

CLE343 Supernatural Beings and Demons of Ancient Egypt

CL-M79 Ancient Egyptian Demonology

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Swansea University, Wales, UK

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Joint undergraduate level 3 and graduate MA level



Introduction

Ancient Egyptian textual and non-textual evidence bespeaks a wide-spread belief in an indeterminate range of demonic beings that influenced the world of the living and of the dead. This module explores the nature of these liminal entities – both hostile and beneficial – that filled the zones between human, animal, and god, and the methods used by religious scholars to study them. The sources will include texts (such as Coffin Texts, literary texts, spells), representations (on artifacts and tomb walls), and objects (such as ivory wands and apotropaic figurines). The Egypt Centre provides an opportunity to engage with the evidence directly. We will also have a field trip to another collection.

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Class Times:
Wed, 11-1, KH216

Dynamics

This is a seminar module, not lecture, so a good class depends on you. The first class which will be an introductory lecture on supernatural beings and the study of them, along with examples of how to use the evidence. As seminars can be deadly without a lively dialogue, it is important that each of you express opinions, as well as question, challenge, and engage your colleagues. **Every week you will pick a supernatural being or type to explore, and use a different dataset relating it to the theme of the week and the case-study.** For class, bring your notes so you can report and discuss your findings. Some of the classes will feature guest speakers (stay tuned!).

**** Books ****

Required Bibliography (you should purchase)

- Raven, Maarten J. (2012). *Egyptian Magic: The Quest for Thoth's Book of Secrets*. Cairo: American University of Cairo. (Note: While I have assigned readings for this, it is even more useful if you read the whole thing as soon as possible.)
- Borghouts, Joris F. (1978). *Ancient Egyptian Magical Texts*. (Vol. 9). Leiden: E.J. Brill.
- Ritner, Robert K. (1993). *The Mechanics of Ancient Egyptian Magical Practice*. Chicago: The Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago. [<http://oi.uchicago.edu/research/pubs/catalog/saoc/saoc54.html>]
- Readings will be available on Blackboard & in the library as well

Highly Recommended to Read

- *Archiv für Religionsgeschichte*, 14, is dedicated to the topic of Ancient Demonology (including Ancient Egypt, Mesopotamia, Classical Greece and Rome).
- Hornung, E. (1996), *Conceptions of God in ancient Egypt: The one and the many* (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press). [B141 HOR]
- Kousoulis, Panagiotis I. M. (Ed.). (2011). *Ancient Egyptian Demonology: Studies on the Boundaries between the Demonic and the Divine in Egyptian Magic*. Leuven: Peeters.
- Pinch, G. (1994), *Magic in Ancient Egypt* (London: British Museum Press). [BF1591 PIN]
- Stein, R. L. and Stein, P. L. (2007), *The Anthropology of Religion, Magic, and Witchcraft* (2nd edn.; Boston: Allyn & Bacon).
- Van der Toorn, Karel, Becking, Bob, & van der Horst, Pieter W. (Eds.). (1999). *Dictionary of Deities and Demons in the Bible* (Second extensively revised edition ed.). Leiden: Brill.
- Further bibliography for the sources you will be using in the module is on Blackboard
- An extensive bibliography is on <http://www.demonthings.com/bibliography/>

**** Syllabus ****

IMPORTANT: Readings are below. Bring all your readings and notes with you to class. This could be done via printout, notes (handwritten or on your computer) or online on your computer/tablet/etc. You have to be able to refer to these texts throughout the class. All readings for lectures should have been read **beforehand** (including the one for session 1) so that you will be able to participate. Also check the weekly folders on Blackboard for the tasks 📁.

