

Newsletter

SOCIETY FOR THE STUDY OF EGYPTIAN ANTIQUITIES

Editor: Melissa Campbell

Summer 2011 #3



THE EGYPTIAN CIVIL YEAR Sarah Symons

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Figure 1: Computer simulation of a heliacal rise of Sirius (Sopdet) in 2600 BC viewed near the Giza Plateau. Sirius is the bright object near the horizon amid the glow from the rising Sun. Orion (the Egyptian constellation Sahu) can be seen above Sirius. (Stellarium software: www.stellarium.org.)

Would you like to know your birthday in the ancient Egyptian calendar? Or what day to celebrate the ancient Egyptian new year? Would you like to mark the anniversary of the accession of Ramesses II each year? Unfortunately, it is not easy to find out where these dates fall in “our” calendar. Indeed, the whole field of calendrics in ancient Egypt is technical, intricate, and full of questions. This article is an overview of the Egyptian civil year and how it relates to our own calendar.

In ancient Egyptian records, the usual type of year used for dates has 365 days. We call this year the Egyptian “civil year”. The calendar based on the civil year was very regular. Each month contained exactly thirty days. There were three seasons each containing four months. The extra five days (to make up the total of 365) were added each year after the end of the twelfth month. In Egyptian they are called “the five days upon the year”, but we often use a Greek term: the epagomenal days.

Dates expressed in the civil calendar state the regnal year (counted from the start of the pharaoh’s reign), the month (I to IV), the season (Akhet, Peret, or Shemu), and the day (1 to 30). The epagomenal days omit month and season and simply say “epagomenal day x”. This system is the standard form of date that we see on Egyptian texts and objects (see Figure 3).

Converting a date of the form I Akhet 1 (the first day of the year) or III Shemu 27 (Ramesses II’s accession¹) to our own calendar is tricky because the 365 days of the civil year do not match one-to-one with our own months and days.

How long is a year? The question is not as straightforward as it seems. For us in daily life, our year is 365 or 366 days. The extra “leap day” is added every four years, but there are also some rules about years which are divisible by 400 and 100, and leap seconds are added occasionally for fine tuning. Our year is based on a measure of the movement of the Earth around the Sun called the tropical year. The leap days and seconds are needed as the tropical year does not contain a nice round number of days. Our 365/6 day year was the product of two major calendar reforms by Julius Caesar and Pope Gregory XIII. Both reforms were caused by a desire to keep the calendar in step with the seasons, resulting in more accurate but more complicated calendars.

The ancient Egyptians stuck with simplicity: 365 days every year. During most of ancient Egyptian civilisation, therefore, the difference between the 365-day civil year and the approximately 365.25 day tropical year meant the civil calendar was slipping against the seasons at the rate of one day every four years. After several hundred years, the season of Akhet, originally the inundation season, no longer corresponded to the Nile flood.

If we imagine that the Egyptian civil calendar has continued to tick by all these years, counting out exactly 365-day periods, and if we know one date from antiquity which identifies an Egyptian date with a modern-looking day and month, we can work out when I Akhet I or III Shemu 27 occurs during any year. We just count days, while also remembering the calendar reforms. There is an online calculator which has all the necessary information and will do the work for you.² We find that in 2012, I Akhet 1 will fall on 20 April. Knowing that, you can work out your own birthday by counting packets of thirty days per Egyptian month, remembering the five epagomenal days which fall just before I Akhet 1. So 12 March is III Shemu 27, for example. The civil year was kept at exactly 365 days long for most of ancient Egyptian history. An attempt to reform the calendar was announced in the Decree of Canopus (238 BC), adding a sixth epagomenal day every four years. This reform was not actually applied

1 According to Brand, PJ (1998) *The Monuments of Seti I: Epigraphic, Historical and Art Historical Analysis* [PhD Thesis] University of Toronto.

2. http://www.ortelius.de/kalender/form_en2.php. This calculator accepts Gregorian (our) dates, then produces (amongst others) “ancient Egyptian calendar” dates. To convert the other way, use trial and error.

3. For a full discussion of the naming of civil months, see Depuydt, L (1997) *Civil Calendar and Lunar Calendar in Ancient Egypt* Leuven: Peeters.

until 25BC when, the Egyptian year with its new leap day fell into step with the Roman calendar, as reformed by Julius Caesar. The Julian calendar is very similar to our present one, except that every fourth year without fail is a leap year.

In 1582, Pope Gregory XIII announced a further reform (removing leap days in certain centennial years) which resulted in our present, Gregorian calendar. The reform was not universally and immediately accepted. Some religious institutions, including the Coptic Church, still retain the Julian pattern.

The Coptic calendar uses the outline of the Egyptian civil calendar with 12 months of 30 days plus 5 epagomenal days, but adds a sixth epagomenal day every fourth year. It uses month names (see Figure 2) originally associated with Egyptian lunar months (from a second type of calendar used in ancient Egypt) but which had become names for the civil months.³ The first day of the Coptic year falls on 11 September in our Gregorian calendar (or 12 September in a Coptic leap year).⁴ This is equivalent to 29 or 30 August in the Julian calendar.

