



HOTEP

Issue 63: November 2021

Review of October Meeting

October's talk, given by Dr **Bernadette Brady** of the University of Wales, Trinity Saint David, was titled '**The Astronomical Ceiling of the Temple of Khnum, Esna**'. This was a fascinating and informative talk, and this review will unfortunately not do it justice.



The Temple of Khnum, Esna. (Internet photo)

Bernadette began by giving a brief history of the site and the temple. The area of Esna has some 12th dynasty tombs but the earliest dateable objects are from the New Kingdom. There is likely to have been a temple on the site from at least the reign of Thutmose III as the festival calendar on

The newsletter of The Southampton Ancient Egypt Society

the façade refers to that king, but what survives today dates from the Ptolemaic and Roman periods. In fact, all that survives is the hypostyle hall built by the Romans under Tiberius or Claudius which was added to the front of a Ptolemaic temple. The hall's decoration was begun under Claudius (41-54 CE) and continued up to Decius (249-251 CE). The temple was dedicated to Khnum.

Apart from the astronomical ceiling, Esna is also noted for the three calendars that are recorded on the façade of the hypostyle hall. As well as the festival calendar already mentioned, there is also the civil calendar and one based on Pharaoh's birthday. In this case it is a Roman emperor, thought to be Marcus Aurelius.

There are 18 columns in the hypostyle hall in six rows of three, breaking the ceiling into seven panels, and it is the decoration of these that Bernadette discussed in her talk. Because the ceiling was decorated in the Roman Period, they are a mix of Egyptian and classical themes. The point that Bernadette stressed was that the ceiling is not a star map but how the Egyptians interpreted the night sky and so is indigenous astronomy.



Zodiac ceiling, Temple of Khnum, Esna. (Internet photo)

Bernadette began her review at the southern end of the hypostyle hall where the first panel is an overview of the sky, while the second panel has the zodiac and planets. The zodiac was depicted in a way that we recognise. In the picture (above) you will see that Scorpio is shown in the bottom register, while in the upper register Leo identifiable behind Cancer.

In the third panel the two registers show the sun and moon, the east side having the rising sun and the west the setting sun. In the centre of the upper register is the full moon with, on the eastern side, 13 deities representing the waning moon. There is a similar scene on the western side, but the deities represented the waxing moon. On the lower register the noon day sun is in the centre, while six deities on the east side are the six hours of the morning, and on the west, they are the six hours of the afternoon.

Panel 7 has an interesting depiction of the phases of the Moon. The circle that represents the Moon has a Wadjet eye in it and symbolises the full moon. The circles that represent the days between the full and new Moons have the eye in diminishing levels of completeness. This is a Ptolemaic feature of representing the moon.

Bernadette's talk presented a potentially difficult subject in an understandable way, and from the comments at the end everyone was very appreciative.

Glenn Worthington

Important Reminder

Of necessity we have had to adopt the Zoom format for **all** our meetings for the foreseeable future. Details of our programme are available on the SAES website and enquiries should be addressed to the Secretary saesinfo55@gmail.com

No in-person meetings are yet planned at Oasis Academy, Lordshill.

November Quiz Answer



The picture above shows the brick-built magazines, also sometimes called granaries, at the Ramesseum. These buildings show clearly that the Egyptians were confident in creating vaulted or arched roofs.

Amarna Donation



At the fascinating evening talk from Prof Barry Kemp in September, which was advertised as a fund-raiser for the Amarna Trust, we raised £235 from meeting fees. With the agreement of the AGM, we topped up this amount to £500 which was duly sent to the Trust. During the talk Barry mentioned the opportunity for individual donations in the form of 'buy a talatat block' – one of the stone blocks which are being used to rebuild the outer enclosure wall of the Great Aten Temple. Purchase entitles the purchaser to have an inscription of their choice put on the stone in permanent marker. If you would like to make such a donation, please see the Amarna Trust website:

<https://www.amarnatrust.com/supporting-the-trust/>

In the News

A hail and thunder storm in the Aswan area near the River Nile on Friday 12 November was particularly violent. Scorpions are regularly washed into the streets by heavy rain, while snakes have also been disturbed. Extra doses of anti-venom have been provided to medical centres in villages near mountains and deserts, a health official told Al-Ahram news agency. Egypt is home to the Egyptian fat-tailed scorpion, regarded as "one of the most lethal scorpions in the world," with numerous deaths attributed to its venomous stinger. Doctors have been pulled away from giving COVID vaccinations to treat scorpion stings, and people have been urged to stay at home and avoid places with many trees.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-middle-east-59274686>



Scorpion goddess Serqet

A storm in the Egyptian city of Aswan caused many accidents, as a result of wind and torrential rain, which brought down many trees, street lights and power cables. Aswan University Hospital announced that it received 80 cases of scorpion and snake bites after heavy rains in Aswan Governorate due to a wave of bad weather leading to localised flooding. Ahmed Rizk, professor of harmful animal science at the Agricultural Research Center, warned, in press statements, against being near mountainous areas where rain and torrents fall, because the scorpions and snakes are washed away by water from torrential rain falling over mountainous areas.



