

HOTEP

Issue 42: June 2019

The newsletter of The Southampton Ancient Egypt Society

Review of May Meeting

After a minor panic over train delays **Luigi Prada** arrived to a warm welcome for his talk '***Egypt in Rome: Obelisks and Ancient Cultural Appropriation***'. There are more Egyptian obelisks in Rome than there are in any other country, including Egypt itself. Luigi explained the origins of these obelisks, dividing them into three categories; genuinely ancient obelisks bearing original hieroglyphic inscriptions, obelisks commissioned by Emperors to be quarried from Egyptian granite and inscribed with copied or made-up inscriptions, and blank obelisks whose origins are less certain. Once removed to Rome, the purposes to which they were put varied from personal commemorative monuments or temple adornments to use as the gnomon of a massive sundial and as decoration on the spina or central barrier of the Circus Maximus. The successors to the Roman Empire, the Mediaeval Popes, further appropriated these massive monuments to their own use. In each case the obelisk was erected on a suitable plinth or decorative pedestal, some designed by the greatest Italian architects and sculptors. Many became the central features of some of Rome's famous piazzas and fountains, such as Bernini's Fountain of the Four Rivers in the Piazza Navona and the Elephant in front of the church of S Maria Sopra Minerva, built over the site of Rome's Temple of Isis.



The elephant of the Minerva obelisk shows his rump to the building that housed the offices of the Inquisition.

Luigi discussed the apparent contradiction in using pagan artefacts bearing writings the meaning of which could no longer be determined as Christian monuments, giving us plenty of scope for discussion of the rights and wrongs of cultural appropriation. He

also described an obelisk 'pub-crawl' on which he had embarked with a friend as a good way to see the obelisks of Rome, though he did say that the idea of a pint at every obelisk had to be abandoned after the first three!

May Quiz Answers:

The three obelisks are in:

- A)** Paris: Place de la Concorde
- B)** London: Cleopatra's Needle on the Thames Embankment
- C)** Istanbul: in front of the Blue Mosque



Piazza Navona: The River God of the Nile is shown with his face veiled representing the river's unknown source.

In the News

<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2019/06/10/egypt-asks-christies-cancel-sale-of-tutankhamun-statue/>

<https://edition.cnn.com/style/article/christies-tutankhamen-auction-scli-intl/index.html>

Egypt demands halt to sale of 'stolen' Tutankhamun sculpture



Christie's in London is being pressured to cancel the auction of the head of a statue of Tutankhamun after Egyptian authorities claimed that it may have been stolen from the Karnak temple. The 11in (28.5cm) head is

more than 3,000 years old and is currently part of the Resandro Collection, one of the best-known private collections of Egyptian art in the world. The auction house estimates that the statue will fetch more than £4.0 million (\$5.1 million). According to the catalogue, the facial features of a "full mouth with slightly drooping lower lips, and almond-shaped, slanted eyes, with a deep depression between the eyes and eyebrows are those of Tutankhamun". Other Egyptian items include a painted wooden coffin and a bronze cat statue.

Christie's insists that the sale is legitimate. "Ancient objects by their nature cannot be traced over millennia," a spokesman said. "It is hugely important to establish recent ownership and legal right to sell which we have clearly done. We would not offer for sale any object where there was concern over ownership or export. Christie's strictly adheres to bilateral treaties and international laws with respect to cultural property and patrimony." The company said the statue was acquired from Heinz Herzer, a Munich-based dealer, in 1985. Before that it was acquired by Joseph Messina, an Austrian dealer, in 1973-74, from Prinz Wilhelm von Thurn und Taxis, who reputedly had it in his collection by the 1960s. "The work has been widely exhibited and published and we have alerted the Egyptian embassy so they are aware of the sale". Egyptian officials have called on Christie's to prove that the statue left the country legally.

"We will do our best to stop this auction immediately," said Dr Mostafa Waziri, the head of Egypt's Supreme Council for Antiquities. Egypt introduced a law in 1983 to regulate the ownership of Egyptian antiquities, saying any ancient artefacts discovered in the country are considered state property with the exception of

