

AHRC Collaborative Doctoral Partnership (CDP) with British Museum and University of Cambridge

PhD studentship

‘Made for the afterlife? Identifying metal craft traditions in early Egyptian funerary assemblages, from local to cross-cultural practices’

Start date: 1st October 2025

Application Deadline: 30 April, 4pm GMT

Interviews will take place online on 15 May.

The British Museum and the University of Cambridge are pleased to announce the availability of a fully funded Collaborative doctoral studentship from October 2025 under the AHRC’s Collaborative Doctoral Partnership consortium ([Home - AHRC Collaborative Doctoral Partnership consortium](#)).

Using advanced non-invasive analytical techniques, this project will evaluate manufacturing methods, technological choices, and material selection behind ancient Egypt’s earliest funerary metal assemblages, to understand the regional emergence and spread of craft traditions and their role in funerary practices.

This project will be jointly supervised by Frederik Rademakers and Aurélia Masson-Berghoff (British Museum), Marcos Martín-Torres and Kate Spence (University of Cambridge), and the student will be expected to spend time at both the British Museum and the University of Cambridge, as well as becoming part of the wider cohort of CDP funded students across the UK.

Students should have a Master’s Degree in a relevant subject or be able to demonstrate relevant equivalent knowledge or experience.

The studentship can be studied either full or part-time, and is open to both home and international applicants.

We encourage applications from a diverse range of people, from different backgrounds and career stages.

Project Overview

This project aims to explore wider stories and connections within the British Museum collection by conducting the first detailed technological study of some of Egypt’s earliest metal objects found in funerary contexts. Using advanced non-invasive analytical techniques, the research will evaluate manufacturing methods, technological choices, and material selection behind metal vessels and (model) tools, as well as their role in funerary practices. Representing some of early Egypt’s most significant material culture, these assemblages remain poorly exploited from a museological

perspective. Their holistic examination and interpretation through the lens of ‘object itineraries’ affords tremendous potential to understand their makers and owners, thus developing engaging narratives beyond their artistic appeal. Furthermore, this opens novel possibilities for museum-based research to examine interactions between early civilisations in the region through technological exchange. As a pilot study, metal objects from the mid-third millennium BCE Royal Cemetery of Ur, Mesopotamia, will be compared. This will support future museum exhibitions and collaborations telling new stories about these under-researched objects in the British Museum collection.

The research will provide unprecedented insights into the evolution of metal craft traditions and their integration into burial assemblages, helping to reframe traditional understandings of Egyptian funerary archaeology largely focused on beliefs about the afterlife.

Very important questions regarding these iconic funerary objects have never been explored:

- a) How were such objects made, ranging from small tools to elaborate vessels? Which techniques and materials were involved? Do technological choices vary by context, over time and by region?
- b) Can traditions be identified in the conception and selection of funerary metal assemblages, how were these organised, and how do they relate to other crafts engaged in funerary practices?

This informs broader questions about early technologies, funerary practices and craft organisation, including the comparison between funerary and daily objects, and variations in funerary metal traditions across time and space.

Research with the British Museum

This research studentship is one allocated to the British Museum by the AHRC. The successful student will be expected to spend time carrying out research and gaining relevant experience with the partner in London as part of the studentship.

Details of Award

CDP doctoral training grants fund full-time studentships for 4 years or part-time equivalent up to a maximum of 7 years

The award pays tuition fees up to the value of the full-time home fee. Research Councils UK Indicative Fee Level for 2024/2025 is £10,356.00. Students with an ‘overseas’ fee status are welcome to apply but will need to cover the difference between the UK and overseas fees rate of £31,320, and will be required to reside in the UK until completion of the PhD.

The award pays an annual stipend for all students, both home and international students. This stipend is tax free, and is the equivalent of an annual salary, enabling the student to pay living costs. The UKRI Minimum Doctoral Stipend for 2024/2025 is £20,780 plus a half-London weighting allowance of £1000/year. There is also a CDP maintenance payment of £600 per year. The total stipend for 2025/26 will be £22,380.00

Further details can be found on the [UKRI website](#).

