

MAES Lecture Programme 2026-27

Doors open 7:45

DATE	SPEAKER	TITLE
14 Sep 26 GMT+1	Mahmoud Marai	<i>The Lost Kingdom of Yam: Mysteries of the Egyptian Sahara</i>
12 Oct	Bryony Renshaw	<i>Fragments of Identity: Reconstructing the Lives of Two Victorian Women Through their Ancient Egyptian Collection.</i>
26 Oct GMT	Matthieu Vanpeene	<i>Middle Kingdom Excavations at Karnak</i>
9 Nov	Roger Forshaw	<i>An Old Kingdom Funeral: The Ritual Specialists behind the Ceremonies</i>
14 Dec	James Harrell	<i>In Search of Ancient Egyptian Gemstones</i>
21 Dec	Philippe Collombert	<i>A new mastaba for Weni at Saqqara: recent discoveries of the French-Swiss Archaeological Mission at Saqqara.</i>
11 Jan 27	Aidan Dodson	<i>Amenhotep-son-of-Hapu – High Official – Architect – Demigod</i>
8 Feb	Dyan Hilton BP Lecture	<i>Ancient Glass Technology</i>
8 Mar	Jo Derbyshire	<i>The Temple of Sobek at Gebel el-Silsila: New Discoveries from the Archaeological Mission</i>
22 Mar	Christina Geisen	<i>Heka – The Ancient Egyptian Power that Transforms Reality</i>
12 Apr GMT+1	Rosalie David	<i>Weaving for Eternity: the study and analysis of textiles in Egyptian collections in the north of England.</i>
10 May	Colin Reader	<i>The Old Kingdom: What do we really know?</i>
14 Jun	AGM & Michael Tunnicliffe	<i>Will the real Moses please stand up!</i>
12 Jul	Campbell Price	<i>Memories of Hatshepsut and Senenmut in Later Traditions</i>

14th September: Mahmoud Marai

The Lost Kingdom of Yam: Mysteries of the Egyptian Sahara

For more than a century, the location of the Kingdom of Yam has remained one of ancient Egypt's greatest archaeological mysteries. Described in the autobiography of Harkhuf, Governor of Elephantine during the Sixth Dynasty, Yam was portrayed as a powerful kingdom beyond Egypt's southern frontier, yet its true location continues to be the subject of scholarly debate.

This lecture follows the search for Yam through the remarkable history of exploration in Egypt's Western Desert, from the pioneering expeditions of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries to recent archaeological discoveries and field research. Drawing upon more than two decades of exploration, it examines the ancient caravan routes, royal inscriptions, and remote archaeological sites that are gradually reshaping our understanding of Egypt's relationship with its distant desert neighbours.

Mahmoud Marai was born and raised in Egypt. A seasoned desert explorer, Mahmoud has led numerous expeditions across the Sahara and Egypt's Western Desert. Together with fellow explorers, he has contributed to significant discoveries and published research on the prehistoric civilisations of the Sahara. His work earned him recognition as a Fellow International Member of The Explorers Club in the United States. He is also a member of the Egyptian Geographical Society, and the author of two Arabic books chronicling his journeys and explorations across Egypt's Western Desert.

12th October: Bryony Renshaw

Fragments of Identity: Reconstructing the Lives of Two Victorian Women Through their Ancient Egyptian Collection.

In 1874 Marianne Brocklehurst and Mary Booth returned from their first trip to Egypt. The trip sparked a fascination with Egypt, both ancient and modern, which would see them spend the rest of their lives collecting and researching artefacts, befriending Egyptologists and building their own museum.

150 years later, new research into their collection is revealing fresh insights into the adventurous life Marianne and Mary shared. Each artefact they collected offers, not only a window into the ancient past, but also a glimpse into the minds of the women who collected them. This talk will explore how these fragments can be reassembled to reveal the forgotten story of these two remarkable Victorian women.

