

# Abstracts: Excavating the Extra-Ordinary

Challenges and merits of working with small finds

8–9 April 2019

*IMPULSE:* BETTINA BADER (OREA Institute, Austrian Academy of Sciences, Vienna)

## **From Knobbly bits to complete vessels – information contained in finds made of clay**

Pottery represents the largest find group in almost all excavations in Egypt. Whilst not every context type can and should be treated in the same way, each of them provides data and insight into the history of the site under scrutiny. Besides dating also typology and functional issues can be highlighted.

Even very broken material in surface contexts informs about the periods in which activities took place, because the general sequence of pottery development is quite well researched, so that at the very least a general date can usually be proposed. This is not to say that no more advances and refinement can be achieved or that new research is superfluous in the light of advances in research method and technology. The practice of dating by parallels from other sites is to a certain extent problematic especially in transitional periods because an absolutely uniform time horizon for certain pottery types seems to be the exception rather than the rule as well as total conformity in technology as well as in typology.

The paper focusses on methodology in processing, data collection and ways to tease out information of the smallest pieces of pottery including material from drill cores. Last but not least the controversial topic of discarding material will also be discussed.

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PATRYK CHUDZIK (Polish Centre of Mediterranean Archaeology, University of Warsaw)

## **An extra-ordinary story hidden in the ordinary dump. Challenges of working in the Middle Kingdom tomb of Khety at Thebes**

The Chancellor Khety was one of the most prominent high official in the court of Nebhepetra Mentuhotep II. His tomb is located near the royal mortuary complex at Deir el-Bahari, in the area that we call currently the North Asasif. After four thousand years the tomb of Khety was discovered by Herbert E. Winlock from the Metropolitan Museum of Art. His excavations on that area have led to the discovery of the Middle Kingdom funerary equipment elements and hundreds of beautifully decorated fragments of a fine white limestone blocks.

Current works of the Polish Mission brought to light new evidences of Khety's extremely important position at the royal court. His tomb decoration represents traditional, early Theban style and innovation motives of the reunited Middle Kingdom Egypt. During Winlock's excavations a long dump was left by his workers on the tomb courtyard. The recent re-clearance has led to the discovery of previous exploration methods, but first of all to reconstruction of the steps of using and destruction of the tomb. Among the debris a large amount of decorated limestone blocks from different parts of the tomb main corridor, funerary equipment dated to the Middle Kingdom and later periods has been revealed. But why Winlock's workers left so many beautiful and important objects? The answer to this question is hidden in a completely different place.

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*IMPULSE:* PAOLO DEL VESCO (Museo Egizio, Turin)

## **Excavating and curating “disturbed” contexts**

Since the 1950s archaeology witnessed a constant and exponential increase in the number of collected data and artefacts, which have been growingly calling for long-term and multi-disciplinary collaborative projects. The extraordinary expansion in available data did not always correspond, especially within Egyptian

archaeology, to a comparable advance in context recording techniques and post-excavation or museum-based research methods. Drawing on first-hand experience of archaeological fieldwork and of curatorship within an Egyptian collection, the paper will discuss the huge potential so often intrinsic to “problematic” objects or contexts as well as to large collections of fragmentary artefacts, while stressing the relevance of comparative approaches that address absence as much as diversity. The paper will also argue for a shift of perspective on “disturbed” contexts that allows for a more “positive” and fruitful approach to their complexity.

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*IMPULSE:* HENNING FRANZMEIER (Roemer- und Pelizaeus-Museum Hildesheim/Humboldt University Berlin)

**“...half a loaf is better than no bread”<sup>1</sup>  
On the fragmentary nature of early archaeological publications and their utilisation in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century**

W.M.F. Petrie is without doubt one of the most influential figures in late 19<sup>th</sup>/early 20<sup>th</sup> century Egyptology, especially if it comes to archaeology. His aim was to prepare a monograph on any excavation, ideally within one year. This led to a great number of publications, most of which are relatively brief, lacking substantial information from a modern point of view. This approach also holds true for other early scholars, some of which were disciples of Petrie.