<i>week</i>	Topic	Case Study	Exercise
1	What's a Demon & where do we find them?		
2	Definitions & Terms for Beings		Exploring the Evidence
3	Names & Combinations	Sehaqeq	magical texts
4	Depiction & Manifestation	Bes-image or Taweret-image	working with images (wands)
5	Characteristics	Gatekeepers of the Afterlife	Coffin Texts
6	Demonic-Human interactions I	Enemies & Affliction Mongerers	Magical & medical texts
7	Demonic-Human interactions II	Gatekeepers of the Afterlife	Book of the Dead
8	Classification	<i>werets</i>	Oracular Amuletic Decrees
9	Divine-Demonic	Divine Guardians in both worlds	Royal Books of the Afterlife
10	Ancient Near East & Med Interactions	Samanu Demon	
	Field Trip 1	British Museum Basement Tour	
	Field Trip 2	Egypt Centre Demon Trail	
	Workshop	Ancient Egyptian Demonology Project Database	

**** Readings (check folders on Blackboard) ****

Week 1 **Introduction**; Definitions; Sources & Evidence; Methodologies & Approaches

Raven 2012: Chapters 1 & 2

Week 2 **Definitions & Exploring the Evidence**

- Kousoulis, Panagiotis I. M. (2011). The Demonic Lore of Ancient Egypt: Questions on Definition. In P. I. M. Kousoulis (Ed.), *Ancient Egyptian Demonology: Studies on the Boundaries between the Demonic and the Divine in Egyptian Magic* (pp. ix-xxi). Leuven: Peeters.
- Lucarelli, Rita. (2010). Demons (benevolent and malevolent). *UCLA Encyclopedia of Egyptology*. Retrieved from <http://escholarship.org/uc/item/1r72q9vy>
- Szpakowska, Kasia. (2009). Demons in Ancient Egypt. *Religion Compass*, 3(5), 799-805. doi: 10.1111/j.1749-8171.2009.00169.x
- Hornung 1996: Chapter 2

 **Exploring the Evidence**

Week 3 **Names & Combinations;** textual descriptions

- Raven 2012: Chapter 3
- Borghouts, Joris F. (1999). Lexicographical Aspects of Magical Texts. In S. Grunert & I. Hafemann (Eds.), *Textcorpus und Wörterbuch: Aspekte zur ägyptischen Lexikographie* (Vol. 14, pp. 149-177). Leiden, Boston, Köln: E.J. Brill.
- Hornung 1996: Chapter 3
- Azzam, Lila M. (2009). The Demon *šh3kk*. In el-Sharkawy & B. Samir (Eds.), *The Horizon Studies in Egyptology in Honour of M. A. Nur el-Din (10-12 April 2007)* (pp. 105-108). Cairo: Supreme Council of Antiquities Press.

 **Individual gods (Schaqeq) & working with magical spells**

Week 4 **Depiction & Manifestation;** structural approaches

- Raven 2012: Chapter 4 Practice of Magic
- Simandiraki-Grimshaw, Anna. (2010). Minoan Animal-Human Hybridity. In D. B. Counts & B. Arnold (Eds.), *The Master of Animals in Old World Iconography* (pp. 93-106). Budapest: Archaeolingua Foundation.
- Fischer, Henry G. (1987). The Ancient Egyptian Attitude Towards the Monstrous. In A. E. Farkas, P. O. Harper & E. B. Harrison (Eds.), *Monsters and Demons in the Ancient and Medieval Worlds: Papers Presented in Honor of Edith Porada* (pp. 13-26). Mainz: Philipp von Zabern.
- Hornung 1996: Chapter 4
- Romano, James F. (1998). Notes on the Historiography and History of the Bes-Image in Ancient Egypt. *Bulletin of the Australian Center for Egyptology*; 9, 89-105.
- Weingarten, Judith. (1991). *The Transformation of Egyptian Taweret into the Minoan Genius: A study in cultural transmission in the Middle Bronze Age*. Partille: Paul Astroms.

 **Manifestations of Bes- or Ipet-image & images (wands)**

Week 5 **Characteristics;** functional approaches; limits of power; locomotion; emotions

GUEST LECTURE

- Raven 2012: Chapter 5 Books of Magic
- Lucarelli, Rita. (2012). The so-called vignette of Spell 182 of the Book of the Dead. In R. Lucarelli, M. Müller Roth & A. Wütrich (Eds.),

Herausgehen am Tage. Gesammelte Schriften zum altägyptischen Totenbuch (pp. 79-91). Wiesbaden: Harassowitz.

- Hornung 1996: Chapter 5
- Leprohon, Ronald J. (1994). Gatekeepers of This and the Other World. *Journal of the Society for the Study of Egyptian Antiquities*, 24, 77-91.

