

CROSS-CULTURAL INTERACTION
IN EGYPT THROUGH THE AGES
CONFERENCE



ABSTRACT BOOKLET



Ewart Memorial Hall, AUC Tahrir Square
5-7 December, 2025





Keynote Speech

Cross-Cultural Interaction in Avaris, the Capital of the Hyksos, in the Middle Kingdom and Second Intermediate Period

Irene Forstner-Müller

Director of the Austrian Archaeological Institute in Cairo

The town of Avaris (modern-day Tell el-Dab'a), capital of the 15th Dynasty (Hyksos) during the Second Intermediate Period (ca. 1650 – 1550 BC), exemplifies Egypt's long-standing role as a crossroads of cultural interaction. At times, Tell el-Dab'a was one of the largest towns in Egypt and the Near East. It was occupied from the early 12th Dynasty (ca. 1939 – 1760 BC) until Late Antiquity AD 390–641.

Strategically positioned between the Pelusiac branch of the Nile—providing access to the Mediterranean and the Bahr el-Baqar—as well as at the entry point of the Horus Road leading to the Levant via northern Sinai, Avaris emerged as a critical hub for both maritime and overland trade. Its function as a harbour is attested by the site's rich material culture, notably the large quantity of imported goods.

Avaris's exposed location in the northeastern Nile Delta also gave it strategic military importance, allowing control over the movement of people and goods. Drawing on archaeological evidence, this presentation explores Avaris as a focal point of migration, settlement, and intercultural exchange. It examines patterns of settlement and explores how immigrants from the Near East adapted to and transformed their Egyptian environment. It highlights the hybridity of material culture—particularly in architecture, ceramics, and burial customs—which reflects a dynamic fusion of Egyptian and Near Eastern traditions. These cultural entanglements provide insight into the complex processes of interaction, negotiation, and identity formation during a period of political fragmentation.





CONFERENCE PAPERS

1. Abd El-Kawy, Mohga
Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities, Egypt

Morand, Nicolas
Eveha International Lab - UMR 7209, National Museum of Natural History of Paris

From Ancient Tables to Modern Kitchens: Tracing Alexandrian Marine Cuisine Across Time

This research explores the enduring relationship between Alexandrian communities and marine resources, highlighting how culinary traditions reflect cross-cultural interactions from antiquity to the present. Drawing on zooarchaeological evidence from domestic assemblages uncovered in urban excavations, the study investigates the variety of Mediterranean shellfish species commonly consumed during the Greco-Roman period and the Middle Ages. These findings also reveal a range of preparation techniques that contributed to the distinctive character of Alexandrian cuisine.

Far from disappearing, these long-standing practices have been preserved and adapted in contemporary Alexandria, where similar marine species continue to play a central role in both markets and household cooking. Ethnographic observations demonstrate not only the continuity of recipes and preparation methods but also adaptations in culinary vocabulary, shaped by the influence of foreign communities, particularly Italians, Greeks, and Levantines, who settled in the city during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Comparative insights further show how Alexandria's marine culinary traditions remain uniquely distinct from those of other Egyptian coastal towns, where related but different seafood practices have developed. Meanwhile, such dishes remain largely unfamiliar in inland regions like Upper Egypt due to environmental and cultural differences. Archaeological evidence also suggests that shellfish consumption was relatively uncommon in most parts of ancient Egypt.

This study argues that marine cuisine serves as a vibrant expression of Alexandria's layered identity, shaped by centuries of exchange, migration, and local innovation. Based on an integrated analysis of material, textual, and oral evidence, this preliminary investigation contributes to broader discussions of cultural resilience, regional specificity, and the lasting impact of shared food heritage within Egypt's evolving social landscape.



2. AbdelMoniem, Sherif
Ain Shams University

New Results from Malqata Jar Dockets

During the New Kingdom, Egypt significantly expanded its trade networks with the Levant (modern-day Syria, Lebanon, and Palestine) and other regions. The Egyptians exchanged goods like papyrus, gold, and linen for materials such as wood, olive oil, and wine from the Levant and other areas.

A recent comprehensive study of the Malqata jar docket ("jar labels") has been carried out by the author. This study is an attempt to re-examine the collection from a ceramological perspective to uncover new information, most importantly, the provenance of these vessels and their complete shape/form. This collection has previously been studied, however, most of these studies have focused on translating the hieratic inscriptions on these docket. Since the docket come from an archaeological context and are clearly dated, they provide an important contribution to the corpus of Eighteenth Dynasty Hieratic. The collection (1545 docket) was divided among three museums: The Metropolitan Museum of Art (1,400 Docket), the Egyptian Museum, Cairo (90 Docket), and the Penn Museum (55 Docket).

This study explores the relationships between jar (forms and fabric), commodity, handwriting, and other aspects enclosed in the docket. The results of this study reveal important information regarding trade relations between Egypt and the Levant region.





3. Abdelnaby, Heba Mahmoud Saad Alexandria University

Wings Across Borders: Birds as a Medium of Cross-Cultural Interaction in Medieval Islamic Egypt

Hunting with predatory birds was widely practiced in Egypt during the Fatimid and Mamluk periods; thus, hunting birds were traded, given as diplomatic gifts, and incorporated into practices of aristocratic identity and knowledge exchange. Songbirds and exotic birds were also traded as luxury commodities and a sign of elite prestige, while domestic birds were used in folk medicine and traditional remedies. Therefore, due to the strong presence of birds in the daily practices of various social classes, the medieval Islamic period has left us a wealth of zoological sources, courtly falconry manuals, literary texts, and illustrated manuscripts that can reveal how birds were used as a medium of cultural exchange. Moreover, birds were frequently represented in the visual arts in various contexts as aesthetic and symbolic elements reflecting their importance and role as dynamic agents of interaction. This paper examines how birds moved across political, economic, and cultural borders in the medieval Islamic world, with Egypt as a central node. By exploring textual, visual, and material sources, this paper argues that birds offer a powerful lens for understanding the entangled relationships of empire, trade, science, and symbolic culture in Egypt's medieval Islamic context. Moreover, the paper sheds light on examples of knowledge transfer to Europe, such as in the field of falconry.



4. Abo-Alhassan, Mahmoud Al-Azhar University

Personal Names in Egypt during the Ptolemaic Period: A Study of Cultural Identity with Tebtunis Papyri as a Model

An analysis of the names contained in the first part of the Tebtunis Papyri reveals a rich and diverse list of names prevalent in Egypt during the Ptolemaic Period. This diversity of names, which blends Egyptian and Greek, provides an important window into understanding the complex cultural identity of that historical period. These names carried multiple connotations, reflecting different aspects of life in society.

There are names with religious connotations, indicating association with the gods and religious beliefs prevalent at the time, whether Egyptian or Greek, such as "Ammonius" and "Apollonius." This reflects the great importance of religion in the lives of individuals and their expression of their faith through the naming of their children. There are also names with praiseworthy attributes, carrying positive meanings such as "happy" and "generous." This illustrates the social values that

society placed importance on. There are also names that express victory and courage, such as "Victorious" and "Warrior" reflecting the desire to express strength and triumph. Other names are derived from animal names, such as "The Dog" and "Lion", and some names are inspired by nature, such as "Moon" and "Sun". This demonstrates the close relationship between humans, their environment, and the natural world around them. The ubiquity of Egyptian and Greek names in Egypt at that time demonstrates the cultural interaction and integration that occurred in Egypt during the Ptolemaic period. Despite the Greek Ptolemies' control over Egypt, Egyptians retained their cultural identity through their names while simultaneously being influenced by Greek culture, resulting in a unique blend of identities.