The paper wants to take a closer look at the problems arising out of the briefness of the publication for new research into these sites excavated long time ago. What did Petrie include in the publications and what did he not include? How did he deal with very fragmented evidence, such as heavily disturbed tombs? As will be shown, the concentration on the presumed important, was already anticipated during the excavation and is visible in the archaeological

process itself and the preserved documentation such as tomb cards and notebooks.

The excavations at the site of Sedment in the winter 1920/21 will be used as a case study to highlight on the one hand the practical problems for any modern scholar undertaking a reassessment of an old excavation, being connected to the fragmentary nature of the publication, the already biased documentation and the often heavily disturbed archaeological contexts. On the other hand, potential solutions and the great potential, connected to a reexamination of archaeological material excavated in the earlier days of Egyptology will be demonstrated.

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<sup>1</sup> From the preface of W.M.F. Petrie's 1886 publication of Naukratis (Naukratis I).

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CRISTINA GHIRINGHELLO (University of Turin)/MARCELLA TRAPANI (Soprintendenza Archeologia Belle Arti e Paesaggio di Torino)

**Bone and ivory carvings preserved in the Museo Egizio in Turin – Interdisciplinary approach**

Object of study is a corpus of 150 bone and ivory unpublished objects (objects carved in the round, appliques with figurative and vegetal reliefs, everyday objects, unfinished objects, raw material), dating between the Roman and early Islamic period, preserved at the Museo Egizio in Turin. Most of the finds come from the Evaristo Breccia excavation at El-Ashmunein (1903-1904); moreover there are objects bought by Ernesto Schiaparelli in Egypt at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. In an attempt to obtain as much information as possible, in particular from the objects found at El-Ashmunein, an interdisciplinary approach has been adopted along with the traditional typological-stilistic analysis.

*Methods and results:*

- Reconstruction of the excavation context of which only short reports are known

- Typological, iconographic and stylistic analysis, dating: cultural contextualization of the objects and iconographic comparison
- Physical analysis of the material aimed at:
  - Recognizing: some objects classified as “ivories”, after careful examination were proven to be made of bone
  - Reconstruction of the craftsmen *modus operandi*: recognizing the selection criteria of the material according to shape of the objects
  - Analysis of the manufacturing evidences to recognize the tools used

The comparison between the objects found in the area involved in the Breccia excavation, in particular the figurative ones, and the materials from sites excavated in recent years with stratigraphical method, have allowed to remedy the shortage of data regarding the context where these objects were found and to reconstruct the stratigraphical phases of the site: a habitation quarter with levels from the Hellenistic, Roman and Byzantine period, on which an Muslim cemetery was later established. A stratigraphy therefore similar to the one found in some sites in Alexandria, which have returned very similar materials.

Moreover the discovery of unfinished plaques and half-product bones, suggests the presence at El-Ashmunein of bone/ivory carving ateliers, thus confirming the vitality of manufacturing of such materials in provincial towns. Activity that had often been considered a prerogative only of the Alexandria workshops.

Therefore the approach adopted for these “forgotten” materials has allowed to broaden our knowledge about the methods of processing objects and their discovery context.

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CHARLOTTE HUNKELER (University of Basel)

### **A Ramesside coffin ensemble: what information can be gained from fragmented and incomplete material?**

TT 95 is a New Kingdom elite tomb, located at Sheikh Abd’el-Qurna in the Theban necropolis. The rock-cut tomb was built for Mery, a high priest of Amun, and his mother Hunay, royal nurse of Amenhotep II. Not long after the construction of the burial complex and its original sepulchres, the tomb began to be reused. Consecutive reuse took place at least until the beginning of the Late Period, with an increase of burials during the 25<sup>th</sup> Dynasty. Unfortunately, like many other tombs in this necropolis, TT 95 was looted on numerous occasions. During the looting activities, objects were destroyed, spread through both substructures as well as the tomb chapel, or had even completely been removed from the tomb.

Besides fragments of various object categories, two thousand wooden as well as several hundred cartonnage fragments came to light. Since spring 2013, I have been documenting and studying all fragments belonging to wooden coffins, chests, and mummy-masks. Grouping of objects was achieved through observation of the material, manufacture, iconography, and epigraphy. Ideally, this work was supported by wood specialists and conservators.

