The concept of time in ancient Egypt

Start date  13 July 2018                      End date  15 July 2018
Venue       Madingley Hall                      Madingley
            Madingley
            Cambridge
Tutor       Dr Sarah Symons                    Course code  1718NRX069

Director of Programmes  Emma Jennings
For further information on this course, please contact  Public Programme Coordinator, Clare Kerr
                                                        clare.kerr@ice.cam.ac.uk or 01223 746237
To book  See: www.ice.cam.ac.uk  or telephone 01223 746262

Tutor biography
Sarah Symons is a member of the School of Interdisciplinary Science at McMaster University in Ontario. She teaches aspects of history of science, science communication, mathematics, and astronomy. She is interested in innovative teaching methods and is an instructor in Integrated Science, an undergraduate degree programme taught by research. Her own main field of research is ancient Egyptian astronomy. She is also Director of the William J. McCallion Planetarium in Hamilton, Ontario.
Course programme

Friday
Please plan to arrive between 16:30 and 18:30. You can meet other course members in the bar which opens at 18:15. Tea and coffee making facilities are available in the study bedrooms.

19:00    Dinner
20:30 – 22:00  Long time in ancient Egypt
22:00    Terrace bar open for informal discussion

Saturday
07:30    Breakfast
09:00 – 10:30  Years and months: the Egyptian calendars
10:30    Coffee
11:00 – 12:30  Archaeological dating: a puzzle for the ages
13:00    Lunch
14:00 – 16:00  Free
16:00    Tea
16:30 – 18:00  The hour-watchers: water clocks and sundials
18:00 – 18:30  Free
18:30    Dinner
20:00 – 21:30  Cycles in the sky: time in texts
21:30    Terrace bar open for informal discussion

Sunday
07:30    Breakfast
09:00 – 10:30  Cycles in the sky: time in tables
10:30    Coffee
11:00 – 12:30  Temples and tombs: a tour of time
12:45    Lunch

The course will disperse after lunch
Course syllabus

Aims:

The course aims to
- discuss the concept of “time” in ancient Egypt
- outline what we know and can support with evidence
- illustrate some problematic areas and gaps in our knowledge
- add context to our understanding of ancient Egyptian society and culture

Content:

How did the ancient Egyptians describe and measure time? This course examines the evidence for ancient Egyptian time and date measurement. We will investigate calendars, ways times and dates were recorded, time measuring instruments and tables, and texts concerning timekeeping. We also will look at ways we can piece together “who did what when” in ancient Egypt.

Presentation of the course:

The course will be a mixture of lectures and activities, with each session having active components. Where possible, timekeeping methods will be modelled or demonstrated using software, cardboard, or wooden models, giving students the opportunity of trying out timekeeping methods themselves. We will also look at texts from ancient Egypt and learn to read and write dates.

As a result of the course, within the constraints of the time available, students should be able to:
- understand the structure of the Kingdom/Dynasty chronology
- describe some methods used for dating materials and sites
- identify and read dates written in hieroglyphic script
- list and describe the major timekeeping methods used in ancient Egypt
## Reading and resources list

Listed below are a number of texts that might be of interest for future reference, but do not need to be bought (or consulted) for the course.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Author</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Publisher and date</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Clagett, M</td>
<td><em>Ancient Egyptian Science vol. 2: Calendars, Clocks, and Astronomy.</em></td>
<td>American Philosophical Society 1995</td>
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<tr>
<td>Symons, S.L.,</td>
<td><em>Ancient Egyptian astronomy.</em></td>
<td>2013</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cockcroft, R.,</td>
<td></td>
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<td>Bettencourt, J.</td>
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<td>Koykka, C.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hornung, E.,</td>
<td><em>Ancient Egyptian chronology</em></td>
<td>Brill Academic</td>
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<tr>
<td>Warburton, D.A.</td>
<td>Handbook of Oriental Studies</td>
<td></td>
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Browsing through this book (particularly the plates) gives an overview of the types of texts and objects we will be discussing. The book by Clagett (above) is available for reading online in full at [https://books.google.ca/books?id=xKKPUpDOTKAC](https://books.google.ca/books?id=xKKPUpDOTKAC).


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**Note** Students of the Institute of Continuing Education are entitled to 20% discount on books published by Cambridge University Press (CUP) which are purchased at the Press bookshop, 1 Trinity Street, Cambridge (Mon-Sat 9am – 5:30pm, Sun 11am – 5pm). A letter or email confirming acceptance on to a current Institute course should be taken as evidence of enrolment.

*Information correct as of:* 05 October 2017