

## Lecture Transcript:

### The Altered State of Religion Sekhmet and Ritual Revelries in the Reign of Amenhotep III

by Betsy Bryan

Wednesday, September 30, 2020

#### **Louise Bertini:**

Hello, everyone and good afternoon or good evening depending on where you are joining us from, and I want to welcome to you to our September public lecture with Dr. Betsy Bryan titled "The Altered State of Religion Sekhmet Ritual Revelries in the Reign of Amenhotep III." I'm Dr. Louise Bertini, and I'm the executive director of ARCE. For those of you who are new to ARCE, we are a private nonprofit organization, whose mission is to support research on all aspects of Egyptian history, culture, foster a broader knowledge about public and support American Egyptian cultural ties. As a nonprofit, we rely on ARCE members to support our work. So I first want to give a special welcome to our ARCE members who are joining us today. If you are not already a member and are interested in joining, I invite you to visit our website [arce.org](http://arce.org) and learn more. We provide a suite of benefits to our members including our private member-only lecture series. Our next member-only lecture will be on October 18<sup>th</sup> at 3 p.m. Eastern Time with Imam Abdulfattah of the University of Bonn and is titled "Maurice Nahman Antiquities Collector, Dealer and Authority." We are also having another member-only lecture on October 25<sup>th</sup> at 3 p.m. Eastern Time with Dr. Tara Prakash of the University of Charleston titled "Putting Them Back Together Again: The Story of the Old Kingdom Prisoner Statues at the Metropolitan Museum of Art and the British Museum." Our next public lecture will be October 31<sup>st</sup> at 1 p.m. Eastern Time with Taylor Moore of the University of California Santa Barbara, who will be presenting on ... Apologies, on "The Curse of the Black Eggplant: Reconstructing Occult Economies in late Ottoman Egypt. Last but not least, ARCE National along with the ARCE New York chapter, Archaeological Institute of America New York chapter and the Metropolitan Museum of Art are cohosting a special lecture on October 17<sup>th</sup> at 1 pm Eastern Time in honor of International Archaeology Day with Dr. Mark Lehner titled "The People Who Built the Pyramids: How We Know." Details will be forthcoming later this week on how to register for this special event. So I'm now going to turn it over to Dr. Betsy Bryan for our lecture today. Dr. Bryan is the Alexander Badawy Professor of Egyptian Art and Archaeology at Johns Hopkins University. Her areas of specialization are

history, art, and archaeology of the New Kingdom. Her current fieldwork is on the temple complex of the goddess Mut at South Karnak, and her research focuses on defining the earliest forms of Mut of Isheru. So I'll hand it over to you, Dr. Bryan.

**Betsy Bryan:**

Thank you very much, Louise. And I am very much happy to see everyone whatever time zone you're in. I look forward so much to the day when being truly face-to-face doesn't mean we can't enter someplace and doesn't illicit angry looks. I prefer that we can all be open-faced in Ancient Egyptian [foreign] wbi-hr, which did not mean without a mask, but skillful and able to understand. I am here to talk to you about some ceremonies that the Ancient Egyptians conducted more than 3,300 years ago. They were cultic revelries that included alcohol, drugs and loud music resulting in sexual hook-ups between participants in ways that some in Egyptian society were both skeptical of and found humorous, just as many of you would react today. (video audio was not audible during the lecture). Well, they're clearly ready to have a wild time, and you notice how Otter worked the group up to that repeating, "Toga, toga, toga," until they're all on their feet. It will be my aim to unpack these Egyptian festivities and look at the roles played by the gods, kings and various ranks of participants in our existing documentation. The religious environment of the 15th century B.C. when Amun-Ra was the premier deity is our backdrop, and we'll see that drunken festivities were very popular for some 120 years in the 18th dynasty. We'll see that in other religious trends including ancestor veneration was woven into the festivals and that we'll examine. We'll also see growing personal piety focused on the sun god. All of these religious trends were cohabiting in Ancient Thebes, and after we mention them, I will propose how I believe that these religious festivals were manipulated and redirected to further the specific aims of the king, royal family and court under Amenhotep III's rule. I'm leading with the Goddess Sekhmet, an alter ego of the great goddess Hathor. I worked at the precinct of the Goddess Mut Sekhmet Bastet for 20 years, where there are hundreds of granite statues of Sekhmet placed there in the reign of Amenhotep III. We'll return to those later, but due to discoveries we've made at the Mut temple, I have found myself trying to understand the worship of that goddess in New Kingdom. Between 2004 and 2007, our expedition from the Johns Hopkins University with the Supreme Council of Antiquities uncovered beneath the temples west side the column drums of a pillared hall dedicated by Queen Hatshepsut and her young nephew/stepson Thutmose III and identified as a monument for Mut as a porch or hall of drunkenness. The longer text on the left says, "She made it as a monument for her mother, Mut, mistress of Isheru, making for her a columned portico of drunkenness anew that she might perform given life." This represented a space for the celebration of the so-called festivals of drunkenness, known well

from the Mut precinct but for some 1,200 years after Hatshepsut's demise. Likewise, these festivals are very well-known for the goddess Hathor and are richly referred to on her temple walls at Dendera. Superb scholars such as John Darnell have elucidated much about the elements of the celebrations, particularly noting the importance of Hathor, the golden one, a reference to her as the Sun. Hathor's connection to other aspects are essential. First, as the eye of Ra, her role in maintaining the world and the gods representative in it, the king of Egypt. Hathor was a solar goddess, the eye of Ra, his agent in the world. In many ways, for him and for the king of Upper and Lower Egypt, she kept the mechanisms of the world running. Particularly, this means the annual flood cycle and celebrations of drinking, whether of beer or wine, allude to the river and the fertile green fields that it guaranteed each year, and also to the numerous plants and flowers that are part or edge the river itself. A song from the New Kingdom captured this notion quite specifically. "The river is wine, Ptah its reeds, Sekhmet its lotus leaf, ladet its lotus bud, and Nefertum its lotus flower." The song also indicates what was added to the wine when it was consumed at banquet. Second, in practice, Hathor's role as the eye of Ra was generally subcontracted to goddesses envisioned in lion form or associated with the cobra, Uraeus, protecting the forehead of the king himself. For example, Sekhmet, Raet-Tawy, Bastet, Nekhbet, Wadjet and Tefnut, the so-called far away goddesses. Just as lionesses are the primary food hunters and caretakers for lion prides, these goddesses ensured the food sources and the fertility of Egypt on behalf of the sun god and the king. Myths associated them with the slaughter of mankind, which the sun god instructed Hathor in the form of the lion Sekhmet to carry out. As the far away ones, lioness deities were said to have wandered away from the Nile Valley and were believed to need enticements to return and bring with them once again the great floods of the Nile. The story of the destruction of mankind contained within the religious book of the heavenly cow told of how Sekhmet's bloodthirst was quenched by drowning the fields of Upper Egypt with beer stained red to attract her violent lust. The connection of this myth to the drunkenness festival, wherein the goddesses offered this reddened brew called Minut is rather undeniable. Yet, it is surely combined with allusions in the myth of the sun's eyes. So far, only well preserved in late copies, but preferred to both textually and visually already in the New Kingdom. The far-away goddess called Tefnut, the moon goddess in the late example, was lured back to Egypt by a dog ape identified with Thoth, and her return ensured the proper maintenance of the sun god's creation on earth. Since we've connected Sekhmet and the lioness associations of Hathoric deities to the festivals, let's look more closely at the celebrations using both late and earlier materials. Amun-Ra was the national god of Egypt and the recipient of, to pun a little, the lion's share of royal patronage frequently resulting from booty and tribute derived from imperial conquests south

