

الجمعية المصرية الألمانية فى شمال ألمانيا ج.م.  
Die Ägyptisch-Deutsche Gesellschaft Nord e.V.

## Zum Vortrag von Mervat Abdel Nasser

**Donnerstag, 2. Sept. 2010, 18:30 Uhr Vortrag in Englisch: Dr. Mervat Abdel Nasser,  
Ort: Universität Hamburg, Edmund Siemers – Allee; Westflügel, Raum 121**

**„Hermopolis- Ort der Entwicklung von Schrift, Philosophie und Wissen und seine  
Aktualität für heute“**

Zum Vortrag, erstellte uns die Vortragende eine mehrseitige Zusammenfassung, die von unserem Mitglied Frau Beeke Kalischek ins Deutsche übersetzt wurde. Sie wird den Hörern zur Verfügung gestellt. Das Englische Original ist im Anschluss an diesem Dokument.

Der griechische Name Hermopolis geht auf den Götterboten Hermes zurück, der als griechische Parallele zum altägyptischen Gott Thot angesehen wurde.

Nach der ägyptischen Mythologie brachte „Thot“ den Menschen nicht nur die Schrift, sondern auch das Wissen über Medizin, Astronomie und Architektur. Ihm wurde an seinem Kultort auch die Begründung der mathematischen und philosophischen Traditionen des „Alten Ägyptens“ zugeschrieben, die im „Ma’at – Gedanken“, der für Gerechtigkeit steht, tief verwurzelt sind.

Im Vortrag wird auf die altägyptischen Glaubensvorstellungen eingegangen, die wohl sogar während der Amarnazeit Bestand hatten. Dieses Wissen wurde über die griechisch verfassten hermetischen Schriften während der Römerzeit bis nach Europa verbreitet.



**Bild rechts: Thot beim Schreiben**

Der Vorstand

P.S.

Es ist kein Zufall, dass die 1908 gegründete **Kairo-Universität** die Gottheit der Wissenschaften in ihrem Logo verwendet.

s. <http://cu.edu.eg/>



Treffen jeden 1. Freitag im Monat ab 20 Uhr im Restaurant von Pro Linguis, Rothenbaumchaussee 97, Hamburg

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## **Hermopolis: Ancient and New Revisiting a philosophy fit for our times**

**Mervat Abdel Nasser MD, MPhil, FRCPsych\*  
Consultant Psychiatrist- Author- Egyptologist**

Hermopolis in ancient times was the capital city of the 15<sup>th</sup> Nome of Upper Egypt (now in El-Minia in Middle Egypt). It stretches about 5Km from El-Ashmonin (eastern Hermopolis) to Tuna El Gebel (western Hermopolis) in Mallawi . The whole region is rich in heritage personified by significant antiquities from every period of Egyptian history, including the famous city of El Amarna (Akhenaten City), the breath taking site of the Middle Kingdom tombs at Bani Hassan, the tombs of Deir El Bersha and the multiple significant Coptic monuments that lie a short distance away.

The city was named after Hermes the Greek equivalent of the Egyptian 'Thoth', the lord of time, the inventor of writing and the guardian of thought who revealed to the Egyptians all knowledge on astronomy, architecture, medicine and Alchemy. The sum of the knowledge produced by Hermopolis is contained in the "Corpus Hermeticum ", a collection of manuscripts representing the intellectual, philosophical and reflective tradition of ancient Egypt and revolves around the unity of man and the universe.

The Hermopolitan philosophy has long been seen as a Greek one. This was initially supported by the fact that most of the Hermetic texts that were found were written in Greek or Latin and were also collected in the city of Alexandria in the second and third centuries. However with the discovery of Hermetic texts in Coptic language among the Nag Hamadi manuscripts the picture has somewhat changed.

With the Hellenisation of the Mediterranean, the world grew larger and the inevitable meeting of ideas and beliefs became necessary. The individual felt the need for a

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philosophy that can address the challenges of such confusing and rapidly changing world, which resulted in the development of the Hermopolitan philosophy.

The philosophy is deeply rooted in the ancient Egyptian concept of *Ma'at* or *harmonia i.e.* the fitting together of opposite, through balance and proportion. This is reflected too in the mythological origin of the Hermopolis, the city of the "Ogdad" where the eight contradictory forces of chaos /darkness wedded those of order /light to allow harmony to be born. It taught that all people belong to the single family of mankind and to find inner happiness, humans need to live in harmony with the universe.

Alchemy was part and parcel of the Hermetic philosophy, particularly the connection between wisdom, transformation and healing. The alchemical path is seen as self-perfecting journey consisting of a series of steps taking place within man's body, mind and soul. It is not surprising therefore to see how the Hermetic philosophy managed to inform religion and influence the development of the spiritual side of almost all religious doctrines.

Hermetic philosophy inspired some of the greatest minds and achievements of the ancient world and was behind the heydays days of great Islamic learning and scholarship. It reached Europe when the "Corpus Hermeticum' was brought to Florence in the 15<sup>th</sup> century and had its influence on the philosophy of Europe since the renaissance. This is reflected in the life and work of major European figures of science, philosophy, art and literature including Newton, Goethe, Blake, Kant and many others.

It is difficult nonetheless to streamline such philosophy and regard it as one system of thought, and despite the complexities of its concepts and its various forms and discourses, its influence continued into our modern and post-modern times. Many elements of the Hermetic tradition were taken over by several movements in the West in the nineteenth and twentieth century manifesting in societies dealing with theosophy, anthroposophy and other esoteric studies. It also continued to influence

the artistic and literary world as seen the works of many including the famous children work, Harry Potter.

The appeal of the Hermetic philosophy in our post-modern era stems from our disillusionment with what we see as a growing reductionist view of science, added to our rejection of a parallel wave towards religious extremism that threatens all the humanistic values that we stand for. Hermetism offers on the other hand the possibility of union through diversity.

It is perhaps easy to visit the philosophy of Hermopolis in the books shelved in major libraries but the land of its birth is certainly harder to visit. The area is in dire need of tourist facilities and the city that was once the seat of learning and cultural dialogue is now neglected and plagued by poverty, ignorance and fanaticism. Against this sad reality the project of the new Hermopolis was born.

The project consists of a cultural village / retreat that are currently being built on a site adjacent to historic Hermopolis. The site will house an environmentally friendly resort which serves to introduce tourists, intellectuals and artists alike to the history of this significant region and its philosophy. In analogy with the Silk Road, this project aims to introduce the tourist to itineraries based on roads travelled by ideas.

Apart from serving as a retreat for visitors, this resort will also house lectures, offer courses and organise intellectual events and workshops for the local community and international visitors. Camps will be organised as well as conferences for artists, writers, Egyptologists, among others. The history of Hermopolis as the birth place of humanism and spiritual development through knowledge is sure to inspire innovation, religious tolerance and cultural harmony.

The anticipated results of such communication include decreased religious tensions, increased democratisation through community mobilisation programmes and empowerment through sustainable development and civic education. In this way, the project will introduce Egypt to tourism for both culture change and culture development.