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Abstracts



GROUP
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LYDIA BASHFORD (University of Auckland)

“We’re going on a bear hunt”: An unusual scene from the causeway of Unis

The Syrian Brown Bear (*Ursus arctos syriacus*) was not native to Egypt during the dynastic period and extant representations are few and far between throughout its history. It is from the exquisite reliefs of Sahure’s mortuary temple that the first true and accurate representation of the bear is known; they are remarkable not only for their exotic content, but also in their quality. The accuracy of these images surely informs us that the artists must have studied the animals in person in order to have recreated them with such detail. Only one other fragmentary example is known from this period, originating in the Dynasty V causeway of Unis at Saqqara. The identification of the species in this scene is fundamental to its understanding, as it is found in the unexpected context of a desert hunt, alongside other rare and exotic quarry, and offers an unusual but intriguing element to the royal scene. Animals featured prominently in Egyptian art and, as all artwork was chosen with specific meaning and reason in mind, why such an exotic creature was incorporated is a crucial element for the analysis of this relief as a whole. In this poster it will be demonstrated how the animal in the Unis desert hunt scene can be identified as a bear, and its context within the scene is discussed.

BENJAMIN BASSETT (Monash University)

The villages of Roman Egypt: A view from the Dakhleh Oasis

Our impressions about the state of urbanism in Roman Egypt (c. 30 BCE-CE 350) are slowly changing thanks to new evidence derived from excavations in the Oases of Egypt’s Western Desert. Where older theories tended to dismiss villages as non-urban, new research is calling that view into question. One such excavation, led by Colin Hope at Ismant el-Kharab at the Dakhleh Oasis, is shedding new light on the status of villages in Roman Egypt and suggests a more complicated picture. This talk will both summarise the debate around the status of villages in Roman Egypt, and outline my response to this debate in my current research, focusing on the Dakhleh Oasis. I will suggest that a more complicated picture of Romano-Egyptian urbanism is emerging, mostly from archaeology, which should place these ‘third tier’ settlements at the centre of any analysis. Furthermore, I will argue that scholars should be wary of generalising too readily about ‘villages’ in Roman Egypt as a broader range of settlement types than first anticipated are being unearthed.

HEIKE BEHLMER (University of Göttingen; Göttingen Academy of Sciences and Humanities)

The digital edition of the Coptic Old Testament

Coptic texts are fundamental primary sources for diverse scholarly fields: Linguistics, Biblical Studies and Church History, Late Antiquity, Egyptology, Islamic Studies. They are also the heritage of the Coptic Orthodox Church itself, which, together with its local cultural heritage, is under considerable pressure in the current political situation in the Middle East.

Despite their importance we lack modern critical editions even of the most central of Coptic texts: the Bible. The translation of the Old and New Testaments into the classical literary language of Christian Egypt, Sahidic Coptic, from the 3rd-5th centuries, can be considered one of the most important translation projects of Late Antiquity. The Coptic Bible, the largest and one of the most important translations of the Old and New Testament into the languages of the Christian East, is a unique monument to the intellectual, religious and cultural history of the Eastern Mediterranean. The Bible in Coptic influenced the literary language of Christian Egypt until the affirmation of Arabic and is the basis of the entirety of Christian religious literature and culture in Egypt, in particular Egypt’s arguably most important contribution to the history of Christianity, monasticism. As the Coptic language is still used today in the liturgy of the Coptic Orthodox Church, both in Egypt and in the countries of emigration, the Coptic translation of the Bible as cultural and historical heritage is also a political and social document of outstanding current interest.

The proposed poster will document the rationale, methods, digital tools and first results of a recently started long-term project at the Göttingen Academy of Sciences and Humanities: the “Digital Edition of the Coptic Old Testament”, which aims at preserving and studying this important part of Egypt’s literary heritage in a collaborative virtual research environment.

SUSANNE BINDER (Macquarie University)

Max Weidenbach's travel diary and the 1842-45 Lepsius expedition to Egypt and the Sudan: Exploring the value of 19th century expedition documents for Egyptological research today

The discovery in 2013 of Max Weidenbach's travel diary, a manuscript in German, in the South Australian Museum in Adelaide was a significant event for the history of Egyptology. As it is written by the 19-21 year-old youngest member of the Prussian expedition with Richard Lepsius, it sheds unexpected and fascinating light on one of the grand-scale 19th century European expeditions, on the contemporary historical and political context of the enterprise as well as on the everyday life and work practices of the highly skilled men during this scientific mission.

In a range of case studies, this paper examines the potential and the importance that the study of such a diary and of the documentation later published by the Prussian expedition holds for Egyptological research in the 21st century.

CAROLINE JAYNE BRUMBRIDGE (University of Auckland)

How the other half lived: The real and imagined experiences of women residing at Deir el Medina during the New Kingdom.

This paper will discuss the lives and lived experiences of the women who inhabited the workman's village of Deir el Medina, examining surviving literary evidence from Dynasties Nineteen and Twenty in order to do so. The New Kingdom Love Songs, important sources for the construction of gendered identities and expectations at this time, will first be introduced. The majority of these Songs with known provenance were found at Deir el Medina, situating the genre in a distinctive temporal and spatial milieu. I will look at specific compositions in order to analyse how women were presented as speaking and acting in these sources, and question whether this can be regarded as a genuine female 'voice' or experience. Next, the ways in which the genre of the text may circumscribe the individual performance of 'self' will be considered, along with the identification of inherent biases and potential challenges to the constructed, stereotypical female. The second part of this presentation will examine other evidence from Deir el Medina relating to the position and experiences of women, often documents with an administrative or legal purpose. These will be analysed in conjunction with the Love Songs, in order to both challenge the veracity of the idealised female character we encounter within the genre, but also to flesh out the information the Love Songs do give us regarding the gendered experiences of the personae that most likely had some basis in 'real life', in actual village encounters and events. It will be shown how drawing together information from two seemingly disparate types of written evidence can add to our understanding of gender roles and conventions that formed the foundation of the social structure of a specific habitation site, and shaped the lives of those living within it.

LEANNE MICHELLE CAMPBELL (University of Melbourne)

Reading Late Bronze Age Egyptian and Aegean representations and interconnections

Regular communication between Late Bronze Age cultures across Egyptian and Aegean regions, including seasonal trade and gift exchange, resulted in a broad range of interconnections documented through available archaeological and iconographic evidence. This paper, based on the author's doctoral research which employs an art historical methodology, will discuss these cultural exchanges through analyses of portrayals of human iconography from the Minoan, Mycenaean and Egyptian Amarna cultures, including selected figures from the Theban frescoes of Akrotiri, and portrayals of the Amarna Royals in reliefs and sculptures. Comparative analyses of carved and painted works demonstrate important similarities and differences, ranging from stylistic and visual and close physical details, to reactionary influences such as iconographic assertions of individuality. Contrast and comparisons demonstrate that artists and the elite of these societies purposefully chose visual cues such as selection of body shapes, dress codes, hairstyles and physical adornments to produce new iconographies that were stylistically self-aware and conscious of neighbouring artistic traditions. These people's selection or rejections of varied stylistic elements represent visual markers that may be used to reconstruct interactions, influences, and attitudes, and can be seen through portrayals of individuals as well as of crowds and collectives. Such analyses of these images allow us to inform a deeper understanding of the various social, political, economic and cultural realities and developments through these societies and peoples' cognizant choices of representations.

