

INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE

MEETING THE OTHER
TRANSFERS AND CULTURAL INTERACTIONS
AROUND THE NILE VALLEY

ABSTRACTS



CAIRO 27-31 MARCH 2021
IFAO & PCMA

International Conference
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IFAO & PCMA, Cairo

Nubian Soldiers in the Egyptian Army

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*“When His Majesty took action against the Asiatic sand dwellers, His Majesty made an army of many tens of thousands from all of Upper Egypt
from Irtjet-Nubians, Medjaw-Nubians, Yam-Nubians, Wawat-Nubians, Kaau-Nubians.....”*

Weni

From the tomb of Mesehty, a monarch of Assiut, we have two very impressive groups of wooden figurines, fixed on bases, each representing a regiment of soldiers on the march. One group shows Egyptians and the second group of soldiers represents Nubians. There is no doubt that the Egyptian army organization was still based on unpaid military service, unlike the mercenaries, and this was particularly evident among the Nubians loyal to the Pharaoh and to the state, as we shall see later.

Representations of Nubians appear scattered throughout Egypt, but a large series of stelae from Gebelein, just south of Thebes, record their presence as an organized community. They are generally represented in simple style with their bows and arrows in their hands, often accompanied by their dogs. The Nubians were recruited into the Egyptian context, operating in and on behalf of Egypt, without however, losing their own identity.

Regarding the Egyptian military organization, the manner in which these armies were organized and led, and their activities beyond the natural frontiers of the home land, we will notice that it increased since the Old Kingdom to reach a climax during the Empire of the New Kingdom. We will also notice the role of the Nubians soldiers in the Egyptian army growing in importance based on the use to which the army was put.

In this paper, I will give a tentative account of the Nubians soldiers within the Egyptian army organization as recruited permanent elements, not mercenaries, and as they existed during the great historical phases of the Old Kingdom, Middle Kingdom and the New Kingdom wars.

Cultural and social practices of conviviality: The “dining code” in Roman and Late Antique Egypt

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The research focuses on the complex issue of the conviviality, along with its public and private functions, in Roman and Late Antique Egypt. This topic fits in the broader frameworks of studies and publications on the ancient world and specifically on the Roman convivium.

Commensality, reflected in the conviviality when the sharing of meal has a social and ritual meaning, is one of the most important issues that concerns ancient civilization. Starting from the 8th-7th centuries BCE, it was possible to recognize in Mediterranean basin a “convivial code” with a shared distinctive feature: the reclining banquet. Egypt is the only country where there are no traces of the adoption of this new custom until the Hellenistic era.

The practice of reclining banquet and the Hellenistic convivial luxury spread in late Republican Rome. During the Late Antiquity, the banquet customs and traditions as well as the dining rooms’ layout changed in all Empire territories.

The analysis of a double-pillar dining room with masonry stibadium (sigma couch) found at Amheida (Dakhla Oasis) in 2010 by the Archaeological Mission of The New York University points out the absence of previous studies about the Roman banquet in the Egyptian cultural field. The dining rooms and the banquet couches documented so far suggest a certain standardization of the architectural schemes and the introduction of models and traditions coming from the Graeco-Roman world. These models are often combined with local building elements, recognizable especially in the planimetric organization of spaces and in the building materials.

The collected data point out different degrees of use of the convivium elements perhaps influenced by the different degree of “Romanization” in the several regional contexts. Finally, the analyzed structures denote the different ways in which Mediterranean models have been re-visited and influenced by a local strongly rooted building tradition and the social membership of the owners.

Expeditioners and nomads: the cultural milieu of ancient Egyptian frontier regions.

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The ancient Egyptian mining activity is widely attested - since the Early Dynastic period - all over the Eastern desert and the South Sinai. These areas on the fringes of Egypt were actual crossroads for mutual exchanges, especially with the Levant. They were also inhabited by non-sedentary people and considered as negotiation centres visited by different ethnic and social communities pursuing their own interests for the exploitation of the mines. Therefore, contact between various cultures in these regions was inevitable. As it has been demonstrated by archaeological investigations, epigraphic evidence, and material culture analysis, the members of the Pharaonic mining expeditions worked side by side with local communities, although not always peacefully. The combined sources reveal, indeed, a complex and shifting reality, in which different coexistence strategies have likely been adopted by both parties involved. Equally relevant for understanding the social dynamics behind mining activities is a change of perspective in studies in favour of those “invisible actors” like pastoral and semi-nomadic populations (e.g., Nubians and Canaanites), who played a consistent role in the spreading of ideas, practices, and goods.

The aim of this paper is to focus on the social and cultural context underlying the procurement of mineral raw materials around the Nile Valley, by tracing the diachronic development of intercultural relations in these marginal areas from the Third to the Second Millennium BC.

Playing with the other: the Egyptian game of *senet* and the Greeks under the 1st millennium

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Throughout Antiquity, games have travelled, been transformed and played the role of “social lubricant” between cultures. As such, games allow us to question the multicultural interactions that took place between people. The most famous Egyptian game, the *senet*, exists since the 4th millennium BC and has been the subject of several major studies, led by E. Pusch and P. Piccione. However, its evolution during the 1st millennium, when multiculturalism becomes very strong in Egypt, is much less known, and so is its relationship with the Greek and Roman worlds. This lecture will show the profound changes that the game underwent at that time, and will tackle the following questions: did *senet* really influence classical ludic practices and funerary beliefs as some studies have attempted to show? Or were the Greek and Roman games that changed Egyptian habits, and the cultural imaginary that surrounded *senet*?

Tomb no. 3 in Bir el-Shaghala Necropolis “The Invisible Acculturation beyond Archaeology”

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The Bir el-Shaghala Necropolis, currently, is better known via publications within recent years. The tombs mostly have an open-air court, first floor with funerary spaces and a second floor with a chapel and a pyramid. Tomb no. 3 shows many anomalies in terms of structure and decoration: the walls of the court are painted with Egyptian scenes showing two figures of the deceased or a priest censuring. Another register shows two crouching lions and remains of a deity above. Stylistically they are comparable to the Tutu temple scenes in Kellis. The main funerary unit is a large rectangular hall, uniquely built in burnt bricks and paved in mortar. The walls, on the contrary, are decorated with coloured panelled squares, in ad zones style, which are comparable to houses in Kellis and Narmouthis as well as tombs in Akhmim and traceable back to Anfushy Tomb 2. Two carved Greek-style plaster portraits, depict a male and female likely are the owners. Uniquely, the tomb has a single square funerary space. The identity of the owners and their cultural background is questionable, but likely a Greek family settling in Mothis.

