

Secret Knowledge and Doubtful Priests in Ancient Egyptian Literature

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12:00p-1:00p
Humanities 365



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This lecture will discuss two themes of my ongoing book project "Cult Practice in Ancient Egyptian Literature". First, Egyptian literary texts (narratives, wisdom texts and discourses) often make reference to "secret knowledge." What does this mean? Second, doubt is an important motif in several of these texts, that is, doubts about the claims of certain priests, doubts about the efficacy of magic and offerings, and even priestly self-doubt. What role does this motif play in these texts?

Franziska Naether is assistant professor of Egyptology at the Egyptological Institute and Egyptian Museum "Georg Steindorff" at the University of Leipzig. Her dissertation "Sortes Astrampsychi" focused on a complex Greek lot oracle from Roman Egypt and other divinatory methods and their legacy. Naether's research interests include ancient Egyptian literature, religion and its material culture, representation and communication of rulers, papyrology and digital humanities. From 2005 to 2008, she was collaborator of the initial phase of the "Trismegistos" database and is now working for the "Demotistische Literaturübersicht," a review project for demotic studies featured in the journal "Enchoria" and in Trismegistos. Naether is a Visiting Research Scholar at the Institute for the Study of the Ancient World in New York for the 2015-16 academic year and currently for a short leave at the Getty Research Institute.