ANNA CHILCOTT (University of Auckland)

Theme and composition in the Pyramid Texts: The complex case of the queens' eastern wall

The Pyramid Texts belonging to kings Unis, Teti, Pepy I, Merenre, and Pepy II, have been studied extensively since their discovery in the late 19th Century. However, relatively absent from much of this discussion are the more fragmentary Pyramid Texts of the Sixth Dynasty queens, whose unicameral tombs stand apart from those of the kings in their architectural layout and the arrangement and content of their texts. While Breasted, among others, hypothesised that the Pyramid Texts subsequent to the reign of Unis were “arranged by the successive editors almost at haphazard,” the antithesis of this idea can be found in consequent works, most notably by Allen and Hays, which have shown that the selection process for these texts does indeed follow logical thematic patterns. This has allowed for the identification of relatively set ‘sequences’ or ‘groups’ consisting of core motifs concerned with the reconstitution and/or manifestation of the deceased. However, the predominant focus of these recent grouping studies has been the distinctly bicameral burial complexes of the kings, with Allen, Nuzzolo, and Hays sidestepping the problem of the queens’ pyramids almost entirely.

Drawing on research from my MA thesis, this poster will examine the composition of the queens’ Pyramid Texts, with specific focus on the complex arrangements found on the east sarcophagus chamber walls of Ankhnespepy II, Neith, Ipwt II, and Wedjebten. Using the conventional placement of the kings’ Pyramid Texts for comparison, it will be demonstrated that each queens’ corpus was an individualised entity, rather than an exact copy of any one kings’ entire corpus. Indeed, through the conflation of specific texts, and the inclusion of the serdab, the purpose of the east wall appears to have been fundamentally multi-functional, acting not only as a traditional sarcophagus chamber wall, but also as the evidently crucial antechamber, vestibule, and corridor.

MALCOLM CHOAT (Macquarie University)

Text and paratext in documentary papyri from Roman Egypt

Many scribes in Roman and late antique Egypt produced and copied texts in both the literary and documentary sphere, and the many paratextual features familiar from the former occur in the latter, including word spacing and other features of textual division and punctuation, marginal signs and notations, titles, and other elements which effect the text’s presentation. In arguing that practice across the spectrum of ancient scribal activity must be taken into account to properly understand paratext in the ancient world, this paper addresses the use of paratextual features in ancient scribal practice by examining their use in documentary papyri from Roman Egypt.

In examinations of New Testament papyri, such features are often taken as lectional aids, and seen as reflecting features (e.g. sense pauses) within the text which can be witnessed in later manuscripts. The possibility of documentary influence and the likelihood that scribes were reflecting features found in their exemplars have also been raised. Testing of these hypotheses is hampered by the paucity of situations in which we possess both exemplar and copy of any particular literary papyrus and the second is the lack of certainty that any of these manuscripts were read out loud (even if various factors strongly suggest many of them were intended to be). In order to advance our understanding of how these elements may have been transmitted between documents, and how they may have functioned within a text, this paper concentrates on papyrus documents on which exist in duplicate copies, concentrating on those which may have been read aloud, asking what we can learn from such texts about the use of paratextual features in the ancient world.

ANDREW CONNOR (Monash University)

A strongly worded letter: (Re)constructing a priestly dispute in P.Tebt. 2.302.

The draft petition published by Grenfell and Hunt as P.Tebt. 2.302 sits at the heart of nearly all narratives of the Roman administration of Egyptian religion. As published, the priests of Soknebtunis in Tebtunis write to the Roman administration to complain that the terms of a deal or settlement made between the Roman government and all Egyptian temples were being infringed. In short, the purported settlement forced temple administrators to choose between total confiscation of their sacred land in exchange for a direct payment from the state or the right to lease back from the state the land that they had previously held as sacred. While scholars

over the past two decades have challenged parts of this—Glare and Monson most notably—this dichotomy has remained more or less at the center of all narratives of Roman religious oversight in Egypt. In this paper, I will reconsider the testimony of P.Tebt. 2.302 based on a fresh examination of the papyrus itself and a critical analysis of the supplements proposed by Grenfell and Hunt. As a number of key passages are supplemented by Grenfell and Hunt with little support in the text itself, I will discuss what external factors may have led them to offer those supplements and the effect those supplements have had on the wider debate and the formation of a “confiscation narrative.”

SAMUEL COOK (Macquarie University)

Greek grammatical borrowing in Egyptian: The case of subordinating conjunctions

Among the large number of Greek words borrowed into Coptic are the class of subordinating and coordinating conjunctions. These words have no lexical meaning of their own, but rather are used to express relationships between clauses and sentences. Since conjunctions are structural elements of a language, a number of scholars have argued that the presence of Greek conjunctions in Coptic is evidence not only of lexical borrowing, but also grammatical borrowing. However, this view is highly debated amongst Coptologists.

This paper will discuss the borrowing of Greek subordinating conjunctions into Egyptian from the perspective of current theories in the field of contact linguistics. Cross-linguistic research into situations of intense language contact suggests that the borrowing of subordinating conjunctions may be accompanied by the internal restructuring of the receiving language. However, this is not always the case. Through a brief diachronic sketch of subordination patterns in Ancient Egyptian, I will argue that the presence of Greek subordinating conjunctions in Coptic does not in itself represent a situation of grammatical borrowing. Furthermore, this paper will demonstrate that the debate surrounding Greek grammatical borrowing in Coptic can greatly benefit from the application of contact-linguistic theory. Data for this paper will be drawn from Late Byzantine/Early Islamic legal texts from the Theban region.

JANET DAVEY (Victorian Institute of Forensic Medicine; Monash University)

Interpretation of mummification practices in Graeco/Roman child mummies

In a Computerised Tomography (CT) study of fourteen Graeco/Roman child mummies various mummification practices were identified which required interpretation using modern forensic radiology techniques to identify mummification damage, peri-mortem injuries and the reasons for unexpected inclusions. The study was carried out using a Toshiba Aquilion 64 CT scanner and an advanced visualisation workstation for the production of volume rendered 3D images of areas of interest within the body. In all mummies the cervical spine had been flexed to allow the head to be pushed forward; with the chin on the chest. Nine mummies had been subject to excerebration, eight had been eviscerated but four mummies retained their internal organs. In twelve mummies there were inclusions of organic or non-organic substances or objects. In one mummy a possible cause of death was detected and in another a possible unusual route for brain removal was discovered. The study has added to the limited amount of information available about burial practices in Graeco/Roman child mummies and has shown that complex mummification methods were not uncommon during this period.

