



**JUAN JOSÉ CASTILLOS**

**MEMOIRS OF AN  
EGYPTOLOGIST**

**Ediciones MAAT**

For Val, with love

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EGYPTOLOGIST**

**JUAN JOSÉ CASTILLOS**

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## **TORONTO 1974-1984**

I arrived in Toronto, Canada, in 1974 fleeing a brutal military dictatorship that afflicted for a while the country of my birth, Uruguay, that had otherwise a long democratic trajectory.

I secured lodging in an area near the University of Toronto, the Royal Ontario Museum and the huge and modern Robarts research library, which I planned to use as much as possible.

One of the first places I visited was the ROM and when I went there, Prof. Tony Mills received me very kindly. When I showed him a letter I had just received from Raymond Faulkner, in which he very generously praised my translations of the texts on the coffin of the Montevideo Egyptian mummy, Mills told me he had been his teacher of Egyptian hieroglyphs. Then he showed me a paper in Spanish he had received from Argentina and asked me what I thought about it. After reading it I said it was rubbish, an attempt to mix local politics and ancient Egypt, to which he replied that was what he thought, but being his Spanish not so good, he wanted confirmation.

Then one of his graduate students who much later moved on to bigger things entered and I was introduced as 'Prof. Castillos from Uruguay', he immediately stood up to attention, bowed and greeted me to what I replied, thanks but I'm not a professor yet.

I discovered that this graduate student and I lived in the same street, Huron Street, and once we met as we went on our rounds, he recognized me and showed me a copy of a hieratic papyrus of the Eloquent Peasant and said he was expected to translate it for the next day. I advised him to get back home and work on it and we parted.

Later on I was working on a translation of the texts on the coffin of an Egyptian mummy in Uruguay and suspected they were versions of the Pyramid Texts, so I was keen to get hold of Occurrences of the Pyramid Texts so as to try to help date if possible the ones on the coffin. Although Prof. Mills had kindly provided me with a special card for access to the stacks at the Robarts Library, I couldn't locate the book after many attempts. It was just missing from its proper place.

My frustration took me to the University of Toronto to see Mills and ask for advice. He was teaching a class and kindly interrupted it to listen to my request. Several students were seated around a large table, one of them, the above mentioned graduate student. When I told Mills my predicament, this student asked what I

meant by Occurrences of Pyramid Texts. I was surprised and replied that, as he surely knew, those texts had been used all through later pharaonic history. Mills interrupted a bit embarrassed and said he would try to locate the book for me and I left.

Later I found out that the book was missing from the stacks because another egyptologist was also using it and had hidden it elsewhere in the stacks so nobody else would interfere with his study. I didn't mind the little trick because when I approached him, he quickly consulted the book and gave me the information I needed.

Mills tried to be helpful also by helping me find some sort of employment. I remember that we had a meeting with another very kind and helpful egyptologist, Geoffrey Freeman, who had a background in insurance but was then retired. When Freeman suggested why I did not go into business, I quickly replied that I would rather not, I'd prefer to stay within the academic world since I thought business people saw us egyptologists as a kind of exotic animals. Freeman denied this and seemed very disappointed although Mills just smiled and kept quiet. That killed any business prospects I might have had, but I didn't regret having spoken my mind.

Two other top egyptologists in Toronto at the time, Prof. Nicholas Millet and Prof. Donald Redford also proved to be very friendly and helpful, the latter putting at my disposal all his personal and institutional resources so that I could resume my research, a generous attitude that I will never forget.

As I became incorporated into the Toronto egyptological life by also joining the newly founded Society for the Study of Egyptian Antiquities (SSEA), I noticed that another of the professors seemed to dislike me for some reason. He never greeted me at the meetings and lectures and ignored me completely. I could never understand why, perhaps my approach when I started to publish in the Newsletter of the SSEA was not what he approved or to his liking, but I took it in my stride and ignored the distant and standoffish attitude.

I remember that when I attended one of his public lectures at a university venue on Ramesside monumental inscriptions I ventured to suggest during the question period that they could also have acted as our modern newspapers providing illiterate Egyptians with news of the king's victories against the enemies of Egypt. He contemptuously rejected my suggestion saying that it was just propaganda.

Then I submitted a book review of the recently published Hoffman's Egypt before the Pharaohs that was favourable but with several critical remarks. After a while

Freeman called me and said that it had been rejected. I asked him why and he said he didn't know but would try to find out. I never heard from him on the subject. I suspected whose hand was involved in the rejection, but I couldn't prove it.

So, I felt free to submit it elsewhere and was promptly accepted by Midant-Reynes for her then Journal *Égypte Avant l'Histoire*.

A few months later I got my copy of the Newsletter (then the Journal of the SSEA) and there was my rejected review !

Shortly after I got a letter from Freeman saying that they understood a scholar's wish to publish as widely as possible, but that repeating a publication without approval was unethical.

With an impish satisfaction I reminded him of his rejection that freed me from any obligation and I never heard from him again on this.

Although I couldn't prove it, I saw my nemesis' hand on my rejection and most probably Redford's or Mills' intervention to get it approved, since I thought I was making valid points.

A couple of years later a young female student of archaeology from Uruguay came to Toronto and expressed a wish to study egyptology, so I found out who could

receive us to carry out her purpose and I was a bit taken aback when we were sent to see the professor who hardly ever spoke to me.

At the meeting I was very surprised to meet a very kind and attentive man, who mellifluously replied to my questions on her behalf. Of course, I was bringing a new student to the fold.

I felt at the time that I had at last got the true measure of the man.

Another little surprise I had at the time was when I read a paper written by a very distinguished professor of Near Eastern Studies at the university and in one of the footnotes he quoted Kaiser's review of early Egyptian chronology as if it confirmed Petrie's estimations half a century ago, the exact opposite of the truth.

I called Mills and asked him where this eminent professor could have got such wrong information. He said that he had provided him with a copy of Kaiser's papers, but being those in German, a language he probably didn't know, he had got the wrong end of the stick and published accordingly. Talk of black and white damnation for posterity...

I also remember I was once invited to lecture at a university venue and at the appointed time a blizzard was raging. Since I love the winter, the cold and the

snow, I didn't even think of calling them in case the lecture had been cancelled, so I got dressed, I took my slide projector and notes and bravely made my way to the appointed place. The wind was blowing, with the falling snow you could hardly see ahead, snow drifts were already gigantic, I'm sorry to say I loved the whole thing. When I arrived there were six brave souls who attended my lecture. We had interesting exchanges and I made my way back home under the same conditions.

