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Abstracts

Oral Presentations

Banquet at Mahal Teglinos (Sudan, third-second millennia BC) Local Recipes and Imported Delicatessen in Protohistoric Eastern Sudan

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The research project conducted by the Italian Archaeological Expedition in the Eastern Sudan of the University of Naples “L’Orientale” and ISMEO has already provided crucial evidence for reconstructing the process of sorghum domestication in the Sahelian belt and the spread and adoption of this crop up in India in the third-second millennia BC. More recently, excavations conducted at the site of Mahal Teglinos, near the Sudanese city of Kassala [eastern Sudan], also led to the discovery of a food preparation, and perhaps consumption area, dating to the end of the 3rd millennium BC. Some data about the way food was processed was collected there, perhaps also throwing light on the origins of the griddles that are still used to cook sorghum and teff bread in some regions of Sudan and on the Ethio-Eritrean highlands. Moreover, the evidence of the possible consumption of delicatessen imported from the First Intermediate Period-early Middle Kingdom¹ Egypt was also collected in the same sector of the site, suggesting that the menu included both local and exotic ingredients, and perhaps even experiments of interethnic cuisine. Finally, some remarks on the social context and the possible meanings of the banquets taking place at Mahal Teglinos will be proposed.

¹ First Intermediate Period: ca. 2100–2030 BC; Middle Kingdom: ca. 2030–1660 BC.

Reconstruction of the Baking Process Based on Depictions in Old Kingdom Tombs

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Bread-baking scenes are one of the most popular decorative motifs depicted in Old Kingdom² tombs. Those depictions are known from the Memphite necropoli, and they are dated mostly to fifth and sixth dynasties.³ In total, one can find 46 tombs with bread-making depictions often accompanied by scenes of beer production as both bakeries and breweries were frequently combined in one workshop complex.

The fullest picture showing the complete baking process is shown in the Mastaba of Ti (located in Sakkara). Additionally, every activity bears information about the character of each action. Scenes depicted in other tombs are either partially preserved or only show chosen fragments of the process. Hence, they are a great source of complementary information. The main goal of this paper is to reconstruct the bread baking process step-by-step based on preserved scenes and their descriptions. Due to dividing depictions into sub-scenes (each showing one activity only) it was possible to reconstruct the whole bread-baking process – starting with retrieving grains from the silo and ending with removing baked bread from the moulds.

² ca. 2649–2100 BC.

³ Fifth dynasty: ca. 2465–2323 BC; sixth dynasty: ca. 2323–2150 BC.

A Historical and Scientific Study of a Pottery Jar of Tutankhamun, Used to Preserve Lentil Seeds

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Lentil was an important element of the ancient Egyptian diet, especially for the poor. Lentil seeds have often found buried with the dead in tombs.

Such an example is a pottery jar belonging to the reign of King Tutankhamun (New Kingdom, Dynasty 18).⁴ The jar was found to be filled with lentils. Structural characteristics and textural properties of the lentil seeds were investigated by microscopic examination. The seeds were studied using a stereomicroscope and SEM.

Based on these analysis, the paper will present the study of preservation methods of lentil seeds in ancient Egypt and definition of structural characteristics and textural properties of lentil seeds.

⁴ Reign of King Tutankhamun: ca. 1336–1327 BC.

Food Connections in Upper Egypt in the Eighth Century AD: a View from a Hermits' Hill

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During the Early Islamic period,⁵ a large number of Coptic hermits lived on a hillside to the north of the town of Djeme (Medinet Habu) in Upper Egypt. The dwellings repurposed Middle and New Kingdom⁶ elite tombs built in and on the hill known today as Sheikh Abd el-Qurna. A Belgian team, under the direction of the late Roland Tefnin and Laurent Bavay, excavated two such neighbouring hermitages on the remains of the chapels and courtyards of tombs TT 29 and TT C3. They yielded architectural structures as well as a wealth of material, including written documents (ostraca and papyri), pottery and organic remains preserved mostly in desiccated form. Together, these provide a detailed image of the daily life of the hermits and their connections with individuals and institutions in the nearby Nile valley.

Archaeological structures (ovens, storage structures), pots (for storage, transport and cooking), written documents and plant remains inform us on several aspects of local foodways: the provisioning of food and drink, the local processing of ingredients, the different uses or values associated with items of food and drink.

How does the diet of these hermits compare with that of coenobitic monks, of people in secular contexts from Late Antique/ Early Islamic times? How was it integrated in the wider food and drink network of the time and (how) can it be identified as belonging to the long transition between the Roman and the Islamic world?

⁵ Early Islamic period in Egypt: AD 641–969.

⁶ Middle Kingdom: ca. 2030–1660 BC; New Kingdom: ca. 1550–1070 BC.

KEYNOTE

Thinking About Monastic Food: Theory, Practice, and the Archaeology of Spatial Design

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In the 1970s, Mary Douglas proposed that the “key kitchen person” is the single individual who documents the relationship between food, cooking, and consumption within a community (Douglas 1973:17). Monastic kitchens in late antique and medieval monastic settlements offer a unique data set for testing the applicability of archaeological and anthropological approaches to foodways within homosocial and institutional settings (Brooks Hedstrom 2017 & forthcoming). This ethnohistorical study of the kitchen and food preparation areas, such as courtyards and associated alleys, will open new avenues for consider how monks monitored ingredients, prepared food, and served meals. New research in the archaeology of cooking — opposed to the archaeology of food —; in the archaeology of communities of practice; and in the archaeology of institutions provides robust lines of inquiry that will illustrate how we can reread and better understand how monastic communities used cooking as a way to structure daily life (Barnes 2011; Harper 2012; Stahl 2014). These fields provide effective lines of questioning to reconsider the role of communities defining space for eating, power dynamics as it relates to eating (Douglas 1975), and the role of the kitchen as a space for mediating social relationships (Beisaw, et al, 2009).

