

HOTEP

The newsletter of the Southampton Ancient Egypt Society

Issue 88: February 2025

Meeting reviews

Saturday 14 December 2024 (Zoom)



Katharina Zinn Dr.Phil, M.A, Dipl Bibl, Associate Professor in Egyptian Archaeology and Heritage, University of Wales, Trinity St. David.

Forgotten objects, the public and the extraordinary – Ancient Egyptian objects from Cyfarthfa Castle Museum as tool to fascinate



Cyfarthfa castle Museum, Merthyr Tydfil, Wales.

Katharina started this fascinating and passionate talk by providing an overview of the history of the Museum and the region. Cyfarthfa Castle, nestled in beautiful grounds, is a Grade I listed building of national importance. Once owned by the Crawshay family it played a significant role in the ironworks industry. Today, it is under the ownership of Merthyr Tydfil Council, which transformed it into a museum, art gallery and school.

The collection in the Cyfarthfa Museum was collected by Harry Hartley Southey, a Major and Lieutenant Colonel of the British Army Welsh Regiment who made several trips to Egypt to collect and excavate. Although no notebooks of his travels survive, he did record his collection in a number of letters. 95% of these artifacts have no provenance and have been partially forgotten.

The title of Katharina's talk, *"Forgotten Objects,"* does not imply neglect but rather refers to objects that have been carefully stored and kept out of public view for the past century. Katharina's mission is to breathe new life into these pieces by creating diverse cultural representations through academic research, Egyptological exhibitions, storytelling projects like *A Museum of Lies*, and art displays.

The Museum of Lies – a thought-provoking initiative launched by Katharina in 2015 – explores the intersection of unprovenanced objects and the evolving understanding of ancient Egypt. This project addresses objects that have been lost, overlooked, or abandoned and aims to incorporate them into contemporary culture. By inviting researchers, students, artists, and the public to engage in the creation of object biographies, reimagine their presentation, and construct narratives, Katharina encourages fresh perspectives and creative storytelling.

The Museum's collaboration with the Museum of Wales offers an exceptional opportunity to connect with the local community, involve audiences of all ages, and contextualize ancient artifacts within 21st-century culture.

One striking example of this was Katharina's innovative approach to photographing ancient objects. While preparing a Greco-Roman plaster burial mask for an exhibition catalogue, she experimented with new photographic techniques. The resulting images were striking, capturing the object in a way that resonated much more with visitors than traditional methods of object photography.

The second example involved a small, well-preserved pottery offering bowl. Katharina shared that students initially found the object "boring," so she decided to spark their interest by asking them to create their own replica bowls and place them in modern-day contexts. The emotional reactions from those who participated were so successful that Katharina was inspired to further develop this approach.

Another object in the collection was an Egyptian headrest. Katharina had students replicate it and asked them to explore how they would use it, what it felt like to rest on, and which position they found most comfortable.



Greco-Roman plaster burial mask

The results revealed that students engaged much more deeply with the object than they typically would, although they did discover that it wasn't quite comfortable enough for a full night's sleep!



Students trying out ways of resting on an Egyptian headrest

Katharina also collaborated with artists, poets, and dancers in practice-led, art-based research, aiming to engage the audience's senses, emotions, and cognition. Art goes beyond the traditional academic understanding of an object's biography, bringing out the living essence of the piece.

Artist Julie Davis was invited to participate and sought to evoke emotions that would deepen the understanding of the artifacts. Julie created the triptych below, a contemporary take on the ancient depiction of two Sokar birds, while still maintaining a distinctly Egyptian aesthetic. Julie explained, "I'm a painter working in the 21st century, post-digitization, so you think about the world in a very different way."



Julie Davis, 'Into the Light'. Oil/acrylic on wooden panels.

Poet Samantha Wynne Rhydderch wrote a beautiful thought-provoking work, entitled 'Souvenir', which is reproduced here:

*Dear Hieroglyph here, did he mention you
in his letters home, the man who chipped out this
picture, not thinking that you are in fact a word?
Without your presence at whichever tomb
or temple he nicked you from, the sentence no longer
makes sense, and hasn't done for a hundred years.*

*You float on a row of 'w's and 'n's: when when when.
So many questions unanswered: when did he take you
away? When did you arrive in Merthyr to grace
a mantelshelf, you who had observed the world
from the top of a temple or the gloom of a tomb,
guarding your conversations with the dead?*

*When you look back at us from a glass case
in this place of learning, we will stop and listen
to what you have to teach us about unexpected
journeys, about context, about stillness and change,
what it is like to live in the boundary between
the desert and the fertile land, to speak through time.*

Links:

<https://www.cyfarthfa.co.uk/collections/>

[https://repository.uwtsd.ac.uk/id/eprint/1178/1/Zinn,%20Katharina%20\(2019\)%20Museum-of-Lies-.pdf](https://repository.uwtsd.ac.uk/id/eprint/1178/1/Zinn,%20Katharina%20(2019)%20Museum-of-Lies-.pdf)

I thoroughly enjoyed Katharina's talk, even though I am not an educator. Her passion for bringing ancient objects into the 21st century was evident, and her innovative approach is successfully engaging new and younger audiences. I hope her efforts continue to flourish, as it's inspiring to see fresh perspectives in academia.

