



PROGRAM & ABSTRACTS

Workshop (Zoom)
19–20 January 2024

TRANSCENSION

THEORIZING ANCIENT STUDIES
IN/AS TRANSDISCIPLINARY SPACE



KEYNOTES BY

Prof. Walter D. Mignolo (Duke University)

Dr. Vijay Prashad (Tricontinental)

ORGANISER

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together with the Berliner Antike-Kolleg (BAK) and the Institute
Archäologie und Kulturgeschichte Nordostafrikas (AKNOA),
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This workshop is a follow-up to the BAK annual theme 2022/23 “Active Voices – Transdisciplinarity and Participation in Ancient Studies!”

PROGRAM

January 19, 2024

Topic Start Time	New York	São Paulo	Lisbon London	Berlin
Welcome and Introduction	7:30	16:30	12:30	13:30
SESSION 1				
Sarah Defant & Sabina Fiołna (Freie Universität Berlin): Scales of Fragmentation	8:00	10:00	13:00	14:00
Nasser Ayash (University of Heidelberg): The Marginality of the Nabatean and Palmyrene Culture as an Example of Cultural Amalgamation, Offering a Possible Narrative for Modern Integration Issues	8:30	10:30	13:30	14:30
Federico Zangani (University of Cambridge): Ancient Egypt and Globalization, Then and Now: On the Transdisciplinarity of Egyptological Knowledge	9:00	11:00	14:00	15:00
<i>Break</i>	9:30	11:30	14:30	15:30
Session 2				
José das Candeias Sales & Susana Mota (Centro de Estudos Globais da Universidade Aberta): "Tutankhamun in Portugal" and "Abel Salazar and the reception of ancient Egypt": Two Research Projects on the Reception of Ancient Egypt - Two Interdisciplinary Experiences	10:00	12:00	15:00	16:00
Katharina Zinn (University of Wales Trinity Saint David Northeast Normal University): Global Heritages, Local Identities and Ancient Objects: Transdisciplinary Approaches to Extended Object Biographies	10:30	12:30	15:30	16:30
Bárbara Alexandre Aniceto (São Paulo State University): Reconsidering the Female Body in Classical Antiquity: Greek Women as Part of Humankind	11:00	13:00	16:00	17:00
<i>Break</i>	11:30	12:30	16:30	17:30
Vijay Prashad (Tricontinental): Keynote I	12:00	14:00	17:00	18:00
Conclusion of Day 1				

PROGRAM

January 20, 2024

Topic Start Time	New York	São Paulo	Lisbon London	Berlin
SESSION 3				
Jacob C. Damm (Cornell University): Overlapping Magisteria? Archaeology as a Transdisciplinary Science	8:00	10:00	13:00	14:00
Louise Steel (University of Wales Trinity Saint David): Transdisciplinary Approaches and Community Archaeology	8:30	10:30	13:30	14:30
Christian Langer (Berliner Antike-Kolleg Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin): The Study of Obelisks in China as Transdisciplinary Investigation	9:00	11:00	14:00	15:00
<i>Break</i>	9:30	11:30	14:30	15:30
Session 4				
Gautam Chakrabarti (Viadrina European University): 'AIT' vs 'OoT': Transcension as an Analytical Bridge Between Scholarly Debates on Early Vedic India	10:00	12:00	15:00	16:00
Haleli Harel (Freie Universität Berlin Hebrew University of Jerusalem): From Ancient Categories to Modern #Hashtags	10:30	12:30	15:30	16:30
Lin Mi (Royal College of Art): Transdisciplinary Immersion: Digitising Textile Intangible Cultural Heritage	11:00	13:00	16:00	17:00
<i>Break</i>	11:30	13:30	16:30	17:30
Walter D. Mignolo (Duke University): Keynote II: Understanding the Past to Speak to the Present	12:00	14:00	17:00	18:00
Final Discussion				

KEYNOTE



Prof. Walter D. Mignolo

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Walter D. Mignolo is William H. Wannamaker Distinguished Emeritus Professor of Romance Studies and Professor of Literature at Duke University. He is the former director of the Center for Global Studies and Humanities. He was a research associate at the Simón Bolívar Andean University, Quito, 2002-2020 and an honorary research associate at CISA (Center for Indian Studies in South Africa), Wits University in Johannesburg (2014-2020). He was an Advisor to the DOC (Dialogue of Civilizations) Research Institute based in Berlin. He received an Honorary Doctorate from the National University of Buenos Aires, Argentina and an Honorary Degree from Goldsmith University in London in 2018. In 2023 he received an Honorary Doctorate from the National University of Formosa and the National University of Córdoba, respectively.

