

# Newsletter

SOCIETY FOR THE STUDY OF EGYPTIAN ANTIQUITIES

Editor: Peter Robinson Assistant Editor: Gayle Gibson Éditeur adjoint: Cloé Caron



## A Statuette of Ptah-Sokar-Osiris in Hamilton, ON

*Dawn Power*

Summer 2020-21 #3

SSEA  
PO Box 19004 Walmer  
360A Bloor Street W  
Toronto, Ontario  
M5S 3C9  
Canada

While volunteering at the McMaster Museum of Art (MMA) in Hamilton many years ago, the Collections Administrator Julie Bronson\* showed me a very beautiful statuette of the syncretized god Ptah-Sokar-Osiris, which was a gift from Mr. W.H. Atkinson in 1975. It is not on display at the MMA but is kept in the museum's archives.

Recently, I was speaking with the SSEA National President, Mark Trumpour, about his project "In Search of Ancient Egypt in Canada," which involves finding and documenting ancient Egyptian artefacts in Canadian Museums. I mentioned this statuette to him, of which he was unaware, and he asked if I would do a write-up for the Newsletter to share with all our members. I, of course, agreed to do so.



Fig. 1. Front of the Ptah-Sokar-Osiris Statuette.  
©McMaster Museum of Art.

The Ptah-Sokar-Osiris statuette at the MMA (Figs. 1 and 2) is made of wood and dates between 1069 and 500 BCE, which coincides with the Third Intermediate Period (21st to 25th Dynasties) to the Mid-Late Period (early 27th Dynasty).

These statuettes belong to a class of tomb objects normally used in the Memphite area, beginning in the New Kingdom (1550 to 1069 BCE; 18th to 20th Dynasties), until around the Roman Period (30 BCE to 395 CE). They were placed in tombs as guarantors of rebirth. During the New Kingdom when the Book of the Dead began to be used, the papyrus roll was sometimes inserted into hollowed-out versions of these statuettes, which were then deposited into the tomb.

The god represented in this figure is one of a complex nature. It is a fusion of three ancient Egyptian gods: Ptah, Sokar, and Osiris. Ptah was a creator god worshipped at Memphis; Sokar was a funerary god also worshipped at Memphis; and Osiris was the god of the Underworld worshipped at Abydos.

In addition to being funerary gods, Osiris and Sokar were seen as chthonic gods. During the Old Kingdom, the priests of Ptah fused together Ptah and Sokar to create the god Ptah-Sokar, not only because they believed that Ptah had created Sokar but also because their cult-centres were in close proximity.

By the Middle Kingdom, Osiris was added to the mix (Sokar and Osiris were connected, as they were both funerary gods) and the god Ptah-Sokar-Osiris was born. This new syncretized god grew in popularity, which reached its height during the New Kingdom. As Ptah-Sokar-Osiris was a Memphite funerary deity worshipped mainly in this area, it is highly likely the MMA statuette came from a nearby tomb.

The inscription on the back of the statuette is too damaged to read. The inscription on the front is incomplete, but what remains reads as follows.

*(Wsir nb) imnt nfr ntr nb 3btt dit.f..*

(Osiris Lord of the) West, Great God, Lord of the East, may he give...

This inscription may be part of the standard Htp-di-nsw, an offering to the gods found on various funerary objects. The deceased's name was probably written at the end of the offering.

The statuette's iconography and colour scheme also tell us a lot about its nature. This god's crown is the Double Plume Crown (*swty*). Its two ostrich feathers also appear on the Atef Crown sometimes worn by Osiris and



Fig. 2. Back of the Ptah-Sokar-Osiris Statuette.  
©McMaster Museum of Art.

the Sun Disk Crown with two feathers worn by Ptah. Normally a sun disc was at the bottom of the crown and, from the New Kingdom onward, a set of ram's horns were there as well (as indicated by the hole in the top of the head of the statuette). However, both features are missing from this statuette. A false beard, as worn by the king and the gods, and a broad collar appear around the neck – both were seen as signs of divinity/royalty. A falcon was normally placed at the end of the base, which might have represented Sokar. The mummified body of the statuette is no doubt a representation of Osiris, the first god to be mummified and resurrected, and of Ptah, who also appears mummified. As can be seen, not only were the names of the various gods combined to form a new god, but each one's iconographic features were combined as well.