In another phase of the tomb life, the court was joined to two funerary rooms cut inside the pyramid of tomb 6, likely used by a successive generation of the same family, where Greek dipinti were found. One text mentions Osiris which conforms to the Egyptian style court, while the other text echoes Homer and Empedocles which conforms to the main hall Greek style decoration.

This tomb presents an interesting case study of religious acculturation reflected in its architecture, texts and decoration, which stress the question of personal choices against liberty of painters and architects of eclectic styles in such remote areas like Dakhleh Oasis in Roman period.

Blemmyes, Romans and Indigenous Peoples in Berenike in the 4th–6th centuries AD

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An emporium with global reach, the port of Berenike on the Red Sea coast of Egypt is suited to answer questions about cultural interactions around the Nile Valley like no other harbor site currently excavated within Egypt's borders. Developed by the Roman administration of Egypt in the 1st–3rd centuries AD, the port of a debated antiquity reaching possibly back to the Middle Kingdom, appears to have changed hands in late antiquity. The extent of this handover—political, economic, military—can be illuminated by exploring the border situation of the Roman Empire in southern Egypt in the context of new archaeological discoveries made by the Berenike Project, especially in the Great Temple and the so-called Northern Complex. The evidence of the archaeological record (written sources, architectural remains, material culture—especially dress, personal adornments, pottery and art) can be interpreted to reveal the ethnicity of the people residing in Berenike, permanently, seasonally or intermittently, in the 4th to 6th centuries AD. The proposed paper will focus on particular types of evidence from this late period, especially architecture, personal adornment, written records etc. in order not only to assess the cultural makeup of the port but also to see the extent to which specific intangibles, such as people's aspirations, openness to cultural influence, the nature of their commercial dealings, are represented in the historical record and what they say about the place.

In the light of recent discoveries, Berenike showcases the intricate situation on Egypt's southeastern flank and the extraordinary melting pot of cultures and ethnicities that it had become at a time of unrest and major political and cultural transitions in the ancient world.

Disentangling Identity in Ancient Egypt from the ‘Egyptian’ vs. ‘Nubian’ Dichotomy

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In spite of recent strides in our understanding of identity in the multicultural landscape of ancient Egypt, the late 19th and early 20th century framework of a uniform Egyptian identity still prevails and archaeological evidence that does not fit this narrative is frequently dismissed as an outlier or exception to the rule. Moreover, a common thread in many studies on identity and material culture is the presumption of clearly defined Egyptian and Nubian cultural groups as starting points. In no period can the claim of a homogenous culture across Egypt be supported, and this is acutely evident during the Second Intermediate Period and early New Kingdom (c. 1780–1500 BCE). Contexts with a complex set of material culture and social practices, stemming from a variety of direct and indirect cultural encounters, are forced into rigidly defined categories based on the entrenched culture-historical approach, an inflexible taxonomic tradition, and the lingering “pots = people” mentality (Bader, in press).

This paper challenges a simplistic view of identity in ancient Egypt with a multi-theory approach to the material culture and social practices evident in both settlement and funerary contexts that do not conform to our tidy typologies. A new appraisal of archaeological evidence in the Nile Valley demonstrates that multiple, diverse ‘communities of practice’ (Wenger, 1998) existed within Egypt. These communities can be discerned and disentangled from the strict Egyptian vs. Nubian dichotomy. Material and practice will be considered as reflections of active community choices and not as passive symbols of a presumed ethnic or cultural label. Case studies from the sites of Tell Edfu, Saqqara, Qau el-Kebir and Badari will be presented to demonstrate three different results of intercultural encounters in ancient Egypt during the Second Intermediate Period and early New Kingdom.

The Other in Archaeology

Bettina Bader

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Material culture tends to be interpreted as a direct reflection and manifestation of the ancient people within the field of Egyptology. The objects, in the widest sense, made and used by the people imply intricate patterns of technology and organisation of manufacture and often networks of exchange within and outside of Egypt, which complicate interpretational frameworks. Assumptions seem to oversimplify the available data and need scrutiny.

In periods or at sites, when and where material culture is the only preserved remnant of activity, particular care needs to be employed to not impose preconceived ideas, historiographic and modern, on the finds before the data set has been analysed in depth and thus provides a valuable source type, which can then be compared to other sources.

Differences in interpretation of relations by means of material culture can be observed when the material culture of the First Intermediate Period with all its regional developments and variation are contrasted with that of the Second Intermediate Period.

Various definitions and concepts will be discussed, especially where cultural contacts are perceived to go beyond Egypt.

Foreign plants in the Egyptian landscape - selected examples.

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Plants played a great role in Egyptian culture – they were used as a decoration (in gardens, as bouquets, garlands and collars), in the kitchen, in medicine, in magical practice, and as ingredients of the cosmetics. Some of plants, are so often represented in Egyptian depictions and texts, that they instantly remind us of Egypt. But do all the plants depicted in Egyptian art or mentioned in texts are originally Egyptian? Aim of the presentation is to investigate which plants were brought to Egypt, how they became part of traditional Egyptian landscape, and most importantly, why they were brought to Egypt from the abroad? During the presentation author will introduce the history of selected plants (e.g. olive – *Olea Europea*, pomegranate – *Punica granatum* or lentils – *Lens culinaris*) basing on different type of data (archaeological, archaeobotanical, lexicographic and iconographic material).

Technological choices within a framework of interaction: Eastern Nile Delta in the 4th millennium BC A methodological assessment from Anthropology of Technology

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Mobility - both regional and interregional - implies not only goods that are put into circulation, but also people and knowledge. Namely, these exchanges carry with them a cultural identity in terms of the circulation of ideas, symbols, technologies, goods and images of the other and, therefore, they are immersed in a complex system where there is an interplay of interconnected identities.

The aim of this presentation is to analyze the cross-cultural interactions of the Nile Delta with its peripheries in the 4th millennium BC from the perspective of the Anthropology of Technology, highlighting the social context in which these technological choices are part of these interaction networks. In this sense, in a context of changes and continuities, technological choices are understood as inventions, loans, and recombinations that are embedded in a woven symbolic system.

The socio-historical context analyzed here allows us an interesting approach to the role of the communities of the Eastern Delta and their relationships with their neighboring areas, i.e. the Southern Levant and Upper Egypt within the framework of the exchange of goods and craft specialization. A focal point in this analysis is the evidence of copies, local imitations and hybrid styles that reflect a display of everyday practices that would have emerged among new social settings. In other words, local and foreign groups would have coexisted in the same scenario where social ties would be quite close and could have converged on social and technological practices with numerous elements in common.