5. Abou-Khatwa, Noha American University in Cairo

Echoes of Persia in the Mamluk Manuscript Tradition: Mobility, Patronage and Material Culture

The Mamluk period in Egypt (1250-1517) is ostensibly the most culturally and intellectually vibrant era in the history of Islamic Egypt. Consequently, the Mamluk empire's capital, Cairo, flourished as a dynamic and cosmopolitan city where cultural interchanges took place. In the aftermath of the Mongol invasions of the eastern Islamic lands in the thirteenth century, the genesis of the Muslim-Mongol Ilkhanid empire in the fourteenth century, and the Reconquista of al-Andalus, which lasted to 1492, many scholars, intellectuals and artists fled and resettled in cities like Cairo. There, under the patronage of the Mamluk elite, they found an environment conducive to scholarly and artistic flourishing. The convergence of talents and traditions gave rise to a rich material culture marked by dynamic cross-cultural interaction, especially with those hailing from the Persianate lands (Iran and Central Asia). It is thus the aim of this paper to explore this cultural dialogue and its underlying causes by examining how Persianate elements were manifested in the production of the arts of the book in Egypt. Several manuscripts produced in Egypt from the early 14th century to the early 16th century show an intense interchange in the illumination details and, in some cases, calligraphic styles. Manuscripts of the Qur'an as well as manuscripts from other literary and religious genres, housed in the National Library of Egypt, al-Azhar Library, the Chester Beatty Library, the British Library and Bibliothèque National de France will serve as case studies to illustrate the degree of the Persianate cultural exchange. Illumination details showcasing chinoiserie elements transmitted from Mongol Iran, color schemes, and binding techniques are amongst the details to be discussed. This analysis will adopt a multidisciplinary approach, situating each work within its broader artistic, geopolitical, and intellectual contexts to understand the underlying forces that facilitated this cross-cultural interaction with the Persian world.





6. Bertsch, Julia Franziska University of Tübingen

The Golden Appliqués from Tutankhamun’s Tomb –
Chariot Decoration and Cross-Cultural Exchange of
Visual Motifs in the 18th Dynasty

When Howard Carter and his team discovered the tomb of Tutankhamun (KV 62) in 1922, approximately 100 ornate gold-and-leather appliqués were found in association with six chariots. However, due to their poor state of preservation, they were placed in storage at the Egyptian Museum in Cairo following the clearance of the tomb. In recent years, these objects have been the subject of an interdisciplinary research project involving the German Archaeological Institute in Cairo, the Egyptian Museum in Cairo, the Leibniz-Zentrum für Archäologie in Mainz, and the Institute for Ancient Near Eastern Cultures at the University of Tübingen. In addition to conservation and documentation, the project focused on functional, technological, archaeometric, and iconographic aspects, the latter forming one of the speaker’s main areas of research.

One group of appliqués is decorated with traditional Egyptian images of royal power and domination over Egypt’s enemies. Another group, however, displays motifs widespread throughout the Eastern Mediterranean during the Late Bronze Age. Examples of such ‘international’ motifs on the golden appliqués include animal attack scenes, caprids flanking plants, volute plants, and spiral bands – motifs also present on other objects from Tutankhamun’s tomb.

The research thus addresses questions concerning the transmission of imagery between different regions of the Eastern Mediterranean. How do these motifs integrate into New Kingdom Egyptian art and the broader context of complex Late Bronze Age interactions? How can the ‘hybrid’ imagery on the appliqués and the related chariots be interpreted?

The presentation will provide an overview of this exceptional material and explore its significance in the context of artistic exchange and chariot decoration during the Eighteenth Dynasty.



7. Caramello, Sara University of Turin and University of Udine, FMAE (Egyptian Museum of Turin)

Tabi, Tuma, and the Others...Aramaic-speaking People
Cross-cultural Funerary Beliefs in the Memphis Area

The funerary objects with Aramaic inscriptions from the Memphis area constitute a relatively small, but highly significant corpus. The inscriptions on coffins and mummy labels typically mention the name of the deceased and the related patronymic, while the texts on stelae and burial markers generally follow the structure: “Blessed be N, son/daughter of N, in front of the god Osiris”. Only a few stelae and an offering table bear longer and more

elaborate inscriptions. These documents illustrate, on the one hand, the desire of Aramaic-speaking foreigners to adopt the Egyptian funerary practices and express faith in the god Osiris. On the other hand, onomastic elements and other details reflect their continued attachment to their original deities. The funerary stelae are particularly interesting, as they reveal a complex yet relatively well-balanced blend of Egyptian and Aramaic elements from both linguistic and iconographic perspectives. Indeed, the funerary customs of these foreigners display an almost complete adoption of the Egyptian funerary beliefs, while still preserving their Semitic identity—demonstrating a clearly defined and successful model of cultural and religious interaction.

Moreover, two stelae include an explicit request for the water the deceased must be provided with, and the offering table, presumably intended for water libations, can likely be added to this small group. The prominent role of water in connection with Osiris is thus especially noteworthy. As such, the apparent significance of water in this context deserves to be highlighted and more thoroughly investigated. Additionally, some scholars have noted the similarity between these texts and a number of funerary stelae from Alexandria that bear Greek inscriptions mentioning Osiris and including a similar request for fresh water.



8. Cole, Sara E. J. Paul Getty Museum

A Painted Sarcophagus from Byzantine Egypt at the
Getty Museum

Among the objects held in the Antiquities collection of the Getty Villa Museum in Los Angeles is an enigmatic painted wooden coffin from the Late Roman/Byzantine period in Egypt, displayed in a gallery dedicated to Romano-Egyptian funerary material.

The coffin came into the Getty collection as a purchase in 1982 along with an assortment of “contents” with which it was purportedly (and probably falsely) associated. The coffin remains poorly understood and is due for a holistic assessment. Its owner, a young man named Ammonios, is depicted on the coffin’s front panel and was clearly a high-status member of Byzantine Egyptian society – but what more can we say about his identity, his role in society, and the artistic, cultural, and religious syncretisms that informed his burial choices?

The present project aims to undertake a comprehensive study of the coffin and its imagery in order to see it as an active agent within its ancient context, one which its owner used to visually articulate his sense of self. Who might Ammonios have been, and what was the cultural milieu in which he operated? How does his coffin speak to the multicultural, internationally connected aristocratic society of Egypt ca. AD 400 as part of the broader Byzantine world? The object also presents a valuable case study in the possibilities and limitations of provenance research, as we seek to better





understand the origins of objects in museum collections and problematize how best to steward them in the 21st century. The research is part of a larger, ongoing project to update labels and interpretive materials in the Getty's display of funerary art from Roman Egypt. This paper will present preliminary results from this research, which will be advanced by the suggestions, thoughts, and feedback of the conference's participants.

as it developed in Egypt. Ultimately, this research contributes to a more nuanced understanding of how women archaeologists advanced and complicated the historiography of Egypt and its past.



9. Curryer, Emma
The Open University

Pioneers and Paradoxes: How Did Female Archaeologists and Travelers Contribute to Cultural Assimilation and Resistance in Different Historical Periods?

This paper considers the role of female archaeologists and travelers in Egyptian history, exploring the dual role they had in challenging existing histories and archaeology, whilst influencing historic and contemporary views of Egyptian society.

Their work helped recover and narrate histories of ancient Egyptian society and participated in patterns of cultural appropriation and material loss, contributing to a legacy of cultural assimilation that often excluded contemporary Egyptian voices. Notably, often absent from their accounts are the perspectives and contributions of modern Egyptian women, despite deep historical and cultural ties.