Bryony Renshaw has been researching the Egyptological collection of Marianne Brocklehurst and Mary Booth for over a decade. During this time she has gained an Archaeology BA, Egyptology MA and Art Gallery and Museum Studies MA. More broadly, her research focuses on women in ancient Egypt as well as women in early Egyptology. She is currently Senior Curator of Paradise Mill in Macclesfield, where Marianne and Mary's collection is based.

26th October: Matthieu Vanpeene

Middle Kingdom Excavations at Karnak

Opened in 2021 as part of the “Karnak des origines” and the “Karnak à l’est de Karnak” research programme (MEAE/CFEETK), the excavations undertaken by the Centre Franco Égyptien d’Étude des Temples de Karnak (CFEETK, MoTA/CNRS) at the south-eastern corner of the Amun-Re temple enclosure were initially intended to establish a reliable chronology for the development of Thebes in the third millennium BC.

The excavations, which follow on from the work carried out in the Legrain, Lortet and Franchet sector at the beginning of the twentieth century, led to the rediscovery of a relatively dense settlement which, at its height, lay outside the temple walls. Centred around a street, the remains - remarkably well preserved for this period - provide glimpses of large buildings devoted to storage and food processing, forming part of a larger neighbourhood that remains to be investigated.

Drawing on this material, the presentation will offer an insight into daily life in the capital of Egypt during the Middle Kingdom.

A specialist in construction in ancient Egypt, Matthieu Vanpeene is an architect who graduated from the École Nationale Supérieure d'Architecture de Paris-Belleville (ENSAPB) and completed an Egyptology PhD at the École Pratique des Hautes Études (EPHE, PSL) in 2021. Since 2010, he has been studying various sites in Egypt, from the Alexandrian coast to Aswan. After six years as Head of the Architecture and Archaeology Department at the Centre Franco Égyptien d'Étude des Temples de Karnak (CNRS, UAR 3172), he joined the HiSoMA research team (CNRS, UMR 5189) and now leads the mission of the Institut Français d'Archéologie Orientale (Ifao) at Dendera, middle Egypt.

9th November: Roger Forshaw

An Old Kingdom Funeral: The Ritual Specialists behind the Ceremonies

When we picture an ancient Egyptian funeral, we tend to think of the coffin, the procession, the tomb and the rituals surrounding the deceased. But who actually performed those rituals? Who directed the ceremonies, recited the sacred words, cared for the deceased, and guided the funeral through its various stages? This presentation looks at the people behind the rituals, introducing some of the fascinating and sometimes enigmatic officiants who played their part in an Old Kingdom funeral.

We will meet the lector, the *djeret*, the *wt* and the mysterious *mww*-dancers, and consider what the tomb scenes and inscriptions can tell us about their roles. We will also encounter one of the great puzzles of Egyptian funerary ritual, the *tekenu*, whose meaning remains uncertain even after more than a century of scholarly debate. Along the way, we will explore some surprisingly familiar aspects of an ancient Egyptian funeral and consider how these elaborate ceremonies compare with the way we understand funerals today.

Roger Forshaw is an Honorary Lecturer at The University of Manchester - and a former dental surgeon. He studied Egyptology at the University of Exeter before completing an MSc in Biomedical Egyptology and a PhD at the University of Manchester. His doctoral research examined the role of lector in ancient Egyptian society, and his broader interdisciplinary work explores medical and dental practices in Pharaonic Egypt. Roger's publications include The Role of the Lector in Ancient Egyptian Society, Egypt of the Saite Pharaohs, and the 2024 volume Medicine and Healing Practices in Ancient Egypt, co-authored with Professor Rosalie David.