*The Book of Nut*⁵ is a New Kingdom funerary text describing the way celestial objects move around the sky. It describes happenings in an ideal or original time called *zep tepy*. During this ideal time, the star Sopdet (our Sirius) makes its appearance in the sky on I Akhet 1. This date and event are significant in the story of the Egyptian civil calendar. To explain, it is necessary to understand some basic astronomy, in particular three cycles which occur in the sky.

The first and fastest cycle is the daily rising and setting of stars and the Sun. The Sun very obviously rises and sets every day. Stars also do the same thing, rising in the east and setting in the west, just like the Sun. These events are described in *The Book of Nut* as Nut giving birth to and then swallowing the Sun and most of the stars. The exceptions are the “imperishable stars” of the northern sky, the group of circumpolar stars closest to the north celestial pole, which do not rise and set. All other, non-circumpolar, stars rise and set (are born and swallowed) every day.

The second cycle is the yearly motion of stars, and result-

Hieroglyphic	Transliteration	Translation
	3jt	(season of) Akhet
	prt	(season of) Peret
	smw	(season of) Shemu
	rnpt-hsb or rnpt-zp	regnal year
	jbd	month
	sw	day
	tpy	month I
	jbd 2	month II
	jbd 3	month III
	jbd 4	month IV
	hw-rnpt 2	epagomenal day 2

Example:

 rnpt-hsb 2 3bd 4 smw sw 21 hr hm n nswt-hjtj mn-hprw-r'
 Regnal year 2, month IV of Shemu day 21, under the majesty of the Dual King Egypt Menkheperure

Figure 3: Expressing Egyptian dates using the civil calendar. See Allen, J (2010) *Middle Egyptian Cambridge: CUP. Chapter 9.*

ing re-birth after a more emphatic form of death than mere swallowing. Sometimes a non-circumpolar star is not visible because it is above the horizon only during daylight. This effectively means that the star is invisible for some portion of the year. The length of this period of invisibility depends on the location of the star and its brightness. *The Book of Nut* stated that Sopdet had a period of invisibility of 70 days. The reappearance or re-birth of Sopdet (an astronomical event called heliacal rise) was called peret (“going out”). The re-birth of Sopdet was special (Sirius is the brightest star in the sky) and was given its own feast, Peret Sopdet.⁶ The rising (see Figure 1) was apparently observed and recorded each year, although very few records remain. These records are very important to scholars because they can help fix dates in Egyptian chronology.

The third cycle lasts more than a thousand years. The movement of the Egyptian civil calendar against the tropical calendar means that Peret Sopdet does not happen on a fixed day in the civil calendar, but wanders slowly forward through the civil year at the rate of one day every four years. If we start the calendar with Peret Sopdet happening on I Akhet 1, five years later Peret Sopdet will occur on I Akhet 2. It will take 1461 civil years (1460 Gregorian years) to return to I Akhet 1. It is unlikely that ancient Egyptians understood this 1460-year cycle in detail, but *The Book of Nut* shows that the coincidence of I Akhet 1 and Peret Sopdet was seen as the ideal configuration. Coincidences occurred around 2780 BC, 1320 BC, and 140 AD with the earliest of these being a candidate for the formalisation of the civil calendar.⁷

Peret Sopdet also marks another kind of new year. Famously, the reappearance of Sopdet each year occurred around the Nile flood during pharaonic times, making it a marker for the beginning of the agricultural year regardless of the civil date. The heliacal rise of Sopdet occurs late July to mid-August currently (depending on your location and observing conditions), so the Toronto Chapter’s Annual SSEA New Year’s Dinner could be seen as a celebration of Peret Sopdet.

Sarah Symons has a BSc in mathematics and astronomy and a PhD in ancient Egyptian astronomy. She is an assistant professor in the Department of Physics and Astronomy at McMaster University and Director of the William J McCallion Planetarium.

7. For a discussion on the origin of the civil calendar and for further reference, see Claggett (1995) and von Bomhard, A S (1999) *The Egyptian Calendar: A Work For Eternity*. London: Periplus.

Civil Month	Coptic Month Name (with typical English spellings)
I Akhet	ΘΩΟΥΤ Thout, Tout
II Akhet	ΠΑΩΠΕ Paopi, Baba
III Akhet	ἩΘΩΡ Hathor, Hatour
IV Akhet	ΚΟΙΑΚ Koiak, Kiahk
I Peret	ΤΩΒΙ Tobi, Touba
II Peret	ΜΕΣΗΡ Meshir, Amshir
III Peret	ΠΑΡΕΜΗΤΑΤ Paremhat, Baramhat
IV Peret	ΠΑΡΗΟΥΤΕ Parmouti, Barmouda
I Shemu	ΠΑΣΩΝΣ Pashons, Bashans
II Shemu	ΠΑΩΝ Πaoni, Baona
III Shemu	ΕΠΙΠ Epip, Abib
IV Shemu	ΜΕΣΩΡΙ Mesori, Mesra
Epagomenal Days	ΠΙΚΟΥΧΙ Η'ΑΒΟΤ Pi Kogi Enavot, El Nasii

Figure 2: Names of Coptic months. Spelling varies depending on the date and origin of the source.

