

# RETHINKING BORDERS: INTERACTION IN THE ANCIENT EGYPTIAN PERIPHERY

25TH JUNE 2019

HAUPTGEBÄUDE DER UNIVERSITÄT ZU KÖLN,  
NEUER SENATSSAAL,  
ALBERTUS-MAGNUS-PLATZ

Nevertheless, neither of the two traditions have looked closely into the material culture. They have mostly limited the discussion to selected contexts. One of the practices closely tied to personal identity is bodily care through the use of cosmetic substances and utensils. Over 1000 objects such as kohl-pots, kohl-tubes, kohl-sticks, cosmetic spoons, razors, tweezers, wig tools, combs and mirrors are known from Egypt, the Levant and Nubia during the New Kingdom. These objects were rarely discussed regarding the background and identities of their users. Beauty as a form of symbolic capital can be used to differentiate both inter- and intra- groups. Some members of different groups can share more between themselves than with other members of their individual group. Based on the use of cosmetic utensils in New Kingdom Egypt and beyond its borders, this paper will concentrate on the role of beauty ideals in the construction and maintenance of inter- and intra-group similarities and differences.

David Sabel, M.A.  
Wissenschaftlicher Mitarbeiter  
Universität Bonn

*Face to Face. Observations on interactions between Egyptian expeditions and local Canaanites in rock-art at Serabit el Chadim, SW- Sinai*

Serabit el Chadim was the operative base of the Egyptian expeditions for raw materials in the Middle and New Kingdom. At this place in the cultural and geographical periphery, Egyptians and local Bedouins met and agreed on a peaceful system of cooperation on equal footing, which apparently not only offered economic advantages for both sides, but was also the motor for socio-cultural exchange and adaptation, which ultimately resulted in no less than the invention of the alphabetic script. This talk will examine the traces of these interactions in rock art and inscriptions around Serabit by analyzing the features with the historico-cultural questions in mind.

## PROGRAMME

Introduction Prof. Dr. Richard Bußmann

13:30 - 15:15 Dr. Frank Förster (Ägyptisches Museum Bonn)  
“Sheikh Muftah People, ‘Water Mountain’ Men, the Ruler of Demi-ii, and the Mysterious Land of Tekhebet(en): Evidence of Egyptian Interaction with ‘Libyans’ in the Dakhla Region and Beyond”

Cristina Alù, M.A. (Pisa - Köln )  
“Theorizing Models of Cultural Interaction in Mining Frontier regions of Ancient Egypt”

Jana Eger, M.A. (Münster)  
“News from the West. The new survey project in Northern Kordofan (Sudan) of the University of Münster”

Coffee-break

15:45 - 17:00 Dr. Uroš Matić (Münster)  
“Beauty beyond Borders: New Kingdom Egyptian Cosmetic Utensils outside of Egypt”

David Sabel, M.A. (Bonn)  
“Face to Face. Observations on Interactions between Egyptian Expeditions and Local Canaanites in Rock-art at Serabit el Chadim, SW- Sinai”



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## ABSTRACTS

Cristina Alù, M.A.

PhD student - University of Pisa, Universität zu Köln

### *Theorizing models of cultural interaction in mining frontier regions of ancient Egypt*

The Eastern desert of Egypt and the Sinai Peninsula were not only important sources of raw materials but also actual crossroads between the Nile Valley and more peripheral regions. These marginal areas were inhabited by semi-nomadic populations and acted as negotiation centres for the different ethnic and social communities pursuing their own interests for the mines exploitation. As has been demonstrated by archaeological investigations, epigraphic evidence and material culture analysis, the members of the Pharaonic mining expeditions worked side by side with local communities. The combined sources reveal a complex reality, in which “invisible actors” like non-sedentary native groups (e.g. Nubians and Canaanites) played a consistent role in the creation and spreading of innovation and goods. The aim of the talk is to propose a theoretical framework fitting the social and cultural phenomena underway in Wadi el-Hudi and Serabit el-Khadim mining sites, taken into account as case studies.

Jana Eger, M.A.

Wissenschaftliche Mitarbeiterin

InterLINK-Project

WWU Münster - Institut für Ägyptologie & Koptologie

### *News from the West. The new survey project in Northern Kordofan (Sudan) of the University of Münster*

This paper will present the first results of the new survey project of the University of Münster labeled “Interregional Linkage Investigations in Northern Kordofan”, short “InterLINK”. The research aim of the project is the investigation of the Jebel al-Ain region (roughly 280 km away from the Nile valley) in the Sudanese western desert as a contact zone between the Sahel cultures and the Nile valley. The focus of this presentation is the medieval Nubian period, because (as shown by the first results) the Makurian kingdom was not only established in the Nile valley region, but also along some remote and marginal areas.

Dr. Frank Förster

Kurator des Ägyptischen Museums der Universität Bonn

### *Sheikh Muftah people, 'water mountain' men, the ruler of Demi-ii, and the mysterious land of Tekhebet(en): evidence of Egyptian interaction with 'Libyans' in the Dakhla region and beyond*

Summarizing results of long-term archaeological work conducted by various projects both within and beyond the Dakhla Oasis in Egypt's Western Desert, this paper will focus on archaeological, pictorial and epigraphic evidence from Early Dynastic to Middle Kingdom times, which sheds light on culture contact and interaction between Egyptians and 'Libyan' groups in this region. Dakhla as a hub and most south-westerly outpost of Pharaonic civilization played a major role in these contacts, even before its firm colonisation in the late Old Kingdom. Hunting of desert game, procurement of raw materials, and the establishment of trade relations to distant regions in sub-Saharan Africa can be identified as the main motives for such contact and interaction with indigenous (nomadic) people. Suggesting a collaborative nature of the latter, at least at times, this evidence challenges the traditional, oversimplifying view of 'the Libyans' (Tjemehu/Tjehenu) as one of the archenemies of the ancient Egyptians, a view that is mainly based on highly ideological representations in the Egyptian records from the Nile Valley.

Dr. Uroš Matić

Wissenschaftlicher Mitarbeiter

WWU Münster - Institut für Ägyptologie & Koptologie

### *Beauty beyond Borders: New Kingdom Egyptian Cosmetic Utensils outside of Egypt*

During the New Kingdom, the dominion of the Egyptian state extended considerably both in and outside of the Nile valley. Egyptian presence is to a various degree attested in both the Levant in the north and Nubia in the south. Whereas in the Levant the presence of Egyptians was mostly of military nature, several temple-towns were built in Nubia which did not have functions of military bases, although they could have stationed soldiers and the police. In both regions Egyptians of various social backgrounds interacted with local population of various local social backgrounds. Whereas earlier studies of such interactions privileged the Egyptian perspective and opted for gradual acculturation of the locals, recent studies, influenced by postcolonial theory and its echoes in archaeological theory, have concentrated on local perspectives and argued for the hybrid nature of social encounters and identities.