



***Shifting Sands:  
Change Over Time in Ancient Egypt***



*9th Annual Birmingham Egyptology Symposium*

*Friday 6th May 2022*

**DELEGATE  
PACK**

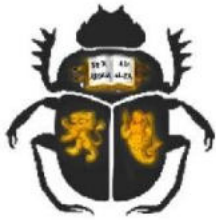
# **Welcome...**

to the Birmingham Egyptology  
Symposium 2022!

Thank you so much for signing up for  
**Shifting Sands: Change Over Time  
in Ancient Egypt**

In order to be as accessible as possible,  
this event will run both in-person and  
virtually via Zoom.





# How to find us

## The Symposium (Edgbaston Campus)

LR5, Arts Building, Birmingham,  
B15 2ST.

Nearest rail station: University.



## The Eton Myers Collection (Selly Oak Campus)

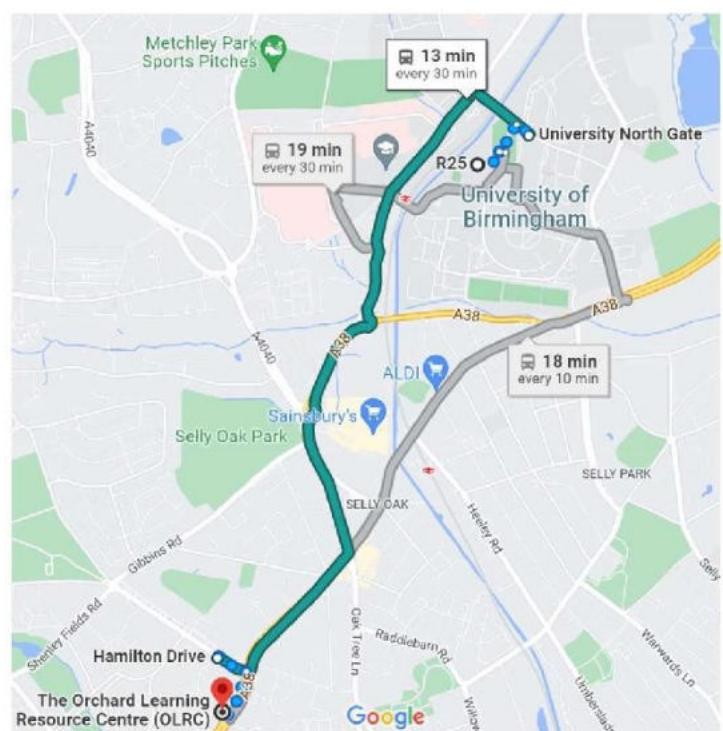
Orchard Learning Resources Centre,  
986 Bristol Rd, Birmingham B29 6LB.

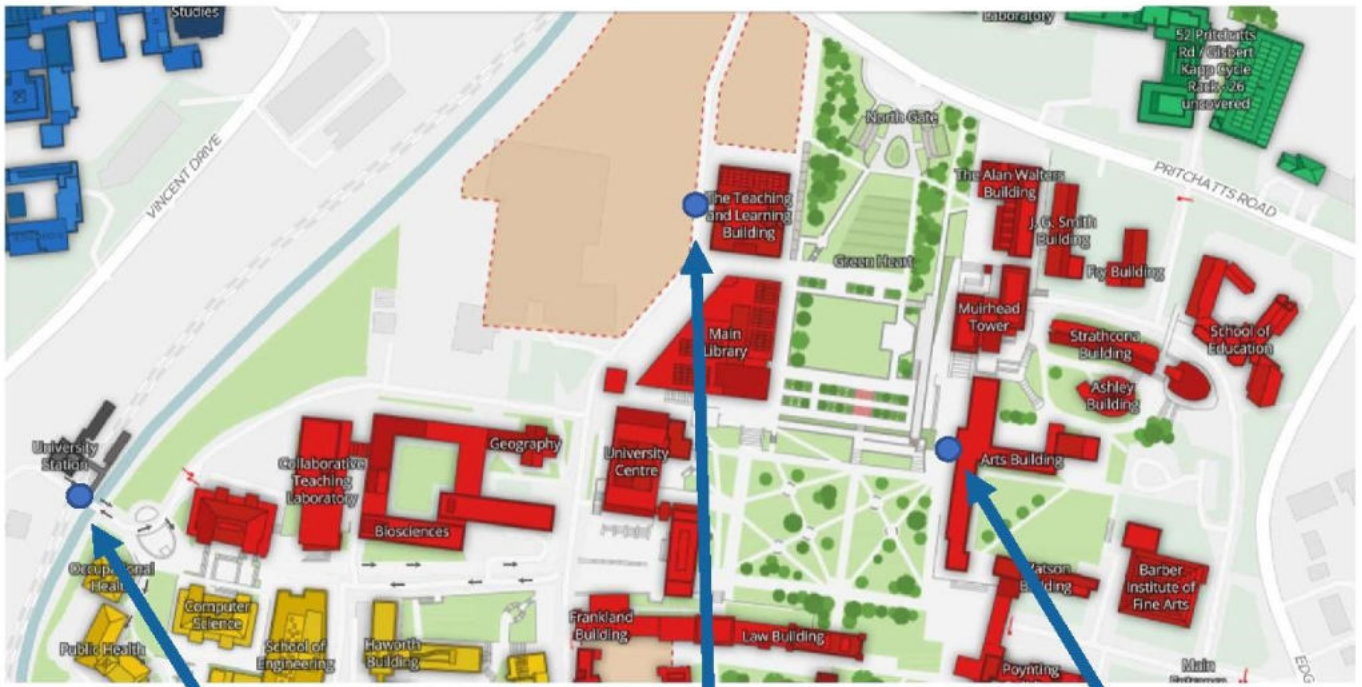
Nearest rail station: Selly Oak.



