

International Association of Egyptologists Association Internationale des Egyptologues Internationaler Ägyptologen-Verband المصريات لعلماء الدولية الرابطة

Candidate statement for the position of president of the IAE

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Vision Statement

The International Association of Egyptologists has a long history and research on Ancient Egypt is as vibrant as ever. Born from a history of nationalist strive, Egyptology has developed into an international and interdisciplinary endeavor. The International Association's role is at present minor, compared to other professional organizations: the IAE is mostly known for its involvement in the International Conference of Egyptology (ICE) every four years. This core task can be improved by aiding the organizing country financially as well as organizationally. More importantly, the congress should be the culmination of ongoing efforts to support Egyptology, rather than the main effort itself.

We can re-imagine the IAE, by broadening the core tasks, improving the communication, and providing reasons to be a member, beyond participation in the congress. Key to this will be improved communication in both the open and the members-only section of the webpage. If one of our goals is to exchange results from our research, then a private section can help to discuss ideas, pre-publish articles and post publications for member access. Egyptology continues to innovate itself, by examining its assumptions and renewing its objectives, subject of study, methods and theoretical approaches.

The open section of a newly designed IAE web-page is our gateway to the general public. Ancient Egypt continues to be at the forefront of the popular imagination and public education continues to be important in a time where Ancient Aliens are considered a viable way to explain the human past. If we expect governments or the public to support our work, we need to engage in explaining why our work is relevant. The struggle we find ourselves in to preserve archaeological sites can only be alleviated if we connect with stake holders and involve communities in our work.

The IAE is a professional organization and has specific goals that have been defined by its statutes, but have not always been realized. The development and growth of the IAE can start with considering the practical consequences of our most recently proposed statutes:

The Association shall encourage the study and preservation of the cultural and historic heritage of the ancient inhabitants of the Nile Valley.

The first aim of the IAE is focused on study and preservation, the two mainstays of Egyptological work in the broadest sense. Modern borders and politics should not hamper a holistic approach of the Nile Valley and the adjacent deserts. Studying the cultural continuum as well as the regional specificities through time is at the basis of our research and the Association provides a forum where this information can be exchanged, irrespective of the country of origin of the researcher.

The preservation of cultural and historic heritage should go hand in hand with the preservation of the natural heritage because landscape studies have shown that an archaeological “site” cannot be studied in isolation.

The Association shall promote a wider understanding and appreciation of Egyptology on the part of the general public.

In a world in which universities and cultural heritage institutions are often dependent on financing from the public, be this through state funding, donations from private individuals or foundation grants, it is more important than ever to be actively involved in the public debate. Popular television series hijack the Egyptological narrative and relegate our profession to that of the grumpy nay-sayers who have not seen the light. Social media are a powerful tool to turn these negative accounts around and speak to the large potential base that has a true interest in science and scholarship. We have a vibrant community of students, and an enthusiastic base of amateurs in the best sense of the word, that can and should be mobilized. There are many tools which can help to draw the general public to a better way of understanding ancient cultures, for instance through offering an augmented reality app that provides on the spot and remote access to Egyptological information.

The Association shall openly discuss problems affecting Egyptological studies, and shall encourage and promote the study of Egyptology in all its aspects on an international basis.

It is time to finally recognize Arabic as one of the scholarly languages of the IAE, a step that is long overdue. Much has been written in that language that is of great interest to the profession, from the medieval scholars to the present. As a native speaker of the Dutch language I also see the importance of communicating in a *lingua franca*, for which English seems to be the most widely accepted. On the front of open discussion, the IAE should be a forum that improves communication within and beyond Egyptology. This can be realized by using the website more effectively. The IAE leadership should also confer with the Ministry of Antiquities on how the procedures for research in Egypt can be improved, ranging from timely decisions on permits to well-balanced collaborations. The IAE should most of all be a forum where vibrant discussions take place and problems that block the progress of research can be addressed.

Under my leadership the IAE will reach out to Egyptological organizations (museums, universities, foundations, projects) to promote opportunities for internships and training. These should be open for an international group of students and recent graduates. The website can be

used as a venue to list such opportunities and the financial support that enables access to a diverse group of students.