Among his books related to the subject are: *The Darker Side of the Renaissance. Literacy, Territoriality and Colonization* (1995, translated into Chinese and Spanish 2015); *Delinking: The rhetoric of modernity, the logic of coloniality and the grammar of decoloniality* (2007, translated into German, French, Swedish, Romanian and Spanish); *Local Histories/Global Designs: Coloniality, Subaltern Knowledge and Border Thought* (2000, translated into Spanish, Portuguese, Korean and Turkish); *The Idea of Latin America* (2006, translated into Spanish, Korean and Italian). With Catherine Walsh he published *On Decoloniality. Concepts, Analytics, Praxes* (2018, translated into Italian and Portuguese, in Brazil). In 2020, he published *Global Coloniality and the World Disorder* in Taiwan in Mandarin language. With Rita Segato and Catherine Walsh, he is co-editor of Anibal Quijano's first publication in English: *Coloniality of Power Foundational Texts*, 2024.

KEYNOTE



Dr. Vijay Prashad

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Vijay Prashad is an Indian historian and journalist. Prashad is the author of forty books, including *Washington Bullets*, *Red Star Over the Third World*, *The Darker Nations: A People's History of the Third World* and *The Poorer Nations: A Possible History of the Global South*. His latest book *The Withdrawal: Iraq, Libya, Afghanistan, and the Fragility of U.S. Power* (2022) was written with Noam Chomsky.

He is Executive Director of The Tricontinental: Institute for Social Research and Chief Correspondent for Globetrotter.

He is also the Chief Editor of LeftWord Books (New Delhi) and a senior non-resident fellow at Chongyang Institute for Financial Studies, Renmin University of China.

He has appeared in two films – *Shadow World* (2016) and *Two Meetings* (2017).

ORGANISER



Dr. Christian Langer

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Christian Langer is a Visiting Research Fellow at the Berliner Antike-Kolleg. His research interests revolve around the political economy of pharaonic Egypt, the colonial heritage of Egyptology, the international relations of Egyptology as well as the global cultural reception of ancient Egypt. From 2016 to 2017, he was an ERASMUS Visiting Research Student at the Institute of Archaeology of University College London. In 2017, he received the award of the Foundation for Postgraduates in Egyptology of the Austrian Academy of Sciences. In 2022, he received an award as Outstanding Postdoctoral Fellow of Peking University.

He has published books, book chapters, and journal articles. His articles have appeared in *Archaeologies: Journal of the World Archaeological Congress* and the *Journal of Egyptian History*, among others. His works have been published in the Chinese, English, German, Portuguese, and Turkish languages. A special issue of *Archaeologies: Journal of the World Archaeological Congress* co-edited together with Uroš Matic (Austrian Academy of Science, Vienna) on the topic of "Postcolonial Theory in Egyptology: Applications, Debates and Potentials" appeared in spring 2023. His most recent monograph is *Egyptian Deportations of the Late Bronze Age: A Study in Political Economy* (De Gruyter, 2021).

ABSTRACTS

Bárbara Alexandre Aniceto

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Reconsidering the Female Body in Classical Antiquity: Greek Women as Part of Humankind

This paper aims to demonstrate the advantages of employing sociological and anthropological perspectives within Ancient Studies as a means of delving into the classical Greek perception of the female body. The past two decades have witnessed a substantial growth in the interactions between Ancient Studies, Sociology, and Anthropology. I maintain that incorporating these analytical approaches enhances our documentary treatment as historians, especially when addressing male cultural constructions of female physiology. In this sense, the Hippocratic testimony proves especially valuable for understanding the intricate interactions between nature and culture, as well as the dynamic entanglements between the body and gender. The Hippocratic Collection comprises approximately 60 texts, with ten devoted to women's issues. The ancient *iatroi* held a significant interest in reproductive matters, which led to substantial investigations about the transition from *parthenos* to *gyne*. A girl would be seen as a woman once she became capable of bearing a child. Gestation held great importance in societies that directly relied on the community to exist and/or that worked based on direct democracies, as was the case of Athens in the classical period. Accordingly, women, especially married ones, were responsible for guaranteeing the survival of their communities and the maintenance of humankind through pregnancy. From my point of view, the Hippocratic doctors recognized women's active performance in the generation process. Moreover, I shall argue that they shared a symbolic system in which women were seen as an essential part of humankind. As a shared perspective, I also perceive such an anthropological premise in Aristophanes' comedies, especially those centered on female characters. A close reading of *Lysistrata* (411 BC), *Thesmophoriazusae* (411 BC), and *Assemblywomen* (392 BC) suggests that the legitimate wife was consistently depicted as a pivotal factor in the operation of the Athenian city and of the community as a whole. Therefore, I aim to connect medical and comic testimony in order to show that married women could have had a much more significant impact on classical Greek societies and on how they perceived themselves.