⁴ The online tool (see note 2) also converts Gregorian dates to and from the Coptic calendar. Be aware that the Coptic year starting on 11 September 2012 is year 1728.

⁵ von Lieven, A (2007) *Grundriß des Laufes der Sterne. Das sogenannte Nutbuch*. Kopenhagen: Museum Tusulanum Press.

⁶ For a summary of *Peret Sopdet* records, see Claggett, M (1995) *Ancient Egyptian science vol. 2: Calendars, Clocks, and Astronomy*. Philadelphia: American Philosophical Society

CAIRO CALLING

THE GRAND EGYPTIAN MUSEUM *Kei Yamamoto*

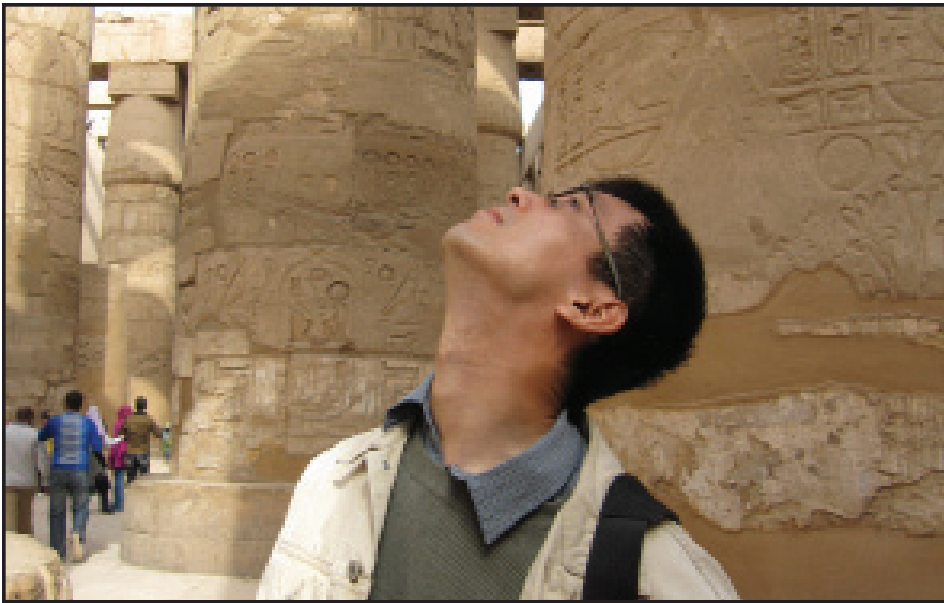


Photo courtesy of Kei Yamamoto

I have been working as an academic consultant for the Grand Egyptian Museum (GEM) since December of 2010. Of course, our work was interrupted soon afterwards by the successful political uprising, which is now known as the 25th of January Revolution. Our office closed temporarily, and I evacuated from Egypt by force majeure. On my way to the airport I saw the smouldering headquarter of the National Democratic Party, burnt police vehicles, and a long row of tanks stationed in Heliopolis to protect the residence of then President Hosni Mubarak.

Some of my braver friends and colleagues decided to stay in Cairo and were able to witness thousands of people rejoice in Tahrir Square as the resignation of President Mubarak was announced.

The turmoil had some negative impact on Egypt's archaeological sites and museums. Many archaeological expeditions suspended their fieldwork or cut their seasons short, although a few projects in the south continued their work. Some site guards left their posts while others were outnumbered by looters who broke into archaeological sites in search of saleable antiquities. Some artefact storage facilities were also breached. In complete absence of the state police, thieves also broke into the Egyptian Museum in Cairo, vandalized showcases, and stole a number of artefacts including some from the Tutankhamun

collection. When this theft was first noted many ordinary citizens gathered and formed a human chain in front of the museum entrance to prevent any further robbery. As an archaeologist and museum worker, this was one of the most touching moments during the whole event. It demonstrated that all Egyptian people, whether Muslims or Copts, truly cared about their pharaonic heritage and valued their common identity.

During the revolution, the Supreme Council of Antiquities (SCA) was made into a ministry of its own, rather than a branch of the Ministry of Culture, and Dr. Zahi Hawass, who served for many years as the Secretary General of the SCA, was promoted to its minister. The new cabinet formed by President Mubarak was dissolved soon after the revolution, but Dr. Hawass was asked to return as the head of the newly formed Ministry of State for Antiquities (MSA) despite his connection to the previous regime. The MSA operation is in full swing again, and its staff members are busy assessing the damage to the archaeological sites, keeping inventory of the museum objects, tracking down the stolen artefacts, and conserving the broken works of art. Thankfully, many artefacts stolen from the Cairo Museum have been recovered – sometimes in very mysterious circumstances. For example, some pieces from the Tutankhamun collection were

found, rather conveniently, by a staff of the MSA, in a plastic bag left on a bench in a Metro station. While I wonder how many of these stories are true, the most important thing is that these precious antiquities have returned to the museum.