Travelling between the  
two:

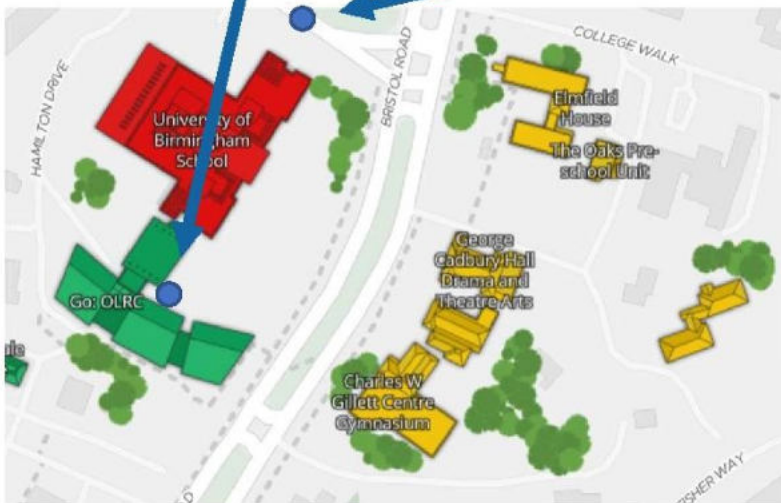
It's a 30 minute walk  
between the two  
venues, or a shuttle bus  
runs between the two  
sites





University rail station      Shuttle bus (Edgbaston)      Arts Building

Orchard Learning Resources Centre  
(Eton Myers collection)      Shuttle bus (Selly Oak)



Shuttle bus leaves  
Edgbaston campus:  
1230-1239 or 1330-1339

Returning from Selly Oak  
campus:  
1339-1350 or 1439-1450

**REMEMBER:** We have limited capacity at the Eton Myers collection; you will need to have booked a ticket for this portion of the day!





## Birmingham Egyptology Symposium 2022

### Shifting Sands: Change Over Time in Ancient Egypt

Friday 6<sup>th</sup> May 2022

#### 0930 Registration

1000 Welcome

- *Edward Mushett Cole, Chair of Birmingham Egyptology.*

1015 One of these things is not like the others: Changes in the composition of wooden funerary models post excavation.

- *Sam Powell, University of Birmingham.*

1045 Shedding Light on Egyptian Mirrors: new insight into their manufacture.

- *Elizabeth Thomas, University of Liverpool.*

1115 The Ancient Egyptian Celestial Diagrams: Between Change and Continuity.

- *Yossra Ibrahim, Wissenschaftliche Mitarbeiterin.*

1145 The Changing Role of Divine Nursing Scenes in Ancient Egyptian Religion and Kingship: Examining the Decorative and Physical Context of these Scenes in Temples and Tombs.

- *Cannon Fairbairn, University of Birmingham.*

1215 Introduction to the Eton Myers collection.

#### 1220 Lunch and optional trip to the Eton Myers collection

1415 Shifting or Immovable Sands? "Anti-Atenism" in private Religion during the Amarna Period.

- *Valentina Santini, University of Birmingham.*

1445 Cyclical Change in the Development of the Egyptian Verbal Constructions.

- *Rachael McLaughlin, University of Liverpool.*

1515 Tracking the Untamed: Developments of the Griffin Motif from the Predynastic Period to the Middle Kingdom.

- *Jake Colloff, Harvard University.*

#### 1545 Break

1600 Searching for meaning: Initial findings of a corpus-based study on the diachronic development of adjectives in Earlier and Later Egyptian.

