

University of Vienna - Institute for Egyptology

WORKSHOP

When entering uncharted territory...

an Archaeology of the Late Dynastic Period and beyond

Programme & Abstracts

31st of August - 1st of September 2022 (open to the public)
2nd of September 2022 (internal discussion)

University of Vienna - Campus AKH
Hof 1 / Hof 2
Alte Kapelle (2.8)

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PROGRAMME

Wednesday, 31st of August
(public)

A Modern Archaeology of the Late Period

- 10.00 - 10.15** *Opening address*
- 10.15 - 10.55** **Ladislav Bareš** | Charles University, Prague
Large Late Period shaft-tombs at Abusir
- 10.55 - 11.35** **David Aston** | Austrian Academy of Sciences, Vienna
Theban funerary archaeology in the Late Period
- 11.35 - 12.15** **Chiori Kitagawa** | Freie Universität, Berlin
Animal deposits in ancient Asyut
- 12.15 - 14.00** **Lunch Break**
- 14.00 - 14.40** **Katharina Stövesand** | German Archaeological Institute, Cairo
Late Period coffin decoration in Middle Egypt - common traditions and workshop practice
- 14.40 - 15.20** **Mélanie Flossman-Schütze** | Staatliches Museum Ägyptische Kunst München
Behind the scenes. Living, working and dying at the animal necropolis of Tuna el-Gebel
- 15.20 - 16.00** **Coffee Break**

- 16.00 - 16.40** **Esther Pons Mellado & Maie Mascort Roca** | National Archaeological Museum, Madrid
Saite and Persian tombs in the upper necropolis of the archaeological site of Oxyrhynchus (el-Babnasa), Egypt (seasons 2019-2021)
- 16.40 - 17.40** **E. Christiana Köhler** | University of Vienna
The Necropolis of el-Sheikh Fadl (Umm Raqaba) - an Introduction
- 17.45** **Reception**

Thursday, 1st of September
(public)

The University of Vienna Middle Egypt Project - El-Sheikh Fadl. Results.

- 09.30 - 10.10** **Delphine Driaux** | University of Vienna
Overview of six years (2016-2022) of archaeological work in the necropolis of el-Sheikh Fadl
- 10.10 - 10.50** **Herbert Böhm** | University of Vienna
Bare bones and odd mummies – zooarchaeological insights into the religious practice of the Anubis-cult at el-Sheikh Fadl (Kynopolis).
- 10.50 - 11.15** **Coffee Break**
- 11.15 - 11.45** **Victoria Asensi & Adel Mustafa** | Independent researcher & University of Vienna
Analytical methods and preliminary results on the wood artefacts el-Sheikh Fadl
- 11.45 - 12.15** **Amandine Mérat** | Independent researcher
“Textiles attached to animal remains and fake mummies from el-Sheikh Fadl, Area 2 – Tomb 2: introduction and first observations.”

- 12.15 - 14.00** **Lunch Break**
- 14.00 - 14.40** **E. Christiana Köhler** | University of Vienna
“Remains of the day – other artefacts recovered at el-Sheikh Fadl (Umm Raqaba)”
- 14.40 - 15.05** **Joachim F. Quack** | University of Heidelberg
Demotische Papyrusfragmente aus Scheikh Fadl
- 15.05 - 15.30** **Coffee Break**
- 15.30 - 15.55** **Bernhard Palme** | University of Vienna
Greek papyri from el-Sheikh Fadl
- 15.55 - 16.35** **Tawny Holm** | Pennsylvania State University
The Aramaic Inaros Inscription at el-Sheikh Fadl
- 19.00** **Dinner for the participants**

Friday, 2nd of September
(only for the speakers)

General Discussion

- 10.00 - 12.00** *General discussion*
- 12.00 - 12.30** *Concluding remarks*
- 12.30** **Lunch**

