



Universität  
Basel

## Research Project

Like the conversation of a Delta man with a man from Elephantine! Exploring the interactions between dialectal realities, Levantine loanwords, and sociolinguistic dynamics in New Kingdom Egyptian

### Third-party funded project

**Project title** Like the conversation of a Delta man with a man from Elephantine! Exploring the interactions between dialectal realities, Levantine loanwords, and sociolinguistic dynamics in New Kingdom Egyptian

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**Organisation / Research unit**

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**Status** Active

Recent years have seen a renewed interest in issues of Egyptian linguistics, with new collections of data and new types of evidence becoming available through the work of various scholars, including the present author. These works have raised interesting questions about issues of linguistic varieties and dialectal interferences, which call for a reassessment of the sociolinguistic landscape of pre-Coptic Egyptian. My project aims at exploring some of these questions within the context of New Kingdom Late Egyptian. The project will be divided into four phases that will explore four interrelated questions, namely:

- Is the New Kingdom linguistic reality better described by a two-layers model (classical language vernacular dialects) or a three-layers one (classical language official/prestigious/court vernacular dialect other vernacular dialects)?
- Was there any shift in the main (official?) dialect underlying the Late Egyptian texts during the New Kingdom? And if yes, when and which dialects were involved?
- How does the appearance of Levantine loanwords in New Kingdom sources correlates with pre-Coptic dialects? Could at least some of such loanwords be associated with a specific Delta dialect, and could the increase in their number reflect a shift in the official dialect? And if so, when did these Levantine words enter such Delta dialect? Can they be connected with the Hyksos phenomenon?
- Was there any conscious linguistic policy during the New Kingdom, and was the main (official?) dialect actively promoted by the state (e.g. through didactic material) or does Late Egyptian represent a koiné that emerged naturally through a process of unconscious levelling of the (written) vernacular language used by the scribal communities across the country?

**Keywords** Dialects, New Kingdom, Linguistics, Levantine loanwords, Sociolinguistics, Late Egyptian, Egyptology

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**Add publication**

**Add documents**

**Specify cooperation partners**