The SSEA that was run then by a team of very sympathetic and friendly scholars, accepted my two major publications on Egyptian predynastic cemeteries as their first and second titles of a list of Studies, which was a great encouragement for my research.

I remember that I met once Prof. Redford in the street and he asked me why I didn't apply the same methodology to other later periods like the Old Kingdom, a task that could provide interesting results.

I replied that for periods in which there was plentiful other evidence such as textual and from other than funerary nature, the approach would have to be substantially different and being my concern at the time predynastic Egypt, it was beyond my sphere of interest.

After I returned to Uruguay and became Professor of Egyptology at the local Montevideo specialized Institute, Redford kept in touch and confided that the Canadian government was planning to cut funds for the Canadian Mediterranean Institute with several branches in Italy, Greece, Egypt, in breach of previous agreements, which was a source of great international embarrassment.

He asked me (and perhaps several others) to write to the Canadian government protesting this decision in the hope they would reverse their policy.

Eager to help in what I could, I wrote several strongly worded letters to the Canadian Ministries of Foreign Affairs and Heritage and to the then Prime Minister.

All sent me kind replies (to my surprise the one from Foreign Affairs had spelling mistakes) explaining the reasons for their decision and that was that.

Shortly after I learnt that Redford had been forced to retire by the university and eventually replaced by someone less prone to make waves with the government and I always wondered whether my letters had had anything to do with what had happened.

I sadly reflected that Canadian egyptology had lost a top scholar that, like so many other Canadians, had continued his brilliant career in the United States, a place where merit is more recognized and rewarded.

## **CONSTITUTIONAL TROUBLES**

It was a bit embarrassing that Canada, an independent nation for many years, at the time I was living there still did not have a Constitution of its own, the document that fulfilled that role was in fact, a British law, the British North America Act.

Conscious of this shortcoming, the Trudeau government decided in 1982 to correct this and have our own Constitution document, written by Canadians, as it should be.

This accomplished, Her Majesty the Queen was invited to come to Canada to sign the new Constitution with a ceremony that sealed the country's full independence.

Unfortunately, shortly after, a deranged person with false pretences got access to the original document and defaced it by throwing glue and the contents of a can of paint all over it.

It was not considered appropriate to make Her Majesty return to Canada to sign a new original, so attempts were made to try to remove the stains without damaging the document.

During my stay in Canada I had made acquaintance of Dr. Peter Marr of Reed International, who had been approached by Public Archives of Canada to see what he could do about it.

Aware of my early university training in analytic chemistry, Dr. Marr invited me to work in his laboratory on samples of the same kind of paper used for the Constitution that had been stained with the same glue and paint that defaced the original.

Always attracted to new challenges I accepted and tried different approaches, unfortunately all unsuccessful.

Until finally I tried a reducing mixture that completely removed the stain without affecting the writing or the paper itself.

This information was passed on to Public Archives but as far as I know, for some reason the stains have not been removed, and the original is still mostly in its defaced form.

The only recognition I had for my work was a letter from Dr. Peter Marr acknowledging my intervention and years later another letter from the Canadian Ambassador in Uruguay congratulating me for my work.

But what I really cared about was the success in finding a solution to the problem brought about by careless handling of that precious document that allowed its defacement.

## **MUSEUMS**

I remember that many years ago I made a tour of several US Egyptian museums mainly to take photographs and make slides for my classes in Uruguay.

One of the museums I visited was the one at the University of Pennsylvania that also contained a vast wealth of magnificent exhibits.

But what really worried me was that many of them were not protected at all, being within easy reach of visitors. The mere thought of possible vandalism, like spray painting some of those priceless objects with the terrible damage that might have implied or spraying acid on them made me shudder.

I noticed as well that the couple of guards supposedly watching visitors spent a long time outside the room involved in long and noisy chatting, leaving it all at the mercy of any visitor with evil intentions, that might have easily and with total impunity, performed the deed and quickly walked away.

I decided to make a phone call to the Curator of the Egyptian collection, a very well known colleague. After expressing my concerns, he replied with a tone of voice as if I had upset him and told me that the intention was to make many of the objects readily available to the public, without anything in between that could interfere with their appreciation.

This reminded me of another similar experience I had at a museum in the city of Chartres in France. It contained paintings of several centuries going back to the Renaissance and I noticed that there were no guards around and the pictures seemed to be just hung on the wall as we would have them at home.

I decided to try something that might have put me in trouble if there was an alarm system in place. I took one of the small priceless pictures off the nail on the wall and nothing happened. It could have easily been put under the clothes I was wearing and smuggled out of the museum.

When I left, I told the person there about the danger to the collection's integrity by their policy and signed the visitor's book including a detailed warning of what could happen at any time under those conditions.

I don't know if they ever changed their policy but it reinforced my doubts about how some museum collections are exhibited around the world.

I also visited several times the small Egyptian collection at the La Plata Museum in Argentina. Among mummies and other objects, it contained reliefs of a temple that a Franco-Argentine mission rescued from the rising Nile waters in the 60s of the last century.

These were beautifully displayed on the walls with labels explaining their characteristics, without any protection like at Pennsylvania, I took photos and enjoyed the exhibition.

But on my next visit shortly after, it had been temporarily cancelled due to an act of vandalism. There were graffiti all over the old stones and labels and most likely the lack of adequate supervision had given the opportunity for the damage.

The next story concerns, also many years ago, one of my visits to the Egyptian Museum in Cairo. To my horror I noticed that the large Anubis from the Tutankhamun exhibition had parts falling off or shrinking out of place, as well as the wheel of one of the chariots dangerously out of shape and being almost at the point of breaking as well as the leather from one of the chairs actually falling and precariously hanging down.

Since there was at the time in Cairo one of the World Egyptology Congresses, I met on my way out William Kelly Simpson and shared my concerns with him asking him to make the situation known to the pertinent Egyptian authorities.

Simpson replied: Why don't YOU tell them about it? I understood what he meant but I couldn't help saying: Well, you are our current president, so perhaps it's you who should report it. He promised he would try, and I knew that I was making a difficult proposition, given the local hypersensitivity to what could look like a criticism with the possible negative repercussions to whoever mentioned such things.

Needless to say, the Egyptian guard in the room was dozing off sitting on a chair, all which I could document with photos that became part of a regular talk at our Institute with examples of how certain museums should NOT be run.

As to the mentioned hypersensitivity I was talking about that can be easily offended with dire consequences, unless it involves a special good person and scholar like in the case I will mention here, can be appreciated by the following story.

