

# ALTERING IMAGES

## ICONOCLASM in Egypt

International Workshop  
Université de Liège  
12th-14th May 2021



LIÈGE université  
Philosophie et Lettres  
UR Mondes Anciens



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## Wednesday, May 12, 2021 – *Wounded Egyptian images*

Zoom link:

<https://unibas.zoom.us/j/62506073594?pwd=bjQwN1g4UjlJUFNqYlNXRWF1L0NmZz09>

14:00 (Liège/Basel/Paris/Cairo time)

14:10 Introduction

By Simon CONNOR, Chargé de recherche, F.R.S.-FNRS, Liège University, and Vera Elizabeth ALLEN, PhD student, University of Basel, Eikones

14:55 *Exhibiting Iconoclasm: Scholarly Narratives and Public Expectations*

By Edward BLEIBERG, Curator Emeritus, Brooklyn Museum, Egyptian Art Department

15h30 Break

15:45 *Hatshepsut: condemning a ruler to non-existence*

By Dimitri LABOURY, Directeur de recherches, F.R.S.-FNRS. Professeur adjoint, Liege University

16:15 *Twilight(s) in Heliopolis: episodes of destruction in the city of the sun*

By Simon CONNOR, Chargé de recherche, F.R.S.-FNRS, Liège University, and Dietrich RAUE, Curator, Leipzig Museum; co-director of the Egyptian-German mission in Heliopolis

16:45 Break

17:00 *Rewriting the Present: Memory sanctions and pharaohs in Roman Egypt*

By Nicola BARBAGLI, PhD student, Istituto Italiano per gli Studi Storici (Napoli); Scuola Normale di Pisa

17:30 *On some aspects of Christian iconoclasm*

By Françoise DUNAND, Professeur émérite à l'Université de Strasbourg

18:00 *The image-issue in Islam*

By Antoine LE BAIL, École du Louvre



## Thursday, May 13, 2021 – *The end of the Eighteenth dynasty*

Zoom link:

<https://unibas.zoom.us/j/63110118021?pwd=eExZTGlxSUNCRS81MW16TTIYWjFmUT09>

14:00 (Liège/Basel/Paris/Cairo time)

14:10 *Adapting to ideology: Akhenaton and his father's house of millions of years*

By Susanne BICKEL, Professor, University of Basel

14:45 *Attacking Amun: Problems of Amarna iconoclasm*

By Christian BAYER, Curator, Roemer- und Pelizaeus-Museum Hildesheim

15:15 Break

15:30 *The colossi of Akhenaten at Karnak:*

*Adaptation – mutilation – oblivion*

By Lise MANNICHE, formerly Assistant Professor, University of Copenhagen

16:00 *Damage to royal statuary at Akhetaten during the Post-Amarna era*

By Kristin THOMPSON, Amarna Project

16:45 Break

17:00 *The image and text program of the temple of Amenhotep III at Wadi es-Sebua: a case study in continuous updating of cult buildings*

By Martina ULLMANN, Professor at the Institute of Egyptology, Ludwig-Maximilians-University, Munich, and Regine SCHULZ, Director, Roemer- und Pelizaeus Museum Hildesheim

17:30 *Mutilated and immobilized signs*

By Stéphane POLIS, Chercheur qualifié, F.R.S.-FNRS, Liège University, and Renaud PIETRI, Boursier post-doctorat, Liège University



## Friday, May 14, 2021 - Reuses, tomb destructions, Egypt and the Near East

Zoom link:

<https://unibas.zoom.us/j/66128184331?pwd=N1FkS05HRnp4WWNTRHdidXpMQ05MQT09>

- 14:00 Welcome
- 14:40 *Ramesside revisions*  
By Tom HARDWICK, Consulting curator, Houston Museum of Natural Science
- 15:10 *How private sculptures were altered in the Third Intermediate Period*  
By Helmut BRANDL, Roemer- und Pelizaeus-Museum Hildesheim; Min-Project
- 15:40 Break
- 16:00 More than a hundred pieces of wood, the destruction of Sarenput II's coffins: iconoclasm or *damnatio memoriae*?  
By Jose Manuel ALBA GÓMEZ, co-director of the Proyecto Qubbet el-Hawa, Universidad de Jaén
- 16:30 *To destroy or to be destroyed: The reduction of Karomama's funerary equipment in the light of the archaeology of her tomb*  
By Benoît LURSON, Professeur en égyptologie, Université catholique de Louvain
- 17:00 Break
- 17:15 *Cambyse, Moïse et les taureaux. Trois versions pour une tragédie ?*  
By Dominique FAROUT, Enseignant à à l'École du Louvre et à l'institut Khéops
- 17:45 *Wounded Egyptian statues found outside of Egypt. The case of Tel Hazor, Israel*  
By Bénédicte LHOYER, Ecole du Louvre; Institut Khéops, Paris
- 18:15 Discussion



## Abstracts



## Exhibiting Iconoclasm: Scholarly Narratives and Public Expectations

By Edward BLEIBERG, Curator Emeritus, Brooklyn Museum, Egyptian Art Department

U.S. public museums mediate between scholarly knowledge and general public offering interpretation, explanation, and context. Egyptian exhibitions attract wide audiences with varied preconceived ideas about the objects. These preconceptions are especially focused on the cause of damage to Egyptian objects. Many of these ideas stem from past racial injustices which remain, sadly, an integral element of American society.



In this paper I will describe how those injustices are historically related to Egyptology in the U.S. and the strategies employed in the exhibition to foster discussion of the issues.





## *Hatshepsut: condemning a ruler to non-existence*

By Dimitri LABOURY, Directeur de recherches, F.R.S.-FNRS. Professeur adjoint, Liège University

Since the modern rediscovery of the historical figure of Hatshepsut, the proscription of the female pharaoh has elicited much debates and discussions among Egyptologists and other commentators. The lecture will address the issue of her *damnatio memoriae* with a practical take in order to assess the aims and motivations at stake.





## *Twilight(s) in Heliopolis: episodes of destruction in the city of the sun*

By Simon CONNOR, Chargé de recherche, F.R.S.-FNRS, Liège University and Dietrich RAUE, Curator, Leipzig Museum; co-director of the Egyptian-German mission in Heliopolis

What could lead to the eclipse of a city?

Heliopolis, one of the most important religious centres of ancient Egypt, suffered a seemingly brutal disfavour from the kings after Dynasty 30, followed by a gradual abandonment. In the centuries that followed, its monuments were dismantled, leaving only scant evidence of the site's former grandeur.

Nevertheless, recent excavations at the site and the material uncovered allow us to trace various iconoclastic episodes throughout Egyptian history and provide much food for thought as to why people might have mutilated, destroyed or reused the sculptural material surrounding them.





## Rewriting the Present: Memory sanctions and pharaohs in Roman Egypt

By Nicola BARBAGLI, PhD student, Istituto Italiano per gli Studi Storici (Napoli); Scuola Normale di Pisa

In the city of Rome sanctions against a disgraced individual were intended to undo his/her good memory, and to set it as a negative example. During the first centuries AD, some emperors were subjected to such sanctions, which led to the destruction or alteration of their records, from publicly displayed monumental inscriptions to privately-kept portraits. Such measures had a far-reaching extension, being adopted and put into practice (or ignored) in all the provinces, following both top-down received and local costumes, as felt appropriate.



