

# News & Notes

MEMBERS' MAGAZINE

ISSUE 240 | WINTER 2019 | NUBIA



THE  
ORIENTAL  
INSTITUTE  
OF THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO



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*News & Notes* is a quarterly publication of the Oriental Institute, printed exclusively as one of the privileges of membership.



**On the Cover:** Pyramid at Meroe, North Cemetery N21. Sometimes attributed to King Teriteqas

## From the DIRECTOR'S STUDY



Inspired by two recent events at the Oriental Institute this quarter — Stuart Tyson Smith's November Members' Lecture, "Entangled Lives: Intercultural Interactions in the Nubian Borderlands," and the Afrofuturism Symposium the OI hosted in October — this issue of *News & Notes* takes ancient Nubia as its central theme. The portion of the central Nile valley which would later bear the name Nubia was first inhabited in the seventh millennium BCE (ca. 6500 BCE), and became the seat of the powerful kingdom of Kush between the end of the second millennium BCE (ca. 2000 BCE) and first centuries of the current era (ca. 400 CE).

The OI has advanced our understanding of Nubian culture during the course of its long history of research in the region. Already in 1905-07, James Henry Breasted traveled to southern Egypt and northern Sudan to document ancient Egyptian and Nubian monuments, taking a historically important series of photographs which were exhibited in the OI in 2006. In the 1960s the OI participated in the Nubia Salvage Project organized by UNESCO to excavate areas threatened by the construction of the Aswan High Dam. Highlights of the some 15,000 objects brought back to Chicago in course of those excavations can be viewed in our museum's Robert F. Picken Family Nubia Gallery. The OI returned to Nubia between 2006 and 2008 to participate in the Merowe Dam salvage excavation project at the Fourth Cataract of the Nile. The OI's ongoing Nubian Expedition Project, under the direction of Bruce Williams, who provides the lead article for this issue of *News & Notes*, continues to pursue an ambitious publication program with three volumes on the cusp of completion.

In his contribution, Bruce traces the primary phases of Nubian history and their major cultural attributes from the earliest habitation of the region in the Neolithic through the fall of the Meroitic empire in the fourth century CE, highlighting the major archaeological finds of the OI expeditions. Of particular interest to our readers, no doubt, is the description of the complex cultural, economic, and political interactions between Egypt and Nubia over the millennia, which shaped to a large extent the vicissitudes of both countries. Resuming the story, Tasha Vorderstrasse considers Nubian art during the Medieval period, which is characterized by local adaptations of Byzantine iconographic motifs as well as similarities to the artwork of late antique Egypt and Ethiopia. While much attention has been paid to striking monumental wall paintings, Tasha focuses on the illuminated manuscripts, which provide a wealth of information about not only local Nubian style but also the linguistic diversity of the period as the manuscripts bear witness to Old Nubian, Greek, and Coptic.

We hope that you enjoy this issue of *News & Notes* devoted to Nubia — a name that is evocative in the public imagination but whose culture and history is perhaps lesser known than other civilizations of the ancient Middle East.

**CHRISTOPHER WOODS**  
Director

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# EVER-CHANGING NUBIA

PEOPLES  
STATES &  
EMPIRES

by Lisa Heidorn & Bruce Williams

From the time of the Arab geographers, the word “Nubia” has been used to name the countries along the Middle Nile, and the lands on either side, from the Ethiopian Plateau to the Egyptian Eastern Desert. Its cultural past begins with the departure of the glaciers farther north, but its continuous past is more recent.

**THE LANDS WE CALL NUBIA** are centered on the middle Nile, from the confluence at Khartoum to the First Cataract. It is a vast region without clear boundaries, containing different peoples with different languages, religions, and cultures. Although once considered a corridor, it is actually a complex center of cultures in its own right, and the routes that pass through it are varied in direction and purpose. The greatest route, the Nile, is in fact also an immense string of oases.



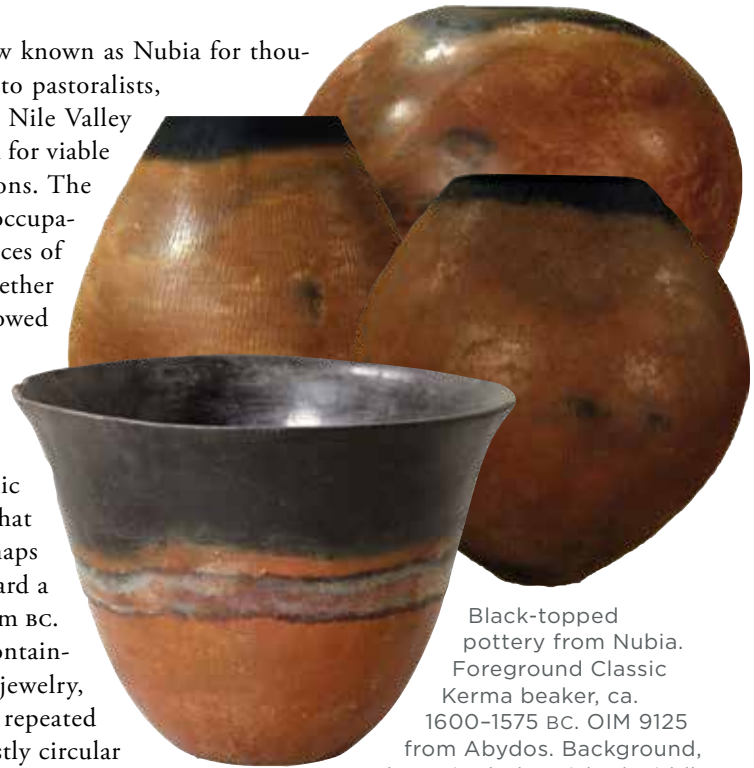
## NUBIA BEFORE 2500 BC

### MESOLITHIC NEOLITHIC A-GROUP

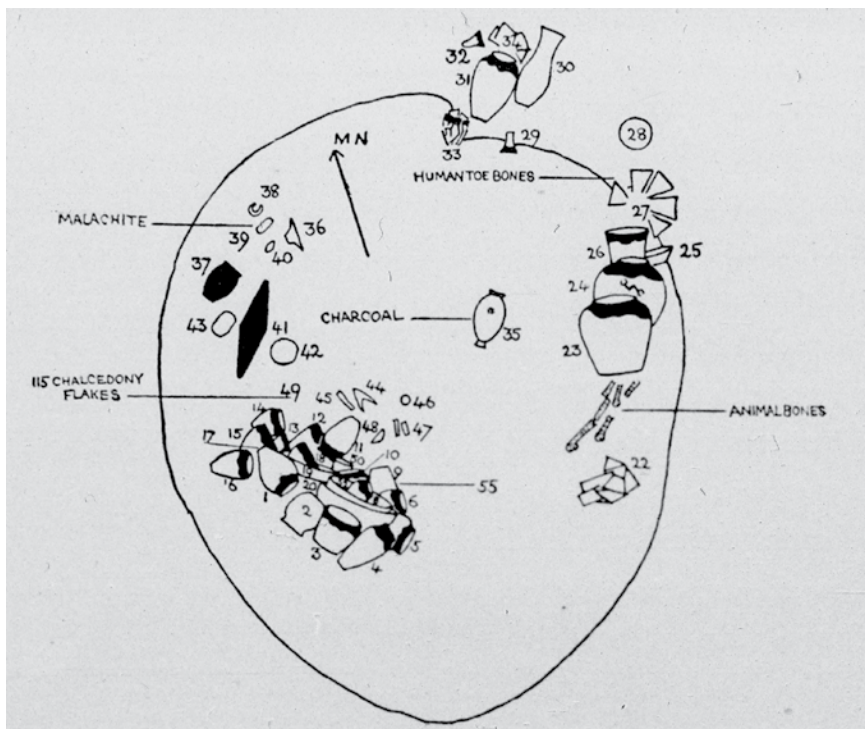
A sequence of cultures has lived in the area now known as Nubia for thousands of years, ranging from hunter-gatherers, to pastoralists, to settled agriculturalists that moved in to the Nile Valley when climatic changes made the deserts too arid for viable

sustenance and have often mixed features of economies and locations. The cultural groups surrounding the river valley and its larger centers of occupation varied from cooperative to hostile depending on the circumstances of control in Lower and Upper Nubia — or over the deserts — and whether their share of the resources and the trade moving along the routes allowed them some prosperity.