ABSTRACTS

Wednesday, 31st of August

A Modern Archaeology of the Late Period

Ladislav Bareš | Charles University, Prague

Large Late Period shaft-tombs at Abusir

The archaeological work in the Saite-Persian cemetery situated in the western part of the Abusir necropolis started in 1980. In previous years, three large shaft tombs, namely those of high dignitaries Udjahorresnet, Iufaa and Menekhibnekau, have been unearthed and thoroughly examined, together with two smaller structures of the same kind that belonged to Padihor and an anonymous owner respectively. Some years ago, excavation was started in the fourth large Late Period shaft tomb at Abusir, situated between the burial complex of Udjahorresnet and the unfinished pyramid of Dynasty 5 ruler Raneferef. In 2021, a large embalmers' cache was unearthed close to this structure, containing about 370 large storage jars and amphorae, as well as four empty canopic jars mentioning the name of Wahibre-mery-Neith, born to Irturut, possibly the owner of the tomb. The archaeological exploration of that structure was resumed in April 2022. In its shape and arrangement, this structure differs from the tombs of Iufaa and Menekhibnekau, resembling more the nearby sepulchre of Udjahorresnet and, in some way, also that of Pakap in Giza (the so-called "Campbell's tomb"), being perhaps an imitation of an Osiris tomb. Wahibre-mery-Neith was buried in a double sarcophagus directly at the bottom of a deep and rather narrow shaft, without any burial chamber. Although his burial (the basalt inner sarcophagus above all) was looted and badly damaged in Late Antiquity, a considerable part of his burial equipment was still found in situ, including – among other items – two canopic jars, 402 faience shabtis and a large limestone ostrakon inscribed with religious texts in black hieratic script. According to the inscriptions on his limestone outer sarcophagus, the most important title of Wahibre-mery-Neith was that of a Commander of the Foreign Mercenaries.

David Aston | Austrian Academy of Sciences, Vienna

Theban funerary archaeology in the Late Period

This talk will attempt to discuss what is known of Theban funerary practices during Dynasties 27 to 30 and will comprise two parts. Firstly it will concentrate on what is archaeologically visible in terms of extant monuments, such as where such cemeteries/individual burial places might be, and what might have constituted a typical burial assemblage for the period under review. The second part will attempt to use documentary evidence to trace how the necropolis was actually organised.

Chiori Kitagawa | Freie Universität, Berlin

Animal deposits in ancient Asyut

Animals had a prominent presence in ancient Egyptian religion. In ancient Asyut (Lykopolis in Greek), the gods Wepwawet, Anubis, Hathor, Thot and others were venerated. Animal tombs were connected with the cult of these gods. These tombs are located on the Gebel Asyut al-gharbi (the western mountain of Asyut) at the edge of the Western Desert. The mountain has been used for various activities since antiquity:

it has housed necropoleis for humans as well as animals, a temple, quarries, places of prayer and military facilities. It was also a destination of excursions and a place for schooling.

In connection with cult practices, mummified animals, osteofaunal remains, clay figurines, stelae and other artefacts were dedicated and found in and around the tombs on the mountain. Different animal taxa could be dotted there at different locations, which will be discussed together with handling those animals during the 2nd and 1st millennium BCE.

Katharina Stövesand | German Archaeological Institute, Cairo

Late Period coffin decoration in Middle Egypt - common traditions and workshop practice

Several Late Period cemeteries in Middle Egypt have produced wooden coffins of various types and shapes. However, due to their frequent lack of proper documentation, often simpler decoration and lesser state of preservation, they are underrepresented in coffin studies.

The presentation will focus on the coffins of the area of the Nile valley close to the Fayum and of several findspots in Middle Egypt, for example el-Hibe. Through comparison with coffins from the Memphite necropolis as well as from Southern Egypt (such as Thebes and Akhmim), patterns of manufacture and decoration emerge. This may hint at an inter-regional network of workshops sharing knowledge of coffin production and a common visual repertoire. Local workshops may be identified through a detailed analysis of coffins

from a single site, through their shape, iconography, layout and colour scheme, texts and palaeography, as well as manufacture techniques.

Thus, this paper aims not only to identify the coffins as local products but also to combine these analyses with the perspective of regional variability and to investigate the possibility that decoration patterns can be linked to specific areas of Egypt at a certain time.