In this paper, I focus on fragments belonging to a coffin ensemble dating to the Ramesside Period. It consists of a two-piece open-work mummy-board and an inner wooden coffin. Only about 10 per cent of the ensemble is preserved and its fragments were distributed in all three structures of the tomb. Furthermore, the ensemble, consisting of different materials, will function as an example to demonstrate all the individual steps taken during the research and what can be reached by studying very fragmented and incomplete material.

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JADWIGA IWASZCZUK (Polish Academy of Sciences, Warsaw)

### **Small find – big challenge: the false-door of Thutmose I from his temple at Gurna**

During the season 2009-2010 the Polish-Egyptian Archaeological and Conservation Mission at the Temple of Hatshepsut at Deir el-Bahari started work on very fragmented blocks coming from the temple of Thutmose I, that were re-discovered in the tomb MMA 828 in Thebes. The edifice had been excavated by Dr. Abu el-Ayun Barakat in 1970s and published in two short reports. Among the remains of the temple, more than 150 fragments of stones decorated in sunken relief and painted red with brown dots to imitate granite were found. All these fragments belong to the false door of Thutmose I, as it is attested by the decoration, as well as cartouches of this king.

The aim of this paper is a theoretical reconstruction of the false door and an interpretation of its meaning in connection with another false door of the same king, stored in the Louvre, that once constituted a part of the decoration of the offering chapel of Thutmose I in the temple of Hatshepsut at Deir el-Bahari.

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CLARA JEUTHE (German Archaeological Institute Cairo)

### **Objects in space – spatial analyses at Elephantine and Ayn Asil**

Both settlement excavations at Elephantine Island/Aswan (DAI) and Ayn Asil/ Dakhla Oasis (IFAO) offer a wide variety of finds. This project focuses on selected and presumably multifunctional areas within the settlements. Spatial analyses and pattern of distributions should help to understand differences and similarities within an individual settlement. The intra-site comparison outlines specific regional strategies but provides also first indication for possible all-over Egyptian concepts. With most findings being different tools and “insignificant”

daily-life objects, aspects such as raw material access and selection, distribution and supply by the authorities and secondary/re-use (i.e. the life-circle of an object) are among the main lines of research. The relationship of features and contexts play an important role. Therefore, the questions targeted by this workshop are of uttermost interest, in particular the understanding of the contexts and if objects are truly related with the room/building function. This applies especially to the older excavation, for which the documentation not allows provide clear indications of a find situation. In addition, archaeometric studies (mainly use wear analyses) provide a different angle of functional settlement analyses.

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CHIORI KITAGAWA (Johannes Gutenberg-University, Mainz)/SILVIA PRELL (OREA Institute, Austrian Academy of Sciences, Vienna)

### **The bone workshop of the armoury of the chariotry of Ramesses II in Qantir-Piramesse**

During the excavations of site Q I in the 1980ies by the Hildesheim Mission at Qantir-Piramesse quite an amount of stone tools were found within structures that turned out to be part of a much larger workshop complex. One part of the architectural remains can be associated with the chariotry stationed in the capital of Ramesses' II in the Eastern Delta of Egypt. The tools found here belong to a highly specialized establishment located within the palatial district and most likely under direct palatial control.

The distribution of tools itself did not help very much with the identification of the production branches. Together with associated finds, however, it was possible to observe the *chaîne opératoire* of a bone workshop, processing from raw materials to end-products. The majority of the worked bones was debitage, followed by half-finished artefacts and finished artefacts, including bone points in small numbers. Functions of bone points could have been diverse; pins, awls, drills, scribal stylus, cosmetic

tools and needles are possibilities, but they would also have been made for arrowheads.

Only one type of stone tool found at site Q I, can be tied to a special function – tools for smoothing and polishing bone points. These are made of either steatite or phyllite; the latter is a material that is not documented elsewhere in Egypt for any kind of object.

A. Tillmann, who published the lithics of site Q I, suggested that there was a wood workshop connected with the bone workshop. Complete bows and arrows could have been produced here.

