



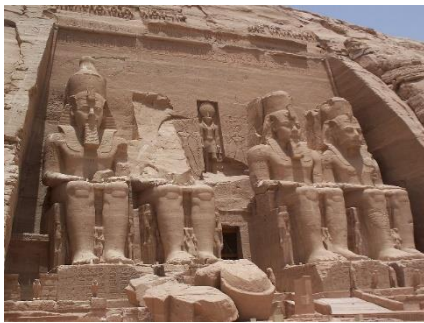
HOTEP

Issue 81:

November/December 2023



Review of November Meeting



'Abu Simbel: Anatomy of a Temple, Epitome of a Reign' was presented by **Peter J Brand** speaking from America. He provided a comprehensive and accessible introduction to the temples built by Ramses II at Abu Simbel, on the southern frontier of Egypt. Through Peter's eyes and lucid exposition we were given insight into the motivation behind one of the most impressive of all Egyptian building projects. Ramses II, sometimes known as 'the Great', used the temples to promote his own personality cult and to legitimise his position as king. His grandfather, Ramses I, was the Vizier and chosen successor to the childless Horemheb. When he came to the throne with an adult son and grandson, he established a new dynasty, the Nineteenth. Having been born into a non-royal family, Ramses the Great seems to have felt he had a lot to prove, particularly regarding his acceptance by Egypt's principal deities. Peter showed how, from the very entrance of the great Abu Simbel temple, Ramses promoted himself as a living god, the equal of the great national deities, Amun-Ra, Ra-Harakhty and Ptah.

The newsletter of The Southampton Ancient Egypt Society

Peter gave an outline of the history of Abu Simbel's rediscovery in the early Nineteenth Century and showed how the paintings, drawings and plans from that time have aided the interpretation of the temple's decoration. Coloured engravings, like those by Belzoni, Rossellini and Ricci, provide impressions of the decorative scheme, especially the colours which have largely disappeared.

Ramses' display of his family – mother, wives, sons and daughters – further demonstrated the continuity of legitimate kingship. While the scenes of his military activities, including the Battle of Kadesh, established him as Egypt's protector and champion of the gods, the dedication of the lesser temple to his favourite wife, Nefertari, in the guise of the goddess Hathor, raised her to the premier league of Egyptian deities.



Peter finished with a brief description of the UNESCO rescue operation which moved the temples to their current position above the waters of Lake Nasser, an engineering feat which surely has to be considered on a par with the original construction.

This was a thoroughly absorbing talk, inspiring many interesting questions to which Peter gave comprehensive answers. His delivery was both authoritative and good-humoured making this one of the highlights of our Programme so far. We very much hope we can persuade him to visit us again, through the magic that is Zoom.

Hilary Wilson

Cancellation of the Study Weekend Fundraiser for the Friends of Silsila

It was with regret that we had to announce the **cancellation** of the Silsila fundraiser weekend planned for 9-10 December 2023. Despite the loyal support of SAES Members and our regular guests, John Ward and the Gebel el-Silsila team have made it clear that registration numbers and, more especially, confirmed payments are not enough to warrant the time and effort of the speakers in preparing for this event. We were hugely disappointed by the last minute decision to cancel, which was entirely beyond our control. We would like to thank other groups, in particular the Egypt Exploration Society, the Kemet Klub and the Thames Valley and North-East Ancient Egypt Societies, who had generously left this weekend clear to avoid clashes of the sort that resulted in the postponement of the original event in July.

We are extremely sorry for the short notice of this cancellation which was communicated to us in the following message from John Ward on 27 November: *'No, easy way to put this, but having looked at the numbers of those who have registered and paid, against those who have not and may have registered an interest in attending the Silsila study weekend. The attendance numbers are just too low to justify the commitment and sheer work involved by the team. It is regrettable given the circumstances and timing, but having spoken with the team members who are involved and those in Egypt etc. we are afraid we have no other choice but to cancel the event.'*

A more explanatory announcement from the Friends of Silsila, was included in Gill Ekici's regular digest of upcoming events in her message of 4 December.

