

I suggest that the scene in the tomb of *nj-ꜥnh-ḥnmw* and *ḥnmw-ḥtp* depicts a combination of threat displays and subsequent fighting by black kites. Both birds show the characteristic splayed claws associated with this species' threat and attack behaviour. The wing position of the kite on the right indicates that it is jumping or flying forward to attack its opponent, which threatens its aggressor by opening its wings and holding up one open-clawed foot, while leaning on its tail. The open beak of the attacking bird suggests that it is also vocalizing.

The birds' postures encompass all the elements of black kite aggressive behaviour.¹⁰ Members of this species are found frequently around human settlements where they often scavenge for food; there will consequently have been ample opportunities for the Ancient Egyptians to witness their aggressive displays. The scene thus points to a particular interest in this striking avian interaction, either by the artist or the tomb-owners, and is consistent with a general tendency in the tomb to depict uncommon animals¹¹ and activities.¹² Nevertheless, it is interesting to note that this unique image of an opposed pair of birds has been found in a tomb that is renowned for representations of the unusually intimate relationship expressed by its two male owners. It is also tempting to speculate whether the birds' prominent claws (*ꜥnt*; *Wb.* I, 188.4–5) are a visual pun that was intended to allude to the tomb-owners' status as manicurists (*jrj ꜥnt*).¹³

Regardless of its deeper significance, however, the scene of battling raptors provides an instructive example of both the importance and the benefits of attending closely to the behaviour of depicted fauna when analysing Ancient Egyptian animal imagery.¹⁴

LINDA EVANS

Ernest Sibree: a forgotten pioneer and his milieu

An account of what is known of the life and career of Ernest Sibree, who taught Ancient Egyptian at University College Bristol and Bristol University between 1896 and 1927, a period during which a remarkable concentration of expertise in Oriental languages was to be found at that then-fledgling institution.

It is a little-known fact that in the late 1890s the Ancient Egyptian language was being taught at University College Bristol—and continued to be taught in Bristol until the 1920s. Still less known is the teacher, Ernest Sibree (fig. 1), whose surviving publications were not concerned with Egypt, rather a Neolithic stone circle in Somerset.¹ However, he played an

¹⁰ A relief fragment from the mortuary complex of Userkaf depicting a bird that bites the beak of a companion while raising one foot against it may also represent a fight, see *Egyptian Art in the Age of the Pyramids* (New York, 1999), 317 (cat. no. 102). Houlihan, *Birds*, 130 (fig. 184) suggests that they are 'engaged in playful conflict'.

¹¹ Note, for example, two unique representations of flies (or wasps) hovering overhead while fish are gutted, which are found on the same wall as the fighting birds, as well as unusual depictions of pelicans, a jerboa, a wild cat, Cape hares, and leashed baboons that occur elsewhere in the tomb.

¹² For example, the tomb decoration includes rare scenes of goat slaughtering, tree-felling, and manicurists.

¹³ Similar to a suggestion made by Moussa and Altenmüller that a baboon was included in two scenes in the Saqqara tomb of *nfr* and *ks-ḥ3.j*—one depicting the wringing of a sack press, the other the twisting of ropes during boat-building—due to a deliberate play on the words *ꜥn* 'turn' and *jrj ꜥnt* 'baboon', see A. M. Moussa and H. Altenmüller, *The Tomb of Nefer and Ka-Hay* (AVDAIK 5; Mainz am Rhein, 1971), 24 n. 137.

¹⁴ See L. Evans, *Animal Behaviour in Egyptian Art: Representations of the Natural World in Memphite Tomb Scenes* (Oxford, forthcoming).