14th December: James A. Harrell

In Search of Ancient Egyptian Gemstones

This presentation is in two parts. The first provides an overview of the gemstones employed in ancient Egypt, including their varieties, their uses in jewellery and other decorative arts, and their sources. The second part focuses on the speaker's geo-archaeological survey of ancient gemstone mines in Egypt: those for amazonite at Gebel Migif and Gebel Hafafit; amethyst at Abu Diyeiba, Wadi

el-Hudi, and Dihmit South; carnelian and other chalcedonies from Nile River gravels and Stela Ridge northwest of Abu Simbel; emerald in the Gebel Zabara-Wadi Sikait district; fluorite at Gebel el-Ineigi; and peridot on Zabargad Island in the Red Sea.

James A. Harrell was born and raised in Los Angeles, California, USA. He is currently an Emeritus Professor of Geology at the University of Toledo in Toledo, Ohio, USA. He retired from this university in 2009 after 30 years of teaching geology. For the past 37 years, he has been studying the ancient mines and quarries in Egypt and northern Sudan, and has so far made 50 trips to these countries in support of this work. He has also carried out fieldwork on ancient quarries in Saudi Arabia and Yemen.

21st December: Philippe Collombert

A New Mastaba for Weni at Saqqara: Recent Discoveries of the French-Swiss Archaeological Mission at Saqqara.

In 2022, The French-Swiss Archaeological Mission at Saqqara (MAFS) began a new excavation programme. After many years excavating the funerary complex of King Pepy I, and the numerous funerary complexes of his queens, MAFS decided to redirect its archaeological work to the remains of the mastabas of the élite, in order to fully understand the general organisation of the entire necropolis. This work began with the discovery of a mastaba belonging to Vizier Weni, whose (other) mastaba, excavated by Mariette in Abydos in 1860, is famous for having held the longest autobiography of the Old Kingdom. Parts of a copy of the autobiography were discovered at Saqqara during our excavations, as well as many new elements, including clues about the family of Weni and puzzling new facts. This lecture will focus on the very recent discoveries of the excavations.

Phillipe Collombert is Director of the French-Swiss Archaeological Mission in Saqqara (since 2008) and full Professor of Egyptology at the University of Geneva, Switzerland (since February 2009). He gained his PhD in Paris in 2000, and was Scientific Member at the Institut Français d'Archéologie Orientale, Cairo from 2000 to 2003. He is a specialist in ancient Egyptian writing and religion.

11 January 2027: Aidan Dodson

Amenhotep-son-of-Hapu – High Official – Architect – Demigod

As a living person, Amenhotep-son-of-Hapu was an official of the 14th century BC pharaoh Amenhotep III. He was of exceptional prominence, with a vast array of titles, and responsibility for the management of the king's principal works. He was honoured with numerous statues in major temples which claimed to be able to act as intermediaries with the gods. In addition to a large rock-cut tomb-chapel of the normal kind, he was also granted a unique mortuary temple of a type more normally associated with a king. Amenhotep's posthumous cult would endure long after his death, culminating in his elevation to divine status. As such, he would take over the ancient temple of the female pharaoh Hatshepsut at Deir el-Bahari, later joined there by an even more ancient deified

royal builder, Imhotep of the 26th century BC. The divine duo also popped up in various temples in the Theban area, functioning as healing gods into Roman times.

Professor Aidan Dodson is Honorary Professor of Egyptology at Bristol University, and was elected a Fellow of the Society of Antiquaries of London in 2003. He was Simpson Professor of Egyptology at the American University in Cairo for the Spring of 2013, and was Chairman of the Egypt Exploration Society from 2011 to 2016. He is the author of some thirty books, including Amenhotep-son-of-Hapu — High Official — Architect — Demigod, written with Ken Griffin of Swansea University, which is due to be published by AUC Press at the beginning of 2027.

8 February Dyan Hilton (Annual Bob Partridge Lecture)

Ancient Glass Technology

This presentation explores Egyptian glass from its earliest appearance until its popularity during the Roman period. Looking at both history and technology, Dyan will explain how a common material can become one of the most expensive and sort after objects created by man.

