Egyptian Epigraphy

Leiden University, Faculty of Humanities, Course no. 5864VEG01
Teacher: Prof.dr. Olaf E. Kaper

Admission requirements
The course is open to Master and Research Master students in Classics and Ancient
Civilisation: Egyptology, as well as Research Master and PhD students associated with OIKOS.

BA degree and excellent knowledge of Middle Egyptian. If you are interested in taking this
course, but are not sure whether you fulfil the entry requirements, please contact the
instructor.

Description
The aim of this course is to introduce students to the techniques and practices of reading,
editing, reproducing and handling original inscriptions in the Egyptian language in any of its
scripts.

The ancient Egyptian language was written for more than four thousand years. The
hieroglyphic script developed in the period around 3200 BC, together with its cursive hieratic
version, and it survived into Late Antiquity. In this course students will be instructed in the
development of the scripts, and how to study this topic in the face of standardized fonts in
the text editions. The relation of texts with the objects on which they are inscribed, including
the walls of buildings, will also be discussed. The course will take into account recent
developments in the study of paleography, both in hieroglyphs and in hieratic.

In addition, the course will offer practical training in preparing drawings of epigraphic
material, which combines text with the study of objects and iconography. Recent
developments in 3D-recording and the use of drawing tablets will be explored, as well as the
traditional skills of copying with the use of paper and plastic.

The course consists of three parts. In part one, the student is introduced to the history of
Egyptian paleography and the script's most important developments. In part two, students
will learn techniques of photographing, drawing and editing hieroglyphic and Coptic texts
from specialists. For this part, we will work with the collection of plaster casts of reliefs from
the Rijksmuseum van Oudheden that are housed in the NINO, and prepare line drawings,
photographs, 3D imaging, and digital text markup. Part three consists of an individual project
designed by the student and involving a particular text or relief in the RMO or elsewhere.

The course will be taught at Leiden (Institute of Area Studies) in the Spring term of 2023,
starting in the second half of March. It will bring together a diverse group of people,
including Research MA students, PhD students and staff.

Course objectives
Course objectives of part 1 and 2 (5 EC):

to gain insight into the materiality of writing, paleography and principles of text composition
in ancient Egypt;

to master techniques of editing and reproducing Egyptian hieroglyphic texts, including skills in hand-drawing, tablet drawing, photography, 3D imaging and digital text markup;

to understand the paleographic developments of the hieroglyphic script over several millennia.

Course objectives of part 3 (5 EC):

to design and carry out an individual project involving a particular hieroglyphic inscription written on an object;

to make a complete edition of an unpublished or inadequately published text or texts.

Timetable
The timetables will be determined at the beginning of the course in consultation with all participants.

Mode of instruction
Seminar
Assessment method
Assessment
participation: 20%;

oral presentation: 20%;

individual project (paper and research visit to museum): 60%.

Weighing
The final mark for the course is established by determining the weighted average.

Resit
If the overall mark is unsatisfactory, only the paper of the individual project may be re-written. The mark for the oral presentation and participation will still count in that case.

Exam review
Students will be invited to discuss the results of the course individually with the teacher as soon as the results have been published.

Reading list
Krisztián Vértes, Digital Epigraphy, Chicago: The Oriental Institute, 2014, on: https://oi.uchicago.edu/research/publications/misc/digital-epigraphy;

Jack Green, Emily Teeter, and John A. Larson (eds), Picturing the Past: Imaging and Imagining the Ancient Middle East, Chicago: The Oriental Institute, 2012, on: http://oi.uchicago.edu/sites/oi.uchicago.edu/files/uploads/shared/docs/oimp34.pdf;

Ricardo A. Caminos and Henry George Fischer, Ancient Egyptian Epigraphy and Palaeography, New York: MMA, 1987, on:

http://metmuseum.org/art/metpublications/Ancient_Egyptian_Epigraphy_and_Palaeography#

Registration
Enrolment through uSis is mandatory for Leiden University students.
General information about uSis is available on the website.
Contact the teacher in case of problems.

Contact
o.e.kaper@hum.leidenuniv.nl

For questions about enrolment, admission, etc, contact the Education Administration Office:
Arsenaal