As we have seen in the first part of this series of conferences, the province of Egypt was no exception, at least for the realm of non-royal individuals. When it came to pharaohs -that is emperors- however, the picture is more varied. This paper aims at examining the evidence for erased or altered names and images of Roman emperors as pharaohs occurring in the world of the temples. Focusing on cartouches and ritual scenes, each analysed in their historical and architectural contexts, I will show how the local priesthoods received the measures sanctioned in Rome and adapted them to fit the peculiar functions of the temples' images and text. Furthermore, I will highlight the differences between these alterations and those affecting other kind of evidence from Egypt, such as statuary and paintings. It will emerge that the segment of the Egyptian society involved in the temples partook in the culture of the empire and was actively engaged with the pharaoh, still perceived as a historical and vivid figure, embedded in the politics of its time.



## *On some aspects of Christian iconoclasm*

By Françoise DUNAND, Professeur émérite à l'Université de Strasbourg

Three points are examined in this paper:

- 1 - In spite of imperial Roman decrees, traditional Egyptian religion is still living all along the 4<sup>th</sup> century AD, not with the big temples, which had economic-administrative problems, but in the small-size temples present everywhere in the country. The Edict of Milan by Theodosius is a turning-point, marked by the destruction of the big Serapeion at Alexandria (394 AD).
- 2 - Destruction of Egyptian temples and statues was justified by texts of Christian polemicists who, from the 2<sup>nd</sup> century AD, had declaimed against “pagan” temples and images. They were considered as insensitive material or as abodes for malevolent forces, two good reasons to destroy them.
- 3 - Two cases are presented: the temple of Isis at Philae, and the temple of Amun at Wadi al Sebua. They illustrate two aspects of Christian iconoclasm. One was probably a “popular” movement, from local people indoctrinated by priests or monks; the other appears to be planned by Christian authorities in order to get back the powers of traditional sacred places.





## *The image-issue in Islam*

By Antoine LE BAIL, École du Louvre

Why is there a “question of the image” in the lands of Islam? The images are in fact diverse and varied since the dawn of Islam; not only, but the look at the ancient pre-Islamic images is also manifold. Orientalism a priori and religious rigor in the face of images can be summed up as follows: "Eyes Wide Shut".



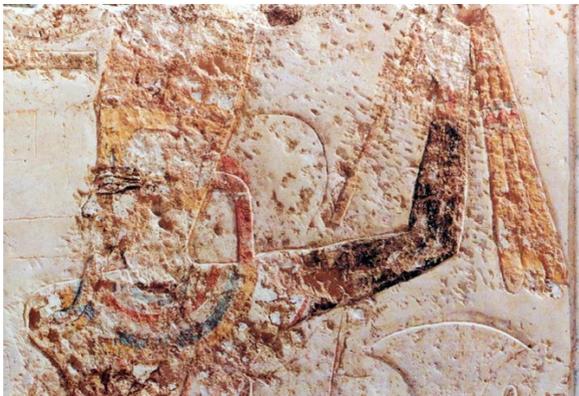


## *Adapting to ideology: Akhenaton and his father's house of millions of years*

By Susanne BICKEL, Professor, University of Basel

When Akhenaten sent his troops throughout the country to obliterate the traditional gods, he found himself confronted with two incompatible ideological necessities: eradicate the god Amun and honor his father's memory and cult. This problem arose most acutely in Amenhotep III's Theban 'house of millions of years', where the cult of Amun was closely linked to the afterlife destiny of the king. The conviction that cult and food supply were essential for the deceased's existence was upheld in the Amarna conceptions.

A complete obliteration of the gods in the funerary temple would have resulted in the impossibility to present offerings and to carry out the mortuary cult for Amenhotep III. Several strategies were applied specifically in this location in order to reconcile the imperative of eliminating Amun (and most other gods) with the necessity to keep the temple functioning not only effectively but also visually. Some of these adaptations were inspired by iconography developed already during Amenhotep III's lifetime, namely in Nubia.