The pottery and lithic types of the Khartoum Mesolithic are scattered at sites as far north as the Second Cataract and out into the Libyan Desert. These populations were hunter-gatherer groups who were only partly sedentary. It's not until after 6500 BC that Neolithic style remains are found at sites near Kerma, belonging to groups that both herded and raised crops. With an overlap in lifestyle and perhaps culture between the earlier and later populations, the transition toward a more sedentary lifestyle was complete by the end of the fifth millennium BC. Burials became more elaborate, reflecting an increasing prosperity, containing fine pottery vessels, notably the tulip-shaped incised beakers, jewelry, palettes, and often the skull of a bovine, a potent funerary symbol repeated in burials down to the conversion to Christianity. Dwellings are mostly circular arrangements of postholes. Cemeteries inform us of the increasing population and its centers of concentration, such that one near Shendi in central Sudan.

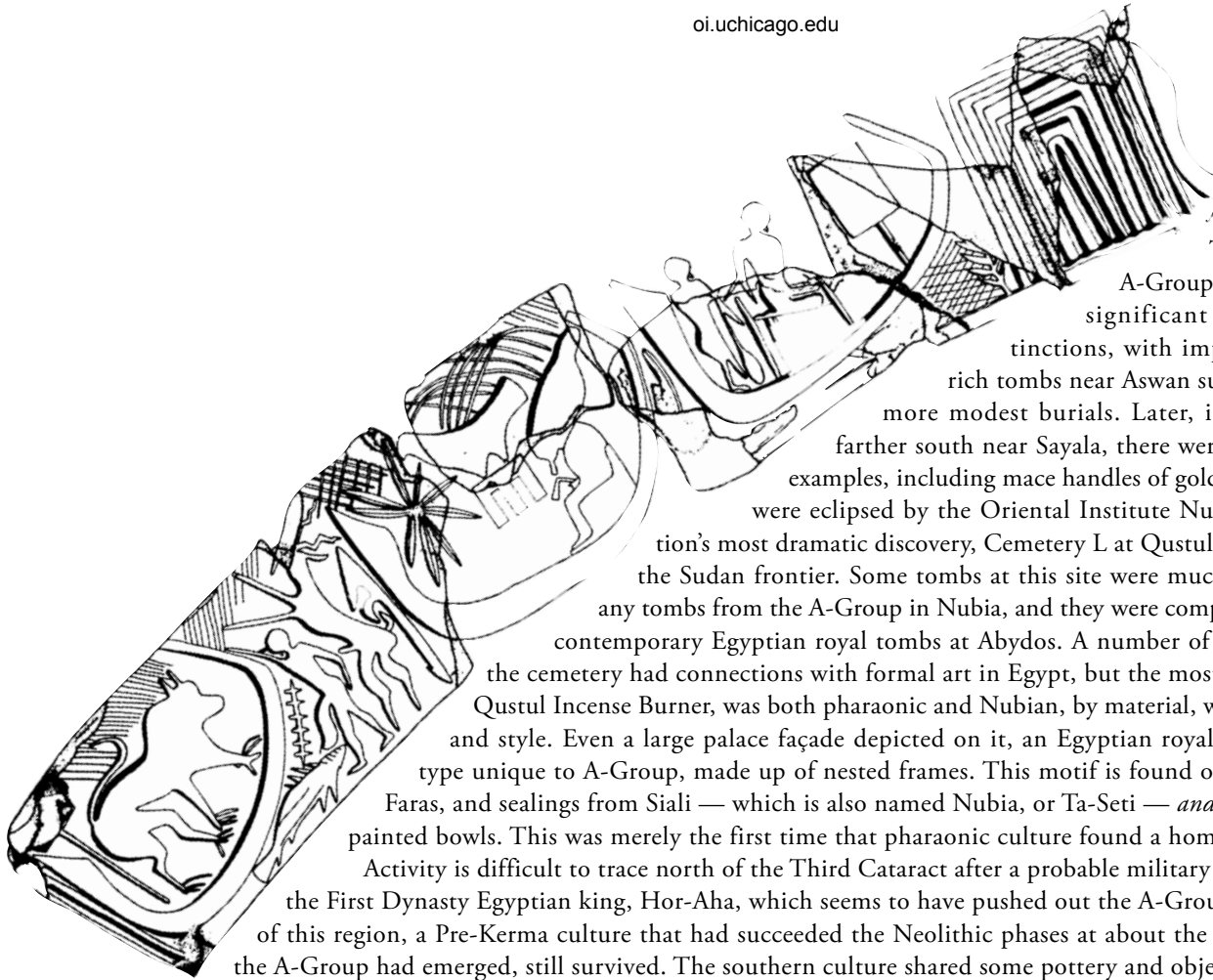


Black-topped pottery from Nubia. Foreground Classic Kerma beaker, ca. 1600–1575 BC. OIM 9125 from Abydos. Background, three ripple-burnished Middle A-Group jars ca. 2300 BC. OIM E21901, E21900, E21898, front to back



Early A-Group rich tomb from Lower Nubia at Khor Bahan, contemporary with Naqada I or early Predynastic in Egypt, ca. 3700 BC

In the fourth millennium BC, the latest Neolithic in Northern Nubia, the Abkan culture, gave way to the better-known A-Group. It is best known from its initial emergence near Aswan, where tombs were found that contained objects that are nearly all of Upper Egyptian Predynastic Naqada I type. However, the large tombs in the type-site of Cemetery 17 at Khor Bahan were not organized in an Egyptian way, but were circular as in the Sudanese Neolithic. As the A-Group spread to the south, local pottery became more elaborate, including fine, ripple-burnished black-topped vessels, ultimately replaced by an equally fine painted pottery. Three phases appear, one that correlates to the Egyptian so-called Predynastic Naqada I (c?) to Naqada IIc, one that correlates to the Naqada IIc–early IIIa, and one dating to Naqada IIIa–b, ending just after the beginning of the First Dynasty (IIIc).



The A-Group showed significant class distinctions, with important and rich tombs near Aswan surrounded by more modest burials. Later, in cemeteries farther south near Sayala, there were even richer examples, including mace handles of gold. All of them were eclipsed by the Oriental Institute Nubian Expedition's most dramatic discovery, Cemetery L at Qustul just north of the Sudan frontier. Some tombs at this site were much larger than any tombs from the A-Group in Nubia, and they were comparable to the contemporary Egyptian royal tombs at Abydos. A number of objects from the cemetery had connections with formal art in Egypt, but the most famous, the Qustul Incense Burner, was both pharaonic and Nubian, by material, workmanship, and style. Even a large palace façade depicted on it, an Egyptian royal symbol, is a type unique to A-Group, made up of nested frames. This motif is found on a seal from Faras, and sealings from Siali — which is also named Nubia, or Ta-Seti — and on A-Group painted bowls. This was merely the first time that pharaonic culture found a home in Nubia.

Activity is difficult to trace north of the Third Cataract after a probable military action under the First Dynasty Egyptian king, Hor-Aha, which seems to have pushed out the A-Group. But south of this region, a Pre-Kerma culture that had succeeded the Neolithic phases at about the same time as the A-Group had emerged, still survived. The southern culture shared some pottery and object types with the A-Group peoples.

By the time of the Egyptian king, Sneferu, at the beginning of the Fourth Dynasty (ca. 2613–2589 BC), the fortified site of Kerma was attacked. The king's victory inscriptions note the 7,000 prisoners and 20,000 cattle captured from the Kermans. And his successor, Khufu, sent expeditions out west of the Nile, where graffiti and deposits of pottery vessels are found marking the location of watering stations in the desert. This suggests a trade route leading toward southwestern Egypt, and to Gilf el-Kebir and Gebel Uweinat, which possibly then turned to the more southerly desert routes leading to countries where exotic products were obtained by the Egyptians (see below).

The Egyptians proceeded to settle in Nubia, at the Second Cataract fortified settlement of Buhen, founded during the reign of one of Khufu's successors, Khafre. Buhen served multiple functions, probably organizing the southern trade, as well as providing the manpower for resource extraction and processing. This town was abandoned around the time of the Egyptian Fifth Dynasty king Niuserre (ca. 2415–2393 BC).