- *Josefin Percival, Uppsala University.*

1630 Ascend to the Imperishables: The Rise of Stellar Eschatology at the Dawn of State Formation.

- *Marla Szwec, University of Toronto.*

1700 Keynote presentation – The puzzle of the 'Salakhana' tomb.

*Tony Leahy, Honorary Research Fellow in Classics, Ancient History, and Archaeology at the University of Birmingham.*

1745 Closing remarks

- *Leire Olabarria, Lecturer in Egyptology, Birmingham University.*

#### 1800 Reception and quiz.

# Housekeeping rules

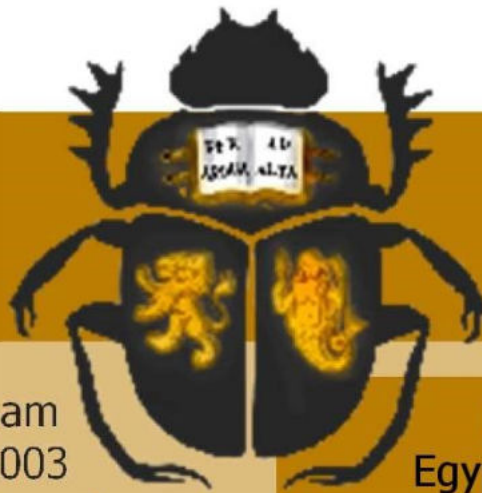


Please be respectful of others, and the opinions of others.

There will be breaks throughout the day. Each of the sessions is twenty minutes long, with ten minutes allowed for questions. The chair will endeavour to keep speakers to time, but please do be patient if we experience any technical difficulties.



# Birmingham Egyptology



The idea for Birmingham Egyptology arose in 2003 following the graduation of a class of MA Egyptology students eager to maintain their social network.

Follow Birmingham Egyptology on Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter for upcoming events!



The Forum brings current postgraduates together with alumni, other students and academics associated with University of Birmingham and members of the public to work on a variety of projects including regular seminars and workshop on a range of Egyptological topics.

We also work closely with the Eton Myers collection of objects currently on loan to the University following on from the initial catalogue of essays published and produce our own journal.



Visit <https://more.bham.ac.uk/birminghamegyptology/> to find out more!

## **One of these things is not like the others: Changes in the composition of wooden funerary models post excavation.**

***Sam Powell, University of Birmingham.***

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@samchannpowell

Objects have a life cycle which continues past their original function and context. From the point of excavation, objects can end up in a variety of locations, passing through numerous owners, serving a variety of purposes, and being presented in a variety of forms. This became particularly apparent during my ongoing research into ancient Egyptian wooden funerary figures (small human forms, typically a component of tomb models). The corpus comprises of a fairly even split of objects of known and unknown provenance. In the case of the unprovenanced material, crucial context is lost (for example, if a figure was part of a brewing scene), its companion pieces, and its geographical and temporal origins, reducing its value to research.

Even in the case of figures from a known provenance, however, things are not always as simple as they initially seem. The stated provenance and presented interpretation of an object is often taken for granted, particularly when displayed within a museum context. When an object comes directly to an institution as a result of the distribution of finds from excavation, this interpretation is unquestionably regurgitated without further investigation or analysis. However, when the figures are considered in isolation and compared for consistency with the stylistic traits typical of its origins, this can sometimes show things aren't as straightforward as they initially appeared.

This paper provides an overview of the accuracy of the reassembly of ancient Egyptian wooden funerary models from the point of excavation, considering the ways in which these accidental or deliberate alterations affect the object's life cycle, and impact their interpretation. Case studies will be drawn from my current research in UK institutions.



*Sam Powell is a PhD candidate at the University of Birmingham working to create a stylistic typology of ancient Egyptian funerary figures held in UK institutions. She has worked closely with the Egypt Centre Swansea for many years, creating their online catalogue "Abaset". She holds MA qualifications in both Archaeology (UCL) and Ancient Egyptian Material Culture (Swansea University).*



## **Shedding Light on Egyptian Mirrors: new insight into their manufacture.**

***Elizabeth Thomas, University of Liverpool.***

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Ancient Egyptian mirrors have received a great deal of attention for their cultural significance and connections to religious beliefs. However, in depth investigations into their production processes have been lacking with only a handful included in wider analyses. So how were mirrors manufactured and what kind of reflection did the metal produce? What colour and how clear were the images? Essentially, how did the Ancient Egyptian elite see themselves? The combination of metallurgical analysis and experimental work presented here aims to shed light on some of these questions.