Bárbara Alexandre Aniceto is a PhD candidate at São Paulo State University. Her dissertation is an investigation about Hippocratic medicine and Aristophanic comedy in regards to women's bodies and sexualities. Bárbara's research focuses on the cultural and physiological perceptions of the female body according to Aristophanes and Hippocrates alongside women's sexual behaviors as portrayed by the playwright and the physician. Bárbara is a member of G.LEIR (Study Group on the Roman Empire, São Paulo State University), Lab.Arque (Archaeology Laboratory at São Paulo State University), NEAM (Center of Ancient and Medieval Studies at São Paulo State University), and Messalinas - Study Group on Gender and Antiquity at the University of São Paulo (USP).

In 2020, Bárbara published the book "By the Abstinence of the Phallus: a study on the legitimate wives in Ancient Comedy", which takes a new approach to the study of Aristophanic Comedy by advocating that Aristophanes depicted, mainly in *Lysistrata*, *Thesmophoriazousae* and *Assemblywomen*, the Athenian wives as maintainers of the polis and the community. Bárbara is interested in Ancient Greek History, Aristophanic Comedy, Ancient Medicine, and Gender History.

Nasser B. Ayash

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The Marginality of the Nabatean and Palmyrene Culture as an Example of Cultural Amalgamation, Offering a Possible Narrative for Modern Integration Issues

One of the foremost subjects of the last decade in Europe is the matter of integration of refugees, a great number of which originate from the Middle East. In this presentation the insight from two ancient cultures is proposed as means of a narrative formation.

The Nabatean kingdom and Palmyra of the Hellenistic and Roman periods constitute a unique space within the archaeological disciplines. Often less prominent in the Hellenistic/Roman or Near Eastern studies due to their marginal character in each of these groups, they constitute a fine example where an interdisciplinary approach is needed to evaluate their cultural aspects. Furthermore, the questions of assimilation and/or integration into the Graeco-Roman world necessitates a theoretical approach of these matters that exceeds the older views of Romanisation/Hellenisation. In this respect, the evidence is not limited to the fusion of architectural styles or expression of elite ideologies. Rather, they are to be found even in the smallest fragments of evidence, the bilingual texts, ranging from inscriptions in the colonnade of Palmyra to everyday trade agreements. These - bearing Greek and one of the indigenous languages, such as Aramaic, Nabatean or Palmyrene - provide an insight into the targeted audience in each case. The texts alongside other evidence such as religion and elite representation show a strong local identity and character, but nevertheless an effort of adaptation and integration within the greater world, leading to local shifts in traditions. And it is within this dialectic that the unique characteristics of these cultures are brought to fruition. The relevance of the Nabatean kingdom and Palmyra is more prevalent in the contemporary era, as these cultures have been integrated in ethnogenic and national narratives in the region of the Middle East from antiquity until today. These tend to be dichotomous in nature, portraying the existence of a culturally rather homogenic group targeted by exterior expansion. Therefore, an interdisciplinary approach to these cultures, stressing the actual fluidity and interconnectedness, could offer a narrative for the integration efforts in the broader context of the Middle Eastern refugees in Europe.

Nasser Bovoleti Ayash (M.Sc. M.A. M.A.) is a PhD candidate at the Institute for Classical Archaeology and Byzantine Archaeology at Ruprecht Karl University of Heidelberg, with interest in material and written cultures of the past, including aspects of interculturality, history of science and religion and landscape archaeology with focus on Eastern Mediterranean: Aegean Bronze Age, Hellenistic and Roman Eras.

2004–2010: Dipl. Electrical Engineering, Electrical Engineering Department, University of Patras

2017–2019: Master, Institute for Classical Archaeology and Institute for Near Eastern Archaeology, Ruprecht Karl University of Heidelberg

2020–2023: Master, Institut für Alte Geschichte, Ruprecht-Karls-Universität Heidelberg

November 2019–March 2024: PhD candidate at the Institute for Classical Archaeology and Byzantine Archaeology at Ruprecht Karl University of Heidelberg

José das Candeias Sales & Susana Mota

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"Tutankhamun in Portugal" and "Abel Salazar and the reception of ancient Egypt": Two Research Projects on the Reception of Ancient Egypt - Two Interdisciplinary Experiences

This communication presents two cases of interdisciplinarity in two different research projects in the field of ancient Egyptian reception studies in Portugal.