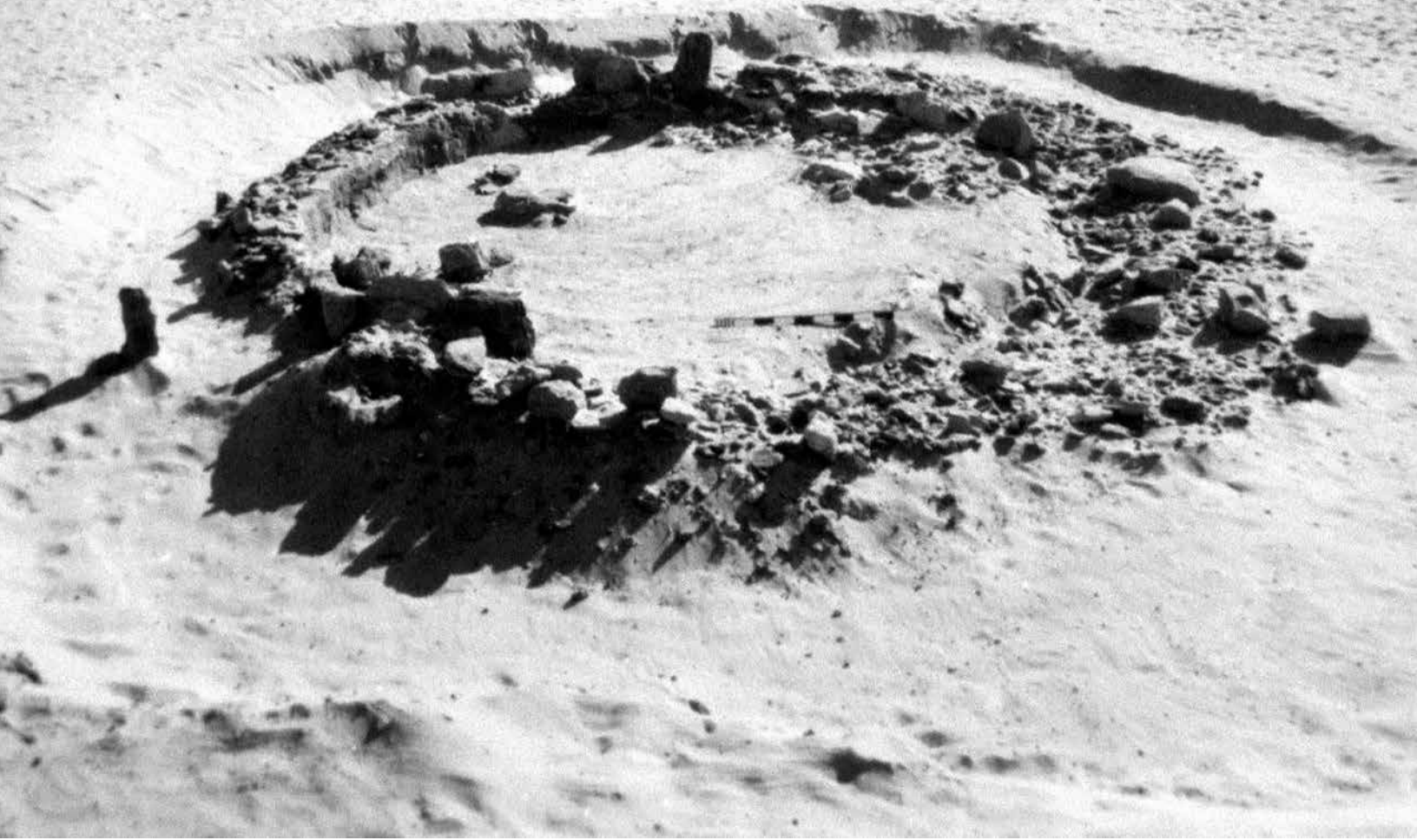
Above: Drawing of Qustul Incense Burner

Right: Qustul Incense Burner, from a royal tomb of the Late A-Group at Qustul, contemporary with Naqada IIIa or late Predynastic/Protodynastic in Egypt ca. 3100 BC. OIM 26069



# THE RISE OF KUSH C-GROUP & THE MEDJAY

CA. 2500-2400 BC



C-Group house structure at Serra East ca. 2000 BC

Shortly after Buhen was abandoned, new cultures start to appear around Kerma and in the Eastern Desert. The earliest C-Group materials are found in these graves, which are then succeeded by materials of the Early Kerma culture. However, the C-Group established a more permanent presence north of the Second Cataract, where their cemeteries are distinguished by well-built circular stone tombs containing fine black-topped and black incised pottery styles. The cultural remains indicate that cattle were all important to them, and cattle images are found on grave stelae, pottery vessels, and in rock graffiti.

The largest settlement south of Elephantine was found at Kerma, where excavators have uncovered houses, palaces, and a throne hall centered in a brick temple compound that still survives 20 m in height. Cattle were also important here, with a later phase of the culture displaying hundreds to thousands of cattle skulls deposited around their low grave tumuli.

Together the C-Group peoples and the Early Kermans lasted until the late sixteenth century BC. Both groups were warlike and known for their skill in archery. Along with the Medjay, also well-known archers, they were used by the Egyptian army for battles and sieges against the Asiatics. The Sixth Dynasty autobiographical inscriptions of Weni, for example, note that these people were present in the five Asiatic campaign in which he participated (late twenty-fourth–early twenty-third centuries BC).

Egyptians voyaged south along the Red Sea to the region of Punt, and they had already established a trade route running west from the Nile and south along the desert paths of the Western Desert. The products of Punt and Yam, the latter known from the Sixth Dynasty records of Aswan's governors and caravan conductors, obtained incense, animals like giraffe, animal hides, and ebony. The Eleventh Dynasty ruler, Mentuhotep II, recorded receiving tribute from the land of Yam, which may have been at the end of the route running south from the Gebel Uweinat region, perhaps in modern Darfur or nearby. The caravaneers proceeded back along the Nile to the north, passing through Wawat (Lower Nubia) on their return to Egypt and Aswan.

During the same periods, the Kerma and C-Group cultures flourished, even as Egypt entered the First Intermediate Period, when the country was divided. Amenemhat's usurpation around 1994 BC found the Nubian warriors fighting on both sides of Egypt's civil war, and a counter-dynasty arose in Lower Nubia, with the last, a Nubian, king named Segersenti. However, the Middle Kingdom Senwosret I secured Lower Nubia with a string of fortresses. Wawat's population is evident in the numerous cemeteries found there, as is that of the region of Kush, of which Kerma was the capital.



Above:  
Neolithic rock  
drawing of a hunt  
scene from a boulder at  
Akkad on the west bank of  
the Nile in the Third Cataract

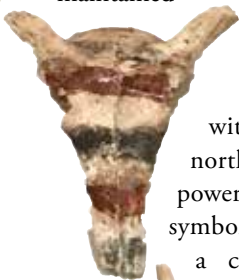
Below: Painted caprid skulls of the  
Pan Graves at Adindan, Lower Nubia,  
ca. 1700-1650 BC

Right: Winged sun disk from a lintel found at the  
funerary temple K II at Kerma showing the selective  
adoption of Egyptian religious symbols ca. 1575-1550 BC



Kush flourished at this time, with evidence for the extent of its power or influence felt upstream on the Nile to the Fourth Cataract. The cultures in the latter region left pottery and objects that are not of typical Kerma type, but show the influence of Kerma. By Middle Kerma times (ca. 1900-1650 BC), it is clear that the Kermans were traveling or trading out to the Kassala region by the Red Sea, and that they were mining gold around the Fourth Cataract. This provided an incentive for the Egyptians, who were mining gold in the Eastern Desert, to challenge the power of Kerma.

Senwosret III (1878-1839 BC) campaigned repeatedly to Kush with results so mixed that he built the largest fortification system to survive in the ancient world, stretching from Serra East to Semna South. His frontier vigilance and desert patrols stabilized the southern situation and allowed trade and resource extraction to continue for about one century. However, his Asiatic campaigns failed miserably, and stretched resources so thin that the Nubian fortresses were no longer maintained



by the mid-eighteenth century BC. However, some of the garrison populations remained behind, with tenuous ties to Egypt and its Thirteenth Dynasty bureaucratic state. The Egyptians, however, continued to use Medjay warriors from the Eastern Desert in their armies.

By the mid-seventeenth century, the Hyksos Asiatic dynasty was dominating the northern part of Egypt, with separate lesser dynasties at Abydos and Thebes. This happened while Kush expanded its control to the north after the Egyptians withdrew, taking control of Wawat and the Egyptian fortresses, and extending their power from the Fourth Cataract to the Egyptian frontier at Aswan. The kings adopted, once again, pharaonic symbolism, both in the Kushite homeland and in Lower Nubia, and the title "ruler of Kush" was enclosed in a car-



touché. Records and archaeology indicate both continuing trade and conflict during this period. A graffito at el Kab, in Egypt, records a major assault on Egypt by the entire imperial Kushite force, while booty from Egypt populated the tombs and town of Kerma. By the end of the period, Kamose, last pharaoh of the Seventeenth Dynasty, recorded that the Hyksos and Kushites were in full alliance with each other, pressuring Egypt from both the north and south. had brought in the horse-drawn chariot, and this technology must have been used to communicate with their Kushite allies. It's from this time forward that the horse spread from there to the rest of Africa.