to Sudan and north as far as modern Syria. The great god Amun-Ra of Karnak benefited from the rulers largesse at Karnak, Luxor and other temple sites. The state religious worship was hierarchical in form and viewed only by a handful of clergy who opened his shrine each day to conduct ritual. There was nothing that we might call congregational worship in the interior of the temple. And the personnel themselves were highly stratified in their organization. Although, the professional clerics were supplemented by civilians who served in inherited part-time priestly roles. However, Amun-Ra left his sanctuary during festivals and traveled within his shrine placed on a boat to more accessible parts of his temple and also to a variety of temples around Thebes. At those times, the populace lined the streets and joyfully participated in the excitement of the god among the people. The worship of Sekhmet, Mut and other Hathoric deities in the drunkenness festivals however took place at two primary feasts in Thebes in the Ptolemaic era and likely in the New Kingdom. According to the Ptolemaic calendar on the entrance gate to the Mut temple, the first revelries took place in the very first month of the civil year in the month of Thoth day 20 most often. This is the primary festival of drunkenness at Dendera, Hathor's home temple. Many months later in the time of harvest or Shemu appears this entry. Beer tinted with red pigment overflows at the time of this festival of the valley. It's more exalted than blood, being the work of Menqet, the beer goddess to cheer Mut's heart out of her anger. The valley festival was a celebration of potential fertility coming with the inundation. It celebrated the potential return of the dead in a daily rebirth. The specific reference to the reddened brew in the calendar here clearly connects the valley festival in the second month of Shemu with the mythological story of Sekhmet's slaughter of mankind. We know that the beautiful feast of the valley as the drunkenness festival took place routinely and annually through much of the 18th dynasty. So thanks to a combination of sources both contemporary to the 18th dynasty and later, we can outline elements of the drunkenness festivals as they were observed both inside the temple proper by kings or high priests and in processional locations in the cemetery landscape of the Theban west. From the temple of Amun-Ra in Karnak, the god traveled from his sanctuary and joined with Mut to journey across the Nile. The king's figure is seen in the processions from Karnak to Deir el-Bahri, and he not only escorts the god on his travel but also participates in rituals to ensure a pure and propitious festival period. He demonstrates his fitness in ritual running and once the procession reaches its destinations at Hatshepsut's temple of Djoser-Djeseru, he participates in rituals there. The funerary temple of Hatshepsut at Deir el-Bahri, where also the Goddess Hathor had a local home associated with her perceived residence within the limestone cliffs, was named Holy of Holies, Djoser-Djeseru. Other deceased rulers' mortuary temples were also named as places where the god might visit and rest for a time, meaning that his boat and statue were

brought there and housed temporarily, but Djoser, as it was often called, was the primary destination. In the Hathor chapel at Deir el-Bahri, the king was depicted conducting a ritual of striking the ball, skr hema. His actions sent the evil eyes of the sun god's enemy, Apophis, associated with the balls here, hurtling away from endangering the world that the king must preserve on behalf of the god. Hathor was frequently called the Lady of Drunkenness just as she is so profoundly at Dendera and at the Mut temple across the river. The king's role in striking the ball defeated the enemies of the sun god to ensure a cosmic stability. Yet, beyond rituals conducted at the temple, little can be said about the role of the king other than in processions to and from the temple. The remainder of the valley festival was devoted to two primary aims. First, communion with the goddess by the festival participants in order to urge her continued love for the king and her protection of him from his enemies. And second, communion and visitation with ancestors, royal and non-royal, as they enjoy the festival drink and food. In this tomb from the left, we see the owner of the tomb and his wife receiving the ritual prayers of a priest, behind whom are the deceased parents of the tomb owner, and behind them, the family and friends, living and dead, all together at a banquet of communion. This ensured the ancestors' positive involvement with their family and friends still on Earth as well as their helpful intercession along with that of the deceased rulers. Inside the temples, formal requests to the goddess would take place in the open courtyard before the main interior shrines. At the temple of Hathor, that may have been in the court before the Hathor chapel, which you see here, or in the open court of the top tier of Deir el-Bahri, where scenes of the valley festival procession appear. At the Mut temple, the open court behind the pylon would have been the gathering place just in front of Hatshepsut's portico of drunkenness., located very likely on the west side of the original temple. From the hymn inscribed in the temple of Medamud invoking the Uraeus lioness goddess, Raet-Tawy, the order of ceremony and the personnel on in the Ptolemaic era is known, so we can make some general observations of how this beautiful feast of the valley began in Hatshepsut's time and then traveled to the west. In late June in her reign, this communal gathering began in the evening with the lamps being lit. The Medamud hymn begins, "Come, oh golden one, who eats of praise, because the food of her desire is dancing, who shines on the festival at the time of lighting the lamps, who's content with the dancing at night. Come, the procession is in the place of drunkenness, that hall of traveling through the marshes. Its performance is set. Its order is in effect without anything lacking in it." Now, it continues by telling us who the participants were. When the royal children pacify you with what is desired, the officials multiply the reversion offerings for you. When the lector priest exalts you in intoning a hymn, the magician recites the order of ritual. When the organizer praises you with his lotus blossoms, the percussionists take up the