Therefore, we propose a processual approach that considers the meaning of technical concatenations from specific socio-ecological-territorial contexts with an emphasis on political intentions, power relations, use needs, as well as the confrontation of various corpus of knowledge.

Byblos & Egypt – From the time of Sinuhe to the time of Wenamon: art(in)facts

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Archaeology reveals that there were many “exchanges/transfers” between Egypt and Byblos/Jbeil in Lebanon. The excavations at Jbeil brought to light small Egyptian and Egyptianizing objects - such as easily transportable scarabs that can be found everywhere in the Mediterranean - and some large-scale constructions and architectural elements (obelisks, uraeus-friezes, bas-reliefs...). As for iconography, we can find also: cobra, sema-taouy scenes etc... Most of these examples are chronologically placed from the Middle Kingdom/SIP and the beginning of the first millennium. These Egyptian influences are not only found in Byblos but also in other Near-Eastern regions.

In this communication, we will give a general presentation of these objects, monuments, Egyptian figures which inspired Giblete production (the Egyptianizing objects). We will focus on the adoption and transfer of motifs, symbols using Egyptian and Egyptianizing artefacts found in Byblos/Jbeil. This general inventory will give an idea about the nature and evolution of relations between Egypt and Byblos and will help us to ask many questions: how the exchange of objects become a transfer of ideas, signs, and symbols? Do the object and the sign have the same function in Egypt and in Levant? Do they play the same role? Why some imported objects have been modified? Knowing all the Egyptian symbols existing in Byblos, what influenced the choice of a pattern over another on some artefacts?

Finally at the end of this process of assimilation/transfert, is it possible to consider this “Egyptianizing art” as a “purely decorative art”, with a complete loss of the significance of Egyptian symbols?

Cultural diversity in New Kingdom Nubia

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PI of ERC Project DiverseNile

The recent concepts using theories of ‘cultural entanglement’ are important starting points, but still not the solution to reconstruct the actual cultural milieu of the Nile Valley in the New Kingdom due to the current elite and centre bias. However, based on the latest results, we are now able to develop a novel method tackling the full complexity of cultural dynamics in the Middle Nile. The ERC project DiverseNile is tacking a new approach and investigates internal cultural factors, individual choices and careers, and related decisions of different groups of Nubians and Egyptian settlers. The paper will give an overview of the project and its case study in the Middle Nile, the Attab to Ferka region.

Egyptian ‘colonization’ of southern Levant during the end of EB I, a view from both perspectives

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Since the discovery of Egyptian settlement at Tel Erani by S. Yeivin in the 1950s many scholars discussed the nature of the newcomers presence in the southern part of southern Levant during the terminal stages of EB I. Up to date the commonly accepted theory says that young Egyptian state established a colony to acquire the goods for own elites. Other researchers presented arguments supporting other theses, such as, for example, conquest and domination or more sporadic trade contacts. Moreover, some researchers claim that the disappearance of Egyptian settlement in the Levant is associated with a coup against the rule imposed by the newcomers. All of this ideas were focusing mostly on the situation in the southern Levant without analyzing the situation in Egypt itself.

Archaeological research in the Nile Delta, which began at the end of the 20th century, and new data from what is now Israel and the Gaza Strip shows that the nature of the relations, dominated by newcomers from Egypt, promoted by the scholars so far, is incorrect.

In my opinion, the contacts between the communities living in both regions were based on trade relations, which can be described using the bazaar economy theory. For the correct reconstruction of the nature of the relationship, it is important to look at the ongoing processes from a broader perspective and embed them in a chrono-cultural context. A very good database for such studies is provided by the results of works carried out in Tell el-Farkha and recent finds from well-published archaeological prospections carried out in the southern Levant. In my paper I would like to propose the new description of the nature of the relations between Egypt and the southern Levant.

Of Cretan wood and an Aegean shape, adorned with Quadruple Spirals. On the identity of the Keftiu-ship in the Egyptian records

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During the Thutmosid Era, the pharaonic conquests undertaken in the Levant further opened Egypt to more northern regions. Among these, the Aegean world occupies a prominent place as illustrated by the representations of Aegean bearers of diplomatic gifts on the walls of several noble tombs (e.g. those of Senenmut and Rekhmire) within the Theban Necropolis.

In the Egyptian toponymic vocabulary, Kftjw (“Keftiu country”) refers to the island of Crete. During the second half of the 15th century, during the reigns of Thutmose III and his son and successor Amenhotep II – the term obtained an unparalleled polysemy: it is both a toponym and an anthroponym, but also a qualifying adjective used to denote a vase of Cretan craftsmanship, a Cretan name and a Cretan-type ship. The kftjw-ship is mentioned three times in Egyptian records from this period. Nevertheless, its meaning remains controversial. Earlier Egyptologists and Aegeanists scholars interpreted the term either as an indication of the ship’s destination, the origin of its construction or its home port.

Areassessment of the textual documentation (DAUTAIS, forthcoming), however, demonstrates that these ships were built in Egypt (Perunefer shipyard) using Egyptian techniques (sewn boat, shell-first) by and for Egyptians (including Kenamun). Coupled with a cross-referenced approach to iconographic and archaeological data from both Egypt and the Aegean, and in the light of the Cretan socio-political context (Late Minoan II Knossian and Mycenaean-related supremacy across the island), this paper argues that the appellation “kftjw”, for such a type of ship, refers to the materialization of iconographic and morphologic transfers coupled with the origin of the raw material. From this moment onwards, the “kftjw-ship” would be a generator of prestige for the most powerful Egyptian elites.

The Kerma ornaments as indicators of cultural interactions in the Nile Valley

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The focus of this paper will be to investigate the cultural encounters in Nubia during the Kerma times (2500-1450 BCE) through the study of personal ornaments that will be considered as potentially relevant indicators of regional cultural variations. The production and distribution of these finds, such as beads, pendants, and amulets, constitute an intriguing research problem with various potential outcomes. Identifying the provenance of the beads' materials and the respective manufacturing techniques will add new information about the involvement of Kerma sites in regional and long-distance networks between the mid-3rd and the mid-2nd millennium BCE.

The ancient Nubian socio-cultural landscape during the Kerma times was extremely complex and there were contacts not only between Egypt and Nubia but also within Nubian populations themselves. The complex interactions taking place between Kerma people and their neighbours were frequently reflected in the manufacture of personal ornaments, which was characterized by the presence of different features. Therefore, the systematic study of these ornaments testifies a wide range of short- and long-distance contacts but can also help us to obtain important information on the heterogeneous Kerma society – composed of different cultural groups that interacted and merged with each other. These finds offer evidence for varying trends and influences during the Bronze Age, allowing cultural contacts to be traced when studying Nubia from a broader perspective.