Katharina is also:

- University of Wales Associate Professor at the Egyptian Archaeology and Heritage within the Institute of Education and Humanities
- Institute Manager of Research Degrees, Institute of Education and Humanities
- Board of the Doctoral College
- Institute Member of the Research Degrees Committee
- Programme Manager Professional Doctorate (ProfDoc) Heritage
- Director of Studies and supervisor for MRes, PhD and ProfDoc students in the areas of heritage, museum studies, Egyptology, archaeology and literacy across several UWTSD institutes
- Mentor to applicants in the HEA Fellowship Scheme

An impressive CV indeed!

By Sara Arnold

Saturday 18 January 2025 (Zoom)



Dr Glenn Godenho, BA, MA, PhD, Senior Lecturer in Egyptology, University of Liverpool

Questions and Directions in Archaeological Work at Ankhtifi's Tomb Complex

Glenn delivered a fascinating talk on a project he has been involved with for several years, focusing on the tomb of Ankhtifi near Mo'alla, located on the East bank of the Nile in Upper Egypt. Situated about 40 kilometres from ancient Thebes, with the western cliffs visible in the distance, this tomb dates back to the First Intermediate Period, around 2100 BCE, between the end of the Old Kingdom and the start of the Middle Kingdom.

Ankhtifi's tomb is particularly renowned for its extensive inscriptions, which offer critical insights into this transitional period – something Glenn has previously discussed at the SAES. The First Intermediate Period was marked by a fragmentation of central authority, with Egypt divided into smaller regions ruled by local leaders.



Carved into a freestanding cliff, Ankhtifi's tomb is the largest in the area, underscoring his high social standing. Interestingly, despite the absence of a major ruler's mention in the inscriptions*, Ankhtifi is often likened to a king, with depictions showing direct communication between him and the gods. His authority extended as far as Edfu, and he is portrayed not as an aggressive ruler but as wealthy, efficient, and effective.

The tomb complex also includes six satellite tombs in the Gebel, with evidence of structural collapse due to the fragility of the limestone. Fault lines and fissures are visible, and the tomb builders appear to have worked around these issues, with evidence of repairs made during construction.

Inside the main tomb hall, numerous columns are arranged in varying shapes – what might seem haphazard at first glance is actually a carefully considered design to accommodate the fragile structure.

Some columns are adorned with carvings, and some even show remnants of painted decoration. The tomb's interior is also painted, and a rock-cut stela has been discovered alongside the inscriptions.

The decoration in Ankhtifi's tomb differs from the style of the Old Kingdom, offering a greater sense of artistic freedom and diversity – evident in features like thinner bodies, smaller heads, and high insteps. Despite this, the influence of past traditions remains strong, and the quality of the reliefs is exceptional, filled with intricate detail.

Recent excavations of the previously walled-up entrance have uncovered a large forecourt with pillars, fragments of wooden coffins, pottery, and animal bones. Signs of plaster on the façade indicate it was once decorated, with reed matting impressions visible in the mud plaster, further suggesting the area was painted. There is also evidence that the forecourt was roofed, which would have made it an impressive

sight. Additional excavations have uncovered what may be a causeway extending from the tomb.

The satellite tombs, relied on Ankhtifi in life as they continue to do in death. Evidence suggests that later Ptolemaic tombs were constructed on the upper levels of the Gebel, and the collapse of the area may be linked to the pressures of these later constructions.

There is also the possibility that further tombs, including a lower necropolis or other tombs at the same level, remain hidden beneath the debris.

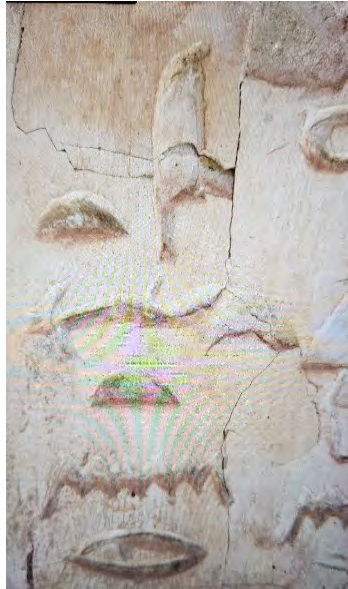
* A faint cartouche found in the tomb contains the phrase “Ka nefer ra” or “Ra ka nefer,” which may reference a "king" associated with Herakliopolis.