Dyan Hilton is best known for her work on the genealogy of ancient Egyptian royal families and is the co-author of The Complete Royal Families of Ancient Egypt with Aidan Dodson. Educated in Glass Technology in Stourbridge and Egyptian archaeology at the University of Bristol, she works at the Roman Baths Museum in Bath and has conducted research on ancient glass, particularly Roman and Egyptian glass artefacts.

8 March: Jo Derbyshire

The Temple of Sobek at Gebel el-Silsila: New Discoveries from the Archaeological Mission

This presentation provides a unique opportunity to hear first-hand about the latest discoveries from the field and the ongoing research that is helping to illuminate one of Egypt's most intriguing temple sites: the Temple of Sobek at Gebel el-Silsila. We will explore the excavation of the temple complex, the architectural and artefactual evidence uncovered during recent seasons, and what these findings reveal about religious practice, local communities, and royal activity at Gebel el-Silsila. Particular attention will be given to the ways in which new archaeological data are reshaping our understanding of the cult of Sobek and the significance of the site within ancient Egyptian society.

The lecture will also present research from Jo's doctoral work, which examines the Temple of Sobek in its archaeological and historical context. By combining excavation evidence, material culture, epigraphy, and architectural analysis, this research offers fresh perspectives on the temple's development and its place within the sacred landscape of Upper Egypt.

Jo Derbyshire is a PhD researcher in Archaeology at Durham University and Assistant Director of the Gebel el-Silsila Archaeological Mission in Egypt. Her research focuses on the Temple of Sobek at Gebel el-Silsila, examining more than 2,500 relief fragments from a recently rediscovered temple dedicated to the crocodile god Sobek. Jo has participated in archaeological excavations across Egypt,

Greece and the United Kingdom, with particular interests in temple architecture, epigraphy, material culture and ancient religious landscapes. She holds an MA in Egyptology from the University of Manchester and has presented her research at international conferences.

22 March: Christina Geisen

***Heka* – The Ancient Egyptian Power that Transforms Reality**

The presentation begins with a concise introduction to *Heka*, the fundamental force woven into creation and sustaining the ongoing functioning of the world. Drawing on anthropological approaches, the talk presents two case studies that demonstrate how these concepts intensify the effectiveness of *Heka*. The first examines *Book of the Dead* spell 155, the spell for the *Djed* pillar, using the example from Tutankhamun's burial assemblage. This case highlights how materiality, text, and ritual action converge during the placement of the object within the mummy to ensure the boy king's revivification.

The second case study focuses on a Horus on the crocodile stela from the Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology at the University of Cambridge. Here, the presentation shows how the object's imagery, inscriptions, and material properties work together to generate a protective sphere for its owner. This analysis deepens our understanding of how ancient Egyptians experienced - and sought to influence - their world.

Christina Geisen received her PhD in Egyptology from the University of Toronto in 2012, with a new edition and interpretation of the Ramesseum Dramatic Papyrus (BM EA 10610), a ritual text honouring king Senwosret I. She held a postdoctoral fellowship from Canada's Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC), researching personal names containing royal names, and went on to academic positions at Yale, Oxford, and Cambridge before joining the British Museum. Her research focuses on funerary, ritual, and magical texts, as well as ritual landscapes and performance and human-environment interactions in ancient Egypt. She is currently studying the British Museum's Amduat Papyri, a funerary corpus depicting the twelve hours of the night.

12 April: Rosalie David

Weaving for Eternity: the Study and Analysis of Textiles in Egyptian Collections in the North of England.

An interdisciplinary project at the University of Manchester has examined ancient and medieval textiles from Egypt, now held in sixteen museums in northern England. Here, wealth generated through local textile industries in the 19th and early 20th centuries enabled entrepreneurs and manufacturers to fund excavations in Egypt, often to seek new evidence about the Christian Bible. These sponsors received a share of the archaeological finds which, together with examples purchased from dealers, they often donated to local museums.