The ornaments will be used to approach regional patterns, supra-regional relationships, and networks within the Kerma Kingdom, bearing in mind recent discussions of cultural entanglement in Nubia during the Bronze Age. This innovative approach will provide new data about the cultural identity of Ancient Nubia and to highlight interactions between the different cultural horizons who lived together in the Nile Valley and beyond during the Bronze Age.

(De)constructing ethnic identity of Nubians in 3rd millennium BCE Gebelein

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Late Old Kingdom and First Intermediate Period funerary stelae from the Gebelein region depicting Nubians as well as Egyptians are well known among scholars researching ethnic relations in ancient Egypt. Nubians on the stelae can be recognised by hieroglyphic labels calling them Nehesi and/or they are holding a bow, arrows, sometimes they are wearing a sash and have a dark complexion as well as kinky hair. However, the ethnicity of depicted people is not always clear, because element of their dresses and complexions not always match.

Current field surveys at Gebelein and archival research brought new data on the archaeological context of these stelae and some of them can be linked with specific tombs and their furnishing. This is especially interesting in the context of several stelae that reflect cultural interactions between Nubians and Egyptians that can be related to these tombs. Of special interest is the burial of Nomarch Ini, whose tomb combined Egyptian and Nubian or Kerman traditions in its furnishing. Thus, the evidence from Gebelein allows to observe how skin colour, material culture, and ethnicity were coinciding.

The aim of the paper is to present evidence of Nubian presence in the Gebelein region from the perspective of these stelae and other sources. Furthermore, the author would like to discuss how the ethnic identity was constructed by inhabitants of the area in the late third millennium BCE and how it is constructed by contemporary scholars.

The Eastern Nile Delta Hub at the Beginning of the Late Bronze Age

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In the course of the Second Intermediate Period, an important urban centre emerged in the eastern Nile Delta, identified with Avaris, the capital of the Hyksos. The archaeological site is the well-known excavation area of the Austrian Archaeological Institute in Cairo, including the sites of Tell el-Dab'a, Ezbet Rushdi and 'Ezbet Helmi. The archaeological remains, especially from the Middle Kingdom and from the Hyksos period, have already been examined in several studies by various scientists.

At the excavation site of 'Ezbet Helmi platforms of mud bricks with surrounding settlement structures were uncovered, which were the substructures of palaces in the early New Kingdom, and which became famous primarily because of the discovery of Minoan fresco fragments. While most of these paintings have been published, the overall stratigraphy of the site, including a study of all the finds, has not yet been adequately investigated.

The subject of this paper is the interpretation of the imported goods in the material culture from features of the so-called small palace platform F at 'Ezbet Helmi. Currently, these areas H/I, H/IV and H/V are being analysed stratigraphically in a project financed by the Anniversary Fund of the Austrian National Bank, whereby the entire find material is included in the evaluation.

While from the Hyksos period mainly imports from the Middle Bronze Age culture could be identified, in 'Ezbet Helmi it is imports belonging to the Late Bronze Age culture of the Eastern Levant. These are subsequently also reflected in Egyptian productions. The influence of such imports becomes visible both in the imitation of vessel forms, and in the creation of new shapes. In addition, motifs and decorations were adopted, which subsequently appeared in the 18th Dynasty material culture.

Constellations of objects: investigating the concept of Egyptian dwelling

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This paper develops the concept that domestic experience both reflects and is a product of the Egyptian concept of social reality. In her 2020 “Putting People in their Place. Domestic Space and Privacy in the Amarna Workmen’s Village”, Rocha da Silva showed how Egyptian domestic practice was not confined to the four walls of the house or even its compound, but was distributed across the surrounding environment. Expanding on this, we are interested in the relationship between the social practices and practical habits that result in an Egyptian lifeway and the extent to which this is modified and adapted to new environments and different social landscapes. To what extent, and in which areas of life (architecture, foodway, dress, religion) was the Egyptian habitus modified in the Levant and Nubia? Equally, to what extent was this habitus variable between the extremes of the Nile valley and its Delta? In this paper we propose a method of investigating these questions which is the starting point of a joint investigation about similarities and difference of domestic in the New Kingdom.

The female figurines of the Late and Greco- Roman periods in context

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The nude female figurines are attested from pre-dynastic times to the Greco-Roman Period in Egypt. The best known examples of these figurines were found from the Middle Kingdom onwards. These figurines are made of different materials such as unfired clay, terracotta, stone, faience, and wood. The female figurines of the Late Period resemble the figurines of the New Kingdom: they appeared in a form of carved plaques representing a nude woman lying on a bed with arms to her sides and a heavy wig to her shoulders. In some examples, these women suckle a child or have a child on their feet. The female figurines of Late and Greco Roman period were found in various contexts. Most of them were discovered in temples and domestic buildings; whereas some others were buried in tombs. A few examples were even found in military camps and forts.

There is a continuity of forms of those figurines from the New Kingdom into the Ptolemaic times a new types, inspired by Greek culture, appeared in Egypt during the Greco-Roman Period. These may be material expression of cultural confluence, which happened at that time along the Nile. The female figurines seem to have been re-conceptualized by the Greeks and Romans living in Egypt.

The function of the female figurines during this period became more complicated and is still debated by scholars unlike the female figurines of the Middle and New Kingdoms. The current paper aims to present the examination of these figurines to identify their cultural conception during the Late and Greco Roman periods. I would like to answer the research questions: what are the main purposes of those figurines? Or in another word, what is the relationship between these female figurines and their find-spots?, who were the owners and dedicators of these figurines?, and finally, Is there any relation between form of a figurine and ethnicity of its owner or donator?

Ceramic Altars from Memphis

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This paper is focused on several fragments of altars found by the Russian Archaeological Mission at Kom Tuman. The site is located in the northern part of archaeological area of Memphis. The landmark of Kom Tuman is a massive structure so-known as “Palace of Apries”. The palace was surrounded by administrative, industrial and living quarters that were occupied by local and numerous foreign communities.

The altars in question were ceramic objects shaped as architectural models and decorated with human and animal figures and floral motifs. Such objects were common in Syro-Palestinian region, where they were used as votive offerings or they were part of domestic religious practices.

The altars from Memphis were made of local clay in local workshops. Their production could be encouraged by the Levantines, who formed a significant part of the large and multiracial population of ancient Memphis.