Parts of some houses collapsed in the "Kima" area of the eastern neighbourhood of the city, and the "Sheikh Haroun" area of the South Aswan neighbourhood witnessed partial collapses of two houses.

<https://www.eq24.news/2021/11/egypt-storm-causes-scorpion-and-snake-bites-and-houses-collapse-videos.html>

Extreme Weather and SCORPIONS

Heavy rain and flooding in Egypt's southern province have killed 13 people and hospitalized almost 500 others. Over the weekend, heavy rains, hail, and thunder in the province of Aswan led local officials to cancel school lessons on Sunday, according to Governor Ashraf Attia. According to BBC News, three individuals have died due to scorpion stings, and 450 more have been hurt as a result of the stings. Attia said that storms drove scorpions out of their hiding places and into numerous homes around the region and that at least 503 persons were hospitalized after being stung by scorpions though all of them were released after receiving anti-venom treatment.

Flooded streets, destroyed houses, automobiles, and agricultural lands were seen in photos, and video footage shared on social media. The Al-Ahram newspaper reported the fatalities, which cited Ehab Hanafy, the Health Ministry's Undersecretary in Aswan without going into detail about the cause.

<https://www.natureworldnews.com/articles/48223/20211115/extreme-weather-disturbs-egyptian-scorpions-leaving-3-dead-and-hundreds-hospitalized.htm>

Forthcoming Meetings

Further details of the Zoom meetings listed below are published on the website

www.SouthamptonAncientEgyptSociety.co.uk

Registration is required for all meetings.

Registration links will be released on a meeting-by-meeting basis and priority will be given to SAES Members.

If you would like to have your personal email details added to our non-Members mailing list, please contact the Secretary at saesinfo55@gmail.com

Zoom Meeting format

For **Saturday talks**, the Zoom meeting will nominally 'open' at 13:30 from which time attendees will be admitted to the virtual waiting room. Once the host has connected with the speaker, checked the technology is working and set up the presentation, participants will be admitted to the meeting from 13:45 for a start at 14:00. Please note, the Zoom platform only deals in half hours so the automated confirmation message tells you simply that the start time is 13:30.

For **evening meetings**, the same applies with the meeting 'opening' at 18:30, admission from the waiting room from 18:45 for a start at 19:00. Evening meetings may be on a Wednesday or Thursday so please check the date.

The joining link for any meeting is only released on confirmation of payment.

Payment details are on the website.

The joining link is unique to the name & email address with which you register. If you share this link, you risk being prevented from joining the meeting yourself if the person with whom you shared signs in before you.

Important Notice: Programme Change

Due to the speaker's illness the advertised evening meeting '*Herodotus on Wildlife*' on Thursday 25 November 2021 has been replaced by the following:

Thursday 25 November 18:30 for a start at 19:00 (GMT)

'Age cannot wither her – the lasting allure of Cleopatra'

by **Hilary Wilson**



For many people the very name Cleopatra epitomises ancient Egypt and is synonymous with feminine beauty. In this light-hearted talk Hilary explores the ways in which modern culture has embraced and exploited the Cleopatra legacy.

Register in advance for this meeting using this link:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZYlcOuppjstEtNLKo5xeOiEeNi08YLWEAEQ>

This is the same link as previously given in Hotep, though the subject of the talk has changed. In the circumstances, **there will be no charge for this meeting.** If you have already registered for John Wyatt's lecture, your registration will be automatically approved for this talk, but if you want to make sure you are welcome to re-register. Please contact the Secretary at saesinfo55@gmail.com if you have any queries about this change of programme.

Our pre-Christmas treat

Saturday 18 December 2021:

Music in ancient Egypt and its beginnings: Latest research in music archaeology

(lecture, including live music)

by **Heidi Köpp-Junk**



Old Kingdom sources referring to music and a complex hierarchy of musicians show that music was not only for entertainment, but played a major role in tomb and temple ritual and at the royal court. This talk, based on current research in ancient Egyptian music archaeology, deals with origins in the 5th millennium BC that developed into the complex system attested in the Old Kingdom. Using more than 25 instruments, including replicas, like the so-called dancer's lute from the time of Tuthmose III, and modern equivalents, as well as texts such as the *Song of the Palanquin Bearers* and the *Harper's Song*, Heidi demonstrates 5000 years of ancient Egyptian music history.

Dr. Heidi Köpp-Junk holds a doctorate in Egyptology from Georg-August-University of Göttingen. She is also a trained singer (opera, art song), currently working as Assistant Professor in Egyptian Archaeology at the Institute of Mediterranean and Oriental Cultures, Polish Academy of Sciences Warsaw



Register in advance for this meeting:

[https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZMtdeygrD0uGNZEoClrNDXx6dY11g27Kv6f](https://us02web.zoom.us/join/https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZMtdeygrD0uGNZEoClrNDXx6dY11g27Kv6f)

The meeting link will be released on confirmation of payment:

Member £3 Overseas Member £4 Guest £6

Please contact the Secretary saesinfo55@gmail.com to arrange payment or check payment status.

November Quiz



What connects these two artefacts from the Louvre Museum?

Answers in the next edition of **Hotep**