BRENAN DEW (Macquarie University)

The cosmography of the Amduat

It is well established in ancient Egyptian belief that when the king died, passing from this world to the next, he would join the sun-god on his journey through the Egyptian cosmos. This eternal cycle ensured that both the king and the sun-god would live forever in the so-called Afterlife. The details of this daily journey were subject to the speculation of the ancient theologians (or “religious astronomers”) as they tried to come to terms with, and attempted to explain, the world beyond their own physical borders. During the New Kingdom, a new corpus of religio-funerary texts appeared almost exclusively upon the walls of the royal tombs in the Valley of the Kings. Commonly known as the Books of the Afterlife, this corpus of texts relates the mysteries that

the sun encounters on its nocturnal (and, later, diurnal) journey. Where did the sun physically go between its disappearance beyond the western horizon in the evening and its re-appearance in the east the following morning?

Using the Amduat as a case study, this paper will present a short discussion of my doctoral research into the cosmography of the Afterlife. As will be demonstrated, a close reading of this text enables us to better understand the topography of the Afterlife as the text follows the sun-god through various gateways: sbA, arr. yt, aA.wy and rw.ty nTr, on a journey through a variety of locations: sx.wt “fields”, qrr.wt “caverns”, wA.wt “paths”, a.t imn.t “the hidden place”, Sa.y “sand”, Ts.w “sand banks”, niw.wt “places”. This journey also includes the named locales of RA-sTA.w “Rosteau” and ImH.t “Imhet”. Establishing a conceptual map of the Afterlife landscape will help to demonstrate the ancient Egyptian understanding of the universe and the scope of their early scientific, or religio-scientific, thought.

LAUREN DUNDLER (Macquarie University)

Collecting papyrus in the 21st century: A comparison of existing and emerging trade markets

The presence of antiquities in the modern world evokes strong emotional responses and heated debates, the most contentious of which are often related to the ownership and trade of these objects. In recent years, the antiquities market, both licit and illicit, has been dramatically shaped by the rise of e-trading practices, with existing dealers looking to the Internet to further their reach and new dealers emerging having been enabled by the ease of online auction platforms, like eBay. These new e-markets have tremendous implications for nation states, scholars, museums, and collectors investigated in cultural heritage and considerable research is needed to better understand the nature of antiquities dealing in the 21st century in order to inform policy development and implementation. Of particular concern to these invested parties are the issues related to the provenance of these antiquities, with many dealers and buyers needing to respond to the ethical expectations of post-1970 UNESCO Convention on the Means of Prohibiting and Preventing the Illicit Import, Export and Transfer of Ownership of Cultural Property.

This will paper respond to these issues through a systematic investigation of the existing and emerging e-markets dealing in papyrus (Hieroglyphic, Coptic, Greek, Demotic), a portable antiquity that is moved through sites like eBay, Invaluable.com, and the websites of traditional auction houses like Sotheby’s and Christie’s, on a regular basis. A comparison will be formed between these two markets, drawing attention to how different dealers approach ethical concerns like provenance and the treatment of papyrus, in order to yield greater insight into the contemporary practice of papyrus collecting and trading portable antiquities.

ELIZABETH ELTZE (University of Auckland)

The Kushite king at war: The self-representations of Tanutamani in battle within the “Dream Stela”

The Napatan culture as encountered in evidence from the Kushite Twenty-Fifth Dynasty of Egypt had its foundation in an amalgamation of elite traditions from ancient Egypt and those native to Kush. Many of the Twenty-Fifth Dynasty’s tropes of kingly self-presentation were inherited from key texts of the Egyptian New Kingdom, particularly those of Thutmose III. However, the manner in which Tanutamani presents himself as a king in battle within the “Dream Stela” is markedly different from the representational programmes of the New Kingdom “warrior-kings”. Indeed, such dissimilarity in monarchical self-presentation would seem to suggest the implementation of a more traditionally Kushite/African tradition of royal representation. This paper will explore this idea by focusing on Tanutamani’s “king in battle” depictions as found in the text of the “Dream Stela”. Each battle “episode” as recorded within the “Dream Stela” will be analysed and will then be compared to key documents of New Kingdom kings, in order to highlight the differences between the two royal doctrinal conventions. Through these comparisons, this presentation will argue that the ideology of Kushite kingship can be said to have been complex and essentially unique within an ancient context, taking inspiration from the New Kingdom Egyptian kings, but not wholly mimicking their practices. It aims to demonstrate that Tanutamani’s self-representations in his “Dream Stela” provide valuable insights into the creation and dissemination of the king’s public identity, as well as advancing current understandings of the ideology of Napatan kingship at this juncture.

LINDA EVANS and ANNA-LATIFA MOURAD (Macquarie University)

DStretch and digital epigraphy: Case studies from Beni Hassan

Macquarie University's Australian Centre for Egyptology has initiated an ARC-funded project at the Middle Kingdom necropolis of Beni Hassan under the directorship of Naguib Kanawati, which has the long-term goal of re-recording and publishing all of the decorated tombs at the site. The wall paintings at Beni Hassan are unusually well preserved, however loss of pigment in some sections hampers recording and limits the interpretation of scene content. Here we present the results of a trial application of DStretch, a freely available programme for enhancing digital photographs. DStretch enables details that are otherwise invisible to the naked eye to be viewed by artificially highlighting traces of remaining pigment. Case studies to be presented include new images of pigs and bats, a highly unusual depiction of a vulture, and new insights regarding the operation of bird traps represented at the site.

To date, DStretch has been employed primarily by rock art researchers, but we hope to alert the Egyptology community to the benefits of this free programme, which, if used in conjunction with traditional epigraphic methods (digital epigraphy or 1:1 tracing), offers an invaluable tool for achieving a more complete record of Egypt's artistic legacy.

MATTHEW GEORGE (Macquarie University)

Preliminary examinations of administrative centralisation in the Early Dynastic period

The process of administrative centralisation during the Early Dynastic Period is significant as it is an integral component of the state formation process. However, despite this significance, we possess little understanding about how this process would have occurred. Although scholars such as Vera Müller, and Eva Maria Engel have dealt with components of this topic, there is a lack of comprehensive scholarship regarding administrative centralisation in this time period. Through the presentation of archaeological, textual, and iconographic evidence, this paper hopes to offer a detailed critical view of the process by which the bureaucracy becomes centralised, and ultimately evolved into a complete system of governance designed to control the entire country. With an analysis of the changes in administrative documentation, the development of the taxation system, and the evolution of iconographic evidence, a conscious effort towards centralisation is visible in the administration. Through the examination of this process, the aim of this paper is to reinforce the importance of the administration during the Early Egyptian era, and the impact that this centralising process had on the eventual formation of the Egyptian state.