tambourine. The female youths rejoice for you with garlands, the young women with wreath crowns. The drunken celebrants drum for you during the cool of the night with the results that those who awaken bless you. We cannot be certain whether there was in any way a perfect match between the participants and the Ptolemaic era and the 18th dynasty. However, it was likely quite similar. It's not surprising to find that the chief ritualist here who chants the hymn is a lector priest, not the high priest of the Medamud temple. The magician, one who knows things, writes the ritual, recites the ritual. These are people who have roles that go well beyond temple boundaries, and that was necessary in these festivals, which require the appropriate knowledge and control of magical practices but were also familiar with funerary practice. The identity of the officiants and the communal nature of the gathering of men and women strongly point to the source of these celebrations in the kinship system and ancestor veneration rather than the state. The other classifications named were part of temple groups, professional musicians whom we see as small orchestras in all periods. Those referred to as the drunken celebrants were not disparaged by this label. Rather, it indicated those who participated fully. The participants in the time of Hatshepsut were among the highest elites, including the high priest of Amun, the second priest, the steward of Senenmut and a variety of others. The order of the festivities required that all took place at evening, and the participants were gathered to hear the intoned chanting, as they don scented garlands and received from young women copious amounts of alcohol, heavily laced with various plant additives. Lotus was one of those plants and produced some sleepiness, but laudanum was also used in Dendera's drink for Hathor. The importance of the additives even affected the writing of the word drunkenness in the Medamud hymn, where it's determined by the lotus blossom. In a variety of elite tombs of the 18th dynasty, we see those serving the alcohol also dangling small vessels from their fingers. These would have contained the pressed oils of the plants that produced soporific and other neural effects on the drinkers. The tiny dangling vessels are a frequent element in banquet scenes, and in Theban tomb 17 of Nebamun, we see the server pouring the contents from that small pitcher into the drinking cup. The recipient holds an unusually large lotus, a common feature in banquet scenes, and likely suggestive here of a variety of uses. Most of the participants here at the banquets drank and then drifted into intoxicated sleep, while some may have wandered away to have sexual encounters before sleeping. But this was not the end of the temple service. As the hymn from Medamud says, "the drumming drunken celebrants awaken the others, who are both now inebriated and sleepy and most susceptible to suggestion." Now, there is music accompanied by acrobatic dancing carried out by the so-called Libyan dancers. As seen at Deir el-Bahri on the slide, they used rhythmic clappers that made loud staccato knocking sounds, carefully choreographed with the music and dancing. Following

this, the hymn introduces a variety of animals and fantastic beasts that praised the goddess. Here we have come into the ecstatic visions, produced after the long night of intoning, drumming, drinking, singing and dancing. The lector, magician and organizer control the pace and set the stage for the remainder of the ceremony. It's interesting here to pause briefly consider the Egyptian festival's use of mind-altering substances and its communal organization in a broader setting. Ceremonies around the world, ancient and current, have relied on alcohol and a variety of plants to assist in spiritual experiences. Particularly in Central and South America, shamans or experienced healers laid a communal gathering through the consumption of strong drugs and had them experience visions during the period, often of very similar types. It's interesting to find that the shamans, for example the Huichol Indians of North-Central Mexico and tribes in Amazonic Peru use not only a choice of drugs to control but also music and other rhythmic sounds along with a rich variety of smells, tastes and visions. To quote Dobkin de Rios, who worked with the Peruvians, "Rattles, singing, chanting and vocal productions in general may be very important part of the hallucinogenic experience." She continues to note that olfactory, tactile, auditory and gustatory senses are all present and no doubt affected by the music. Other researchers have found that synesthesias are common, that is that participants heard the chants or certain music, but smelled and tasted certain substances as a response. The types and uses of the music allowed healers to bring the communicants into their ecstatic journeys and also to bring them out. The specific sounds and rhythms acting as cues not unlike the concomitant uses of incense and bells in many types of modern worship. It would not surprise us then to think of the Egyptian versions of altered-state ceremonies as highly sophisticated and carefully choreographed as was described in the Medamud hymn. At the climactic moment of the awakening of the celebrants, the goddess joined the group in some manner, here perhaps in the form of a Hathor drinking goblet. The participants could see the goddess and, songs tell us, experience a moment across the human world meeting that of the divine. This was the formal aim of the drunkenness ceremonies carried out at tombs on the west bank, where the participants might drink and be carried into a communion with the Goddess Hathor and with their deceased family members. At Dendera, the epiphany of the non-temple community with the goddess provided them with the opportunity to make a direct request to the goddess, and these were of two types" A request for Hathor's love for the king and all the people, and second, for her destruction of the king's enemies and his protection from them at all times. In the Mut temple, the high priest of Amun, Hapuseneb, left a statue of himself with a hymn on it to Mut Sekhmet that provides one very specific request made to the goddess during that moment of epiphany. It asks her to awaken peacefully, which meant as Goyeau and others have stated without anger at those whom you will

join. But then the inscription does not ask for her love and joy but rather states, "May you awake propitiated. May the pestilence which is upon your mouth and the slaughter which is upon your lips awaken." It continues to refer to a very specific concern that Hatshepsut has placed before the goddess already. "May you judge this matter, which the king, Maatkare, has spoken to you. O, Sekhmet, may you be powerful of heart, be powerful indeed over those who hate her." Does this suggest that the queen herself was present at the communion epiphany and that her request was then monumentalized by the high priest of Amun? We can't say, but there is little doubt that this ritual was one considered highly important and highly relevant for Hatshepsut, who built the portico of drunkenness for its celebration in the Mut temple at Deir el-Bahri, and in the reign of this ruler, this was serious worship. But what of the celebration of the beautiful feast of the valley on the west of the city? After the royal procession has reached Deir el-Bahri and festivities have been enacted there, the god goes to another funerary temple to rest and often that is of the current ruler. This occasion's gatherings and elite tombs where there were offerings burned on braziers and then banqueting and true drinking feasts to achieve the experience of the goddess. In the tomb of the high priest of Amun Menkheperaseneb, the priest receives the gifts from the temples where Amun had visited. A number of banqueting scenes in other tombs make specific an indication to become drunk. In Theban Tomb 85 of Amenemheb, a male server requests that he imbibe, saying, "For your Ka, a perfect drunkenness, make festival." In the tomb of Horemheb, a military scribe in the reign of Thutmose IV, the song of the musicians is written about the seated recipients at the banquet. And is the most complete version of what the valley festival drunkenness intended. "For your Ka, make festival in your beautiful house of eternity, in the place of everlasting, a beautiful heart being in your hand. Tie on wah collar, rub on fine ointments and join the festival being joyful, your heart in exultation. As you see Amun, may he cause that you be among the sun people, being a praised one in the land of the living. But Mut has returned as the faraway one of the beautiful face, in order to cause her sistrum players to cry out desiring drunkenness from a goblet of gold." The song refers to the ecstatic viewing of the goddess Mut from the goblet, the drunkenness festival having enticed her to return. It encourages the festivities described in the Medamud hymn. The goblets of gold held by the female offerer can be equated with the golden one herself, Hathor, and the goddesses associated with her. This language is remarkably close to that found in the Demotic drinking songs written down more than 1,200 years later. All those who come to worship Nehamanit within the temple, when they're drunk, they will see the merit goddess by means of the goblet. At this time and well into the reign of Amenhotep III, we can find representations from tombs of scenes linked to The Beautiful Feast of the Valley. We see it here on the right in the tombs of Menna, and on the left in the