 **Functional Approaches - Coffin Texts**

Week 6 Human-Demonic Interaction I

- Raven 2012: Chapter 6 The Social Security System
- Frandsen, Paul John. (2011). Faeces of the creator or the temptations of the dead. In P. I. M. Kousoulis (Ed.), *Ancient Egyptian Demonology: Studies on the Boundaries between the Demonic and the Divine in Egyptian Magic* (Vol. Orientalia Lovaniensia Analecta 175, pp. 25-62). Leuven: Peeters.
- Hornung 1996: Chapter 6
- Eyre, Christopher J. (2009). Belief and the Dead in Pharaonic Egypt. In M.-C. Poo (Ed.), *Rethinking Ghosts in World Religions* (pp. 33-46). Leiden, Boston: Brill.

 **Presentation of the Dead: Magical vs Literary sources**

Week 7 Human-Demonic Interaction II GUEST LECTURE

- Raven 2012: Chapter 8 A Magical Funeral Insurance, 9 Eternal Life
- Lucarelli, Rita. (2010). The guardian-demons of the Book of the Dead. *British Museum Studies in Ancient Egypt and Sudan*, 15, 85-102.

 **Gate-Keepers in the Book of the Dead**

Week 8 Classification

- Hornung 1996: Chapter 7
- Lucarelli, Rita. (2009). Popular Beliefs in Demons in the Libyan Period: The evidence of the Oracular Amuletic Decrees. In G. P. F. Broekman, R. J. Demarée & O. E. Kaper (Eds.), *The Libyan Period in Egypt. Historical and Cultural Studies into the 21st-24th Dynasties: proceedings of a Conference at Leiden University, 25-27 October 2007* (pp. 231-239). Leiden, Leuven: Nederlands Instituut voor het Nabije Oosten, Peeters.

 **Demons wherever you look - Oracular Amuletic Decrees**

Week 9 Divine-Demonic Interaction GUEST LECTURE

- Raven 2012: Chapter 7 Vigilant Authorities
- Roberson, Joshua. (2009). The Early History of "New Kingdom" Netherworld Iconography: A Late Middle Kingdom Apotropaic Wand Reconsidered. In D. P. Silverman, W. K. Simpson & J. W. Wegner (Eds.), *Archaism and Innovation: Studies in the Culture of Middle Kingdom Egypt* (pp. 427-445). New Haven; Philadelphia: Department of Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations; University of Pennsylvania Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology.
- Manassa, Colleen. (2012). Divine taxonomy in the Underworld Books. *Archiv für Religionsgeschichte*, 14, 47-68.

 **Guarding the Divine Here & Beyond - Royal Books of the Afterlife**

Week 10 Ancient Near East & Mediterranean Interactions

- Raven 2012: Chapter s 10-11 Changing worlds...
- Lucarelli, Rita. (2012). Towards a comparative approach to demonology in Antiquity: The case of Ancient Egypt and Mesopotamia. *Archiv für Religionsgeschichte*, 14, 11-26.
- Sonik, Karen. (2012). Mesopotamian Conceptions of the Supernatural: A Taxonomy of *Zwischenwesen*. *Archiv für Religionsgeschichte*, 14, 103-116.
- Fischer-Elfert, Hans-W. (2011). Sāmānu on the Nile: The Transfer of a Near Eastern Demon and Magico-Medical Concept into New Kingdom Egypt. In M. Collier & S. Snape (Eds.), *Ramesside Studies in Honour of K. A. Kitchen (pp. 189-198)*. Bolton: Rutherford Press.

**** Assessment ****

**For all the assessments you will choose a demonic being or category
(see examples below)**

Formal Assessment for Level 3 students:

13 March	40% Presentation (Individual)
12 May	60% Research Paper

Presentation - 40%

You have only 15 minutes to tell the committee (i.e. your classmates and examiner) the essentials of what they need to know about these entities. What do they look like? What do they do? Where are they found? Include a brief bibliography of main sources for those interested in learning more as one of your slides.

Think of this as a “show and tell,” exercise, a rare opportunity to provide a session on *everything you wanted to know about xyz but were afraid to ask*. To help you prepare to engage the public, you will also write an engaging one page article that might be published in *Inscriptions*, the Friends of the Egypt Centre newsletter. The presentation, research poster, and article are required, but further **creativity** is encouraged! Your audience is fellow level 3 and MA students.