## *Attacking Amun: Problems of Amarna iconoclasm*

By Christian BAYER, Curator, Roemer- und Pelizaeus-Museum Hildesheim

The attack on the god Amun during the reign of Akhenaten may well be considered as a major break in the long history of Egyptian religion. Since the rediscovery of Amarna in the early 19th century, various ideas and hypothesis have been developed why this momentous attack occurred. The lecture shall shed some light on the phenomenon of Amarna iconoclasm due to selected examples and seek explanations for the king's attempt to ritually kill Amun and some gods in his entourage. The restoration of images of Amun will also be briefly addressed with new observations on a statue from the Egyptian Museum in Berlin.





## *The colossi of Akhenaten at Karnak: Adaptation – mutilation – oblivion*

By Lise MANNICHE, formerly Assistant Professor, University of Copenhagen

Because of their number and the precise time in history in which they were produced, the colossi of Akhenaten at Karnak offer an interesting display of the kind of interference that may be inflicted on royal sculpture. This paper considers the role and state of preservation of the colossi at the time when the decoration of the Gempaaten was first conceived. The identification of the colossi provides a clue for an interpretation of their eventual fate after the death of the parties involved. Absence of mutilation is as telling as its presence, and in order to grasp the motives behind the actions taken in the years after the king's death, the results of a careful study of the state of survival of the colossi and the context of their discovery are presented here.





## *Damage to royal statuary at Akhetaten during the Post-Amarna era*

By Kristin THOMPSON, Amarna Project

Following the abandonment of the city of Akhetaten shortly after the reign of Akhenaten, a campaign to erase the rebel pharaoh's existence occurred. The names and parts of the figures of Akhenaten and Nefertiti were erased in reliefs. Statues of the royal family were smashed. Studies of the post-Amarna damage or alteration to stone in the city have tended to focus on the removal of thousands of limestone talatat from the city's royal buildings.



The smashing of the statues, however, has received less attention. This paper will begin by briefly considering these campaigns of destruction: who might have instituted them and where both types of stone ended up. It will then go on to discuss the methods used to destroy royal statues. Many of the thousands of surviving fragments display the marks of the tools used by the workmen assigned to break them up—in some cases involving considerable time and effort.

The study of such marks is not a morbid lingering over the destruction of beautiful and revolutionary statuary. In some cases, an understanding of the means of destruction can provide evidence for the nature of pieces that survive and even of the existence of statues otherwise largely lost to us, and I will end with an example using small fragments from the Maru-Aten.



## *The image and text program of the temple of Amenhotep III at Wadi es-Sebua: a case study in continuous updating of cult buildings*

By Martina ULLMANN, Professor at the Institute of Egyptology, Ludwig-Maximilians-University, Munich, and Regine SCHULZ, Director, Roemer-und Pelizaeus Museum Hildesheim

The presentation will focus on the numerous alterations traceable in the wall paintings from the inner part of the cult building erected by Amenhotep III at Wadi es-Sebua in northern Nubia. A team of Egyptian conservators of the Supreme Council of Antiquities detached these paintings from the temple's walls in 1964, shortly before the flooding of the area. They inserted them into huge wooden frames and brought them to Cairo, where they are nowadays kept in the magazines of the Egyptian Museum at Tahrir Square. Currently, these unique temple paintings are investigated as part of a larger study, that also encompasses a virtual reconstruction of the temple, by the Wadi es-Sebua project, a collaboration between Ludwig-Maximilians-University Munich, the Roemer- and Pelizaeus-Museum Hildesheim and the Egyptian Museum in Cairo, as well as the Centre for Heritage Conservation Studies and Technologies at the University of Bamberg and Kathryn Piquette from University College London. The investigation of the paintings by various imaging techniques revealed very complex sequences of paint layers in some parts of the walls. Varied segments of the decoration underwent numerous alterations at different points in time. Most of the modifications can be assigned to four main decoration phases, with the first and second phases dating to the reign of Amenhotep III, the third phase belonging to the Amarna Period and the fourth phase dating to the post Amarna or early Ramesside time. Several topics of interest within the framework of "Iconoclasm in Egypt" arise from this material:

- Methodological questions related to the documentation, analysis, and interpretation of the various paint layers.
- The relationship between the image and text program of a provincial temple in northern Nubia and changing ideas of state theology within the relevant time frame.
- The modalities of alterations: Who ordered to whom what to do? How was it executed at technical and artistic levels?



