



Profile for Post-Doctoral Position

Research Framework

Work-Package: *Constructions plurielles de l'espace* (Multiple constructions of space)

Heads: Francis Joannès, François de Polignac

Description of the Position

Profile title: River ports of Egypt and the Near East

Research proposal:

Although the territories of both Ancient Egypt and Mesopotamia were modelled by major rivers (the Nile in the case of Egypt, and the Tigris and Euphrates in Mesopotamia), no systematic research study has ever been carried out on one of the main features that enabled their operative use, i.e. the ports. Yet, as indispensable infrastructures, the ports dictated the pace of the development of these regions by promoting navigation and interaction and through their emergence as strategic points.

The aim of the research programme is to understand how the river ports constructed these ancient spaces based on a multiscale approach. At local level it involves the investigation of the specific construction of the spaces associated with the ports and, in particular, their impact on the human geography. The studies already carried out by the *Fleuves et territoires* ('Rivers and territories') work-package have demonstrated that the presence of a port plays a key role in attracting and consolidating populations considered as mobile: merchants, boatmen, carpenters and fishermen. This dimension, which is frequently neglected in studies on port settlements, is an essential aspect of the Egyptian and Mesopotamian contexts, which were characterized by weak demographics and high labour costs, particularly in relation to skilled workers. At regional level, the ports occupy a central place in the circulation of goods and people. As prime locations for the collection of tolls and taxes, they enable the effective monitoring of everything that transits through them. Moreover, ports often coincide with zones for the reloading and transshipment of goods in locations where fluvial and caravan transport linked up.

One of the challenges of this project is to analyse how the presence of a port constructs space at both local level (construction of equipment and specific facilities) and regional level (regulation of flows).

Tasks and activities:

The tasks of the appointed post-doctoral researcher will include:

- Analysis of the port location strategy: Do port towns develop from a favourable port location or



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does the port become necessary due to the presence of a town or city that needs to be supplied with all kinds of goods? Do institutions like palaces and temples have specific ports which enable them to manage the flow of persons and goods independently? Other factors must also be considered here, for example the desire to organize the territory. Hence, a port established by Thutmose III in Mi-Our (Gourob) to serve his newly constructed palace-harem also represented an important stage in the establishment of the crown in the strategic zone of Fayoum.

- The study of the integration of the port zone into the urban fabric and its hold on the urban territory: due to the potentially devastating impact of floods, many cities were constructed at a considerable distance from the water or on a hill or knoll. Were the port facilities integrated into the city or did they occupy a specific space closer to the river?

Deliverables:

The post-doctoral researcher will contribute to the research blog on hypotheses which has already been set up (fleuves.hypotheses.org). On completion of the contract, the research results will form the basis of a synthesis text to be published in a leading international journal (A ranking). Depending on the post-doc's specialism, the article will be submitted to the *Journal of Egyptian history* or *Akkadica*.

Planned Collaboration

The post-doctoral researcher will be attached to the ArScAn Laboratory (UMR 7041) in Nanterre and will work in collaboration with researchers and teacher-researchers involved in the *Fleuves et territoires* ('Rivers and territories') work-package. This work-package, which was established in the context of LabEx Dynamite in December 2013, involves archaeologists and historians from several laboratories (UMR 8167 *Orient et Méditerranée*, 8120 ANHIMA) and universities (Paris 1 Panthéon-Sorbonne, University of Brittany) who specialize in research on the ancient worlds.

Required Qualifications, Skills and Aptitudes

The candidate must:

- hold a doctorate in the history or archaeology of the ancient Near East or Egyptology;
- have a knowledge of the topic based on his or her doctoral studies or experience;
- have a knowledge of the scientific references and debates surrounding these topics within both his or her own discipline and other disciplines;
- be completely fluent in French and English: a good knowledge of German would be an advantage;
- be able to work in a pluridisciplinary team.





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Additional Information	
Commencement of the contract	Between 01/09/2015 and 01/12/2015 (according to preference)
Duration of the contract	1 year
Host laboratory	Name: ArScAn Address: Maison Archéologie et Ethnologie René-Ginouvès 21 allée de l'Université 92023 Nanterre Supervisor: Aline Tenu (UMR 7041 ArScAn)
Net monthly salary	Approximately EUR 2324
Contact	contact@labex-dynamite.com or +33 1 49 54 84 21

Recommendations for the candidate(s):

Recruitment procedure and schedule:

- **The application must be submitted electronically by application form** (<http://www.form-labex-dynamite.com/postdoc/en/>). It must demonstrate that the candidate fulfils the requirements indicated in the position profile (specified tasks and skills).

The application will include:

- a description of the proposed research project (3 to 5 pages) and an abstract (2,000 characters including spaces) indicating the theoretical basis of the research, the tests to be carried out on empirical materials, the methodology to be used, a feasibility report and project schedule;
 - a covering letter;
 - curriculum vitae;
 - list of publications with internet links (if available);
 - doctoral thesis defence report (not required for foreign candidates);
 - copy of doctoral degree (or certificate)¹.
- The **deadline for the submission of applications is 26 April 2015 (inclusive)**.
 - **The application summary sheet which will be transmitted automatically by e-mail** on completion of the electronic application must be sent by post (date as per postmark) or

¹ The thesis must have been defended fewer than five years ago.





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presented in person to the office of the LabEx DynamiTe (190-198 avenue de France, bureau 008 or 004 Aile A, 75013 Paris) before the applications deadline.

For your information: When the deadline for applications has passed, the LabEx DynamiTe will contact the potential supervisor and the director(s) of the potential host unit(s) and will add two letters of invitation to the application.

- The candidate(s) appointed following the assessment of the applications and interviews (which will take place during the week of 15 June 2015) will be informed of the results of the application process from 22 June 2015.

