



# The ST. PETERSBURG CELEBRATION *of the* ARTS

THIRD SEASON  
FEBRUARY 2021

*The Sea*

2021 *The Sea*

2022 *Love*

2023 *Freedom*

2024 *Shakespeare*

2025 *Tolerance and Acceptance*

2026 *The Sea*

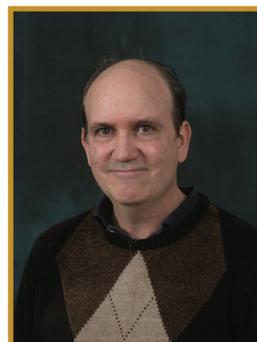
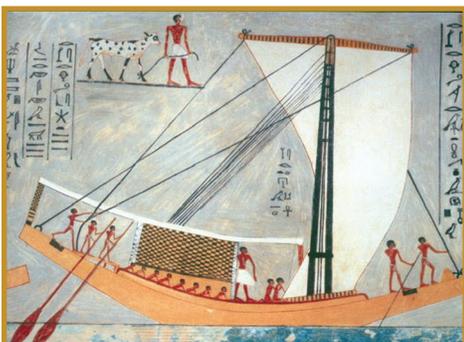
## *Stephen Michael Vinson — February 23rd, 2021 at 1 pm* *Ancient Egyptian Nautical Art*

*Presented in Partnership with the American Research Center in Egypt*

The Ancient Egyptians are justly famous for the beauty of their visual arts – their architecture, their sculpture, and, above all, their painting. With their art, the Egyptians did not attempt to directly reproduce their sensory impressions of the world around them. Instead, they tried to represent the perfect, ideal reality in which the world of experience was embedded. However, there is no gainsaying the fact that Egyptian artists, both sculptors and painters, were experts in their art and created images that were not only beautiful and compelling but which did, in fact, accurately render features of the external world.

Nowhere is this dual purpose and meaning of Egyptian art more apparent than in what we may call “nautical art” – that is, images of boats and ships. Of course, watercraft were crucial to the Egyptians’ daily lives: they were the most important, central transportation technology of Egypt, permitting goods, people, and armies to quickly move from one point to another, tying the country together and contributing materially to the country’s unparalleled prosperity and unity. But they were also the vehicle by which the gods themselves traversed the sky and the underworld, and by which the dead reached the hereafter. As such, they were imbued with symbolic and philosophical importance that can hardly be overstated. By examining Egyptian representations of their boats and ships, we gain invaluable insight into both the quotidian reality of ancient Egypt and its most important spiritual beliefs.

Professor Steve Vinson earned an MA in Nautical Archaeology at Texas A&M University and a Ph.D. in Egyptology from Johns Hopkins University. His early work focused on Egyptian boats and ships from technological, sociological, and economic perspectives. He recently worked on Demotic literary texts of the Graeco-Roman period and Virtual Heritage, applying advanced computer visualization to ancient Egyptian art and archaeological objects. He is the author of *Egyptian Boats and Ships*, *The Nile Boatman at Work*, and *The Craft of a Good Scribe: History, Narrative, and Meaning in the First Tale of Setne Khaemwas*. An internationally renowned lecturer and holder of a Fulbright Fellowship, he has spoken at a number of conferences sponsored by the American Research Center in Egypt and will be talking at The National Arts Club. Register to attend this talk at <https://iu.zoom.us/j/84857277352>.



— Dr. Steve Vinson, professor and chair of the Department of Middle Eastern Languages and Cultures at Indiana University – Bloomington.