Rather than using the lens of purity, this paper examines concepts such as guides related to contagions in preparing bread or cooking food (Megis 1998). Consuming the bread produced by a monk who laughed or who talked during kneading could, in some monastic literature, lend to the corruption of one who consumed the bread once it was baked. The shift from communal spaces for baking bread and cooking meals to spaces

designed exclusively for cooking presents a unique spatial locus for examining the preparation of food within a panopticon environment (Nelson 2014). In light of a lack of textual evidence, the design of the cooking and baking spaces at a monastic settlement may suggest the form or forms of asceticism practice by the residents in the community (Brooks Hedstrom 2017). The increased attention to cooking as a “craft” (Langlands 2017) and “placemaking” (Ross 1993) will also be considered as theoretical lines of inquiring for constructing a “monastic taskscape” (Ingold 1993; Rajala and Mills 2017) that brings together ingredients, cooking skills, and the physical nature of the kitchen space (Dusselier 2003).

Egypt's National Dish: *Fūl*, Egyptian Identity and Their Reflection in Modern Egyptian Literature

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Fūl (“fava beans”, “broad beans”), often nicknamed ‘*akl il-ġalāba* (“food of the poor”), is the prototypical modern Egyptian dish, and for many Egyptians the main daily food. Its dominance in the Egyptian kitchen has given rise to folklore associated with the dish and its impact on daily life in Egypt.

My paper will discuss the following issues, in three sections:

- a. A short introduction on the types of *Fūl* and the various dishes derived from them, the appropriate time for serving *Fūl* (for example: Ramadan versus the rest of the year and the weekend versus the rest of the week), and the various locations where *Fūl* is consumed.
- b. A short report on humoristic references to *Fūl* among Egyptians and the terminology that has resulted from these references.
- c. The main part of this paper will describe the connection between *Fūl* and Egyptian identity and show how *Fūl* has become a marker of national identity. This will be demonstrated mainly by examples taken from modern Egyptian literature (one short example: two protagonists of a play find themselves in a cave and have no idea where they are. When they search the place they find a sack of *Fūl*, and immediately and happily conclude that they are in Egypt). Among other literary works, the famous poem *il-Fūl wil-laḥma* by Aḥmad Fu’ād Nigm (performed by Sheikh Imām) will be quoted, too.

Food Management at a Monastic Household in the Wadi al-Natrun: The Ceramic Evidence

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Excavation of a monastic residence at the Monastery of John the Little in Wadi al-Natrun [Western Desert, Egypt] by the Yale Monastic Archaeology Project (YMAP) has retrieved a wealth of data concerning the everyday life of this household. The architecture of the multi-phase building provides indicators for the location of some household activities, especially cooking. The floral and faunal remains attest to the use of plant and animal products and by-products in the foodways of the last habitation phase. This is dated to the late ninth-century by the ceramic assemblage left behind when the residence was vacated, although dated *dipinti* within one of the rooms suggests possible visitation into the later tenth century. Analysis of the ceramic assemblage moves beyond the traditional tasks of dating and basic characterisation to investigate various aspects of how the residents engaged with pottery on a day-to-day basis. One aspect is food management, focusing on the key activities of food-preparation and storage, cooking and dining. Comparative tools including ancient literary and documentary texts, ancient visual sources, scientific analyses and recent pottery-usage in Egypt have been used to create criteria through which the purpose-made, recut and reused vessel-types in the John the Little assemblage may be matched to activities. Consideration of how these vessels might have been used, and in what quantities by the monastic householders addresses questions of self-sufficiency, cooking practices and hierarchy within this residence, adding further texture to the understanding of the everyday realities of monastic life.

Street Food and Nourishment of the Poor during the Mamluk Era

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The prosperous life of the Mamluk (648-923AH/ AD1250-1517) sultans resulted in the sophistication of food production and protocols. This prompted studies to be conducted to explore the nutrition of the Mamluk elites, giving examples of the types of food they consumed and describing how food preparation, consumption and distribution were an essential part of most of their ceremonies. On the contrary, the current study focuses on the nutrition of the middle class of the society who depended on ready-made food sold in markets. It intends to describe the types of foods common during the Mamluk era, how they were prepared, cheating methods used during preparation of street food, and how cheating was discovered and prevented by the *Muhtasib*.

The current study also aims to discuss the nourishment of the lower class or the poor who depended primarily on charity. It intends to shed light on the various events and ceremonies during which food was distributed among them, the types of food they received, their regular diet throughout the year, as well as the hardship they often faced at times of crisis.

The study will not only focus on the nutrition of the middle and lower classes in cities, but will also include those in the villages.

Food and Drinks in the Early Egyptian Funerary Tradition – the Case of Tell el-Farkha and and Tel Erani

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Food accompanied Egyptians in every aspect of their life, even after death. Archaeological evidence shows that as early as the 4th millennium BC, the idea of food offerings was deeply embedded into Egyptian burial customs. Thanks to the Polish excavation project conducted at the site of Tell el-Farkha [eastern Delta], where more than 150 graves of Proto- and Early Dynastic periods⁷ were discovered, we gain new insight into the evolving practice of funerary feeding and feasting.

The Tell el-Farkha graves of the Proto- and Early Dynastic periods represent two distinct cemeteries that document major social and political changes within Egyptian society in the age of state formation. The excavations revealed traces which can be interpreted as remains of various kinds of food and drinks: wine, beer, bread, cereals, meat, fish, etc. used as grave goods or for funerary feasting. Interestingly, their diversity, the popularity of certain kinds and their locations in particular graves changed over time, which proves that deep cultural transformation into the early Egyptian society also influenced also evolution of burial customs.