With the use of a novel minimally destructive sampling method called flat edge abrasion, analysis of mirrors from a range of UK museum collections using SEM-EDX has revealed the chemical composition and microstructure of the metal. The mirrors' provenance spans from the Old Kingdom through to the Late Period, allowing the manufacturing techniques used to produce them to be characterised and then tracked over time, showing when various developments occurred. Additionally, different surface treatments have been identified which will have varying effects on the type of reflection created, ranging from a coppery through to a silvery appearance. Ongoing experimental work based on these analyses aims to re-create the manufacturing sequence alongside the visual characteristics of the mirrors which will aid our understanding of how they originally functioned.



*Elizabeth completed her BA in Archaeology & Egyptology in 2018 from the University of Liverpool, and then moved on to an MSc in Archaeology, again at the University of Liverpool which she finished in 2020. She applied and was successful in obtaining PhD funding from the NWCDTP AHRC, and is now going into the second year of her PhD.*

## The Ancient Egyptian Celestial Diagrams: Between Change and Continuity.

***Yossra Ibrahim, Wissenschaftliche Mitarbeiterin.***

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<https://www.blogs.uni-mainz.de/fb07-grk-man-nature/yossra-ibrahim/>

The Celestial Diagram is a term denoting a set of stellar illustrations and iconographic motifs that can depict a variety of stellar elements such as; decans, stellar deities, planets, constellations, and stars. With the introduction of the elaborate celestial picture in the unfinished tomb of Sennmut (TT353); the vibrant image of the celestial diagram was consequently adopted in several contexts such as: the ceilings of royal and private tombs, ceilings of temples, coffin lids, and in some occurrences, it can also decorate the exterior of water clocks. While the celestial diagram is bound to a set of specific stellar figures; yet each diagram has its own unique character which usually results in several alterations in terms of content, general configuration, actions, and gesture of characters. Furthermore, with the Ramessides, Saite dynasty, and the Graeco-Roman period some elements were incorporated among the visual depictions of the sky diagram.

For instance, the introduction of the Ramesside star clock, the four winds, and the addition of some of the elements from the zodiac. This research is particularly interested in the development of the celestial diagram from the mere stellar depictions attested on a number of coffin lids dating to the Middle kingdom to the elaborate celestial diagrams. In addition, the integration of foreign cultures and ideas, and the incorporation of elements from the zodiac will be highlighted. The discussion will commence with an overview of the components of the celestial diagram and then emphasise on certain modifications and changes attested in the sky representations. It is the hope of this dissertation to examine tradition, innovation and also to better understand the development of this decorative scheme across different time periods.



*Yossra is an Egyptologist, specialising in ancient Egyptian Astronomy. She received her B.A. majoring in Egyptology and minoring in Entrepreneurship and History from the American University in Cairo (AUC) and a Master's Degree in Archaeology from Durham University. She is currently a Research Associate at the Research Training Group "Early Concepts of Man and Nature" and a Doctoral Candidate at Johannes Gutenberg University Mainz researching the Ancient Egyptian Astronomical diagrams with a dissertation entitled "Lights of Eternity - Investigations into concepts, tradition and innovation in the ancient Egyptian sky diagrams". Her main area of speciality is concerned with the astronomical activity in the Ancient Egyptian society; particularly calendars, astronomical texts and depictions dating from the New Kingdom up to the Second Century A.D. She is currently conducting her first field survey on a number of ancient Egyptian astronomical ceilings in Thebes.*

## **The Changing Role of Divine Nursing Scenes in Ancient Egyptian Religion and Kingship: Examining the Decorative and Physical Context of these Scenes in Temples and Tombs.**

*Cannon Fairbairn, University of Birmingham.*

[caf136@student.bham.ac.uk](mailto:caf136@student.bham.ac.uk)

Depictions of the Egyptian king being nursed by a goddess appear from the Old Kingdom through the Graeco-Roman period in temples and tombs throughout Egypt. The motif is generally understood to represent the bestowal of protection and legitimacy on the king upon his rebirth at coronation or after death. In response to a tendency in past research to examine these scenes in isolation from the decorative programs in which they appear, this research analyses the purpose of this motif and divine breastfeeding by studying the scenes' placements within sacred space and its relationship to surrounding imagery. By collecting information on each known appearance of this motif from the Old Kingdom through the Graeco-Roman Period, this presentation will make several observations regarding the changes in the use of this scene over time as well in the motif's purpose and use in temples and tombs. These are based in part on the types of temples and tombs in which these scenes appear and where in these spaces the scenes are located. Further, the presentation presents the case study of the divine nursing scene from the Cave Temple of Tuthmosis IV at Amada to demonstrate the importance of examining these scenes within their decorative and spatial contexts to better understand their role in temple decoration and in the ancient Egyptian temple experience.