The Association shall require all members to uphold a Code of Professional and Ethical Standards

Every professional organization upholds a code of standards and in Egyptology the conduct should be beyond reproach. It is in our best interest that the association works closely with Egypt and the international community in battling the illegal trade in antiquities. Ethical standards also rule the relationship between members and where many other organizations have spoken out about problems related to bullying and sexual harassment, the IAE has not. Addressing diversity, equity and inclusion is overdue and my absolute priority. From my own experience I know that our field is not an exception and that sexual harassment is an issue. I also appreciate how difficult it is to discuss these experiences and circumstances, yet we need to.

The Association shall actively support such projects as are of importance to the scientific development of Egyptology and international collaboration among its professionals, including the Online Egyptological Bibliography (OEB).

The IAE supports the long-standing *Online Egyptological Bibliography* and has endorsed other endeavors that are a mainstay of the Egyptological scholarly community, such as the *UCLA Encyclopedia of Egyptology*. The Association can develop more activities in stimulating or supporting Egyptological initiatives that require grant applications. With the growth of online resources, the digital preservation of these initiatives is of great importance. I intend to stimulate the growth of the IAE website into an international platform and generate funding to work on making such resources widely available, as well as sustainable. The goal for the IAE is to help develop projects that will hire international trainees and interns from diverse backgrounds and nationalities. If successful, young Egyptologists will become members of the IAE for reasons other than a reduced fee to attend the congress.

The Association shall support the holding of international congresses of Egyptology

This is traditionally the core activity of the Association, but the outgoing Presidium suggests to put this point last. That is a good decision for reasons outlined above in the introductory paragraph.

I want to conclude with highlighting two aspects that the proposed Statutes no longer list. What was removed from the presently proposed statutes are two points: “The Association shall collect and distribute information concerning new discoveries, scientific work on progress and work completed. “

This task has in effect been taken over by the Ministry of Antiquities in its regular newsletter, but it would be beneficial if the IAE would be an online conduit for such information as well, especially for broadly conceived Egyptological results, posting of conferences, job opportunities etcetera.

“The Association shall encourage collaboration between scholars and existing professional associations and shall facilitate the application process for fellowships, scholarships, etc. in Egyptology.” This was a task that the association has not fulfilled for many years. Nevertheless, the diversity of specializations presented at the Congress trumps that of smaller scholarly conferences. Scholarships and fellowships are usually linked to universities or institutes, but the Association should at all-time be a fierce supporter and mentoring platform for the next generation of Egyptologists.

Outline of 4-year plan

I see the role of the IAE leadership as one of listening and acting on behalf of the Egyptological community, which is of course not homogenous or always in full agreement. I would, therefore, start my tenure with polling whether the ideas outlined above resonate. We need to decide what the IAE is going to be.

2020	2021	2022	2023
Polling membership on: - Vision - Core tasks of IAE - Website functionality			
Propose subcommittees e.g.: - membership - finance - core task expansion - career - student - publication - web presence	Subcommittee election and installation	Subcommittee meetings	Subcommittee reports
Annual budget	Fundraise	Fundraise	Fundraise
Changing website host	Redesign website	Maintain website and social media	
Communicate with country representatives			
Communicate with supported and endorsed projects (OEB and e.g. TLA, UEE, CLEO)			
Continue to communicate with the Ministry of Antiquities on issues where a united voice is helpful.			
Continue to represent the Egyptological community to promote and defend the discipline, whenever needed.			

Qualifications

I have over 30 years of experience in archaeological excavation and survey in Egypt: participant in the excavations of Amarna, Qasr Ibrim, Abu Sha'ar, Quseir and co-director of the excavations at Berenike, the Fayum North Shore (Fayum Neolithic, Qaret el-Hamra and Karanis).

Organized and taught archaeological field schools for the Ministry of Antiquities annually from 2002-2014.

Extensive administrative experience as director of the Cotsen Institute of Archaeology at UCLA (since 2016) and director of the UCLA Center for Digital Humanities (2013-2017). Board of Governors of the Institute for Field Research (a US non-profit); chair of the Taskforce on Implementation of Data Access and Archiving for the Society of American Archaeologists (2017-2018); Board of Governors of the American Research Center in Egypt (2006-2009).; Academic Board member of the Museo Egizio in Turin (2016-present), Editorial board member of the Journal of Egyptian Archaeology, the Rivista del Museo Egizio and the African Archaeological Review.

Editor-in-Chief and PI of the UCLA Encyclopedia of Egyptology (<http://UEE.ucla.edu>)

Co-PI on the Digital Karnak Project

Co-PI on Ancient Egyptian Architecture Online

See my CV for a list of publications.