



**"Beyond Royal Sources:  
Contextualizing Middle Kingdom  
Kingship"**

**Dr. Luiza Osorio G. Silva (University  
of California, Irvine)**

**Lecture: June 7, 2025 1:30 p.m. - 3:30 p.m.**

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Egyptian kingship has traditionally been approached through royal evidence: bombastic rhetoric, monumental architecture, images of conquest and triumph. In recent years, scholarship has slowly moved away from narratives focused solely on royal monuments and texts to interrogate how kings and kingship fit into broader ancient Egyptian society. Luiza Osorio G. Silva's current book project, *Kings from Below*, seeks to better understand where, when, why, and how non-royal Egyptians in specifically the Middle Kingdom engaged with kingship. What changes about the modern understanding of ancient kingship when these kinds of concerns are taken into consideration alongside official ideology? The ways in which non-royal people engaged with the royal institution were variable and varied. Rather than an ancient Egypt in which culture was defined primarily in terms of

kingship, non-royal evidence highlights that the relevance of royal power was highly dependent on social context and the circumstances of different actors.

Luíza Osorio G. Silva is Assistant Professor of Art History, Archaeology, and Visual Studies at the University of California, Irvine. Her current main research interests include ancient Egyptian kingship and monumentality, specifically the non-royal experience of kingship in the Middle Kingdom (ca. 2030-1650 BCE). Luíza is otherwise interested in materiality, the intersection of space and power, the contexts and audiences for art and architecture, and the writing of historical narratives. She is currently the Assistant Director of the Mastaba of Akhmerutnisut Documentation Project (Giza, Egypt) and an archaeologist for the Memphis-Kom el-Fakhry Archaeological Project (Memphis, Egypt). As a Brazilian Egyptologist, Luíza is committed to further developing Egyptological studies in Brazil and Portugal, as well as making the ancient world more accessible to diverse audiences. To that end, she co-hosts a podcast with two colleagues about ancient Egypt in Portuguese, titled "Três egiptólogos entram num bar".

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