# EGYPTIAN EMPIRE IN NUBIA

1550–CA. 1177 BC

However, between ca. 1530 and 1500 BC, the Egyptians had once again gained power in their homeland and returned to Nubia. Kerma power was reduced by Egyptian conquest, and Nubia was treated as an extension of the Egyptian state. Their hold over the area between Kawa and Gebel Barkal is unclear. The populations remaining in Egyptian-controlled Nubia — whether Egyptian expatriates or local groups — apparently accepted Egyptian religion and culture, which largely replaced Nubian objects and practices by about 1430 BC, even above the Third Cataract. However, some Nubian presence is evident, and there were even new Nubian groups.

By the late Eighteenth Dynasty, almost all of the tombs in Nubia display the credible adoption of Egyptian religion, culture, politics, and economy by local populations. Even at Kerma (the site of Dukki Gel) the Thutmosides built three orthogonal structures alongside a contemporary Nubian temple, which had existed since at least the Classic Kerma period. Egyptian temples there that were dedicated to Amun of Pnubs (Kerma/Dukki Gel), Amun of Nubia, and Amun of Karnak were built by Thutmose I and renovated by Hatshepsut and Thutmose IV.

The Egyptian officials — undoubtedly with their local help — organized trade and accumulated products such as gold, which were paramount in supporting the extensive colonial administration in Nubia. This extraction of products and goods also contributed to the endowment of major temples in Egypt, while gold, cattle and other animals, people, special items like ebony, incense, and elephant ivory — from farther south, east, and west in Africa — also flowed northward. A jar

docket from Amarna, for instance, notes it is “meat

from *Kush*.” Foreign kings

demand gifts of gold

to solidify bonds of

fraternal loyal-

ty — that is,

bribes.



The Egyptians invested in renovating older sites and building temple complexes, first in Lower Nubia and then building towns and temples to the south of the Second Cataract, after the conquest of Kerma by Thutmose I. The founder of the Eighteenth Dynasty, Ahmose, built temples and renovated Aniba and Buhen Fortresses. Amenhotep I built a temple at Semna Fortress, later renovated by Thutmose III, who also constructed at an Egyptian supply post, and an administrative and temple complex established by Thutmose I on Sai Island. The areas of Wawat and Kush were officially placed under the king's son of Kush and overseer of the southern lands, while two deputies oversaw the daily administrative, religious, and military duties in the north and south.

Thutmose I pursued a policy of expansion to the south, which was finally achieved under the later Thutmose III. He also built at both Sai and possibly Tombos, where he left a long campaign inscription. He conquered Kerma, killing the Kushite ruler, flattening the town, and then building a new military, administrative, and religious center atop earlier remains at Dukki Gel. His victory inscription at Tombos, private inscriptions near the First and Second Cataracts, and boundary inscription at Kurgus at the Fifth Cataract witness his victory.

The boundary tableaux at Kurgus, and the blocks of Thutmose III and Thutmose IV from Gebel Barkal, attest to the Egyptian presence far upstream from Kerma. The inscriptions of Thutmose I, Thutmose III, and Ramesses II (Year 44) and also one of his viceroys, and that of Thutmose I's senior queen, Ahmose, are found at Kurgus. This Egyptian imperial genre, which is replicated throughout Nubia in the New Kingdom, reflects a dominion from northern Syria to Upper Nubia. The inscriptions of both Thutmose I (year 2) and Thutmose III read:

As for any Nubian or any foreigner who violates this stela, which my father Amun has given to me, his chiefs shall be slain, Ra-Atum shall endure, the sky shall not rain for him, his cattle shall not calve, there shall be no heirs of his upon earth. (Davies 2017, xx)

Thutmose II also notes that

No king had reached this place except for my (grand)father. [Not] has the like [occurred] since the (time of) the primeval ones, in that my person returned to the boundary of the north and (the boundary) of the s[outh], to Miu, in victory. (Davies 2017, 72: Miu most likely refers to the land around the monumental tableaux)



In Upper Nubia large fortified towns with temples were newly established including Sai, Soleb, Sesebi, Tombos, Tabo, and Kawa, while Amara West was built during the Ramesside period. The lightly fortified enclosures surrounded vast areas with temples, official residences, or administrative offices, and smaller residences for the ordinary people. Each establishment was located where agricultural products and livestock could be raised, or where mined gold, gems, and quarried stone could be extracted. The building and refurbishment of temples and fortresses continued during the later Eighteenth Dynasty, with a new temple at Kawa under Tutankhamun. While inscriptions tell of campaigns in southern lands, the textual and archaeological evidence otherwise indicate a relative peace.

Southern campaigns are depicted in reliefs from Tutankhamun into the Nineteenth Dynasty, when campaigns against an unknown area called Irem are recorded. Reliefs of Ramesses II indicate that an even more remote region was reached. But by the late Twentieth Dynasty, disorder at Thebes led to the displacement of the High Priest of Amun, and the Viceroy of Nubia Pa-nehsi (the Nubian) intervened. He, in turn, was defeated by the next high priest — who was also an army commander — and retreated to Nubia. Nubia was lost. The following Twenty-first Dynasty kings ruled only from Tanis, in Lower Egypt, while the High Priest of Amun controlled Upper Egypt from Thebes.

The revival of Kerma-like burial practices in the post–New Kingdom period in Nubia, however, confirms that Nubian cultures survived throughout.



Rock inscriptions at Sahel Island south of Aswan. Above, Ramesses II offers wine to gods Khnum, Satis, and Anukis of the cataract. Below, inscription of the King's Son of Kush, Overseer of Foreign Countries, and Royal Scribe Huy adoring the cartouche of Ramesses II

## KUSHITE RISE & EMPIRE

CA. 1077–350 AD



Queen-King Katimala and the goddess Isis from Semna, ca. 900–800 BC

The weakening of Egyptian control in Nubia during the Twentieth Dynasty was caused by political turmoil, waves of migration of peoples from famine-stricken regions, and the onset of an arid climate shift that hit the Eastern Mediterranean and Near East in approximately 1200 BC.

The title of Viceroy of Kush and Overseer of the Southern Lands is still attested during the Twenty-first through Twenty-third Dynasties, perhaps with no official control over the gold mines in Lower Nubia as earlier, but merely the task of collecting of taxes at the southern border. The title disappeared in the early to mid-eighth century BC, around the time when the Libyan Dynasties collapsed into anarchy and there was a rise in power of the God's Wife of Amun at Thebes.

One monument from Semna West attests to the presence of Kushite royal power in the region, and it was left by a queen called Katimala. She is called “king” in the stela, which dates to a period before 850 BC, although its exact chronology is uncertain. The inscription records her successful conclusion of a struggle as reported to a council of thirty, the conflict involving a criminal chieftain, Makaresh, who annually oppressed the region by robbing gold and silver from the Mountains of Gold, and “Slaughtering from the offering [cattle] herd of Amun.” A second monument, provisionally dated to this period, is a stela from Kawa Temple by a King Ari or Ariamani recording donations.

The first named ruler of the Kushite dynasty, Alara, is known only from later Kushite royal inscriptions. His successor Kashta, named on a stela fragment from Elephantine about 750 BC, installed his daughter Amenirdis I as God's Wife of Amun at Karnak. Her mother, Queen Paabtameri, erected a funerary monument at Abydos, which, along with other Kushite inscribed monuments there, proves Kushite influence at least in Upper Egypt. The next king, Piankhy,

ruled for twenty years before a coalition formed by a Libyan Dynast in the Delta became a threat to him. The finest historical record in Egyptian is Piankhy's Victory Stela, which describes his celebrated campaign during which battles were won, a coalition of northern kinglets were driven into submission, Memphis was won, and the submission of all the dynasts in person was obtained, except for that of Tefnakht of Sais (between ca. 734 and 726 BC), who submitted to Kushite envoys.

The wealth and power of Egypt under the Twenty-fifth Dynasty soon gained the negative attention of the Assyrians, whose encroachment on the cities and trade of the Levant accelerated during the eighth century BC. They were threatened by, and held designs on, Egypt. Before his elevation to the throne, Taharqo commanded Egypto-Kushite forces in the Eltekeh campaign versus the Assyrian army of Sennacherib. The battle was successful for Assyria, but the campaign resulted in a temporary retreat to Phoenicia. After recovery from subsequent battles and assassination and instability in Assyria, Sennacherib's successor Esarhaddon attacked Egypt itself, and after three hard-fought campaigns his successor Assurbanipal drove Taharqo — now the king — to Kush in 669 BC. But Tanutamani returned to Egypt in 664–663, killing the Assyrian client Necho I, and Assurbanipal acted quickly, finally expelling the Kushites and plundering Thebes in a sack memorialized in the Bible (Nahum 3:8–9).