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ROBERT KUHN (Ägyptisches Museum und Papyrussammlung Berlin)

### **More than 20.700 fragments of stone... The convolute of stone vessels from the tomb of king Dewen at Abydos**

Stone vessels can be found in large quantities in royal tombs and those of the highest elite during the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> Dynasty. An example of this is the convolute of more than 20.700 fragments of vessels found during the excavations of the German Archaeological Institute inside and around the tomb of King Dewen at Abydos. Due to the problematic history of the site, the assignment of these fragments to this very tomb is sophisticated. In case of the Dewen-tomb, traces of secondary burning of the objects may help in this matter. The second firing process led to a discoloration of the fragments and even to mineralogical alterations. Therefore it is sometimes difficult to determine the geological mineral or stone with precisely. This is of course a problem since the assignment is the basis for important economic questions connected to transportation, trade networks etc. Even though many resources of stones in Egypt are known, yet almost no resources of the Pre- and Early Dynastic mining can be ascertained.

When working with the fragments themselves the biggest problem concerning the assignment of the vessels is that the majority of the convolute represents non-diagnostic fragments. The designation of the diagnostic material is also problematic as well. The fragments are small and hand-made, which causes differences even within the same vessel. Therefore, it was decided to work with a slightly smaller and rougher corpus of forms. In the past 100 years many different typological studies have been performed – starting with W. M. Flinders Petrie. However, working with these typologies is very difficult, as they usually lack a clear definition of the forms, e. g. especially for the open forms such as platters, plates, bowls and cups. To avoid this problem, the typology for pottery based on the vessel-index introduced by Holthoer is to be preferred.

In addition to typological aspects, the technical questions of the manufacturing process play an important role. Since only very few workshops and store rooms have been archaeologically discovered, most of the information can be obtained by studying the material of the early Dynastic stone vessel itself.

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VERA MÜLLER (OREA Institute, Austrian Academy of Sciences, Vienna)

### **Re-excavating re-excavated materials – A case study from the royal necropolis of the Early Dynastic Period at Umm el- Qaab/Abydos**

The royal cemetery at Umm el-Qaab/Abydos has not only been looted during several periods in Ancient and Modern History, but was also the target of several excavators since the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. So, for instance, the tomb of Den was excavated by at least four different missions before the German Archaeological Institute started her work at this cemetery in 1977. Each team deposited the dump in the diverse directions of the tombs and with it the majority of the former tomb equipment that was meanwhile broken into small bits and pieces. In

addition, large amounts of these fragmented material was distributed to different museums around the globe.

It is rather challenging to re-collect the different fragments belonging to the same object. Without direct joins it is in many cases next to impossible to decide if the fragments once belonged together or if they represent a variety of similar objects. And if the fragments are too small it is rather difficult to grasp to which object it might have once belonged and how it actually might have looked like. This is especially difficult for objects which are singular and otherwise not attested in other tombs of the period.

A further challenge is caused by the replicated spread of the dumps in all directions during the different lootings, excavations and other activities in the cemetery. These procedures caused a mixing of the material from different tombs. For extraordinary pieces a re-assignment is quite easy but most of the tomb equipment consists mass produced objects; this holds especially true for pottery and stone vessels.

Furthermore, the question of heirlooms should be addressed in this context as well. Although closed contexts in this cemetery are absolutely exceptional, we have some clear cases of heirlooms.

And finally, it is not always easy to differ former tomb equipment from offerings deposited in this specific cemetery in the course of the Osiris cult, especially concerning so-called small finds.

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*IMPULSE:* MARTIN ODLER (Charles University, Prague)

### **On computers, typewriters and small metal finds**

The first part of the talk is aimed at the positive outcome of my study of small metal objects. I have had an opportunity to re-examine many unpublished copper finds during the writing of the book *Old Kingdom Copper Tools and Model*

*Tools* and afterwards. The slowly built expertise has enabled me to reassess some of the finds and create a meaningful explanatory framework for Old Kingdom copper model tools based on the iconographic, textual and archaeological sources. The typological study has confirmed earlier suspicions concerning the determination of full-size tools and their models. A “grey” zone of an intermediate size between these two categories raises questions of what was and what was not a model. Moreover, fragments of full-size tools can be identified among fragmented artefacts. I would strongly recommend preserving even tiny bits of objects until they can be seen and analysed by a specialist.