The “Tutankhamun in Portugal. Reports in the Portuguese press (1922-1939)”, completed in 2023, whose essential aim was to gather, catalogue and analyse the news about the discovery and excavation of the tomb of the pharaoh Tutankhamun published in the Portuguese press, by its very nature and the parallel discoveries it enabled, was a process rich in interdisciplinary experiences. In this context, the need to call on information and knowledge in the fields of the history of the press and the history of communication in Portugal in the 1920s and 1930s stood out. The research carried out and the collaborations established with other researchers allowed us not only to learn new and significant things, but also to gather and discover new information and elements that complemented existing knowledge. More concretely, we were able to retrace/reconstruct the history of news agencies in Portugal, demonstrating that the first one was not created in 1944, as all the specialised bibliography propagated until today, but in 1921.

Still in the preliminary stages, the project “Abel Salazar and the reception of ancient Egypt: the influence of Egyptian civilisation in the political, philosophical, sociological, and artistic thought of a Portuguese humanist” is based on the documentation produced by this multifaceted author from different fields of knowledge. Abel Salazar, physician, researcher and professor, was a man who was interested in the most diverse areas of knowledge - from psychology to sociology, from history to politics - and whose interest in the civilisation of ancient Egypt led to the production of various texts, with different inspirations, motivated by this civilisation. Even though we are still at the stage of fully cataloguing this production, we anticipate the need to combine various branches of knowledge in his study. His texts on what he calls the "Osirian Revolution", for example, will involve an Egyptological, political and sociological analysis.

José Sales is a Full Professor in the Universidade Aberta and a researcher in the Centre for History of the University of Lisbon and a member of the Centro de Estudos Globais of the Universidade Aberta. He works in the field of ancient History – Egyptology –, having published many books and articles both in Portugal and abroad. He is responsible for the research project “*Tutankhamon em Portugal. Relatos na Imprensa Portuguesa (1922-1939)*” in the field of ancient Egypt reception studies. This project aims to identify, analyse, and publish the news released by the Portuguese press (newspapers and magazines) about the discovery of the tomb of Tutankhamun.

Susana Mota is a researcher in the Centro de Estudos Globais of the Universidade Aberta. She is also responsible for the research project in the field of ancient Egypt reception studies titled “*Tutankhamon em Portugal. Relatos na Imprensa Portuguesa (1922-1939)*”. Since 2006, Susana MOTA has done research in Egyptology, and from 2016 onwards, she has dedicated herself to researching in the field of ancient Egypt reception, Egyptomania, and in the field of History of Communication.

Gautam Chakrabarti

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‘AIT’ vs ‘OoT’: Transcension as an Analytical Bridge Between Scholarly Debates on Early Vedic India

There is – since the end-1990s and, especially, with the rise of Hindutva (=Hinduness, lit.) – a ‘New India’ that seeks to privilege an Indic Weltanschauung or, at least, view world affairs through an Indian lens; there’s a sense, especially in the public sphere, that India’s ‘moment’ has arrived. With India’s growing economic, scientific-industrial, cultural-diplomatic and geostrategic footprints in the post-Corona and war-torn global reality, old scholarly debates within Indian historiography seem to have acquired a global salience. Within the country, one of the key decades-long debates – in the cultural-intellectual tussle for the ‘soul of India’ – remains that between the proponents of the so-called ‘Aryan Invasion Theory (AIT)’ and ‘Out of India Theory (OoT)’. The former is the internationally-dominant scholarly, especially comparative and palaeo-linguistic understanding that the Vedic culture – as transmitted through its ritual-textual corpus in Vedic Sanskrit – was introduced to the Indian Subcontinent, through what is now Afghanistan, by Caucasian – from the Caspian-Sea-region – migrants/invasers around the middle of the second millennium before Christ. The latter theory challenges this and holds the various Indo-European languages and, by extension, peoples to have emigrated out of India to different parts of the Eurasian landmass. Without going into the merits of these theories – the former does have more scholarly adherents than the latter – it needs to be noted that this particular Ancient-Studies-debate has somewhat risen, of late, in academic priorities.

The present paper seeks to look at the transdisciplinary debates – spanning linguistics, philology, archaeology, genetics – that have informed the scholarly exchanges in this domain. The attempt will be to focus on the transcensional dimensions of these exchanges and what they might have to contribute to both the study of Ancient India and the broader field of Indo-European linguistics, and the emergence of the Indian Nation-State as a burgeoning global power. Thus, the paper will also discuss selected ways in which scholarly knowledge is or can be instrumentalised in political polemic, especially with regard to contemporary India’s perception of the ancient Indic past, as highlighted through, among others, Bollywood and other Indian cinema. This will be done through analytical and historicising references to both commercial and arthouse films, like *Mohenjo Daro* (2016), as also popular TV-series like *Bhārat Ek Khoj* (India: a Discovery, 1988) and *Cānakya* (1991-92).