Steatite plaque from Qustul of the earlier Napatan Period showing the Amun-Re of Pnubs, Dokki Gel/Kerma, ca. 700–650 BC



El-Kurru, the great pyramid KU1 of an unknown Napatan ruler just before the royal burial place moved to Meroe, ca. 300 BC

From then onward, the Kushites retained only their local power and did not become involved in the Twenty-sixth Saite Dynasty encounters against the Babylonians, who succeeded Assyria as a regional power after the final defeat of an Assyrian army and their Egyptian allies in 605 BC. From then until about 300 BC, Napata remained the religious and the main political center of Kush.

The period of the Twenty-fifth Dynasty sparked a strong rebirth of Egyptian culture, reviving earlier styles of Egyptian art, but one in which special iconography was used in depicting Kushites. The kings built and added to temples in Egypt and Kush, and closely associated

Amun of Napata at Gebel Barkal with the northern

Amun of Karnak at Thebes. They stressed their Kushite origin, despite writing in Egyptian hieroglyphs and worshipping the ram-headed form of Amun, a figure first found in the New Kingdom inscriptions at Kurgus.

The temples at Gebel Barkal were part of the Kushite capital complex at Napata, as were the temple, cemeteries, and settlement of Sanam, and the royal cemeteries at el-Kurru and Nuri. However, another elite cemetery was founded in the south at Meroe, another important city of the kingdom. The burials of the predecessors of the Twenty-fifth Dynasty kings are found at el-Kurru and are in the form of Nubian tumuli. The burials are much disturbed but already contain pottery and objects that indicate interaction between north and south. But successive generations of the Twenty-fifth Dynasty and Napatan royalty built Egyptian-style pyramids at el-Kurru and then Nuri. The funerary objects and practices show a mix of Egyptian and Kushite traditions, including the use of Egyptian-style coffins and bead nets over the body, with extended burials in Egyptian style but placed on beds, an ancient Nubian practice. Upper Egyptian imported vessels, wheel-made examples in Egyptian style, and local handmade pottery join objects that are inspired by Egypt but crafted with Kushite originality.

Important early first-millennium burials were found in cemeteries at Debeira north of the Second Cataract, Amara West north of the Third Cataract, and Hillat el-Arab near Sanam, while pre-Twenty-fifth, Twenty-fifth, or post-Twenty-fifth Dynasty burials are found at many earlier New Kingdom sites, including Sai, Sedeinga, Soleb, Sesebi, Tombos, and beside the old capital at Kerma, at Dukki Gel. The non-royal cemeteries also use a mix of burial practices, with the addition of flexed or contracted burials placed in pits, with a mix of Egyptian-style and Kushite vessels and objects.



Northern Nubia was sparsely settled, however, although fairly numerous graves from periods before, during, and after the Twenty-fifth Dynasty appear, concentrated around the Second Cataract. Some burials were found in reused New Kingdom tombs, and the grave goods and burial practices reveal, once again, a mix of Egyptian and local burial customs. Bed burials and flexed or contracted bodies found in pit burials appear next to chamber tombs with extended burials; superstructures include cleft tombs and tumuli. Funerary goods also show a mix of Egyptian and Kushite forms, resembling those found in the graves farther south.

A fortress that was established in the earlier first millennium BC is Dorginarti at the Second Cataract, where the predominantly Egyptian pottery and objects indicate that it may have been founded by Egypt. Gebel Sahaba, downstream from the latter on the east bank, also has similarities in architecture and pottery, while the fortress of Qala Abu Ahmad in the Wadi Howar near the tip of the Great Bend, also contains pottery from this period. This fort was longer lived and also has remains dating to the Twenty-fifth Dynasty and Napatan periods. We may also include the fortress at Karni at the Fifth Cataract, but there has been no excavation yet to prove its precise date. Sites with other possible fortresses and settlements include Qasr Ibrim, Buhen, Mirgissa, and Semna. There are temples at Usli and Soniyat between the Third and Fourth Cataracts, while Temples of Taharqo were built at Qasr Ibrim, Buhen, and Semna.



## SAITES IN LOWER NUBIA

593–CA. 540 BC

Gebel Barkal, the Holy Mountain of the Kushite Empire and center of the northern capital Napata, shown in profile

The Level II fortified platform at Dorginarti, built within the earlier first-millennium BC fortress, is dated by Phoenician and East Greek amphorae and sixth-century Egyptian pottery, which is clear evidence for the presence of Egyptians at the Second Cataract after the Nubian campaign of Psamtik II in ca. 593 BC. The renovation of the latest structure at least once indicates a more persistent Saite presence in the region than has been believed. Stelae of Psamtik II from the First Cataract, Thebes, and Tanis mention the campaign, while Greek, Carian, and Phoenician inscriptions left by Psamtik's mercenaries are found at Abu Simbel and in the vicinity of Buhen.

Some interaction between the north and south occurred at this time, which is reflected in the imported pottery found at Dorginarti and in some of the royal Napatan tombs at el-Nuri. The only textual reference to Nubia, beyond the victory stelae of Psamtik II, is one found at Elephantine that mentions an armed expedition into Nubia during the reign of Amasis. Dorginarti was apparently deserted sometime around the First Persian conquest of Egypt in 525 BC.



## MEROE AND LATER

Arqamaniqo was the first king buried at Meroe — during the Egyptian reign of Ptolemy II Philadelphus from 285 to 246 BC — marking the move of the royal burial to Meroe. Napata still retained its religious functions, and a few royal burials were made there after the fourth century BC.

The Meroitic language was now adopted for writing, in both a cursive and hieroglyphic form, and art becomes more distinctively Meroitic in subject and style. The arts and industries, while still in touch with the Egyptian and the Mediterranean worlds, become more independent. Meroitic pottery is unequalled in its production and decoration, sometimes taking inspiration from the north, but just as often displaying a brilliant creativity.

The Meroites repopulated Lower Nubia and set up an administrative system as far north as the Dodekaschoinos, which was generally controlled by the Ptolemies. The settlements and cemeteries of both their homeland and in Lower Nubia show considerable prosperity, fueled by the richness of a continued trade between the north and south. Although the radical departure from Egyptian language and the adoption of Nubian gods and language were probably related to the momentous changes under the early Ptolemies, we hear little of warfare between them and the Meroitic kings.

This situation changed under the Romans, in the reign of Augustus (27 BC–AD 14), when after crushing a revolt in Thebes they campaigned into Lower Nubia and claimed control over Meroe itself. The Romans responded to an attack by the Meroitic queen (Candake), Amanirenas, at Egypt's southern border by sending their troops as far south as Napata, which was apparently destroyed.

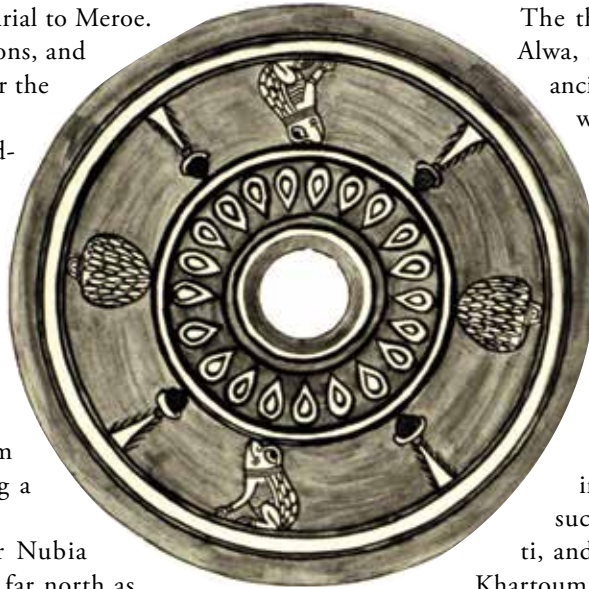
After further campaigning, the Candake sued for peace, and Meroitic envoys met Augustus at Samos, where he recognized Meroitic rule south of the Dodekaschoinos. This peaceful solution allowed the rapid growth of Meroitic Lower Nubia as a prosperous province, one that lasted until the fourth century. This century saw widespread disruption in the ancient world, the dissolution of the Meroitic empire, and its replacement by three kingdoms, now explicitly Nubian. Nubian speakers had been in the area for mil-

lennia, and peoples called by that name were known near Meroe, and probably formed part of the population of Kush itself.

