

HOTEP

Issue 74:

January/February 2023

Announcing the first of our occasional Local meetings

In response to our Members' requests, for the first time in three years, we offer a **face-to-face Saturday meeting**.

'The Life and Afterlife of Egyptian Furniture'

by Hilary Wilson

**Saturday 25 March 2023
13.30 for a start at 14.00
Itchen College, Whites Road,
Southampton**



c.1300 BCE



c.1880 CE

Ancient Egypt provided a vast source of inspiration for artists and craftsmen at the start of the Nineteenth Century, through published travellers' accounts and the Napoleonic Survey. This talk explores the influence of images of ancient art and everyday artefacts publicly available in museum collections, on European art and design. The main focus will be on four styles of the humble Egyptian stool, tracing the impact they have had and continue to have on modern furniture design.

**Places are limited to 30
advance booking is essential.**

The newsletter of The Southampton Ancient Egypt Society

Bookings for this **face-to-face only** meeting should to be made through the Secretary saesinfo55@gmail.com Places will be confirmed on receipt of the meeting fee of £5, on a first-come-first-served basis. Since this fee includes refreshments, we really need to know how many people we are catering for. Payments may be made by Bank Transfer, Paypal or cheque as per the usual payment arrangements given on the website, where you will also find location and access details for the venue.

We are offering this event first to Members, current and former, but it will be opened up to all-comers from 11 March if places are still available. **Book early to avoid disappointment.**

If this event is successful, we hope to offer further opportunities for in-person meetings in the not-too-distant future.



Details of the 18 March Zoom meeting

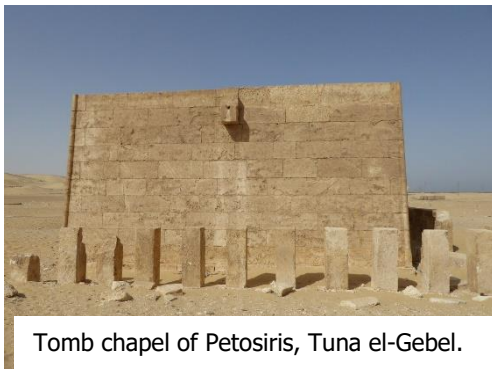
***'An Egyptian Michelangelo? Senenmut and his Times'* by Campbell Price,**

will be found on Page 5 of this issue

Review of December Meeting

The Zoom talk on 17 December was '*What Happened When it Rained?*', presented by Dr **Heidi Köpp-Junk**, Assistant Professor in Egyptian Archaeology at the Institute of Mediterranean & Oriental Cultures, Polish Academy of Sciences Warsaw.

While we are used to hearing about how the Egyptians managed the waters of the annual Nile inundation, we rarely think about how they coped with less welcome water sources, such as run-off from rain (yes, it did rain in Egypt, sometimes torrentially), industrial processes like laundry, brewing and tanning, and domestic waste water.



Heidi started her talk by describing her work on the Temple of Atrihbis, and the necropolis of Tuna el-Gebel, in Middle Egypt. She focused on those of the predominantly Graeco-Roman monuments where roofs are still at least partially intact. She identified drainage channels sloping to holes in the balustrade which emerged in the form of gargoyles, or water spouts. These were often carved in the shape of lions' heads, as at the Temple of Denderah, (below) and bore inscriptions calling on the protection of various deities.



Within the temple, drainage gullies were provided to carry away water from altars where libations were made. This may well have been collected as 'holy' water, sanctified by ritual, for use in healing and purification. Larger channels and culverts were built in and under the temple floors to deal with the quantities of run-off from areas where offerings were prepared, such as the



brewery and slaughterhouse. Some of these were stone-lined but others were made from tubular pottery pipes made in sections.

Heidi then took us back in time to see how excess water was dealt with in earlier ages. This review took us from the 5th Dynasty pyramid temple of Sahura at Abusir, through Middle Kingdom tomb models, to Akhenaten's capital at Amarna and the 20th Dynasty Temple of Medinet Habu. Everywhere she pointed out the essential works the Egyptians carried out to cope with keeping water where it was needed and removing it from places where it was not wanted. This included the solutions for dealing with the more delicate problem of domestic sanitation.

Heidi presented this mundane topic in a way that, on several occasions, made us think, *Why haven't we noticed that before?*, or, *So that's what that is!* A thoroughly satisfying afternoon, capped off by the audience joining in with Heidi's rendering of 'White Christmas' to her guitar accompaniment. Great entertainment!