Remains of food production and storage such as breweries, bakeries, ovens/hearths or silos found in the settlement part of the site show that at least the most common types of food we find in graves were made locally. The scale of manufacture evolved from small household activity into centralized mass production, coinciding with sepulchral changes and supplementing our knowledge of early Egyptian burial traditions.

⁷ Protodynastic period: ca. 3300–3100 BC; Early Dynastic period: ca. 3100–2649 BC.

Fish and Fodder: the Alternative Food Supply Chain Found on Elephantine Island, Aswan

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The standard repertoire of private tomb ‘daily life’ scenes from the Old – New Kingdoms⁸ depict the chain of food supply as being the cultivation of cereals (wheat and barley) and gathering fruits, alongside raising cattle, sheep and goats, supplemented with (hunted) fowl and fish. Cereal processing by-products, and sometimes the cereals themselves, were fed to animals as fodder for extra fattening. The picture emerging from recent excavations on Elephantine Island [Aswan, southern Egypt] – the ‘Realities of Life’ Project – reveals a different image. Pigs were common, living within settlements, together with cattle, sheep, and goats, which formed a relatively small part of daily diet. The inhabitants appear to have relied almost entirely upon fishing as their primary source of animal food, whilst maintaining cultivation of cereals and gathering fruit. This leaves us with a confusing question: if there was sufficient land for crops, there would have at least been some areas for grazing as well as a supply of fodder from cereal processing waste, and it would have been simple to maintain traditional practices of rearing sheep and goats – therefore – what caused the local inhabitants to turn away from traditional pastoral practices? It seems that this shift away from the “traditional” subsistence pattern on Elephantine Island was a deliberate choice, and would have certainly altered economic and cultural behaviours in the local area. In this paper we discuss the evidence for this shift, and the probable causes and consequences of the adoption of a different food supply chain.

⁸ ca. 2649–1070 BC.

Cooking and Drinking in Egypt during the Early Medieval Centuries: A Time of Changes on the Table and in the Kitchen

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It is often said with some conviction that the Arab-Muslim conquest⁹ brought the technique, function and increasing use of glazing ceramics in Egypt. This revolution in terms of ceramic production somehow obliterates the other innovations appearing in the Umayyad and Abbasid kitchens. Some changes in the shapes and technology of the vessels suggest new habits and cooking practices. For example, soapstone ware is convenient for stewing due to its refractory properties. Its utilization could be linked with the use of oriental spices, as Islamic cookbooks described it. Changes of capacity for drinking vessels, and size of the glass cups are also significant.

As with food preparation and traditions, cooking processings are also defined by cultural identities. Changes observed in the early medieval period may reflect the presence in Egypt of new groups of inhabitants or at least their influence. Continuities, in wine production and consumption for instance, and transitions to medieval and oriental habits will be presented in this paper. Relying on vessels made of pottery, stone and glass found in archaeological contexts, this talk aims at presenting the new habits in the preparation and consumption of food as well as the new special organization of the kitchen.

⁹ AD 641.

The Impact of the Hellenistic and Roman World on Eating and Drinking Habits in Upper Egypt. Changes in the Local Repertoire of forms of Syene, Aswan

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Syene, today's modern town of Aswan [southern Egypt], represents the southernmost town in the Ptolemaic realm and subsequently in the Roman Empire. When Egypt was conquered by Alexander the Great in 332 BC and later 30 BC by Augustus, an increased Greek-Hellenistic as well as Roman influence spread over Egypt.

While in the fourth century BC the local ceramic production still followed Egyptian traditions, a distinct change in the repertoire of forms can be recognized in the third century BC. Apart from a few imports from the Mediterranean, the shape repertoire of the Hellenistic and Roman prototypes was stylistically imitated by using locally available clay raw materials.

Most dominantly, tableware such as the "Echinus bowls" had been reproduced in Syene, testifying to the adoption of Greek vessel shapes. The repertoire of cooking ware in particular was strongly influenced by the Greek world. With the emergence of completely new cooking vessels, such as casseroles or frying pans, the population of Syene also adopted foreign cooking habits.

The Greek and Roman influence on the local ceramic production of Syene, especially on table ware and cooking ware, indicates a change in the eating and drinking habits which probably came to Egypt with the respective rulers.

Multidisciplinary Study on the Ancient Egyptian Wine Production

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In Ancient Egypt, wine was a prestigious drink consumed mainly by royalty and the elite, offered to gods in religious rituals, used in medicine and in the Pharaoh's resurrection ritual.

Egyptian wine culture is one of the world's most ancient, however, the extensive archaeological findings have not been fully investigated.

The EGYWINE research project (2016-2018) investigates how the Egyptian wines were made to understand the ancient traditional elaboration methods for the knowledge advancement and heritage conservation.

Based on our previous research, EGYWINE analyses:

- The scenes of viticulture and winemaking depicted on the walls of 92 tombs of the nobles from the Old Kingdom (2680-2160 BC) to the Greco-Roman Period (332 BC-395 AD),
 - The typology of wine jars and their production to know how the jars were made to contain wine,
 - The wine inscriptions to know the ancient winemaking procedures such as maceration,
 - The ancient Egyptian bacteria and fermentation yeasts involved in the fermentation process to know the way of preserving wine,
 - The modern amphora wine production in the Mediterranean region.
- EGYWINE seeks to understand the Egyptian footprint on the history of wine culture.

Modern amphora wine producers aim to produce natural wines and different tastes to their products. What information can be obtained that is similar to ancient Egyptian techniques? Preliminary results reveal some relevant steps of the vinification techniques and the fermentation process.