This paper goes much further than existing research, pulling together Egyptology, heritage, culture, and literature, demonstrating how cross-cultural interaction in Egypt has been shaped by many diverse and eclectic people and events. It considers how, individually and collectively, female archaeologists contributed to the landscape of archaeology and knowledge of Egyptian history and culture, whilst maintaining their own identity, but absorbing their experiences of the contemporary culture in Egypt.

Further, and perhaps more importantly, it considers their impact on Egyptian culture through their actions, whilst exploring how twentieth-century literature they authored influenced how culture in Egypt was seen and is still seen today. That literature which was built upon their real-life experiences in Egypt and the Middle East, as well as using historical records available at the time, to write about Ancient Egypt.

By critically examining the contributions of these female archaeologists and travelers, this paper situates them within broader discussions of cultural transformation. It argues these women were instrumental in preserving and obscuring aspects of Egyptian cultural identity, and their legacy offers valuable insights into the gendered and cross-cultural dynamics of archaeology and history

10. El Dorry, Mennat-Allah
American University in Cairo

Eat Like a Copt: Exploring How Copts Ate Before the Seventh Century AD

Foodways are a fundamental aspect of daily life, and serve as a powerful lens through which to examine cultural exchange and assimilation. This paper explores Egyptian (i.e., Coptic) foodways in the period leading up to the Islamic conquest.

How much did the Arabs assimilate into the existing Egyptian cuisine? In order to answer this question, this paper establishes baseline to investigate the subsequent introduction of new foodstuffs, cooking techniques, and dietary habits brought by Arab and Muslim settlers.

Drawing upon archaeological evidence and historical texts, this study will reconstruct the staple foods, culinary practices, and dietary customs prevalent in Egypt between the third and seventh centuries AD.

This interdisciplinary approach aims to contribute to a deeper understanding of Egypt's multifaceted engagement with cross-cultural encounters, as well as assimilation, specifically through the tangible and intimate medium of its foodways.



11. Emam, Mahmoud
Cairo University

Crafting Belief: Meroitic Amulets and Cross-Cultural Symbolism in Relation to Ancient Egypt

During the last centuries of the first millennium BC and the first centuries of the first millennium AD (ca. 3rd BC-4th AD), the Kushite Kingdom emerged in a new center, focused mainly on Meroe in the fertile Shendi Reach between the Fifth and Sixth Cataracts of the Nile, and established control of extensive areas of the Middle Nile and its hinterlands. In Lower Nubia, Faras then Karanog were provincial administrative centers with major public buildings and a rich cemetery, while Philae and Qasr Ibrim acted as a main religious center. Amulets are considered among the characteristic cultural materials of the Meroitic period, but a general comprehensive study of them has never been attempted. Despite the heavy looting of cemeteries, they survived in substantial quantities from the royal burials of Begrawiya and Gebel Barkal cemeteries, not to mention high-status burials in the Meroitic territory along the Nile Valley.





The paper presents a multi-stranded investigation of Meroitic funerary amulets, integrating typological analysis, comparative study, archaeometric methods, and ethnoarchaeological perspectives. It examines both the diachronic and synchronic distribution of these objects, their spatial configuration, and their presence at intra-site and broader regional levels. The study also explores manufacturing techniques, including the range of materials used, to identify potential production zones and specific workshops. Finally, the paper sheds light on the interplay between indigenous traditions and external adoption and adaptation, applying new theoretical frameworks to assess Meroitic material culture in its context in relation to ancient Egypt.

were international in that they drew from different linguistic registers (Armenian, French, and Arabic) and through diverse financing networks concentrated in the eastern Mediterranean but also across Europe. They were local in that these philanthropic societies were authorized through Egyptian legal infrastructures and whose members often considered Egypt their home. Above all, they frequently collaborated with Egyptian charitable organizations—including Coptic and Muslim societies—toward common goals. I argue that Armenian and Maronite charitable associations demonstrate an underexamined site of cross-religious and inter-ethnic engagement in the history of modern Egypt.



12. Fallas, Amy
UC Davis

Charitable Cosmopolitanism? Armenian and Maronite Benevolent Societies in Egypt’s Modern Philanthropic Landscape

When the Armenian General Benevolent Union (AGBU) was founded in Cairo in 1906, it was made possible by several decades of Armenian philanthropic efforts across the Ottoman Empire as well as the community’s established presence in Egypt since the nineteenth century. Out of the dozens of Ottoman cities across the region with significant Armenian populations, Cairo was the location where Armenian organizers decided to establish what would become the largest Armenian philanthropic organization in the world. A few decades earlier in 1880, the first Christian benevolent association established in Egypt was the Maronite Charitable Endeavors Society (MCES) composed of Eastern Catholics originally from the Lebanese mountains. What drew these regional communities and their charitable endeavors to Egypt and how did they become an integral part of a burgeoning Egyptian philanthropic landscape during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries?

This presentation explores how Egypt became a hub for regional philanthropic work and cross-cultural convergence by focusing on the formation and integration of Armenian and Maronite benevolent organizations at the turn of the twentieth century. Through an analysis of primary sources from Egypt’s Armenian and Maronite communities, I demonstrate how charity was both a local and international endeavor through sources of funding, philanthropic causes, and charitable institutions. These projects

13. Fouad Moussa, Yumna
American University in Cairo

The Maghrebi *Wikalas* of Cairo: Sensescapes of Encounter on the Ottoman Egyptian *Hajj* Route

From the 16th to the 18th centuries, Cairo welcomed more than 30,000 pilgrims annually, making their way to the Muslim Holy cities. The majority of these pilgrims came from the Maghreb (Morocco, Tunisia, Algeria, and Libya), and resided for several weeks in Cairo’s numerous *wikalas* (urban caravanserais). During their stay, Maghrebi pilgrims actively participated in Cairo’s scholarly, artistic, and commercial milieus; some even decided to permanently live in the city on their way back from the *Hajj*. This paper explores the *wikalas* of the Maghrebi diaspora in Cairo as spaces of encounter. It highlights the overlapping dynamics of pilgrimage and migration in shaping distinctive urban “sensescapes” mediating cultural exchange in Ottoman Egypt. The visual, auditory, and tactile elements of these spaces will be mapped, bringing to light several markers of Maghrebi-Egyptian cultural exchange. Sensory experiences within the *wikalas’* material space played a crucial role in the socio-economic transformations of Ottoman Cairo. Evidence from *Hajj* travelogues, court documents, and endowment deeds is used to argue for the creation of novel intercultural traditions that transformed trade patterns and craft industries, both in Egypt and the Maghreb, and were associated with new socio-urban icons. This study ultimately situates Cairo’s Maghrebi *wikalas* as key nodes in a broader network of exchange spanning the Ottoman *Hajj* route and the Mediterranean. Its interdisciplinary approach contributes to contemporary understandings of cross-cultural negotiations in Ottoman Egypt through an urban sensory framework.





14. Galazzo, Daniela University of Paris-Sorbonne (Paris IV)

The de Clercq Collection at the Louvre Museum: A Material Witness of Cultural Interactions between Egypt and the Levant

This proposal aims to present the results of research conducted on Egyptian and Egyptianizing objects belonging to the de Clercq Collection, today preserved at the Louvre Museum in Paris. This project includes 234 objects, most of which are scarabs and scaraboids, and 15 objects made of different materials (bronze, stone, marble, and faience). They belong to the collection of antiquities assembled in the second half of the 19th century by Louis de Clercq, a French politician and collector who donated to the Louvre Museum many of the objects today displayed there. Archival documents attest a relevant correspondence between de Clercq and some merchants and antique dealers sent to the Levantine region with the aim of buying antiquities to enrich his collections. The de Clercq collection, like many other archaeological collections formed in the 19th century, does not provide precise and scientific information regarding the archaeological contextualization of the objects of which it is composed. For this reason, it is challenging to establish whether these finds are to be considered products of local Levantine workshops or whether, at least in part, they arrived in the Syro-Palestinian region following trade with Egypt or cultural contacts. However, they are an important iconographical and material witness to the diffusion of the *Aegyptiaca* within the complex system of relationships and exchanges between the civilizations of the Mediterranean basin.