It is interesting that figures on these objects were made both in original “Levantine” style (postures of human figures, facial features, etc.) and in Egyptianizing manner.

This can be considered as markers that the immigrants who lived in Egypt tried to adapt to local culture, and — at the same time — that the local culture absorbed some elements brought to Egypt by foreigners.

The possible role of Wadi Tumilat in the EBA copper trade between Egypt, Sinai, and the Levant

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Based on both textual and archeological evidence, Wadi Tumilat was long considered important communication, exchange, and trade route between Egypt and the ancient Near East during the Graeco-Roman Period. However, more recent surveys and excavations conducted in the area showed that it might have served a similar function during the Late, Middle, and even as early as the Early Bronze Age.

Archaeological finds from sites such as Kafr Hassan Dawud, Tell el-Niweiri, Tell Nishabe, Shaqafiya, and Tell Samud show that the wadi could have been used as a corridor between the Nile Delta and the Sinai peninsula, and beyond, as early as during the Pre-, Proto-, and Early Dynastic Periods. The presence of copper artifacts in burials recorded at the Kafr Hassan Dawud cemetery in quantities significant in comparison to other contemporaneous sites indicates that this site, and possibly others, were involved in the long-distance exchange networks spanning across the Sinai Peninsula towards the Southern Levant and the Gulf of Aqaba that facilitated trade in goods unavailable in the Nile Delta.

Mapping of the EBA, MBA, and LBA sites in Wadi Tumilat, across Sinai, and the Southern Levant alongside contemporaneous locations involved in copper mining and processing show a clear overlap and suggests the existence and continued use of trade routes involved in the procurement of this commodity since at least the 3rd millennium BCE.

In this paper, I will discuss the importance of Wadi Tumilat in the EBA exchange network between Egypt, Southern Levant, and the Central and Southern Sinai, as well as examine its possible scope and reach in the context of copper trade during the 3rd millennium BCE.

Nubian Jewellery in the New Kingdom: The Creation of Global Styles Across Cultural Boundaries

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As a result of extensive exploration, much of which resulting from the need to document threatened sites, Nubia is today one of the best archaeologically known areas of the world. Among thousands of sites documented by extensive surveys and excavated by large-scale projects over the years, New Kingdom cemeteries in Nubia have yielded an enormous quantity of information that comprise the basis of current research exploring the dynamics of cultural encounters and exchanges in the light of complex theoretical frameworks. In this paper, I will focus on large corpora of jewellery excavated at numerous New Kingdom cemeteries across Nubia. I will explore the circulation of both 'Egyptian' and 'Nubian' jewellery and its use in a variety of contexts across the New Kingdom Egyptian empire to reveal the mutual influences of one culture upon the other. I will argue that cultural encounters between Egypt and Nubia resulted in the constitution of a global style, expressed through jewellery, across cultural boundaries.

Cultural interaction as a key factor in the formation of the Egyptian civilisation

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The current state of research on the emergence of the Egyptian state allows us to look for its origins as far back as in the 6th millennium BCE. The Neolithic communities which emerged in Lower Egypt at that time and then spread along the Nile Valley over the next millennium are generally considered as the ancestors of the Ancient Egyptians. However, the roots of the Egyptian civilisation could be looked for much earlier in the Egyptian Nile Valley as well as in different parts of the Egyptian Eastern Sahara. The Prehistoric communities of Egypt did not develop in isolation. Contacts between groups of different cultural backgrounds resulted in interactions which lead to further development. The origins of the Predynastic farming communities could be linked to the exchange of ideas with the Levantine newcomers as well as the pastoral groups from the Western Desert in the Neolithic. Moreover, the interactions did not stop in the subsequent Chalcolithic period, during the emergence of the Egyptian state. In that time, the Predynastic communities in Lower and Upper Egypt had contacts with groups from the Near East as well as from the Sahara. Their cultural interactions should be seen as a key factor in shaping the foundations of the Ancient Egyptian Civilisation.

The presentation focuses on the interactions between the different cultural groups that occupied northeastern Africa and the Near East. In particular, the nature and the results of these interactions are discussed, alongside their influence on the development of the Egyptian Prehistoric communities between the 6th and 4th millennium BCE.

Beakers and Beyond: Re-examining Kerman-Egyptian Interconnections in a Seventeenth Dynasty Theban Intact Burial Group

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In 1908, Flinders Petrie excavated a Late Seventeenth Dynasty Theban burial of a woman and child that included a gilded rishi-coffin, an elaborate set of gold jewellery, six imported Kerma beakers, and many more items. Over a hundred years later, ongoing research on this burial group has more to reveal about the interconnections between Egypt and Kerma.

While Mycenaean and Cypriot vessels excavated in Egyptian-style graves have generally been seen as imports, Nubian pottery in Egyptian burials has been interpreted as an indicator of Egyptianized Nubian identity, revealing a reluctance to recognize the desirability of Kerma material cultural. The presence of Kerma beakers in this Seventeenth Dynasty burial has been used to argue that the woman was a Nubian princess who married into the Theban royal family, an identification which framed Kerma as culturally and politically subservient to Egypt.

Other items from the burial, such as an inlaid headrest, a bovine-legged stool, and carrier net-bags have often been assumed to be specifically either Egyptian or Kerma, but are actually not so easily categorized and likely derive from a more complex lineage of Kerman-Egyptian entanglement. Although Egyptology has often approached Nubia from the perspective of ‘the other’, re-examination of the objects from this burial and elsewhere suggests a greater extent of mutual influence and shared cultural heritage across the Nile Valley.

Why did Hatshepsut receive a Secretarybird as a gift?

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From Zarafa to the lions of the Colosseum, via the cockatoo offered by the Sultan of Egypt al-Kâmil to Emperor Frederick II, the animals never ceased to pass through the lower Nile valley in a continuum of exchanges of prestige goods and ideas.

Beyond nature and culture, can the role played by raptors as diplomatic gifts teach us more about the imagery of power? One might ask, for example, whether the possession of an exotic bird - whatever it is - made sense in the pomp of the king identified with Horus' Divine Falcon, and if so, can it be seen as an indication of a transculturality between sovereign courts in the Middle Bronze Age?

The discovery at Deir al-Bahari in 2018 of a block from the Punt portico showing a secretary bird thus raises many questions. Is this identification correct? If so, does the current range of the species help to better locate Opono and its neighbouring countries on the map?

This discovery will be recontextualised in the global geopolitical context: reign of King Hatshepsut/end of the first kingdom of Kush. What can be drawn from this about international relations in East Africa?