As peace (but never tranquility) returned to the streets of Cairo, I flew back to a new and revitalised Egypt and resumed our work at the GEM Project. At this stage, we are responsible for developing the museum storylines, assisting our Egyptian colleagues in selecting appropriate artefacts for each gallery, and helping the UK-based exhibit firm decide how to distribute the objects. Meanwhile, we also established the chronology to be adopted and checked the object database, so we have certainly been kept busy. In due course, the team will also compose and edit the exhibition texts, such as panels and labels. The GEM will be located along the Cairo-Alexandria Road, about 2 km northwest of the pyramid of Khufu at Giza. Once completed, the GEM will be by far the largest and most well-equipped museum in Egypt, and its level of sophistication will be comparable to the British Museum, the Metropolitan Museum of Art, and the like. In all, some 50,000 objects are scheduled to be on display, while the storage areas can house 50,000 additional pieces. The location near the Giza pyramids, away from the hustle-bustle of Downtown Cairo, was chosen purposefully to allow the visitors to enjoy the pyramids and the greatest treasures of ancient Egypt on the same day. The vast land at the edge of the desert can accommodate a great number of tourist buses, and for more independent-minded travellers, a subway line will connect from Downtown to the museum site in the future.

The architecture, designed by an Irish firm, was selected in 2003. Its façade will feature an enormous wall made of cream-coloured alabaster slabs, arranged in a series of rhythmical triangular patterns. Because of the reflective and translucent nature of alabaster, the wall will gleam in the sun during the day and glow from the artificial lighting inside at night. Once inside the massive wall, the visitors will find themselves in an airy atrium, where they will be greeted by the colossal statue of Ramesses II, which used to stand in front of Ramesses Train Station from

1955 to 2006. On one side of this atrium is the museum's gallery space, while other various facilities will be located on the other side of the atrium. In a sense, the exhibit space begins with the impressive Grand Stairs, on which will be placed some 100 pieces of great sculpture and wall relief from the entire span of ancient Egyptian history. They will be displayed in reverse chronological order, from Greco-Roman material at the bottom of the stairs and Early Dynastic material near the top, so the visitors will have the sense of travelling back in time as they ascend the stairs. The pieces currently slated for the Grand Stairs include: a colossal head of Shabaka and a statue of Ramesses III as a standard-bearer. Turn left and enter the first of the twelve chronological galleries. The first gallery will explain the origin of the great civilization. Beyond it will be two galleries dedicated to the Old Kingdom, which will feature the Queen Hetepheres collection among other art works from the "Age of Pyramids." In the following Middle Kingdom galleries, hundreds of non-royal stelae from Abydos, which are often neglected in the current display, will be exhibited in the context of the Osiris cult during this period.

The GEM will be very different from the Cairo Museum in that the objects will be shown to illustrate certain stories about each period, not simply as part of a typological display. Also, there will be more usage of creative multimedia at strategic points, in order to give the visitors wider contexts to the artefacts they are looking

at. Needless to say, the objects will have better cases, lights, and labels in this new museum. In this fashion, the chronological galleries will continue to the end of the Roman Period. At this point, the visitors will cross a bridge over the Grand Stairs to see the biggest attraction of the GEM – the Tutankhamun collection, to which about one-third of the gallery space in the museum is dedicated. Unlike at the Cairo Museum, almost all of the 3,500 or so objects found in the tomb (except for those that are too fragile) will be on display at the GEM. A short video and a large model of the tomb will introduce the visitors to the discovery of the tomb in 1922. Walking past the two guardian statues, the visitors will enter rooms with spotlights forming islands of light around the star pieces. The gallery will be divided into two sections: palace life, while the royal regalia and weapons show his role as a pharaoh. In the Afterlife section, the exhibit will illustrate the mummification, funeral, and burial of the king who died too young. The beautiful canopic set and regal image of Anubis who guards it, the gilded statues of gods welcoming Tutankhamun into the afterlife, and the magnificent series of nested coffins are some of the highlights. Finally, the dramatic climax comes with the true masterpiece, the funerary mask of the king.

As already mentioned, the GEM will boast the largest exhibit space in Egypt but it is much more than a big museum. In fact, galleries will take up less than one-tenth

of the 424,000 m² allocated for the entire project. The whole development will include a state-of-the-art conservation centre, secure storage spaces, classrooms, a conference centre, a 3D cinema, commercial areas, as well as vast well-maintained parks and open-air museums. In fact, the GEM can be viewed as an improved version of the Cairo Museum, Bibliotheca Alexandrina, Cairo Opera House, and el-Azhar Park – all combined into one. It will be simply the greatest cultural institution ever to be built in Egypt, if not the world. Over half of the expenses associated with this ambitious project will be funded by a \$300 million USD soft loan from Japan, while the Egyptian government will finance the rest. The aforementioned conservation centre was completed in 2008, and it is already up and running. The actual construction of the main complex will start later this year. At the time of writing, the GEM is officially scheduled to open in 2015.

