ELSC-ICNC Seminar: Orly Goldwasser

June 20, 2013

On the topic of: "Ancient Egyptian Hieroglyphs as a Window into the Mind"

ELSC & ICNC cordially invite you

to the lecture given by:

Orly Goldwasser
Head of the Division of Egyptology, the Institute of Archaeology and Ancient Near Eastern Languages and Cultures, HU Jerusalem.
Honorary Prof. Goettingen University, Germany.

On the topic of:

"Ancient Egyptian Hieroglyphs as a Window into the Mind"

The lecture will be held on Thursday, June 20, 2013
at 17:00, at ELSC-ICNC: Silverman Bldg., 3rd Wing, 6th Floor, Edmond J. Safra Campus

Light refreshments at 16:45

Abstract:

The hieroglyphic script system exhibits a unique phenomenon. Almost every word in the script may be followed by 1-4 "silent" hieroglyphs. These signs are never pronounced, but are always connected to the preceding word by clear motivated semantic relations. These signs constitute a regulated repetitive system. The classifiers present different taxonomic and metonymic relations to the word.

In the lecture I shall present and exemplify the main rules of the system, and present a case study. It advocates (and proves, in my opinion) the existence of "concepts without words" in the mind.

Short bio:

when I was 10 years old, I decided to study the Ancient Egyptian script: hieroglyphs. I was fascinated by the little pictures, believing even then that they were somehow a manifestation of the stuff that makes up our thoughts. In the past two decades, I have concentrated my efforts on the study of the effects of the pictorial nature of the Egyptian hieroglyphs on its readers and beholders. I have examined the effects of the pictorial prototypes promoted by the script and their influence on our thought processes.

In the last decade, I have focused on two main issues in particular: first, a new definition of the hieroglyphic
classification system as a strictly rule-governed system that appears only in the hieroglyphic script but not in the Egyptian spoken language. These pictographs shed light on how Ancient Egyptians categorized the physical and spiritual world around them, reflecting their network of conceptual organization.

The second topic on which I have concentrated is a detailed, new reconstruction of the innovation processes standing behind the invention of our alphabet, a "disruptive innovation" that eventually changed our world. The alphabet was invented only once, and the pictorial nature of the hieroglyphic script was the necessary condition for its invention.

This year, I have had the pleasure of teaching over 50 excellent, devoted students a class entitled Picture Word and Thought- from Pictorial Scripts to the Invention of the Alphabet, in the Department of Cognitive Sciences. I hope to help my students see that the Egyptian hieroglyphic system is indeed a treasure trove for all students of human cognition.

ATTACHMENTS

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