The statuette's colours are iconographically significant. Much of ancient Egyptian religion has to do with rebirth and rejuvenation, and the colours found on this statuette speak directly to these ideas. Red (*dšr*) is the colour of the sky at sunrise (i.e. rebirth). It is seen as a life-giving and protective colour.

Green (*w3d*) represents rejuvenation and vegetation, and black (*km*) represents the fertile soil of the Nile after the inundation. Green is normally the colour of the skin of Osiris and Ptah, due to their chthonic nature, though their skin can be black as well. Osiris is sometimes called *kmy* ("the Black One"). Black is also thought to be the colour of the underworld where the sun is regenerated every night and white (*ḥd*) can also be equated with light and rebirth. The sun disc in the Double Plume Crown is also a symbol of rebirth. Here, the face of the statuette is painted green, possibly to represent either Osiris or Ptah and to also represent rejuvenation. However, in some cases, the face is painted gold, which was the skin colour of the gods. Most of the Ptah-Sokar-Osiris statuettes from the end of the New Kingdom have a white body and, in the Late Period (664-332 BCE; Dynasties 26-30), they appear to be mostly polychrome in colour. It may be that the red body of this statuette is characteristic of the Third Intermediate Period, which may be why not many of this colour are found.

After examining the iconographic features and colour symbolism contained in this statuette, it is apparent why these statuettes were used as funerary items that were placed in tombs as guarantors of rebirth. It also shows how easy it was for the ancient Egyptians to combine aspects of various gods to create a new god, while continuing to worship the individual gods in their own right – a practice that occurred throughout all of ancient Egyptian history.

**Notes:**

\* I would like to thank Julie Bronson for assisting me in gaining permission to include the photographs in this article.



## Further Reading

Gahlin, Lucia. *Egypt. Gods, Myths and Religion*. London: Hermes House. 2007.

Goebs, Katja. “Crowns” In *The Oxford Encyclopaedia of Ancient Egypt*. Ed. Donald B. Redford. (2005. e-reference).

Goebs, Katja. *Crowns in Egyptian Funerary Literature. Royalty, Rebirth, and Destruction*. Oxford: Griffith Institute. 2008.

Robins, Gay. “Color Symbolism” in *The Oxford Encyclopaedia of Ancient Egypt*. Ed. Donald B. Redford. (2005. e-reference).

Wilkinson, Richard H. *The Complete Gods and Goddesses of Ancient Egypt*. London: Thames & Hudson Ltd. 2003.

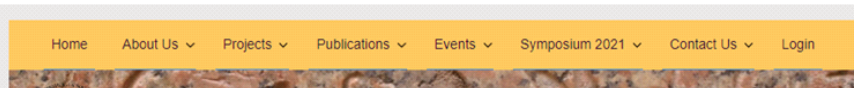
*Dr Dawn Power is President of SSEA Toronto Chapter*

## Logging in to the SSEA website to view the Katary Lecture or download the latest newsletters and journal

In our Winter 2020 newsletter, we outlined some of the changes we’d done to our website, and suggested that we would be making further changes to the site to bring it up to date, and include more functionality and items of interest to members. We hope that you have already visited the website and seen the events calendar and found it to your liking so far.

Members may remember that the Katary lecture in May 2021 was given via Zoom due to the Covid pandemic meaning that in-person meetings had to be cancelled or postponed. As we recorded the presentation, we were able to upload it to the website, and it is currently there accessible to members. In addition, we have also put this season’s newsletters (including this one) and a copy of JSSEA volume 46 in electronic format, so that members can download them and read them on their computers or electronic devices.