*Cannon is a PhD student at the University of Birmingham having received her MA in Art History - Egyptian Art and Archaeology and Graduate Certificate in Museum Studies from the University of Memphis. Her research focuses on the ancient Egyptian divine nursing motif (images of the ancient Egyptian king being breastfed by a goddess) and its role in temples and tombs as well as in ancient ideas of kingship and power.*

## **Shifting or Immovable Sands? “Anti-Atenism” in private Religion during the Amarna Period.**

***Valentina Santini, University of Birmingham; CAMNES.***

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The revolutionary Amarna Age was a period marked by critical changes, mostly due to Atenism, the new religion wanted by pharaoh Akhenaten. Tell el-Amarna - the ancient Akhetaten - was built as the cultic centre of the new doctrine, a place to worship the Sun Disk and avoid celebrating Amun and the other deities that became the subject of the strong *damnatio memoriae* enacted by the pharaoh.

Apparently, it would seem that everyone supported Atenism, however, giving a closer look at funerary equipment and religious objects found at Amarna (both in the city and in the necropolises), the situation changes. Why are these items related to the traditional religion, rather than the new cult? Why, in such a climate of shifting sands, were common citizens stuck to the “conventional” pantheon? Due to the fact that, before moving to the capital, Amarna citizens lived elsewhere and had a religious background that they carried with them to the new city, would it be possible that placing traditional grave goods in private tombs had a relationship with the concept of collective identity? Basically, was Amarna the main symbol of the revolution - as Akhenaten craved - or, on the opposite, was it the emblem of the failure of change?



*Valentina is a PhD student at the University of Birmingham, with a research project focused on beliefs, conceptions and practices related to the Afterlife in New Kingdom Egypt. After obtaining her MA and BA degree, respectively, in Florence and Pisa, she was employed at the Museo Egizio in Turin (Italy). She is currently working at CAMNES (Center for Ancient Mediterranean and Near Eastern Studies), a center for archaeological studies based in Florence (Italy).*

## **Cyclical Change in the Development of Egyptian Verbal Constructions.**

***Rachael McLaughlin, University of Liverpool.***

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As the world's longest attested language, Egyptian offers a unique opportunity to investigate diachronic linguistic changes over a more extended period than any other language, including wide-ranging linguistic patterns. One such pattern is the 'linguistic cycle', which shows the alternation between synthetic forms (inseparable forms with a lower quantity of elements) and analytic forms (separable forms with a greater quantity of elements). This is particularly visible in the diachronic developments of Egyptian verbal constructions.

This presentation will demonstrate the existence of the linguistic cycle pattern in the developments of Egyptian verbal constructions from Old Egyptian to Coptic, showing the alternation between syntheticity and analyticity. The nature of the linguistic cycle pattern in Egyptian verbal constructions will then be discussed, exploring the diachronic linguistic changes which resulted in stages of analyticisation, in which analyticity was increased, or syntheticisation, in which syntheticity was increased. A comparison of the linguistic cycle patterns visible from each individual construction will establish which linguistic changes were commonly involved in either analyticisation or syntheticisation across several or all constructions, and which were involved in the developments or only a few, or even just one, construction(s). The time taken to form the linguistic cycle in the development of each verbal construction will also be determined and compared across constructions. The various similarities between the linguistic cycle in different constructions will be used to determine the nature of the linguistic cycle across Egyptian verbal constructions, while the various differences will be used to conclude that within diachronic studies constructions must be examined individually, rather than categorising the language as a whole, as has often been done in previous studies.



*Rachael McLaughlin (née Cornwell) is close to completion of her PhD in Egyptology, funded by the AHRC, at the University of Liverpool, following her MA in Egyptology and BA in Egyptology with Ancient Greek, also from the University of Liverpool. Her research is focusses on linguistic changes over the history of the Egyptian language from Old Egyptian to Coptic, with her PhD thesis analysing the changes between synthetic and analytic forms in the diachronic development of Egyptian verbal constructions.*

## Tracking the Untamed: Developments of the Griffin Motif from the Predynastic Period to the Middle Kingdom.

**Jake Colloff, Harvard University.**

[jcolloff@g.harvard.edu](mailto:jcolloff@g.harvard.edu)

Whilst the Middle Kingdom griffins of Beni Hassan and Deir al-Barsha have received fair attention in years past, scholarly consensus remains elusive with regards to their role in the decorative scheme of these private elite tombs. This presentation traces the development of the griffin motif from the Predynastic Period through to the Middle Kingdom, highlighting how an art historical approach allows us to grasp the underlying function of this animal in later periods. Together with contemporary etymological and archaeological evidence, this can be used to elucidate the particular nuances of each of the later forms. Based on these varying approaches, it argues that a single predynastic 'ancestor' develops into four distinct forms of griffin by the Middle Kingdom, all of which serve to aid the rebirth of the tomb owner in the afterlife, though each in its own varying and unique way.