Food and Ritual. An Anthropological Perspective

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The use of food and drink in a ritual context is not often obvious, but when we think of linking of food with special occasions and festivals, and often limiting it to these, it becomes clearer. For example, many Americans in the past were accustomed to only eating turkey at Thanksgiving, and even now it is rare to cook the whole bird except at this important ceremonial family gathering. Numerous pastries are reserved for special occasions, like gingerbread for Christmas in Europe, No Egyptian *Eid Al Fitr*, the feast holiday that marks the end of Ramadan, is complete without *Kabk*, the lightly spiced crumbly cookie stuffed with sticky sweet date paste (*agwa*), walnuts or pistachios.

Because of its central place in our lives, food becomes a perfect vehicle for ritual and plays an important role in magical practises. Whether in funerary contexts, wedding ceremonies, childbirth or practises to drive away evil spirits, food is an essential ingredient - either in its use or in its denial (as in religious fasting) to mark the passage into or out of a ritual state. The dead can also be remembered and celebrated through eating. We observe this during Saints' festivals and in Coptic and Islamic feasts, when the cemeteries in Egypt become the centre of the celebration. While such feasts provide a practical opportunity to draw people closer to one another in the occasion of sharing a common meal, they also serve the perceived ritual purpose of feeding the dead and uniting them with the celebrants in the common act of eating, with all its rich, symbolic associations.

Meat and Fish Consumption in Ptolemaic Alexandria: Zooarchaeological Evidence from *Necropolis* and Settlements

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Food habits in Greek cities are not well known in Egypt or in the rest of Hellenistic world. The study of animal bones, among first evidences of food practices, can give concrete information about meat consumption.

For several years, zooarchaeological studies have been carried out on faunal remains excavated on archaeological sites in Alexandria by the French Center (CEAlex). This type of approach increases knowledge of food usages and the place of livestock, poultry, wildlife, and fish products in alimentation in the ancient city during the Hellenistic period.¹⁰

The corpus of this presentation comes from three urban domestic sites (Cricket Ground, Theatre Diana, and former British Consulate) and the *Necropolis* of Gabbari (third–first centuries BC). Methods applied during archaeological excavations collected at least 10,000 remains of mammals, birds, molluscs and fish.

This study presents taxa identified in each site, describes steps of meat quarters preparations and slaughtering. With three sites, it is possible to compare and observe similarities and differences between species consumed, quality of meat and preparations. We discuss the possibility of determining food patterns in the world of the living as well as that of the dead. Zooarchaeological evidence highlights the diversity of food choices in the most ancient funerary and domestic areas of Alexandria.

¹⁰ ca. 323–30 BC.

The Fadija Cuisine Before and After the Relocation

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For ages, traditional Nubian cuisine was passed down from one generation to another and has been considered part of their daily life. The building of the High Dam and the relocation to New Nubia, Esna and cities like Alexandria has imposed a different life style on Nubians. It brought about changes in the raw materials and utensils they used in cooking and serving food as well as the type of dishes themselves. In its own right, food became a way for Nubians to hold on to their cultural identity.

The aim of this paper is to focus on popular Fadija dishes before and after 1964, both in New Nubia and Alexandria and trace the changes and innovations. Taking anthropological studies by Ibrahim Sharawy and Fadwa El Guindi as starting points, interviews are carried out with people from New Nubia and Alexandria born before and after the relocation as part of a project to document traditional Nubian dishes, what has survived of them and the changes they underwent to suit their new environments. Part of the paper will be dedicated to food taboos as well as food offerings and whether or not they survived the relocation.

Star of the Nile: How Stella Became the Beer of Egypt, 1882-1980

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To order a Stella beer in Egypt is a unique experience. Almost anywhere else in the world, when one asks for a Stella you receive the Belgian pilsner, Stella Artois. Yet in Egypt, one receives a big green bottle with a yellow label that carries a silver star encircled with blue. This paper examines how this Stella became the beer of Egypt.

It did not appear fully formed as the Egyptian beer *par excellence*; like many who have come to the country, Stella was Egyptianized. Using unstudied American, Dutch, and Egyptian archival sources, as well as Arabic literary, audio, and visual sources, this paper tells three interlinked stories about Stella's Egyptianization: the transformation of two companies, Crown and Pyramid Breweries, the sellers of Stella, from transnational beer ventures into unequivocally Egyptian companies; the transformation of the product itself from a foreign and vaguely illicit product to an unquestionably Egyptian one; and the transformation of brewing technology from foreign importations to accepted methods of Egyptian beer-making. These transformations happened during an exciting period, from 1882 until 1980, spanning Egypt's move from a quasi-colonial state under British Occupation to an independent country within a highly competitive global economy. To tell this story we must rely on a hybrid history. Instead of cordoning technological, economic, and cultural affairs apart from one another, this paper shows that the three spheres only make sense when they are considered together.

Food as Therapy. Aspects of Medical Discourse of Mamluk and Early-Post Mamluk Egypt (13th-17th centuries)

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When in the course of the eighth and ninth centuries the Galenic doctrine of humoral pathology was imported into the Arabic-Islamic Near East, it was accepted almost immediately as an integral component of its medical culture, on both the scholarly and practical level. Founded on the ancient concept that all things were composed of the Four Elements, the doctrine implied a specific style of therapy which aimed at restoring health by treating a disease with therapeutics such as drugs and, above all, properly selected food.

The complex knowledge regarding the Greek doctrine evolved in time – either simplified and misinterpreted or combined with other kinds of knowledge, including popular healing traditions or the Muḥammadan dietary tradition as featured in the so-called medicine of the Prophet. At the same time, the waning interest in secular scholarship and the concurrent increase of religious components in medical discourse resulted in the decrease of the significance of Greco-Arabic thought for the medical culture of Egypt and the Islamic Near East in general.