sculptures Nebamun and Ipuki. And the scenes of banqueting that include both the living and dead appear to continue unabated. However, it was always the case that the drunkenness was not desired by all banqueters. And those refusing are depicted on tomb walls, just as were the recipients of the wine. Contemporary with these drinking revelries, some found communion with the gods in a personal fashion and called upon them to intercede directly, thus perhaps avoiding the communal gatherings as a mechanism. In the song above, there's an allusion to viewing of Amun not by means of the goblet but by seeing him in the sky. In the middle of the dynasty, the swelling of personal piety that elicited hymns and prayers by individuals addressed to the great national gods was on the rise. The joy of viewing the sun god was not infrequently compared to the experience of drinking. An ostrakon, or small prayer found near the tombs in Sheikh Abd el-Qurna dates to the middle of the 18th dynasty, and it says, "Oh Amun, come to me in peace, so that I might see the beauty of your face. The perfect face of Amun that the entire land beholds. The people view it until drunkenness, more than every beautiful red complexion." Such personal calls to the god were more formally placed in hymns to the sun that were painted or carved on the entrance doorways to elite tomb chapels, and greeted the rising and setting sun. Requesting the tomb owner's association with the daily solar cycle for eternity. In addition, there were no doubt those who did not take seriously the divine epiphany that was attributed to the family drinking feast. In fact, none of the tomb inscriptions mention a communal request to the goddess so relevant to the gatherings later and at the tomb Mut temple. Rather, always, it was the seeing that was the stated aim, as might be understood since this was in many ways a festival of ancestor veneration. And communion with family was paramount. The sexual behavior of the revelers, despite being encouraged in Demotic drinking songs, may have contributed to a more secular and jocular attitude by some. The next couple of slides do have very clear sexual imagery, just giving you the heads-up. Graffiti in unfinished tombs in the hill above and around Deir el-Bahari show indications that revelers visited during the festival period. And in at least one tomb, a bawdy drawing on wood was left showing a priest in a very unseemly fashion, grasping a female musician. This humorous view of the drunkenness festivals continued to surface in the later New Kingdom as we see on the famed Turin Papyrus. To summarize, our lengthy look at the drunkenness feasts in Thebes of the 15th century from about 1480 until around 1360, some 120 years, the Beautiful Feast of the Valley was celebrated as a Hathoric festival, connected with Mut Sekhmet, that resulted in communion with the goddess, with Amun Re, and with deceased ancestors. It did this by the use of mind-altering alcoholic drinks, assisted by rhythmic, entrancing music and eventually of static visions. The deities were the most visible focus of these festivities, less so the rulers, although they conducted rituals and invited Amun-Re

to rest in their funerary temples. And how does this then change in the time of Amenhotep III? First, the accent on drunkenness does appear to decrease in the tombs of the time of Amenhotep III, as does the primary role of Hathor, Mut, Sekhmet being supplanted by vaguer references, to seeing Amun at his beautiful festival. This difference was noted already by Siegfried Schott when he discussed the Beautiful Feast 70 years ago. But in general, the shift has been attributed to Akhenaten's religion having caused the cessation of the Valley Festival, at least until the post-Amarna era. The festivals continued to visit Deir el-Bahari but a statue of Neferenpet, Amenhotep III's butler, suggests that changes have come. Like Amenhotep, son of Hapu, whose statues became intercessors for petitioners at the Temple of Amun-Re of Karnak, Neferenpet's statue was accepting the festival requests made to Hathor at the Hathor Chapel in Deir el-Bahari. The skirt text included the following, "Everything which goes forth on the altar of Hathor, mistress of the necropolis, for the Ka of the royal butler... He says: I am the sistrum player for my mistress, the herald of the lady of truth, who causes that the petition of every person ascends to the golden in the interior of her sanctuary." So the direct addresses at the time of divine epiphanies are suddenly short-circuited and sent through a route ultimately controlled by the king. More significantly, Amenhotep III's funerary temple stela does, indeed, refer to the Beautiful Feast of the Valley and clarifies how the king includes Amun's visit to the west. "Making for him a very great pylon opposite Amun, its nickname which his majesty made is the Arbor of Amun which elevates his beauty, a resting place for the lord of the gods at his Festival of the Valley. During the procession of Amun of the West, for the viewing of the gods of the West." We note here that there is neither a reference to Deir el-Bahari nor to Hathor, but to the gods of the west, who Amenhotep III may well have been installing in his own funerary temple as an alternative way to celebrate the Valley Fest. Second, the accent on the sun god and the personal connection seen in hymns and prayers of personal piety continued but was also a focus of royal ideology in the reign. The king brought solar elements into nearly every cult that he supported and celebrated that aspect of Amun-Re and, as the time went on, of himself, as a representative of the sun god on Earth. Kom el-Hettan, the funerary temple of Amenhotep III devoted to Amun-Re. On a stela there, he says, "Come, Amun-Re, lord of the thrones of the two lands, foremost of Karnak, so that you may see your temple which I have made for you on the west bank of Thebes ... As you rise in the horizon of heaven, it is illuminated with the gold of your face." Here, Amun-Re is purely the sun in the sky, and note that he refers to Amun as the gold in the skies, specifically an epithet of Hathor. At the same time in his 30th year ... as his 30th year approached, bringing the said festival renewal of this king, the king supported by his court associated himself as closely as possible with the sun god. As Ray Johnson and others have illustrated, the

imagery of this king's reign was dominated by sun disks and solar cobras, as we can easily see here, by showing a few statues and relief scenes of the king. At Luxor Temple, we see his crowns being confirmed by Amun-Re. On the left, he wears the crown of Atum, and on the right, a solarized Atef crown. Amenhotep III's Heb Sed began on the first day of the second month of Shemu in year 30. That is the beginning of the Festival of the Valley. The second month of Shemu, day one. Indeed, there is no indication that the Valley Festival was celebrated separately that year. So we might ask, why was Amenhotep III so devoted to Sekhmet that he lined both his funerary temple and the Mut temple with statues of that goddess? As Goyeau and [Indistinct] have demonstrated, Sekhmet's role in maintaining the mechanisms of the world also made her the principal support for the ruler in his similar responsibility. Officiation of the goddess was necessarily to ensure that she sat peacefully and provided that assistance to the king and the people. So here, the king takes the role of Re, in placing the wadjet eye on his forehead, that is the Uraeus in this case. But it demonstrates that the king could bring the order needed and demonstrate it to the sun god himself. [Indistinct] has suggested the Sekhmet statues placed at Amenhotep III's two temples provided a permanent litany to the goddess requesting her kindness and obedience to the rule of Re. Let's then look at this calendar for the Sed festival and how the king has used elements of various feasts to conduct his renewal. Amenhotep III's 30th year reign was approximately 1360 BC. In the second month of Peret, day 29, which was around February 5th to 10th at that time, he began offerings for Sekhmet. The litanies associated with the statues of the goddess at both his temples of Mut and his funerary temple. And these would have continued until the fourth month of Peret, day 26, when the Illumination of the Dais took place at a ritual in Soleb Temple in Sudan and perhaps in Thebes. And this lasted until the first day of Shemu, either 5 or 6 days later. In Thebes, the Harvest Festival began on the first day of the first month of Shemu, as we learn in the tomb of Khaemhat, the overseer of granaries, who was responsible for the bumper crop at the harvest of year 30. On the first day of the month of the second month of Shemu, approximately May 10th or 12th, which appears also to have been Amenhotep III's accession date, the Heb Sed began and lasted until the second day of the third month of Shemu, more than a month. In Sudan, at the temples of Soleb and Sadinga, both Amenhotep III and his wife, Tiye, were equated with aspects of the sun and the moon. The connection of Tiye with Tefnut, the faraway goddess who had run away to Nubia, was plainly depicted where she appears as the sphinx. So the pair were associated with the myth of the sun's eye but not with the destruction of mankind and its drunkenness theme. In Thebes, a new formality appeared in the elite tombs that replaced the sensuality of the many banquet scenes earlier. As depicted in the tomb of Kheruef, the king presided over a variety of festivities that depicted him in the role of the

