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NEW HEAD AND NEW DIGITAL CURATOR OF EMKP

We are pleased to announce that Paula Granados García has been appointed as the new Head of the Endangered Material Knowledge Programme. In her previous role Paula was Lead Digital Curator and Operations Manager for the EMKP and has been working with the EMKP since she joined the programme in 2021.

Paula's background is in the archaeology of the Late Iron Age Iberian Peninsula with a focus on cross-cultural interaction through material culture. Her PhD research focused on the intersection of cultural heritage and digital technologies, and the challenges of digital preservation especially related to the representation of Indigenous epistemologies and alternative ontologies. As a Digital Humanities specialist, Paula specialises in data and knowledge modelling via Linked Open Data technologies, the creation and mediation of knowledge in museums, and collaborative curation of cultural heritage initiatives through digital media and experimental technologies. She also focuses on the application of ethical research to the use of digital technologies, especially concerning intellectual property rights, environmental sustainability, and accessibility.

Together with Paula, we would like to use this opportunity to welcome Jacob Anthony who has recently joined the EMKP team as Digital Curator. Jacob will be with us for the next 18 months to review EMKP digital procedures and optimise the programme's digital workflows and web architecture. Jacob has a background in both Bronze Age Jordanian ceramics, and the archaeology of Etruscan sites in Italy; his research convenes Geographic Information Systems (GIS), applied machine learning, and archaeological policy for stewarding cultural heritage.

Exciting times for the EMKP as we embrace these changes to the team!



Paula Granados Garcia



Jacob Anthony

2024/2025 CALL FOR APPLICATIONS

The 2024/2025 Call for Applications is now **OPEN!** If you have a project idea to document or digitise endangered material knowledge and practices, do apply! Being part of the EMKP is an excellent opportunity to engage with an international community of researchers, practitioners, and knowledge holders, all working towards the documentation and digitisation of endangered material knowledge.

EMKP offers two grant schemes with three types of grants: The Documentation Grant scheme with the Large Documentation Grant and the Small Documentation Grant, and the Legacy Digitisation scheme with the Legacy Digitisation Grant. Documentation grants provide funding to document living material knowledge systems and practices in danger of disappearing. Large Documentation Grants can be up to 24 months with a maximum award of £100,000. Small Documentation Grants can be up to 12 months with a maximum award of £20,000. The Legacy Digitisation Grant, used to digitise collections or materials relating to

endangered material knowledge, can be up to 12 months with a maximum award of £20,000, and can be applied for separately or together with a documentation grant.

We will be hosting a series of webinars in English and Spanish to explain the application process and answer questions. To check the coming dates and register please complete this [Registration Form](#).

If you have any queries on the application process, please email emkp@britishmuseum.org



Epaya Rayo making an older form of stool referred to by some as an 'aporokocho'. (Image: Samuel, Derbyshire, 2023).

2024 EMKP TRAINING AT THE BRITISH MUSEUM

In September, the EMKP Team had the pleasure of hosting the 2024 cohort of grantees for the 2024 EMKP Training at the British Museum. We welcomed 23 grantees - our biggest cohort so far - from 18 different countries, spanning across the world, from the Solomon Islands to Mongolia, Nigeria, Ethiopia, India, and Brazil. Throughout the week the EMKP team presented lectures that explored ethnographic field methods and consent, digital ethics and open access, metadata and data management, photography, filming, video editing, and community and public engagement.

The knowledge exchange between the EMKP Team and the grantees of various backgrounds in anthropology, visual artistry, archaeology, architecture, photography, linguistics, and history encouraged an enriching and creative space, where we all were able to learn from each other.

Key highlights from the week include a welcome drinks reception, where the British Museum's Director, Nicholas Cullinan, offered a speech to

welcome our grantees, a photography and film workshop led by Orly Orbach (EMKP) and Henrike Niehaus (University of Greenwich), and a 'Become the Maker' workshop led by Alkesh Parmar (RCA).

We look forward to seeing the grantees embark on their projects, as well as exploring their finished digital collections! Read the full article [here](#).



EMKP Grantees with the Director of the British Museum, Nicholas Cullinan (Image: Chrisyl Wong-Hang-Sun, 2024).