¹ Published substantive mentions of Sibree are few and far between: *Bristol in 1898–99: Contemporary Biographies* (Brighton, 1898–9), II, 281 (with portrait); obituaries in the *Western Daily Press* and *Bristol Times & Mirror*, 30 March 1927; an 'appreciation' by W. Tudor Jones in the *Press* the following day; W. Tudor Jones, 'Ernest Sibree (1859–1927)', in E. Sibree, *Aspects of the History of Stanton Drew* (Bristol, 1927), 7–11; and L.V. Grinsell, *Guide Catalogue to the Collections from Ancient Egypt* (Bristol, 1972), 10. The University of Bristol's archives contain little material relating to Sibree, other than some press cuttings and passing mentions in the annual *Calendars* and committee minutes of the University and its predecessor institution, University College Bristol. I am indebted to Michael Richardson and Nick Lee, current and past Special Collections Librarians, for all their help in locating these sources. Thanks are also due to Martin Crossley Evans for his comments on Sibree and his academic contemporaries at Bristol, and to Sue Giles for access to Sibree's manuscript notebooks in Bristol's City Museum and Art Gallery.

important role in the documentation of Bristol Museum's Egyptian collection, and was key in drawing at least two significant figures into Egyptian archaeology. He was also one of a number of interesting characters who contributed to a remarkably eclectic range of ancient and oriental languages that were on offer at Bristol during the last years of the nineteenth century and first decades of the twentieth.

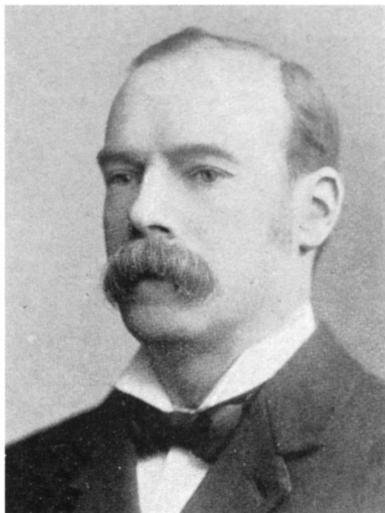


FIG. 1. Ernest Sibree, pictured in the late 1890s (from *Bristol in 1898-9: Contemporary Biographies*, II, 281).

Sibree was born on 2 January 1859² at Painswick, Gloucestershire, the second son of John Sibree (1823-1909) and Anna Cash (1823-1912, a Quaker). The family originated in Frome, Somerset, but John's father, also John (1795-1877), a Congregational Minister, had relocated to Coventry by the time of his son's birth.³ The younger John moved to Painswick in Gloucestershire in 1852/3, where he was schoolmaster.⁴ He was also a Justice of the Peace, a talented translator,⁵ a poet⁶ and even produced a textbook of anatomy.⁷

Ernest was educated at his father's school and spent some time at the University of Bonn in 1876.⁸ On his return he did some tutoring at the school⁹ while studying at University College London,¹⁰ his father's alma mater. However, he never graduated from London,¹¹ matriculating on 13 October 1883 at Oxford as a Non-Collegiate student. He received his BA in 1887, advancing to MA in 1890.¹² He was appointed Assistant Keeper of the Indian Institute at Oxford¹³ on 26 January 1888, at a salary of £5 16s 8d per

month 'for assistance and superintending the Library and Museum and cataloguing and keeping the accounts'. On 28 April 1888, his duties were specified further, as 'to attend in the

² Some sources give the date as 1 January.

³ The well-known Madagascan missionary, James Sibree (1836-1929), was another grandson of the elder John, by his son James (1805-1891).

⁴ Firstly at The Grange; ten years later he was running the Bussage House Boarding School in the village of Bisley just east of Stroud. This, and most of the other personal detail contained in this paper, is derived from the quarterly indices of births, marriages, and deaths for England and Wales, the ten-yearly census records for England from 1841 to 1901, and other family history databases accessed via <<http://www.ancestry.co.uk>>. I am particularly grateful to my wife, Dyan Hilton, for introducing me to, and navigating me through, the byzantine world of these documents. Information has also been derived from various issues of the annual *J. Wright & Co.'s Bristol and Commercial Directory* (Bristol).

⁵ He produced an English version of Georg Wilhelm Hegel's *Vorlesungen über die Philosophie der Geschichte* in 1853, as *Lectures on the Philosophy of History* (London, various editions and printings), and contributed to J. Bellows' *Vrai dictionnaire de poche français-anglais* (1873).

⁶ He published two volumes of verse, in 1880 and 1884. John was also a friend of the writer Mary Ann Cross (George Eliot).