15. Gutierrez, Ana Belen Rumi Complutense University of Madrid

Foreigners to Pharaohs: Greek Archaeological Evidence in Egyptian Settlements Leading to the Ptolemaic Dynasty Rulership

Interrelations in the Ancient Mediterranean did not end after the invasions of the Sea Peoples. The discovery of Naukratis in 1884 by Petrie has shown that trade between Ancient Egypt and Greece continued to take place after the fall of the Mycenaean civilizations and before the arrival of Alexander the Great, leading to the establishment of the Ptolemaic dynasty. However, this is not the only settlement that has proven to have hosted Greek inhabitants; the ancient cities of Memphis, Thmuis, Thonis-Heracleion, and Daphnae, among others, have also done so. In this presentation, the focus of attention will be the presence of Greek inhabitants before the arrival of the Ptolemies, demonstrating a continued relationship, and how this could have influenced the acceptance of this dynasty into the pharaonic tradition.

This paper will present different settlements with Greek archaeological evidence that dates back to the pre-Hellenistic times, specifically between the 7th and 3rd centuries BC. While those examples were located on the Nile River Delta, cities founded—or refounded—under Ptolemaic rule during the late 4th and early 3rd century could support the idea of an existing Graeco-Egyptian trading network that expanded past the original boundaries, successfully creating Hellenistic settlements with both Greek and Egyptian inhabitants and cultures.

By doing so, this research will aim to demonstrate that the Greek presence in Ancient Egypt took place well before the arrival of Alexander the Great and that such presence may have had a positive impact on the later acceptance of the Ptolemaic dynasty into the Pharaonic tradition.



16. Hampikian, Nairy Hampikian for Architecture and Heritage Management

The Cemetery of Mar Mina: A Museum Compiling the Architectural Styles that Shaped Cairo through Time in an “Armenian” Version

Since the 15th century, Armenians have had a prayer hall in the name of Sourp Minas (Mar Mina) in Old Cairo, which was an underground chapel, given to the Armenians by the Copts, near Kom al-Armani (tell of the Armenians), as mentioned by al-Maqrizi. Armenians lived nearby, and by time, as they moved away to other quarters in Cairo, the area started to be used as their burial terrain, sharing it with other Christians. In 1840, Muhammad Ali divided the existing Christian cemetery between the Copts and the Armenians. Since this date and until 1960, when a new cemetery was founded for the Armenian community in Heliopolis, Mar Mina has uninterruptedly been the burial ground for the Armenians. Magnificent mausolea, elaborate cenotaphs, and tombstones of all types were built there during these hundred and twenty years, the styles of which varied according to the architectural and artistic movements that influenced Cairene builders working in the city, who, when commissioned to build in the cemetery, used the style that was modish in the city then. This created a *mélange* of styles in the cemetery that betrays the development of styles in the city through time, but, contrary to the destiny of these styles in the city, which, if surviving, are left scattered in different quarters, those in the cemetery are all amassed in one place. Today, Mar Mina cemetery witnesses Classical, Neo-Islamic, Neo-Pharaonic, even Neo-Gothic structures, beside the Neo-Armenian style, which was a part of the worldwide movement to introduce the historic Armenian style in the diaspora. In this paper, samples of these styles will be discussed, connecting their existence to the history of these styles in Cairo at large from the mid-nineteenth to mid-twentieth century.





17. Hussein, Hesham

Supreme Council of Antiquities, Ministry of Antiquities, Egypt

Reconstructing Egypt's Eastern Gate: Cross-Cultural Transformations at Tell Abu Saefy during the Ptolemaic and Roman Periods

Tell Abu Saefy, situated at Egypt's eastern frontier in North Sinai, offers a unique lens through which to examine cross-cultural interaction between Egypt and the eastern Mediterranean world. Excavations conducted during the 2025 season have uncovered key architectural modifications reflecting both continuity and transformation in military planning and urban layout. A dry moat, initially constructed in the Ptolemaic period to defend the fort's eastern approach, was later filled in during the Roman period, reshaping the entrance into a more open, controlled passageway. The discovery of two successive limestone pavements, along with a tree-lined processional route extending 500 meters to the east, indicates a sustained, symbolically charged use of the space across both periods. These layered changes reflect evolving defensive priorities and suggest an adaptive reuse of strategic infrastructure in response to shifting cultural and political dynamics. The site thus stands as a testament to Egypt's role as a cultural crossroads where military, urban, and ritual functions were negotiated and redefined through successive regimes.



18. Ibrahim, Yossra

Johannes Gutenberg University Mainz

Zodiacal Rebirth: Egypt's Creative Transformation of the Babylonian Zodiac

The zodiac—twelve constellations aligned along the ecliptic—was first codified in Babylonian astronomical tradition during the first millennium BC. When it entered Egypt during the Ptolemaic period (305–30 BC), it was not simply received as a foreign system but reinterpreted through a complex process of visual and theological adaptation. Rather than displacing traditional Egyptian conceptions of the sky, the zodiac became a medium for integrating new astral structures into established frameworks of cyclical time, rebirth, and cosmic order. This paper explores how Egyptian artists reimagined and restructured zodiacal imagery within indigenous religious contexts to express enduring concepts of cosmic order and rebirth. It argues that the zodiac was not passively adopted but actively restructured through processes of intericonicity: new visual forms were selectively merged with long-standing iconographic and theological conventions. In the temple ceilings of Dendera and Esna, zodiacal signs were rendered using Egyptian motifs—Cancer as a scarab, Sagittarius bearing the Atef crown—and reordered to begin with Leo, corresponding to the Egyptian calendar and the Nile's inundation. These adaptations reaffirmed the temple's ritual role in sustaining cosmic harmony.

In funerary contexts, zodiac diagrams appear alongside Nut, the Hours of the Day and Night, and decanal stars, forming part of a broader rebirth iconography. Here, the zodiac functioned not as a chart of fate but as a celestial map guiding the deceased on their journey toward regeneration.

By placing temple and tomb material in dialogue, this study demonstrates that the zodiac in Egypt became more than a shared astral vocabulary—it became a site of cultural agency, where visual and religious systems were negotiated and renewed. In reimagining the heavens, Egyptians reaffirmed their theological sovereignty within a celestial sphere increasingly shaped by intercultural contact.



19. Jensen, Victoria

University of California, Berkeley

The Development of Attenuated, Abstract Female Figurines in Egypt in the Middle Bronze Age and their Relationship to Surrounding Cultures

In the late Middle Kingdom, two new types of female figurines appeared in Egypt. Markedly different from their more naturalistic Middle Kingdom predecessors, these figurines are characterized by extremely stylized heads and unnaturally narrow waists and long legs. The first type, categorized as Type 2 by Geraldine Pinch, features several descending locks of hair rendered in clay, surrounding an abstracted face. Type 2 figurines are attested from the Middle Kingdom into the Second Intermediate Period. The other type of figurine, Pinch's Type 3, has even more unnaturally formed heads, which are disc-shaped and generally extremely wide. In both types, the eyes and eyebrows are indicated by simple horizontal incisions. A beak-like nose is applied to the face, and usually, no mouth is indicated. As with the Type 2 figurines, the Type 3 bodies are extremely attenuated. Type 3 figurines appear in the late Middle Kingdom and continue to be found into the reign of Thutmose III.