In the late 80s of last century there was a Cultural Attaché at the Egyptian Embassy in Montevideo, Hala Hassan, that later became Egyptian Ambassador in

Peru. Her husband, Magdi Kamal, a prosperous Egyptian entrepreneur, attended some lectures at our Institute and other locations in Uruguay, and became so taken with our efforts on behalf of professional academic egyptology, that once when I accidentally met him at a Shopping Centre, he promptly wrote a cheque on our behalf for 100 US dollars.

Some time later I visited Cairo in one of my study trips and Mr. Kamal, having got wind of my visit, invited me to join him in his Country Club as his and his wife's guest. I couldn't turn down an invitation from one of our benefactors although I'm not a hedonist and detest country clubs and their crowds.

During our conversation he mentioned that Dr. Sayed Tawfik, then Director of Egyptian Antiquities, was excavating some tombs of princesses nearby and would love to meet me. This I quickly accepted being more up my street and the next day I could meet the illustrious Egyptian colleague at his dig.

He showed me around and I noticed he was doing excellent work, he even mentioned that one of the reliefs had a map of the tomb, something quite unusual. When we joined Mr. Kamal, I praised his work and mentioned my surprise that all that had been accomplished in just six months, which I meant as a compliment.

But apparently it was not thought as such, since Dr. Tawfik's face showed some concern. He told me nothing about it but the next day Mr. Kamal spoke to me and said that Dr. Tawfik had been very impressed by my knowledge and expertise...

I was gobsmacked. I had said nothing to provoke such remarks, just the common comments anybody would have made.

Then I realized that the only interpretation for such a puzzling outburst was perhaps an attempt to defuse any comments I could make about hasty work or such, by flooding me with praise.

Regardless of the above, I was very impressed by Dr. Tawfik's modesty and unassuming attitude, a really thorough and hard working scholar who unfortunately died well before his time, the complete opposite of certain people that later occupied his post, eager for fame and popularity, at any cost.

## **EXPERT OPINIONS**

Field archaeologists as a rule tend to exaggerate their finds, a very human weakness that prevents objectivity as far as some aspects of those finds are concerned, and we must be careful about this.

They also often have peculiar ways to interpret their discoveries, emphasizing aspects that increase their relevance and importance, perhaps to maintain or advance their career in a very competitive academic world.

The more famous and prestigious they are, the greater the tendency to yield to the temptation of indulging in imaginative interpretations.

I'll quote an example that won't embarrass any living colleague, being about one who unfortunately, passed away.

This may be considered an extreme case, but I have witnessed many other less scandalous ones.

I was participating many years ago in a conference in Poznan, Poland, and one of the organizers was Prof. Fred Wendorf, a scholar who enormously contributed over many years of work with his group of assistants to our understanding of prehistoric Egypt.

In his presentation he mentioned a group of buried stones he had found in the desert that he thought were in the shape of cows, probably being examples of an early bovine cult there.

I simply cannot refrain myself from avoiding saying that the emperor is richly attired when all I see is nakedness, so in the question period I raised my hand and said that regardless of how much I tried to stretch my imagination in his favour, I couldn't see those stones as having the form of any cow I had ever seen.

Wendorf reacted quite angrily and said he just couldn't accept that, then what other shape they had? I did not insist, but Fekri Hassan sitting near me, who is also a geologist, asked if it wasn't possible that all was just a natural deposition, the result of a large stone that had been fractured through weathering, the pieces falling nearby and having been buried over the years by sand that had blown over.

No clear reply from the speaker that left the impression that this was a possibility.

Then from back in the lecture hall the voice of a lady colleague asked if any human remains had been found, such as offerings to those supposedly sacred cow images or any sign of any kind of artefacts in the area associated to this burial place.

The answer was no, nothing like that had come to light.

I heard no more of this interesting discovery and I couldn't help wondering that if I hadn't expressed my objections, whether anybody would have dared challenge the opinions of this very influential and prestigious colleague.

It pays always to be cautious and take with a pinch of salt whatever sounds strange or unusual, regardless of who is the speaker.

## **DEEP PERMANENT HATRED**

Years ago I had to go to Denmark and when I arrived in Copenhagen we all had to go through immigration and customs. A lady ahead of me looking like a well-to-do very well dressed traveler, was holding a Chilean passport and she was told to go to a little room where a lady wearing a thin transparent glove was waiting for her. When she returned she gave me a glance with a look of disgust on her face. I imagined what had taken place and realized that anyone holding a South American passport is automatically a suspect of being a drug dealer and gets searched in the most intimate places. When it was my turn, I showed my Canadian passport and I was just waved through.

Then I was hurrying along a street in Copenhagen dragging my hand luggage behind me and I saw a couple of little old ladies who stared at me with an unpleasant expression and one of them mumbled to the other: 'disse tyskere...' (these Germans). Just then I realized that being quite tall, with a very short haircut and wearing clothes similar to what I had seen German businessmen wearing elsewhere and walking briskly, I had been taken for a German.

I felt tempted to turn around and say to them: 'jag är inte tysk' (I'm not German) in Swedish which I hope they would understand, but decided not to because it might upset the dear old ladies, who didn't have a clue that I had understood.

I couldn't help noticing that so many years after the war there was still such a deep hatred for the invaders of their country, especially among the older generation.

I've just watched a Danish film, Land of mine, in which right after the war, a group of young German POWs are forced to clear mines from a beach and are treated so savagely by the Danish sergeant in charge that I could understand it only in the light of my past experience there as a pseudo-German.

Denmark was (and maybe still is) a very expensive country. The hotel where I stayed charged in kronor the equivalent of over 100 US dollars a day for a no-frills little room without TV or any other amenities. In the restaurant I decided to have for dessert a small piece of cake and a cup of coffee and I was horrified to be charged by the very neatly attired waiters (a young boy and a girl) 350 kronor (about 50 dollars) just for that.

That didn't dampen my appreciation of a very neat and beautiful little country where everything seemed to run smoothly and efficiently.

In different countries there are very different perceptions of past events. For example, I had a Polish friend who had a deep admiration for Germans and I also met other Polish people who deeply resented what the Germans had done to Poland.

After a brutal war they occupied his country, murdered many of its inhabitants whom they considered an inferior race, plundered and destroyed its major cities during five years of widespread terror.

But Wieslaw, my Germanophile friend, never mentioned these events, to him Germans were extremely well organized people, disciplined, efficient, hard working, conscientious, from whom his countrymen could learn a lot.