The Committee will give you feedback, but the final decision (in other words, your grade) is fully in the hands of the Lords of All (that would be me and the 2nd marker). While this should be fun, it is also a serious exercise, and you will receive the feedback from everybody as guidance to help you in future presentations and in your research paper.

Please let me know in advance if you need any audio-visual equipment. Only part of the grade is based on the presentation – the poster, article, and notes count as well. Please read the marking criteria *carefully*.

To bring to class (there will be two 2-hour sessions scheduled):

- Presentation (if using PowerPoint, Keynote, or Prezi, bring it on a flashdrive. There will be a Mac and a PC available).
- Poster (they will be posted around the room. In the summer they will be posted in James Callaghan and online)

To upload to Turnitin:

- Poster (PDF)
- Handout or notes
- 1-page (maximum) article
- Bibliography

Research Paper - 60%

The research paper should be designed as a persuasive argument for the significance of your being (3,000 words). Your audience is readers of scholarly journals such as the *Journal of Egyptian Archaeology* or the *Journal of the American Research Center in Egypt*. All the usual guidelines for a research paper apply.

Remember, the committee is particularly interested in the following:

- the reason that you have chosen these beings above all others
- a structural analysis
- a functional analysis
- an essential analysis
- the main sources: include a representative sample
- geographical & temporal context
- anything else that will strengthen your case

Formal Assessment for MA students:

Weekly	30% Weekly Data Reports (average of best 5)
TBD	20% Seminar Expert (presentation)
12 May:	50% Research Paper

Weekly Data Reports - 30%

Every week you will pick a supernatural being or type to explore, and use a different dataset relating it to the theme of the week and the case-study. You need to submit, via the Assignments section of Blackboard, a succinct analysis and summary based on the given question and one of the case-study readings given for your topic (you are encouraged to do all the readings!). Do include at least one question associated with the readings and/or your research. They will be due by Noon on the Sunday before the class for which they are assigned. A sample format is on Blackboard.

Your best 5 will count towards your final assessment (each is worth 6 points). This does not mean that you should only submit five. You should be sure to carry out this exercise every week to ensure that you are prepared for each seminar.

Seminar Expert - 20%

One week you will be the expert in charge and will lead the seminar for 45 minutes. Your presentation should last no more than 20 minutes and focus on an introduction to the topic as well as the results of your analysis. Don't think of this as a lecture, but more of a workshop. You may wish to provide the rest of the class with questions or data set analyses to prepare in advance, or you may prefer to lead a workshop style session where we all work on the data together during the class session. There will be a section of the Blackboard site for you to control and use. You can post questions for the class, links, discussion boards, wikis, whatever you think would be most useful.

Your grade will be based on the presentation and the related notes (upload via Blackboard Assignments). Since is this your first time leading a seminar, student engagement will not be assessed, though feedback will be given. This assignment will give you needed experience and practice that you will use in any number of career or academic paths that you may later take. You will practice: leadership skills, peer assessment, accepting and giving constructive critiques, presenting analysis in an

understandable way, summarising, oral communication, presentation, use of information technologies, assessing others and of course, teaching!

Research Paper - 50%

The research paper should be designed as a persuasive argument for the significance of your being (4,000 words). Your audience is readers of scholarly journals such as the *Journal of Egyptian Archaeology* or the *Journal of the American Research Center in Egypt*. All the usual guidelines for a research paper apply.

Remember, the committee is particularly interested in the following:

- the reason that you have chosen these beings above all others
- a structural analysis
- a functional analysis
- an essential analysis
- the main sources: include a representative sample
- geographical & temporal context
- anything else that will strengthen your case

Possible examples include demons:

- with a particular visual appearance, either composite or complete:
 - Hippo
 - Dog
 - Bes-image
 - Rabbit
 - Turtle
 - Flaming torches
- engaged in a particular activity:
 - dancing
 - chopping
 - pulling out hearts
- with a particular distinguishing characteristic:
 - fire-breathers
 - loud-mouths
- associated with a specific location:
 - mountains
 - watery areas
- who cause particular problems:
 - plague
 - headaches
 - possession
- who prevent particular problems:
 - psychological disturbances
 - helpers to the gods
 - assaults on infants
- who are featured on <http://www.demonthings.com/category/daily-demon/>