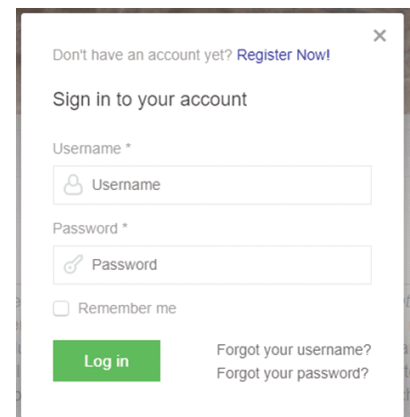
To access all these, you should first log in to the website from the Login option in the menu at the top of any page on the site.



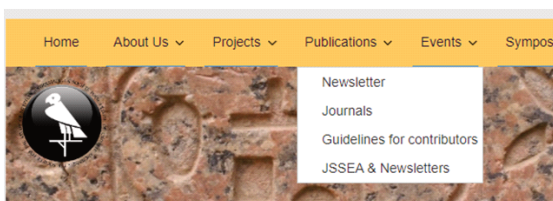
You should then see the log-in box :

and should be able to type in the member name **member-2021** and password **Pinudjem**. Please note that if you have forgotten the log-in details, you should not try to click on the links to get reminders, as they will not work. Instead, please contact us at the SSEA office and we will send you the ‘reminders’.

Once you’ve successfully logged in, you will be taken to the 2021 Katary lecture page and you will be able to see the video presentation on ‘**Gaining New Perspectives on the Hypostyle Hall at Karnak: The Université du Québec à Montréal (UQAM) – University of Memphis Project at Karnak**’ that was given by Peter Brand and Jean Revez.



The same log-in will allow you to access the ‘JSSEA & Newsletters’ option in the Publications menu. Clicking on this will send you to the page with links to the current year’s newsletters and volume 46 of the JSSEA.



We hope that you log in and visit these pages to watch the Katary lecture again or download the newsletters.

### Current Publications

As a current member, you are able to access the latest newsletters and JSSEA

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## 2021 Annual General Meeting of the SSEA/SÉÉA

Every year, on the weekend of the Annual Symposium and Scholars' Colloquium, the entire voting membership of the SSEA/SÉÉA hold their ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING in Toronto to elect the Board of Trustees which governs the Society through the parent, "national" organization ("Head Office") and pass the Society's budget and approve the financial statements. The national organization organizes the Annual Symposium and Scholars' Colloquium and all publications, including the Journal and Newsletter and maintains the database of members. All members of any chapter of the SSEA or SÉÉA are members of the national organization and entitled to vote. If you cannot attend the Annual General Meeting of The SSEA/SÉÉA, you may also send a proxy, using the form, which will be mailed to you. This year's Annual General Meeting will be held virtually on November 5th, 2021 from 7:00pm.

Log-ins to the AGM will be emailed out to members whose email addresses we have, but the link to the AGM is:  
**<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81714054990?pwd=UUxEdmJEN2V2NFVEZzdOY09wR25BQT09>**  
Meeting ID: 817 1405 4990 Passcode: 677895

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### Schedule for the 2021 AGM weekend

Friday, November 5th, 9am to 4:30pm – Scholars' Colloquium Day 1  
Friday, November 5th, 7:00 pm onward – Annual General Meeting of the SSEA/SÉÉA  
Saturday, November 6th, 9am to 5pm – 43rd Annual Symposium  
Sunday, November 7th, 11am to 4pm – Poster Session and Scholars' Colloquium Day 2

All events will be held virtually. All times are ET. **Please note that on Saturday night we change our clocks back by one hour.** The Colloquium and Symposium are now grouped together as paid events. One fee pays for the entire weekend. A detailed schedule for the entire weekend is available online at [www.thessea.org](http://www.thessea.org). Details are being added as they are decided, so check back periodically.

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## 2021 Assemblée Générale Annuelle de la SSEA/SÉÉA

L'assemblée générale annuelle des membres de la SSEA/SÉÉA se tient chaque année à Toronto lors de la même fin de semaine que le symposium annuel et colloque. On y élit l'ensemble des administrateurs (Trustees), lesquels gouvernent l'organisme parent, « national », de la Société ("Head Office") ; aussi, on y adopte le budget de la Société et approuve les états financiers. L'organisme national organise le Symposium annuel de même que le Colloque, s'occupe de toutes les publications nationales, incluant le Journal et le Newsletter et maintient la liste des membres. Tous les membres de tous les chapitres de la SSEA/SÉÉA sont aussi membres de l'organisme national et ont droit de vote. Si vous ne pouvez être présent lors de l'assemblée, vous pouvez aussi voter par procuration (proxy), en retournant le formulaire qui vous sera envoyé. Cette assemblée aura lieu le 5 novembre à 19h00.

