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EGYPTOLOGY

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Welcome to the 12th Annual

BIRMINGHAM EGYPTOLOGY SYMPOSIUM

Works in Progress in Egyptology

UNIVERSITY OF
BIRMINGHAM





Programme

9:00 **Registration**

9:30 **Opening Remarks**

9:40 **Petrie's Hoof-prints: Charting the influence of Flinders Petrie on the Interpretation of Predynastic Bovine Iconography using a case study at Naqada by Olivia Kirk (In-person)**

10:10 **Video Gaming in Classical Education: The Effect of Assassin's Creed on post-16 recruitment by Claire Johnston-Martin (Online)**

10:40 **Egypt in Buckinghamshire: An Exploration of Documentation relating to the Egyptian Collection at Discover Bucks Museum by Elizabeth Owen (In-person)**

11:10 **Break**

11:30 **The Iconography of Akhenaten: Between Tradition and Novelty by Klaudia Kornas (Online)**

12:00 **Yoda best, Dad: A Father-Son Tomb at Qubbet al-Hawā' and what it tells us by Reuben Hutchinson-Wong (In-person)**



Programme

- 12:30** **Iron Skies of Rain: An Astronomical Catalogue of the Pyramid Texts by Elizabeth Leaning (Online)**
- 13:00** **Lunch**
- 14:00** **(Re)thinking through the layers of ‘nested’ Middle Kingdom Coffins by Emily Whitehead (In-person)**
- 14:30** **When in Pain, Is the Body Perceived in a Different Way? A Psychological and Anthropological Approach to Body Language in New Kingdom Bereavement Scenes by Valentina Santini (Online)**
- 15:00** **Break**
- 15:10** **Khedebneithirtbinet II, a Queen of the 26th or 30th dynasty? by Stuart Silver (In-person)**
- 15:40** **"This Rather Meagre Substitute": The Use and Interpretation of Ancient Egyptian Heart Scarabs by Emma Stone (Online)**
- 16:10** **Poster Session Questions**
- 16:30** **Keynote - Funerary Landscape Archaeology: A Geographical Information System in Thebes by Ángeles Jiménez-Higueras**



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Housekeeping

There will be one twenty minute break, one ten minute break and a hour long break for lunch.

Tea, coffee, and a light lunch will be provided for those attending in person.

Each of the sessions is twenty minutes long, with ten minutes for questions (thirty minutes in total).

The chair will endeavour to keep speakers to time, but please do be patient if we experience any technical difficulties.

A gentle reminder to be kind and considerate to organisers, speakers, and other attendees, both online and in person.



Birmingham Egyptology brings together current students, alumni, and academics associated with the University of Birmingham who have an interested in ancient Egypt.



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Ángeles Jiménez-Higueras

Funerary Landscape Archaeology: A Geographical Information System in Thebes

Ángeles Jiménez-Higueras is “Ramón y Cajal” postdoctoral researcher at the Department of Prehistory and Archaeology of the University of Granada, where she got her degree in History in 2003, majoring in archaeology. Angie got her MA in 2008 and her PhD in 2016 in Egyptology at the University of Liverpool.

Angie is the PI of the research project “Study of the territory of Sheikh Abd el-Qurna (Luxor, Egypt): an analysis based on Landscape Archaeology” and the co-director of the “New Kingdom Scribe Project”. Angie has published two books *The Sacred Landscape of Dra Abu el-Naga during the New Kingdom. People Making Landscape Making People* (Brill), and *A Prosopographic Study of the New Kingdom Tomb Owners of Dra Abu el-Naga* (Archaeopress).

Angie’s fields of interest focus on Landscape Archaeology, the Theban necropolis during the New Kingdom, the distribution of the territory study applying GIS, and funerary architecture in ancient Egypt.

This contribution aims to present the main research lines about the Landscape Archaeology of the Theban necropolis, the distribution of its territory and the GIS analyses applied to the area. This study has been motivated by the idea that the location of a tomb was not subject to chance, but important criteria had to be present during the selection process of the locations where the tombs were going to be built. In order to do so, an analysis of the distribution of the territory and the creation of a GIS database are mandatory. The completion of



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these two objectives involves a prosopographic study of the owners of the tombs, a geological-geomorphological study, and a topographic survey to create the digital cartography. Once the GIS database is created, several tools will be applied to run visibility studies between the tombs in the research area, and the main funerary monuments of the Theban necropolis.