Gautam Chakrabarti is affiliated to the Viadrina Institut für Europa-Studien at the Europa-Universität Viadrina, Frankfurt (Oder), and was, till recently, a Postdoctoral Researcher and Lecturer in Cultural Studies there. Previously, he was a Lecturer in "Berlin and German Studies" at the Freie Universität Berlin (FUB), where he was a Dahlem Research School HONORS Postdoctoral Fellow (2014-15) after finishing, at the FUB, his PhD in Comparative Literature (2011-14). He has researched at the Centre for Global Theatre History, Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität München (2016-19). He has, previously, taught South Asian Studies at the Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin and English and Comparative Literature at the FUB. He has also studied, researched, taught and/or lectured in various universities in India, Finland, Russia, the Baltic States, Poland, Israel, South Africa, Brazil and Serbia. After his ongoing Habilitation post-WW2 detective fiction across Eurasia, he hopes to work on Indo-Yugoslav cultural politics in the Cold War, especially through the prisms of "phantom borders" and "maverick cosmopolitanism".

Jacob C. Damm

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Overlapping Magisteria? Archaeology as a Transdisciplinary Science

Archaeology, after its parent discipline Anthropology, has long been considered a social science, though in many ways this designation is far from uniform. Indeed, many of the historical archaeologies practiced around the world today have deeper roots in disciplines more readily classified as the humanities rather than social sciences. And yet, archaeology's epistemological foundation has been further entangled through the development of archaeological science—a profusion of analytical techniques derived from natural sciences like chemistry, biology, and geology. Far from the traditional hierarchy of sciences proposed by Auguste Comte and the subsequent debate of “hard” versus “soft” sciences that it engendered, the archaeology of today cannot be placed in some sort of hierarchy of fields rated on the verifiability of their claims. By arguing that archaeology should be viewed as a transdisciplinary science, I stake my position against any attempts to place such clear epistemic parameters around archaeological reasoning. Instead, for archaeology to be effective tool in ancient studies, I argue that it must be transdisciplinary, and that any attempt to confine archaeology at a theoretical or methodological level within a single disciplinary framework needlessly constrains our ability to reason about past lives. I also argue, however, that the overly optimistic application of scientific methods within archaeology is equally damaging to the desired transdisciplinary space. To offer a critical vision of archaeology as a transdisciplinary science, in this paper I will highlight three elements that I view as being at the heart of issue: the surprisingly thorny issue of defining archaeological data, the critical appropriation of methods from the natural sciences, and the use of experimentation to hone interpretive assumptions about the past. While certainly not exhaustive, these three problems are deeply entangled with how archaeology might thrive in a transdisciplinary space—or how it might flounder. To this end, I will discuss my own trials and travails as someone who has sought to incorporate statistical ecology and analytical chemistry into my own research.

Jacob C. Damm is Hirsch Postdoctoral Fellow at Cornell University. He completed his B.A. in Religious Studies and Classics at the University of South Carolina, his M.A. in Levantine Archaeology at Harvard University, and his Ph.D. at UCLA's Cotsen Institute of Archaeology where he focused on the archaeology of the southern Levant. Currently, he is a director of the Turning Points Project at Tel Dan in Israel and a researcher with the South Karnak Extramural Expedition in Egypt. To date, he has excavated throughout Israel at the sites of Khirbet Qeiyafa, Ashkelon, Jaffa, and Tel Dan.

Sarah Defant & Sabina Fiołna

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Scales of Fragmentation

The Mediterranean world has been the focus of historical research for centuries, resulting in a rich collection of materials and a plethora of narratives concerning the meaning of past events and their relevance to the present. This robustness presents an exceptional starting point for transdisciplinary research and a challenge at the same time. Our project Scales of Fragmentation (SCALoFRAG) aims at offering new lines of enquiry, that are based on the latest scientific methods developed in recent years, independent of standard narratives describing the transitional period of 4-8th century CE in the Mediterranean. We are looking into how the transition from the Late Antique to Early Medieval periods is reflected in changes in subsistence strategies around the Mediterranean, especially in but not limited to its Eastern parts. Our main hypothesis is that the progressing political and economic fragmentation led to the higher reliance on locally available resources and differentiation of strategies. The overarching framework of a complex socio-ecosystem allows us to incorporate a wide array of results originating from bioarchaeology, through palynology to social network analysis. Drawing from our experience of working in a multidisciplinary team, we would like to discuss the chances, challenges and limits to approaches combining humanities, natural sciences and computational methods.