Kei Yamamoto received his PhD in Egyptian archaeology at the University of Toronto. He has participated in a number of archaeological projects at Abydos and written several articles about the site. In 2010-2011, he is working in Egypt, preparing exhibition texts for the new Grand Egyptian Museum at Giza. He is an SSEA Trustee (2004 - present) and Vice President. Photograph courtesy of Helena Pereira.

ANCIENT NUBIA: NEW DISCOVERIES IN THE MIDDLE NILE VALLEY SYMPOSIUM, ROYAL ONTARIO MUSEUM

The civilization of ancient Nubia which flourished on both banks of the Nile between Aswan in Egypt and Khartoum in the Sudan has long been overshadowed by pharaonic Egypt. Yet, this far-away and inaccessible land has ruins of ancient temples, medieval churches and whole buried cities waiting to be discovered. In the last decade, archaeological investigations in Nubia received new impetus, partly as the result of the construction of dams along the Nile. Some of the world's most eminent Nubologists will present the history of ancient Nubia and the latest archaeological discoveries.

On Sunday, September 25, the ROM will host an exciting symposium on Ancient Nubia. Featuring a panel of internationally renowned scholars, including the ROM's own Dr. Krzysztof Grzymalski. Lectures include: *History of Archaeological Explorations in the Sudan*, Salah eldin Mohamed Ahmed, Fieldwork Director and the National Corporation for Antiquities and Museums

(NCAM) in Sudan; *Dukki Gel-Kerma: The Nubian Towns and the Egyptian Foundations of Thutmose I*, Charles Bonnet, Professor Emeritus of the University of Geneva; *Nubian Pharaohs on the Upper Nile: Royal Statues, Temple Offerings and Other Recent Discoveries*, Julie Anderson, Assistant Keeper (Curator) in the Department of Ancient Egypt and Sudan at the British Museum; *A Common Settlement of Nubians and Egyptians: Philae as a Nubian Holy Place*, Jitse Dijkstra, Associate Professor and Head of Classics at the University of Ottawa; *Kings and Pilgrims: Excavating the Holy Sites of Banganarti and Selib*, Bogdan Zurawski, Head of the Department of African Cultures in the Institute of Mediterranean and Oriental Cultures of the Polish Academy of Science; *ROM in Nubia: Archaeological Discoveries in the Middle Nile Valley*, Krzysztof Grzymalski, Senior Curator, Egypt & Nubia, and Associate Professor of Egyptian and Nubian Archaeology, University of Toronto. This event is free and open to all. Please email programs@rom.on.ca for more information.

DEATH ALONG THE NILE: Uncovering the Secrets of Egypt's Lost Tombs

Date: November 5th, 2011 9am to 5pm. Location: Toronto, Ontario, Canada

This event is ticketed. Online registration prices: \$90 general public; \$80 SSEA or Royal Ontario Museum members; \$40 students (with ID). This event is presented in cooperation with the Royal Ontario Museum. On November 5th, 2011, The SSEA/SÉÉA will present an exciting day of papers on the latest discoveries from Egypt. This year's focus is on current archaeology of tombs and cemeteries, with reports presented from those working in the field in Egypt. Speakers scheduled to appear include: Dr. Otto Schaden (KV63), responsible for the excavation of the first new tomb discovered in the Valley of the Kings since Tutankhamun, and Prof. Suzanne Onstine (University of Memphis), who is working in the tomb of the noble Panehsy at Thebes; Dr. Peter Sheldrick of the Dakhleh Oasis

Project; and Dr. Jerry Cybulski of the Museum of Civilization in Ottawa. Drs. Sheldrick and Cybulski will present on their work with human remains from Dakhleh Oasis, the Valley of the Kings, Sheikh Abd el-Qurna and the Hungarian Mission at Thebes. This year's mixture of field reports on tombs, cemeteries, and their inhabitants will provide a truly exciting look at the process of archaeological discovery, and at what excavations can teach us about life and afterlife in ancient Egypt.

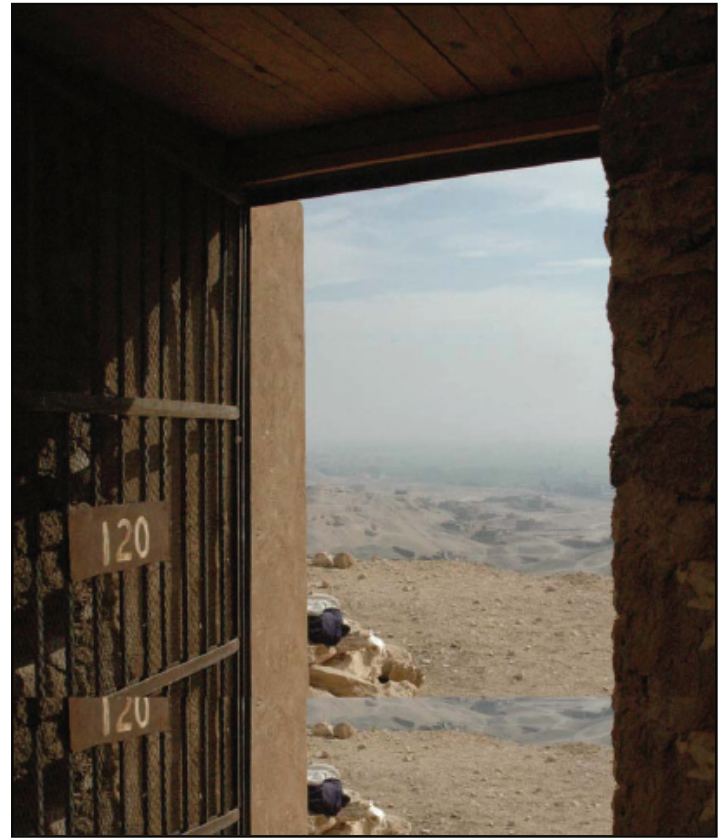
Contact info@thessea.org for more information on speakers. To register online, visit <http://www.rom.on.ca/visit/calendar/index.php> keyword Egypt, or phone 416.586.5797 or email programs@rom.on.ca and reference program 7102.