Thanks to the Landscape Archaeology approach, this contribution hopes to help reconstructing the palaeo-landscape of Dra Abu el-Naga, Sheikh Abd el-Qurna and the Theban necropolis. By highlighting the sacred aspect of the necropolis and its urbanism, a more rigorous image of the whole necropolis in terms of organisation and placement of the tombs is to be achieved.



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Olivia Kirk

Petrie's Hoof-prints: Charting the influence of Flinders Petrie on the interpretation of Predynastic Bovine Iconography using a case study at Naqada

Olivia began her academic journey at Birmingham in 2016, graduating in 2019 with a First-Class degree in Ancient History. She decided to continue her educational development at Birmingham and completed a MA in Antiquity: Classics and Ancient History achieving a Distinction. She is a current Doctoral Researcher at Birmingham.

This presentation builds upon my ongoing research titled "Petrie's Hoofprints: Charting the Influence of William Flinders Petrie on the Interpretation of Predynastic Bovine Iconography." The core of this study focuses on William Matthew Flinders Petrie, regarded as one of the most influential Egyptologists of the 19th and 20th centuries. My research aims to explore how individuals like Petrie have shaped modern understandings of Ancient Egyptian material culture. Specifically, this presentation examines a case study on Naqada to investigate this perspective further.

I will investigate the excavation history and artefact distribution at Naqada, a crucial site in Predynastic Egypt. My focus will be on bovine material, which will serve to illustrate how early archaeological biases have influenced contemporary interpretations and shaped our understanding of this material.



Claire Johnston-Martin

Video Gaming in Classical Education: The Effect of Assassin's Creed on post-16 recruitment

Claire Johnson-Martin is a PhD student at University of Wales Trinity St. David (UWTSD). She is currently researching the impact of the non-serious videogames, Assassin's Creed Origins & Odyssey, on recruitment into post-16 classical and digital heritage education, with a focus on the accuracy of the games and whether they can be used as learning experiences. Prior to this she graduated from Swansea University with a BA(hons) Egyptology & Ancient History and MA(hons) Ancient Egyptian Material Culture. For the last decade she has been teaching A level Ancient History & Classical Civilisation, where she has frequent lively and in depth discussions about the aforementioned videogames!

Current research into digital video games focused on ancient historical or classical context is relatively narrow in its scope; authors have tended to focus on "serious" games; those that have been specifically designed and created for educational purposes. Very little scholarly research has been conducted into "non-serious" and "triple A" games, or those designed mostly for entertainment purposes, despite these games having larger audiences. In regards specifically to the use of video games in heritage education, research historically and continues to focus on smaller games, serious games, or even the creation of games to fit specific briefs.

The aim of this thesis is to identify the effectiveness of non-serious digital games in both engagement and education in the field of



heritage, with a specific focus on the subject of ancient history; my research will add an in depth study of a relatively new form of media, and will cover two games that have not been as well documented – Assassin's Creed; Origins, and Assassin's Creed; Odyssey.

This research will explore a historiography of videogames currently discussed in academic study and the issues that have been researched up to the present day, including “popular antiquity” as a concept and the effect that it has on videogame media, as well as how we define and differentiate between “serious” and “non-serious” games. The paper will also analyse a combination of primary evidence from the period in a mixture of formats, and also carry out an analysis of primary research conducted in the format of interviews and periodic mixed questionnaires, in order to address whether the games can be useful in recruiting and educating students into the classical subjects. I hope to suggest that non-serious games have a role to play in digital heritage education, and to discover and suggest techniques in which this can be done, ultimately to help recruit students into the academic area in which I currently work. Ultimately this paper aims to contribute to the relatively new and advancing field of digital heritage and gaming in education.



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Elizabeth Owen

Egypt in Buckinghamshire: An Exploration of Documentation relating to the Egyptian Collection at Discover Bucks Museum

Elizabeth has recently completed an MA degree in 'Archaeology and Heritage of Egypt and the Near East' at University College London. She did her BA degree in 'Ancient History' at the University of Birmingham where she first became interested in Egyptology. While undertaking her MA degree, Elizabeth started volunteering at Discover Bucks Museum where she became familiar with their Egyptian collection. Her presentation is an outcome of a personal research project initiated by this voluntary work.