Nevertheless, the fundamental tenets of humoral theory continued to determine the mental horizon of the city dwellers, so much so that even as late as in the Ottoman period the ancient qualities of hot, cold, dry and wet continued to shape cultured people's thinking on medicine, health, illness and food.

Taking a number of Cairene medical books as a demonstration model, I will try to demonstrate how influential the Greek dietary concepts remained in 13th-16th-century Egypt, and how they were modified or recombined so as to fit into changing cultural circumstances.

Cultivating Nile Islands: Agriculture and Land-Use at New Kingdom Amara West (1300 -1070 BC) and Perspectives from Present-Day Ernetta Island

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The town at Amara West [north Sudan] was occupied between 1300 and 1000 BC, and was founded as the administrative centre of occupied Upper Nubia. Amara West was originally located on an island but channels running north of the town dried up during its occupation.

This paper will present archaeobotanical evidence for the agricultural practices at the town, focusing on cereals. Perspectives from nearby present-day Ernetta Island will also be drawn on, particularly concerning hulled barley processing and cultivation. This research is a component of an AHRC funded research project ‘Sustainability and Subsistence Systems in a Changing Sudan’ which more broadly investigates recent and ancient crop changes and risk management within agricultural strategies of Nile settlements.

“Every Friend with Whom I Drank and Ate”

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In some contexts, occasions centred around sharing food, help us to understand emotional and social aspects of ancient Egyptian life. A number of texts explicitly mention eating together beyond the formal context of festive banquets and convivial occasions, and certain documents denote sharing food as a sign of closeness or friendship.

In some letters, while reminding someone of having been old eating companions, seemingly an indication of instability, it is inferred that the persons who shared food were friends or family. Sharing food in old days was therefore clearly a sign of affection. In this association the question arises whether sharing food may be an allusion to close relations; an approach which helps to culturally investigate food consumption behaviour in ancient Egypt.

Sharing food on the basis of close relationships helps to recognize the identity of social groups, and is thus particularly significant in trying to interpret the social act of eating together. In this sense it is assumed to offer a context for such a mode of behaviour.

For the purpose of this study, the texts that mention eating together in a social context were analyzed in order to define more precisely the relationships between individuals and society, by especially referring to the togetherness feeling that such gatherings provoke.

The Big Question: How Were the Pyramids built? The Answer: by Well-Fed People...!

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For millennia people have sought answers to the question “how were the pyramids built?” seeking some kind of solution to what seems – to many – an incomprehensible achievement. What is perhaps even more incomprehensible is how they organised this project and, in particular, the economic infrastructure that supported it. The success of any major construction project depends not only upon a team of highly experienced and skilled administrators and managers, and efficient organisation of the labour force, but on the supply of sufficient food and materials. Where workers live, and how they are fed, are two of the most crucial aspects needing consideration – without a well-run, healthy, and compliant (happy) workforce, the project will be in jeopardy from the outset. The town of the ‘workers’ associated with the construction of the Khafre and Menkaure pyramids at Giza was discovered in 1988 by Mark Lehner, and excavations over the past 30 years by AERA have revealed a highly complex town which housed officials, scribes, and teams of skilled workers involved with the construction project. Integrated studies of the material culture (stone tools, domestic artefacts, seal impressions, ceramics, faunal and botanical remains), the buildings in different areas of the town, texts, results from experimental archaeology, and historical data, reveal a highly organised community that was imbedded in a regional strategy of agro-pastoral spatial diversity. The town’s food supplies depended on specialisation in villages elsewhere, an efficient network of delivery, and highly organised management of storage and food-processing to ensure that the inhabitants – who were dependent upon the state – were well-fed and free from nutrition-related disease.

Dietary Transgressions? An Investigation of Diet among the Monks of Ghazali, Sudan

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Self-removal from society to live an ascetic monastic life has long been associated, both in written accounts and cultural conceptions, with restraint and self-denial of luxury, allowing the individual to focus on spiritual empowerment while living on a restricted diet. This model is evident in medieval Egyptian and Nubian monasticism, where accounts of the diets of monks indicate a prescribed reliance on vegetal and grain based products, mainly bread, with proposed abstention from meat and other animal products. Yet a strict adherence to such dietary prescriptions was not always undertaken.

In this study, we examine the evidence for dietary intake among a series of monks interred in the monastic cemetery (Cemetery 2) at the site of Ghazali, located in the Bayuda desert of northern Sudan. Using a combination of textual insight, material culture, faunal evidence, and isotope data, we present a picture of a monastic community in which the dietary intake of monks varied both in the type of foods eaten as well as, evidently, in the adherence to dietary prescriptions for the monastic lifestyle, with numerous individuals exhibiting evidence of animal product intake over an extended period of time. We discuss the implications of these findings in light of dietary recommendations and potential hierarchical differences in foodstuff consumption within the Ghazali community.

Culinary Infrastructure and Traditions in Early 20th Century Cairo Mansions: In Addendum, a List of Some of “the Lost Recipes of the Notables of Egypt”

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I grew up in a 19th century mansion built by my grandfather in Dokki. Though he had passed away years before I was born, the rules governing the household went unchanged till the 1952 Revolution. This paper will draw a picture of a transitional period where Westernized habits were being grafted on traditional modes of life, with a special focus on culinary traditions.

The construction of the house reflected this change: It had “Italianate” façades and rooms built around a central hall, a covered transposition of the traditional courtyard of medieval domestic architecture. Like the latter it had several entrances and was meant to house an extended family. As it reproduced some features of traditional architecture it also introduced new accommodations. Some of these announced future habits and were to take root, like *odet el sufrab*, the dining room, while others such as *odet el mesaferine* (the room of travellers) were not to survive the transition.