Suzanne Onstine in the tomb of Panehsy at Thebes (TT16)"



Archie Chubb (SSEA Trustee) at work in KV63



Tomb Discovery: Courtesy of Archie Chubb, SSEA Trustee

SSEA SCHOLARS' COLLOQUIUM 2011

The 2011 SSEA Scholars' Colloquium will take place on Friday, November 4th from 9 to 5 in the Theatre of the Royal Ontario Museum, and on Sunday November 6th, from 1pm until 5pm in 5 Bancroft Ave.

Attendance at, and participation in, the Scholars' Colloquium is free. However, those attending the event in the Royal Ontario Museum must pay a separate fee to access the galleries and special exhibitions. The SSEA is looking into the possibility of obtaining discounted tickets for attendees at our event. Please let us know if you are interested in getting advance tickets to the galleries. There is also an advance prepaid lunch in the ROM's Food Studio for groups of 20 or more. Please contact info@thessea.org if you are interested.

The deadline for submission of abstracts was August 31, 2011. A preliminary list of presenters should be available by the end of September. For more information, visit our website at <http://www.thessea.org>.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF THE SSEA 2011

The Annual General Meeting of the SSEA will be held on the evening of Friday, November 4th, 2011 on the campus of the University of Toronto. Details of the location are on the Notice of Annual Meeting sent to members of the Society and will be posted at www.thessea.org/events.php.

All categories of individual membership [Full Individual, Lifetime, Associate and Student] in good standing are entitled to one vote. We hope that you will attend and vote, in person or by proxy. If you are a Chapter member and are unable to be there in person, you may send your proxy. If you have any questions regarding how to use your proxy, please contact us at info@thessea.org. This year it is especially important to have input from our members because of proposed changes to our Bylaws.

The Bylaws of the SSEA have been updated by a special committee of the Trustees. Members are invited to view the proposed new Bylaws on the website at www.thessea.org, where you will find the present Bylaws, the proposed new Bylaws and a list of the major changes. A list of the items to be amended is also included below. These new Bylaws will be presented for a ratification vote at the Annual General Meeting on November 4, 2011. Members are invited to communicate any questions or concerns to us well in advance of that meeting by writing to info@thessea.org.

THE SOCIETY FOR THE STUDY OF EGYPTIAN ANTIQUITIES BYLAWS

Major Changes Proposed for Presentation to the AGM November 4, 2011

- | | |
|---|---|
| 1) Rearrangement of classes and categories of membership (II,1 a) | 6) Policies and Procedures manual defined (IV, new 13) |
| 2) Life memberships no longer issued (II,1 c) | 7) Positions of Chairman and vice-chairman of the board eliminated (V, old 4) |
| 3) Quorum of meetings of members redefined (III,4) | 8) Position of Secretary of the Board (optional) defined as separate from secretarial assistants (V, 5) |
| 4) Chapter reps sitting on the board (IV,1) | 9) Membership fees sent to head office (VI, 4) |
| 5) The board is required to meet regularly, therefore the executive committee is eliminated to prevent an oligarchy (IV,5 and IV, old 13) | 10) Standing committees redefined (VII, 1) |

MONTREAL CHAPTER REPORT *Jean-Frédéric Brunet*

The year 2011 kicked off with a blast for Montreal area Ancient Egypt enthusiasts. On January 26, we gathered at Librairie Monet's "Aire Libre" room to hear André Grandchamps, our resident astronomer, who brought us back in time as he told the story of his favourite ancient Egyptologist, Champollion. Deciphering the hieroglyphs was, after all, a feat of truly astronomical proportions. A month later (on February 26), our Chapter's president, Dr. Brigitte Ouellet, gave a one-day seminar about the Ancient Egyptians' conception of the Universe. These men and women of the distant past may well have kept their feet solidly on the ground, they nevertheless were fascinated by the world around them and found unique and yet fascinating ways of rationalizing the great unknown, down to its very details. The ancients not only thought about such esoteric matters, they also used their artistic skills to depict them. Art historian Prof. Richard Milot, from the University of Sherbrooke, tackled this very subject in a well documented public conference held on March 24 at the Egyptian consulate. With stunning examples hailing from most periods of Ancient Egypt's long history, "*Les cosmogonies dans l'art pharaonique*" (Cosmogonies in Pharaonic art) brought us on a fantastic journey through space, time and ancient minds alike. On February 27th, we headed back to Monet bookstore for a conference by our beloved treasurer and secretary, Nicole Brisson. A seasoned traveler herself, she brought us on a wonderful tour of the Libyan Desert oasis, highlighted by