During my long conversations with him I realized that he did not deny any of the terrible things they had done during the war, but he blamed them on the nazis, not on the ordinary citizens who had submitted to their infamous rule and carried out what they were told to do. Wieslaw had the open-mindedness to appreciate what he saw as national virtues that deserved to be emulated.

## **FUNNY SITUATIONS**

We receive at our Institute of Egyptology a lot of mail and once the Post Office or the postman could not identify the address in the envelope that said "institute of egyptology", so the letter went from probable place to place, all listed in the envelope, the the last but one was "try the (nearby) university hospital", thinking that perhaps "egyptology" was some sort of medical specialty... This time we laughed only after finally receiving the letter.

At our Institute in Uruguay we have all kinds of visitors, most of them to inquire about our courses and the career to a Diploma in Egyptology, besides those interested in our Egyptian Museum.

But occasionally other people show up with whom we have to deal with the utmost respect everybody deserves, although it is often very hard to do so avoiding a smile or a laugh.

Once a man came and gave us a bulky manuscript dealing, he told us, with ancient Egypt. It had to be dealt with in complete confidence, since it was discoveries he wanted to divulge only at the right time. He wanted my opinion.

When I read it later, it was so, so crazy and written in such a way that although he seemed normal in every way, betrayed a confused and deranged conception of what ancient Egypt had been.

At the end of his manuscript he had written that he had to endure an endless pilgrimage seeking someone to read and assess his discoveries, first he had gone to the local Ministry of Education, from there they had sent him to the State University, then to a museum of history of art, from there to the Department of Culture of the City Hall, then finally they had sent him to the Municipal Zoo !

When one of our students read the document and reached this part of the manuscript, he said: "Did they intend for him to get into a cage and lock himself in?".

The laughter could be heard a block away. Fortunately he never returned to find out what we thought of his document and we were saved the embarrassment to try to somehow please him without encouraging his delusions.

But similar difficult situations can also happen in very respectable and serious academic surroundings.

Another rather difficult moment took place at a World Egyptology Congress in Cairo years ago. An Egyptian journalist was trying to find in the huge crowd of egyptologists Dina Faltings, who was carrying out important work at Buto. He asked me if I knew where she was. I had seen her a few minutes before so I told him, you can't miss her, she is a thin, tall, blond, very attractive lady in a white suit, she is quite easily recognizable. Apparently he didn't miss her because later in the day I happened to be talking to Dina and she told me that an Egyptian had found her and interviewed her distracting her for a long time because some busybody had given a description of her.

I very peevishly admitted having been the one responsible and she looked at me accusingly while she said: "So, it was you !". It took me a while to make amends.

In the same Congress I saw Renee Friedman coming towards me and in her usual kind and obliging way told me: "It's you ! I have something for you". And then she gave me a copy of the latest Hierakonpolis bulletin. I thanked her profusely for that and shortly after I noticed she had put it up on a Notice Board.

I was very keen to read it and went to a coffee shop, sat down and started to do so. But when I reached a part of the text, I couldn't help laughing loud as my imagination ran wild.

People around me stared at the crazy noisy egyptologist and right then Fekri Hassan happened to approach, greeted me, sat down at my table with an Austrian colleague and inquired as to the reason for my mirth.

I told him that someone had written in the Hierakonpolis publication that a case of severed heads found at the site could well be 'for medical reasons'. I told him I couldn't help imagine the ancient situations: he got a headache, chop off his head !

We all laughed and understood that Renee probably didn't have time to thoroughly inspect what had been written in the bulletin.

Later in the day I noticed the bulletin was no longer in the Notice Board. I carefully tried to avoid meeting her again that day afraid that word of my discovery and my irrepressible reaction had reached her.

Another incident took place while I was reading a local paper and found an interview with an Egyptian tour guide who lives in Uruguay and was the daughter of a former Egyptian Ambassador. She had graduated in her country as a tour

guide but defined herself as an "Egyptologist", something I profoundly dislike since perhaps unintentionally, tends to deceive and misinform people.

In the interview she had declared that the ancient Egyptians spoke hieratic and described some famous ancient queens thinking and talking of Nefertiti and Nefertari as if they were the same person. My wife came quite alarmed at my loud chuckling and then laughing but it was only my imagination running wild again thinking of people today speaking, for example, in 'italics' or in 'small print'.

After I mentioned the article to the then Egyptian Ambassador, I never heard or read this lady describing herself as an 'Egyptologist'.

## **UNLIKELY HEROES AND WHITEWASHING LEGENDS**

Hans Alexander Winkler made significant contributions to prehistoric Egyptian archaeology that still today can be consulted with profit.

In a recent issue of a Journal an article was published under the title 'The tragic life of Hans Alexander Winkler', implying that some of the accusations raised against his attitudes and behaviour before and during the Second World War were unjustified.

Also in the latest edition of Who is Who in Egyptology his obituary does not dwell too much on his political background except to say twice that he was a 'radical' the probable cause for his dismissal from a teaching job in Germany under the nazis.

This seems to imply a degree of sympathy toward him since he seemed to be at odds with the regime in Germany at the time.

However, in spite of Winkler's early communist leanings, later on he became a good nazi and antisemite, more accurately, anti-Jewish or judeophobe, so the tragic life of other nazis, officials or minor party members like Winkler, does not provoke much sympathy among many others who resent the harm he did while he performed his many duties for his masters, as can be seen in the following excerpts of publications that we should not sweep under the carpet:

'In 1941 and 1942, during the fighting in North Africa, Foreign Ministry officials in an intelligence unit connected to Rommel's Panzerarmee, wrote many drafts of Arabic language leaflets. The unit was commanded by Konstantin Alexander Freiherr von Neurath, the son of the Nazi regime's foreign minister replaced by Ribbentrop in 1938. Dr. Hans Alexander Winkler, with a degree in Oriental studies from the University of Tübingen was his assistant. On November 17, 1941, von Neurath sent the Foreign Ministry the text written by Winkler with input from von Neurath entitled 'War and Hunger'. It was intended for distribution in Egypt. It was well received in the Foreign Ministry. In Africa, General Rommel praised. The leaflet was among others that were distributed that summer.

Winkler summarized the rationale for the following text in a letter to the Foreign Ministry in August 1942. "The main argument of enemy propaganda against us is the assertion [that we advocate] racial superiority. As the Orientals incline to a

feeling of inferiority, the enemy's agitation has had some success. But the wind can be taken out of the sail of English propaganda through praise of Egyptian cultural accomplishment and emphasis on the Jews as the common racial and for the Egyptians also religious enemy'.

