



**Archaeological Institute of America-Milwaukee Society
Presents**

Demons in the Dark: Nightmares in Ancient Egypt

**Sunday, April 15, 2018
3:00 p.m.
Sabin Hall Room G90
3413 North Downer Avenue
Milwaukee, WI 53211**

**Free Public Lecture
by
Dr. Kasia Szpakowska
(University of Swansea)**

The dream in ancient Egypt functioned as a liminal zone between the land of the living and the afterlife. However, the dream was also a phenomenon over which the dreamer had little control, and its permeable boundaries allowed both the divine and the demonic inhabitants of the beyond access to the visible world. Sometimes the result was a positive beneficial experience, as is attested in royal texts and elite hymns that relate the awe-inspiring contact a dreamer could have with a god or a goddess. But another more disturbing belief was that dreams could allow the vulnerable sleeper to be watched or even assaulted by the hostile dead. Drawing upon both textual and material evidence, we explore the identity and nature of the hostile entities who dared to disturb the sleep of the living. Surviving prescriptions, and apotropaic devices attest to the prevalent fear of nightmares while the intricate steps one could take to ensure safety in the night emphasize the tangible nature of these fears.

Kasia Szpakowska is Associate Professor of Egyptology at the University of Swansea, and Director of the [Ancient Egyptian Demonology Project: 2K BCE](#). Her research interests are the demonology of ancient Egypt, the archaeology of religion and ritual figures, Egyptian extra-temple ritual and religious practices, gender and daily life in the Late Middle Kingdom and New Kingdom, and dreams and nightmares in ancient Egypt. She is also conducting the experimental archaeology [Ancient Egyptian Cobra Project](#).



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