her own photographs. Our conference season ended on the 25th of May, still at Monet's, with a wonderful lecture by our life member, Michel Guay. Entitled "*Guerre et Paix au Nouvel Empire égyptien*", he set the New Kingdom in its proper setting. Guay's presentation was flawless, except for a little something: he had prepared enough material for not just an hour lecture, but for a full seminar! This reporter thinks he talks on behalf of all who were there that evening: we are all eagerly waiting for part 2 (and 3 and 4)!

Thus ended the academic aspect of our 2010-2011 activities; yet, our season wasn't quite over as our annual "*pique nique*" took place on August 27. Good food, good company and our annual fundraising auction was on the menu. Special this year is the grand raffle for a unique set of magnificent hand made jewellery. 2011-2012 should be a memorable year. The biggest change, certainly, is that our mini-lecture series changes its venue. The Librairie Monet has been a nice home for many years now, and this reporter wishes to warmly thank M. Pierre Monet, Anne-Pascale Lizotte and Chantal Chabot for their hospitality and helpfulness over the past few years. But we must now look forward to our new home, the "Maison de l'Afrique Mandingo" set at 6356 Henri-Julien street. Between this new home and our other usual venues (the Egyptian consulate and the UQAM), the new season will have something for everyone. See you there!

CALGARY CHAPTER REPORT *James Morrison*

Title: *Remembering Steven Larkman and Pre-recorded Lecture on Early Predynastic Egypt*

Date: February 4, 2011

Before screening a pre-recorded lecture, we took some time to remember Steven Larkman, our past president, who passed away late last year. Julius Szekrenyes then presented a pre-recorded lecture and a short talk on early predynastic Egypt.

Title: *Encaustic Demonstration and Slideshow Presentation*

Date: March 4, 2011, Speaker: Tracy Proctor

Tracy Proctor gave us a slideshow presentation and discussion on encaustic art throughout history dating back to its origins in Ancient Egypt. Tracy then did a live demonstration encaustic painting. A short video of the demonstration can be found on the Calgary SSEA YouTube channel: <http://www.youtube.com/user/CalgarySSEA>. Tracy Proctor is the Gallery director at Swirl Fine Art and Design. She has created many works of art with the Encaustic colored wax technique. <http://www.swirlfineart.com/artists.php?id=5>.

Title: *Ancient Egypt in the Nineteenth Century: Egypt in Victorian Popular Culture and the Emergence of Egyptology.*

Date: April 1, 2011, Speaker: Kevin M. McGeough Ph.D.

Kevin McGeough is an Associate Professor of archaeology at

the University of Lethbridge. A specialist in the Late Bronze Age city of Ugarit, McGeough has excavated at many sites throughout the Near East, including the Middle Kingdom town at Abydos. Mc Geough discussed how ancient Egypt was represented in Victorian-era popular culture and how these representations influenced the emergence of Egyptology as an academic discipline. He explored how Egypt appeared in diverse media (such as adventure fiction, periodicals, theatre, world's fairs, and the rites of secret societies). He illustrated the important role of ancient Egypt in Victorian thought and society. Since our topic was about Victorians, we were joined by a small group of Victorians who arrived by time machine.

Title: *My 2011 field season: "ground truthing", a lost village in the empty desert, and the Egyptian Revolution viewed from Dakhleh Oasis.* Date: May 6, 2011. Speaker: Dr. Mary McDonald. Mary is an Associate Professor in the Archaeology Dept at the University of Calgary. She received her Ph.D. from the University of Toronto. Her interests lie in the origins of agriculture and developments towards civilization in Egypt and the Near East. Mary talked about her 2011 January/February field season with the Dakhleh Oasis Project (DOP), and the Kharga Oasis Prehistoric Project (KOPP). Mary also talked briefly about some more recent Egyptian history that occurred during her time in Egypt earlier this year.

VANCOUVER CHAPTER REPORT

Thomas H. Greiner

Another summer is nearing its end and we are excited about the upcoming year. We celebrated our first year in existence, and we are kicking off 2011/2012 with a Museum Visit to Tacoma, WA to visit the 'Wrapped: The Search for the Essential Mummy' exhibit. It will only be a day trip, but you will get a chance to mingle with other members and also learn about mummification! For more details, you can always email us at sseavancouver@gmail.com or visit our new website at <http://sseavancouver.wordpress.com>.

The new Executive for this year had a very productive meeting in June 2011 and is reconvening in the end of August to finalize the lecture program as well as other events. We are hoping to make this year a successful one and to enthrall more members to join our society.