JAMES GILL (Monash University)

Regionalism within the pottery tradition of Ptolemaic Egypt: The example of Dakhleh Oasis

This paper examines the concept of regionalism within the Ptolemaic pottery tradition. Whilst scholars have in the past recognised some differences between the Ptolemaic pottery of Upper and Lower Egypt, the idea that multiple regional pottery traditions existed has not been fully explored. By using the Ptolemaic pottery from Dakhleh Oasis as an example, I will demonstrate that a discrete oasis pottery tradition can be recognised. This displays some similarities with the pottery traditions of both Kharga Oasis and the Theban region; however, distinct differences are also evident, particularly in terms of the painted decoration, surface treatments and range of forms being produced. This raises questions about the degree to which regional pottery workshops were influenced by the workshops of the capital Alexandria.

CALEB HAMILTON (Monash University)

The role of queens during Dynasty One

The influence of First Dynasty queens, such as Neithhotep and Merneith, is well established. Despite scant evidence for these figures, it is possible to investigate the roles that these queens may have held at the beginning of the nascent Egyptian state. Through the incorporation of archaeological evidence, including the

funerary remains of these two queens and contemporary inscriptional material, it is clear that royal woman in the nascent Egyptian state provided critical support to their husbands or sons, or in fact may have even held authority in their own right. This would establish an early precedent for the vital role of females within the Egyptian court.

By examining the recently discovered rock-cut inscriptions in the Wadi 'Ameyra, it is possible to reassess this evidence and the extent of the importance and authority that queens held during this dynasty. The name of Neithhotep, in the Wadi 'Ameyra, was inscribed amongst serekh-signs of kings from the Protodynastic and Early Dynastic periods. These marks were most likely left by expeditions to the southern Sinai region. Given that this rock-cut inscription is outside the Nile Valley, it is possible to suggest the inscribing of a queens name here signifies the prominent role she had within state development during this crucial part of Egyptian history. Importantly, the connection between the goddess Neith and early Egyptian queens is also explored, in relation to the role that they held at this time.

JENNIFER HELLUM (University of Auckland)

The ancient Egyptian language through European eyes

The 19th century during which the vocabulary of the ancient Egyptian language was interpreted and then codified was a time in Egypt of intense foreign activity, which had paternalist and hegemonic aspirations. Excavation crews were largely undifferentiated regarding gender, but the translation of the language was done by privileged white European males, which led to translations that reflect contemporary Orientalist and gendered attitudes. The impact of this on the translation of Egyptian vocabulary was profound. Words dealing with gendered activity are particularly obvious examples of this intersection of East and West. The verbal distortion betrays an understanding of Oriental woman as dangerously and intrinsically sexual. A need for re-examination of the translated vocabulary is obvious. Because the original translations are still presented in the dictionaries, our modern vision of the ancient Egyptians remains distorted by the lens of the first European translators of the ancient Egyptian vocabulary.

SARAH KEEL (Monash University)

Grape expectations

Previously, archaeobotanical remains from Mut have been retrieved from the Saharan sands by water flotation by the members of the Monash University Dakhleh Oasis Project team. During the 2014-'15 season dry sieving was used in a pilot study to gauge its effectiveness in retrieving small macroscopic remains.

Literature points to flotation methods being effective for retrieving larger and more complete floral remains, but resulting in the destruction and loss of smaller, or carbonised, samples of delicate floral structures (Cappers & Neef, 2012, 231-238; Arranz-Otaegui et al. 2015). It was apparent that most of the Mut floral artefacts awaiting retrieval were either small macro-remains, partially or wholly carbonised, or both small and carbonised. The matrix was either the local Saharan sand, or ash. As a result, tri-level dry sieving from the matrix was deliberately chosen for retrieval of floral remains to ascertain whether a wider typology of small remains was viably retrieved.

A considerable proportion of the derived collection was carbonised *Acacia* sp. (wattle). However, a small number of other taxa were also collected. These included: *Balanites aegyptiaca* (L.) Delile. (sugar date), *Cyperus esculentus* L. (yellow nutgrass), *Ficus carica* L. (figs).

A highlight of the retrieved remains was the carbonised fruit of *Vitis vinifera* L. (grape). In previous seasons grape seeds, and portions of the vine with adherent tendrils had been found. The fruit was retrieved from [Trench Mut 34, Context Level 48, Context type A]. Thus, it could have dropped from a vineyard worker's meal, rather than indicate a significant presence of grapes in Mut. Then again, a vineyard is mentioned on a regional Romano Ostrakon as being grown in neighbouring Kellis (Worp 2004, O.Kell. 75).

Although one grape does not a vineyard make, it is encouraging that sieving for floral remains resulted in a previously unseen artefact type.

PAUL KUCERA (University of Central Florida)

A Roman-Egyptian military campaign of the third century CE in the northern region of the Western Desert

The third century CE is generally understood to have been a period of turmoil for the Roman Empire with numerous events triggering regional crises and instability. The Egyptian province was not immune to the troubles experienced and it is during this century that insecurity of the Western Desert first appears to emerge as a major problem for the Roman authorities. From about the mid-third century, raids conducted by groups identified as Libyan begin to take place into the Egyptian territory and it is possible that this represents the first time during the Roman period in which the oases of the Western Desert were also affected by these incursions. Severe disturbances occurred in neighbouring Cyrenaica within the same general time frame and highlighted the magnitude of the problem on a regional scale. A potential connection between events referred to in a document from Oxyrhynchus and an inscription from Cyrene in Cyrenaica offers a new perspective on the military action taken as a means to restore order in the northern region of the Western Desert and parts of North Africa. This paper presents the evidence known to date and examines the possible implications for the western oases, particularly Bahariya Oasis.

NICOLLE LEARY (Macquarie University)

Animal figures and the canon of proportion in Old and Middle Kingdom wall scenes at Meir

Animal figures are an abundant feature of ancient Egyptian wall scenes, however they have been left in the dark shadows of their human counterparts when it comes to artistic analysis. The presented research aimed to shed new light on the methods used by Egyptian artisans to represent animals during the Old and Middle Kingdom periods by investigating an artistic convention known as the 'canon of proportion', which, thus far, has only been examined in relation to human figures. In order to investigate the existence of a proportional guide for the rendering of animal figures in wall scenes, the study focused on elite tombs from the Upper Egyptian site of Meir, where existing grid systems survive. Hypothetical grids were developed based on those associated with three animal types at the site, and were then used to analyse a corpus of fifty-eight examples comprised of standing cattle, standing and swimming ducks and standing oryx dating from the 6th to 12th Dynasties. Results of the examination revealed consistent body measurements across the entire test group, indicating that a proportional guide was used in the rendering of all three figure types at the site. Investigating the existence of a proportional guide for the representation of animal figures at Meir has generated new information about the practices used by Egyptian artisans when rendering subjects in two-dimensional form. The methodology employed for the current study will subsequently provide a platform for testing further sites in the Nile Valley region in order to determine whether the same phenomena occurred uniformly across Egypt or if regional diversity existed.