These factors established arguably the finest group of Egyptian textiles in the UK, outside London, but they have never been studied as an entity before. The lecture will describe how examination of

the archaeological and historical data, together with scientific analysis of textile samples, provides new information about the manufacture, ownership and use of these precious commodities, and the trade that in some instances brought them to Egypt.

Rosalie David is Emerita Professor of Egyptology, University of Manchester; Honorary Research Associate, McDonald Institute for Archaeological Research, University of Cambridge; and a Vice-President of the Egypt Exploration Society. She established Biomedical Egyptology as a new university discipline, and has received Fellowships of the Royal Society of Arts and Royal Society of Medicine; in the New Year Honours List 2003 she was awarded an O.B.E. for services to Egyptology.

10th May: Colin Reader

The Old Kingdom: What do we really know?

This lecture is the result of one of the lines of research Colin pursued in his book on the Sphinx. As a result of the work of Egyptologists over the last 100 years or so, we are presented with a relatively clear picture of Old Kingdom Egypt. Although Egyptology presents a less-definitive view of the dynasties that went before the Old Kingdom, we tend to think that generally, we have quite a good understanding of Egypt's early history.

In this presentation, we will look at the relatively sparse evidence base from which the early history of ancient Egypt has been reconstructed and ask whether our understanding is as robust as we tend to think? We will also explore a related issue: what did the Egyptians of the later Pharaonic Era – the New Kingdom and Late Period – know of life during ancient Egypt's earliest dynasties?

Drawing from his experience working as a geologist in the construction industry, Colin was first attracted to ancient Egypt as a result of the controversy over the age of the Great Sphinx. He was invited to join the Saqqara Geophysical Survey Project, to map the soils and rocks of that incredible site and has since enjoyed working with AWT on tours in Egypt, Morocco and Jordan. He regularly gets invited to speak to Egyptology societies up and down the country – including of course MAES. Over the years, he has published his research and has recently set up his own website www.giftofgeology.co.uk to make his work readily available. He is the author of A Gift of Geology (AUC 2023) and Rewriting the history of the Great Sphinx (Archaeopress 2026).

14th June: AGM & Michael Tunnicliffe

Will the Real Moses Please Stand Up!

The story of Moses is one of the best known biblical tales which portrays how the Hebrew slaves escaped from Egypt. A reluctant Pharaoh was forced to "Let my people go" following a series of Plagues and the deliverance at the "Red Sea". With the dawning of Egyptology in the 19th century there was a hope to find evidence in the archaeological and literary record, but this proved elusive. So is the story history or merely religious propaganda? We cannot even be sure who the "pharaoh of the Exodus" is, despite Ramesses II being the 'go-to' candidate. The lecture will explore the various suggestions made by believers, doubters and alternative theorists to try to unravel the mystery.

Michael Tunnicliffe is a freelance tutor in the North West of England teaching a series of history and religion course. He holds degrees from Birmingham and Cambridge and completed the Certificate in Egyptology at Manchester. He has been a member of MAES for 25 year and served on the committee for 6 years.

12 July: Campbell Price

Memories of Hatshepsut and Senenmut in Later Traditions

The intriguing relationship between Hatshepsut and her High Steward Senenmut is usually said to end with their supposedly violent erasure from various monuments. But that erasure was not always violent and far from consistent - and both enjoyed a legacy after death that they may have actively planned. This lecture reviews the aftermath and memory of these two fascinating characters from the 18th Dynasty, and ties in with the 2027 publication of a new biography of Senenmut by American University in Cairo Press.

Dr Campbell Price is Curator of Egypt and Sudan at the Manchester Museum, part of the University of Manchester and European Museum of the Year 2025. He is an Honorary Research Fellow at the University of Liverpool and was Chair of the EES Board of Trustees from 2021 to 2025. He is the author of several books, including Brief Histories: Ancient Egypt and (with Stephanie Boonstra) Ancient Egypt in 50 Discoveries and the upcoming Senenmut: High Steward and Favorite of Hatshepsut - His Life and Afterlife (AUC Press, 2027).