Because these figurines represent such a radical departure from the previous style, which had naturalistic heads and normally proportioned bodies (albeit with truncated legs), it remains an open question as to how this new style arose in Egypt. Did these new types of figurines represent influences from a non-Egyptian cultural identity? Some sources have identified these abstracted figurines with the Hyksos who came to Egypt from the Eastern Mediterranean, while others identify them as coming from a Nubian culture. This paper will examine contemporaneous figurines from the regions surrounding Egypt, as well as earlier figurines indigenous to Egypt, to investigate possible sources that may have served as inspiration for the Type 2 and 3 female figurines, and what they may tell us about the cultural and social identities of the people who made and used them in Egypt.





20. Khalifa, Mahmoud

Hurghada University

Competing Geographies of Egypt: Deromanticization and Orientalist Vision in William Makepeace Thackeray and Bayard Taylor

In *Notes of a Journey from Cornhill to Grand Cairo* (1846), William Makepeace Thackeray offers a strikingly deromanticized view of Egypt that directly challenges the dominant Orientalist tropes of the 19th century. His portrayal of the Pyramids as “absurdly small” and his comparison of Cairo’s bazaars to “a London alley on washing day” signal a refusal to treat the East as a site of sublime revelation or symbolic transcendence. In contrast, American traveler Bayard Taylor, writing a decade later in *The Lands of the Saracen* (1855), romanticizes Egypt’s geography in poetic terms, describing the Nile as a “silver ribbon” and the city’s minarets as “prayers frozen in stone.” Where Taylor aestheticizes Cairo and frames it within a spiritualized Orientalist gaze, Thackeray’s tone is ironic, bodily, and resistant to mystification. This divergence can be understood through Bertrand Westphal’s geocritical lens, which insists on the multiplicity and heterogeneity of spatial representations. Egypt, in this comparison, is not a singular literary geography but a contested and stratified one—a space that absorbs and refracts national ideologies and subjective positions. Thackeray, writing from within the heart of the British Empire, derails the imperial fantasy by exposing the disappointment of the traveler and the banality of the real. Taylor, by contrast, reproduces the romantic geography that Edward Said critiques in Orientalism, reducing place to metaphor and reinforcing the imaginative dominance of the West. Together, these texts map Egypt as a site of representational tension—a “thickened” space in Westphal’s terms—where competing visions of empire, aesthetics, and geography collide.



21. Lemos, Renan

Durham University

Cultural Coexistence in the 18th Dynasty: New Evidence for Egypto-Nubian Interactions from the Theban Tomb of Neferhotep (TT49)

Various Theban tombs, including the tomb of Neferhotep (TT49), were documented and published early in the 20th century. Egyptologists today rely heavily on these publications, which include facsimiles of inscriptions and iconography crucial for our understanding of various aspects of New Kingdom society. However, in the 1933 publication of TT49 by Norman de Garis Davies, there are two inaccurate textual mentions of Nubians and several other instances where the copyist was either unable to identify or misrepresented Nubians in the

decorated tomb chapel. Despite methodological issues, these and newly identified scenes depicting Nubians in TT49 are significant because they seem to carry little or no ideological connotation, therefore serving as evidence for a fuller integration of Nubians into New Kingdom Egyptian society. In this paper, I will discuss the significance of the representations of Nubians in TT49 to understand aspects of cultural coexistence in the New Kingdom beyond stereotypical artistic and literary representations of foreigners in this period.



22. Lightbody, David

Universities of Glasgow and Vermont, and ARCE

New Maritime Horizons: Cultural Hybridization and Strategic Resource Networks in Egypt’s 26th Dynasty

This paper explores Egypt’s activities in the East Mediterranean and Aegean seas during the Saite Period (ca. 664–525 BC) and looks at how a strategic alliance may have developed as a result of a desire to access material resources. This activity, in turn, served as a catalyst for cross-cultural interaction and the development of hybridized cultural forms. As the Grecophile pharaohs reasserted Egypt’s independence during the 26th dynasty, and trade with their traditional suppliers on the Levant became more problematic, they sought to develop new links across the eastern Mediterranean and to engage more deeply with northern regions, including Cyprus and the East Aegean. This study looks at how the Egyptian Delta served as a hub for outward-facing entrepôts and traces the cultural and material extents of Egypt’s new seaborne networks.

One of the driving factors for this realignment may have been the loss of access to heavy timber forests. Earlier Egyptian states had traditionally sourced cedar for shipbuilding and architectural use in the famed mountain forests of the Levant, but by the Saite period, much of this region was under Neo-Assyrian control, limiting Egyptian access. This paper argues that the 26th dynasty increasingly turned northwards and westwards in response to this situation. This pursuit had strategic implications as timber was essential for expanding the Egyptian navy. The recruitment of Greek and Carian mercenaries relied on a steady supply of ships and shipbuilding materials.

The archaeological and textual evidence reveals the circulation of materials and people and the emergence of hybrid cultural forms during that period. Egyptian-style objects appear in Cyprus and the Aegean, while imported styles and technologies from those regions influenced Delta settlements. These interactions forged new koine identities and networks, reshaping Egypt’s role in the Mediterranean world.





23. Michelini, Laura

Universität zu Köln

Entangled Afterlives: Tracing Religious Transformation in Egyptian-Style Burials of the Southern Levant

This presentation explores the cross-cultural dynamics between Egypt and the Southern Levant during the Late Bronze Age (ca. 1600–1200 BC) through the lens of funerary archaeology. Egyptian-style objects and motifs—such as anthropoid coffins, scarabs, and Osirian symbols—appear in elite burials across the Levant, often interpreted as signs of Egyptian political dominance or cultural emulation. However, this study reconsiders such interpretations by investigating how these funerary elements were recontextualised within Levantine mortuary traditions.

Combining archaeological data from selected cemeteries in Egypt and the Southern Levant with theoretical models of cultural entanglement, the presentation examines how local communities appropriated and transformed Egyptian religious imagery and rituals. Special attention is given to contrasting conceptions of the afterlife: while Egyptians envisioned a regenerative journey culminating in eternal life, Levantine beliefs centered on a shadowy underworld devoid of moral judgement. The integration of Egyptian symbols into this local framework points to selective borrowing, adaptation, and even reinterpretation of religious meaning. Rather than viewing this cultural exchange as one-directional or hegemonic, the paper adopts a postcolonial and interdisciplinary perspective to highlight local agency, resistance, and identity negotiation. The presence of hybrid funerary practices suggests a process of religious syncretism shaped not only by Egyptian influence but also by the social, political, and symbolic priorities of Levantine elites.

By reassessing the meaning and function of Egyptian-style burial elements in their specific archaeological contexts, this research contributes to broader discussions on the transformation of religious practices, the complexity of cultural assimilation, and the entangled nature of cross-cultural interaction in the ancient Eastern Mediterranean.