Sarah Defant is a PhD student at Freie Universität Berlin and the Max Planck Institute of Geoanthropology since 2020/2021. Her research, within the *Scales of Fragmentation* project, focuses on investigating changes in diet and mobility during the transition from Late Antiquity to the Early Middle Ages. As part of her role within the project, she has undertaken research visits to institutions such as the Austrian Archaeological Institute, University of Warsaw, Max Planck Institute for Evolutionary Anthropology, and Masaryk University Brno. She holds an MSc in Human Osteology and Funerary Archaeology from the University of Sheffield and a BA in Classical Archaeology from the University of Vienna. Her experience includes archaeological and osteological projects across Austria, Egypt, Germany, Italy, Saudi Arabia, Turkey, and the United Kingdom.

Sabina Fiołna is a postdoctoral researcher at the Freie Universität Berlin. As an environmental historian she is working on the applications of methods and approaches originating from complexity science such as social network analysis, causality modelling, and agent-based modelling into historical research. In cooperation with archaeologists and natural scientists, she proposes reconstructions of the past that combine simultaneously natural (climatology, palynology), archaeological and historical (literary, numismatic, epigraphic) data. Her main area of study is ancient Anatolia. She obtained her MA at Warsaw University and DPhil at Oxford University.

Haleli Harel

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From Ancient Categories to Modern #Hashtags

This talk explores how we can access innate hierarchies in two seemingly unrelated phenomena by examining patterns of categorization in language data. Two categorization systems, one ancient and one contemporary will be described and contrasted. The first linguistic system of categories are semantic categories represented by classifiers (aka determinatives), and existing in ancient complex scripts such as Ancient Egyptian, Cuneiform, and Ancient Chinese among other scripts. The second are hashtags (#), used in contemporary media to sort content into categories, mainly to extend its audience or to create a network effect, arranging content into topics or categories. I aim to discuss how categories reflect the negotiation and indoctrination of social values, both in ancient and modern societies. The first system reflects a range of semantic categories arranging the lexicon and the second a range of themes or higher-level categories. Both allow us to sort data. The data is in the first case lexical items or in the second image and text content shared by users. Both are arranged into an interconnected network of tags.

This talk will address how ancient and modern humans constructed higher-level categories according to these two categorization systems. These two systems will be outlined using examples of individual comparable categories. The macro image of how categories are distributed in both phenomena will be painted and their extent and limitations evaluated. This task will be done using data collected in the *iClassifier* digital research tool (@Goldwasser, Harel, Nikolaev) digitizing the ancient Egyptian classifier system, and by sourcing information regarding hashtags inventory and distribution patterns from reports published by social media outlets and from several datasets available based on LLMs (Large Language Models, e.g., GPT-4, Bert). By looking at emic categorical structures and comparing them to hashtag usage today, I will offer insights into how categories construct realities, referring to relevant scholarship in cognitive linguistics and sociology.

Haleli Harel is a postdoctoral researcher working on network modeling of the ancient Egyptian language. She is currently a guest researcher at Humboldt-Universität, Berlin, in the research project REGISTER (SFB 1412/B03), and a postdoctoral researcher in the project "Exploring the minds of Ancient Egypt and Ancient China —A comparative network analysis of the classifier systems of the scripts" (ISF 1704/22) in Jerusalem.

Haleli received her Ph.D. from The Hebrew University of Jerusalem in 2023. Since 2017, she has served as the scientific coordinator of the iClassifier digital research tool and the lab manager of the ArchaeoMind Lab (P.I. Prof. Orly Goldwasser, <https://www.archaeomind.net/>) at The Hebrew University of Jerusalem.

Alongside her research, she works towards creating a full-immersion teaching method for Bohairic Coptic, and is affiliated as a faculty member and researcher at the Polis Institute, Jerusalem (<https://www.polisjerusalem.org/>).

Christian Langer

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The Study of Obelisks in China as Transdisciplinary Investigation

Transdisciplinary approaches go beyond traditional disciplinary boundaries, fostering a holistic understanding that can significantly enhance and expand knowledge within and across individual academic fields in multiple ways. This presentation conceptualizes the study of modern Chinese obelisks as a case in point. Chinese obelisks are a multifaceted and emerging research topic; effectively transdisciplinary, it unites various academic domains. Drawing from the rich tapestry of Egyptology, China Studies, Cultural Studies, and beyond, this investigation unveils how the spread of the obelisk to China resulted from cross-continental cultural exchange and adaptation. Just like the Chinese obelisks transgress boundaries, so does their study transgress disciplinary boundaries. Traditionally viewed through the lens of Egypt's architectural heritage and Western adaptations, obelisks find an unexpected resonance in China's historical landscape. Chinese obelisks, serve as emblematic conduits of intercultural dialogue. By intertwining Egyptology with China Studies, we unearth a shared aesthetic language.