The text continues as follows: 'Arabs, whoever speaks to you in this way, can he be anything other than a son of a Jewess? Who else would lie and turn the facts upside down? What does he want to do other than in his moment of danger hide behind you, with whom he has nothing in common in religion, morals and traditions. The only thing he has in common with you is what he as a parasite has taken from you ! Look at how he really behaves ! Germany was tired of its countless Jews which like maggots in meat were present as professors, lawyers, artists, doctors and not least as industrialists and retailers. Since 1933, the Führer has cleaned house. He did not do so with brute force, as the Jew expected but rather honorably and in a German way with laws which determined the part of the alien in the life of the nation. Now they are screaming: Oy veh. And many are going elsewhere in the world where it is 'better' for them, to London or New York. There they engaged in propaganda and agitation until they had their war. And now they are trying to draw not only Europe but rather the whole world into the whirlwind. With the help of others they want 'revenge' for the 'injustice' that came about because a free people in the course of its struggle to survive resisted them'.

J. Herf, *Nazi Germany and the Arab and Muslim World: Old and New Scholarship*, Baltimore, 2008.

Part of an internet biography of Winkler provides the following information:

‘Winklers Qualifikationen und sein 1939 erfolgter Eintritt in die NSDAP machten den einst Verstoßenen nun zu einem willkommenen Mitarbeiter im Auswärtigen Amt’.

Meaning he joined the NSDAP nazi party and then was welcomed into the nazi Foreign Office.

Also in another biography:

‘Die Desertion seines Sohnes Hayko Alexander (1923–1945) veranlaßte ihn im Mai 1944, sich freiwillig zum Fronteinsatz zu melden. Am 20.1.1945 ist er in Schlusau bei Thorn gefallen’.

H. Junginger and J. Wischnath, *Nachlaß Hans Alexander Winkler, 1900-1945*, Tübingen, 1997.

Meaning that only after his son deserted, he left his Foreign Office job and volunteered for front action, where he was killed.

When he published his books on rock images in Upper Egypt he added pictures of swastikas that bear little connection with the subject of his books, that an anti-nazi archaeologist would omit, but that someone hoping to please the current government in Germany would be keen to include.

Besides, he held views and published them in his books on the origin of civilization not very different from what national socialist archaeology was publishing at the time and also, when the Second World War began, he decided to return to his country, while many other Germans remained abroad, fought in the Wehrmacht and died in action in 1945

In spite of the good work carried out in Egypt by this pioneer of predynastic archaeology, we should not ignore or what is worse, deny, the abhorrent political views that were part of his collaboration with the murderous activities of his masters in Berlin.

## **EGYPTOLOGICAL CUPID**

I joined the Egypt Exploration Society of London, England, a very prestigious society devoted to egyptology and with a very long history of wondrous accomplishments, over 50 years ago, in 1967, when I was still a student in Uruguay.

Over the years I bought many of its important publications at a time when digital versions were a distant dream and those of us who wanted to do serious research, especially from countries very far away from large adequate university libraries, required them to provide us with essential data.

I'll always remember the Society's Secretary at the time, Mary Crawford, always eager to help and oblige, who sent me hundreds of pounds worth of publications before I made any payment but that made me stretch my modest personal finances to honour her trust with the least possible delay.

I was very proud of this membership and when upon my return to Uruguay with the help of my late local colleague, Dr. Alberto Bianchi, we founded first in 1980 the Uruguayan Society of Egyptology and then in 1984, the Uruguayan Institute of Egyptology, where local students could have access for the first time in the

country's history, to professional egyptology, the EES was always sympathetic to our efforts.

Suddenly in 1992, without any request from us, the EES decided to make a large donation of their books to our Institute, about 5,000 US dollars worth of publications, for which I received a notice from the local Post Office that there were several large boxes full of books waiting for us at the international airport.

This happened on a Saturday and being bureaucracy one of the problems that turned any procedure involving the government a nightmare of paperwork and delays, I dreaded the steps to get hold of the books.

But one of our students happened to be a captain in the local Air Force, so as soon as he got to know, he volunteered to bring us the boxes. This avoided any delays and the next day, a Sunday, the boxes were sitting at our Institute's premises.

Then I started thinking. Why not get in touch with the British Embassy and propose to have a ceremony in which the books would be presented to us as a gift of the British people to Uruguay, using the embassy's many media resources to make this ceremony more public and thus give us free publicity for our academic work.

I called the embassy and left a message indicating what we had in mind and hoping that if they were interested an embassy official would get in touch with us during the week.

To our great surprise, the British Ambassador himself, Donald Lamont, (who would later become Governor of the Falklands) called us and accepted our offer, arranging for a personal meeting at the embassy the next day.

Everything was set up for a ceremony at the stately Ambassador's Residence a few days later with the presence of the members of our Board of Directors, of the Egyptian and British Ambassadors and journalists invited to a special press conference. All went well and everybody was satisfied that the EES donation had been given the prominence it deserved.

What had not been predicted was that in the Monday meeting I was going to meet the British Ambassador's secretary, a very nice and efficient lady of British ancestry, who was responsible for all the arrangements and with whom I promptly fell in love.

After a couple of months during which I found out that she was fortunately single, I won her heart and we got promptly married, we have recently celebrated our 25th wedding anniversary.

An unforeseen chain of events that nobody could have predicted had not only provided us with plenty of valuable publications we couldn't possibly have bought but had also provided me with a wife.

## **EGYPTOLOGY CONTESTS**

Shortly after our Institute of Egyptology started the courses towards a Diploma in Egyptology and although at the time the media was helpful publishing our press releases and news about our lectures and other activities, we felt that the study of ancient Egypt in Uruguay needed some more encouragement, especially among young people.

With that goal in mind we started to have national egyptology contests in which people could write papers on any subject related to ancient Egypt and a tribunal assigned prizes.

We were unable to hand over cash prizes so in order to have many people take part in them we decided that besides the usual certificate and trophy, we needed to reward people's efforts with books, a substantial number of them with each prize.

Our own publications could be part of the prizes but we needed much more than we could afford.

So, we sent to many universities and museums in Europe and North America a request for donations.

Then, the books started to arrive. From Italy, France, Germany, the UK, the US, Canada, the local Egyptian Embassy, etc., a flood of generous donations from colleagues all over the world.

