

Title

Preliminary enquire on daily life in ancient Egypt: investigating gender and domestic space

Keywords

Daily life, Gender, Material Culture, Domestic Space, Egypt

Abstract

Daily life studies on Ancient Egypt combine textual, visual and material sources. Scholars dedicated to the topic have focused mainly on Deir el-Medina, Amarna and Lahun, producing a vast literature that offered different perspectives about how ancient Egyptians lived. However, these studies have provided many information on milestone events about individuals, such as giving birth, marriage, death, etc. precisely because there are many sources available. On the other hand, it is more difficult to define what was a daily life for ancient Egyptian society, differentiating those special events from a daily routine. In adjusting this new framework it would be possible to identify a new range of social relations, especially related to gender, age and domestic space.

Biographical note

Thais Rocha da Silva is a PhD student at University of Oxford sponsored by CNPq (Conselho Nacional de Desenvolvimento Científico e Tecnológico) in Brazil. She did her Masters Degree in the University of São Paulo studying gender relations in Ptolemaic Egypt based on Greek and Demotic letters. Her main research interests are gender, domestic space and material culture in Ancient Egypt.

Jessica Santos
CHAM – FCSH/NOVA-UAc

Title

Surviving to childhood at Tell el-Amarna: the archaeological evidence

Keywords

Tell el-Amarna, Childhood, Magical Protection, Domestic Religion, Material Culture

Abstract

The city of Tell el-Amarna was projected and constructed under the order of the pharaoh Amenhotpe IV/Akhenaton, as part of its political-religious reformation. Intended to be the new Egyptian capital, Akhetaton (as was originally called) was built in the desert, in an area devoid of the influences of the previous political-religious system. In this communication we intent to analyse the results of the archaeological excavations conducted in Tell el-Amarna's domestic contexts in order to perceive which contribute

this archaeological site provides to the study of one particular sphere of the daily life: the magical protection of the ancient Egyptian children.

In this way, focusing on the material culture found among the city remains, we aim to present the multiple magical mechanisms that were used by the people who lived there to protect their children from the uncountable risks and perils associated with childhood which caused elevated infantile mortality rates. In addition, we intend to understand how widespread these practices were in the city and if they were accessible to anyone, independently of its social status. Finally, we will demonstrate that in spite of the imposition of a new official religion – based on the cult of one deity, Aton – during the Amarna Period, the people continued to conduct the domestic religious practices, worshipping other Egyptian deities, as the ones related with childhood.

Biographical note

Jessica Alexandra Monteiro Santos has a Masters degree in History (Egyptology) by the Faculdade de Ciências Sociais e Humanas da Universidade Nova de Lisboa, having defended a dissertation entitled “A Protecção Mágica da «Primeira Infância» no Egípto Antigo”. Jessica Santos is research assistant at CHAM, FCSH, Universidade NOVA de Lisboa, Universidade dos Açores and her research interests are related with the ancient Egyptian daily life, in particular of women and children.

Christoph Schmidhuber
University of Cambridge

Title

Childhood in Mesopotamian texts and archaeology: finding a common ground?

Keywords

childhood studies, identity, material culture studies, Mesopotamia, Assyriology and Near Eastern Archaeology

Abstract

Children in antiquity, having long been rather overlooked in modern scholarship, rightly received increased attention by archaeologists, historians and philologists in recent years. Despite few exceptions, however, most studies have not addressed how to deal with the divide between archaeological and textual data. This is also true for ancient Mesopotamia, where the separation of Assyriology and Near Eastern Archaeology has created reluctance in integrating both types of sources. While combined approaches have been successfully applied to specific topics in recent years (e.g. Neo-Assyrian expansion, climate change), childhood and other aspects of social history lack such treatments.

In this talk, I will review the different types of data available for studying the role and status of children in the Old Babylonian period (2000-1600 BC) and will outline opportunities and limitations in integrating material culture and texts. I will discuss the different information that can be extracted from both types of data and highlight the