The three kingdoms, from south to north Alwa, Makuria, and Nobadia, retained their ancient religion until the sixth century AD, when as a matter of deliberate policy they converted to Christianity. Although coming late to Nubia, Christian belief and culture flourished there, populating the countries with churches and monasteries, and with their own scribal traditions. The most important religious buildings were richly decorated with wall paintings that have been painstakingly rescued and conserved, in places where no dams have reached, such as at Old Dongola and Banganarti, and in museums otherwise, especially in Khartoum and Warsaw.

Nubia along the Nile remained Christian, essentially until the sixteenth century, although disturbed periods saw invasions from the Islamic world of the north and east, and even a Muslim king of Makuria in the early fourteenth century CE. Still, records in the north show a functioning Nubian kingdom in the late fifteenth century, and we know of Christians there in the sixteenth, when the country was divided between the Ottoman empire to the Third Cataract, and the Funj empire to the south, the latter built by a people from the area of the White Nile. At this point Nubia became a part of the wider Islamic world.

Throughout its history Nubia often maintained periods of freedom and prosperity, always bolstered by the extraction of resources from their territories or the rich trade coming from the south. However, they were often threatened by foes wishing to control those assets, and who undermined their authority and independence. These threats came from the kings of Egypt, tribal groups surrounding the Kushite and the medieval Nubian kingdoms, and Ethiopian or Ottoman superpowers in the north or south, all of whom broke their authority and prosperity. Ironically, the Ottoman conquest of 1821 and the Anglo-Egyptian reconquest in 1898 led to the unification of Nubia and the surrounding regions into the present-day Republic of Sudan.



Top: Drawing of a Meroitic red-exterior jar with frogs and lotus buds from above, from tomb B208 no. 1 at Ballana, Late Meroitic (IV) ca. 280–300 AD. OIM22658

Above: Bezel from a Late Meroitic brass bezel-ring depicting the lion-headed god Apedemak wielding his bow and trampling a serpent, from tomb B242 at Ballana, Late Meroitic, ca. 250–300 AD. OIM22771

# WHAT IS MEDIEVAL NUBIAN ART?

by Tasha Vorderstrasse

As the iconic scene in *Black Panther* shows us, museums and research institutions do not always understand the art that they have in their own collections. The film depicts the villain, Erik Killmonger, engaging with a white museum director of the Museum of Great Britain. He asks the museum director about the different African artifacts on display. The museum director responds in a patronizing manner about the different artifacts and then misidentifies one of the pieces as being from Benin. Killmonger, to her incredulity, corrects her by telling her the artifact is from Wakanda and that it is made of vibranium. He then says he will take it from her and, when she protests, points out that it was in fact, looted. She then dies of drinking poisoned coffee, and he steals the artifact.

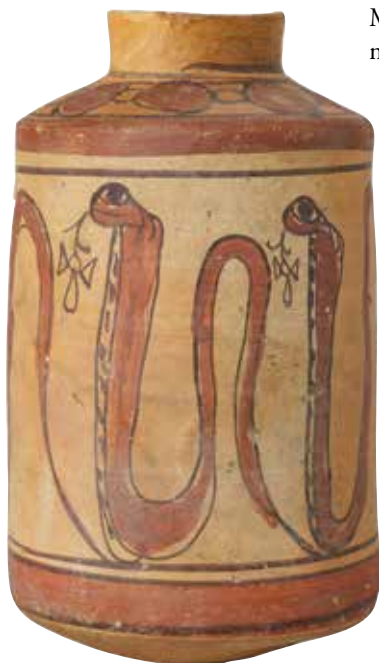
The scene has spurred debate among the museum community, namely by Casey Haughlin, who wrote about the importance of the scene for museum professionals in the online museum journal of Johns Hopkins University (“Why Museum Professionals Need To Talk about Black Panther,” *Hopkins Exhibitionist*, [jhuexhibitionist.com/2018/02/22/why-museum-professionals-need-to-talk-about-black-panther/](http://jhuexhibitionist.com/2018/02/22/why-museum-professionals-need-to-talk-about-black-panther/)). There are many issues that can be discussed in relation to this tightly written scene, one being that of provenance. Where does an artifact come from?

In a fictional movie, this appropriation and misunderstanding of that art leads to deadly consequences for the museum director. In the scholarly discourse, on the other hand, it means that certain types of art have not received the attention that one might expect. There are often assumptions about where we think artifacts are from, and re-assessing the evidence or finding new evidence can lead to different conclusions. This is certainly the case for medieval Nubian manuscripts, which have received little attention.



Illustrated manuscript page from Serra East, National Museum of Sudan, Khartoum

## MEDIEVAL NUBIAN ART IN CONTEXT



Meroitic painted pottery jar of the third century AD showing uraei (cobras) with ankhs. E22563 (usually on display in the Oriental Institute Museum)

Medieval Nubia was originally made up of three kingdoms: Nobadia in the north, Makuria in the center, and Alodia in the south. By the end of the sixth century AD, the kingdoms were at least nominally Christian although it is likely that conversion began earlier in lower Nubia, perhaps in the fifth century AD. Trying to reconstruct the history of Nubia is challenging, since we do not have any histories that the Nubians wrote about themselves, but rather we have outsiders' views, which are necessarily biased in what they wrote about Nubia and why, as well as inscriptions and primary-source documents that give some information. At some point between the late sixth/beginning of the seventh–eighth centuries AD, Nobadia and Makuria united into a single kingdom of Makuria. In the eleventh century, Makuria united with Alodia and became known as the Kingdom of Dotawo from the twelfth until the fifteenth century, when the kingdom collapsed. There are still many unanswered questions about the history of Nubia for scholars, and in many cases, we do not have the answers yet.

Medieval Nubia had a rich artistic tradition, but the scholarly focus has largely been on the spectacular wall paintings that have been found at sites such as Faras and Dongola. These wall paintings show that medieval



Nubia had an extensive vocabulary that they used to depict largely Christian subjects or Nubian high elites, such as rulers, often with Christ, the Virgin Mary, or saints protecting them, in churches. These monumental wall paintings are a clear signal of the richness of medieval Nubian art, showing the power and wealth of the individuals who commissioned these wall paintings. The iconography of the wall paintings comes from the Byzantine world, but stylistically Nubian art looks very different. Some of the art resembles that from late antique Egypt and Ethiopia, but they also had their own distinctive art style.

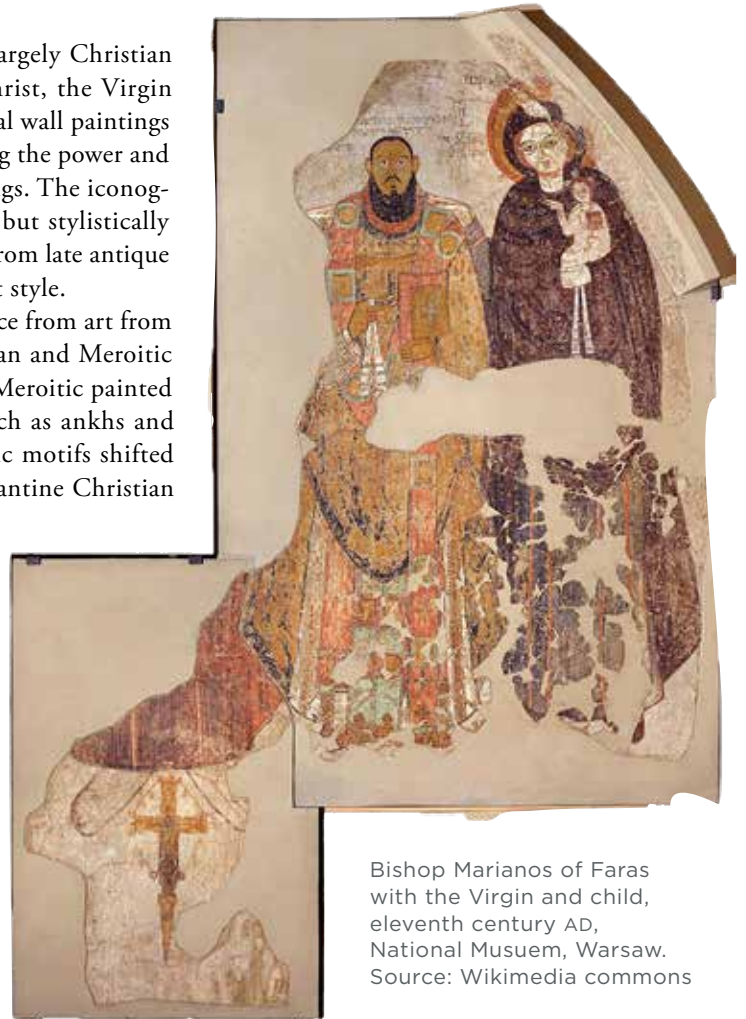
Additionally, art in Christian Nubia shows a major difference from art from the preceding Napatan and Meroitic periods in Nubia. Napatan and Meroitic art reimagined aspects of Egyptian art. Second-/third-century Meroitic painted pottery, for instance, integrates ancient Egyptian symbols such as ankhs and *uraei* (cobras). When Nubia converted to Christianity, artistic motifs shifted away from ancient Egyptian motifs to those derived from Byzantine Christian art, with a few exceptions.