Another source of material for the prizes were the conferences I attended in Poland. They had very important publications that were sold at very low prices, so every time I went to take part in those meetings I returned with my luggage bursting with books.

Thirteen contests were organized over the years that generated very good participation and interesting contributions, many of them becoming students at our Institute.

The prizes were handed over by the current Egyptian Ambassador in Uruguay and government officials if the occasional winner worked for the government.

As the news about these contests spread beyond our borders, people from Argentina, Brazil and even Spain participated, which almost led us to bankruptcy

since the local Post Office had eliminated the printed matter rates and sending the prizes abroad became very expensive.

I remember I once was having lunch at a pub in Cambridge and the Keeper of the Egyptian Department at the British Museum, Vivian Davies, came over and sat at my table.

We chatted away for a while and I told him how grateful we were for all the publications the British Museum had donated to be given as prizes. Then I said that some of them were very expensive and also very good books and that we had handed them over with tears in our eyes since they would have come so handy for our institutional library.

He replied that we could have added them to our resources, there was no need to give them all away as prizes.

I thanked him for his kind words, but since they had been donated for a purpose, we could not possibly have deviated them from it, that would have been unethical.

On another occasion, during a World Egyptology Congress, I was in London, England, visiting the British Museum. I found in a room predynastic objects and among them those almost perfect Naqada I knives that had edges as if they had

been machine made. I knelt down to admire them and while doing so, Dr. Karig, an official then of the Internacional Association of Egyptologists of which I was still a member, recognized me, approached me and asked what they could do to help us in our work in Uruguay.

The only word I mentioned was books, as many as they could spare. He took note of my request and promised to do what he could.

The British Museum and the other institutions continued to help us in this way for several years, which led to great enthusiasm in participating and having a chance to win such valuable prizes.

This generous collaboration with us from many universities and museums led to hundreds of local students over the years to know about our Institute, attend our courses and benefit from the reliable information about ancient Egypt that they conveyed.

## **EGYPTIAN MUSEUM IN MONTEVIDEO**

Well before the Uruguayan Institute of Egyptology was founded we felt the need to have a small collection of ancient Egyptian objects exhibited in our premises so our students would be able to see them without having to go elsewhere to appreciate examples of the ancient art.

For the purpose and over the years I bought from many museums in Europe and North America good and rather expensive reproductions and in the market some originals like Ptolemaic and Roman coins, as well as some of the samples I had obtained of the Montevideo Egyptian mummy while I was engaged in its formal publication.

This is the way our small Egyptian Museum started and generated much interest among our students.

The word spread and the local media started to visit and publish interviews which in turn, caused many members of the public to express a wish to see the collection.

Access to our Egyptian Museum has always been free of charge, a principle we have continued to practice over the years and when some local colleagues, eager to generate resources for the museums they run, have suggested we start to charge admission, a very important museum abroad comes to our rescue providing an example that they cannot challenge, that is the British Museum, that only accepts voluntary donations without charging any admission.

As this private, institutional museum became public, thousands of people had access to the collection over the years and many of those visitors wished to donate objects that one of their ancestors many years ago had brought with them from Egypt while visiting the country.

It was painful to tell them that most were crude reproductions, little better than the souvenirs people buy everywhere, but some turned out to be original objects and those we were quick to accept.

A local academic bookseller had received from his brother in Israel some stones that he had found while working in a kibbutz and with which his daughter used to play. He showed them to us and asked if we would be interested in them.

We told him that those stone toys his daughter was playing with were ancient stone tools dating back 100,000 and 10,000 years, and of course, we would be delighted to accept them. They became part of our small collection.

A local businessman showed us a 4,000-year-old stone fragment inscribed with a funerary text that he used as a paperweight on his desk. We explained what it was and begged him to treat it with more respect, with the result that it was donated to our museum.

An American lady who also visited our museum and turned out to be an archaeologist and had participated in an archaeological project in Jordan, also donated many small objects that she had brought back with her.

Little by little our collection grew from mostly good reproductions to be about half originals, which on its turn generated more public interest in it with the result that in a recent Museums Night at Montevideo, during four hours thousands of people lined up in the street to the corner and around it, patiently waiting for their turn to visit.

As a way of conducting our work with the utmost transparency, colour photos of all our authentic objects donated by the public have been included for many years in

the museum's webpage, which allows people abroad and those local but unable for different reasons to visit, to evaluate what we have on display.

## **UNETHICAL ATTITUDES AT A URUGUAYAN UNIVERSITY**

A few years after my return to Uruguay, the Chair of Ancient History at the University of the Republic in Montevideo became vacant by the retirement of the incumbent.

There was a call in the local newspapers for scholars interested in applying for this position and since I had studied at that university for seven years as a young man, and thought that the procedures were carried out in an unbiased and fair manner, I applied for the position which was grade 5, that is, the maximum for a chair.

Later on I discovered that I would be competing against the incumbent's assistant, that had a junior position (grade 2) in that Chair.

Therefore, I presented 130 pages of international merits and publications that I thought would guarantee my success since the assistant had no published research and a poor teaching trajectory.

Things however took a turn for the worse and the procedures at this university in this case were so incredible, blatant and impudent that defied belief.

The events to which I am going to refer took place years ago and reflect very badly on the way things are done at the University of the Republic at Montevideo, Uruguay.

My intention is to make people aware of this situation, not only for my own sake, but for that of others who may be going through the same ordeal, in the hope that international condemnation might bring about a change of attitude in that university.

On February 20, 1989, Luis Bausero, a person who at the time was holding the Chair of Ancient History at the Faculty of Humanities of the University of the Republic, granted an interview to a local newspaper in which his opinions on an Egyptian mummy kept at a local museum were in more than 90% word by word part of a text published by the writer years before. No credit or mention was given to the author, which in any civilized country is considered blatant plagiarism and is against the law, besides being a gross misconduct when it is done by an academic.

The incident was transmitted to the authorities of the Faculty where this person worked, including proof of the deed, but no action was taken, I repeated the complaint several months later, with the same result.

One of the first steps taken by the faculty where the chair was located was to reduce the grade of the professorship from the original grade 5 to grade 3, that is, just one step above the grade my competitor, the incumbent's assistant, had.

This was already a very suspicious decision that made my competitor's advancement, if she won the contest, a very normal one of just one step forward.

During the academic contest for that Chair the rulings of the three person committee that was appointed at first and then, the five person final group that decided the issue, were scandalous and devoid of any ethical considerations.

At first, perhaps aware of the limitations of the assistant, the three member committee charged with deciding whether there should be a contest or the position should be directly awarded to one of the competitors, attempted to arbitrarily rule on the assistant's favour.