24. Ocakli, Nuray

Istanbul Sabahattin Zaim University

Cross-Cultural Relations Between Egypt and Macedonia: The Case Study of the 1843 Poll-Tax Register of Kastoria in the Ottoman Archives

Until the official decree of 1855 introduced the compulsory military service for non-Muslim men and replaced the poll-tax with the exemption tax from the military service, poll-tax registers had been the most detailed source of information on the demography, economic activities, and income/wealth of non-

Muslim householders in the Ottoman Empire. 19th-century poll-tax survey books are important examples of these registers, indicating the cross-cultural relations and interactions of the non-Muslim members of the imperial society with important trade and craft centers in the empire and abroad. After the first modern population census of the Ottoman Empire was completed in 1831, obtaining travel permits became easier for merchants, craftsmen, and skilled workers, which increased the interactions of provinces with cosmopolitan centers through trade and labor force movements in the subsequent decades. The 1843 poll-tax register of Kastoria is one of the most compelling examples of 19th-century poll-tax survey books documenting details of the incredible and complicated web of cross-cultural relations and economic networks of Macedonia, with more than sixty trade and craft centers in the Ottoman Empire and across Europe, one of these being Egypt. The 1843 poll-tax register of Kastoria indicates that members of the multi-ethnic and multi-cultural Orthodox Christian and Jewish communities of the city went to Egypt for occupational purposes and formed socio-economic relations with Egypt in the age of modernization.

This study aims to explore the cross-cultural relations and interactions between Kastoria and Egypt through records from the 1843 poll-tax register and related documents in the Ottoman Archives. These sources shed an important light on the history of inter-civic networks and socio-economic ties between Egypt and Macedonia in the 19th century.



25. O'Connor, Peter

Stellenbosch University

Illuminating Ugarit: An Iconographical Study of the Egyptian Influence on Ugarit during the Late Bronze Age (ca. 1600–1150 BC)

Since the discovery and subsequent exploration of the ancient capital of the Levantine kingdom of Ugarit, dating back to the second millennium BC, the relationship between Ugarit and Egypt has captivated the scholarly community. This fascination has been intensified by the uncovering of unique objects, encompassing both personal and royal items. These archaeological discoveries have served as a catalyst for specialized research, concentrating on the domain of material culture, iconography, and epigraphy. In recent years, the focus of the scholarship has been centered around the historical and cultural backdrop characterizing the interaction between Ugarit and Egypt. As the collection of “Egyptian” artifacts uncovered at Ras Sharma, Minet el-Beida, and Ras Ibn Hani continues to expand, numerous inquiries remain open for investigation. Foremost among these is establishing the significance of the Egyptian styles and motifs present on a select few objects. This requires the analysis of these objects in isolation from the broader “International Style”. The forthcoming investigation employs an iconographic analysis of these items within the contextual framework





of Late Bronze Age Ugarit, shedding new light on the intricate relationship between Ugarit and Egypt and the consequent transfer of motifs and styles at Ras Shamra. This research focuses on four key items from Late Bronze Age Ugarit: the Mami stele, the Marriage Vase, the Ba'alau Foudre stele, and the Ivory Bed Panel. This study underscores the high value placed on Egyptian-style items in Ugarit and how the adoption of these motifs served political, religious, and cultural purposes. It also illustrates how Egyptian culture influenced Ugarit on multiple levels (the divine sphere, etc.), leading to the creation of imitations and emulations.



26. Said, Lama

University of Edinburgh

Edmond Pauty's Vision for Historic Cairo

Prevailing narratives on urban conservation history in Egypt begin with Historic Cairo's inscription on UNESCO's World Heritage List in 1979. However, the emergence of urban conservation as a distinctive approach can be traced back to the 1920s-1930s when French Architect Edmond Pauty, a *Beaux-Arts graduate*, developed his proposal "*La défense de l'ancienne ville du Caire et de ses monuments. Urbanisme et archéologie*" while working as *Architecte-Expert* at the *Comité de Conservation des Monuments de l'Art Arabe*, the body responsible for the conservation of Islamic and Coptic monuments in Egypt (1881-1953).

His proposal for Cairo was deeply influenced by his prior experience as director of historic monuments in Morocco, where he first formulated and implemented his ideas on safeguarding historic cities, representing a fascinating case of knowledge transfer from one colonial context to another. Pauty's approach marked a departure from the prevailing focus on individual monuments to encompass entire historic cities and sought to reconcile the development of the new city with the conservation of a 'living' old city—an avant-garde concept for its time, predating key international developments in the field. Despite its innovation, Pauty's plan was largely unimplemented, and some of his ideas faced resistance from Egyptian *Comité* members, reflecting the tensions between foreign and Egyptian expertise amidst changing political and cultural dynamics marked by the rise of Egyptian nationalism.

Drawing on Pauty's published work, Cairo city plans, and other archival material, this paper examines his contribution to the emergence of urban conservation in Egypt and its intersections with colonial and nationalist dynamics. It further seeks to situate his work within broader transnational narratives of both conservation and planning history.



27. Shehada, Sherouk

Helwan University/Humboldt University

Deciphering Cross-Culture Community through Paleographical Studies: a Case Study on Serabit el-Khadim Inscriptions

Serabit el-Khadim, with its temple of the goddess Hathor, is an ancient Egyptian site, located in southwest Sinai, where mining expeditions used to extract copper and turquoise. 223 Middle Kingdom (ca. 1985 – 1773 BC), 188 New Kingdom (ca. 1550 – 1069 BC), and 95 undated inscriptions are attested from this site. They are written in hieroglyphs, cursive hieroglyphs, hieratic, hybrid, i.e., a script between hieroglyphics and hieratic and proto-Sinaitic, which is considered the earliest alphabetic writing in the world. The reason for using these different scripts is still unclear. A palaeographical study of these inscriptions, which has never been conducted, can help to explore the evolution of the writing community in ancient Egypt over time and space. Aiming to tackle the socialization of a crucial contact area at the near-border landscape between Egypt and the Levant during the 2nd millennium BC, through tracking the identities and the cross-cultural perspective of the community in Sinai in general, and in Serabit el-Khadim specifically, this paper will examine (a) the writing practices of the scribes and their social contexts, (b) the place of origin of the scribes who carved the inscriptions in Serabit el-Khadim, and (c) how they defined themselves.



28. Sheppard, Kathleen

University of Missouri

Encountering Saqqara: Victorian Visitors to an Ancient Necropolis

The advent of travel for enjoyment (and edification) in the early to mid-nineteenth century meant that more people than ever before were encountering new cultures and ideas outside of their own. Tourism was one of the main forms of cross-cultural interactions in Egypt during this time. For Europeans, Egypt was not necessarily a new destination. Outsiders had been traveling up and down the Nile for centuries. What was novel was the number of people going to Egypt simply to see the sights—and not necessarily to study them. As outsiders approached Egypt, they wanted to see the familiar—something they had already seen in a museum, in photos, or read about in a book—and the exotic. When tourists were encountering sites like the Pyramids at Giza or the Valley of the Kings, there were long lines of Western travelers who had been there before them. Often, there were long lines of tourists waiting to get into those sites each day. Saqqara, while on the beaten path and highly interesting, was not a place that most tourists went. Those who did were either following an itinerary in a guidebook or were particularly





intrepid travelers. This paper will explore how Victorian era visitors encountered Saqqara, examining what their guidebooks said and what they thought of the site after visiting, based on letters and journals. I will situate Saqqara as a site not only of immense religious importance for ancient Egyptians, but also as a site that early tourists did not and could not fully understand, due to so much of it being buried in the sand. Importantly, these tourists not only witnessed and recorded Saqqara for a “Western” audience, but their cross-cultural (mis) understandings may have, in fact, impacted future studies of the necropolis by European archaeologists.

the negotiation of identity and the maintenance of intercultural relationships within a multi-ethnic society. These findings underscore Aswan’s role as a lively crossroads of civilizations.