It is also important to remember that Nubia and Ethiopia, unlike Egypt, remained Christian kingdoms under the patronage of Christian kings after the rise of Islam. Egypt was conquered by the Muslims in the mid-seventh century, meaning that its rulers were not busy patronizing Christian monasteries and churches, as the Byzantine emperor Justinian did at St. Catherine's Monastery in the Sinai in the mid-sixth century, for example. That is not to say that there was no Christian art in Egypt in the Islamic period and that no Christian art was produced, but rather that it was not the focus of its rulers.

The spectacular wall paintings of medieval Nubia have meant that other types of art, such as medieval illuminated manuscripts, have not received as much attention from scholars. Further, Nubian manuscripts that are illuminated have tended to receive more attention because of their texts, not their artistic qualities. Manuscripts from medieval Nubia point to a rich linguistic heritage that was available to them. There was the local language, Old Nubian, a Nilo-Saharan language, which used a modified form of the Coptic alphabet, which in turn was based on the Greek alphabet. In addition to Old Nubian, people in Nubia also knew Greek and Coptic, which tended to be used to write religious inscriptions, suggesting it was largely tied to Christianity. As a result, there has been a great deal of interest in the different languages used in texts from Old Nubia, meaning that once again, illuminations in manuscripts have been overshadowed or ignored by other matters that are more interesting to scholars.

Another barrier to the study of these manuscripts has been a lack of recognition about which manuscripts actually come from Nubia. Unusually, illuminated manuscripts have been found in archaeological excavations rather than in libraries (many done by the Oriental Institute), and even those that are now in Western libraries look as if they were probably excavated. At the beginning of the twentieth century, a number of manuscripts appeared on the market that were alleged to come from a monastery at Edfu. The story originated from Robert de Rustafjaell, a colorful character who collected many Egyptian antiquities. Originally born Robert Smed/Smith, he later changed his name to Robert Fawcus-Smith, and then Robert de Rustafjaell, before finally being known as Prince Roman Orbeliani, thereby linking himself with the powerful Georgian Orbeliani family. It is possible that Robert de Rustafjaell's mother was Georgian, but there is absolutely no evidence that she was an Orbeliani. In any case, there may have been certain advantages in de Rustafjaell claiming to be the representative of a far-away land whose language few people were likely to speak or understand. He apparently married several times and also seems to have invented an unlikely story about his involvement in World War I.

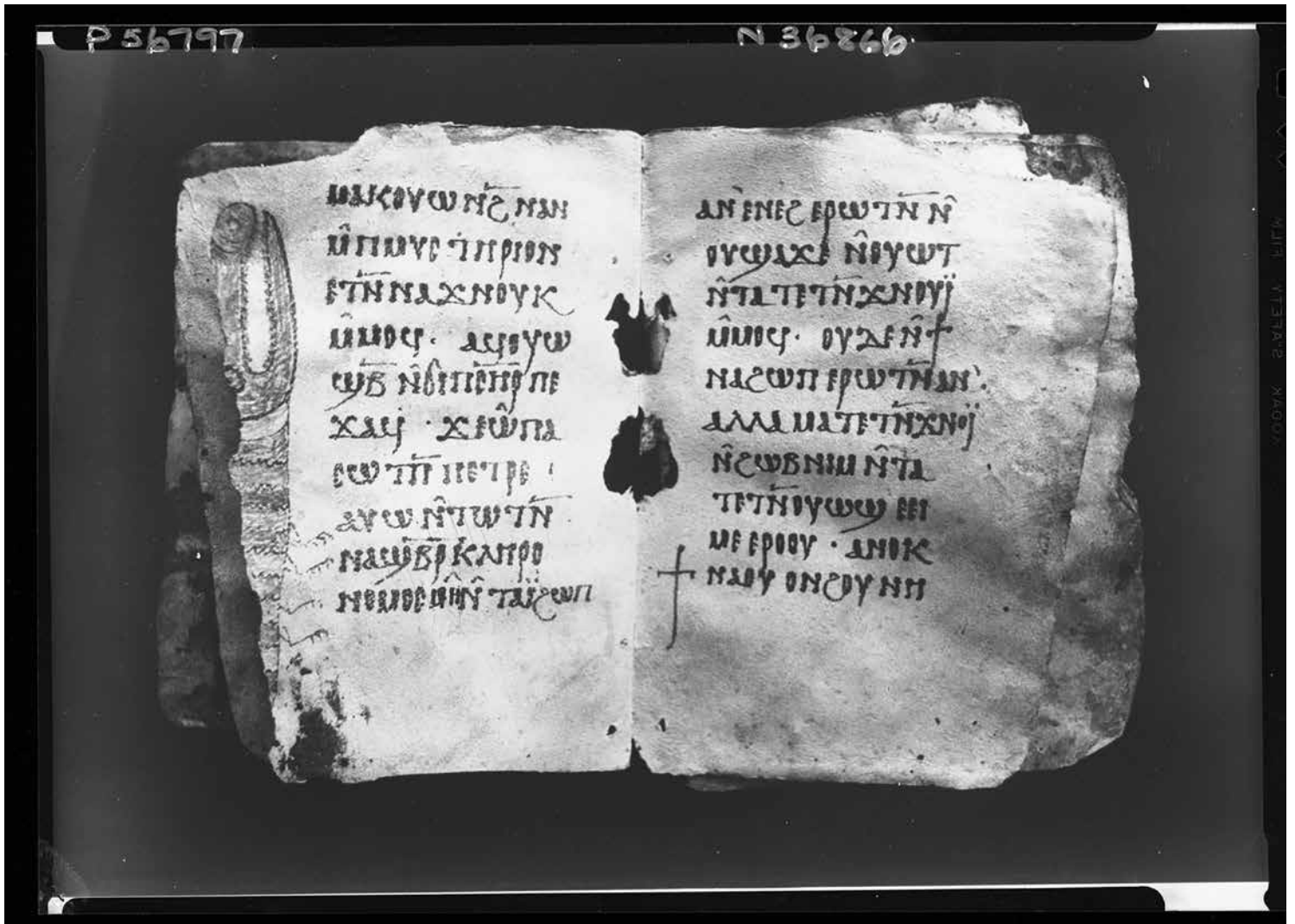
Sherd with painting of a horse on it from Serra East (E19350)



Bishop Marianos of Faras with the Virgin and child, eleventh century AD, National Museum, Warsaw. Source: Wikimedia commons



Of course, all of this does not necessarily prove that he was lying about the story of all the manuscripts being discovered together at a monastery in Edfu, but it does cause one to question whether he invented the story in order to improve the price of the manuscripts. It is true that some of the manuscripts were evidently written at Esna before finding their way to Edfu. The difficulty is that some scholars have assumed that *all* the manuscripts were written in Upper Egypt, regardless of their colophons. This included two manuscripts written in Coptic that had a connection to Nubia, one of which was written for an individual whose name has not survived who was the son of Mashenka in Faras for the Church of the Cross at Serra Matto (Serra East) in Nubia, while the other was written for a church in Ilarte. Furthermore, the second manuscript, which was written in Old Nubian, has clear artistic connections to a pottery fragment with a horse painted on it from the Oriental Institute excavations at Serra and a parchment fragment from the excavations of Qasr Ibrim, also in Nubia. This argues that these manuscripts were made in Nubia, not in Upper Egypt, despite their association with the Esna-Edfu group. Even if all of the manuscripts were found together, this still does not prove that they were all made in the same place. Manuscripts could and did travel large distances, such as the Shah Abbas Bible, now in the Pierpont Morgan Library, which was illuminated in Paris in the 1240s, and then was taken by the Angevins to Naples around 1300. At some point it went to Krakow, and from there it was presented to Shah Abbas, king of Persia, in 1608. It disappeared for two hundred years before being bought by Giovanni d'Athanasio in Egypt and sold in London in 1833. It was eventually acquired by Pierpont Morgan in 1916 and is now in New York except for three other folios in Paris and Los Angeles. Therefore, it is possible that the manuscripts might have been produced in Nubia and found in Egypt or were found in Nubia and said to be found in Egypt for commercial reasons.