Fortunately, one of them perceived that such a ruling would be very difficult to justify and that the contest had to continue.

The five member committee had to decide and give credit for three aspects of the contest: first, research and academic achievements, then a research project and third, a sample class on a certain subject of ancient history chosen by the committee.

I was shocked when the assistant, in spite of my heap of published research and her negligible or non-existent evidence, was deemed three points ahead in the contest.

Eager to document all events as much as possible, I appealed to the legal department of the university pointing out the obvious bias by the committee, but my protests were ignored and deemed unjustified.

Then the research project that had to be defended. I was supposed to answer questions by members of the committee. It all lasted no more than ten minutes, one of them asked how long it would involve to be carried out, I replied one year, another asked the nature of the project, what I was trying to prove, to which I had to say that it was clearly explained in the introduction and then I was invited to leave.

Later on I could get hold of the assistant's project and was also shocked at finding numerous basic spelling mistakes and absurd historical concepts, the text written by a semi-illiterate person.

However, the committee granted maximum points to this inept text and considerably less to my project I could so easily 'defend'.

In view of how things were going I understood why the first committee had tried so desperately to prevent the contest from happening so the assistant's serious incompetence would not be exposed.

My friends and colleagues advised me to abandon the contest since it was so clearly inclined on my competitor's favour.

But I decided this would be the less intelligent thing to do, much better to go on to the bitter end and then photocopy the whole file as was my right, before any modifications could be made.

The final event, the class. It had to do with Roman imperial rule in Northern Africa. I projected many images to illustrate my points and perceived the approval nods of some of the members of the committee at some of the points I was making, but to no avail, since the assistant got again maximum points, more than I was granted,

for a class I could not attend to decide on its merit but that I could verify included no projections of any kind.

I could have gone to court during the short time allowed with my photocopies of the files in order to challenge their decision, but believing at the time that this was an isolated incident and that the university where I had studied would surely put things right after I denounced to the Rector what had happened, I only sent him a report attaching the proof of my sayings.

This was a very naive attitude, as I was to discover after a long delay.

In 1968-1970 I had risked my life as many others did in public demonstrations in the street as a student of that university to defend its autonomy when it was threatened by an increasingly authoritarian government, so I felt I deserved some respect.

At the time the university was going through a period of severe confrontation with the government due mainly to budgetary cutbacks and I preferred to delay my action in order to avoid unnecessary embarrassment to the university at that difficult time and in the hope that steps would eventually be taken.

This naive and unsuccessful gesture ended when the Rector of the University, Jorge Brovetto, sent me a letter in which he washed his hands concerning the affair and hinted that legal action could be taken by the writer. This, of course, after I had learnt that the delay in taking action had led to the expiry of the period the laws of the country allowed for such a procedure.

When I published a letter in a local newspaper making the affair public so that they would feel compelled by the pressure of public opinion to do something about the damaging situation to the prestige of the university, the only result was that the Dean of the Faculty of Humanities, Carlos Zubillaga, replied in the same newspaper with an insulting letter in which he threatened the writer for making use of his right to complain publicly about it.

After I replied in the press with further revelations on the matter, not a word was read from this person on the subject although I publicly mentioned his name several times.

Some time later, I appealed to the local organization Uruguay Transparente, a branch of Transparency International, an anti-corruption movement with central offices in Germany, which was carrying out a campaign against corruption in Uruguay. This organization was presided at the time by Dra. Jacinta Balbela, one-time President of the Supreme Court of Justice of Uruguay, and other members

were Dr. Lescano, Academic Advisor to the Rector of the University of the Republic as well as other personalities and respected community leaders.

This Committee accepted to study my case and after six months ruled in my favour, specifically mentioning that if the legal period had not expired, they would have advised that the matter should have been put before a court of law.

After this ruling, that was published in the local press, the university insisted in not taking any action against the person accused of violations of the most elementary rules of academic ethical behaviour and of my rights as author of the appropriated material.

What is even more incredible is that the person responsible for plagiarism and for those violations, whose only response to my public accusations was trying to blame the journalist who interviewed him, a weak and ridiculous claim because after the publication he never published a clarification nor apologized to the author, minimum actions to establish some sort of credibility, shortly after the ruling was made Professor Emeritus by the University of the Republic and retired as an honoured member of his Faculty...

Let us point out as well that this person in the many years he occupied his Chair at the university, never published any research and was recently branded in an

article by another person in the local press as an illiterate, because of some opinions he had made public. He did not respond at all to such serious public accusation against him.

The Rector involved, responsible for the protection of ethics at his university, and who took no action on the matter, was appointed afterwards President of the Latin American Association of Universities and later on presided one of the major local political parties.

In spite of all the time that has passed with those responsible enjoying full impunity for such deeds, I am convinced that many academics in the university where it all happened are honourable people and I hope they will some day take action to restore the rule of respect for the rights of others to their intellectual property, provided that international public pressure makes them aware of the seriousness of the situation.

As an example of the situations that this unresolved matter encourages, later on, at another Faculty of the same university, the Dean had to resign after winning a contest for a Chair at his Faculty with a thesis in which he used parts of books by other authors without mentioning the sources, another clear case of plagiarism. Only after the other person who participated in the contest put forward a claim assisted by her lawyer, the Dean was forced to resign. However, a group of

professors of that Faculty were quoted in the local press declaring that the Dean represented the best traditions of that university and that they expected him to be back teaching there as soon as possible. Any comments are left to the reader.

## **STIRRING UP TROUBLE**

Since my student days I have always, right or wrong, tried to understand things my own way and also due to my early training in the exact sciences, I have a scientific background that makes me demand solid and explicit proof before I can accept anything as tolerably acceptable.

This is not usually the case with people exposed only to the humanities that tend to be more flexible in their approach to scholarly subjects and have less stringent requirements in their research.

I also see all kinds of egyptological conferences and colloquia in which I participate as opportunities to analyze and if necessary challenge presentations that I see as poorly supported by the evidence or sometimes simply flights of imagination.

The same way I expect to be confronted if my perspectives are debatable or wrong, I am candid in expressing my views whenever I consider it proper, in the hope that all present, including myself, will benefit from such exchanges.

I regret to say that this attitude is usually seen as confrontational and bad form, and while in all academic events exchange of ideas and debate are encouraged, this rarely happens and the standard procedure is read your paper, clarify some points if required, and leave the floor to the next speaker.

