

MUSEUM ARCHAEOLOGY PREP AND A BIT OF GOLD DIGGING

June 30, 2012 Kathryn E. Piquette Day of Archaeology, Day of Archaeology 2012, Digital Archaeology, Egypt, Finds, Museum Archaeology Academia, Anthropology, Archaeology, Berlin, Dahlem, Dahlem Research School, education, EUR, Freie Universität Berlin, Marie Curie, Mesopotamia, museum, Museum Archaeology Prep, Nile Valley, Peer-to-peer, Pennsylvania, Science, Stone tablet, the University of Pennsylvania, TOPOI, University of Pennsylvania, University of Pennsylvania Museum, University of Pennsylvania Museum of Archaeology, University of Pennsylvania Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology

Good morning from Berlin! We are finally getting a bit of sun....which we need given the Euro2012 match results last night (Glückwunsch an Spanien und Italien!). So — since my Day of Archaeology post last year, I've started a [Marie Curie COFUND](#) fellowship at Freie Universität Berlin, in association with the Dahlem Research School and TOPOI. My research project is entitled: *A Comparative Study of Scribal and Artistic Spaces in Early Egypt and the Ancient Near East: Integrating micro- and macro-scale analyses*. More information can be found [here](#) and I am also keeping a [blog](#) on my progress. (In fact, in addition to posting here I really need to update said blog, but that will probably happen Monday now since today is already chock full!)

So here is a bit about what I am getting up to today. I am in the course of planning several museum research visits for this summer. I need to document 100 ancient art- and writing-bearing objects dating to the early period of graphical development (c.3200-c.2500 BCE) in both southern Mesopotamia and the Nile Valley. I am documenting and examining both portable objects (e.g. cylinder seals, impressed sealings, cuneiform tablets, labels) and fixed image-bearing surfaces (e.g. stelae, tomb relief, rock art), using [Reflectance Transformation Imaging](#) (RTI).



Stone tablet with early writing incised into its surface, University of Pennsylvania Museum, B16105

Although I am an Egyptologist first and foremost, I did dabble a bit in Near Eastern archaeology and languages (e.g. Akkadian) as an undergraduate at the University of Pennsylvania. With this project I am finally getting back to this side interest which is quite exciting. But it means coordinating museum research with both the Egyptian and Near Eastern curators and other staff at each museum. This morning my goal is to get my object list and research permission request sent off to the [University of Pennsylvania Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology](#) before lunch.

This afternoon several other post-docs and I will be participating in a peer coaching session at the [Dahlem Research School](#), with the help of a successful grant applicant, on drafts proposals for funding we've been preparing for a follow-on research projects. My [COFUND fellowship](#) is for 15 months, and in addition to completing a research project this year, I am tasked with bringing in funding for a follow project (Note: details for the next COFUND application should be posted soon at link above. Do consider applying!).

It's great to be in a fellowship programme that is emphatically about [training and career development](#). Many fellowships / post-docs focus resources on completing of a particular piece of research. Fair enough I suppose, but having more advice, time and support thrown in my direction to help ensure the next gig is lined up is great. The level of regular contact, mentoring and—yes—deadlines that the DRS provide both for achieving our short-term goals and hammering out a longer-term career plan and getting it funded is super valuable. I need to take even more advantage of this in fact.

Anyway, I'd best finish sorting out this museum object request list and reading my colleagues' funding proposals for our peer review session.