Les connexions à l'AGA seront envoyées par courrier électronique aux membres dont nous avons les adresses électroniques, mais le lien vers l'AGA est :

**<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81714054990?pwd=UUxEdmJEN2V2NFVEZzdOY09wR25BQT09>**  
Meeting ID: 817 1405 4990 Passcode: 677895

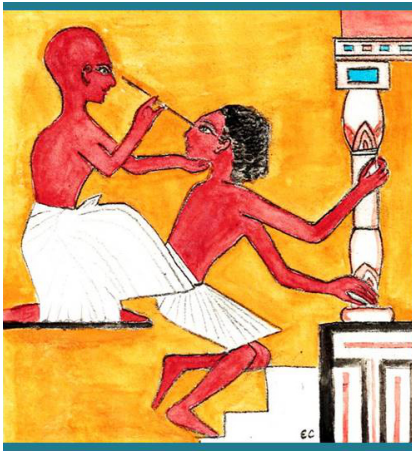
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### Horaire de la Fin de Semaine de l'Assemblée Générale 2021

Le Colloque et le Symposium sont maintenant les événements payant.  
Vendredi 5 novembre, 9h à 16h30 – Premier jour du Colloque  
Vendredi 5 novembre, débutant à 19h00 – Assemblée générale annuelle des membres de la SSEA/SÉÉA  
Samedi 6 novembre, 9h à 17h – 41e Symposium annuel  
Dimanche 7 novembre, 11h à 16h – Deuxième jour du Colloque et Session d'Affiches

Tous les événements se dérouleront virtuellement. Toutes les heures sont HE. **Veillez noter que le samedi soir, nous changeons les horloges d'une heure.** Le Colloque et le Symposium sont désormais regroupés en événements payants. Une taxe paie pour tout le week-end. Un programme détaillé pour l'ensemble du week-end est disponible en ligne sur [www.thessea.org](http://www.thessea.org). Les détails sont ajoutés au fur et à mesure qu'ils sont décidés, alors revenez périodiquement.

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## IN SICKNESS AND IN HEALTH: THE HEALING ARTS IN ANCIENT EGYPT

### A Virtual Symposium

**This year we are taking our topic from the times in which we are living, and looking back on what we are terming the “healing arts” in ancient Egypt. A stellar line-up of speakers will lead us into an understanding of medicine in its varying forms in ancient Egypt – what they knew, how they attempted to care for the health of the population, how these compared with contemporary medical practice, and more.**

**Dr. James P. Allen** will set the tone with the Keynote address, speaking generally about medicine in ancient Egypt, what we know of it from medical papyri, and specifically the Edwin Smith papyrus.

**Gayle Gibson** will discuss the medical practitioner in Egypt as an unlikely type of hero, since such “wise men” were respected and very highly regarded in the ancient Egyptian culture.

**Ed Meltzer** and **Gonzalo Sanchez** team up to discuss their work on their new translation of the Edwin Smith Papyrus, and the challenges faced in dealing with a treatise full of technical terminology. The morning ends with a three-way discussion amongst the morning’s presenters.

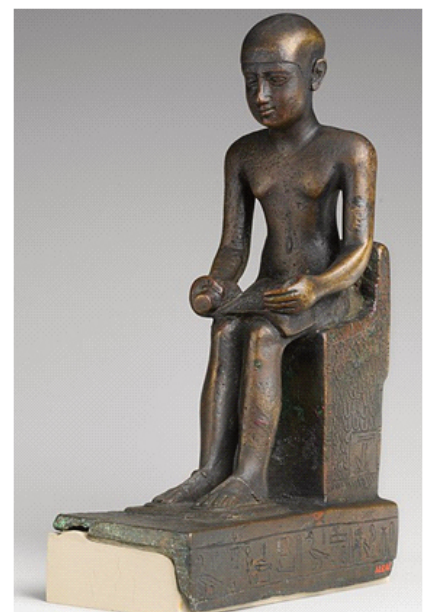
The afternoon begins with **Paula Veiga** who discusses herbal approaches to treating ailments in ancient Egypt – the role of plants in medicine and prescriptions, plants frequently used, and how certain plants were associated with particular gods such as Osiris.