In the second part of the talk, I would like to focus on a structured presentation of data and on data analysis using available proprietary software or open source software such as R. Well into the new millennium, many scholars in the humanities still use computers only as typewriters. The unfortunate result of the present state of data formatting is that in any attempt to collect, compare and analyse data, a lot of precious time is spent to accommodate the data to the desired structure. Within this process, moreover, many data points must be left out because of incompleteness. The possibilities of data structuring and subsequent analysis go deeper and further. Instead of just looking for parallels, we could properly analyse statistical data and discover the structures that are “hidden” behind the objects.

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SILVIA PRELL (OREA Institute, Austrian Academy of Sciences, Vienna)/LORENZ RAHMSTORF (Georg-August-University, Goettingen)

### **The value of weights – what they can tell us about economic changes and changes of power**

Balance weights have not received much attention within the archaeology of Ancient Egypt. Weights dating from Egypt’s Middle Kingdom are mainly flat and rectangular; the

common unit is called *dbn* and weighs, as already in the Old Kingdom, c. 13–14 grams. The metrological system changed in the New Kingdom to a *dbn* weighing c. 90–95 grams, subdivided into ten *qdt*. But not only the weighing system but also shape and material was subject to change. Weights dating to the New Kingdom are often ‘sphendonoids’ (sling-bullets), sometimes also duck-shaped, and frequently consist of dark iron oxide like hematite as distinctive material, a material not used in Egypt for weights before the Second Intermediate Period. As such shapes and material were used for weights in Syria and Mesopotamia since the Early Bronze Age, it is a likely hypothesis that the fundamental change in Egypt can be linked to the rule of the so-called Hyksos kings during the Second Intermediate Period. This assumption is further supported by the fact that the *dbn* of the New Kingdom, divided by twelve, corresponds with the ‘Syrian shekel’ of ca. 9–9.5 g. This weight unit was widely used in the eastern Mediterranean (cf. the weights from the shipwreck of Uluburun) and facilitated international trade in the Late Bronze Age. Excavations in Tell el-Dab‘a/Avaris, the ancient capital of the Hyksos kings, located in the Eastern Delta, produced about 50 weights dating to the Second Intermediate Period and the Early New Kingdom. They are made of iron oxide, are often sphendonoids and confirm the use of shekel weighing system, both ‘Syrian’ and ‘Mesopotamian’ (ca. 8.1–8.5 grams). One assemblage deriving from a richly furnished tomb dating to the late Hyksos period (stratum D/3, Middle Bronze Age IIB-C) is in this respect of special interest, as it included two sets of weights. This findings from Tell el-Dab‘a contribute to the understanding of the time of the Hyksos as a period in which many innovations reached Egypt from the east, but these consist not only of tools for warfare (e.g. chariot, composite bow), but also of tools for trade.

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JOHANNA SIGL (German Archaeological Institute, Cairo)/PETER KOPP (German Archaeological Institute, Cairo)/CLAIRE MALLESON (American University Beirut)

### **Dem bones, dem beads, dem botany ... Dealing with mass finds from the settlement excavations on Elephantine, Aswan**

Egypt is a country that yields many treasures for archaeologists, and only few of them are golden or attract media attention. Settlement excavations, like on Elephantine Island in Aswan, produce a huge variety and amount of finds even without taking the effort of in depth recovery. But what happens when the archaeological work is moved out of its beaten path and more thorough sampling strategies, like for example dry and wet sieving, are employed? The answers is: the material to be studied increases tremendously, which leads to the need for additional storage and processing space, time and personnel.