Melanie Flossman-Schütze | Staatliches Museum Ägyptische Kunst
München

Behind the scenes. Living, working and dying at the animal necropolis of Tuna el-Gebel

The animal necropolis of Tuna el-Gebel, the „Ibiotapheion“, was very probably founded in the 26th Dynasty and underwent extensive structural and cult topographical expansions, especially with the 30th Dynasty and in the early Ptolemaic Period. Among other things, at the transition of the 30th Dynasty to the first Ptolemies, the main entrance to the underground galleries was built together with and in the middle of a pronaos temple and a massive enclosure wall was erected, which demarcated the sacred area from the settlement. This settlement housed members of the cult communities of the sacred ibises and baboons as numerous archaeological and papyrological sources make clear. The everyday life, work and death of these people has been the focus of the Joint Mission Cairo-Munich excavations for many years. The lecture will first examine the beginnings of the animal necropolis and, in general, the cult topography of Tuna el-Gebel and Hermopolis Magna in the Late Period. In the following, the structural and cultic extensions in the galleries in the Ptolemaic Period as well as in the settlement will be presented.

Esther Pons Mellado & Maie Mascort Roca | National Archaeological
Museum, Madrid

Saite and Persian tombs in the upper necropolis of the archaeological site of Oxyrhynchus (el-Bahnasa), Egypt (seasons 2019-2021)

The Archaeological Site of Oxyrhynchus (El-Bahnasa), Egypt, the ancient city of Per-Medjed, is located 190km South of Cairo. One of the most extensive and important areas of the archaeological site is the Upper Necropolis that covers a wide chronological framework: from the Saite period to the Christian-Byzantine period, including the Persian and Ptolemaic-Roman times (664 BC-7th century).

In the 2019 excavation season, a new sector (Sector 36) was opened in the aforementioned necropolis with archaeological work continuing during the years 2020-2021. The results have been very satisfactory, not only because of the number of Saite and Persian tombs located (10 tombs) but also because in many cases the graves still had mummified individuals, in

two cases inside the stone sarcophagi, with or without cartonnages, funeral nets, ushebtis, amulets, canopic jars with inscriptions and pottery vessels, one of them containing remains of bandages.

Among these latest finds, we must highlight the eight tombs from the Persian period (525-332 BC) that show an architectural typology and an unknown form of burial in this necropolis, and a Saite tomb totally closed and sealed.

E. Christiana Köhler | University of Vienna

The Necropolis of el-Sheikh Fadl (Umm Raqaba) - an Introduction

In late Pharaonic times, there was a regional center near the modern village of el-Sheikh Fadl in Middle Egypt where a flourishing urban community lived that engaged in interregional and long-distance trade and exchange, arts and crafts. This urban area also housed numerous individuals who were wealthy enough to afford themselves and their families monumental rock tombs for a proper Egyptian afterlife. Apart from the many sanctuaries mentioned in various historical sources, this place also comprised an important sanctuary for the god Anubis, which was considered so significant that large numbers of dogs were ritually offered, mummified and buried in the main cemetery at Umm Raqaba, to the east of el-Sheikh Fadl. This is why this area was later called Kynopolis, 'city of dogs'. While the name of this urban center has changed over time, in the late Pharaonic period it was probably called Hardai, 'Horus is here', in reference to yet another important deity that would have been worshipped here. This city and the neighboring town of Saka were capitals of 17th and 18th Upper Egyptian nomes.

And yet, despite its significance, this region has up until recently not received its due scientific investigation and there was next to no reliably dated archaeological evidence for it. What is even worse, the area, and especially its main necropolis at el-Sheikh Fadl, has been subject to intensive illicit diggings over many years and valuable archaeological information is already lost. In order to remedy this situation, the University of Vienna Middle Egypt Project has received the permission from the Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities in Egypt to engage in rescue excavations and a modern archaeological investigation that started in 2014. Surprisingly, the archaeological mission has discovered numerous ancient tombs that open up new insights into a time period of Pharaonic history that is also poorly investigated. While the period of occupation covers a long span of time, the Late Dynastic era of the 5th and 4th centuries BCE can currently be regarded as a phase of most intensive activity.

For the first time, an international and interdisciplinary team of archaeologists, Egyptologists, surveyors, conservators, physical anthropologists, archaeozoologists, archaeobotanists, textile experts, papyrologists and other specialists have now conducted most intensive archaeological research into this little-known area and time.* This paper will present an introductory summary of the first results.