The Egyptian collection in Buckinghamshire's county museum is perhaps an illustrative example of how Egyptian cultural heritage has come to be dispersed in UK museums and institutions. There are approximately 400 ancient Egyptian objects in the collection today that were acquired in the early 20th century by Buckinghamshire Archaeological Society, who founded the museum. These are mainly the product of private donations, including from notable figures Lady Helen Constance Smyth, Professor Flinders Petrie, and Mrs Winifred Firth (née Hansard). A small number of objects were acquired from the collection of antiquities collector Dr John Lee. Additionally, ca. 100 objects were donated by the Egypt Exploration Fund in 1904 from their excavations at Deir el-Bahari, Sedment, Behnesa (Oxyrhynchus), and Ehnasya (Heracleopolis Magna) from 1903-04; these finds are the focus of this presentation.



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In addition to providing an overview of the different modes of acquisition, this presentation explores the different types of documentation available, from accessions registers to correspondence, that can be utilised to interpret the circumstances around which the objects came to be in Buckinghamshire's county museum. Using the EEF's 1904 donation as a central case study, I demonstrate the benefits and challenges of holistically bringing together documentation produced during excavations, finds distribution, and existence in museum collections . I propose that the circumstances surrounding the removal of cultural heritage from Egypt during this period are very much a part of UK museums' heritage today.

Key words: museums; documentation; collecting practices; archives; provenance research.



Klaudia Kornas

The Iconography of Akhenaten: Between Tradition and Novelty

Klaudia is a MA student at the Faculty of Archaeology at Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznan, specializing in Oriental and Classical Archaeology. They are currently working on their master's thesis. In addition, Klaudia volunteers at the National Museum in Poznan, where they have the opportunity to work with objects from the Egyptian Art collection.

Akhenaten's unusual body proportions overshadow the traditional elements of his iconography. The ruler, contrary to common beliefs in the older literature on the subject, does not distance himself from traditional solutions in the art field. Akhenaten refers to the iconography of the rulers of the Old Kingdom, the Middle Kingdom, as well as to the solutions introduced by his immediate predecessors — for example, his father, Amenhotep III. In relation to this, it seems necessary to distinguish traditional aspects into those functioning within the framework of long-term and short-term traditions.

As part of my paper, based on my master's thesis, I would like to present some elements that refer to tradition and those that are new in the way the ruler is depicted. These elements involve such aspects as composition, topic, scenery and attributes. The starting point for my considerations will be the Stela from Cairo (TR 10.11.26.4).



Reuben Hutchinson-Wong

Yoda best, Dad: A Father-Son Tomb at Qubbet al-Hawā' and what it tells us

Reuben is a second-year postgraduate researcher at the University of Birmingham. Before joining the University, they completed their master's at Waipapa Taumata Rau, University of Auckland in New Zealand. Their research predominantly focuses on practices of continued use of tombs as burial sites during the late Old through Middle Kingdoms.

Though in the late Old Kingdom (c.2278–2030 BCE) most tombs 'belonged' to one person, a few tombs across Egypt emerged where fathers and sons were intentionally interred together. This paper explores one such tomb, QH25/26, created over time for two local administrators Mekhu and Sabni and located at Qubbet al-Hawā', an elite cemetery in southern Egypt across from modern-day Aswan. Mekhu began creating this tomb before his untimely passing on expedition in Nubia, after which his son Sabni completed and then expanded the tomb for his own burial. Comparing this tomb with contemporary examples from around Egypt, including Djau-Shemai and Djau at Dayr al-Gebrawi, Niankhpepy the Black and Pepyankh the Black at Meir, and a series of sons buried in their father's tombs at Saqqara, this paper considers the role of identity for both men, in life and death. For the purposes of this paper, I consider identity as relational, emerging from the ongoing recombination of material and meaningful elements over time. However, a curious element of this tomb, not seen in other contemporary tombs, is the level of added burials of members of the local community inside and outside the tomb, which affects the analysis of Mekhu and Sabni's identities in the local context of the tomb.



Elizabeth Leaning

Iron Skies of Rain: An Astronomical Catalogue of the Pyramid Texts

Elizabeth Leaning is a PhD Candidate at the University of Auckland Waipapa Taumata Rau. She is an Egyptologist and archaeoastronomer, and her PhD investigates the presence of an astronomical corpus in Old Kingdom Egypt. She works in the interdisciplinary field of archaeoastronomy to examine how ancient Egyptians understood the night sky, and in her research engages with broader discussions about how academics can navigate pseudoscience, scientific elitism, and the difficulties in communicating indigenous knowledge within Western scientific frameworks. Her research interests also include reception studies and ancient Egyptian scientific practices as a whole.