The German Archaeological Institute Cairo and its cooperation partners have now worked on Elephantine Island in Aswan for the past 50 years. While excavated soil was sieved occasionally, a systematic recovery strategy has only been employed since the start of the project ‘Realities of life’ in autumn 2013. The project’s aim is to get a deeper insight into everyday life around 2000 BC, and to reconstruct how it was, how it felt like to live in the ancient settlement. For this purpose pottery as well as various other mass finds like faunal, botanical and geological remains are in the focus of the research work. The challenge of dealing with these finds lies less on the scientific work, but more on the most time consuming and ‘boring’ tasks of extracting and preparing the material for the study by specialists as well as of sorting and first-recording of each newly excavated item within the limited time frames of the excavation seasons. This paper presents the attempt of the German Institute to establish an ‘ideal’ excavation from fieldwork to laboratory. It addresses the possibilities and challenges of studying the ‘garbage’ of an ancient people with a focus on the reconstruction of food and work

histories. The paper will also give thought to the expectation of financial and political partners to produce extraordinary finds or results to attract media attention, while the actual work is dealing with an extra-large amount of 'ordinary' finds.

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NEIL SPENCER (British Museum, London)/MANUELA LEHMANN (British Museum, London)

### **Amara West: artefact studies within a holistic research project. Opportunities and challenges**

Amara West was founded as a new administrative centre for the pharaonic colony of Upper Nubia (Kush) in the reign of Seti I, and then occupied through the following two centuries, though burials continue in the cemetery into the 8<sup>th</sup>/7<sup>th</sup> century BC. A particular focus of the British Museum's Amara West Research Project (2008-present) has been on researching evidence for cultural entanglement (Egypt/Nubia) but also to provide a rich and nuanced experiential perspective on life in a late second millennium BC settlement in the Middle Nile Valley.

Over 10 seasons of excavations, in the town's living and burial areas, have yielded around 10,700 artefacts (not including ceramic vessels). These are, of course, being studied by specialists, while also informed by a rich array of scientific analyses. Interesting patterns of spatial and chronological distribution that emerge can elucidate aspects of the town's foundation, and how local/community agency shaped the changing form, function and nature of Amara West.

However, an increasingly pertinent question is how such object assemblages can reflect the array and variances in experience and taskscapes within an ancient settlement? Certain elements of architecture and object assemblages remain broadly consistent from house to house. However, micromorphological and geochemical research, alongside study of

bioarchaeological evidence (human, faunal and flora remains) and ethnoarchaeological research in the modern villages and houses, is providing rich perspectives on the variability of activities from one space to the next, and reminding us of the limitation of artefact studies.

Finally, a challenge remains in integrating artefact studies from the British Museum project with the earlier (relatively well documented) excavations of the Egypt Exploration Society (1938-9, 1947-50).

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LESLIE ANNE WARDEN (Roanoke College, Salem, Virginia)

### **But it's just another body sherd... Thoughts on ceramic processing from two Middle Kingdom settlement sites**

The greatest strength of the ceramic record – its sheer quantity – is also its greatest weakness. Settlement excavations yield huge numbers of sherds that provide an excellent data set for statistical analyses that yield insights into Egyptian social history; the same sherds overwhelm even a large team of analysts. Most excavations do not have the extra staff, storage, or time to handle the breadth of their ceramic data. Recording and analysis must be selective, requiring that we are aware of our biases and do not gloss whole types of data.

This paper discusses the balancing act between the need for statistical relevancy with the practical limits in storage and time when working with sherd material, using the excavations at Kom el-Hisn (with the Kom el-Hisn Provincialism Project, directed by the author) and Elephantine (with the German Archaeological Institute's Realities of Life project, directed by Dr. Johanna Sigl, where the author acts as head of ceramics group) as examples. At both sites, two primary questions guide ceramic processing: what data do we prize? what questions do those data answer? Both excavations seek to answer similar

questions of daily life, so at the outset of ceramic work of each project it seemed our collection strategies would be the same. However, the two projects are at drastically different phases of fieldwork, highlighting that collection strategies must also change based on the lifestage, goals, and practical realities of a project. Thus, work at Kom el-Hisn provides an example of what the beginnings of ceramic work might look when one balances the need for statistical relevancy with lack of infrastructure. Elephantine, on the other hand, provides an example of what a 'mature' project with sustained infrastructure can allow one to do. This paper will discuss the data collected, how they are recorded for each site, and the types of questions our recording strategies allow us to answer. Further, I will explore how ceramics from two settlement sites with different collection strategies might nonetheless be fruitfully compared.

