theban mapping project is a good website. What they've done is, they've got, I think you saw the plan, the little plans I had earlier, of the tombs in Egypt, so those plans came from the Theban mapping project, and for each tomb they have a listing where you can see a plan of the tomb, and photographs of different sections of the tomb, and it's a nice thing. You can go through all the different bits, or just find the pharaohs you're interested in most to explore.

So that's the end of my talk, and I suppose what's interesting is, why on earth did Amenhotep III build all these statues?—and I can't tell you an answer right now. There are lots of theories, there are theories that there was some sort of terrible pestilence raging through the Kingdom at the time, or perhaps Amenhotep himself was unwell, and so in order to appease Sekhmet, who would have been thought to have sent that pestilence, he built a lot of them.

There are other theories surrounding the number of statues. There are about, as I say, enough of the standing statues for each day of the year, 365, and again the same number of the seating statues—is there some sort of solar inference, some sort of calendar event? But my plan at some point, maybe when I retire in a few hundred years' time, is to have a little look into this in more detail. My plan for my dotage is to travel the world and catalogue these statues, take a record of what is written on them, translate these areas, to try to come up with my own idea of what's going on, but that is still a few years away and I've taken up quite enough of your time so thank you very much for listening.

Professor Mary Frances McMullin:

Steve, thank you very much—that was absolutely

wonderful. I'm sure you would be happy to take some questions and discussion, so has anybody any questions they'd like to kick off with? There has been somebody putting comments in the conversation as we go along, Shane McKee at least. So has anybody any questions they would like to ask? Just wave or shout out, or raise your hand? Shane, go ahead.

Dr Shane McKee:

I'm going to go ahead, sorry I'm a bit dark here. Stephen, that was great. One thing I was wondering about, what's your opinion of the medical capabilities of the Ancient Egyptians? I know you didn't really touch too much on that, there's a huge amount, I'd imagine you could go on all day.

Dr Stephen Boyd:

You could, but in summary, I think there was very little evidence... They had a fantastic grasp of anatomy. They had to, to perform mummification, but there's no real evidence that they associated any of that anatomy with any physiology, so they didn't really quite link things together terribly well. There's not a lot of evidence they did much other than employ spells and rituals and appeals to gods in terms of treating illnesses, or at least there's not, that's the thing, there's no evidence surviving. I imagine that practical things like that aren't the sort of things that would make their way onto the walls of temples or the walls of tombs, but they're probably the sort of things that will have been on papyrus. Papyrus, although some has survived, quite a lot of it hasn't, just because it's a very fragile medium, and the only reason any of it survived was obviously because of the arid environment in the desert, and as time's gone on, a lot more things have been destroyed by that as well. I didn't mention it, but us going and visiting the tombs in the Valley of the Kings and the Queens is really destroying the tombs. What was a perfectly lovely, completely dark, completely dry atmosphere in the tombs, which meant that the beautiful pigments on the walls were full of beautiful colour. People going in and out, taking flash photography, sweating all over the place, and getting the place humid, is destroying what remains, so it's hard to know, but my suspicion is there's no real evidence they had a good grasp of medicine, despite their excellent grasp of anatomy.

Professor Mary Frances McMullin:

Anybody else like to ask a question?—I see way back, Patrick Morrison was telling us about hippopotami. Eamon Mackle, would you like to comment?

Mr Eamon Mackle:

I've no interest in commenting, I'm just saying that Ebers medical papyrus, I can't even spell papyrus,

never mind prescriptions, gave 33 prescriptions for the treatment of anorectal diseases, which are probably equally as successful as many of the Middle Ages versions that we used in more recent times.

Dr Stephen Boyd:

Yes, there's been a lot of prescriptions for many things throughout history, and many of them probably have never done much good. There is some small surviving evidence, but there's not a lot of success. I think the Egyptians were really well placed, if they made some links to be able to practise medicine quite well, but it was their prescriptions that they came up with weren't terribly convincing, at least none of the ones that we know of. Maybe they were geniuses and we just haven't, what we need just isn't there.

Professor Mary Frances McMullin:

I'm interested in the iconography and that lady who felt she had to have a fake beard. I haven't actually had the pleasure of being in Egypt, but I have been to the Nubian pyramids in Sudan, and it was pointed out to me there by someone who had been to both, that the iconography is very different, that the ladies, the Nubian ladies, all have curly hair?—whereas the Egyptians have all straight hair?

Dr Stephen Boyd:

Yes, women in the iconography are presented as women, generally with long, straight hair, the exception being if you happened to be in a position of rulership, which Hatshepsut was. Some people would argue that she was not legitimately pharaoh, that she was the regent for her son, and there's some people who argue that very dramatically, do make you wonder a little bit about, but the thing is with Hatshepsut, whether she was officially pharaoh or not, she did feel the need to represent herself as all previous pharaohs, with the exception of Akhenaten, felt the need to; and even he kept some of the iconography, he still kept the beard, he still kept the Uraeus, the flail and the crook, but she felt the need to represent herself as pharaoh by using those same symbols that demonstrated that she was pharaoh, and that little beard bit seems to be a very important one, but she was a really successful pharaoh.

Her mortuary temple is really impressive. There's a point above it, there's a little walk, which you can do, well maybe not now, but I have done at one point, where you can walk between Deir el-Medina, the village, over the ridge. You've got a little cliff behind Deir el-Baḥri, the mortuary temple of Hatshepsut, down into the Valley of the Kings, and you get a beautiful view of what, all the things she has constructed, and the things she constructed were actually really good quality. Some of the famous pharaohs like Ramses, some of his monuments are a little bit ramshackle, the

ones that he really built, not the ones he claimed to have built by crossing someone's name out.

Professor Mary Frances McMullin:

Okay, so many many fascinating stories. Anybody else like to ask anything or comment? It's a little bit limiting, when we're all looking at a screen, but I think what we did get out of that is, the things you were pointing out on the slides, actually looking at them on the screen, we probably were able to see better than if it had been on a big screen in a lecture theatre, I don't know. So if nobody else has any comments or questions, I'd really like to thank you again, Stephen Boyd, for such a fantastic lecture. I mean, it's just wonderful to hear something so much separate from what we do during the day, and your breadth of knowledge is amazing.

Dr Stephen Boyd:

There's too much to know, 2,000 years! I don't pretend to know ... the things that interest me, I know, but obviously like anyone, the things that interest me less, I don't know so much about, so I could go on for ages about certain things, and have no clue about others.

Professor Mary Frances McMullin:

Okay, so thank you very much, lots of messages are coming in thanking you, because unfortunately we can't really give you a big round of applause, which is what we would normally do. Thank you Stephen, again.