sun god but also expressed harvest and fertility aspects of the Valley Festival, normally celebrated at this time. The song here focuses the ecstatic dancing on the sun god with the dancers turning their heads up to view the sun. The tombs of Kheruef and Ramose, the best preserved examples, represent slightly different moments, but both have the elements that derive from the king's concentrated focus. Kheruef's completed section was a portico showing the first and third Sed festivals of the king. The accent on the ruler certainly presages the elite tombs at Amarna. In Ramose's, a full walls north and south of the entrance depicts guests at banquets, some of whom were famous at the time, including Amenhotep, son of Hapu, whom we see here in the center. However, he was already deceased at the time of the making of the tomb. So his appearance, as well as that of Ramose's parents, continue the communion of banquet rituals with ancestors without, however, any reference to drunkenness. Finally, at his funerary temple, the king provided the populace with a means of divine communion built upon the ancestor veneration and deceased ruler intercession that was familiar already. Susanne Bickel has written wisely on this, distinguishing the state's approach and that of the populace. It is the contention here that the ruler planned for the need for divine communion by influencing how elites could interact through ritual. At the funerary temple, he placed colossal statues of himself as part of statue cults in his name. The colossus of Memnon was named Nebmaatre is the Ruler of Rulers. But there were also smaller figures with similar names, a granodiorite figure of the king was also named Ruler of Rulers, as the inscription on the rear says. So the king became the chief intercessory and could then also become the focus of all the people's personal worship. At the close of this period, the king was the focus of the worship. And eventually, Hathor was ... even became his helpmate, together with Amenhotep III's wife, Tiye, as they appear in the tomb of Kheruef. The goddess Sekhmet stayed in the king's temples to guarantee his role as the sun god's representative in maintaining the world. And the king was as close to a sun god as he could be. His cults would replace the need for ancestor intercession, and at least for a time, cultic revelries that had celebrated communion with family are now represented by the king as a sun god. Thank you very much.

**Louise Bertini:**

Thank you so much for that very interesting lecture. I want to invite anybody who has questions to please place them in the Q&A button that's at the bottom of your screen. And we do have our first question from Cynthia, who is asking didn't the lotus open in the morning and close in the evening suggesting the banquet would be a morning event?

**Betsy Bryan:**

Well, we know very specifically that the banquets are at night. Lotuses did open at different times, the blue and the white actually opened differently. So, how they might have appeared in an actual banquet, open or closed, is probably of less significance to the attendance at the banquet. We see them as open flowers, it's much more likely that that's the way they wished them to be appearing, whether or not it was day or night, but we know that this took place in the evening.

Louise Bertini: I have a question, it's from anonymous. A trivial question but just wondering how the beer was dyed red?

**Betsy Bryan:**

That's a good question. Well, on the calendar at the Mut Temple, they referred to it being dyed with a mineral called didi. In most cases, red pigment was ochre, so ferrous oxide. So, it probably was a mineral dye that was used.

Louise Bertini: Question from Susan: Are there any residues of wine laced with lotus or opiates in the Portico of Drunkenness or in other places where the Festival of Drunkenness was celebrated? Betsy Bryan: Can you just say that one more time? I missed the ...

**Louise Bertini:**

Are there any residues of wine laced with lotus or opiates in the Portico of Drunkenness or in other places where the Festival of Drunkenness was celebrated?

Betsy Bryan: Okay, good. So, the quick answer would be no. But one of the problems we have is actually getting something that would preserve it. Among the things that I showed in this presentation was a drinking vessel that actually was found underneath one of the column parts when we found the columns of the drunkenness porch. But unfortunately, there was nothing that we could get to test from it. And certainly there are herbs of various sorts that can be found in a number of vessels that have been found. But we would know the answer is I can't guarantee that we have such anywhere. But we certainly have plenty of references to it.

**Louise Bertini:**

Question from Donald, "Can you expand on your comments on the connection between the red-flavored beer and the waters of the flooding of the Nile?"

**Betsy Bryan:**

Well, the idea of a connection of any liquid that the Egyptians might drink was something that connected symbolically with the Nile. So we will see that referred to in many, many different contexts. And when you had a festival that was

associated with the coming inundation, the drinking of the liquid was often referred to throughout, they would make a point of bringing in the Nile, bringing in the fertility of the Nile. So the fact of the red wine and the red beer is more to do with the myth than the Nile itself. But the connection of the drink is a reference to the liquid and its ability to revive people.

**Louise Bertini:**

I have another red beer question.

**Betsy Bryan:**

Okay.

**Louise Bertini:**

What is the name of the reddened beer?

**Betsy Bryan:**

Menu.

**Louise Bertini:**

Question from Scott, "In TT57, I noticed that the Egyptian used the jugulate determinative for the Tek Festival. Were there other determinative used besides the jugulate and lotus blossom for writing this festival?"

**Betsy Bryan:**

I think those are the primary ones. I'm certainly not going to say that there's not ... that there wouldn't have been. But I do think that the jug is certainly the most common determinative and certainly in the New Kingdom, that would have been the most common one. But I don't actually know of any others. I haven't gone to look. The word Tek is also the word for balance, so you will get the word Tek with a scale, but that's a different word.

**Louise Bertini:**

I have a question from Ben, "What are your thoughts on the theory that Amenhotep III built statues to Sekhmet to placate the goddess in response to a pandemic effecting Egypt?"