We then take a look at what we know of health and sickness in ancient Egypt based on human remains. **Jessica Kaiser**, who studied the Old Kingdom workers of the Giza plateau, will speak of the findings of her work. She is followed by **Casey Kirkpatrick**, who examined the much later bodies of teenagers in the Fayoum area.

After a break, dentist-egyptologist **Dr. Roger Forshaw** takes us into the world of one of the ancient specializations, dentistry, and introduces us to what we have learned about ancient oral health and the treatment of dental issues.

Finally, we veer off into the non-physical aspects of medical treatments that served to complement physical treatments. **Kasia Szpakowska** will introduce the role of gods and demons in treating a variety of ailments, but particularly mental illness.

The day wraps up with a Q&A discussion among the afternoon’s presenters.



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# In Sickness and in Health

Programme of topics for the day (note all times are Eastern Time)

<b>TIME</b>	<b>TOPIC</b>	<b>SPEAKER(S)</b>
09:00	Opening Welcome and Introduction	
9:15-10:00	Keynote: Papyrus Edwin Smith, a Field Surgeon's Manual	James Allen
10:00-10:30	The Healer in Ancient Egyptian Thinking: Imhotep and Amenhotep son of Hapu	Gayle Gibson
<b>10:30-10:40</b>	<b>BREAK</b>	
10:40-11:30	Medicine in the Edwin Smith Papyrus	Ed Meltzer/Gonzalo Sanchez
11:30-12:00	Discussion and Q&As	Chaired by Gayle Gibson
<b>12:00-1:00</b>	<b>LUNCH BREAK</b>	
1:00 – 1:35	Green Osiris: The Flora Connection	Paula Veiga
1:40-2:40	Human Remains: Giza Cemetery followed by The Bioarchaeology of Care in Ancient Egypt	Jessica Kaiser Casey Kirkpatrick
<b>2:40-2:50</b>	<b>BREAK</b>	
2:50-3:45	Dental Health, Disease and Dentistry in Ancient Egypt	Dr. Roger Forshaw
3:50-4:40	In the Grip of Demons and Gods: Deliverance from mental illness through faith, prayer, and spells	Kasia Szpakowska
4:40 – 5:15	Discussion and Q&As	Chaired by Kerry Muhlestein

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## Membership Renewal Time

September 1 is the start of a new membership year for the SSEA/SÉÉA. If you haven't renewed already, now is the time! You can get the form on the SSEA website, [www.thessea.org](http://www.thessea.org).

And now if you are in North America, you can pay by E-transfer directly from your account. The name to enter for Recipient is **SSEA**. When prompted to input an email address associated with it, enter **Treasurer@thessea.org**. In the message box, enter "**Membership**".

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## The SSEA Receives a Donation to Support its Speaker Program

Thanks to an important donation from the family of the late Dr. Sally L. Katary, the SSEA/SÉÉA now has a fund from which to pay for an annual speaker. Sally was a founding member of the SSEA, a Trustee, scholar, teacher, and an SSEA supporter in many ways.

The donation is expected to produce sufficient growth to allow us to cover the costs of a special speaker into the foreseeable future. It is expected that the inaugural speaker will be in 2022, at a date to be determined. Various options for how to implement the speaker initiative are under consideration.

The Society is grateful to the Katary family for their donation and support.





## Get your 2022 SSEA Calendar now!



### SSEA 2022 CALENDAR

After 18 months of pandemic, who can even tell what day it is? YOU CAN! With the 2022 SSEA wall calendar. This year's theme is RAMESSES THE GREAT. He ruled an empire. Now you can have him on your wall. Calendars are \$25, including shipping. Proceeds directly support the SSEA.