(* the project is funded by the Austrian Science Fund (FWF, P 31809) and the University of Vienna)

Thursday, 1st of September

The University of Vienna Middle Egypt Project - El-Sheikh Fadl. Results.

Delphine Driaux | University of Vienna

Overview of six years (2016-2022) of archaeological work in the necropolis of el-Sheikh Fadl

The University of Vienna Middle Egypt Project has been conducting fieldwork at el-Sheikh Fadl – Umm Raqaba since 2014. Located about 70 km north of el-Minya, the site covers some 200 hectares and is naturally divided in four areas where ancient rock-cut tombs of various sizes and designs are located. The necropolis is known since the late 19th century and was primarily dated to the Ptolemaic and Roman periods, but prior to our work, it was never systematically excavated.

During the first seasons of work, the Austrian mission has surveyed and mapped the entire necropolis and recorded a large selection of rock-cut tomb structures. Since 2016, we have undertaken the full and systematic excavation of nearly forty tombs of different sizes and with different architectural features. The area yielded material of the Ptolemaic, Roman and later periods, which is what could be expected on the basis of previous research. Despite the poor conditions of preservation of the site that has been looted many times, we have been able to collect a significant amount of data that also suggests an earlier occupation (27th-30th dynasties, ca. 450-306 BCE), especially for many of the large-sized tombs.

This paper will present our work methodology, the challenges we have to face with such an archaeological site and some of our most recent discoveries and results.

Herbert Böhm | University of Vienna

Bare bones and odd mummies – zooarchaeological insights into the religious practice of the Anubis-cult at el-Sheikh Fadl (Kynopolis).

Animals were (and still are) incorporated into religious belief systems in manifold ways and functions. In any case, in Egyptian Late- to Graeco-Roman Periods, when animal cults proliferated, their significance became outstanding and unique in the religious history of humanity. As far as the records tell us, individual animals were deified and worshipped as physical representations of deities, while millions of their conspecifics were deposited as votive mummies in sometimes monumental building structures. This religious phenomenon raised increasing scientific interest during the last decades, since modern bioarchaeological

research widened our perspective significantly.

This talk will give an overview of the variability of the zooarchaeological find material of the site of el-Sheikh Fadl (Kynopolis), which was not only a necropolis of regional administrative centres but also the depositional place of animal mummies associated to a nearby Anubis sanctuary. The huge quantity of animal remains, deriving from mummy layers in primary contexts, provides a solid database for contextualizing the first results. These first evaluations should be complemented by integrating new ethological considerations to widen our perspective on possibly underlying principles of the everyday practice of the local Anubis-cult.

Victoria Asensi & Adel Mustafa | Independent researcher & University of Vienna

Analytical methods and preliminary results on the wood artefacts el-Sheikh Fadl

An initial assessment of the wooden materials is being conducted to establish the potentiality of these materials and the best way to proceed with this large corpus. In order to do this, wooden objects and fragments (e.g., from coffins, chests, and statuary) are assorted and selected according to the quality of the archaeological context, and subsequently identified. Suitable items are also selected for C14 analysis.

It is intended here to show how the selection and sampling of the whole and fragmentary artefacts is proceeding, and how samples are being prepared and studied at the Austrian mission's work facility at el-Sheikh Fadl in Middle Egypt.

The wood identification is carried out directly by examination of the cellular contents of the wood and by using a microscope. Following preparation of the samples, they are discoloured in order to allow for better visualisation of the anatomical features. In this paper, we will present the first results of our wood identification and discuss if these are consistent with materials at other sites or with museum objects of the same period.

Amandine Mérat | Independent researcher

Textiles attached to animal remains and fake mummies from el-Sheikh Fadl, Area 2 – Tomb 3: introduction and first observations.