This paper reviews the relationship between the mistress of the house and two important actors: The cook for “downstairs” and the *soufragui* for “upstairs”. It describes the organization of a kitchen and a household mixing local and Ottoman traditions with Western trends and the way they adapted to new technologies and to the introduction of new eating rituals that resulted from the adoption of a dining room.

The presentation will include some of the rules that regulated food presentation, the special ways allowing for the storing of foodstuffs before the introduction of electric refrigeration and the choice of menus for particular celebrations as well as for reveling and mourning events. It will also list some of “the lost recipes of the notables of Egypt”.

Ancient Diets in Egypt and Sudan: a Direct Biochemical Approach

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Although there are numerous ways to investigate the food and drink consumed in antiquity, perhaps the most powerful evidence is based on material obtained from inside the mouth. One such material is dental calculus (tartar), which is able to provide a wealth of data relating to the diet of ancient individuals and, where numbers allow, the ancient population in general. Despite significant archaeological and analytical challenges, the application of a biomarker approach can identify compounds characteristic of the original organic materials, and since they remain resistant to chemical and microbial degradation it is often possible to identify not only the foods consumed but any evidence of processing and other environmental exposures. The utilization of sequential thermal desorption-gas chromatography-mass spectrometry (TD-GC-MS) and pyrolysis-gas chromatography-mass spectrometry (Py-GC-MS) facilitates the characterization and identification of both free biomolecules and more intractable bound organic material/biopolymers commonly present in aged organic residues. These chemical investigations can therefore detect a diverse range and source of fats and oils, carbohydrates and proteinaceous

materials, in addition to biomarkers indicative of specific herbs and spices, providing insights into diet and into the wider spheres of health/medicine, trade routes, geopolitics and even cultural identity. Such scientific findings can then be compared with the archaeological and historical evidence for ancient cuisine, including artistic and textual evidence, as demonstrated in studies from both Egypt (e.g. Abusir el-Meleq [near the Faiyum]) and Sudan (e.g. Al Khiday [central Sudan]).

The Politics and Local Practice of Food Distribution at the
Shenoutean Women's Monastery at Atripe: Textual and
Archaeological Evidence from the Fifth to the Early Seventh
Century

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In her 2002 book, *Shenoute and the Women of the White Monastery*, Rebecca Krawiec engaged in a close reading of Shenoute's *Canons* to trace the early history of female monastics living under his monastic rule in the vicinity of Atripe across the Nile from Panopolis in Upper Egypt. Her study documented local contestations related to practices of food distribution within the fifth-century Shenoutean federation. In this paper, I report on recent archaeological work conducted at the site of Atripe. Sponsored by the Yale Monastic Archaeology Project (YMAP), in conjunction with the University of Tübingen and the Egyptian Ministry of Antiquities, this work has focused on a refectory and an adjacent six-pillared hall associated with the administration of goods and the storage of food. My study of *dipinti* painted on the walls of these spaces provides the first definitive, *in situ* evidence that the remains there belonged to the Shenoutean women's monastery. The epigraphic data consist of late sixth- and early seventh-century writings by the female monastics themselves, including the head of the women's community as well as a host of other named figures self-identified as virgins or novices. As I will show, this corpus of evidence also includes a previously undocumented rule of Shenoute and sheds important light on ongoing concerns related to the storage and distribution of food and water within the women's monastery in the century and a half after Shenoute's death.

The Development of an Agrarian Foodway on the West African Savanna: A Comparative Perspective on Egyptian and Sudanese Culinary Dynamics

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The transition from hunting and gathering to agriculture is understood as one of the most important and consequential shifts in human history. For many scholars, the domestication of plants and its corollary social, cultural and economic developments are defining features of “civilization” and a fundamentally new “foodway.” Generations of researchers have focused attention on the Fertile Crescent in the Near East as the epicenter and model for this key transition, typically framed as the Agricultural Revolution. More recently scholars have been studying the innovative development of agriculture on the African continent with a focus on two specific regions: the Eastern Sahara (including present day Egypt, Ethiopia and Sudan) and the Western Sahara (including present day Algeria, Mali and Niger). Studies have shown that agrarian transitions and foodways in these contexts exhibit important similarities and differences with the Near East and also reveal commonalities and contrasts between these two African settings.

In this paper I explore the development of agriculture on the West African savanna in order to provide a comparative perspective on Egyptian and Sudanese culinary dynamics. Drawing on archaeological and linguistic evidence, first-hand accounts from pre-colonial travelers and colonial administrators, and insights from my own long-term ethnographic research, I offer a synthetic portrait of West African agrarian food culture and culinary practices and highlight the ways in which they parallel and diverge from reported patterns in Egypt, Sudan and neighboring locations.

Culinary Terms of African Origin according to *De Re Coquinaria*

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The oldest surviving cookbook known as *De Re Coquinaria - The Art of Cooking* (4th-5th c. A.D.) represents the main source of ancient Culinary Art containing a ten-volume collection of almost 500 Roman cooking recipes.

The work is attributed to the 1st century Epicurean Marcus Gavius Apicius - a well-known Roman gourmand. At that time the Roman Empire stretched from north-western Europe to Africa. Consequently, the Empire was filled with plentiful food ingredients and traditions which often came from Africa.

Unsurprisingly, *The Art of Cooking* by Apicius, along with the ancient Greek and Roman traditional culinary knowledge and interpretation, provides significant information on the African culinary traditions and terminology used in Roman Culinary Art. Especially, in the art of seasoning and flavouring derived from African *Ferula tingitana*.

In the paper we will examine plant-based culinary, cooking recipes and culinary terms named as Egyptian, or African in *De Re Coquinaria*. Among them are: *colocasia*, *faba Aegyptiaca*, and *cyamus* - plants brought from Africa and known to the Romans as the *Egyptian Beans*; *arum maximum Aegypticum*, *Asafoetida* - the most frequently used ingredient in Apician recipes - obtained by the Romans from the African province of Cyrene; *ferula tingitana* - the native African plant, etc.