**Betsy Bryan:**

I wondered if I was going to get that question. I never try to rule out a possibility. It, by no means, is it impossible that there was, in fact, a major plague. In fact, I think there's probably good reason to think there was. Its connection to the making

of the Sekhmet statues, however, I consider to be dubious. The amount of time that went into this has to have been far more related to planning for this king's Sed Festival, which he started almost certainly a decade before it came, or at least most of a decade. So the fact that they might have operated as part of a healing litany, certainly I think that's entirely possible, but I don't believe that's the reason that they were made.

**Louise Bertini:**

Question from Melissa, "Can you please discuss the source of laudanum used in the drinking festival? And thank you for a wonderful talk."

**Betsy Bryan:**

Thank you. Well, I don't know that I know the source. At Dendera, the material that is translated as laudanum is called Eber and has been discussed by a variety of people including Renata Guillermer. But I assume that it must be available in Egypt. I can't say that laudanum was part of the 18th Dynasty of the materials that were used in wine and beer. Only that it was definitely referred to in the Ptolemaic texts.

**Louise Bertini:**

Question from Mary, "How was drunkenness reconciled with the balance of Mut?"

**Betsy Bryan:**

With the balance of Mut. So, drunkenness was something that made ... in a ritual sense was something that made people happy and made deities happy. It was something that they believed was a way of pleasing and partiating this goddess when she was angry. Mut herself was ... do you think it's possible we could get a little bit ...

**Louise Bertini:**

I think, actually, I did just see a clarification. I think she was asking the balance of Maat, not Mut.

**Betsy Bryan:**

Oh, okay. Okay.

**Louise Bertini:**

I scrolled down and then I saw another question.

**Betsy Bryan:**

Okay, okay, sorry. Okay. So the question is how is drunkenness ... All right, so I've actually commented on that in earlier publication where we do actually have in the tomb of Rekhmire an image of musicians and guests at a banquet where the guest is saying in a sort of hymn-like form, is it Maat? Is it correct to desire drunkenness? And at that moment, as Henry Fischer pointed out decades ago without any reference to the actual festival itself, he was talking about the direction that hieroglyphs run. He pointed out that there was the hieroglyph for Maat, the actual goddess, and that it faces the person who is saying is it right to desire drunkenness. And as Fischer pointed out, that that was the way of saying yes to the answer to that question. So, the balance was reasonable only in that correct ritual context. And certainly it would not have been Maat to be drunk on the streets, for example.

**Louise Bertini:**

Question from Scott, it's a two-part question, "Were there events other than the Tek festival in which mind-altering substances were used? And during the festival, was sexual activity restricted to the priest, or populists, or both?"

**Betsy Bryan:**

Those are good questions. Okay, so the first one was, were there other festivals? I think there's a very good reason to think that the new year's festival operated in some locations as a drunkenness festival. It certainly seems to be the case at Alkab, we have the in the tomb of Paheri, that is, Nekhbet is a uraeus goddess, but that does appear to be a new years festival that is depicted at that banquet. And that might very well have been the case as well in Thebes. But because the calendar at the Mut temple only specifies two, I am shying away from including more than that until there's more to go on. Okay, remind me what the second one was.

**Louise Bertini:**

The second part was about sexual activity. Was it restricted to the priests, the populists or both?

**Betsy Bryan:**

Okay. Great. So it's hard to say. I really don't think we know the answer to that question. The demotic drinking songs that we have, which are very late date, do talk about a particular member of the community who is encouraged to have sex. However, from the earlier material, we don't have anything that specifically encourages it, nor does it occur in the Medamud hymn. The demotic drinking songs are in fact from house churches, one might say. They're from people who



gathered in small groups in homes. So their festivities may very well have been much looser. But that's the reason why I bring in these graffiti, which we have, and I only showed ones that are really apparently connected more to the 18th dynasty. We have far more than that from the Ramesside period and from Deir el-Medina. So the question is ... The truth is, I can't answer whether they were specific people who did this and who were appointed to do so. Nothing suggests that, that I can see so far.

**Louise Bertini:**

Question from Solange. I would love to know more about the herbal concoctions added to the beer. Other than lotus and laudanum, are there any others?

**Betsy Bryan:**

There are, and unfortunately, I don't have them on the tip of my tongue, but I'm happy to be able to send you the things. Sylvie Cauville about this at some length in her Dendara: Les Fetes d'Hathor, and they're long lists of the things that were utilized, in addition to laudanum and lotus. So it's easily done.

**Louise Bertini:**

Question from Peter. The majority of specialized goblets for the Festival of Drunkenness seem to be of the same form. Are there other types that might be in existence, and where might one find the best resources on those?

**Betsy Bryan:**

Well, I think one good place to look actually would be at the terrific catalog that the Metropolitan Museum did on Hatshepsut some years ago. I think it's called "Hatshepsut: From Queen to Pharaoh." They have a section in there on the faience bowls, the iconography of which in the mid-18th dynasty is quite consistently devoted to either imagery of Hathor herself or to Lotus. So that would be a place to get started if you're interested in.

**Louise Bertini:**

Question on, how do you know the festival banquet took place at night. What is the evidence?

**Betsy Bryan:**

The evidence is coming from the hymn, which says that they're getting together at the time of lighting the lamps.

**Louise Bertini:**

Question from Halah. Do you suggest that heating-the-ball ritual was practiced during the festival or only symbolic by drawing on temple walls?

**Betsy Bryan:**

Yeah, I'd love to know the answer to that question myself. It's one that pleases me very deeply because that particular ritual also occurs in the context of the drunkenness festival at Dendera. So when it pops at the Hathor chapel in Deir el-Bahri, that's meaningful. But, yes, the question is, do we see him swinging for the American league or the national league? I really don't know. I would love to know, and the Egyptians were highly performative, so it's not impossible that someone might have conducted ... maybe not the king himself, but somebody might have conducted, Asek or Hemak, a ritual. But I don't know, and I'd love to.

**Louise Bertini:**

I have another question on the striking-of-the-ball ritual and if we know what the ball was made of.

**Betsy Bryan:**

I think that they were made of a variety of things because many museums have examples of them in their collections made of faience, and they're really about the size of a ... or a little smaller than a tennis ball, and the faience ones are divided in sections that alternate black and turquoise as if you were looking at the parts of an eye. So what the ones would have been used in the actual ceremony we assume would not be faience, but they might very well have been of a harder material. Even stone that would have perhaps been painted to have that similar look. It's a good question.

**Louise Bertini:**

Sorry, I'll repeat it again. Could be the hieroglyphs for drunkenness be translated as the concept of hysteria instead?