"It is with deep regret that we've had to cancel the Silsila study weekend that was due to take place on 9-10 December. As many of you will be aware things have been incredibly hard for the Silsila Family since John's diagnosis earlier this year and we've been working as hard as possible to keep things business as usual. But the work

involved in such a large-scale, multinational event such as this has proved very difficult. We'd like to express our thanks to all who have supported our work, as well as the many other societies who kept this weekend free in their calendars so events didn't clash. We truly appreciate the support. Maria, John and the Silsila Team"

We are entirely sympathetic to John's medical situation and wish him well in his ongoing cancer treatment. We also hope that the Gebel el-Silsila Team will be able to continue their fantastic work at what is one of the most significant Egyptian sites currently under investigation. With all the fees being allocated to the Project, in addition to a generous donation from the North-east Ancient Egypt Society, we were on course to raise as much as £1500 for the Friends of Silsila. We now have the problem of dealing with the monies already collected.

We thank those registrants who paid their joining fees, but we now feel bound to refund those fees so that individual supporters can choose whether to make a personal donation to FoS or use it for another purpose. Payments made through PayPal can be refunded on request. To refund payments made by bank transfer, the Treasurer will require bank details. In either case, please contact the Secretary saesinfo55@gmail.com to discuss arrangements for repayment. SAES Members may choose, if they wish, to have payments set against future events.

Once again, we apologise for the suddenness of the cancellation and hope that it has not deterred people from joining SAES events in the future.

Thank you for your understanding.

Hilary Wilson

Luckily, we do have a regular Saturday afternoon Zoom meeting in December to look forward to – see the next page for details.

Our next Zoom meeting is on

Saturday 16 December 2023

'Walking the desert - ancient visitors to the pyramids'

by Hana Navratilova



Dashur: Senwosret III Pyramid (front)
Seneferu's pyramid (background)

Around 1400 BC, as now, coming near a pyramid required a desert trip, but it was not a trip into an alien environment. The pyramid fields were closely connected with the great cities of Egypt, prominently Memphis, and a desert necropolis was something of a special 'suburb'. Modern research has only begun to trace paths of the ancient builders, users, visitors, and even demolition crews wandering in the necropolis. The pyramids were the focus of many interests, and many visitors left graffiti – texts and drawings. The 12th dynasty pyramid of Senwosret III at Dahshur continued to attract people throughout the 18th dynasty until its stone was recycled into other royal buildings from the reign of Ramesses II onwards. Both visitors and demolition men scribbled and drew on its walls.



Dr Hana Navratilova is a Research Fellow of Harris Manchester College, University of Oxford, and a Lecturer and Senior Tutor in the Department of Classics

at the University of Reading. She works on the project *Who was Who in Egyptology* for the Egypt Exploration Society and is a member of the Egyptian Expedition of the

Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York. Hana has been involved in the study of Egyptian secondary epigraphy (graffiti) since 2003, and in fieldwork epigraphy in Egypt since 2010.

Register in advance for this meeting using the link below:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/join/zoom/register/tZ0kfumgrzotGNZ8UDn89zpeOSU7eJGTcqsH>

Registration will be confirmed on receipt of the appropriate fee

Meeting fees: Member £3; Overseas Member £4; Guest £6

Contact the Secretary:
saesinfo55@gmail.com for further details or to check your payment status.

Hotep matters

You will see that this is the 81st edition of Hotep. This electronic newsletter was conceived in September 2015 as an occasional publication with the prime aim of publicising SAES events and sharing snippets of Egyptological news with the Membership. Since then, Hotep has appeared almost every month, but we now receive too few contributions from Members to warrant the time spent on producing a monthly issue. We are therefore reducing the frequency of Hotep to quarterly, and unless someone is prepared to take on the job of Editor it may be necessary to cut still further. Hotep has been and still is a very useful means of communication. If you think you could help save and revive our publication, please contact us. Thank you.

Hilary Wilson

In light of the above, this year I have not produced a seasonal quiz but please accept our very best wishes for Christmas and the New Year. We look forward to more entertaining and thought-provoking talks to come in our continuing quest for Egyptological enlightenment.