Meroitic Kitchens

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Systematic investigations by a current DAI project in the region of Meroe (Sudan) have highlighted the organisation of social activities and everyday practices within the sub-Saharan town site of Hamadab [near Meroe, in Upper Nubia] (ca. second century BC – fourth century AD). These brought to light *in situ* food processing units are Meroitic (third century BC to fourth century AD), including important assemblages of domestic contexts and the material culture of food preparation and consumption. The kitchens and their associated artefacts incorporate a range of storage, cooking and serving vessels as well as utilised tools that will serve as functional indicators for understanding the cultural and functional processes related to ancient Sudanese foodways.

Of particular interest are domestic kitchens in late Meroitic households discovered within the residential quarters of Hamadab. The setting and installations within these kitchens as well as its ceramic repertoire, including baking plates, cooking pots and ceramic ovens, will be presented. The aim is to identify a typical set of kitchen assemblage at the site level and to reconstruct the relevant range of tools utilised in the region of Meroe for the preparation of meals. This will serve as a means to establish the local tradition within which food choices, cooking techniques and recurring activities are organised.

Eating in Ancient Egypt: Semiotics of an Iconographic Absence

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Yearly festivals, popular events, religious celebrations, funerary banquets...there was no shortage of occasions for feasting in ancient Egypt, as witnessed by the numerous depictions of banquet scenes on Egyptian tomb walls. However, amidst wine jars, cuts of meat, trays loaded with dates, honey or vegetables, one may wonder why none of the banquet guests is ever depicted eating—with the notable exception of the royal family during the Amarna Period.

This paper intends to investigate, through a semiotic approach of images, what could appear at first as an iconographic taboo. From the isolated meal of the dead to the festive social banquets, it explores the iconographic continuities, divergences and revivals in the iconography of eating between the Old Kingdom and the Late Period.¹¹

Elaborating on semiotic efficiency, usage of visual puns and both the social and epistemological implications of such depictions, we will try to understand what images can reveal about the true meaning of eating in ancient Egypt.

¹¹ ca. 2649–332 BC.

Evening Lecture

Feasts Fit for Pharaohs: Food and Drink in Ancient Egypt

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Food is crucial for human survival. However, it provides us with more than fuel for existence; it can be said to be a driving force in forming a culture or religion, and identifying a people. This lecture deals with the methodologies employed in studying food in ancient Egypt, and focuses on the ingredients available, how these might have been prepared, and what different consumption patterns reveal about various socio-economic and religious groups in ancient Egypt.

Posters

Monastic Delicacies: Exploring the Notion of “Tasty” in the Meals of Egyptian Monks

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Food consumption in a monastic context is an interesting issue given its high significance in ascetic practices. The constant effort of the monks to overcome sin through the absolute repression of any desire evoked the model of undernourished individuals, whose achievements in fasting and abstinence were often supernatural. However, even the texts that aimed to praise the spiritual accomplishments of the monks refer to certain delicacies that were sometimes included in their meals.

“Tasty” foodstuffs consumed by Egyptian monks are the main subject of this presentation. A first step is to gather information both from hagiographical and documentary texts in an effort to compose a list of “special” victuals that the Egyptian monastic diet would have included. It will then be explored how often each of these delicacies was consumed, through a comparative examination of the hagiographical and the documentary texts. The results of this inquiry will then be compared with the still scarce archaeological evidence (archaeobotanical and archaeozoological reports, pottery studies etc.).

Without overlooking the most usual foodstuffs that the Egyptian monks seemed to prefer, it will be interesting to examine whether these “delicacies” were indeed luxurious enough to corrupt the ideal monastic model of extreme abstinence.

Doum, Dates and Cereals...: Establishing Archaeologies of Interaction Between Egypt and the African Nile basin, Paleoethnobotanical Approach

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"Egypt is the gift of the Nile" a quote by Herodotus that reflects the inception of Western scholarship viewing Egypt as a unique civilization shaped by the Nile. Absent in this statement, however, is the human element that shaped the history of the Nile and the diverse yet interlinked cultural identities that rose along its banks. In addition, the birth of Egyptology within Orientalist and colonialist frameworks created a paradigm that emphasizes Egypt's interaction with the Ancient Near East creating a de-Africanized history of Egypt. This project introduces interdisciplinary methods and theories of paleoethnobotany to the social archaeology of food in Egypt and Sudan to establish a paradigm shift, emphasizing the intersectionality of identities between Egypt and the African Nile basin. It presents paleoethnobotanical data recovered from the 17th dynasty site of Deir el Ballas [Upper Egypt]. Closer look is given to remains of fruits indigenous to Egypt and the Nile basin, such as dates, Persea, and doum as a lens to Egypt's African dimension.

Ethnoarchaeological data collected from Beni-Sweif [near Faiyum] will be integrated to problematize the interpretation of plant uses into indigenous food and drinkways to unfold histories of cultural interactions in inter-regional scale. To situate these food histories into the larger landscape of the Nile, sources such as Arabic manuscripts provide an ethno-historical context to map the interconnections of the diverse cultures along the Nile before the creation of colonial geopolitical borders and a modern dam. A key implication of these contextualized food histories is to establish the archaeologies of interactions between-Egypt and Sudan by rethinking the Nile as cultural space by which identities across its banks were shaped, maintained, interacted and intersected.

Heritage of Meat Products in Nubia Region: Past and Present

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Nubia, an area spanning southern Egypt and northern Sudan, has a traditional cultural and social heritage that includes different types of meat and meat-based products/meals, cooking traditions and eating habits. However, to the best of the authors' knowledge, there is a lack of in-depth research that compares the authenticity of the heritage of such products and habits in the past and present.