⁷ *Human Anatomy Simplified in a Course of Three Elementary Lectures* (Coventry, 1854).

⁸ *Bristol in 1898*, 281; Tudor Jones, in Sibree, *Aspects*, 7.

⁹ Ernest's younger brother, Francis Joseph (1860-1936), was a tutor at the school, while their eldest sister, Phoebe Eleanor (b. 1851) taught English and French. There were seven siblings in all, the others being Mary Anna (b. c.1853), John (b. c.1856), Monica (b. c.1861), and Mildred (1864-1943).

¹⁰ According to the 1881 census.

¹¹ Personal communication, Zoë Browne, formerly Assistant Archivist, Senate House Library, University of London, 24 April 2006.

¹² J. Foster, *Oxford Men, 1880-1892: With a Record of their Schools, Honours, and Degrees* (Oxford, 1893), 553. Ernest's brother, Francis, later a clergyman, followed him to Oxford, graduating from Exeter College in 1888 (MA 1893).

¹³ The Indian Institute was opened in 1886, for the study of the Indian sub-continent, and for the training of members of the colonial Indian Civil Service. It contained a library, teaching rooms, and a Museum of Eastern Art. The latter was incorporated into the Ashmolean Museum in 1961, while the library became part of the Bodleian Library in 1962; the building now houses the History Faculty.

Library, cataloguing etc from 10 to 1 in the morning; and attend to the Library from 5–7 and from 8–9pm in term time'.¹⁴

During his time at the Indian Institute he became, in 1890, a Member of the Royal Asiatic Society, remaining one until 1901.¹⁵ He was also for a time a member of the Oxford Society of Historical Theology. However, on 2 June 1894 it was resolved by the Institute's Curators that 'the services of the present librarian would not be required after the end of the current year'. This appears to have been a reference to Sibree's post, as on 18 October 1894 arrangements to appoint a librarian '... to perform the other duties that have been performed by Mr Sibree ...' were discussed.

In the autumn of 1896, Sibree married Kate Budgett, born in Clifton, in the western part of Bristol, in 1849, and some ten years his senior. She was the daughter of John Payne Budgett¹⁶ and his first wife, Hannah Sibree,¹⁷ and during the five years leading up to her marriage had been living with her stepmother, Miriam, and sisters Eleanor and Marion, at 2 Cambridge Park, in the northern Bristol suburb of Redland.

The couple moved into a substantial newly built terraced house in Redland, just three streets away from Kate's former family home in Cambridge Park. Soon given the appropriate name of 'The Study', its address was 7 Manor Park Road, changed in 1908 to 48 Manor Park, when the two interconnecting roads were reclassified as one. The Sibrees were to live there for the rest of their lives.

Soon after his marriage, Ernest took up a teaching post as Lecturer in Oriental Languages and Literature (from the following year, just Oriental Languages) at University College Bristol, some two kilometres south of his home. The college had been founded in 1876, and expanded during the 1880s.¹⁸ Although a handful of students were awarded University of London external Bachelor of Arts degrees or lesser distinctions,¹⁹ the majority studying there did so only for a term or two, with teaching offered both during the day and in the evening. Thus, during the 1897/8 academic year, Sibree offered classes in Egyptian (including Coptic) on Thursdays, between 3 and 4 o'clock, and again between 8 and 9 o'clock. He also offered Sanskrit and Arabic—each course costing 7 shillings and 6 pence (= £0.37½).

It is unclear whether Sibree had ever himself taken any instruction in Egyptian. Classes in Egyptian had become available at University College London in 1893,²⁰ but it is likely that he was an autodidact, as he was in a number of other languages. Clearly a man with an ear for foreign tongues, by his death he had acquired over a dozen languages.²¹ As regards Egyptian, his surviving transliterations and translations betray a strong reliance on the works of Wallis Budge, which also formed the basic textbooks for his hieroglyphic Egyptian classes.²²

These classes were clearly a success, for in 1900/1 Sibree added a new elementary Egyptian class on Tuesday evenings. However, Sanskrit was dropped and a Persian option added, which in turn was superseded in 1902/3 by Assyrian. One of his Egyptian evening class students during 1900 was Gerald Avery Wainwright (1879–1964),²³ soon joined by Ernest

¹⁴ Minutes of the Curators of the Indian Institute, details supplied through the kindness of Simon Bailey, Keeper of the Archives, Oxford University (their ref IN1/1).