**Betsy Bryan:**

I think it means intoxicated, and so we pretty much know that "tth" means to be drunk. But it's a good drunk when it's used in a religious setting. Being drunk doesn't always mean good because we find it as an explanation for why workers didn't show up at work in lists, for example, and clearly that would get them in trouble. But it very clearly does mean actually intoxicated. Now when it gets that metaphorical meaning, to be intoxicated by the goddess or the god, I wouldn't go so far as to suggest that it means hysterical, but rather in love beyond one's

thinking. One might note that in the old kingdom, when they were building pyramids, there must have been a necessity to try and do anything to encourage people doing the building to enjoy their work, and so you actually have work gangs that have their own names, and one of them, Mycerenas, is drunkenness. He's also ... another one is called ... Mycerenas is joy. So they're very parallel in meaning, but I think that hysteria is not quite the meaning.

**Louise Bertini:**

Another hieroglyph-related question. Did the lotus determinative, you mentioned in the beginning of the lecture, what does it represent? Is it the lotus itself or something else?

**Betsy Bryan:**

Well, lotus as a hieroglyph, it can simply mean the lotus, the flower. But for the Egyptians, the lotus does have a symbolic meaning that is associated with particularly solar rebirth. To some extent, that seems to be connected to the fact that the closed lotus can have a small tip on it that is reddened, and then as it opens, you see inside that redness. There's the offspring god of Sekhmet and Ta is called Nefertem, and he is the lotus god, and he sits on a lotus. So lotus is very much associated with rebirth, in addition to being a flower. So when people have it dangling on their forehead when they hold it in their hands, when they're offered it in a bouquet, it means that that's probably a water plant that's part of this context for real, but it also implies all of this symbolic meaning in addition.

**Louise Bertini:**

There was actually another lotus question I just saw, but you just answered it. So ...

**Betsy Bryan:**

Okay. Good, good, good.

**Louise Bertini:**

Jumping back in, now some Sekhmet statue questions. From Charles, how many Sekhmet statues were made by Amenhotep III?

**Betsy Bryan:**

I wish I knew the answer to that one. You know it used to be said, when Yoyat wrote his article in the '80s, we were at that time thinking 730, which would be twice the days of the year. Twice 365 would be 730. The way he came to that as a number is that Sekhmet, in her role of governing the sort of mechanisms of the world, also could attribute an either good or bad fate to any single day of the year.

So you would have both a good possibility and a bad possibility for any day, and Yoyet suggested that the litany using the Sekhmet statues would then be done 730 times in order to come up with the proper outcome. However, at this stage we know that it's way more than 730. Already we know that at the Mut temple in the middle of the 19th century, there were more than 550 statues at the Mut temple. But now, Hourig Sourouzian, who is just doing an incredible work at the funerary temple of Amenhotep III, Kom el-Hettan, has several hundred Sekhmet statues. So we're beyond 730, so I don't know what the actual number was.

**Louise Bertini:**

On that note with Kamelhetan and Mut temple, we have a question from Asam asking are they similar, or is it worship for something else.

**Betsy Bryan:**

You mean are the Sekhmet statues ...

**Louise Bertini:**

The Sekhmet statues.

**Betsy Bryan:**

Yes, they are. They're basically the same size as most of the statues. The image that we're looking at, I think if people are still able to see the screen, there's only a few of these oversized Sekhmet statues. The vast majority of them, if we were to measure them in American terms would be around eight feet in height with their bases. So two and a half meters or thereabouts. But the ones that they have, there's really nothing to separate them from the ones that we have at the Mut temple, except that having come more recently from the ground, many of them have beautiful paint preserved. Something that we only have on the large statue at the Mut temple where her eyes are still red. But yeah, they're all very much of the same type.

**Louise Bertini:**

Question from Olivia, going back to the Festival of Drunkenness. She says I might have mixed this up, but is the beautiful feast of the valley a version of the Festival of Drunkenness. Are they mostly the same festival type and place specific?

**Betsy Bryan:**

Okay, great. So this goes back to the calendar at the entrance way to the Mut temple where it goes through the different main feasts, and two of them are defined as drunkenness festivals. One is the one at the beginning of the year, and the other

is the festival of the valley, where it says that it's associated with her having the red beverage, either a brew or a wine. So at that point, they're even also referring to her in her boat because of course the festival of valley requires a movement from the Mut temple on the east bank to the west side to visit the temples of deceased kings. It is the people who live on the east and the west who accompany the goddesses and the god statues to the west bank who continue having this festival. They celebrate it inside the Mut temple probably only by the highest elites. But on the west side of the river, they go to the temple of Hetshepsut, and after there are rituals there and everyone participates, or as many participate as allowed in, because it's a small space, they then leave and go to their family's tombs, tomb chapels. At those tomb chapels, they gather and they drink separately together in order to themselves and their family have an epiphany with the goddess, Hathor, and with their deceased ancestors. I hope that's been made clear. So the beautiful feast of the valley is a Festival of Drunkenness, but it has sort of two parts. One that takes place on the east, and the rest on the west.

**Louise Bertini:**

By the way, we have a lot more questions. How much more time do you think you have?

**Betsy Bryan:**

I'm fine. I'm not going anywhere.

**Louise Bertini:**

Oh, okay. All right. Good. Another question on the beer or wine. Did laudanum added to wine, which probably originated in the Land of Punt had in itself any solar connection? I wonder if the fragrance spice sacrificed the wine during the Festival of Drunkenness.

**Betsy Bryan:**

Say the last point again, the last sentence.

**Louise Bertini:**

It says the Land of Punt had strong, solar connections, so I wonder if this fragrant spice sacrificed the wine during the Festival of Drunkenness.

**Betsy Bryan:**

Oh, I see what you mean. Gotcha. It's possible, but it's not something that I'm aware of as an offering named. Now there are the reliefs and decoration of the feast of the valley at Derobakri on the third level that is in the process of being made

available. So that might be a possible place that we could learn of that. But I'm not aware of it in being specified.

**Louise Bertini:**

Question from Rob. Medamud is three or so miles distant from Karnak. How did it fit into the overall activities of the festival?

**Betsy Bryan:**

Well, it had its own festival. So at Medamud, the so called consort of the main god, who was Montu, she was one of these ureas lioness goddesses, Raet-Tawy. So they celebrated a drunkenness festival at the Medamud temple separately. I don't know the date. I don't think we have the date for that, but I'm guessing that it is likely to be the one in the first month of the year, the Thoth Festival. But it could very well be the one linked up with the valley feast. But the one at Medamud, for which we only have the evidence in the Ptolemaic Period, we don't have a connection for its celebration with other temples in Thebes at the moment. We just know that it represents the order of that type of festival, which I try to make the point very plainly that a communal gathering, to begin with, is not standard Egyptian religion practice. So to have such things and to have them led by people who are not the normal priests of the temple means that it derives from a different source, and so that's what we're really talking about and trying to utilize the Medamud festival.

**Louise Bertini:**

I have a question from Hysem, also on the drunkenness festival, and if this was done throughout dynastic history or not.