MEG LISLE (Macquarie University)

Priestesses, musicians, mourners and offerings: A prosopographic study of the involvement of non-royal women in New Kingdom religious practices

Detailed examinations of social and administrative areas where ancient Egyptian women can be identified in the historical record allow for not only a better understanding of the individual areas of study, but of wider social and historical trends as well. The religious sphere, particularly during the New Kingdom period, is one such area where non-royal Egyptian women are certainly present.

Expanding on findings produced by previous research, the current PhD project aims to identify and examine the means by which non-royal Egyptian women engaged with religious practices and religious beliefs during the New Kingdom. Titles such as Hm.t-nTr, Sma.yt, sSS.ty and wr.t Xnr.wt will be discussed, not only independently, but also in relation to one another, and within the wider hierarchy of the New Kingdom religious landscape. In comparison to the state-level involvement of these officially titled women, the project will also examine, on a more personal and private scale, how women expressed their own devotion through oracles and the dedication of votive objects, and their involvement, as mourners, in funerary rituals.

A significant portion of the current research project is the prosopographic index of known New Kingdom women who have recorded religious titles. Collecting and including data such as names, title lists and extensive family outlines allows for the creation of a detailed prosopographic catalogue of titled, New Kingdom women which, in turn, allows for a more in-depth analysis of not only the individual title holders themselves, but also their place and roles in broader religious and social environments.

This poster presentation will outline the methodology of the research currently being undertaken, making special reference to the scope of the project, its limitations, and the theoretical tools and approaches being utilised. It will also present preliminary findings and an update on the status of the prosopographical index.

ROSANNE LIVINGSTONE (Monash University)

Textiles from Dayr Abu Matta, a Christian site in Dakhleh Oasis

Dr Gillian Bowen, Senior Lecturer in the Centre for Ancient Cultures at Monash University, excavated the site of Dayr Abu Matta in the Western part of Dakhleh Oasis over four seasons of fieldwork between 2008 and 2011. The original size of this site is unknown, the result of encroaching cultivation; it now consists of a church, monastic keep, cemeteries and domestic buildings. It was occupied between the fourth and seventh centuries CE.

Three textiles were recovered from the site during the first two fieldwork seasons. In the first season, two fourth to fifth century textiles were found. One consists of part of a tunic, and the other is a fragment decorated with embroidery. The textile recovered in the following season is a small fragment from of a decorated textile found wrapped around an infant in a fourth century burial. All three were examined, using accepted contemporary methods, to identify the fibres, spinning and weaving practices, and surface decoration used in their manufacture.

The results of the examinations were compared to those of textiles recovered from the site of the village of Kellis, located to the southeast of Dayr Abu Matta, which was occupied during the first four centuries CE. It was found that the three textiles were generally of a higher quality than, and incorporated some techniques not present in, the Kellis assemblage. Since the textiles from Dayr Abu Matta could be of a slightly later date, the differences observed in them may represent developments in textile manufacture and/or Christian burial practices in Dakhleh Oasis.

RICHARD LONG (Monash University)

Unravelling the obscurity of Third Intermediate Period pottery: An oasis perspective

In recent years, significant progress has been made in the once obscure field of Third Intermediate Period pottery. David Aston's pivotal 1996 publication described the investigation of the ceramics from this time as "Tentative footsteps in a forbidding terrain"; fortunately though, the lack of well-dated and unpublished deposits is slowly changing. While excavations in the Nile Valley and Delta have produced significant material and allowed for a greater understanding of key forms, fabrics and functions, work in the Western Oases is also providing a unique perspective on this enigmatic phase of Egyptian history. This presentation will focus on a small group of distinct Third Intermediate Period oasis wares and forms. Some of these have been identified at numerous sites along the Nile for many years, but more recently, well-dated sites in the Western Desert have given us a new lens through which to view the lives of the oasis inhabitants. As such, a more accurate examination of the oasis-Nile Valley relationship during the Third Intermediate Period is now possible, with the extant ceramic record providing an insight into the types of sites, the function of particular vessels, and nature of interactions in the Western Desert.

GLENNDA SUSAN MARSH-LETTS (Textile Research Centre, Leiden)

A 5th Century Virgin Mary; enthroned as the Queen of Heaven?

While investigating evidence for the role that costume played in defining the identity of the Virgin Mary

enthroned with the Christ Child in Egyptian art prior to the Arab Conquest, this author became intrigued by a reference in Atalla, N.S. [1989,1993] *Coptic Art: Wall Paintings/L'Art Copte: Peintures Murales*, Volume I, to a secco painting in the collection of the Coptic Museum, Old Cairo, as coming from the Monastery of Saint Apollo at Baouît and dating to the 5th century. Thus it is one of the earliest images of the Virgin and Child extant in Egypt. The photograph published in Atalla shows only part of the secco painting. The Virgin Mary and the Christ Child are seated upon a high backed, jewelled, and cushioned throne, and attended by two angels. Investigations in Cairo found that a painting in the store of the Coptic Museum, Catalogue No. 12362, matched the photograph in Atalla. Examination of the painting in Cairo showed two possibly unique features. The first feature is the presence of a small niche arch. This could indicate that the painting was not itself originally in a niche, but within a ceiling or arch. However, to date, no other examples corresponding to this architectural feature have been reported in Egypt. The second potentially unique feature of this painting is the unusual purple cap worn by the Virgin Mary, which is decorated in a distinctive pattern. Fifth Century Byzantine Empresses were represented wearing a version of the rolled or large brimmed hat, coloured purple, black or red, and decorated in this distinctive pattern with jewels. Thus this 5th century Egyptian Virgin Mary may be one of the earliest extant representations of the Virgin Mary as Empress or Queen of Heaven.

KATHERINE MCLARDY (Monash University)

Goodbye, Adonis dear: Theocritus' unique Adonia?

Theocritus Idyll 15 (The Syracusans or the Women at the Adonia) depicts two Syracusan women visiting the grand festival in honour of Adonis put on by Arsinoe II at Alexandria. The two main characters, Gorgo and Praxinoa, are clearly having a nice day out without interference from the men in their lives. They leave behind their work, their fractious children and demanding husbands, and all the stresses and boredoms of their everyday life in order to go out to the palace and admire the Adonia festival. The festival is of Near Eastern origin and is known from various locations throughout the ancient world, most notably Athens and Byblos. Theocritus is the major source for the festival in Alexandria, backed up by minor references in relatively late sources and one papyrus from the Faiyum that appears to relate to an Adonia festival. In the paper, I will investigate the influences that create the unique Adonia represented by Theocritus. These include Egyptian and Greek elements as well as hints of elements deriving from the Near Eastern tradition where Adonis' rites originated. Through this analysis, I hope to shed light on how the festival was adapted to suit the needs of the local community who celebrated it.