30. Silvestri, Jason Christ College, University of Cambridge

Beyond Tattoos and Ostrich Feathers: Resituating the Third Intermediate Period Ancient Libyan Diasporic Communities in the Libyco-Berber World

Following a series of wars between the Ramesside state and various Libyan groups, Libyan captives were forcibly resettled into communities in Egypt. Several generations later, after the dissolution of the centralized Ramesside state through civil war, family networks of influential political actors who reasserted their diasporic Libyan (*mšwš*, *rbw*, *mhs(wn)*, etc.) genealogical origins took charge of powerful state and non-state institutions, including the kingship and the highest offices of the Temple of Amun. These influential families continued to control the kingship and Egypt’s most prominent temple institutions for the next three centuries, a period now known as the “Libyan Period” (ca. 1070-720 BC). Libyan rule is characterized in the literature as decentralized, chaotic, and “anarchic.” Recent works are likewise quick to characterize this “Libyan anarchy” in ethnic terms, understanding the decentralization and fragmentation of the political landscape to be the product of Libyan ‘tribal’ cultural influence, however Egyptological definitions of Libyan identity are complicated by the pronounced absence of distinctively Libyan material culture in Egyptian contexts and theoretical reliance upon and projection of problematic colonial ethnographies of indigenous Arab and Amazigh North African groups. This talk critically resituates Libyan groups attested in Egyptian textual and iconographic records of the Third Intermediate Period in their broader North African cultural context. I present linguistic evidence for parallel onomastic practices between the Egyptian Ancient Libyans and other Libyan groups attested epigraphically in Libyco-Berber inscriptions of late 1st millennium BC Tunisia and Algeria. Further interconnections between titles attested in the Libyco-Berber inscriptional corpus and attested in Libyan Period monuments, such as *ms*, *mk*, and *ḥšw.ty/mnkd* are made legible through the lens of diachronic Berber linguistics. Lastly, potential structural parallels between the ‘tribalism’ and legal practices of Libyan groups of antique date and analogous structures (*taqbilt*, *izirf*) among more recent Amazigh groups are presented.



29. Sieli, Ilaria Università degli Studi di Milano

Cross-Cultural Encounters in Aswan: Exploring the Aga Khan Necropolis through Tombs AGH026 and AGH032

Since 2019, the Egyptian-Italian Mission at West Aswan (EIMAWA), co-directed by the Chair of Egyptology at the University of Milan and the Egyptian Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities/Aswan Inspectorate, has been excavating and studying the necropolis surrounding the Aga Khan Mausoleum, on the west bank of the Nile, at Aswan. Spanning from the Late Pharaonic to the Roman period (6th century BC – 3rd century AD), the site offers a rare opportunity to investigate long-term cultural interactions and coexistence among diverse populations in Egypt’s southern frontier. Since pharaonic antiquity, Aswan played a crucial role: a hub for trade with sub-Saharan Africa, a gateway to western desert routes, and a key source of valuable stones like pink granite. This importance grew under Ptolemaic and Roman rule. Excavations have identified nearly 400 tombs, mostly dating to the Ptolemaic-Roman period. Those studied so far reveal strong cultural interaction between local and incoming populations. Roman influence is visible in imported styles, such as à la barbotine pottery, distinctive glass vessels, and figurines of syncretic deities, while Egyptian funerary customs persisted, adapted to Roman tastes. Notably, tombs AGH026 and AGH032—multi-generational family tombs reused over time—have yielded a wealth of funerary equipment and human remains, the analysis of which offers new insights into Aswan as a dynamic cultural mosaic, shaped by local traditions and external inputs. This presentation will outline EIMAWA’s preliminary results, demonstrating its significant contribution to broader discussions on cross-cultural interaction in antiquity. Examples from tombs AGH026 and AGH032 will be presented as case studies, illustrating how funerary contexts can reveal





31. Thomas, Colleen

University College Dublin

Insular Hermit Images: Connecting Egypt and Ireland

The corpus of Insular hermit images depicts the Egyptian saints Paul and Antony. Links between early medieval Egypt and Ireland have been proposed in Insular scholarship since the Egyptian hermits were first identified by Porter (1930) on Irish sculptured crosses. While Raftery (1965) dismissed direct connections due to a lack of robust evidence, subsequent inquiries by Werner (1990), Gillis (2022), Geddes (2017), and Brown (2018, 2020) have identified affinities between the visual cultures of the two regions, if not a specific conduit.

Insular hermit images have no known antecedents and present rare visual evidence of ascetic monastic practice in the West to survive prior to the eleventh century. The visual nature of the evidence presents an unprecedented opportunity to gain insight into early medieval hermit culture, offering a ‘picture’ of ninth- and tenth-century monastic practice complementing previously established archaeological and textual readings. From these images, we can infer the methods used by ascetic monks in their spiritual work, the value they placed on their spiritual achievements, and the significance of their lineage from the desert fathers in Egypt.

As another cohesive collection of regional monastic art to survive from the early Middle Ages, Coptic visual culture is an important comparative context. Grounded in field research conducted through my 2023 fellowship with the American Research Center in Egypt, this paper will present observations about the spatial-spiritual relationships common to early Christian visual culture of Egypt and the Insular images of Egyptian hermits. Focusing on images at Nigg (Scotland), Monasterboice and Kells (Ireland), the representation of caves and tomb shrine spaces will be compared to niches, tombs, and springs at Apa Jeremiah (Saqqara). The Red Monastery (Sohag) and St Paul’s Monastery (Red Sea), in consideration of ascetic practice and spiritual goals shared by monks in early medieval Egypt and Ireland.



32. Thompson, Seth

University of Sharjah

Francis Frith’s Stereoscopic Views of the Nubian Temples and Monuments

As part of his three expeditions to Egypt and the Holy Land, pioneering photographer Francis Frith traveled to Upper Egypt twice (autumn 1856 – winter 1857 and winter 1860) to photographically document its temples and monuments. One of the three cameras he brought was a stereo camera, a device that captures two images side-by-side. These paired images or stereographs are used with a stereoscope to create an illusion of a single three-dimensional image. In the nineteenth century and

early twentieth century, the stereoscope enabled people to explore distant places and cultures in 3D. For many, the stereoscope would allow them to see places and cultures that they would never visit and could experience and understand only through its lens. Francis Frith was captivated by the Nubian temples and monuments and expressed that while there is no “effectual substitute for actual travel...it is my ambition to provide for those to whom circumstances forbid that luxury, faithful representations of the scenes I have witnessed.” By using both primary and secondary sources related to Francis Frith’s stereo photographic pursuits and travel endeavors to Egypt, this 3D paper presentation focuses on Francis Frith and his documentation of the Nubian temples and monuments using stereoscopic photography. It will conclude with how his photographic work plays an important role in understanding the Nubian temples and monuments in their original context before the construction of the upper and lower dams in Aswan.

Anaglyph glasses will be provided to audience members to view the presentation in 3D.



33. Troche, Julia

Missouri State University

Encountering Saqqara: 1st millennium BC Visitors to an Ancient Necropolis

Encounters at Saqqara during the first millennium BC can be understood in many ways as cross-cultural. During this time, Egypt was multicultural, inhabited by Greeks, Nubians, Persians, Libyans, Macedonians, and citizens from all stretches of the Roman Empire. Foreign travellers, in essence—tourists, were also passing through Egypt. Additionally, “indigenous” Egyptians (however one may define this) engaged with their own past as tourists from a faraway time. This novel intersection of cultural practices and identities helped forge a uniquely Egyptian milieu, greater than the sum of its parts. Saqqara is a productive locus for considering this cultural entanglement due, in part, to its incredible antiquity and endurance within regional memory as a significant religious site. It thus offers insights into how perceptions of Egyptian antiquity were both solidified and rejected within the context of an increasingly inter-cultural milieu. Two cases anchor this discussion:

(1) a *longue durée* analysis of the veneration of Imhotep at Saqqara—e.g., around his life and death ca. 2700 BC vis-à-vis the Ptolemaic era temple built in his honor, ca. 300 BC, and (2) an examination of activity at the Saqqara Serapeion during the Late Period and Ptolemaic Period—wherein hundreds of votives invoking Isis, Thoth, Imhotep (Imouthes), and Asklepios are extant—vis-à-vis the Roman era—wherein the Serapeion closed and was looted. Using the lens of visitors at Saqqara during the first millennium BC, this paper analyzes the religious continuity of the site of Saqqara across time, but also how engagement with cults at Saqqara were transformed by extracultural influences.