¹⁵ *JRAS* (July 1902), 698; I thank Alice McEwan, Library Assistant, Royal Asiatic Society, for this reference.

¹⁶ Born in Bradford-on-Avon, Wiltshire, c.1810: he appears to have been a relation of the elder John Sibree's wife, Anne Payne.

¹⁷ Born in Frome in 1811: she was the sister of Ernest's paternal grandfather.

¹⁸ J. W. Sherborne, *University College, Bristol, 1876–1909* (Bristol, 1977); D. Carlton, *A University for Bristol* (Bristol, 1984).

¹⁹ Between 1883 and 1909, only a hundred degrees had been awarded to Bristol students.

²⁰ R. M. Janssen, *The First Hundred Years: Egyptology at University College London 1892–1992* (London, 1992), 6–7, 10–11.

²¹ Tudor Jones in Sibree, *Aspects*, 8, remarks that '[i]t is a superfluous question to ask how many languages he knew. But the answer can be given that very probably he could find his way about in some fifteen of them'.

²² These were E. A. W. Budge's *First Steps in Egyptian* (London, 1895), *Easy Lessons in Egyptian Hieroglyphics* (London, 1889), and *Egyptian Reading Book* (London, 1888). For Coptic, he used Georg Steindorff's *Koptische Grammatik* (Berlin, 1894).

²³ W. R. Dawson, E. P. Uphill, and M. L. Bierbrier, *Who Was Who in Egyptology*, 3rd edn (London, 1995), 429.

Perhaps because of his previous experience in the Indian Institute, Sibree became additionally the Honorary Arts and Science Librarian of University College in 1901.²⁹ The appointment coincided with his library's consolidation on the ground floor of the new Stuckey Lean Building (fig. 3).³⁰

In 1905, there were changes in the oriental language provision at the College, with Arabic being dropped, but Burmese added following the arrival of L. Allan Goss as Reader in that tongue. This was reflected in the re-naming of Sibree's post as a Lectureship in Egyptian and Assyrian. The following year saw Bristol's long-time Lecturer in Hebrew, Rabbi the Rev. Joseph Polack, being brought into the new Oriental Languages Department, renamed Semitic Studies in 1908 and now embracing Egyptian, Assyrian, Hebrew, Aramaic, Syriac, Syrian History, and Hellenistic History. The latter five subjects were taught by the Rev. De Lacy Evans O'Leary (1872–1957), newly appointed Reader in Aramaic and Syriac,³¹ who chaired the new departmental committee, of which Sibree was Secretary.³²



FIG. 3. The North Building of Bristol University's School of Geographical Sciences, originally the Stuckey Lean Building of University College: the ground floor housed the Arts and Sciences Library during the first ten years of Sibree's tenure as Librarian (author).

Although O'Leary's interests in oriental languages, the early Eastern Churches,³³ and Islam were wide,³⁴ he was to play a significant role in British Egyptology as the editor of the *JEA*'s 'Bibliography: Ancient Egypt' between the two World Wars. He was also responsible for publishing material from the 1920–1 work of Hugh Evelyn-White (1884–1924)³⁵ on behalf of the Metropolitan Museum of Art at the Monastery of Saint Macarius in the Wadi el-Natrun.³⁶ O'Leary was also, like Sibree, a prominent figure in the University at large, being Chairman of Convocation between 1910 and 1928.

²⁹ Succeeding James Rowley, who had combined the post with that of Professor of Modern History and of Modern Literature, in which he continued until retiring in 1905.

³⁰ On University (ex-University College, ex-Museum) Road, and now the North Building of the School of Geographical Sciences.

³¹ O'Leary—an Anglican clergyman—had just been appointed Vicar of Christ Church, Barton Hill: see A. Dodson and M. Crossley Evans, 'De Lacy O'Leary', in preparation for the *Antiquaries Journal*.