The study calls for a re-examination of the material updated by G. Reisner in royal graves of the Final-Late Kerma Culture. On this occasion, we will present the results of our research work on raptors in art and their manipulation as objects symbolising power: borrowings, imitations, convergent developments or 'local acclimatisation'? Emphasis will be placed on the great African trade in birds and their importance in the symbolic construction of royal identity at the international level. We will also introduce the concepts of classification and cosmology to probe the limits of the foreignness.

What if, around 1600 BC, Kemi was in fact a pharaonic kingdom in the Egyptian style and Kerma a pharaonic kingdom in the Sudanese style like the later Napata and Meroe?

The Cross-cultural interactions in Ancient Egypt: The block Statue of Na'mu JdE 38268

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The cross-cultural interactions in ancient Egypt are well witnessed on different levels and in various places since the ancient Egyptians recognized as early as the 3rd millennium in what today is termed 'cultural entanglement or multiculturalism'.

This paper intends to present and discuss the block statue JdE 38268 (IS 346) that is kept in room 35 in Cairo Museum. It is a prototype of votive statues of ancient Egypt. It seems that statue was produced outside the Nile Valley, in the local workshop of Hathor temple at Serabit el-Khadim and then it was inscribed with Protosinaïtic inscriptions, which is an alphabetic script. The frontal inscription consists of two columns, then one line linking the two columns. On the right side, there is an inscription that dedicates the statue to the deity Ba'lat. There is one more inscription that refers to the work in the mines, and it shows the statue owner name: Na'mu. The latter was the chief of the local miners; however, the local population considers the statue as a votive offering for the deity Ba'lat who is an equivalent to Hathor, lady of turquoise.

This block statue considers clear example of cross-cultural interactions between Egyptian miners and the people from West Asia regions. It shows the strong impact of Egyptian culture on the local and foreign population as well. Thus, the question arises: To what intercultural extent the miners/semi-nomads were represented in Sinai? Therefore, this paper will discuss the history of the region, giving more attention on the presence, role and presentation of Asiatics in turquoise mining operations, while trying to identify the owner: Na'mu. Then, the paper will develop more discussion on the purpose and style of the statue, focusing on the religious beliefs at Hathor temple.

Plundering the Other: Ancient Egyptian and Nubian Lists of Spoils of War-A Comparative Study

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Plunder is the reality of ancient and modern warfare. However, the lists of spoils of war, attested in ancient Egypt and Nubia, from late 4th millennium BC to 1st century AD, have not been comprehensively studied so far. The importance of such study was already emphasized (Spalinger 1983). The lists provide a long-term perspective on war-time exploitation of neighbouring lands. This paper will present the results of the first comparative study of 30 lists of spoils of war and focus on their composition, content and structure in order to explore the effects of plundering on the defeated lands.

The information provided in the lists inform us on the population movement through imprisonment (deportation), the taking of things (objects and resources) and animals and their re-distribution. This allows us to study the circulation of people, things and animals, and simultaneously the circulation of ideas and cultural practices of those imprisoned. The structure of the lists informs us on the attributed value to the spoils and the economic impact on both the victorious and the defeated side. Where possible, the numbers provided in the lists will be used as a proxy to explore the effect plundering could have had on demographic picture of the defeated side.

Last but not the list, the structure of the lists, points to some underlying principles on the organization of people and animals in them. For example, gender plays an important role as men are listed before women, just as male animals are listed before female. Children come after men in the lists, if they are children of the local rulers (wr.w), or after women if they are not. Therefore, a close study of the lists of spoils war in ancient Egypt and Nubia provides us with more insight than one would expect on the first look.

Buried in a foreign ground: Relocating Greek and Carian cemeteries in the Memphite necropolis

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Original Greek sources inform us of the presence of Ionian and Carian mercenaries in Egypt since at least the seventh century BC. Mercenary forces played a relevant role in the process of reunification of the country promoted by Psamtek I, to whom they demonstrated their true loyalty by naming their children after him. As it appears evident from numerous sources, both archaeological and epigraphic, Ionian and Carian migrants settled in various cities of Egypt. Their presence in Memphis is so entrenched that, a few centuries after their arrival, the quarters of the city where the mercenaries established their homes were still bearing the names of their inhabitants. The communities of Hellenomemphites and Caromemphites became effectively part of the social fabric of Memphis, not only by inhabiting its living quarters, but also through the foundation of cemeteries in the vast necropolis of the capital of Egypt. While it seems assumed that they established their eternal dwellings in the Memphite necropolis, their cemeteries have not yet been located.

The numerous objects with bilingual inscriptions (stelae, votive objects, and cultic implements with Greek, Carian, and Aramean languages) discovered in several occasions in the North Saqqara plateau, tell us about well-integrated non-Egyptian communities which maintained alive their funerary traditions but also adopted costumes and styles typical of their hosts. By analysing this corpus of inscriptions and by looking at the Saqqara-Abusir necropoleis as a whole organic spatial ensemble, the present paper aims at locating the cemeteries of the Carians and of the Ionians, which are yet to be discovered and whose identification will deliver a more complete image of the multicultural fabric of the Memphite necropolis, which mirrored the cosmopolitan society enlivening First Millennium Memphis.

Geographies of knowledge: On the transmission and reception of a serpent-limbed figure

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An ivory apotropaic wand excavated at Megiddo in 1938 (Jerusalem Rockefeller Museum 38.1391) depicts a composite figure with an anthropomorphic body and serpents as limbs. Otherwise unattested on wands, this image most closely resembles two figures depicted in the tomb of Ramesses VI (KV 9) as part of an enigmatic underworld book. The wand is furthermore inscribed with a personal name likely to be non-Egyptian, and its date of production is uncertain, ranging from the late 12th Dynasty to the 18th Dynasty. I use this wand and the serpent-limbed figure it bears to explore how geographic and historical factors interacted with the broader cultural and institutional settings in which images and media were transmitted. These settings are represented by the iconographic systems structuring different visual compositions, which may facilitate or constrain direct transfers of images between contexts of depiction.

I first outline an iconographic system for wands, concentrating on their use of emblematic forms. The serpent-limbed figure on the Megiddo wand may be understood as a non-emblematic formulation of the more common ‘solar disc with legs’ motif. Other variants are attested in underworld books such as the *Amduat*. The use of emblematic forms allowed certain subjects to be accommodated within the general visual conventions of wands; the serpent-limbed figure departs from these patterns. The Megiddo wand was probably made and used around the same time that elements of the underworld books were circulating and developing into the relatively fixed compositions attested from the New Kingdom, with implications for understanding the serpent-limbed figure. Was the image transferred directly from one category to another, or does it point to a body of forms as well as strategies of image construction shared by wands and underworld books? Was the Megiddo wand’s departure from iconographic conventions influenced more strongly by geographic or historical factors?