## *Mutilated and immobilized signs*

By Stéphane POLIS, Chercheur qualifié, F.R.S.-FNRS, Liège University, and  
Renaud PIETRI, Boursier post-doctorat, Liège University

Since the seminal publications of Lacau (1914, 1926), the avoidance, replacement, alteration, and annihilation of hieroglyphic signs representing animate beings in funerary contexts has been intensively investigated (e.g., Iannarilli 2017, 2018; Pierre, 1997; Roth 2017; Thuault 2020). In this paper, we suggest to look at other types of contexts and to consider graphic registers (Ragazzoli & Albert 2021) that are situated lower on the figurative scale (Vernus 2019, Polis 2020). Indeed, if the statement made by Russo (2010: 252) generally holds true — “la mutilation des signes concerne l’écriture figurée, dite écriture hiéroglyphique, l’écriture non figurée, dite écriture hiératique, n’étant pas sujette à un tel traitement, ce qui s’explique par la nature et le statut des deux types d’écriture” — there are exceptions that shed light on this practice as a whole.

In a first step, we situate the phenomenon among the different types of taboos (Polis 2013, Vernus 2020) affecting the written performance in Ancient Egypt, and show that alterations of writing do indeed occur most often in cases of high figurativity, i.e., when the hieroglyphic signs can be equated with actual visual images (Schenkel 2011) and thereby have the potential to be deactivated (Winand & Angenot 2016). In a second time, we propose a typology of the different kinds of sign replacements and alterations, illustrating the practice with examples that belong to non-funerary contexts. This allows us to analyze how this practice transfers to less figurative registers and to show that the Egyptian cursive scripts not only inherited from some types of alterations to the exclusion of others, but also developed new strategies (color, orientation, degree of cursivity) in order to neutralize or, conversely, to reactivate agentive signs in specific contexts.



## Ramesside revisions

By Tom HARDWICK, Consulting curator, Houston Museum of Natural Science

The tendency of Ramesses II to add his name, and often his features, to statues of earlier rulers is now well known. This paper studies non-kingly sculptures of the Nineteenth Dynasty to discuss possible examples of re-use and re-working. The motivation and intent behind these revisions are also discussed.





## How private sculptures were altered in the Third Intermediate Period

By Helmut BRANDL, Roemer- und Pelizaeus-Museum Hildesheim; Min-Project

The reuse of ancient statuary during the Libyan Period included the effacement or erasure of original inscriptions together with re-inscription. In a number of cases the sculptures were “updated” through iconographic and stylistic changes. Common amongst these was the addition of religious reliefs (from isolated images of deities to more elaborate offering scenes) as well as the re-shaping of certain iconographic features, and even of faces. The sculptors of the 10<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> century BC had a certain perception, or notion, of historic styles and on the basis of that, they formed an identifiable 'toolkit' of iconographic and stylistic features, which are well attested in original works of art of their own time.





## *More than a hundred pieces of wood, the destruction of Sarenput II's coffins: iconoclasm or damnatio memoriae?*

By Jose Manuel ALBA GÓMEZ, Teaching and Research Academic Staff and co-director of the Proyecto Qubbet el-Hawa, Universidad de Jaén

Sarenput II funerary complex is located in Qubbet el-Hawa (now numbered QH31).