ANNA-LATIFA MOURAD (Macquarie University)

The tomb of Khnumhotep I: A preliminary report on 2016 fieldwork at Beni Hassan

Since 2010, the Australian Centre for Egyptology, part of Macquarie University's Ancient Cultures Research Centre, has been re-recording and examining the site of Beni Hassan. Located in the Sixteenth Upper Egyptian 'Oryx' nome, the site consists of an important provincial cemetery of the late Old and Middle Kingdoms in which rock-cut tombs of the elite have been found. The tombs contain remarkably detailed wall paintings that explore a variety of themes on daily life, foreigners, religion, warfare and the Egyptian administration. Despite their significance, a number of tombs remain incompletely published since their initial exploration in the late 19th century. The project, led by Naguib Kanawati, seeks to comprehensively record the tombs at the site, offering insight into the nature and function of mortuary art and architecture, as well as Egyptian culture, society and administration. The paper presents a preliminary report on fieldwork conducted in 2016 that has focussed on the tomb of Khnumhotep I (Nr 14) which has never been previously recorded in complete and sufficient detail.

The tomb owner, 'great overlord of the Oryx nome', is postulated to be the father of Khnumhotep II (Nr 3) in whose tomb the famed procession of Asiatics can be found. Like that of his son, the tomb of Khnumhotep I features magnificently coloured paintings of daily life, and uniquely represents a number of ethnic groups from beyond the borders of Egypt. Dating to the reign of Amenemhat I, the tomb, as well as its artistic, architectural and textual elements, can provide much insight into the dynamics of early Middle Kingdom society.

NATALIE MYLONAS (Macquarie University)

The manly eunuchs of late antique Egypt

The figure of the eunuch has gained increasing popularity in recent scholarship, not least because of the insights it can provide into conceptions of gender and the body in the ancient world. Yet despite this growing interest, little attention has been paid to the eunuchs of late antique Egypt. This paper will examine the writings of Justin, Origen, Clement, and Shenoute in order to offer some insight into late antique Christian discourse on gender and the body in Egypt. My point of departure is Matthew Kuefler's seminal work *The Manly Eunuch: Masculinity, Gender Ambiguity, and Christian Ideology in Late Antiquity*. In it, Kuefler suggests that the challenge for Christian authors was to transform the eunuch into a symbol of masculinity. Kuefler's research is restricted to a consideration of the western authors, but I would like to suggest that his thesis rings true for Christian authors writing in Egypt as well. I will argue that these authors challenged the Roman conception of the eunuch as "effeminate" by emphasising the "manliness" of the eunuch and recasting him variously as a soldier, a father, or a symbol of immense self-control. However, this is only half the story. These same authors embraced the well-known stereotype of the effeminate eunuch when it suited their purposes, particularly when they sought to discourage self-castration. We see preserved in our sources this strange rhetoric of dichotomies – the masculine and feminine, moral and immoral, godly and ungodly – all of which exist in tension in the complex figure of the eunuch.

BOYO OCKINGA (Macquarie University)

Unearthing Amenmose: Macquarie University excavations in TT149

The tomb of Amenmose at Dra Abu El Naga (TT149) is one of many in the Theban necropolis that have largely gone unnoticed – the tomb is poorly preserved and the main title borne by its owner, "Royal Scribe of the table of the Lord of the Two Lands", the only one known in the literature, is one that is widely considered to have been rather insignificant. Excavations conducted by the Macquarie Theban Tombs Project have revealed data that call for a re-evaluation of this view. From the fragments recovered, the courtyard's architecture can be reconstructed, revealing that it originally had a portico and colonnades supported by columns and pillars, and that its wall were lined with sandstone revetment blocks decorated in painted relief. A closer study of the inscriptions in the chapel, along with the courtyard decoration, shows that Amenmose was in the personal service of the king and was promoted by the king himself. A fragmentary inscription from the courtyard can be shown to provide data that may contribute to a better understanding of Amenmose's main office.

IRYNA ORDYNAT (Monash University)

Intention or accident? Discussion of deliberate breakage of human figurines in Predynastic burials

Object fragmentation is such a common occurrence in any given archaeological record that the possibility that it may have been caused by a deliberate action is rarely considered. The theory of deliberate breakage is controversial and frequently criticised, the main reason being that such a theory is notoriously difficult to prove. However, several recent studies have been conducted on this topic, and it is gaining increasingly more attention and consideration (Bolger 1992; Chapman 2000; Chapman and Gaydarska 2007, 2009; Anderson 2006; Brittain and Harris 2010).

While conducting research for a Masters' thesis on Egyptian Predynastic anthropomorphic objects, I discovered that a substantial number of these objects (especially human figurines) were exhibiting patterns of consistent breakage in places where accidental fragmentation due to fragility may be implausible. Following previous methodological studies on the subject of deliberate object fragmentation, I conducted a closer study in an attempt to examine the breakages closely. My purpose was to determine whether it is possible that the objects may have been broken on purpose before being interred in the grave. This presentation will focus on the subsequent results I obtained, followed by a discussion of the possible reasons why such breakage would have been inflicted and its significance in Predynastic burial rituals.

AYMIE PAULL (Macquarie University)

Behind every great man: The mothers, wives, and daughters of the high officials at Beni Hassan

Until recently Egypt's Middle Kingdom has received limited attention due to the long prevailing assumption that it was short and would not supply enough material for significant research. Recent studies, however, prove that there is a wealth of valuable information, particularly in the art and architecture.

Most of our evidence about the ancient Egyptians comes from the inscribed and decorated tombs of the elite class. With the area of middle Egypt being the most fertile and accordingly the richest in the country, some of the best evidence for such tombs is found in this region. The site of Beni Hassan contains tombs belonging to the highest title-holders in the province. These structures feature scenes and inscriptions that depict life within the province, important events, and the achievements of the tomb owner, but also place particular emphasis on recording the deceased's immediate family and his ancestry.

This paper aims to determine the role and significance of the wives, mothers, and daughters of Beni Hassan's high officials through an analysis of scenes and inscriptions from the twelve decorated elite tombs at the site.

Of all of the family members to be depicted in the tombs, the mother of the tomb owner appears most frequently in inscriptions whilst his wife is more often depicted in both scenes and inscriptions. It is notable that in the earlier tombs women are referred to by their relationship to the tomb owner and few carry titles or are depicted in scenes. In the later tombs there are longer title strings in the inscriptions and more depictions in the wall scenes.

The study brings a new perspective to our understanding of elite women during the Middle Kingdom, the role they played within the province, their relative importance to the tomb owner, and the tradition of marriage and inheritance.

TRACEY PILGRIM (University College London)

Technological characterisation of Badarian pottery from Hemamieh, Middle Egypt

Archaeometric methods are rarely used to profile the technological processes, or chaîne opératoire, of pottery production in early Egypt. Such techniques have generally been applied in response to questions related to provenance. Scope exists for an investigation into the technological characteristics and traditions of well-attested pottery wares from early Egyptian contexts to inform about the nature and/or progressions of social and cultural contexts and to act as a potential proxy for the movement of socio-cultural groups during the pre-Pharaonic period, especially given the lack of written evidence that is afforded.