The study further extends its reach into Cultural Studies, unearthing the nuanced layers of meaning embedded within obelisks to unravel evolution of symbolism, tracing its journey from the Nile to the Yellow River. This perspective illuminates the subtle shifts in cultural interpretation and adaptation that have transpired over millennia. Topics, like Chinese obelisks, connect the ancient with the modern and relate seemingly distant societies to one another. By embracing transdisciplinarity, we transcend the limitations of individual fields to develop a holistic narrative that enriches our understanding of global cultural exchange and its enduring impact on societies. In this context, the talk outlines challenges related to transdisciplinary research and ways to overcome them, the most fundamental question being when transdisciplinarity becomes necessary and feasible.

Christian Langer is currently Visiting Research Fellow at the Berliner Antike-Kolleg. He earned his doctorate in Egyptology from the Free University of Berlin with a dissertation on deportations in ancient Egyptian history. He completed his M.A. in Egyptology, Prehistory and Near East Archaeology at the University of Mayence with a thesis on Ancient Egyptian imperialism (Peter Lang, 2013). From 2021 to 2023 he was Postdoctoral Fellow at Peking University, School of Arts. He is '2022 Outstanding Postdoctoral Researcher of Peking University' and the 2017 awardee of the 'Foundation for Postgraduates in Egyptology.' From 2016 to 2017, he was Visiting Research Student at UCL Institute of Archaeology. His research interests revolve around the socioeconomic history of pharaonic Egypt, migrations and borders as well as the colonial heritage of Egyptology, the geopolitics of archaeology, and the cultural reception of ancient Egypt. His current major project investigates the adoption of obelisks and their function in modern China.

Lin Mi

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Transdisciplinary Immersion: Digitising Textile Intangible Cultural Heritage

Contemporary craftspeople and artisans are now situated in a complex landscape of traditional textile practices juxtaposed with rapid technological innovation (Heffer, 2021; Pistola et al., 2021). To prevent craft ideas from being seen as outdated and becoming obsolete, the acknowledgement of and engagement with textile Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH) is urgently required to bring traditional practice and modern textile thinking together across various disparate methods. It includes the development of digital textile ICH, an interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary research area relating to art, museology, self-identity, sustainable fashion, communication, and technology. The area of focus has promising contributions encompassing bridging the gap between textile ICH, textile thinking, and immersive tools and theory, and, furthermore, actively generates aesthetic and cultural re-invigoration (Jefferies, Conroy, and Clark, 2015; Briones, 2018; Pistola et al., 2021).

In the workshop, I will use Miao embroidery textile ICH as an entry point, for it is a unique and internationally recognised element of ICH, along with cross-disciplinary digital explorations of applied textiles to dive into the conversation of immersive digitalisation of textile ICH in the art and design world from theoretical and practice perspectives (UNESCO, 2020; Wang, 2022). The goals are to discuss the present and future of the ancient craftsmanship and to enable modern comprehension of textile ICH's materiality, techniques, and connotations in multiverses of palpability and intangibility.

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Transdisciplinary Approaches and Community Archaeology

The term “transdisciplinary” was coined by Piaget in the 1970s. After some 50 years of reflection there are now multiple definitions of this term and carrying out transdisciplinary research presents great methodological challenges (Lawrence et al 2021). Nonetheless the value of transdisciplinarity for solving many contemporary global problems is increasingly being recognised by global agencies such as UNESCO and the International Science Council (Kaiser and Gluckman 2023). The transdisciplinary approaches advocated here move beyond integrating disciplines across the Sciences and Humanities, to incorporating other knowledge systems and values from outside the Academy in the pursuit of common goals, with the aim of fostering the co-creation of multi-actor, community projects. It highlights the need to make academic research socially relevant and, moreover, draws attention to the challenges involved in developing non-extractive research rather than appropriating knowledge for the production of narratives written by academics for their intellectual peers.

Community participation is not new; indeed there are numerous examples of archaeologists working with local communities, but frequently this is approached as an add-on – the delivery of outreach to demonstrate impact. The transdisciplinary emphasis on *co-production*, however is innovative and highlights the need to work *with* communities to develop research that attends to their priorities, including the development and co-production of narratives and outputs. As such, it provides a genuine alternative to multi- and inter-disciplinary research methods, because it produces socially relevant knowledges *with* communities rather than for them. The real strength of transdisciplinary research lies in its ability to enable a variety of knowledge systems to interact in constructive ways in a process of mutual learning (Seidl et al 2013).

Reflecting upon my previous research in the *Hidden Pasts* project at Aredhiou, Cyprus – which attempted to develop an understanding (and appreciation of the importance) of the local archaeology within the local community – this paper seeks to explore:

How we might adopt this essential transdisciplinary principle to develop meaningful research into aspects of the ancient world which are not just of interest to local communities but also attends to local issues – be they oriented towards local education, heritage, tourism.?

What is the benefit of using non-extractive, meaningful collaboration with non-academic community members (from the outset and throughout the research process)?