This study aims to survey and describe different meats and meat-based products in Nubia from the past to the present day. To achieve this, the study considered pragmatism as its philosophical worldview and employed sequential mixed methods (Qual → qual) research design and an abductive approach. Consequently photography, interviews and questionnaires were employed to collect data.

The initial findings of this study revealed that there are numerous impressive ritual menus which the Nubians depicted in their tombs, temples. Their tables were rich with victuals which seem to invite the observer to some gorgeous repast. In addition, the list which written for the deceased included no less than ten sorts of meat, some kinds of meat soup, and different kinds of fowl.

In sum, meat and meat-based meals/products in Nubia reflect a culinary identity which has been maintained for millennia. Not only that, but it is also believed to be a potential marketing tool to promote gastronomic and culinary tourism in the present.

Times of Exchange – Greco-Roman Influences on the Cuisine of the Inhabitants of Syene, Modern Aswan

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The ancient town of Syene, modern Aswan [Upper Egypt], has functioned as a centre for trade and exchange throughout its history. Archaeological remains recovered from this border town at the First Nile Cataract document a history beginning in the Late Period under Persian rule continuously until the Mamluk period.¹² Over the course of the Greco-Roman period in Egypt¹³ the functions of the town on Elephantine as the administrative, trade and religious centre of the First Nile Cataract were finally transferred to Syene. While the island settlement diminished considerably, the mainland town flourished.

Through the placement of military units in the town for warfare and border control as well as the settlement of their families and merchants, the inhabitants of Syene have been highly influenced in their cultural and everyday life by foreigners from various backgrounds: Persians, Arameans, Greeks, Romans and others. However, the Greek and Roman impact in particular is reflected not only in the change of the style of building, public facilities and spaces but also in the culinary habits. New recipes for meat processing and storage were introduced and adjusted to the local resources. Preferences of meat changed noticeably within mammals and fish. Social status alterations of the town's inhabitants may well have acted as a trigger for these changes.

¹² Late Period: 664–332 BC; Mamluk period: AD 1250–1517.

¹³ ca. 332 BC–AD 364.

Milk in Nutritional Manufactures

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Milk was an item of great significance in the religious life of the Ancient Egyptians. As a symbol of purity and rejuvenation, it appeared as an important offering made both to the gods and the dead. It was additionally used in various religious rituals.

Although milk was used in manufacturing some forms of cheese and sour-milk, the manufacturing of “real” cheese in ancient Egypt is doubtful. In spite of its production being somewhat simple (by letting the curd stand pressed), somehow, there is no word for cheese in the Ancient Egyptian language.

The first indication of cheese manufacturing in Ancient Egypt came from Hor-Aha’s tomb (First Dynasty). Another was from tomb 3477 (Second Dynasty) at Saqqara [near Cairo]. Small jars were discovered containing some forms of cheese. Additionally, there was a scene from tomb TT 217 which scholars argue depicts the process of cheese manufacturing.

As for sour-milk, it was one of the oldest products extracted from milk, and was known as “smi”. This word appeared in the Middle Kingdom,¹⁴ and is sometimes translated as cream or butter. “Smi” is mentioned in Egyptian medical texts, where it was primarily used as cough medicine, and also in offering lists such as the Harris papyrus.

The aim of this paper is to highlight the uses of dairy products and to discuss previous research done on the topic.

¹⁴ ca. 2030–1660 BC.

Cooking and Storing Food among the «Commoners» in Graeco-Roman Egypt

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In the past years, there has been an ever-growing interest in domestic architecture in general and the conduct of a “commoner’s” life. For my Masters thesis, I was able to study domestic and small baths, and now in my PhD studies, my aim is to explore the common kitchen(s) and storage areas in the remaining houses of the Saite period up to the Roman period.¹⁵

What is an “ordinary” Egyptian kitchen and what are its storage areas? Did the Persians, Greeks, then Romans, bring anything to it?

The goal will be to identify the cooking area(s) starting with the kilns, pottery and up to the storage bins, to locate and then to understand the spot(s) chosen for these functions since they have a specific meaning. In order to be able to collect this data, all the information will be inserted into a database of my creation.

The Fayoum seems like the perfect starting point for this study since its houses are well documented on different archaeological levels. Thus, my current approach is mainly archaeological but will later develop a ceramological and an archaeobotanical approach in order for this study to be more complete.

This presentation will demonstrate the place that the kitchen occupies and its importance in the «classic» Egyptian household of that time, and how it might have changed through time.

¹⁵ Saite period: 688–525 BC; Roman Period: 30 BC–AD 364.

Foods, Banquets and Sweets of Mawlid al-Nabi Festival in Egypt

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When the Fatimids ruled Egypt,¹⁶ they established new religious festivals which were named as “mawlids”. Those festivals celebrated the birthdays of the prophet Mohamed (PBUH) and those of his family members. The most important one was that of the prophet, *mawlid al-nabi*, where the Fatimids were known to have distributed foods and sweets among the people. This was for political propaganda. The Fatimid Caliphate declined and disappeared, but the *mawlids* and the sweets remained a staple part of Egyptian culture to this day.

Numerous historians and travellers who had lived in or passed by Egypt, gave descriptions of the different kinds of foods and banquets which took place in *Mawlid al-Nabi*. Today, the interest continues and has prompted several studies focusing on the festival and the different types of foods related to it.

The aim of this study is to identify the different types of *mawlid* related foods, sweets and banquets and their development. Moreover, it will demonstrate how rulers historically showed great interest in holding official banquets for this occasion and how their governments customarily distributed the *mawlid* sweets among the public.

¹⁶ AD 969-1171.