A selection of Nile silt pottery sherds from Hemamieh dating to the Badarian and Naqada I periods was analysed in order to determine the feasibility of a ceramic technology study on early Egyptian pottery. Samples were selected to be representative of the five wares identified at Hemamieh by Friedman (1994) and were analysed using thin-section petrography, scanning electron microscopy and portable x-ray fluorescence spectroscopy in order to understand their geochemical and mineralogical composition as well as their textural and structural properties as seen in the microscopic view.

Results procured from these analyses allowed several key observations to be made about the pottery manufacture which were not possible with macroscopic analysis alone. Fabric classifications were re-evaluated once the presence and/or absence of certain tempering agents were confirmed. A clear dichotomy between fabrics with and without naturally occurring organic components suggested that specific locations were purposefully and consistently targeted to harvest raw materials. Three distinct, separate methods for achieving the surface finish on fine, polished wares were also identified which called into question old conclusions about the increasing preference for red polished wares during the Badarian period only being made possible by changes in kiln technology. These conclusions, amongst others, demonstrated some potential for a broader, comparative study of ceramic technological traditions to be conducted across multiple sites, should appropriate material be available.

CARLO RINDI NUZZOLO (Monash University)

Aspects of regional style in the funerary cartonnage from Kellis

Excavations in the Kellis 1 cemetery at Ismant el-Kharab (Dakhleh Oasis) brought to light a substantial amount of funerary cartonnage. The decorative program of the pieces suggests the presence of a specific regional style used in the Dakhleh Oasis, but not exclusively. In particular, similarities have been noticed with the cartonnage excavated in different sites in the neighboring oasis of Kharga (El-Deir, 'Ain Dabashiya, 'Ain el-Labakha, Dush). This paper intends to preliminarily investigate this particular aspect by examining the most prominent features of the cartonnage production of the area.

OLIVIER ROCHECOUSTE (Macquarie University)

Who are the Early Dynastic elite? Evaluating Egyptian elite cemeteries from the First to the Third Dynasties (2900–2545 BC)

Most studies concerning the Early Dynastic period primarily use mortuary data as their main source of information regarding the social structure of this cultural epoch. Of course the minor number of royal tombs that are located between the necropolises of Abydos and Saqqara from the First to the Third Dynasties have been used as prime examples. But, on the other hand, there are a greater quantity of tombs, labelled to be 'elite', that are found inside cemeteries that are also categorised to be 'elite' within different regional locations across Egypt.

The application of the word 'elite', implies that all these tombs are categorised to be similar with the same markers and traits within this archaeological 'elite' group. This social typology has been used to simplify certain tombs into distinct social groups that form part of a social system. But, it cannot be ignored that not all elite tombs within various cemeteries are similarly constructed, which could indicate different degrees of elite individuals to be accounted for.

This presentation wishes to discuss the methodology of this research that will examine these elite cemeteries from published inventories and to analyse them from a multiscale perspective; which includes regional location, cemetery location and tomb design. The outcome of this project is to consider what processes and conditions that affect the scale and distribution of these different elite cemeteries and the tombs that they contain. By studying these elite cemeteries and their variation of scale could provide information about the dynamics of proximity that the Early Dynastic elite had towards the royal family.

SOFIE SCHIØDT (University of Copenhagen)

Papyrus Carlsberg 8: A New Kingdom medical manuscript

Papyrus Carlsberg 8, a manuscript belonging to the Papyrus Carlsberg Collection of the University of Copenhagen, is an 18th dynasty hieratic manuscript dealing with medicine. More specifically, it concerns ophthalmology (the branch of medicine dealing with the eyes; recto side) as well as gynecology and birth prognoses (verso side). The verso was published (at least in part) in 1939 by Erik Iversen, who managed to trace the remarkable transmission history of the text, finding word for word parallels to this medical treatise in a string of later medical documents, thus outlining an unbroken tradition from this 18th dynasty manuscript up until late 17th century European medicine.

A recent study of the recto (as of yet unpublished) has shown that this kind of extraordinary transmission history is also evident from the ophthalmological prescriptions. An analysis of the pharmaceuticals outlined in these prescriptions have revealed parallels in the Greek, Arabic, Coptic, and pre-modern European medical traditions, and can be found as late as 17th century European writings. The specificity of these pharmaceuticals, as well as the very limited circumstances in which these are used, strongly suggests that we are dealing with knowledge that was transmitted from Egypt, and not simply a phenomenon of similar knowledge arising independently in different cultures. The analysis of P. Carlsberg 8 rt. further suggests that the adoption of medical knowledge from Egypt did not occur uncritically, but was very much dictated by cultural similarities and differences and dependent on non-culture specific observations that could be accepted across the boundary of cultures. P. Carlsberg 8 is unique in that it reveals not only aspects of Egyptian medicine, but also of the role Egyptian

medicine played in the formation of later medical traditions, as well as how this knowledge was transmitted interculturally.

MICHAEL STEPHENS (Monash University)

Some thoughts on a recently discovered obelisk transportation scene

The depiction at Deir el Bahari of the transportation of obelisks has attracted considerable attention and debate, accentuated by the lack of a comparative representation. The discovery in 2015 at Gebel el Silsila of another scene involving the conveyance of obelisks provides an opportunity to reconsider how such a task may have been conducted.

Although badly damaged, enough of the scene survives to give rise to a number of questions, including the type of watercraft that is depicted in the scene, and how the Gebel el Silsila obelisks were loaded and positioned onboard. An aspect of my PhD thesis, examining the roles and capabilities of the New Kingdom navy, is the transportation of obelisks. In this paper I draw on this material in a consideration of this new depiction, the vessel depicted, and propose a means for loading, applicable to both the Hatshepsut lighter and the Gebel el Silsila craft.

DAVID STEWART (Monash University)

Flipping hieroglyphs: The use of interactive lectures in teaching ancient Egyptian language

The delivery of content within higher education is moving progressively towards online modes, leaving class time for interpretive or analytical skills to be focussed upon. This style of teaching, variously termed Peer Learning, Interactive Lecturing or the Flipped Classroom has, in recent years, been popularised for its benefits to student engagement and learning, most notably by Eric Mazur of Harvard University, who incorporated a flipped classroom with peer learning in his Physics course. With the help of the Better Teaching Better Learning Small Grant Scheme at Monash University, I incorporated the online program Socrative into my teaching of ancient Egyptian Hieroglyphs in 2016 in order to create a flipped classroom and gauge to what extent this effected the student experience. The results of this, both practical and statistical, are presented here.

SUSAN THORPE (University of Auckland)

An extra dimension: The personal insight ancient Egyptian private letters provide to augment knowledge from visual evidence

Visual representations on tomb and temple walls have provided considerable knowledge of ancient Egyptian daily life, religious custom and military achievements. However, as primarily visual evidence they are unable to provide insight into the people themselves and their personalities, or information about the specific events and issues they were concerned with. This paper will look at a selection of letters which relate to daily life and religious matters. The examples relating to daily life will show the extra dimension such letters give to the people and their involvement in issues such as land management and husbandry. Those relating to religious matters will illustrate the insight given into religious practices and personnel, the importance attached to the observance of religious festivals and the requirements associated with them. It will evidence the way in which the personal touch of private letters provides the extra dimension to visual representations as a source for ancient Egyptian historical information.