Despite being known to Egyptology since the 1880s, and being among the most-studied texts in our discipline, very little thorough, interdisciplinary work has been done on the astronomy of the Pyramid Texts. Faulkner (1966) catalogued mentions of the king's relationship with the stars, Bradshaw (1990) examined the Imperishable stars, Krauss (1993) explored the vocabulary of stellar theology, Brady (2015) speculated as to the nature of Old Kingdom star-watching, and Maravelia (2018) reframed the Pyramid Texts' astronomy as reflecting complex ideas of space-time. However, outside of this, the astronomy of the Pyramid Texts remains largely uncatalogued.

This paper reflects a Work in Progress, the cataloguing of astronomical terms within the Pyramid Texts. It discusses three terms: xnd biA, nwH.w biA.w, and qbHw that have been identified as part of this cataloguing process as reflecting the astronomical understanding of



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the Old Kingdom. It considers how, when viewed as “technical terms”, these terms expand our understanding of ancient Egyptian astronomy beyond stellar concepts.

In the case of *xnd biA*, it suggests that this term indicates an understanding of meteors that reflects complex understandings of the nature of the sky. *nwH.w biA.w* likewise alludes to the understanding of meteor showers and their effects. Finally, I argue that *qbHw* is misconstrued as astronomical and is merely “atmospheric”. Overall, this paper aims to go some way towards broadening the “stellar” nature of the Pyramid Texts, suggesting that many more astronomical concepts beyond those relating to the stars are just as extant.



Emily Whitehead

(Re)thinking through the layers of ‘nested’ Middle Kingdom Coffins

Emily is a PhD Candidate in the Department of Art History, Emory University, Atlanta and the 2024-2027 David E. Finley Fellow at the Center for Advanced Study in the Visual Arts, National Gallery of Art, Washington DC. She received her undergraduate and masters degrees from the University of Auckland, New Zealand. Her PhD dissertation studies variation and innovation in coffins between the reigns of Senwosret I to Senwosret III (ca. 1961-1840 BCE) to foreground individual coffins and examine what they can tell us about the people who created and owned them.

Surrounding objects and the deceased in multiple layers was a practice found across a large swathe of Egyptian history. Coffins and sarcophagi from the Old Kingdom onwards have been found to be in multiples, one inside the other. They have often been compared to matryoshka dolls and are frequently termed ‘nested’ coffins. Recent work on coffins from New Kingdom and Third Intermediate Period has begun to push for exploring the function and nature of ‘nested’ coffins (Bettum, 2012, 2017, 2018; van Walsem, 2014). Alongside this, Christina Riggs’ *Unwrapping Ancient Egypt*, in taking an interdisciplinary approach to both the wrapping and unwrapping of Egyptian objects and human bodies by ancient and modern actors, has highlighted the need to reexamine the conceptualisations and interpretations of wrapping and layering across Egyptian material culture.

In the Middle Kingdom (c. 2030–1640 BCE), numerous deceased Egyptians were interred in multiple box coffins, often two—an inner and an outer—but occasionally three coffins. During the reigns of



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Senwosret I to Senwosret III, anthropoid inner coffins were introduced and placed inside outer box coffins. The nature and function of these two types of ‘nested’ coffins have been little theorised.

To bridge this gap, this presentation will explore two case studies of ‘nested’ coffins from Banī Ḥasan—one with two box coffins and one with an anthropoid coffin and a box coffin—through the lens of Deleuzian assemblage theory. This posthumanist, more-than-representational lens will allow for exploring the two sets of coffins as a collection of material and immaterial elements at multiple scales, in relationships with each other and larger assemblages. It will ask whether ‘nested’ is the most appropriate term for this phenomenon during the Middle Kingdom and explore the impact of the ideas of layering, wrapping, and encircling on the interpretation of these case studies.



Valentina Santini

When in Pain, Is the Body Perceived in a Different Way? A Psychological and Anthropological Approach to Body Language in New Kingdom Bereavement Scenes

Valentina is currently conducting her PhD in Egyptology at the University of Birmingham, with a research project focused on the analysis of New Kingdom bereavement scenes, from the standpoint of modern Psychology and Anthropology. She worked at the Museo Egizio, in Turin (Italy), whereas now she is currently working at CAMNES, a centre for archaeological studies based in Florence (Italy), where – inter alia – she is dealing with the dissemination of scientific and academic data to the wider public. She is one of the collaborators of the Egypopcult Project, has written various scientific papers and published books for the general audience.

