



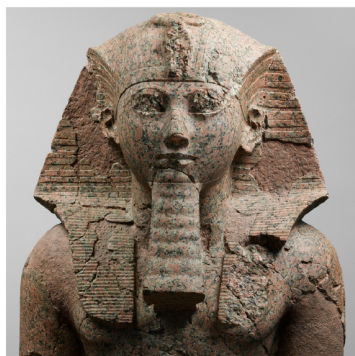
# ALTERING IMAGES

## ICONOCLASM in Egypt

International Workshop

Université de Liège

12th-14th May 2021





The present workshop aims at reflecting on the practice of altering "icons" (both textual and figurative) in the context of Egypt, throughout its long history. The practice of damaging or destroying as an intentional and significant act is attested by several archaeological and textual contexts, nevertheless its understanding does not always come easy. All too frequently does scholarly opinion tend to attribute intentional alterations to iconophobic acts perpetrated by the early Christian and Muslim communities, as acts of antipaganism. There are indeed many cases documented in this sense, in archaeological and textual sources. However, archaeological stratification hints in several cases at actions of altering and abandonment of monuments that were carried out much earlier than the Christian and Muslim periods. Therefore, the workshop will revolve around the discussion of a vast repertoire of monuments affected by the practice of alteration, both bi- and three-dimensional, with the purpose of showing - when possible - various causes, interrelations and intents.

It is important to establish a methodology, which suggests ways of differentiating accidental from intentional alterations, before even attempting to date and interpret the alteration. In order to be able to understand the nature and time frame of the damage, it is essential to put in parallel both examples of so-believed pre-Christian acts, and cases of iconophobia ascribed to the so-called "Abrahamic religions". Following this line of interpretation, one may address the matter of typologies within these specific acts of alteration, bearing careful consideration for the anthropological aspect. The topic proves to be vast to the point that the workshop will be divided in two stages: the first, with a focus on the private sphere, will be hosted by the University of Basel in December 2020, while the second chapter, taking place at the University of Liège in May 2021, will concern the royal sphere.

Since iconoclasm is a phenomenon that crosses borders with a number of other fields - e.g. sociological, anthropological and political - we urge to create as many research paths as possible, while keeping within the ancient Egyptian repertoire. By analyzing individual case studies, we hope to be able to look at iconoclasm in its multifaceted fabric.