³² The other members of the committee were Polack and (rather curiously) Professors R. P. Cowl (English Language and Literature), Francis (Chemistry), and S. H. Reynolds (Geology and Zoology).

³³ A set of his early Bristol lectures was published as *The Syriac Church and Fathers* (London, 1909).

³⁴ Cf. Dodson and Crossley Evans, 'De Lacy O'Leary', forthcoming.

³⁵ Dawson, Uphill, and Bierbrier, *Who Was Who in Egyptology*³, 145–6.

³⁶ De L. E. O'Leary, *The Coptic Theotokia: Text from Vatican Cod. Copt. xxxviii, Bib. Nat. Copte 22, 23, 35, 69 and other MSS, including Fragments recently Found at the Dêr Abû Makâr in the Wadi Natrun* (London, 1923); id., *Fragmentary Coptic Hymns from the Wadi n-Natrun* (London, 1924); id., *The Difnar (Antiphonarium) of the Coptic Church, I* (London, 1926).

University College had spent much of its history suffering from a chronic shortage of funds, but in 1906 a serious attempt was begun not only to put the institution on a sound financial basis, but also to make it a degree-awarding university in its own right. By 1909, a series of major donations—particularly from the Wills family of tobacco barons, as well as the chocolate-making Frys—had provided for an adequate endowment, and on 24 May that year a charter was granted by King Edward VII to establish the University of Bristol.

Through the restructuring that followed, Sibree became once again Lecturer in Oriental Languages, in charge of the department as a whole. The remaining staff now held the position of Special (i.e. part-time) Lecturer, O'Leary in Aramaic and Syriac, Polack in Hebrew, with the addition of G. Jacob in Hindustani and Marathi.³⁷ In 1911 the latter was superseded by the Rev. Joseph Segall, Special Lecturer in Arabic, thus returning that language to the Bristol curriculum. An Oriental Society was founded, with Sibree as President and O'Leary as Honorary Secretary. Sibree also retained his library responsibilities, expanding them to be Librarian for the University as a whole. In 1911 he moved the Arts and Sciences Library into the chapel of the former Bristol Blind Asylum, which lay behind the old University College building (fig. 4).³⁸ Two years later it was moved again into part of the adjacent former Army Reserve Drill Hall.³⁹



FIG. 4. The chapel (left) of the former Blind Asylum complex was Sibree's library's last home before his retirement (from *Bristol in 1898: Contemporary Biographies*, I, 29).

In spite of an intimate involvement with the Egyptian language that lasted for three decades, Sibree seems to have published nothing on Ancient Egypt.⁴⁰ He did, however, have wider antiquarian interests, in particular as regards the stone circle at Stanton Drew, just outside Bristol. He published a number of articles in the local *Western Daily Press* newspaper, as well as a pamphlet⁴¹ and a book,⁴² arguing that the monument acted as a prehistoric calendar. He was also interested in other aspects of local history, including the etymology of the name 'Bristol'.⁴³

³⁷ University College and the new University seem to have been keen at this time to embrace a wide variety of less-usual disciplines, a Visiting Professorship being granted to the anthropologist John Beddoe (1826–1911) shortly before his death.

³⁸ This was demolished a decade later to make way for part of the monumental Wills Memorial Building.

³⁹ A location also now occupied by the Wills Memorial Building. The University had purchased two fifths of the Drill Hall complex that year; the rest being acquired by the adjacent City Art Gallery for its own expansion plans: see K.-M. Walton, *75 Years of Bristol Art Gallery* (Bristol, 1980), 9.

⁴⁰ Certainly he is not listed in C. Beinlich-Seeber, *Bibliographie Altägypten 1822–1946* (ÄA 61; Wiesbaden, 1998), with nothing to be found in Bristol University Library. His lack of publications mirrors the record of his predecessor as Librarian, Professor Rowley: see Sherborne, *University College*, 2.

⁴¹ *Stanton Drew: A Calendar in Stone* (Bristol, 1916).

