



Issue 11: September 2016

Review of our July Study Day

Our speaker on Saturday 16 July was **Dr Aidan Dodson**, from the Department of Archaeology and Anthropology of the **University of Bristol**. The theme of this Study Day was the **Temples of Thebes** and Aidan treated us to a whirlwind tour of the ancient temples on both banks of the Nile at the modern city of Luxor. The ordinary tourist is naturally overwhelmed by the sheer size, magnificence and complexity of these monuments. It is only in the company of an expert that we can begin to appreciate the less obvious design features of these temples and understand their function.

Aidan stressed the differences and similarities between the cult temples of Karnak and Luxor and the mortuary temples, which he called memorial temples, of the west bank. He treated the monuments in chronological order showing how they were partially or wholly demolished, extended, remodelled and refurbished at regular intervals as each new monarch placed his stamp on them. The illustrations were well-chosen, often giving insight into the less well-frequented or inaccessible corners of the temples. This was one of those days when the time flew by all too quickly and we were left wanting more.



Some of the Forty-Two assessor deities, from the Temple of Hathor at Deir el-Medina.

The newsletter of The Southampton Ancient Egypt Society

From our own eagle-eyed Susanne Cooke

I had occasion recently to visit the Royal Albert Memorial Museum and Art Gallery in Exeter and discovered an atmospheric room in subdued light exhibiting Egyptian artefacts and the mummy of Shepen-Mut, who lived around 900BC in Thebes. Hieroglyphs on her mummy case indicated that she was a "lady of the house" and the daughter of Essmenopet, a "Carrier of the Milk Jar"; she died in her fifties and suffered from arthritis and a rare genetic disease. The museum describes this as their most popular exhibit.

Find out more at

<https://rammuseum.org.uk/egyptian-mummy-cases-revisited/>



Aidan Dodson inspects the Exeter mummy case, 2010

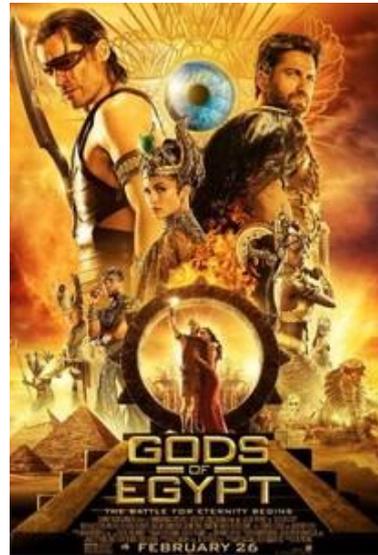
Answers to July's Quiz

- 1)** The season of **Inundation** started about mid-July. Herodotus commented how strange it was that a river should reach its highest point during the hottest part of the year.
- 2)** The ram-headed god **Khnum**, god of the cataract region, was believed to control the flood of the Nile.
- 3)** There were **42** assessor deities, one for each of the nomes or provinces of ancient Egypt. (see left)

Nicola Simpson and a chance encounter



You just never know when or where you might stumble across the influence of ancient Egypt. Whilst exploring the Palace Tropical Gardens at the hilltop town of Monte, Madeira, we turned a corner and found this huge vase with Egyptian decoration. The Palace Gardens claim to be one of the 13 most beautiful botanical gardens in the world and I can well believe it. As well as an amazing variety of plants the gardens also display an impressive array of artworks from all over the world including this Egyptian inspired piece. If you ever visit Madeira I would definitely recommend a trip up on the cable car from Funchal to the gardens at Monte, and if you're feeling adventurous a ride back down in a basket toboggan!



The long-promised fantasy-adventure film '**Gods of Egypt**' was finally released in June. **Nicola** found this review to which she has added her own personal comments after seeing the film in the company of other SAES members.

"In this spectacular action-adventure inspired by the classic mythology of Egypt, the survival of mankind hangs in the balance as an unexpected mortal hero Bek [Brenton Thwaites] undertakes a thrilling journey to save the world and rescue his true love. In order to succeed, he must enlist the help of the powerful god Horus [Nikolaj Coster-Waldau] in an unlikely alliance against Set [Gerard Butler], the merciless god of darkness, who has usurped Egypt's throne, plunging the once peaceful and prosperous empire into chaos and conflict. As their breathtaking battle against Set and his henchmen takes them into the afterlife and across the heavens, both god and mortal must pass tests of courage and sacrifice if they hope to prevail in the epic final confrontation."

(https://www.rottentomatoes.com/m/gods_of_egypt/ 2016)

"Inspired by" is right as this movie bears very little resemblance to the Egyptian mythology we all know. However, if you feel like escaping for a couple of hours into big CGI fantasy adventure you may still really enjoy this. Once you have suspended your Egyptian sensibilities, this turns out to be a fun film with plenty of humour and loads of action. I won't give away any spoilers – if you want to know more you will have to watch it!

My scores: 2/10 for Egyptian Accuracy and 8/10 for Entertainment.

Coming up on TV soon

ITV have produced a four-part series entitled '**Tutankhamun**'. For a change this is not a recreation of ancient Egypt with dodgy costumes and unbelievable makeup. It is a dramatic reconstruction of the collaboration between aspiring archaeologist, Howard Carter, and his sponsor Lord Carnarvon, and their search for the boy-king's tomb. Max Irons plays Carter while Sam Neill takes the part of Carnarvon.



This is due to be aired this autumn though at time of going to press precise dates were not yet available. You can get a video preview at:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=et_JLIF2DWw

We have heard rumours that the **Agatha Christie** story '**Death Comes as the End**' is also due to be dramatized for television. As this is the only Christie story set in ancient Egypt we await further information with anticipation.

Reminder

If you are going on the trip to the **British Museum** on Saturday 22 October with the intention of seeing the '**Sunken Cities**' exhibition, please remember when booking in advance that **your ticket should be timed no earlier than 11 a.m.** The coach will leave from the Oasis carpark entrance on Redbridge Lane at 8:30 am and will leave the BM for the return journey at 4:30 pm. To be sure of your seat on the coach please pay the £20 to Annette as soon as possible.

Next Meeting



On Saturday 15 October, **David Marriott** will be treating us to an '**Egyptian Odyssey: ancient Egypt in 90 minutes**'. This promises to be a visual feast taking you on a trip through the past to some of the famous and not so famous sites of ancient Egypt, travelling southwards along the Nile from Cairo to Aswan. As travel to and around Egypt itself is becoming ever more difficult this armchair voyage should appeal to all confirmed Egyptophiles as well as providing an intriguing overview of the country and its ancient culture for those just embarking on their study.

This talk will be a perfect introduction for anyone thinking of joining the SAES so entry to this meeting will be **Free of Charge** for all-comers. Please advertise this amongst your friends and to anyone who might be interested.

And finally.....**Quiz time.**

- 1) What was the usual **alignment** of the central axis of a typical Egyptian temple?
- 2) What is the main purpose of **Chicago House** in Luxor?
- 3) In which **European city** can you see this image of Hatshepsut?

Answers in the next issue of **Hotep**.