CORRECTION NOTICE

Thank you to Paula Veiga for generously providing the SSEA with the image of Steven Larkman that appeared in the Spring 2011 issue of the SSEA Newsletter.

Thank you to Gabriele Cole for providing the necessary photography that appeared in the article *Manitoba Mystery* (figure 1), an update to SSEA members by *The Search for Ancient Egypt in Canada*, which appeared in the Spring 2011 SSEA Newsletter. Recognition must also go to the University of Winnipeg, where the pieces reside.

All other photographs are courtesy of the authors.



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TORONTO CHAPTER REPORT *Zoe McQuinn*

Greetings and salutations from the Toronto Chapter! This spring and summer was full with interesting events. We continued our very popular Summer Series entitled “*All the Kings Men*” The summer season kicked off with a talk from Gayle Gibson, who spoke to us regarding *Senenmut: Hatshepsut’s BFF (Best Friend Forever.)* Then our very own Dr. Lyn Green regaled us with the tales of *Amenhotep the Magnificent’s Magnificent Men!* I myself gave a lecture in July about *Pleasing the Pharaoh Pepi II*. Our summer ended with an intriguing talk by our former and great president Deirdre Keleher who unlocked the mysteries of *Metjetji at the Royal Ontario Museum: How to survive Middle Management in the 5th Dynasty Egypt*. The Summer Series was very well attended and as always a lot of fun. Our thanks to all our speakers for making us understand the job requirements for working for a Pharaoh.

Also during our spring season we once again ran an SSEA-Toronto Chapter Course entitled *To Pray or Not to Pray? Religious Customs of Ancient Egypt* taught by Amber Hutchinson & Sarah Schellinger, two graduate students from the University of Toronto. The Social Committee hosted a Quiz Night on May 7th in Bloor West Village. Interested on how you would have done? You can find the quiz questions on the SSEA website and test yourself. Our final social event of the summer was our Annual New Year’s Dinner which was celebrated on August 6th at the Café Nicole. It was a great affair with good food and better company. A great deal of thanks must be extended to Arlette Londes for organizing the festivities! So what do we have in store for you in the coming year? It is with great pleasure that I can announce the Toronto Chapter has established a scholarship to Honour the memory of the late Curator of the ROM Egyptian Collection, Professor at the Department of Near and Middle Eastern Civilizations and former Trustee

and Multi-term President of the SSEA, Professor Nicholas B. Millet. This scholarship is to be awarded annually in the amount of up to \$1,000 and is open to all Graduate students of the Department of NMC Studies who are members of the SSEA and also to other graduate students of other Departments in the University of Toronto, who are also members of the SSEA, whose area of research encompasses work that will be meaningfully related to the study of Ancient Egypt up to 550 C. E. Further details, application forms and contact information may be obtained from the Society’s Web Site. We are planning to offer courses starting in the early fall and will be facilitating the start of a Hieroglyphs Club. We have a great line up of speakers including Dr. Ron Leprohon and Dr. Mary-Ann Wegner. As well, we will be rescheduling Dr. Nicholas Reeves’ talk entitled *Behind the Mask of Tutankhamun*. In anticipation of 2012, we will be hosting a mini-symposium in the spring: *Apocalypse Now? How People in the Past Viewed the End of the World*. Join us for the day as we discuss how different ancient cultures contemplated the end of days. On the travelling side of things, we are putting together our trip to Egypt for the winter of 2012-13 and are planning a day trip for this year to visit Dr. Sarah Symons at McMaster University. Expect a day of fun at the universities planetarium and a great discussion about the ancient Egyptian sky. Please join us for our Annual Meeting of Ontario Members. The meeting will be held in 4 Bancroft, RM 215 at 7pm on Friday October 21st. At this meeting we plan to announce the first recipient(s) of the Nicholas B. Millet Memorial Scholarship. As you can tell we have a busy calendar full of fun and enlightening events. We hope all our members are as excited as we are about our upcoming 2011-2012 season! And remember, for current information regarding 2011-2012 events, please check the website (www.thessea.org).



Annual SSEA New Year’s Dinner, August 6 2011.



Annual SSEA New Year’s Dinner, August 6 2011.

The opinions expressed in the Newsletter do not necessarily represent the views of the Society for the Study of Egyptian Antiquities. ARE YOU A MEMBER OF THE SSEA? The SSEA/SÉÉA has Chapters in Calgary, Alberta, Montréal, Québec, Toronto, Ontario and Vancouver, British Columbia. These Chapters host lectures and events on Egyptological topics. Full Individual and Student Membership in the Society includes a volume of the scholarly Journal of the SSEA and the SSEA Newsletter, and free or discounted admission to SSEA events. Associate Membership in the SSEA includes the Newsletter and free or discounted admission to events. Associate Membership is only open to members in provinces which have a Chapter. All categories of membership, excluding institutional members, are entitled to vote at the Annual General Meeting. To apply for membership, write to the address on the front of this Newsletter or email us at info@thessea.org For updates, schedule changes, and further information, see the SSEA Website at: www.thessea.org