*Jake Colloff graduated with a BA in Ancient History and Philosophy and a BA(Honours) in Ancient History from the University of Auckland, New Zealand. He then moved to Leiden where he completed an MA in Classics and Ancient Civilizations with a focus on Egyptology. As of 2021 he has resided in Cambridge Massachusetts as a PhD candidate in Egyptology at Harvard University under the supervision of Prof. Peter Der Manuelian.*

## **Searching for meaning: mapping the diachronic changes in adjectives from Old Egyptian to Coptic.**

**Josefin Percival, Uppsala University.**

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@josefinpercival

Most Egyptologists have agreed that the shift between Earlier and Later Egyptian brings with it some changes to the group of property modifiers known as adjectives, namely their disintegration as a word class. However, no convincing explanation for their disappearance has as of yet been presented. The changes in morphology and syntax have rather been objectively acknowledged as the downfall of attributive and predicative adjectives. During Late Egyptian the earlier uses of adjectives in adjectival sentences and as direct modifiers of noun phrases were gradually lost to be replaced in Demotic by the *nꜣ sdm-f* and the use of the linking *n* between the noun phrase and adjective. The latter was in Coptic developed into the element  $\bar{n}$  but assumed to be the genitive  $\bar{n}$  as a link between nouns. Currently, the most established proposition explaining the disuse of attributive adjectives has been to label adjectives and adjectival properties fundamentally as nouns or verbs to fit the Later Egyptian syntax and morphology. However, this is a westernized view on how languages function and does not take the Egyptian root system into consideration. This presentation is an initial findings report on a corpus-based study concerning the development of the adjective and its functions from Old Egyptian to Coptic. With it, this presentation will concretize the problematic view on adjectives within Egyptian linguistics and discuss the issues with a morphologically focused approach. Finally, the presentation proposes that semantics, being the only consistent in the diachrony of adjectives, can be a more productive approach to the changes in morphology and syntax of adjectives.



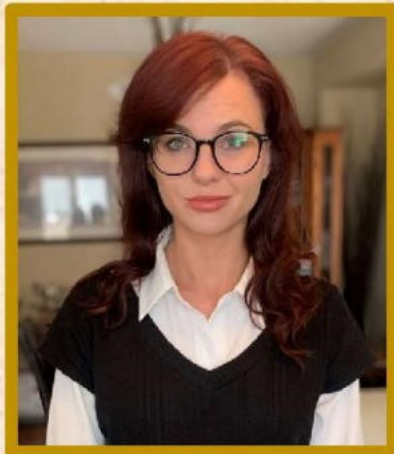
*Josefin is a PhD student in Ancient Egyptian text and language at Uppsala University, Sweden, currently writing a thesis on the diachronic development of adjectives in Ancient Egyptian.*

## **Ascend to the Imperishables: The Rise of Stellar Eschatology at the Dawn of State Formation.**

**Marla Szwec, University of Toronto.**

[marla.szwec@mail.utoronto.ca](mailto:marla.szwec@mail.utoronto.ca)

Sixty references to the *ihemu-seku* (the 'Imperishables') are cited in the Pyramid Texts to help the king's soul "go forth into the sky among the Imperishable Stars" (§§939-41) so that he may transfigure into one of them. These stars correspond to the circumpolar constellations in Ursa Minor, Ursa Major, and Draco which became emblematic of immortality in the royal cult since they maintain visibility every night. The relatively high frequency of these references is explained by Faulkner to be a by-product of a 'star religion' which flourished upon the establishment of the original state. However, as a consequence of the preeminence of the sun cult and its impact on royal mortuary beliefs, the 'star religion' did not survive past the Old Kingdom and for this reason, is underrepresented in scholarship. This presentation focuses on the emergence of stellar eschatology by examining its position in the formation of authority as a contributive force in navigational, time-keeping, and agrarian practices. Attestations to stellar observation are dynamic yet subtle and their appearance in ritualism, symbolic vocabularies, and astronomical alignments in sacred architecture are intimately tied to the development of the African Cattle Complex in the context of legitimizing power and securing cosmological harmony. Ultimately, fresh approaches found in archaeoastronomy are ideal for exploring how the sensory experience gained upon observing luminary rhythms in ancient skiescapes is reflected in the evolution of monumental architecture and ceremonialism in sites such as Nabta Playa, Hierakonpolis, Abydos, and Saqqara.