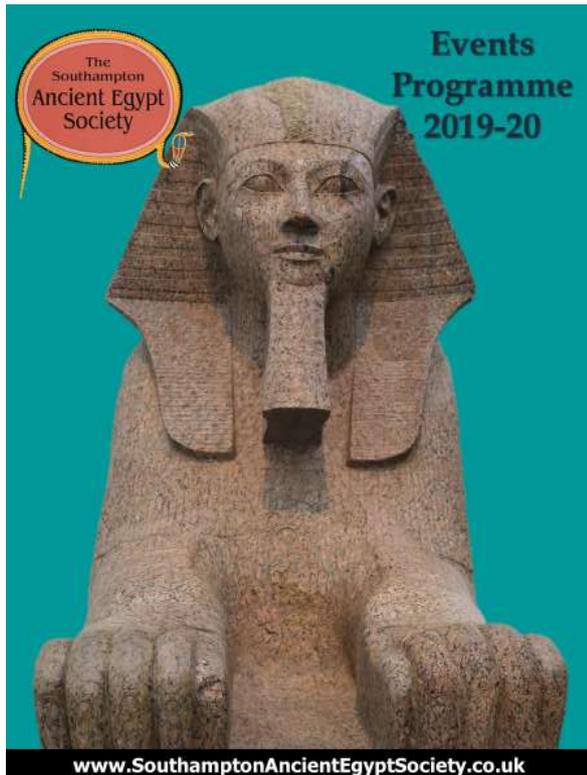


antiquities whose ownership or possession was already established at the time this law came into effect. Dr Zahi Hawass, former Egyptian minister of antiquities, said the statue looked as if it came from Karnak. He believes it left Egypt in 1970. "I don't think Christie's have the papers to show it left Egypt legally; it's impossible," he said. "Christie's has no evidence at all to prove that, and therefore it should be returned to Egypt."

Dr Shaaban Abdel-Gawad, the head of the anti-smuggling department at Egypt's ministry of antiquities, said in a statement that officials were "studying the auction files in preparation for taking the necessary measures". The ministry also reiterated Egyptian officials' demand for documents showing proof of ownership. "If it is proven that any piece is illegally exported, all legal procedures are taken with Interpol, in coordination with the Egyptian Ministry of Foreign Affairs in order to ensure its return," said Dr Abdel-Gawad.

This is the latest episode in Egypt's struggle to prevent the sale of stolen artefacts and repatriate them. In January, a section of relief, stolen from the Karnak Open Air Museum in 1988, was successfully recovered and returned to Egypt after being listed for auction in London. The Ministry of Antiquities had been monitoring international auction houses for the artefact, and managed to have it removed from sale and returned to Egypt.

Advance Notice



**21 September 2019: AGM followed
by Hilary Wilson
'Hatshepsut: Daughter of Amun,
Female Horus'**

Hatshepsut was the only woman to rule Egypt successfully as Pharaoh in her own right. Hers is one of the best documented of all reigns in Egyptian history despite having been expunged from the official records. This talk explores the reasons behind Hatshepsut's unprecedented success including the roles played by some talented and influential courtiers.

**19 October 2019: Wolfram Grajetzki:
'Looking like a goddess. Jewellery of
the Middle Kingdom'**

The Middle Kingdom was the heyday of Egyptian jewellery. The golden adornments from the burials of queens and princesses reached a technical and aesthetic standard that has been hardly surpassed in later times. The talk will show that these adornments had specific religious functions and placed these royal women eternally into a divine sphere.

**16 November 2019: Glenn Godenho
'Being an ideal official in a less than
ideal world'**

Discoveries at a coastal Fortress of Ramesses II, not far from the modern Libyan border have shown the commander was Nebre whose statue inscription reveals the sort of man he was and how he wished to be remembered. He tried to prove his worth as a high official, operating on the margins of Egyptian society in foreign territory, in a military installation whose purpose and functions this talk will explore.

**14 December 2019: Anna Welch &
Annette Winter
'Drink like an Egyptian: another
round'**

A seasonal celebration of the Egyptian love of wine and beer. With Christmas Social and fun and games

**18 January 2019: Sarah Griffiths
'The Rise of the Middle Kingdom:
Nebhepetre Mentuhotep & the return
of the Pooh-Bahs'**

This talk starts with the rise of the Middle Kingdom under a Theban warrior king who reunified Egypt. The legacy of pharaoh Nebhepetre Mentuhotep II, who re-established the country's prosperity and international standing, was the continued stability of government, enabled by some able administrators, the powers behind the throne. The achievements of both King and courtiers were promoted in their monuments.

**15 February 2020: Lee Young
'The Life and Work of Nina de Garis
Davies'**

Nina de Garis Davies is regarded as the finest archaeological artist of the 20th Century, with good reason, her paintings bring Ancient Egypt alive and are exact replicas of the many tombs she worked in. This lecture will tell the story of Nina, along with husband Norman, and will be illustrated with many of these beautiful paintings.

**Other speakers will include Rosalie
David, Anna Garnett & Dylan
Bickerstaffe**

Study Day, Saturday 20 July 2019



'The Valley of the Kings'
by **Aidan Dodson**

The Valley of the Kings is perhaps the most famous cemetery in the world. For more than four centuries it hosted the burials of numerous kings, queens, princes, princesses and nobles of Egypt. Today, we survey the Valley's history looking in detail at some of its most important sepulchres and their contents. We also take a look at the memorial temples, built some distance away on the edge of the cultivation, but intimately linked with the tombs themselves as part of the magical machine that facilitated the dead kings' rebirth and eternal life.

Fees for the above:
Members: £20 Non-Members: £25
Please contact the Secretary to book places

And finally - Quiz Time

Can you 'read' the titles of these six popular songs of yesteryear written **phonetically** in alphabetic hieroglyphs?

Hints:

Remember, there was no 'L' in Egyptian so where the sound occurred in foreign words it was replaced by an 'R', either the 'mouth' or 'lion' sign. Personal names are usually indicated by the addition of the female or male determinative.

- 1:
- 2:
- 3:
- 4:
- 5:
- 6:

Extra clue:

Answers in September's **Hotep**

Have a good summer!