⁴² *The Stanton Drew Stones* (Bristol, 1919). A further pamphlet was published posthumously (see n. 1), while the manuscript for a large-scale work was apparently completed shortly before his death, but never published: cf. Tudor Jones, in Sibree, *Aspects*, 11.

⁴³ *Western Daily Press*, 30 March 1927.

Alongside his enthusiasms for eastern languages, Sibree was a passionate devotee of Welsh. Ernest and Kate spent six weeks a year in small towns or villages on the Welsh coast to improve his command of the language. He also used to read Welsh to his wife and translate it for an hour a night.⁴⁴ According to his friend, the Unitarian minister W. Tudor Jones (1865–1946),⁴⁵ '[n]othing gave him greater delight than to go and hear a Welsh sermon in one of the three little Welsh chapels of Bristol', his devotion being rewarded by a Vice-Presidency of the Welsh Society of Bristol.⁴⁶ He was also a devout Unitarian, being a regular attendee at the Liberal and Free Christian Church in Oakfield Road, Clifton, and on occasion preached at the Lewin's Mead Meeting church in the centre of Bristol.⁴⁷

Sibree's term as Librarian saw considerable expansion of the University Library, and it was doubtless owing to his interest that a fairly good collection of Egyptological books was built up during that period, including the ordering of a set of the *Wörterbuch der ägyptischen Sprache*, and the purchase of a number of other basic works, such as Sethe's *Urkunden*.⁴⁸ However, he was bound to retire from the post at the age of 65, and a few years before he reached this milestone, the University Senate recommended on 24 June 1921 that 'in the event of Mr. Sibree ceasing to be University Librarian, a part-time Lectureship in a branch of Philology be established and Mr. Sibree appointed to the post'.

This came to pass on 1 April 1923, when William Luther Cooper, previously a Lecturer in History, took up post as the first full-time University Librarian. His appointment coincided with the Arts and Science Library's removal to the first phase of the new Wills Memorial Building on Queen's Road, neatly drawing a line under this part of Sibree's career.

However, the 1921 recommendation was fulfilled, and Sibree was appointed Lecturer in Comparative Philology, working part-time, with a stipend fixed at £150 a year. He was still so employed when he died suddenly at home on the morning of Monday 29 March 1927; his body was cremated at Golders Green, London.⁴⁹ Sadly, Kate survived him by only a few months.⁵⁰

Ernest died intestate; under Kate's will,⁵¹ after various specific bequests to friends and family, the residue of the estate was to be disposed of by her executors, Kate's nephew David Thomas Price and brother-in-law John Oliver Cash, and the proceeds donated to two of her favourite charities. However Ernest's books were not so disposed of, and were given to Bristol University, being formally accessioned by the University Library on 19 March 1929. Numbering some two hundred volumes,⁵² they reflected the breadth of his linguistic interests, including works on various Oriental, African, and European tongues—including a large group on Welsh.

Ernest Sibree's demise brought to an end the Bristol University's precocious involvement with Egyptology, and it was not until the arrival of Mark Horton in 1992 and of the present writer in 1996 that some teaching of the subject was revived, in what is now the Department of Archaeology and Anthropology.

AIDAN DODSON

⁴⁴ *Western Daily Press*, 31 March 1927.

⁴⁵ Minister at Bristol's Lewin's Mead Meeting from 1915 to 1933.

⁴⁶ Tudor Jones, in Sibree, *Aspects*, 9.

⁴⁷ Both churches have now been converted to offices, see <<http://www.geocities.com/churchcrawler/bristol/unitar.htm>>.

⁴⁸ No detailed library acquisition data exists from Sibree's tenure as Librarian.

⁴⁹ On 13 May 1927, the University Council 'Resolved:—that Council places on record its appreciation of the valuable services rendered to the University and University College by the late Mr. Sibree and desires that an expression of its deepest sympathy be conveyed to his widow'.

⁵⁰ She died on Christmas Day 1927 while visiting her sister Edna's family home, 40 Wellington Park, Clifton.

⁵¹ Dated 17 May 1927.

⁵² Numbers 12412 to 12617, listed as 'presented by Mrs Sibree'.