Follow the progress of the Tuna el-Gebel project at: <https://www.tuna-el-gebel.com/en/>

Hilary Wilson

Review of January Meeting

On 21 January we were joined by Professor Joyce Tyldesley of Manchester University where she teaches the online Certificate, Diploma and Master's courses in Egyptology. The inspiration for her talk **'Nefertiti's Face, The Creation of an Icon'**, was her 2018 book of the same title.

Joyce began by saying that the famous bust has influenced the view of who Nefertiti was and that the view of Akhenaten's Queen today is very different from what it was a hundred years ago.

The bust was discovered in 1912

by a German expedition, led by Ludwig Borchardt, but did not go on public display in Berlin until 1923.

Over the last century opinions on Nefertiti's origins have changed, from being a foreign princess to the current view that she was the daughter of Ay, a prominent court official. Joyce made the point that very little new evidence for Nefertiti has emerged in the last one hundred years, but interpretations of her character, appearance and political importance, have changed dramatically.

The bust is uninscribed, so it is only the distinctive crown that makes it almost certainly Nefertiti. The location in which it was found is always referred to as the workshop of the sculptor Thutmose. However, as Joyce pointed out, the name Thutmose was found on a horse-blinker in the garden of the house attached to the workshop. So, this reinforces the point that much of what is said about Nefertiti is a best guess not absolute fact as it is often portrayed.

Joyce considers the purpose of the bust to be a sculptor's model, something that was used by the workmen to copy when producing images of the queen. She quoted the parallel of the 'official' portraits of British



Joyce with a replica of the bust of Nefertiti (internet photo)

royalty produced for coins and stamps which also change over time.

Since its arrival in Berlin the bust has become an icon for ancient Egypt and feminine beauty. It survived WW2 by being stored in a salt mine. It has also been used in numerous adverts, as a symbol, almost a logo, for Egypt's tourism industry.

Joyce's talk was a clear review of what is actually known about Nefertiti compared with the many theories and scenarios that have been constructed around her. She showed that the impact the bust has had since its discovery is out of all proportion to the meagre known facts of her life.

Glenn Worthington

Seasonal Quiz Answers

Part 1: picture clues

The words or phrases from seasonal songs and carols suggested by the picture clues were:

- 1: 'Two turtle doves' (The Twelve Days of Christmas)
- 2: '...in heaven the bells are ringing' (Ding Dong Merrily on High)
- 3: '...(around yon virgin), mother and child...' (Silent Night)
- 4: '...three Kings...' (We Three Kings of Orient)
- 5: 'Santa's sleigh (sled)' (various)
- 6: 'Nine ladies dancing' (The Twelve Days of Christmas)

Part 2: Anagrams plus

- 1: ANTHEM POEM = AMENHOTEP + M
- 2: BUNKER FOR SEE = SOBEKNEFERU + R
- 3: I AM EXPRESS = PIRAMESSE + X
- 4: MASK A RUNE = MENKAURA + S
- 5: HER MAIL BRIDE = DEIR EL-BAHRI + M
- 6: EMMA SHIP = MEMPHIS + A
- 7: ROAMS FREE IN HEART = AHMOSE-NEFERTARI + R
- 8: SNOWY TREES = SENWOSRET + Y
- 9: SHE RODE OUT = HERODOTUS + E
- 10: **The extra letters collected together give: MRXSMARYE = MERRY XMAS**

Review of January Evening Meeting

On Thursday 26 January we had the second of this season's occasional evening meetings. This was a welcome return of the lively double act that is **Maria Nillson** and **John Ward**, co-directors of the Gebel el-



Silsila Project. In '*Finding Kheny*', John and Maria gave us an update on their latest work at this fascinating site in the cataract region north of Aswan in Upper Egypt.

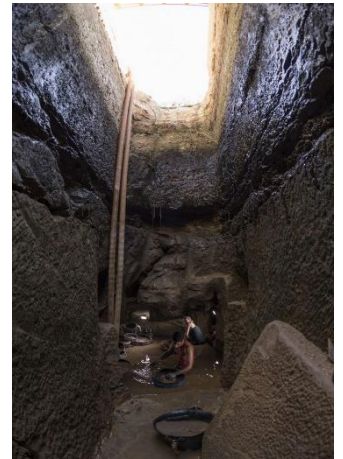
Primarily a quarry site, Gebel el-Silsila, known as Kheny to the Egyptians, flourished during the New Kingdom and later in the Ptolemaic era. On their previous virtual visit (in 2020) John and Maria had told us about their on-going exploration of this multi-faceted site.