*Marla Szwec is a doctoral candidate in the Near & Middle Eastern Civilizations Department at the University of Toronto where she analyzes the intersection between sociology, authoritarianism, and the application of astronomical knowledge in ancient Egyptian material culture. Currently, her dissertation research focuses on exploring potential explanations for the emergence of innovations related to astronomical observation by investigating their practical and ideological dimensions as vehicles to further religious, social, or political ambitions in the changing cultic and mortuary landscapes of Thebes during the New Kingdom.*



## **Keynote presentation: The puzzle of the 'Salakhana' tomb.**

***Tony Leahy, Honorary Research Fellow in Classics, Ancient History, and Archaeology at the University of Birmingham.***

[m.a.leahy@bham.ac.uk](mailto:m.a.leahy@bham.ac.uk)

The 'Salakhana' tomb refers to the funerary monument hewn out of the mountain at Assiut for the Middle Kingdom nomarch Hapdjefa III. It was cleared by the Antiquities Service in the early 1920s but then largely forgotten for many decades. Terence Duquesne's 2009 book, *The Salakhana trove*, was the first substantial publication of its contents. Scholarly attention has focused on the many New Kingdom votive stelae dedicated to the local deity Wepwawet, which have provided a significant addition to the sources for popular religion, but the finds apparently also included a goodly number of Twenty-sixth Dynasty stelae and some demotic papyri. This paper considers possible explanations for the presence of this later material and the implications for the character of the Salakhana cache.



*Tony is an Honorary Research Fellow at the University of Birmingham with a particular interest in Egypt in the first millennium BC.*

## **Poster presentation: Wooden Canopic Boxes with *pr-nw* lid – Development of the lid construction till the end of the New Kingdom (and the practical use in working with object remains).**

***Antje Zygalski.***

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In the burial chamber of the tomb TT C.3 in Sheik Abd el-Qurna, discovered by the Belgian mission in 2012, more than thirty individuals have been buried between the 18<sup>th</sup> and the 20<sup>th</sup> Dynasty. The heavy looting of the tomb caused not only the destruction of the wooden objects but also explains the significant lack of object-elements. Handling thousands of wooden elements (planks, boards, laths etc.) and fragments of them (broken parts of planks etc.) with numerous origins (deposition furniture like tables and stools, container furniture like boxes and coffins, tools and so on) can be compared to solving several jigsaw puzzles where the resulting objects can just be expected, the amount of the specific objects is unknown and several pieces are missing. The key to solving this task was the detailed study of construction methods of the entirety of wooden tomb inventory and their development, beginning with the Middle Kingdom till the end of the New Kingdom.

Due to the central role of canopic boxes, they are found in almost every tomb - and therefore being statistically second to coffins. Related to canopic boxes with *pr-nw* lid in this poster three results focusing on the lids can be presented:

1. The shape of the middle part of the lid (between the end-walls) is changing over time and can be helpful for dating.
2. Within the change of the shape occurs a change in the construction method, which includes the amount and shape of the single elements used to produce these shapes.
3. By using these results several elements could be identified as belonging to two canopic boxes with *pr-nw* lid and the missing parts could be reconstructed.

(Excavation data: MANT-Project of the Université libre de Bruxelles; field director: Laurent Bavay)



*Antje's practical education began with the advanced vocational certificate of education in art-production techniques (special type of A-levels in Germany) and was followed by a three-year apprenticeship in the carpenter guild, and a three-year training in the professional academy for restorers of furniture and wooden objects. Based on that the scientific education was carried out by studying conservation of wooden objects (BA) and conservation sciences (MA). Currently the focus*

*includes art (and craft) technological research of ancient wooden objects, preventive conservation and teaching.*

# The Eton Myers Collection

Here at the University of Birmingham we are honoured to have a wide range of objects from ancient Egypt on loan to us courtesy of Eton College, known as the Eton Myers Collection of Egyptology.



