



**TUESDAY | December 5, 2017 | Humanities 365 | 1:00P**

## **From Pastoral Nomads to Policemen: Ethnicity and Identity of the Medjay in Ancient Egypt**

The Medjay were a people living on the fringes of Ancient Egyptian society. Originating in the Eastern Desert along what is now the borderland between Sudan and Egypt, the Medjay gradually became integrated into Ancient Egyptian society over a two thousand year period. The roles that they played have perplexed Egyptologists and archaeologists for the last century because the sources seem to indicate that they could be either pastoral nomads or policemen, either Nubians or Egyptians, and either foreign enemies or Egyptian war heroes. Over the centuries and millennia, the word Medjay changed from referring to a desert nomadic group to become known as an elite fighting force who worked for the Pharaoh. This lecture is an introduction to the diverse textual, artistic, and archaeological sources that help us identify how Medjay evolved from an ethnic group to Egypt's most important police force.



**Kate Liszka** completed her degree in Egyptology at the University of Pennsylvania in 2012. In her dissertation, she studied the evolution of the Medjay from the Old Kingdom—when they were a Nubian ethnic group of itinerant laborers—to the beginning of the New Kingdom—when they became an elite military group who protected places of pharaonic interest, like the borders of Egypt against the Nubians. Kate Liszka went on to become a Cotsen Postdoctoral Fellow in the Society of Fellows in the Liberal Arts at Princeton University. Currently, Kate Liszka is proud to be the Benson and Pamela Harer Chair and Assistant Professor of History at California State University, San Bernardino. In addition to her work on the Medjay, she directs an archaeological and epigraphic project at Wadi el-Hudi, Egypt. Wadi el-Hudi is a region in the Eastern Desert where the ancient Egyptians mined for amethyst and gold. They built several settlements at the site and carved over 250 inscriptions in the course of their expeditions.

*Lunch will be provided.*