

Analysis of non-marine evaporitic deposits Wadi Natrun, Egypt

Melanie Sapsford, Cranfield University.

The Wadi Natrun is a geographical depression along the Desert Road between Cairo and Alexandria. It lies around 70km from Cairo. Within this depression are a series of ephemeral lakes which precipitate out sodium salts. These salts are currently part of a study investigating their usage in Ancient Egyptian industries. The project itself investigates the chemical and geographical history of the lakes and the deposits, as well as a modern investigation into the current geochemistry of the lakes. Geological samples are analysed using XRD to determine the way in which the deposits form; stratigraphic orientation and the chemical constituents of the lakes. This paper will present a background to the area as well as the new results from these geological samples. It will also emphasise the need for XRD analysis to such complicated mineralogical systems.