During the period April 2nd – April 7th, 2022, the study of the textiles excavated since 2014 at Sheikh Fadl was undertaken. The objective of this short first season was to make a first survey of the material, its nature, amount and condition, in order to establish priorities and a possible time-line for its overall study spread over this season and the next. Priority this spring was given to the textiles attached to animal mummies excavated in Area 2 – Tomb 3, in 2017. Within the forty-nine mummified animal remains preserved, nineteen, considered as the most representative, were selected for the study. These consist of nine

mummies of puppies, three isolated mummified skulls of adult canids, three complete mummies of adult canids and four fake mummies. This paper aims to present here the first results and observations of this initial step in the ongoing overall study, with a special focus given to the main variations that were already noticed, in the different ways in which the animal bodies were prepared and wrapped for burial, and the fake mummies made.

E. Christiana Köhler | University of Vienna

Remains of the day – other artefacts recovered at el-Sheikh Fadl (Umm Raqaba)

During the excavations of the Austrian mission at el-Sheikh Fadl (Umm Raqaba), a wide range of artefacts were recovered from the heavily looted tombs. While those made of wood, textile and papyrus will be presented by the relevant specialists of these specific materials, this paper will mainly deal with the pottery and objects made of faience, clay, stone and other materials that once formed part of the funerary equipment in the tombs of the Late Dynastic and early Ptolemaic periods. While the material preservation is generally very good, these artefacts are highly fragmentary in most cases, which is due to the repeated looting and complex taphonomy at the site. Nevertheless, these fragments allow for valuable insights into the once rich furnishings of the tombs emphasizing the significance of el-Sheikh Fadl in the wider sociocultural and economic environment of Middle Egypt.

Joachim F. Quack | University of Heidelberg

Demotische Papyrusfragmente aus Scheikh Fadl

Bei den archäologischen Ausgrabungen in el-Sheikh Fadl - Umm Raqaba Area 3 sind mehrere demotische Papyrusfragmente gefunden worden. Nachdem diese entfaltet und stabilisiert worden sind, ergaben sie diverse lesbare Textfragmente. Der Vortrag wird einen Bericht über den Stand der Entzifferung und Auswertung geben.

Bernhard Palme | University of Vienna

Greek papyri from el-Sheikh Fadl

During the ongoing excavation in el-Sheikh Fadl, until now a total of 17 papyrus fragments with Greek script have come to light. In addition to seven very small fragments with minimal remains of the text, the others can be assigned to two different documents based on the size of the letters, the line spacing and palaeography. Due to the fragmentary state of preservation, no coherent text can be obtained, but it is clear that both documents

have documentary content and can be assigned to the Ptolemaic period. The presentation will introduce these Greek papyri.

Tawny Holm | Pennsylvania State University

The Aramaic Inaros Inscription at el-Sheikh Fadl

This paper offers a new analysis of the faded Aramaic inscription written on the walls of tomb A2 T1 at el-Sheikh Fadl, Egypt, which used to be dated to the fifth century BCE. Discovered by Sir Flinders Petrie in 1921-1922, the inscription was first published by André Lemaire in 1995 and reedited by Bezalel Porten and Ada Yardeni in 1999. As suggested independently by Günter Vittmann and Kim Ryholt, the text comprises the earliest narratives about the historical seventh-century hero Inaros of Athribis, who took part in a rebellion against the Assyrians, but is best known from the extensive epic cycle in Demotic from the Hellenistic and Roman periods. Building on previous work (Holm, *Aramaic Studies* 5, 2007) and on a new investigation into the tomb and its inscription under the auspices of the University of Vienna Middle Egypt Project directed by Christiana Köhler, the author reassesses key points in the fragmentary narrative and addresses some unique features of its Aramaic. Work at the tomb in 2016-2017 supervised by Delphine Driaux uncovered human remains and artifacts, and the cleaning of the walls in 2016 by Richard Jaeschke revealed more iconography and additional Aramaic inscriptional material (Köhler et al., *Egypt and Levant* 28, 2018). The new evidence suggests that the tomb was in use at a later date than proposed in earlier publications, and that the Aramaic inscription is probably from the early 4th century BCE. Moreover, not only does the Inaros tradition in Aramaic include some of the main characters of the later epic cycle, but a new reading of the Aramaic finds the first mention of Inaros' heroic armor or weaponry, which, in the Demotic narratives, become prizes of contention between the Inarids and other noble families after Inaros' death.