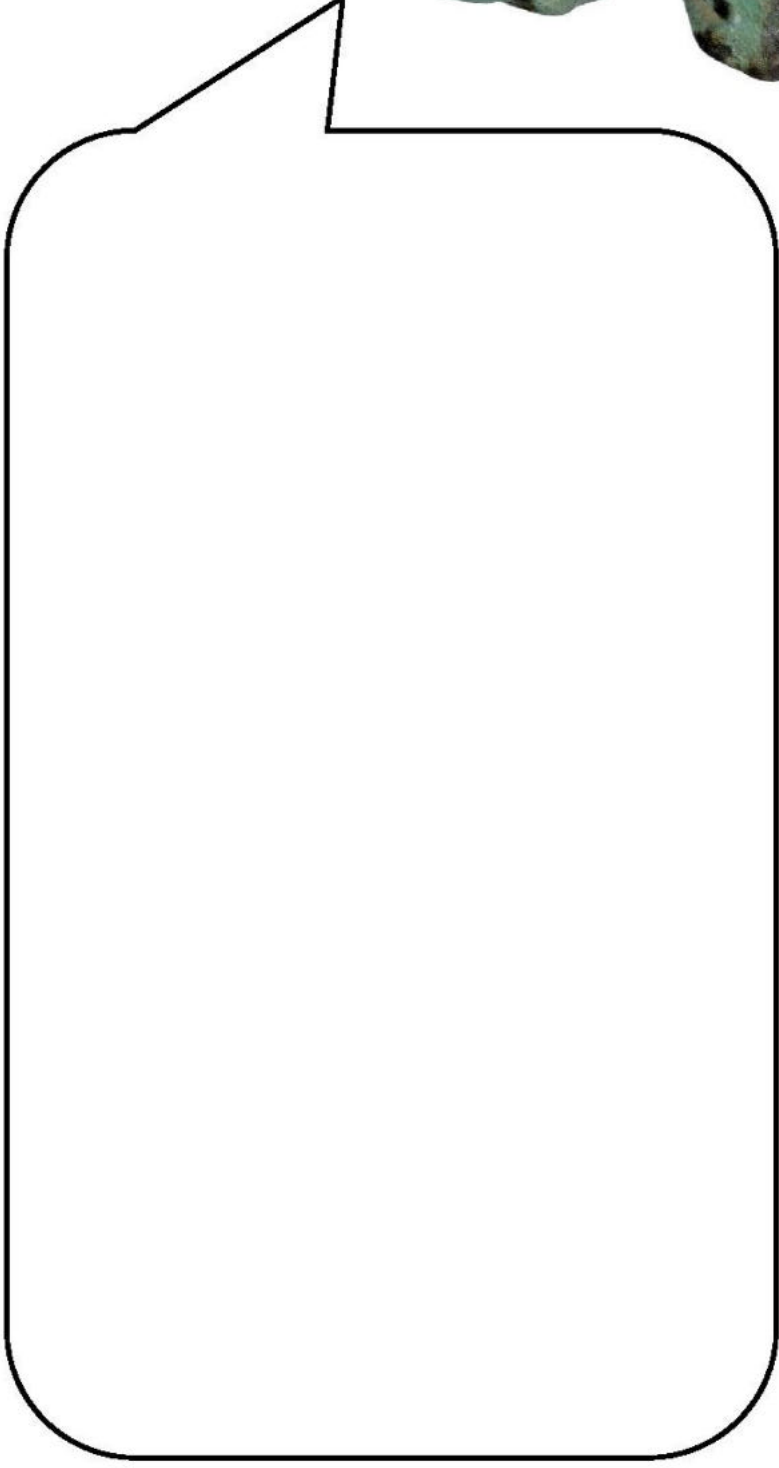
In 2011, a 15-year project started between the University of Birmingham, Eton College, and Johns Hopkins University in Baltimore. This project was designed to catalogue, research and digitise the objects and make this collection of fascinating objects more accessible to students, staff, and the public. Here in Birmingham, we have over 540 objects from the wider collection.



The collection includes a variety of artefacts dating from the Palaeolithic period, throughout Dynastic Egypt and into the Roman occupation of Egypt; we have over 100 stone tools, 100 amulets, and a wide range of pottery and figurines. The Eton Myers Collection is also known as one of the most renowned private collections of Egyptian faience.

Scan here for directions to the Orchard Learning Resources Centre, Selly Oak campus.





We've chosen this little baboon statuette as our mascot for the conference this year; keep an eye out for him when you visit the Eton Myers collection! If you have any feedback for our organisers, please fill in the speech bubble and share on social media, or hand in to one of the team.  
#BabTheBaboon

*Special  
Thanks to:*

PGR Activity Led Fund,  
University of Birmingham  
Graduate School

Egypt Exploration Society



To find out more about Birmingham Egyptology:

Website:

[https://more.bham.ac.uk/  
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