

The Austrian Archaeological Institute (OeAI) of the Austrian Academy of Sciences (OeAW), the largest non-university institution for basic research in Austria, is seeking to fill the position of a

Postdoctoral Researcher
(full time / 40 hours per week)

The position is a **Sur Place** position, based in **Cairo**.

The position is initially offered for one year, from **1 January to 31 December 2027**, with the possibility of extension for a further **four years**. The Austrian Archaeological Institute is Austria's largest research institution in the field of archaeology and ancient studies. The Cairo branch is Austria's only permanent research institution for archaeological field research in Egypt. The tasks of the branch office include archaeological research projects in Egypt and the surrounding countries. The focus is on basic archaeological research, including material culture and cultural-historical studies.

The successful candidate will lead the project's theoretical engagement with liminal spaces and practices. They will connect archaeological evidence with debates on liminality, spatiality, temporality, materiality, agency and culturally specific experience, helping the team develop explicit and critically reflexive analytical criteria. The postdoctoral researcher will participate in relevant stages of fieldwork and material analysis and will play a central role in comparative synthesis across the project.

Project **BETWEEN** investigates liminal spaces and practices in Ancient Egyptian urban settings through the material remains of architecture, pottery and small finds, supplemented where relevant by epigraphic evidence. Bringing together spatial, temporal and social aspects of liminality, the project explores how liminal spaces and situations emerged, operated and changed in ancient Egyptian towns. Rather than treating liminality as a fixed or self-evident attribute of particular spaces or objects, the **BETWEEN** project explicitly addresses the interpretative ambiguity inherent in archaeological evidence and seeks to develop transparent, context-sensitive approaches to identifying and evaluating liminality.

Your responsibilities:

- develop and refine **BETWEEN's** theoretical and methodological framework for studying liminality archaeologically;
- assist the PI with cross-project analytical outputs and dissemination;
- translate theoretical concepts into transparent analytical questions applicable to architecture, pottery, small finds and selected epigraphic evidence;
- support shared terminology and methodological consistency across the research team;
- coordinate regular theoretical and interdisciplinary discussions and exchanges with visiting scholars;
- produce peer-reviewed publications and contribute to collective synthesis, workshops and the final conference;
- participate in project fieldwork and collaborative analysis at relevant stages.

Your profile:

- a completed PhD in archaeology, Egyptology or a closely related field;
- demonstrated expertise in archaeological theory and in the analysis of space, material practice and/or temporality;
- the ability to connect theoretical argument with detailed archaeological evidence;
- a strong publication record appropriate to career stage;
- experience of collaborative and interdisciplinary research;
- excellent written and spoken English;
- the ability and willingness to participate in archaeological fieldwork and research travel.

Desirable qualifications:

- expertise in ancient Egyptian archaeology, urban and settlement archaeology, or a closely related field;
- research experience on liminality, boundaries, thresholds, waste, funerary-domestic relations, landscape change or comparable themes;
- experience in coordinating workshops, interdisciplinary research activities and collaborative publications

The research statement should present a coherent plan for developing and applying the theoretical framework of BETWEEN. Applicants should identify the principal theoretical questions they intend to pursue and explain how concepts such as liminality, boundary, threshold, processuality and agency will be translated into explicit archaeological criteria. Particular attention should be given to distinguishing liminal spaces and practices from peripheral, multifunctional, disturbed or otherwise changing contexts. The statement should explain how spatial, social and temporal evidence will be analysed together and how architecture, depositional patterns, pottery, small finds and selected epigraphic evidence can be evaluated comparatively while remaining sensitive to the cultural and environmental specificity of individual settlements. Applicants should also address the challenges posed by ambiguity, incomplete preservation, negative evidence and alternative interpretations. The proposed contribution should demonstrate how the candidate will collaborate with the other specialists, support a shared analytical vocabulary and integrate results across the project. It should conclude with a realistic outline of research stages and the principal individual and collective outputs envisaged over the five-year appointment.

Applications must be submitted in English and should include:

- a cover letter explaining the applicant's motivation for the position;
- a curriculum vitae, including relevant education, employment and research experience;
- copies of relevant degree certificates;
- a complete publication list and one representative writing sample;
- a research statement of no more than two pages explaining the proposed contribution to BETWEEN;
- the names and contact details of two referees.

Applications should be submitted through oeai-kairo@oeaw.ac.at by latest **30th September 2026**. Shortlisted candidates may be invited to an online interview and, for research positions, a brief presentation of their proposed contribution.