WEAVING HERITAGE: THE CULTURAL TAPESTRY OF CHITRALI SHU

Adil Iqbal

“The delicate patterns of Shu tell tales of Chitral’s mythological past and spiritual depth, serving as a canvas where every colour and knot captures a piece of our shared history.”

Dr. Inayatullah Faizi (Cultural Historian) in conversation with Adil Iqbal

The rugged landscapes of Chitral, nestled in Northwest Pakistan, harbour an ancient craft as intricate as the valley itself: Chitrali Shu. This handwoven woollen cloth, crafted over generations, stands as a symbol of resilience and cultural pride, woven with threads that connect people to their heritage, beliefs, and environment. Principal Investigator, Adil Iqbal explores how this traditional art form serves not merely as a textile but as a narrative of the Chitrali spirit, echoing tales of folklore, myth, and human endurance.



Kushtan preparing the wool for spinning at her village in Royee, Garam Chashma. (Image: Feroza Gulzar, 2022).

Every piece of Shu carries within it a story, often steeped in folklore. Take, for instance, the myth surrounding Shandur Lake, where a young girl lost her life as she was washing sheep. Her tragic fate became entwined with the animal’s horns and the surrounding waters. This tale, woven into the collective consciousness, mirrors the Chitrali reverence for nature’s power, portraying a world where human life is interwoven with the landscape, animals, and forces beyond human control.

Superstitions envelop the craft, bringing a mystical dimension to the everyday work of spinning and weaving. A spinner’s thread that snaps is believed to signal unmet needs or misfortune, a tangible reminder of the spiritual connections within daily life. Even the tools of Shu-making carry symbolic weight; a broken “maku” (shuttle) hints at scarcity, while skilled artisans, known as “capable daughters,”



Small group of sheep grazing in highland pasture in Royee village, Garam Chashma. (Image: Feroza Gulzar, 2023).

are cherished figures, blessed as harbingers of good fortune.

Beyond myth and superstition, Shu’s influence permeates local language and expressions. Phrases like “Dundini Bik,” meaning “bowing down like a carding bow,” capture life’s wear and tear through the language of Shu-making, reflecting how intimately the craft is tied to the Chitrali experience. Shu’s techniques, such as “Bohtik” (felting), have inspired proverbs and metaphors that speak to the community’s values of diligence and hard work. In preserving Shu, Chitral retains more than a fabric—it safeguards a living archive of its cultural lore, ensuring that the stories, beliefs, and resilience woven into each piece continue to resonate, both within the valleys and beyond.

EMKP grantee Adil Iqbal has written a detailed piece, with images and examples that further explore the relationship between Chitrali Shu, and the Chitrali myths, folklore, language, superstitions, and poetry, which can be [accessed through the link here](#).

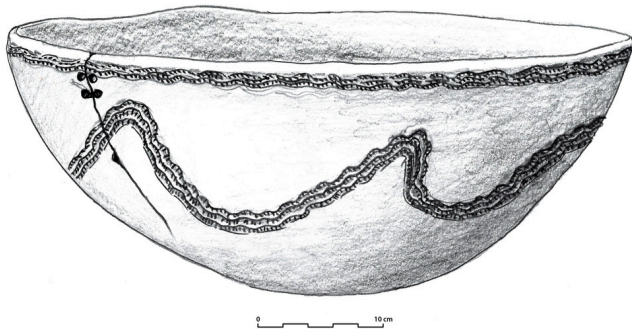


Kushtan spinning the weft yarn at her village in Royee, Garam Chashma. (Image: Feroza Gulzar, 2022).

UPLOAD: MATERIALITIES OF MINORITIES IN WESTERN ETHIOPIA

The borderland between Sudan and Ethiopia has historically been a refuge to an extraordinary diversity of indigenous groups that still maintain their unique material worlds. These, however, are now being threatened by the arrival of mass-produced goods, the influence of Ethiopia's dominant societies, and the spread of world religions. Unlike the situation of other indigenous groups in Africa and elsewhere, the predicament of western Ethiopian communities has failed to capture media and scholarly attention.

Alfredo González Ruibal and his team of Spanish and Ethiopian researchers have just completed their EMKP project which documents the material culture of the Aburamla, Banea, Kadallu, Opo and Chabu peoples. They are all Nilo-Saharan speakers, with the exception of the Chabu, originally believed to speak a Nilo-Saharan language, today considered a language isolate.