**Betsy Bryan:**

Okay, that's a wonderful question. There are hints that it probably was around almost from the very beginning. I suspect strongly that it was probably predated, most of the kinds of state religious festivals that we know of, and that for that reason, that's one of the reasons why it maintained its connection to the kinship system and to ancestor veneration. It did not have a stratified hierarchy, that you had men and women together of equal involvement. Our colleague, Nozomu Kawai, discovered a place of celebration for a lioness-drunkenness type of fest that dates as early as perhaps the third dynasty, and was renewed during the old kingdom, and that was probably connected to the goddess Bastet, rather than Sekhmet at that time. There have been suggestions of a pre-dynastic version of this, and I would totally buy into that belief because, as I say, do think that the structure, the form of its organization, and the connection to ancestor veneration all suggest that this something that is a very old and Egyptian history. What we're

seeing in the valley festival is its being combined with a state version of celebration.

**Louise Bertini:**

Another similar question. How did the drunkenness festival affect the rest of the population? Did religion smooth over the socially unstabilizing impacts?

**Betsy Bryan:**

Yeah, I think that that's probably a good way to put it. These were not common festivals, and almost certainly people had the opportunity to either opt in or opt out. As I made point of saying, they even go so far as to monumentalize the fact that some of the guests at the banquets refuse to drink, and some didn't. And yet it doesn't seem to have prevented them being there. So there's good indications that they try to balance it. On the other hand, once you reach the end of dynasty 18, and we do see this type of festival celebrated in the tomb of Neferhotep from the reign of Ay, it's hard to find it documented in the same way with drunkenness as its focus in the period of the Ramesside era. It does appear that it comes in and out of fashion over time, and I don't think it ever goes away, but I think that it does seem that at some periods, there's less of the drinking and more of the simple communion with ancestors.

**Louise Bertini:**

Question from Andrea, also about the drunkenness ritual. Do you think there exists some connection between Bartalesi with drunkenness ritual since wine ... and red wine are mentioned?

**Betsy Bryan:**

Well, I have to be honest and say that I would have to go back and look at list C because it's not on the tip of my tongue. But just because wine is mentioned, I'm not sure where that gets me. So I would need to go back and look at Barta before I could really give you a response.

**Louise Bertini:**

Question from Donald. Is there a difference between amorous sex and ritual sex in either the visual description, or in textual descriptions?

**Betsy Bryan:**

I need you to read that one one more time.

**Louise Bertini:**

Is there a difference between amorous sex and ritual sex in either the visual descriptions, or in the textual descriptions?

**Betsy Bryan:**

What is amor sex?

**Louise Bertini:**

Amorous?

**Betsy Bryan:**

Amorous?

**Louise Bertini:**

Amorous? Sorry.

**Betsy Bryan:**

Is that amorous?

**Louise Bertini:**

I think it's a typo, yeah.

**Betsy Bryan:**

All right. Is there a difference between amorous sex ... say it again.

**Louise Bertini:**

And ritual sex.

**Betsy Bryan:**

Oh, okay. Well, I don't know whether that would be the case or not. The only thing I can answer, which is really insufficient here, is that the word used when we get it is the word that really means have sex. It's not a gentler word than that. For example, the divine birth inscriptions that we have, they use a slight way of getting around it, and they say they god goes to her and his love travels through her body, even though it does specifically use a word, [foreign] hod, which means sort of using that male member. But the word used in the Drunkenness Festivals is neck, and neck is the word that we would use the F word for.



**Louise Bertini:**

A question from Iris, "Would the depictions of the women holding and pouring the liquid causing the visions perhaps be an indication of the preparation of such psychotropic substances? And the portions was in the hands of female herbalists."

**Betsy Bryan:**

Yeah, well, that's a good question. I wouldn't think that's unlikely. It does seem that the preparation has to have been certainly done well in advance because at least in the banquets, which we see in the 18th Dynasty, they really do appear to be pressing those plant oils into containers so that they could more easily distribute it. But when we look at the Medamud Hem, what you have is actually the organizer whose title is really the guy who's sort of the head of the musician groups. He comes in carrying the plants, so I think that's more likely to be just to remind us that the plants are there, and then we even see that represented on the relief of the women holding the plants in their hands as they come in, but almost certainly the preparation and grinding of it down into oils was done earlier. As female herbalists, I just can't tell you. I don't know for sure. I don't ... That's all.

**Louise Bertini:**

Question from Andrea on if you can elaborate on the colors on the Sekhmet statues.

**Betsy Bryan:**

Mm, so I've only seen a few of these, so Horug would really be the one to talk about this. But one of the ones not only has red eyes, which are ... I even showed one of her Sekhmet heads at one of the very last slides, which the eyes are just bright red. But this one had the necklace it was wearing was completely painted, and it had a combination of blue, red and yellow so that we're looking at the sort of normal beads that you would see on a broad collar in Egypt, so that's the primary things that I've seen so far.

**Louise Bertini:**

All right. We have two more questions, almost there. Is there any connection between Punt's journey and bringing the Eye of the Sun God with the Festival of Drunkenness?

**Betsy Bryan:**

Now that's an interesting question actually. I think it's a good idea. Certainly this is the origin, as we've already heard from a questioner earlier, of important incense and spices. And it's also true that the Punt reliefs at Hatshepsut's temple are located

in the immediately next door to the Hathor Chapel, and being that they come from the south, I think it's a very sensible suggestion.

**Louise Bertini:**

Unmute. All right. Last question, "Do the hieroglyphs say specifically that some people refuse to participate in the drinking or that their presence provides another function? Do you have the wording?"

**Betsy Bryan:**

Okay. What I have is not that I refuse, but instead what we have is the people talking to the person whose hand is up like this. So the butler says, "Go ahead and drink. I will stay with you," something by the way we know from the demonic drinking songs much later, that they had a person who was designated to take care of people who got drunk. And then in addition to the fact that we have in more than one of those inscriptions the butler saying, "Don't worry. I'll take care of you, and go ahead and drink." And he says in one of them, says, "Don't be tiresome" and we also have other members, other guests saying, "It's okay. Go ahead and drink." And then one of them has very little patience and says, "If you're not going to, pass the cup to me because I'm thirsty." So although we don't have the words come out of the mouth of the refuser, we have everybody around it indicating that that's what's happening.

**Louise Bertini:**

Great. Well, thank you so much for your lecture. Want to thank Dr. Bryan for also taking all the questions, and I want to thank all of you for joining us today. If you are interested in supporting work like Dr. Bryan's as well as RC's efforts to research and conserve Egypt's past, I urge you to visit [rc.org](http://rc.org) and become a member or make a contribution today. We rely on your support to make our work possible. So thank you all again for joining us, and I invite you all to join us at our next public lecture on October 31st. So thank you and have a good evening. Bye.