It was built during the Middle Kingdom, 12<sup>th</sup> Dynasty (during the reign of pharaohs Senusret II and Senusret III), and is one of the biggest rock cut tombs from this necropolis. After a survey work carried out during the season 2014, it was noticed that the complex was not completely excavated by ancient scholars. In 2015, the Proyecto Qubbet el-Hawa from the University of Jaén initiated a new plan to re-excavate the funerary chambers. During the archaeological works, several grave goods were found: these included fragments of both the inner and outer coffins of Sarenput II, which was intentionally destroyed, the bearded Osiris figures were mutilated and some of the stones from the cult niche were dismantled at some undetermined time in the past, among the destruction and plundering of some other funerary goods. The destruction of his coffins and several of the architectural elements, together with some of the grave goods, is well attested, not only in more than a hundred pieces of wood, but also by the marks of picks or hammers. The aim of this presentation is to describe and identify the items of destruction and the reasons -religious or political- that could have provoked the damage inflicted on Sarenput's coffins, his statue, and the dismantling of the cult niche.



## *To destroy or to be destroyed: The reduction of Karomama's funerary equipment in the light of the archaeology of her tomb*

By Benoît LURSON, Professeur en égyptologie, Université catholique de Louvain

The presence in museum collections or the discovery during excavations of broken ushabtis raise the question of the causes and objectives of these destructions, which, furthermore, often proceed from the same principle: breaking the feet and/or the upper part of the body, and/or the head, whereby such a systematism is most probably a strong token for intentionality. During the excavation of the tomb of Karomama in 2014/2015, more than 200 fragments of ushabtis of the Divine Adoratrice were unearthed, which precisely show the very same scars of that kind of destruction. Her ushabtis sold in the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century, after the burial was plundered, among which only three are intact and complete, can be added to these artefacts. Now, the excavation of the tomb of Karomama made it possible to specify the circumstances and the moment of the reduction of its funerary furniture, namely an unexpected intrusion into the burial chamber of the Divine Adoratrice during the hollowing of a later tomb.

In this communication, these circumstances, such as the archaeology of the tomb allows them to be reconstructed, we will be presented in detail. We will see that they enable a very fine contextualization of the destruction of Karomama's funerary equipment, which ultimately seems to be due more to a combination of unlucky circumstances and a funerary practice, than to an essentially magical dimension of the ancient Egyptian images.



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## Cambyse, Moïse et les taureaux. Trois versions pour une tragédie ?

By Dominique FAROUT, Enseignant à à l'École du Louvre et à l'institut Khéops

Quel point commun peut rapprocher Cambyse et Moïse ? Le meurtre d'un taureau. Le Cambyse des souvenirs est le résultat de la longue construction de l'archétype du mauvais roi par les Grecs et par les Égyptiens. Apis, sa victime innocente, est l'animal archétype du sacré aux yeux de quiconque s'intéresse aux Égyptiens depuis l'Antiquité jusqu'à nos jours.



CAMBYSÈS BATTANT LE TAUREAU

Dans l'Exode, la péripétie de Moïse détruisant le veau d'or, archétype de la « mauvaise image divine », est la métaphore littéraire mythique de l'établissement de la religion Yahviste. Mais qui est le troisième taureau ? Il s'agit de l'image du dieu de l'orage, Yahveh – Baâl, victime de l'aniconisme qui se développe au royaume de Juda au début de l'époque perse. Et si ce taureau était la vraie victime dont l'élimination serait à l'origine des deux transpositions emblématiques, réunissant malgré lui Moïse et Cambyse, Apis et le veau d'or ?





## *Wounded Egyptian statues found outside of Egypt. The case of Tel Hazor, Israel*

By Bénédicte LHOYER, Ecole du Louvre; Institut Khéops, Paris

Since the discovery of Tel Hazor (Galilee) in the 1930s, nearly twenty fragments of Egyptian statues have been discovered. Dating from the Old Kingdom to the Ramesside period, none of them are complete. Indeed, we only have the heads, torsos or legs of officials or kings, and also a part of a Mycerinus' sphinx.



Our communication proposes to talk about this case and to evoke the hypotheses which would explain the particularly abundant presence of these works of art, so far from their original location.