Cooking pot. (Image: Alfredo González-Ruibal and Alvaro Falquina Aparicio, 2021).

Each of the groups number less than 2,000 individuals, with the Opo as the largest. Western Ethiopia is home to a dozen indigenous minority groups, where many of which are not well known in anthropological or historical discourses. The project draws on Alfredo's long term archaeological and ethnographic work within the region, exploring the tactics of resistance that these indigenous communities use.

The project idea formed in recognition that objects cannot be understood in isolation, and that the disappearance of specific categories of objects often entails the disappearance of others, ultimately leading to the vanishing of entire material worlds. With this in mind, the team set out to record as many items and technological processes as possible



Pottery-making process. (Image: Alfredo González-Ruibal and Carlos Nieto, 2020).

using a combination of old and new media. This embodies EMKP's values of documenting not just the making practices of peoples across the world, but the dynamic and entangled knowledge systems that contribute to these ways of being.

The result of the project was a wealth of diverse assets: conventional photographs, drawings, videos, 3D models, photogrammetric images, orthogonal images, plans, and maps. In recording the material knowledge of these five indigenous communities, the team documented tools, basketwork, stone artefacts, architectures and technological processes related to their production, as well as subsistence, maintenance and ritual activities.

If you would like to learn more about this project and the fascinating material knowledge of Indigenous minority groups of Western Ethiopia, do explore the assets on the repository here.



Manufacturing process of a beer filter or huqu-timis. (Image: Alfredo González-Ruibal and Alvaro Minguito, 2021).

NEWS BITES

Knowledge deposition by Guarani and Kaiowá shamans:

In October, community and team members of the [Oga Pysy Project](#), led by Raffaella Fryer-Moreira, visited the EMKP at the British Museum to personally deliver their digital collection. Guarani and Kaiowá shamans involved in the project—Nhanderu Tadeu, Nhandesy Fausta, and Nhandesy Roseli—had indicated their desire to conduct a ceremony to deposit their sacred knowledge into the EMKP repository. Learn more about the visit [here](#).



Presenting the hard drive. (Image: Jacob Anthony, 2024)

Collections visit with a collaborator from Solomon Islands:

Betty Bosi, an EMKP Project Collaborator with Marianne George (PI) and Luke Vaikawi (Collaborator), who are documenting [the food preparation and preservation techniques of Taumako](#), attended the EMKP 2024 Training in September. Betty visited the Oceania collections with our colleagues Polly Bence and Ben Burt, who were able to show her artefacts from the Solomon islands, her native home and the site of her project. We want to thank Polly and Ben for making this visit possible.



Ben and Betty visiting the collections (Image: Polly Bence, 2024)

The 2024 William Fagg Lecture:

Stephanie Bunn, who has been a member of the EMKP Panel from its inception in 2019, gave a fantastic lecture on the relationship between basketry and mathematics, for the Department of Africa, Oceania and the Americas' Annual William Fagg Lecture. Read more about the lecture [here](#).



Stephanie Bunn presenting the William Fagg Lecture. (Image: Orly Orbach, 2024).

EMKP at the Asean Museum Forum 2024

In September, EMKP grantees Andrea Yankowski and Ana Maria Theresa P. Labrador, along with community partner, Audrey Dawn Tomada, Head of the National Museum of the Philippines presented on their collaborative research for their completed EMKP project, which [documented the construction of a traditional salt workshop \(kamalig\), and the production of locally made salt \(asin tibuok\)](#) at the Asean Museum Forum 2024 in Bangkok.

EMKP Grantee Zoe Cormack featured in *HAU: Journal of Ethnography Theory*:

Zoe Cormack, who leads the [EMKP project documenting Zande slit-drums \(gugu\) in south Sudan](#), has published an [open-access photographic essay utilising images from her project](#). Titled 'A drum that speaks', the article explores the significance of the *gugu* for Zande communities of south Sudan, and its survival amid the precarity of war and displacement in Sudan over the last 100 years. Following the work of master carver, Elia Magas Mboriundo, the images trace the key steps in the making process of the *gugu*.

Contributions and suggestions for future issues should be sent to: emkp@britishmuseum.org