Research in the fields of Psychology and Anthropology reveals a deep interconnection between the body and the mind, with their relationship becoming particularly evident during traumatic or highly stressful experiences. This correlation shows that mental suffering can be unconsciously reflected in the body, potentially resulting in issues like muscle tightness and rigidity. Such transformation of the body can often cause an involuntary contortion, which is clearly apparent in individuals who suffer a loss due to a considerable increase in their muscular tension. The analysis of this kind of body language presented by Psychology and Anthropology aligns with numerous representations of mourners found in New Kingdom bereavement iconography: starting from the end of the Eighteenth Dynasty (partly due to the impact of the Amarna Art), depictions of mourners increasingly illustrated profound despair, characterised by hands raised in anguish



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and faces wincing in pain.

This connection between gestures represented in New Kingdom iconography and authentic human behaviours in response to loss, as indicated by Psychology and Anthropology studies, reflects how the body responds when the mind suffers. Therefore, would it be possible to investigate not only the ways ancient Egyptians responded to loss, but also their experiences of death as individuals in mourning? Might examining body gestures through the lenses of Psychology and Anthropology provide insights into how New Kingdom people actually managed their personal grief?



Stuart Silver

Khedebneithirtbinet II, a queen of the 26th or 30th dynasty?

Stuart has long been interested in Egyptology and Egyptian + Near East languages, and specialises in Saite and Achaemenid Egypt. He has a Dip.HE with Distinction in Egyptology from the University of Glasgow, with his extended essay on the Egyptian rebellions during the first Persian Satrapy. He is currently doing an Ancient Cultures MSc (Part-Time) at the University of Glasgow. His dissertation will be concerning the spread of Amun across the Mediterranean after the Achaemenid invasion.

The titles of Khedebneithirtbinet II “daughter of the king, wife of the king” have led to her identification as one of two theoretical queens. She is regarded as either a daughter of Apries who married Amasis to help secure his legitimacy, or more usually, the wife of Nectanebo II and (probable) daughter of Teos.

Her mummy was found in Saqqara with minimal assemblage, in an apparently undecorated vault within a tomb made for two late 26th officials, both named Psamtik. Mariette first dated Khedebneithirtbinet based on the Psamtik burials, but after a later discovery of a Nectanebo II shabti, the only one allegedly ever found in context, the Khedebneithirtbinet burial was deemed intrusive and attributed to the 30th dynasty. As both queens are unattested elsewhere, this single (now missing) shabti is the only thing that differentiates her between the two eras.

This paper will look at the incomplete and demonstrably erroneous 19th Century reports and possible procedural problems, to try to rectify some of the confusing assumptions surrounding this Saqqara



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tomb and its occupants. The tomb's dating will be confirmed and the evidence examined to see if we can say if the Queen was buried intrusively later or not.



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Emma Stone

"This Rather Meagre Substitute": The Use and Interpretation of Ancient Egyptian Heart Scarabs

Emma is a PhD student at the University of Glasgow working to unravel the research (or lack thereof) surrounding ancient Egyptian amber from various New Kingdom burials. She is particularly interested in long-distance Bronze Age trade circulating throughout Europe and the Mediterranean. She holds an MSc qualification in Ancient Cultures (University of Glasgow), and a BA in Medieval Studies (University of Ottawa).

This presentation will outline some of my preliminary findings from my ongoing PhD research investigating appearances of amber-like resins throughout New Kingdom burials. Part of this research has involved several heart scarabs, such as two amber-like scarabs found in the tomb of Tutankhamun. These scarabs were amulets engraved with a heart spell from the Book of the Dead, typically placed on the sternum of the deceased. Because of the sheer amount of heart scarabs distributed around the world, along with research conducted by early 20th century archaeologists that is still cited to this day, archaeological interest has shifted away from these scarabs. As a result, key details about the materials used to construct these amulets, and the choice of spells on the bases, have been overlooked.

This research is trying to untangle the past approaches to heart scarab research and investigate the impact of these studies on Egyptian amber-like materials. Using over 900 scarabs from museums across the globe, this presentation will outline the various materials Egyptians used for these scarabs and how these differ from descriptions in past studies.



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While this is not a complete overview of every Egyptian heart scarab, it offers a substantial sample of how the Egyptians were interpreting their resources to reflect their spiritual beliefs as well as the neglect that the amber-like scarabs have faced in the overall research surrounding heart scarabs.