The consequence is one more little line in a CV, the satisfaction of the colleagues' applause and move on to the next subject without much else to show for, practically the same as if we would read these papers published in some journal.

In some academic environments any adverse or critical comment made at a conference is considered as a personal attack and is resented accordingly, which in my view only betrays lack of self-confidence and mediocre standards.

Although I always mean well and never seek pointless personal confrontations, this attitude of challenging ideas that seem incorrect has got me in some trouble.

I remember that many years ago at a World Egyptology Congress at Cambridge University in the UK, when I went to register, the student who was doing this job told me: Oh, professor Castillos from Uruguay, we have quite a file on you, which made me cringe at the reputation that had been growing around me.

Perhaps it is hard to blame me if I feel compelled to intervene, like at an earlier congress in Cairo, when a speaker tried to persuade us against all contrary evidence that the pyramids had been built with blocks of some sort on concrete instead of natural stone or that the ancient Egyptians were familiar with advanced scientific techniques like pH control and such based on whimsical so-called 'evidence' while the known facts point in the opposite direction.

Academic egyptology is plagued by a host of amateurish authors that have developed over the years many fanciful conceptions about ancient Egypt and seeing these invade the supposedly professional gatherings is quite offensive.

Well, at that Cambridge meeting and after the somewhat worrying experience during registration, I was hoping to escape my reputation keeping as quiet as possible.

There were eight simultaneous papers every day and we had to choose which to attend which deprived us from learning about other very tempting subjects, so the decisions, I suppose, were made with great trepidation.

One of the papers I decided to attend was by an American professor who tried to prove that the ancient Egyptians were capable of determining latitude, all based on an artefact of dubious and ambiguous purpose and on a supposed massive need

in Egypt for cedar wood, that could not be satisfied by the Lebanon forests and had to be satisfied elsewhere, probably overseas, which in fact was only for very restricted and limited use in temples and elite funerary and other purposes that could be very easily provided by their usual suppliers.

When I confronted the speaker with these facts, mentioning that the burden of proof was on her side and I found it wanting, expecting some sort of reply, none came and I hurried to attend the next paper in another room, regretting to have wasted the opportunity to hear what one of the other speakers at the same time had to say.

But the worst experience was at a Cairo congress in which a Hungarian colleague spoke of ancient Egyptian medicine and ended her paper by saying that the ancient Egyptians were familiar with certain forces that we don't know today and that cemented their fame in the ancient world as highly effective doctors.

I was sitting next to a French colleague and I turned to her and said: *Je ne peux pas croire ce que j'entends*, to which she replied, *Moi aussi*.

We both expected that the presiding scholar, a professor of anatomy at the Faculty of Medicine of Cairo University, would say something about those strange wonderful forces known to the ancient Egyptian doctors, but to our great surprise,

he praised the speaker's comments and hoped that we could learn more about such forces.

Much as I would have liked to intervene and say something, what I heard at a supposedly scientific meeting, left me speechless and unable to say anything.

Perhaps such situations explain why in most academic environments egyptology is not highly considered and the need for the creation of more chairs of egyptology at universities appears to be not a very high priority.

## **AMATEURS VS. PROFESSIONALS**

Contrary to what has happened with other civilizations, the fascination over ancient Egypt in the public mind is unparalleled.

Perhaps this has to do with the important part played by ancient Egypt in the holy books of the major western religions, its overwhelming presence in our major museums, tourism and the country's dazzling surviving monuments built with durable stone, strange practices like mummification, the discovery in 1922 of the almost intact tomb of an insignificant young king but filled with priceless treasures, all led to a widespread interest in this civilization.

Until 1822 and before Champollion and the decipherment of the ancient Egyptian scripts, the knowledge of such distant times and places was nebulous, based on often dubious classical sources and endless speculation.

It is not surprising then that side by side with the scholars working and teaching in academic institutions, the most reliable source of information, there is a vast host of amateurs, people with a great interest in the subject and hungry for knowledge on what we already know and what is continuously being discovered through archaeology and new interpretations by qualified scholars.

All this interest is highly beneficial for egyptology since it funds our work through donations, the purchase of books and other related materials on ancient Egypt, museum visits and the recruitment of fresh generations of students at our universities.

Many of these amateurs are highly trained in other disciplines and under the supervision of professionals sometimes make significant contributions to our knowledge in points of detail.

The problem arises when many of them after reading a few books or attending some lectures and courses, attempt to present themselves as (professional) egyptologists and mislead the public to accept unwarranted beliefs that go against established knowledge using unscientific criteria.

Thus we read in books and hear in lectures that the great Egyptian pyramids were not tombs but temples or places of initiation, that the sphinx at Giza is ten or twelve thousand years old and was carved by a mysterious early people, not by the Egyptians, that ancient funerary texts were not such but instead secret books of profound wisdom, that the ancient priests were in possession of lost technologies that were far more advanced than our own contemporary ones, and multiple other beliefs that do not stand scrutiny but are presented in attractive

ways that dazzle many among the unsuspecting public, always inclined to go for what appears to be wonderful and mysterious.

Of course, although these amateurs often make a substantial income from their publications and presentations and acquire great popularity in certain circles, enjoying their fifteen minutes of fame, there is always that bothersome crowd of scholars that expose their ideas for what they really are, unsubstantiated nonsense.

This motivates them to achieve some degree of respectability and dream of being widely accepted as 'egyptologists' in order to expand their influence.

They often attack what they call 'academic orthodoxy' demanding from us more 'open-mindedness', perhaps unaware that too much of that can cause your brain to fall off.

Sadly, the International Association of Egyptologists, after many years of successfully resisting the pressure to accept amateurs as members in any capacity, eventually yielded and created a special category of 'associate' members, that can be easily abused by some who omit the inconvenient word 'associate' whenever they list their credentials to appear as (professional) egyptologists, taking advantage of the reality that no self-respecting academic

professional association or college, except egyptology, accepts amateurs as members.

In my academic life and in many years of teaching and media exposure by interviews on TV, radios and newspapers, local and international, much time was wasted trying to clarify the widely held and wrong perceptions transmitted by these amateur 'researchers', which also reached our classrooms where we had to explain to students what was what.

It pays to be aware of this situation and as I advise people whenever I can, if you want to know about ancient Egypt from reliable sources, check the credentials of the author and if he or she is not part of a reputable academic institution, take all you read or watch or hear with a large pinch of salt.



The author, born in 1944 and with a 45-year career as a professional egyptologist.

References of the author:

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(seek there also the folder Trajectory)