Ancient Egypt, Global History and early globalizations: Interactions with “The Other” in the Bronze Age (2500-1200 BC)

Juan Carlos Moreno Garcia

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Situated at the crossroads between North-eastern Africa, the Mediterranean, the Near East and the Indian Ocean, ancient Egypt was a strategic pathway that facilitated contacts and the circulation of peoples, products and ideas across these vast regions. Sometimes it was the monarchy that took the initiative in these contacts, whereas in other cases mobile populations, local leaders, itinerant merchants and independent individuals fulfilled such role. Archaeology is gradually revealing the importance of these actors, usually neglected in official inscriptions that highlight, by contrast, the centrality of the monarchy and its institutions. At the same time, new methods of research cast a new light on the modalities of these contacts and the extent of the networks operative in the Bronze Age across these regions and, more generally, Eurasia. A selection of case studies will serve to illustrate the potential of ancient Egypt to contribute to recent discussions about early globalizations and, more generally, to notions such as “Global History” and “geocultural power”.

Foreigners meeting Foreigners: Sustaining Cross-Border Social Relations in the Middle Kingdom

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Throughout the decades, many studies have arisen on the establishment and development of cross-border social relations in the Middle Kingdom. However, only recently have their inherent complexities been considered. This paper explores such complexities of sustaining relations across and between the geographical regions of Egypt and Western Asia. It first offers a brief overview of its theoretical approach with a consideration of terminologies used in Egyptology to identify groups from these regions. It then specifically focusses its discussion on the agents of negotiations and their motivations in promoting cross-border social relations. Examples are provided from three sites, each offering different insights from variant types of data that span the Middle Kingdom. These include Beni Hassan, with its decorated tombs of local officials of the Oryx nome; Serabit el-Khadim, with its inscriptions in and around its mines and sacred areas; and Tell el-Dab'a, with its plethora of administrative, domestic, cultic, and funerary material. By assessing and comparing the evidence from these sites, the paper aims to show the role of agency in the pursuit of sustained cross-border relations, and its posited connection with larger-scale social, political, and cultural transformations.

Trade and exploitation of copper in the late Old Kingdom. New evidence from the Palermo Stone

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Copper artefacts in ancient Egyptian culture are known at least since Dynasty 1, when tombs with copper tools and objects forming part of the funerary equipment have been found in both Upper (Abydos) and Lower (Saqqara) Egypt. However, the issue of copper trade and exploitation during the Early Dynastic Period and the Old Kingdom is a still quite unexplored subject, especially in what concerns the location of the primary sources of copper in this period. In fact, while from the Middle Kingdom onwards we are well informed about the location of the primary copper sources in southern Levant, we do not have many information on the latter are for the Old Kingdom. Alternative areas have been thus suggested, e.g. south Sinai and/or the Egyptian eastern desert, but clear archaeological evidence are known only for the first area, and only connected with some of the Old Kingdom kings. Concerning copper trade and exploitation in the Early Dynastic Period and the Old Kingdom, one of the primary and earliest historical sources is represented by the so-called “Palermo Stone”, i.e. the oldest royal annals known to us, probably dated to the late Fifth Dynasty. Recent investigations on these annals have now brought to light new historical information, which add an important tile to our puzzle for the late Old Kingdom.

A cognitive map of Nubia during the Old Kingdom

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The famous trips of Herkhuf during the sixth dynasty have been a big topic of debate between Egyptologists for several decades. However, despite the different narratives and interpretations, another perspective of Herkhuf's stories has been poorly explored. This perspective is related to how the Ancient Egyptians, or, more precisely, the ancient Egyptian officials, perceived the Nubian world. On the one hand, the relationship between Egyptians and Nubians can be seen as a stir of conflict, full of action, like in the autobiography of some officials such as Wni, but on the other hand, there is a peaceful side to the story, the side of coexistence. To understand this side, it is important to connect what we know from the autobiographies and other textual sources about Nubia during the second half of the Old Kingdom and construct what can be called a cognitive map of Nubia in the minds of the Egyptians. Road networks and trade centres play an important role to complete the picture. Approaching this topic, the relatively new technology of archaeological spatial analysis plays an important part, considering and requisitioning all aspects of the topic within landscape archaeology.

Through analysing the ancient landscape of Upper Egypt, Lower Nubia and Upper Nubia, one can look at the material culture available and get a sense of how Old Kingdom traders and officials illustrated the vast lands south of Egypt in their minds, and how this cognitive map developed through the generations.

This talk will discuss the landscape spatial analysis that has been carried out on available material culture concerning Upper Egypt trade networks with the southern destination during the Old Kingdom while aiming to illustrate part of the cognitive map of Nubia in the minds of Ancient Egyptians.

‘Words of Warcraft’: scribal culture and foreign military lexicon in Ramesside literature

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A large part of the military terms attested during the Ramesside Period, being written in ‘group-writing’, has been regarded so far as loanwords from North-Semitic languages. Military technologies were indeed circulating all around the Mediterranean Sea at that time, as well as related skills and craftsmen. Peoples came into Egypt with their own gods and languages, and likely added new words to the Egyptian vocabulary from their very specific area of expertise. This might explain why, for instance, most of the words used to describe chariot’s parts seems to be loanwords, transferred into Egypt together with the chariot technology.

However, such an explanation should be nuanced. Indeed, those loanwords often occur only once or a few times, mainly in literary texts. Those texts were carefully written by skillful scribes, with a special attention for the vocabulary. Thus, the stylistic device of enumeration was frequently used and ‘lexical lists’ were disseminated among larger literary compositions. Such lists were a good opportunity for the scribe to expose his knowledge regarding a specific field, such as geography or military technologies, but also to show his proficiency in foreign languages – the kind of abilities that were likely much appreciated in an already globalized world with powerful empires sharing common military technologies and social elites. This opens the question whether some words related with the military lexicon were true loanwords passed in the Egyptian language and used as technical terms, or rather foreign words expertly showcased for stylistic purpose?

The paper aims to discuss this question, focussing on two cases studies which illustrate the strong relationship between the scribes and the military, but also emphasize the cultural interactions between Egypt and its neighbors from a lexical point of view : the Satirical Letter of Hori and the Hymn to the King on his Chariot.

