

# Excavating the Extra-Ordinary 2

Challenges and merits of working with small finds

Every archaeological undertaking uncovers small finds, be it tools, vessels, figurines, jewelry, or models. Time and again these finds are so common and “ordinary” that their potential for deeper insight is grossly underestimated. Often these finds are fragmentary, found in disturbed contexts or occur in such rough quantities that their recovery and analysis is a Herculean effort. In many cases, only a small selection of such finds is adequately presented in final publications. Museums and collections frequently contain small finds from early excavations or the art market whose context has not been (sufficiently) documented or whose provenance can no longer be determined. Nevertheless, all these finds can offer invaluable scientific knowledge if researchers dare to take them on.

Two years ago, “Excavating the Extra-Ordinary” provided a first platform for excavators, museum staff and personnel from universities and institutions on all career levels to exchange ideas about methods, *modi operandi* and best practices, focusing on dealing with largely disturbed contexts, the management of huge amounts of finds, the identification of specific items among mixed groups and coping with inconclusive results. This first fruitful conference has shown that there is a great demand for this type of exchange.

“Excavating the Extra-Ordinary 2” aims to continue and broaden the discussion of challenges and merits of working with small finds. Again, we wish to bring together scholars from all areas of object centered work and material culture. Since archaeological work and the exchange on methodological questions always benefits from interdisciplinary input, we are pleased to be able to expand the research area to include Egyptological expertise as well as experts from Near Eastern Archaeology.

We understand small finds in the broadest sense of the term and wish to discuss methodological challenges and compare strategies and methods in dealing with all kinds of (extra-)ordinary objects. In addition to our experienced keynote and impulse-speakers we would like to invite scholars and researchers on all career levels to present a paper about their research activity addressing the challenges and merits of working with small finds and difficult contexts. We especially ask young researchers to present challenges they are working on.

We are looking forward to an exciting and successful exchange and welcoming you at Johannes Gutenberg University Mainz.



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## Papers

The time frame per paper is 20 minutes. Each of our thematic sections will consist of two papers followed by a 20-minute discussion slot.

Presenters may send materials for the workshop participants to us in advance. We will send these materials to the participants prior to the workshop, so that they can better prepare for the exchange of ideas.

Please send an abstract with a maximum of 350 words detailing your paper by no later than 15 January 2022 to [excavating2022@uni-mainz.de](mailto:excavating2022@uni-mainz.de)

The language of the workshop is English.

## “Enigmatic Objects Corner”

We offer all participants the possibility to share photos, drawings, or digital renderings of “enigmatic” objects. Seize the opportunity to use the collective knowledge of this unique scientific community to identify puzzling material and exchange ideas about enigmatic objects.

If you are interested in presenting enigmatic objects, please send an email stating the number of objects to be presented and, if possible, specify the original site/context or current museum location by no later than 15 November 2022 to [excavating2022@uni-mainz.de](mailto:excavating2022@uni-mainz.de)

## Deadlines & Dates

- **15 January 2022:**  
Deadline for the submission of abstracts (papers)
- **31 October 2022:**  
Deadline for registration without a paper
- **15 November 2022:**  
Deadline for the “Enigmatic Objects Corner”
- **25–26 November 2022:**  
Workshop at Johannes Gutenberg University Mainz

## Costs

There is no participation fee.

## Digital Workshop

We are looking forward to welcoming you all hopefully in presence next November in Mainz. If a face-to-face event is not possible, we will switch to a digital format – in which case you will receive further information by email after registration.

## Organizers

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Freie Universität Berlin

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<https://excavating-the-extra-ordinary.uni-mainz.de/organizers/>

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