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Ancient Egypt and Globalization, Then and Now: On the Transdisciplinarity of Egyptological Knowledge

Theories, methodologies, and notions from various fields in the humanities and the social sciences have been increasingly applied to recent Egyptological research. Now, a further, bolder step is required: to produce Egyptological knowledge that may contribute to the academic and nonacademic communities. Thus, transdisciplinarity in Egyptology is a necessity in both directions, inwards and outwards. This paper, therefore, sets out to discuss ways in which Egyptology may be situated within the field of Global History: first, by sharing a common concern with global integration, beyond geographical and disciplinary boundaries, and beyond connectivities; second, by employing one of its main methodologies, comparativism; third, by contributing to an understanding of the current globalized world that may benefit not only scholars in other academic fields, but also citizens and policy-makers. In particular, the period known as New Kingdom in Egyptian history overlaps for the most part with the first phase of globalization in world history, the Late Bronze Age (ca. 16th-12th centuries BC). Moreover, Egypt has been conceptualized as akin to contemporary European nation-states not only because of the Eurocentric nature of Egyptology, but also because of the ancient Egyptians' worldview. Therefore, New Kingdom Egypt has an invaluable potential as a source of information on the dynamics, opportunities, and challenges that states and societies experience under conditions of globalization. This paper will illustrate three case-studies. The first is the trajectory of Egyptian imperialism in Syria-Palestine: its evolution into the diplomatic system of the Amarna letters may shed light on the problematic relationship between imperialism and globalization. A second case-study is the city of Amarna: officially founded by the "heretic" pharaoh Akhenaten to serve exclusively his monotheistic religion of the sun-disk Aten, it may have been a "global city" *in fieri*, possibly designed to be a competitive urban centre within the globalized world of the Late Bronze Age. Finally, the third case-study will be the interplay of institutional authorities, localities, private citizens, and global networks: this will be investigated comparatively in Egypt and in the Mediterranean port-city of Ugarit in Syria, so as to elucidate similarities and differences in how place-specific situations related to global processes, in two fundamentally different polities, regardless of direct connections.

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Global Heritages, Local Identities and Ancient Objects: Transdisciplinary Approaches to Extended Object Biographies

Attempts to define transdisciplinarity as a discipline forget that it is also a way of (academic) being incorporating both a theoretical and practical mode for many in humanities. This is especially the case for so-called “orchid subjects” who need to prove their value. Already before policymaking/research management discovered transdisciplinarity as a way to justify sciences and the enormous sums dedicated to it by applying closer attention to non-academic actors and stakeholders who bring their knowledge to the complex task at hand, it was interestingly often that exactly these unusual subjects with small numbers of students who were looking for the value of the past in the present. They incorporated other disciplines (interdisciplinary approaches) and worked collaboratively with stakeholders and a clear view on the immediate/wider society (transdisciplinary approaches) – often as multiprofessional teams establishing a creative tension.

The proposed paper will describe such a transdisciplinary multiprofessional approach tested in several complementing projects cutting across Egyptology, archaeology, Chinese studies, museum studies, heritage, education (secondary school/FE/HE) and an anthropology of the past incorporating different stakeholders.

Started in 2011 as a museums-excavation – discovering unprovenanced/forgotten objects in museums' storerooms – engagements (museum, local councils, public) shed new light on the necessity to contextualise the discovered artefacts as literal and cultural (re-)discovery. Developing strategies of unmasking the EXTRAordinary within such neglected objects and the communication of these finds through imaginative activities with and for the wider public, artists and a multidisciplinary research community has been at the core of the *Cyfarthfa Castle Museum Project*, *Moving Objects*, the Ireland-Wales *Portalis* project as well as a first attempt to transfer the methodology to Chinese studies. In each several types of cultural representations were created: academic outputs, exhibitions, story-telling, a *Museum of Lies* and artwork in order to “unpack the collection” (Byrne et al. 2011). This approach connects these objects, most of which lie dormant, with several identities in which they are placed: locally (rural Wales and Ireland – where the museums are situated), students of UWTSd (primary research) and Xi'an Academy of Art (creative interpretations), local school children (as case studies: Religious Education/English curriculum), local communities in Wales/Ireland/China/Egypt, the research community (Egyptologists,

anthropologists, heritage professionals, Chinese Studies), artists, local business/political networks and more. First methodological and theoretical outcomes were then applied to other past cultures and different modern societal settings enabled by thinking about applicable methodological and theoretical approaches.

As such, this paper will contribute to the areas of Contemporary Issues Seen through/in Ancient Dataset, Cultural Reception of Ancient Worlds, (emerging) Methodology, Public Engagement and Interpretive Approaches.

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