The successful candidate is eligible to receive an additional travel and related expenses grant during the course of the project courtesy of The British Museum, worth up to £1,500 per year for 4 years.

The successful candidate will be encouraged to participate in professional development events and activities organised for all Collaborative Doctoral Partnership students who are registered with different universities and studying with cultural and heritage organisations across the UK. These activities are organised by a coordination team based at the V&A and are designed to provide CDP researchers with the knowledge, networks and skills to thrive in their future careers.

Eligibility

- This studentship is open to both Home and International applicants.
- To be classed as a home student, candidates must meet the following criteria:
 - Be a UK or Irish National (meeting residency requirements), or
 - Have settled status, or
 - Have pre-settled status (meeting residency requirements), or
 - Have indefinite leave to remain or enter
- Further guidance can be found here based on revisions to Training Grant Terms and Conditions for projects starting in October 2025 - [Policy statement: review of the training grant conditions – UKRI](#)
- International students are eligible to receive the full award for maintenance as are home students. They will need to pay themselves the difference between what the AHRC provides to the university for tuition and the charge made by the university for tuition fees for international students studying for a doctoral degree in Archaeology. For 2025/26, the tuition fee for international students is £31,320.
- We want to encourage the widest range of potential students to study for a CDP studentship and are committed to welcoming students from different backgrounds to apply. We particularly welcome applications from people of Global Majority backgrounds as they are currently underrepresented at this level in this area.
- Applicants should ideally have or expect to receive a relevant Masters-level qualification in a relevant subject (Archaeological Science, Archaeology, Natural Science), or be able to demonstrate equivalent experience in a professional setting such as a museum or research-active institution
- Applicants must be able to demonstrate an interest in the archaeology and cultural heritage sector and potential and enthusiasm for developing skills more widely in related areas.
- As a collaborative award, students will be expected to spend time at both the University and The British Museum

NB. All applicants must meet UKRI terms and conditions for funding. See:

<https://www.ukri.org/funding/information-for-award-holders/grant-terms-and-conditions/>

Project details and how to apply

For more information and how to apply see: [Prospective PhD Students | Department of Archaeology](#)

We ask all applicants to complete a voluntary Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) monitoring form [here](#). All responses are anonymous.

For your application, please include:

i. Core reasons for applying (2500 characters) Please explain your motivation for applying for this studentship.

If you are able, among other relevant skills you have, you should include how you would evidence the following:

- Experience of working with archaeology collections.
- An interest in Egyptian archaeology.
- Experience with archaeological materials analysis, preferably metals.
- A commitment to working in museum contexts or with collections.
- Ability and commitment to working in a team and taking the initiative with a research project which is interdisciplinary.
- IT literacy.
- Excellent communication skills, with the demonstrable ability to communicate confidently with colleagues and external stakeholders.

ii. Sample of work:

Applicants should provide a sample of written work in English. There is no set minimum or maximum word count for the writing sample(s), we simply recommend that students select a piece of work that best represents their writing style. It is sensible (but not obligatory) to choose a piece of work which is at least roughly in the subject area in which you plan to do research. These could include research articles, or sector- or public-facing outputs, including blogs

iii. Research proposal:

Using the project overview above as your starting point, please write a 700-word proposal outlining how you would develop a project to investigate the early metal funerary assemblages at the British Museum. This proposal may include a preliminary set of primary research questions or aims, highlight any objects, materials, or archival sources that are especially relevant to your investigation, and outline your methodology used to approach these questions. The proposal will be used as a basis for the interview.

iv. We are committed to supporting the CDP Equality, Diversity and Inclusion action plan for students. If you would like to request reasonable adjustments to an interview, for example, extra time or the opportunity to enquire about institutional support for students, please include this information with your application.