SHARYN VOLK (University of Melbourne)

Where are the funerary figurine depictions in Book of the Dead Spell 110 vignettes?

Depictions of the ancient Egyptian Field of Reeds in the Book of the Dead have been described as an embellished representation of the cultivated Nile floodplain at the time of harvest. The principal role of the Field in this context is understood as representing the place where crops were grown to provide the dead with food. It has

also been recognised as a place of purification. If the funerary figurine acted as a substitute for its owner when he/she was called to work in the fields, surely in vignettes of Book of the Dead Spell 110 depictions of figurines at work would be evidenced. Consideration of visual and textual representations of Book of the Dead Spell 110, and its predecessors Coffin Texts 464-468, may assist in illuminating the true nature of the agricultural activities undertaken in the Field of Reeds. Is this the type of activity the deceased would specifically wish to avoid in the afterlife? The nature of the mechanism whereby the crops evidenced in the Field of Reeds provided the deceased with sustenance in the afterlife, and the actors seen to be engaged in the agricultural activity in the vignettes, will be considered in this presentation.

ASHTEN WARFE (Monash University)

Iconoclasm in degrees: On the proscription of Seth

Late Period religious texts vilifying the god Seth find support in the excision of the god's image from monuments in Thebes and elsewhere throughout Egypt. Since the early 20th century, the widespread vandalism has been taken as evidence for a 'systematic' proscription of the cult of Seth during the first millennium BCE, a view upheld by te Velde (1977) in his seminal study. Yet recent scholarship is beginning to highlight inconsistencies in the treatment of the god's image, along with the need for context-dependent readings of the textual accounts. Added to this is mounting evidence for the continued veneration of Seth throughout the first millennium: e.g. at the site of Mut al-Kharab in Dakhleh Oasis, currently under investigation by Monash University.

This presentation will explore these issues further. Taking as a case study images from the Colonnade Hall in Luxor Temple, it examines inconsistencies in the erasure of the god's image to reveal a process of excision more appropriately characterised as variable, than systematic. The shift in interpretation implies the need to consider a more nuanced and potentially complex practice of ancient iconoclasm. Some comments on the practice are offered as a preliminary step to an improved understanding of Egyptian attitudes towards the cult of Seth during the first millennium.

Te Velde, H. 1977, *Seth, God of Confusion: A Study of His Role in Egyptian Mythology and Religion*, Brill, Leiden.

ALEXANDRA WOODS (Macquarie University)

Eternal Egypt deconstructed: A re-assessment of cultural continuity and regional diversity in Middle Kingdom Egypt (Dynasties 11-13, 2055-1650 B.C.E.)

European historical traditions have presented ancient Egypt as a well-balanced, homogeneous society that is characterised by continuity of thought, burial customs, artistic traditions and interhuman relations. One of the hallmarks of ancient Egyptian civilisation is its cultural longevity, which has led to the myth that Egypt is unchanged and to this day represents an endless, static, perpetual culture. However, Egyptian history is an amalgamation of 5000 years of development and change and, in more recent literature, the popular idea of 'Eternal Egypt' has been over turned by richer understandings of the dynamic cultural, social, and political forces that continually acted to re-shape the Egyptian civilisation (Moreno Garcia 2014: 52-54).

While there have been considerable investigations into the process of state formation or the factors that contributed to the disintegration of 'kingdom' periods, certainly less of a focus for Egyptologists has been the process of state re-formation – asking how state systems were re-established, re-defined and re-formed following periods of social fragmentation and decline? Striking in the diachronic study of ancient Egypt is the resilience of the 'great tradition': a core political ideology built around the persona of the pharaoh as the divinely sanctioned ruler who was responsible for maintaining maat (divine order) against the continual threat of isfet (chaos). These concepts and a rich, embedded system of iconography and religious symbolism formed a civilisation template that became particularly relevant during periods of state re-organisation. In these times of state re-formation modes of cultural expression were re-defined and reflect a period of cultural renaissance. Various scholars have noted that a salient feature of the Middle Kingdom is extensive use of 'archaism', or a conscious emulation or imitation of form, type and style from earlier periods, which have been long out of use (Kahl 2010).

The brief communication will present an overview of a new research project, which aims to and produce a fuller understanding of regional diversity in Middle Kingdom Egypt in two parts: one, examining regional

artistic style and form from the late Old Kingdom to Middle Kingdom (2 and 3 Dimensions); the other attempting a full analysis on Egypt's view of its past, which will centre on the extent to which connections with the earlier models and forms were explicitly manipulated as symbols of legitimacy.

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Freed, R.E., 'Relief Styles of the Nebhepetre Montuhotep Funerary Temple Complex'. In: Goring, E., Reeves, N., and Ruffle, J., eds., Goring, E., Reeves, N., and Ruffle, J., (eds) *Chief of Seers: Egyptian Studies in Memory of Cyril Aldred* (London, 1997), 148-163.

Moreno Garcia, J.C., "The cursed discipline? The peculiarities of Egyptology at the turn of the Twenty-First century". In: Carruthers, W., (ed.), *Histories of Egyptology: Interdisciplinary Measures* (London, 2014), 50-63.

LAWRENCE XU-NAN (University of Auckland)

Acts of heroism – the life and portrayal of Pektur in the Inaros Series

Pektur is by far one of the most interesting and complex characters in the Inaros series, and features prominently within the corpus. A seasoned military commander and strategist from Pisopd, he is one of the few characters in the series whom we know was inspired by a historical figure of the same name. Although not considered the protagonist in any of the stories, his supportive role and importance in the Inaros cycle is undeniable, to the extent that he can be considered as the main driving force for narrative progression. This paper will present the life of Pektur as portrayed within the narrative framework, particularly his status within the Egyptian court and his eloquence. In doing so, the paper will also bring to light his most striking characteristics, his role within the series, and contribute to the greater discussion on the conceptualisation of heroism in Egyptian narrative literature.

RACHEL YUEN-COLLINGRIDGE (Macquarie University)

'I pray for your full health': Expressions of intimacy in Greek letters from Roman Egypt

A small group of papyrus letters from Graeco-Roman Egypt use either the verbal form *holoklerein* ('to be in full health') or the noun *holokleria* ('full health') in the formulaic expression of greetings which began most letters. The use of these cognates in the papyri begins in the third and fourth centuries A.D. and ends in the fifth. An unusually high proportion of these letters were written by women or between close family members. Moreover, a significant number of these letters appear to have been written by Christians. Epigraphic evidence, on the other hand, points to the association of the term with classical cults. This paper will examine the distribution of instances to determine whether the cognates mark a specific religious affiliation or a particular level of intimacy between sender and recipient. If the use of these terms is associated strongly with Christianity, a number of additional letters might be assigned to a Christian milieu, giving us further information about the early Christian community in Egypt and its adaptation or interaction with pre-Christian religious traditions.