The significant uses of the Language of the Amarna Period

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This investigation tackles the innovations in the language of the Amarna Period analyzing the verbal system based on identity-related. The study shows that the Verbal System in the Amarna Period participated in developing the analytical system of the LE and also used the suffix conjugation of the classical phase in some cases. The language of the Amarna Period and its innovations were not attested suddenly or unexpectedly, compared to the period of Kamose. Some other forms were already attested Pre-Amarnan top of that. The new style of the language was an essential feature at Akhetaten itself. It did not reach Saqqara, Thebes, or any other city in the reign of Akhenaten. This happens probably due to the overwhelming dominance of the local dialect. Besides, the Amarna Period texts clearly showed one of the essential features of this period: the specific use in one tense of different forms or constructions.

Moreover, the researcher explores the idea of these innovations of the Amarna Period at Akhetaten, which were introduced by Akhenaten himself and his scribes following his orders. This was a significant feature, which is presented in the Royal Texts and Private Texts in the direct speech of the king. The statistic study tackled the attestation of the instances, which is subdivided into two main parts: (1) Pre-Amarna Period including (63.33%), (2) the Amarna Period containing (36.67%).

In this case the changes in the language, especially the official texts could reflect the fact that new elites were formed by the side of Akhenaten, whose roots were slightly different than of the previous elites. In such a scenario their language, a bit more “Colloquial” would be a function of the shifts in their social identities.

Entangled Lives: Egyptians in Nubia, Nubians in Egypt

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In spite of the Egyptocentric emphasis on Egypt's cultural impact on Nubia, Nubian culture entangled with and influenced Egyptian society through an accumulation of individual interactions both at home and in the colonial communities founded during the Middle and New Kingdom (c. 2040-1070 BCE) and after the conquest of Egypt by the Kushite dynasty (c. 747-656 BCE), which is itself usually thought of as completely "Egyptianized." Nubian cultural impacts varied over time within Egypt and in different parts of the empire.

This paper takes a regional approach that compares and contrasts Nubian influence on Egyptian society in Nubia and Egypt during these three periods. Nubians in Egypt to some extent assimilated, but continued to be represented in complex ways and with some traditional Nubian features. More importantly, Nubians deeply influenced Egyptian cultural practices in specific social contexts, in particular connected with the military, but also the theology of Amun-Re and aspects of royal ideology. Although Egyptian colonists in both Upper and Lower Nubia maintained a façade of Egyptian-ness, Nubian cultural threads wove their way into colonial society, in particular in the arena of foodways and household ceramic production through a likely gendered dynamic. Religious practices in the colony were also profoundly affected by Nubian beliefs and practices, some features of which were exported to Egypt. Nubian influence was felt both at the household level and in the layout and theology that underlay the massive temples built during the New Kingdom. This entangled colonial culture contributed to the rise of the Kushite, 25th Dynasty, which ruled Egypt for about a century and made its own contributions to Egyptian theology and kingship ideology. Throughout Egypt and Nubia's long relationship, cultural influence was mutual and often subtle instead of unidirectional and monolithic. Entanglement provides a useful model to understand intercultural interactions between the two cultures, in particular understanding how Nubian civilization came to influence Egypt.

Foreign Soldiers in the Egyptian Army: Cultural Interactions in the New Kingdom

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During the New Kingdom, the presence of foreign troops in the Egyptian army was well attested, both in the visual and iconographic official documentation. This massive presence of foreigners in the army has generally been associated with new know-how and new military technologies, that quickly integrated into the art of Egyptian warfare. Evidence suggests that the conscription of foreign soldiers had been constantly increasing since the 18th dynasty. However, during the Ramesside period, a part of these foreign contingents started to be made of prisoners taken during the conflicts, and therefore being the direct outcome of war.

From an ideological and symbolic point of view, the act of integrating a former enemy in the pharaoh's army had a strong significance, which is well attested in the sources. However, it is less clear what the actual consequences of this practice were. How successful were these foreign people to settle in the country? How important was it for these foreign soldiers to retain a separate and distinctive cultural identity?

My paper will discuss the presence of foreign troops in the Egyptian army during the New Kingdom with the objective of understanding their relevance in the processes of integration and hybridization of the Egyptian society. By focusing on written and visual sources concerning troops of Asiatic provenance, I will suggest that Egyptians did not perceive the considerable presence of foreign groups installed in certain areas of the country, tied by a strong sense of community belonging, as a threat to the central power.

Administrators in Nubia: local officials or Egyptian delegates?

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From the beginning of the New Kingdom, Nubia was governed by a high official that reported directly to the Egyptian king and court, the King's son of Kush. The King's sons of Kush appeared to be originally from Egypt. An exception is seen in the career of the first holders of this function at the start of the Eighteenth Dynasty, as they showed a strong attachment to Nubia. However, regarding the supporting officials, few individuals holding an executive title are known, in comparison to those of the contemporary administration in Egypt. The available evidence from officials suggests a strong bond to the region. The inscriptions of graffiti and on material culture show that they followed the recording pattern of officials in Egypt. The variety of material culture in cemeteries of administrative centres in Nubia, whether Sai, Soleb or Faras, hint at a cultural affiliation, thereby blurring the lines of the identity markers. Furthermore, the studies of Auenmüller questioning links between burial location and place of activity highlight how difficult it is to draw causal link conclusions.

This study examines the material culture and textual indications of officials in Nubia to determine whether they were individuals from the region who appropriated the Egyptian administrative system, or whether they were Egyptians who had relocated there in order to carry out their functions.

Fine ware pottery from Memphis of the 6th – 3rd c. BCE: the evidence of cross-cultural interactions

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During archaeological excavations of the Centre for Egyptological Studies of the Russian Academy of Sciences (Moscow, Russia) at ancient Egyptian city of Memphis a large number of fine ware pottery has been found. The shapes are various: beakers, bowls, juglets, neckless jars, table amphorae, etc. They are made of Egyptian marl and mixed clays of different quality. The vessels are dated to the Late and Ptolemaic periods (6th – 3rd c. BCE). The vessels which resembles the fine ware pottery from Memphis are also found on other Egyptian sites.

The investigation of the shapes reveals that these vessels imitate foreign prototypes, i.e. Persian, Greek and Syro-Palestine. The reasons of that phenomenon may be seen within the context of the historical events. Since the Late Period there were a lot of foreigners in Egypt. Greek cities Naukratis and Daphnae have been established in 7th c. BCE, Egyptians traded with many neighbouring countries. In 525 the Persian conquered Egypt. The close contacts with foreigners and their culture led to the adoption of various traditions, including handicrafts.

The author is going to discuss the problem of influence on Egyptian pottery during the Late period and its reasons on the basis of new archaeological material from Memphis.



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