By Sara Arnold



Ankhtifi in his tomb in Mo'alla



Fissures and damage due to weak structure



Wooden coffin fragments found at the entrance to the tomb



Exterior of the tomb, showing the walled up entrance and the space after clearance



Links:

<https://www.liverpool.ac.uk/people/glenn-godenhoe>

<https://independent.academia.edu/GlennGodenho>

The following documents were forwarded from Arthur Farrow after the meeting, but please note that Vandier's publication is in French. (Thanks Arthur).

[Ankhtifi of ancient Egypt substituting f.docx](#)

[BdE 18 Vandier, J - Mo'alla La tombe d'Ankhtifi et la tombe de Sebekhotep - Le Caire \(1950\) Scrib...](#)

Next meeting(s)

Saturday 15th February 2025. Zoom

***Amenhotep III's Mansion of Millions of Years in Thebes'* by Angus Graham**

**Please note the later-than-usual start time - 15.30 for a start at 16.00 (GMT)
(Admission from waiting room from 15.45)**

Angus is a Senior Lecturer/Associate Professor in Department of Archaeology and Ancient History at Uppsala University, Sweden. Since 2002, he has directed interdisciplinary research in the Egyptian Nile Valley combining archaeology with earth sciences and Egyptology in order to (re)construct past land- and waterscapes and interpret human-environment dynamics.



The location of Amenhotep III's Mansion of Millions of Years is exceptional. Situated in the present-day Nile floodplain while all other Mansions of Millions of Years were built on the lower desert edge, the temple's position has puzzled Egyptologists and contrasting hypotheses have suggested possible architectural considerations behind the choice of this site. This talk will present the geoarchaeological survey that took place in and around the temple with the aim of understanding the rationale behind its location. The talk will also place his Mansion of Millions of Years within its wider context of Amenhotep III's huge programme of building in the Theban region in honour of 'his father' Amun-Re.

Please register in advance for this meeting using this link:

https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZEpc6srz8pGdPsnbfvWpp4xQhgOR_R7hPU

Registration will be approved and the joining link sent on confirmation of payment of the meeting fee: SAES Member £3, Overseas Member £4, Guest £6

For payment details or to check your payment status, please contact the Secretary: saesinfo55@gmail.com

Saturday 1st March. Face-to-face

(13.30 for a start at 14.00 GMT) at Itchen College, Bitterne, Southampton

***'Ramesses III, King of Egypt'* by Aidan Dodson**



Ramesses III—often dubbed the “last great pharaoh”—lived and ruled during the first half of the twelfth century BC, a tumultuous time that saw the almost complete overthrow of established order in the eastern Mediterranean. Among Ramesses's achievements was the preservation of Egypt as a nation-state in the face of external assault. However, his reign also saw economic challenges and increasing dissatisfaction, which culminated in the king's own assassination.

Aidan Dodson is honorary Professor of Egyptology at the University of Bristol, where he has taught since 1996. A graduate of Liverpool and Cambridge Universities, he was awarded his

PhD in 1995 and was elected a Fellow of the Society of Antiquaries of London in 2003. He was Chairman of the Egypt Exploration Society from 2011 to 2016, and is the author of some thirty books, including *Ramesses III, King of Egypt: his life and afterlife*, published by the American University in Cairo Press in 2019.



Registration is essential as there is limited seating space at Itchen College. This meeting is NOT on zoom. Places may be reserved by contacting the Secretary saesinfo55@gmail.com and will be confirmed by receipt of payment of the £5 fee, which includes interval refreshments.

Please note: building work at Itchen College is ongoing and the Nursery carpark will not be available. Please use either of the main or overflow carparks accessed from Middle Road. We are advised that pedestrian access from Whites Road might also be impossible. We will confirm and/or update this information closer to the date of the meeting.

Puzzle



Q: Where is this replica image of Ra Harakhte now and where is the original?

A: The image is taken from the Factum Arte full-scale replica of the burial chamber of Tutmosé III (KV34). After a touring exhibition, in 2018 it was established as the central feature of the Bolton's Egypt galleries in the Bolton Museum.

<https://museumsandheritage.com/advisor/posts/bolton-museum-unveils-new-egyptian-galleries-recreated-tomb-thutmose-iii/>

Ancient Egypt magazines

Diana Keen is looking to rehome her collection of Ancient Egypt magazines as she needs the space and is loath just to throw them in the recycling bin. She has every issue from the very first until the present. If you are interested in this, they would need to be collected from Bournemouth BH12 as there are too many to post. Please contact Emily if you would like them: saes@southamptonancientegyptsociety.co.uk

Items for Hotep

We are always happy to receive your items of interest for inclusion in Hotep. If you could provide a review of a talk, book or article, or even a picture or puzzle which you think might entertain our readers, please contact us through the usual channels.

Committee

The next committee meeting has been scheduled for Thursday 13th February, on Zoom, and Hilary has already sent the meeting link to committee members. Thanks go to Sara Arnold and Pippa Dell who have jointly agreed to take over the organisation of the Hotep newsletter.



Sara Arnold and Pippa Dell, Egypt 2019.