January



March



April



Once again, the SSEA is delighted to have a calendar available for members to purchase. Featuring some stunning photos of this year's theme of Ramesses II, we hope that this will make a 'Great' calendar to hang on your wall! Or why not buy a number of copies to give to friends and family?

The cost of this stunning calendar is just \$25, including shipping. To purchase copies of the calendar, please order from the Society or email the Society's usual email address [sseainfo@gmail.com](mailto:sseainfo@gmail.com). And don't forget that **all proceeds** from the sale of this calendar go to the SSEA to help fund its work in Egyptology in Canada and Egypt!

## Conference Deal for SSEA members!



[ArcaBooks.com](http://ArcaBooks.com)

Regular AGM/Symposium Weekend bookseller ARCA Books is a sponsor of the Symposium Weekend.

The ARCA website offers a browse-by-category option when searching for subjects of interest.

Visit ARCA at [www.ArcaBooks.com](http://www.ArcaBooks.com) to view their catalogue and make your purchases.

At checkout, use coupon **SSEA** for **20%** off the price of any publication on the website.

Offer starts Sept. 10 and ends Dec. 3.

Local pickup is possible in place of shipping.

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## SSEA Toronto Chapter Update

The Toronto Chapter would like to thank everyone who attended our virtual lectures for the 2020-2021 lecture series. We welcomed a variety of domestic speakers, as well as many from the UK. We would also like to thank everyone who donated towards the Nicolas Millet Scholarship – we hope we can continue to count on your support.

The 2021-2022 lecture series will commence in September (some will be virtual, and we are hoping some will be able to be in person), with a cooking demonstration from Chef Amr at the Papyrus Restaurant in Toronto. We will also be welcoming Dr. Nathaniel Dominy, who will no doubt provide a riveting lecture.

We will also be offering two courses in the Fall (October and November) – one on Sexuality in Ancient Egypt and one on Iconography. If you are interested in enrolling for them, please check our website, where you can find all the relevant information.

The 50th Anniversary of the founding of the Toronto Chapter took place in 2020, but with Covid, we were unable to celebrate. So, we have decided to invite some of the founding members to provide us with a lecture and so far, we have confirmed Prof. Greg Mumford and Dr. Terry Miosi. 2022 also marks the centenary of the discovery of the tomb of King Tutankhamun, as well as the bicentenary of the decipherment of hieroglyphs by Jean-François Champollion. We have invited speakers to give lectures on both topics – Prof. Ronald Leprohon (King Tutankhamun) and Dr. Jean Revez (Champollion).

If we are able to provide in person lectures, we are hoping to attend a pub in the summer of 2022 where we can taste various beers, while hearing a lecture on beer making in ancient Egypt. We also have dates reserved for our Montreal exchange, which allows a grad student from Montreal to come to Toronto to give a lecture and vice versa. We are hoping this can be done in person, but it may have to be virtual. We are also hoping to once again be able to hold our annual Egyptian New Year's dinner in July 2022, as well as other fun events, if we are permitted to do so.

Please check our website [sseatoronto.wordpress.com](http://sseatoronto.wordpress.com) or our Facebook page for lecture topics, dates, and times, course information, as well as upcoming events (which will be updated as they are available). We look forward to welcoming everyone to our upcoming lecture series and we hope if you enjoy them, you will consider becoming a member, if you are not already one. It is because of our member support that we can continue to bring you new and exciting lectures and events.

Dawn Power  
Toronto Chapter President

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### In Memoriam

We would like to honour the memory of any of our members who have passed recently.

If you know of anyone, please send his/her name to [elainearrone@gmail.com](mailto:elainearrone@gmail.com). and they will be remembered in our first 2022 Newsletter.

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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, and Toronto, Ontario. The Chapters host lectures and events on Egyptological topics. Full Individual and Student Memberships 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](mailto:info@thessea.org). For updates, schedule changes, and further information, see the SSEA website at: [www.thessea.org](http://www.thessea.org).