They took up the story with the latest news of the Sobek temple. Fragments of finely carved limestone identify this as dating from the mid-18th Dynasty, with later phases built in sandstone by Amenhotep III and Ramesses II. Tracing the layout of the temple, with its cult chambers and columned hall, has enabled John to produce drawings which show it to have been a substantial establishment, a 'proper' temple, rather than a small local shrine. He

described difficulties in dealing with a rising water table in what was first identified as a well, but which they now think is a pool (left) for crocodiles sacred to Sobek, the temple's principal deity. Some of the pictures of excavators up to their noses in muddy water typify the dedication of the Silsila team.



Similar images of diggers exploring the so-called 'flooded tomb', (right) while reliant on temperamental pumps, eloquently emphasised the daily hazards and inconveniences. Local regulations prohibit the use of machinery or even any wheeled vehicle larger than a wheelbarrow. John suspects there are more chambers in the flooded tomb yet to be investigated, but doubts that much detail can be revealed without the use of geophysical surveying, photogrammetry and underwater scanning. All these techniques are forbidden at Silsila under current licensing conditions despite being used in other areas of Egypt.



Maria spoke about discoveries in the Tuthmoside necropolis area. The number of child bodies, lovingly wrapped in linen or reed matting, and provided with simple amulets and grave goods, show that, far from being a predominantly male community of quarrymen, there must have been a thriving settlement nearby which is still to be identified.

Maria also described the gargantuan task of clearing the surface of the plateau by hand to uncover a wealth of rock art including 'graffiti', gaming boards and many 'footprints'. The outlines of bare or sandalled feet are found across the site. In the necropolis, depending on which way they pointed, they could commemorate visitors or indicate the direction to be taken by the deceased to reach the afterlife.

A vast collection of ceramic shards, dubbed Pottery Hill, has confirmed the revival in fortunes of the quarries in Roman times. John is particularly interested in the methods used to extract Silsila sandstone in different periods, and he may be persuaded to elaborate on his favourite topic when he and Maria return to give our Study Weekend, 15-16 July. If this evening was anything to go by, we are in for a real treat.

Hilary Wilson

Forthcoming Zoom Meeting

Saturday 18 March 2023

**'An Ancient Egyptian
Michelangelo? Senenmut & his
Times' by Campbell Price**

**13:30 for a start at 14:00
(London time/GMT)**

**Admission from the virtual waiting
room from about 13:45**

Of non-royal persons from ancient Egypt, more is known about a man named Senenmut than almost any other. He rose to prominence in the court of Hatshepsut from apparently humble beginnings, and left a considerable monumental legacy. This lecture explores his creativity and relationship with the female Pharaoh. Dr Campbell Price is Curator of Egypt and Sudan at Manchester Museum, an Honorary Research Fellow at the University of Liverpool, and is currently Chair of Trustees at the Egypt Exploration Society.



**Register in advance for this
meeting, using the link below:**
[https://
us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZU
rd-uvqDwuE90lJ3IibHgrXNC7-f9IiGU](https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84461212693?pwd=ZU5lbnZkdUwE90lJ3IibHgrXNC7-f9IiGU)

**Registration will be confirmed on
receipt of the appropriate fee**

Calling for Contributions

Hotep as the SAES's newsletter, is the place where we hope to give voice to our passion for Ancient Egypt. We would very much like to hear from you if you have any Egyptological news or experiences to share with your fellow SAES Members.

After the amazingly entertaining talk from **Irving Finkel** on 18 February, we would like to suggest that, by way of a review of that meeting, we put together a collection of your individual thoughts and comments to show your appreciation. You need not write a full-page review, a paragraph or even a couple of sentences will do. And if this inspires you to write more, we are always glad to receive further contributions. Please send these to:

Emily: saes@southamptonancientegyptsociety.co.uk

or Annette: saesinfo55@gmail.com

February Quiz

In anticipation of our meeting again, **face-to-face on 25 March**, can you identify the owners of the tombs where these items of furniture were depicted or found?



Answers in the next
Hotep

(or, at Itchen College on 25 March)