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*KEYNOTE:* WILLEKE WENDRICH (University of California, Los Angeles)

### **The Ties that Bind: Excavating the Extraordinary**

"Ordinary" finds in the Egyptian context are absolutely extraordinary because of the often exceptional preservation of organic materials: pieces of string, matting, baskets, leather, wooden utensils, textiles, but also mud containers, pottery and metal objects provide a wealth of information that can only be gleaned with a specialists' knowledge, patience, and in collaboration with others. The sheer quantity of material provides a challenge, and studying materials in isolation is of very limited interpretative value. Pottery, for instance, has been grossly underused as dating material, a situation that is rapidly improving, while other materials have been and continue to be disregarded. Comparing the results of several types of in-depth analysis within the archaeological context provides important new insights that are unattainable in any other way.

But there is more: archaeology is in constant flux, with shifts in methods, research foci, theory and goals. In the 21<sup>st</sup> century the importance of dealing with the colonial past of archaeology has come to the fore and goes hand in hand with the realization that mobilizing the population near ancient sites is the best way to safeguard archaeology. Settlement archaeology provides unparalleled possibilities to create an appreciation for the past that is immediate and visceral. Sharing insights with the local community gained from materials and objects that have unexpected parallels in traditional Egyptian material culture of the last century brings a spark of recognition and connection with the past and carves out a role for the local community to participate and be an equal partner in an exchange of information that benefits everybody. Early excavators, such as Petrie, recognized, and sometimes commented on this, but it remained anecdotal. Ours is the task to theorize, develop and implement this approach systematically.

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KATHARINA ZINN (University of Wales Trinity Saint David)

### **Narrating the *Extra the Ordinary* has: "Re-excavating" objects in storage rooms of local museums as part of an archaeology of unloved objects**

This paper will introduce a specific case of "secondary archaeology": a museum "excavation" and the consequent necessity to contextualise the discovered artefacts without any form of archaeological documentation. Despite being unprovenanced – one could even say especially because of that – it is important to make sense of these "ordinary" finds. Developing strategies of unmasking the EXTRA-ordinary within such forgotten or neglected objects and the communication of these finds as part of imaginative activities for both the wider public and the research community have always been the life-line of museums.

The presented case study started in 2011 as cooperation between Cyfarthfa Castle Museum, Merthyr Tydfil, Wales (UK) and the University of Wales Trinity Saint David Wales (UWTSD), Lampeter Campus. It aims at the literal and cultural (re-)discovery of ancient Egyptian artefacts. As this regional museum serves the local South Wales valleys by representing the daily life and history of this region, it was seen difficult to incorporate the unprovenanced Egyptian collection into the narrative of the museum's permanent exhibition. The project brings these objects back to life by simultaneously creating different types of cultural representations via academic outputs, exhibitions, story-telling, a Museum of Lies and artwork inspired by the items in order to "unpack the collection," to trace the "networks of material and social agency" (Byrne et al. 2011). This approach connects these objects, most of which lie dormant, with several identities in which they are placed: locally at Merthyr Tydfil in rural Wales - where the museum is situated and the collector originated from, students of UWTSD in Lampeter who are becoming involved in primary research, the community around Lampeter, the research community (Egyptologists, anthropologists, heritage professionals) and more. This is only possible by thinking about applicable methodological and theoretical approaches so that conclusions can be drawn.

This project contributes to the discussion of difficult (excavation) settings in need of explanation/interpretation and how to increase awareness of "boring/unimpressive" object groups which are in need to be communicated.

A short introductory video (unfortunately not mentioning the methodological frameworks as it was created for different audiences) can be seen here:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lx616808TjE>

## POSTERS

Gersande Eschenbrenner-Diemer (Institute of Archaeology, University College London)

### **Woodcraft in Deir el-Medina: reassessment and research perspectives**

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Sree Ganesh Thotempudi, Claudia Maderna-Sieben, Fabian Wespi, Jannik Korte (University of Heidelberg)

### **Who is who: Explore the relation among Text-Objects-Persons**

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