34. Quintana, Alejandro Ruben

Yale University

Peoples of All Tribes: Reevaluating Greek Immigration to Ptolemaic Egypt

This paper revisits the mass immigration of Greeks and other Hellenized peoples into Egypt during the Ptolemaic period. Although the consequences of such immigration, especially on the culture, language, and politics of Egypt, are well-known, the movement of migrants as a phenomenon in its own right remains understudied and has yet to be investigated through the frameworks offered by the expanding field of migration studies. Starting from a database that I have constructed of all military settlers in Egypt attested in the papyri (ca. 700 individuals), I apply Lesger, Lucassen, and Schrover’s tripartite typology of migration (space, time, and modality) to describe this wave of movement and to determine its underlying mechanisms.

I demonstrate that the spatiality and temporality of military migration to Egypt do not support recent arguments that emphasize the importance of continued military mobility in the third century BC. While acknowledging certain exceptions, I instead strengthen the older view that most military migrants can be traced back to the original Macedonian and satrapal armies of Ptolemy I. Building upon this conclusion, I then present a mobility history of the military settlement of Middle Egypt as documented in the papyrological evidence.

In the final part of my paper, I move beyond military settlers to suggest that the Ptolemaic state was equally central in structuring and facilitating the networks that brought civilian migrants to Egypt. Accordingly, I then offer a generalized model of migration in the ancient world that argues that long-distance migration mainly occurred when the significant costs of travel were met by the state. In this way, Greek immigration to Ptolemaic Egypt serves as a framework that reconfigures the role of mobility and migration in Egyptian history more broadly.

35. Weiss, Kira

University of California, Santa Barbara

Ebbs and Flows: Egypt’s Musical Exchanges between the Mediterranean and Gulf Regions

Grounded in historical and ethnographic research, this paper examines the musical exchanges and cross-cultural interactions that have shaped the conception and performance of “Arab music” (*al-mūsīqa al-‘arabiyya*) in Egypt. It focuses on two contexts: 1. The Mediterranean and 2. The Gulf.

1. The Mediterranean. The first half of the paper explores musical interinfluences between Egypt and other Mediterranean countries in the late-nineteenth and twentieth centuries. During this period, music in Egypt was particularly influenced by Ottoman-Turkish musical practices and—paradoxically—by the desire to shed these very influences. The Ottoman-Turkish style and repertoire that dominated from the 1870s to World War I came to be overtaken by a more distinctively Egyptian style (El-Shawan 1997) as society underwent a “metamorphosis from Ottoman-Egyptian to Egyptian” (Baron 2005). This was complemented by efforts to institutionalize “Arab music” rather than “Eastern music” in Egypt. That said, Egyptian “Arab music” has always comprised a multitude of cultural influences from across the Mediterranean and beyond.

2. The Gulf. The second half of the paper deals with exchanges between Egypt and the Gulf region during the 21st century. Drawing on ethnographic work, it explores the Egypt-Gulf circuit in Arab music today. As Egyptian musicians travel to the Gulf to perform, teach, and record, so too do musicians, producers, and cultural leaders from the Gulf region exert significant influence over Arab music in Egypt. The author, Kira Weiss, has regularly performed with the national Heritage Arab Music Ensemble (*Firqat al-Mūsīqā al-‘Arabiyya li-l-Turāth*) at the Cairo Opera House over the past two years, and this section is based on participant observation and interviews with fellow musicians.





36. Yao, Ruijie

University of Missouri-Columbia

The Egyptian Tributary System in the Thutmoseid Period: Redistribution, Reciprocity, and Asymmetric Representation

This paper offers new insights into the “tributary system” in ancient Egypt. It examines two key sources: the tribute scene from the Theban private tombs and the “inventory-style” list of foreign tributes in Thutmose III’s royal annals at Karnak temple. By reassessing the Egyptian terms for tribute (*inw*, *b3k.w*, *b3.w*), this study highlights how the concept of tribute was largely fluid and shaped by the perspective of the agent who described it, whether emphasizing economic aspects in texts or representational arts. As a result, it is often difficult to distinguish between how foreign relations were represented and how they were operated. This paper integrates both external (etic) and internal (emic) perspectives to develop a comparative model for understanding Egypt’s tributary relations with its neighbors.

This paper proposes an alternative theoretical model of the Egyptian tribute system, framing it as a multiple-tiered hierarchy within a holistic ideological framework. It examines the various economic relationships recorded in the Theban tribute scenes and the Karnak tribute lists. The first part of the paper develops a contextualized classification of Egyptian tribute terms and relevant texts to remove ethnocentric bias and challenge outdated Western narratives. The second part synthesizes theoretical approaches, such as the substantivist model, the co-opt model from agency-based narrative, and the Neo-Gramscian critique, to interpret evidence from Egyptian sources and to better understand the tribute-giving practices within their ancient social-political context.



37. Zangani, Federico

University of Cambridge, McDonald Institute for Archaeological Research

Cyprus and the Levant: Contrasting Patterns of Egypt’s Cross-Cultural Interaction with the Bronze Age Eastern Mediterranean

In the socio-politically and ecologically heterogeneous world of the Bronze Age Eastern Mediterranean, contrasting patterns of Egyptian cross-cultural interaction emerge between the Levant, where Egypt made several attempts at empire-building, and Cyprus, where it did not. As a crossroads of networks between Afro-Eurasia and the Mediterranean, the Levant provided a stimulus to the civilization of the Nile valley as early as the process of state formation throughout the 4th millennium BC. The foreign and economic policies of the pharaonic state during the Bronze Age evolved through alternating phases of trade, colonization, warfare, territorial imperialism, and diplomacy. This alternation reflects both opportunities and limits of state expansion due to the dense connectivity of a globalized world comprising cities, people, non-state actors, and forms of mobility that transcended institutional power. On the other hand, Cyprus combined maritime connectivity and insularity, and the interplay of the two gave rise to many local specificities. The sociopolitical organization of the island still remains elusive, and so are the conditions under which it entertained trade and foreign relations. The archaeological evidence for Egyptian-Cypriot cross-cultural interaction suggests that there was a transmission of Egyptian material culture and iconography across the Mediterranean at the sub-royal and non-royal level, outside traditional frameworks for international relations such as imperialism and diplomacy. This comparison between the Levantine and Cypriot horizons, it will be argued, demands a shift away from imperialism and diplomacy, which are primarily institutional in essence, to globalization, which subsumes a wider range of dynamics, including commercial, non-institutional, and alternative forms of exchange and communication. It will also be hypothesized how this global connectivity across Afro-Eurasia and the Mediterranean may have shaped the political, urban, and cultural landscape of pharaonic Egypt domestically.





CROSS-CULTURAL INTERACTION
IN EGYPT THROUGH THE AGES
CONFERENCE



Ewart Memorial Hall, AUC Tahrir Square
5-7 December, 2025