Above and opposite: Illustrated manuscript pages from the Qasr el-Wizz manuscript. P56810/N36879 (left); P56797/N36966 (right)



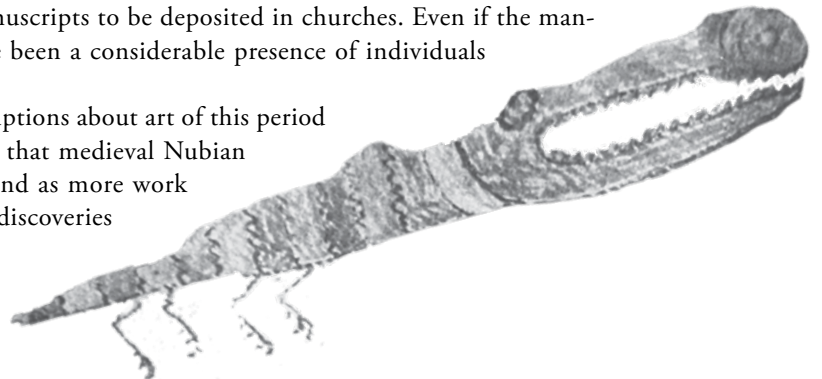
Whatever the case, illustrated Nubian manuscripts can essentially be divided into two groups: those that show a connection with Coptic-language manuscripts produced in Egypt, and those that show a distinctive style that I argue is Nubian in origin. As one can see in the wall paintings, manuscripts of the second type are similar in their iconography to art from Egypt or the Byzantine world, but once one starts to look at the manuscripts carefully, there are clear differences from art produced elsewhere. One can connect a manuscript found at OI excavations at Serra and a manuscript written in Old Nubian in Qasr Ibrim, for instance. Even those manuscripts that might look similar to Coptic manuscripts from Egypt have their own distinctive style. The Qasr el-Wizz manuscript, for instance, is decorated with knotwork and birds that are very typical of that used in the art of the Christian community in Egypt. On the other hand, the crosses in the Qasr el-Wizz manuscript are unusual and only paralleled so far in Syriac manuscripts, and there is a crocodile in the manuscript, which is exceptional (see image below).

When one looks at the manuscripts and their colophons, as well as the relationships of the different manuscripts to one another, interesting patterns emerge. The first is that there are more manuscripts than one might think that are illuminated, given the limited amount of attention that they have received. There is a total of ten manuscripts or manuscript pages, over half of which were found in archaeological excavations in Nubia (modern northern Sudan and southern Egypt). The second is that many of the manuscripts are connected to the site of Serra, which unlike Dongola, Faras, and Bangarti

is not today known as a large artistic center. Three manuscripts were supposed to be deposited in churches at Serra, either at the Church of Jesus or the Church of the Cross, while two other illuminated manuscripts were actually found at the site. These various manuscripts either made for or connected to Serra can in turn be connected either textually or artistically, with a variety of different manuscripts either found in Nubia or that have connections to Nubia.

As a result, Serra emerges as a largely unlikely center of Nubian art, which has hitherto been unrecognized among scholars of Nubian art. The evidence suggests that Serra was a center of manuscript production that may have had several scriptoria active in the medieval period, where patrons ordered manuscripts to be deposited in churches. Even if the manuscripts were not produced in Serra, there seems to have been a considerable presence of individuals who had the means to order manuscripts there.

All of this points to the need to re-examine our assumptions about art of this period and start to look more closely at material in order to see that medieval Nubian art is even richer than people had previously assumed, and as more work continues to be done in the region, it is likely that new discoveries will add to what is already a complex and rich picture.





# THE EPIGRAPHIC SURVEY

DOCUMENTATION  
EXPANSION  
INNOVATION

by J. Brett McClain



Krisztián Vértés penciling Amenhotep III reliefs on iPad Pro tablet, Luxor Temple. Photo by Ray Johnson

When this issue of *News & Notes* appears in print, the ninety-fifth field season of the Epigraphic Survey, based at Chicago House in Luxor, Egypt, will already be under way. Since 1924, the Oriental Institute's permanent epigraphic expedition has dedicated six months in the field each year to recording and publishing the reliefs and inscriptions of ancient Thebes and other Pharaonic sites at the highest possible level of accuracy and detail. Throughout the history of our work, the "Chicago House Method" has been widely recognized as the standard against which all other epigraphic recording methodologies are judged. Today, with an expanded commitment to documentation and conservation at a diverse selection of monumental sites in the Theban region, the Survey continues to incorporate the latest technological tools into its overall methodological approach, so as to maintain its traditionally high standards of accuracy while adapting to a variety of field environments.

First devised by Professor James Henry Breasted, the Chicago House Method of epigraphic documentation is based on a large-format film negative of the wall surface, carefully measured before shooting to minimize distortion. From the negative, an enlargement is printed at scale on matte photographic paper. The artist takes this to the wall and, using the photograph as a guide, pencils the lines of the relief or inscription directly onto the printed surface, taking care to observe and record all visible details of the carved original. The pencil lines are then inked using drafting pens, after which the photograph is immersed in a bleaching solution. This causes the emulsion to disappear, leaving a spatially and visually accurate black-and-white line drawing. The initial drawing is then blueprinted, and the blueprinted copies are taken back to the wall by the Egyptologists, who perform

a multi-phase collation of the drawing in order to make sure that all relevant details of the scene or text are recorded accurately. Any corrections recommended to the artist are verified once more on-site before changes are made to the original inked drawing, and, once corrected, it is checked against the blueprinted sheets and field notes to ensure that all collected data have been included. The project's field director then performs a final check, after which the drawing is approved for publication. No part of the monument is considered to have been recorded in full until the facsimile copy thereof has completed all stages of this exhaustive process. For each scene or wall section, the Survey's folio publications include the drawing, a black-and-white photograph, and a color photograph or facsimile where relevant, along with translations and commentary on the texts and iconography, representing a comprehensive record of the monument, which can, if needed, stand in place of the original itself.

The Survey's first field project was to document the reliefs and inscriptions in the great mortuary temple of Ramesses III at Medinet Habu, an endeavor that resulted in the publication of eight large folio volumes in the Oriental Institute Publications series (*Medinet Habu I–VIII*, 1930–1970). From the 1930s onward, however, the Chicago House team has also undertaken projects at a number of other sites in the region, including Karnak, Luxor Temple, and the Theban necropolis, and these efforts have also produced a substantial dossier of large-format folios and related publications. All of these volumes are now available as free downloads from the Oriental Institute Publications web page ([oi.uchicago.edu/research/publications/epigraphic-survey](https://oi.uchicago.edu/research/publications/epigraphic-survey)), thanks to the generosity of Oriental Institute Members Lewis and Misty Gruber. Today, the Survey continues to work actively both in the

Medinet Habu temple precinct and at the other sites for which we have ongoing documentation and conservation commitments. Each of these sites contains a variety of types of inscribed monumental remains, and each presents different physical conditions under which work must be undertaken, so we have learned over time to adapt our methods to the particular situation at hand on any given site.

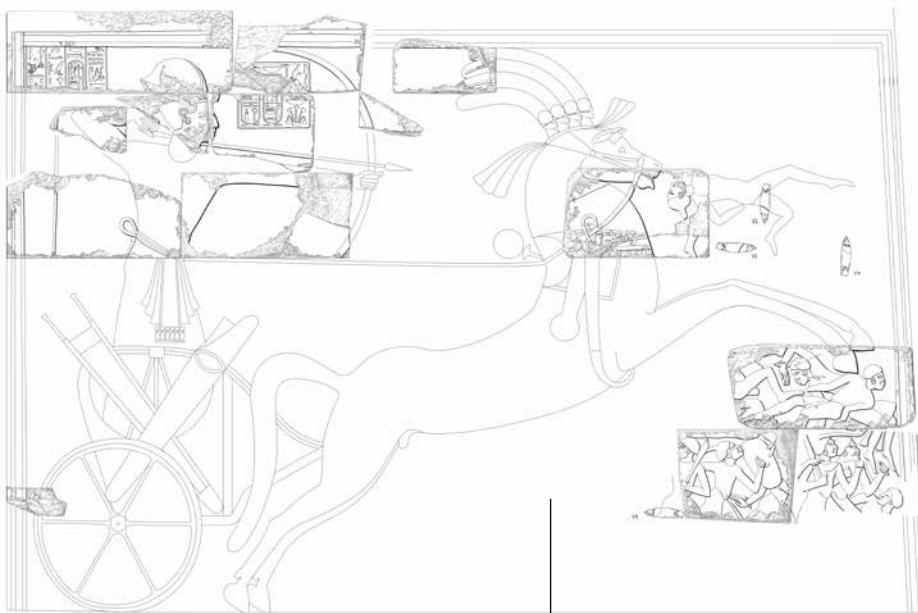
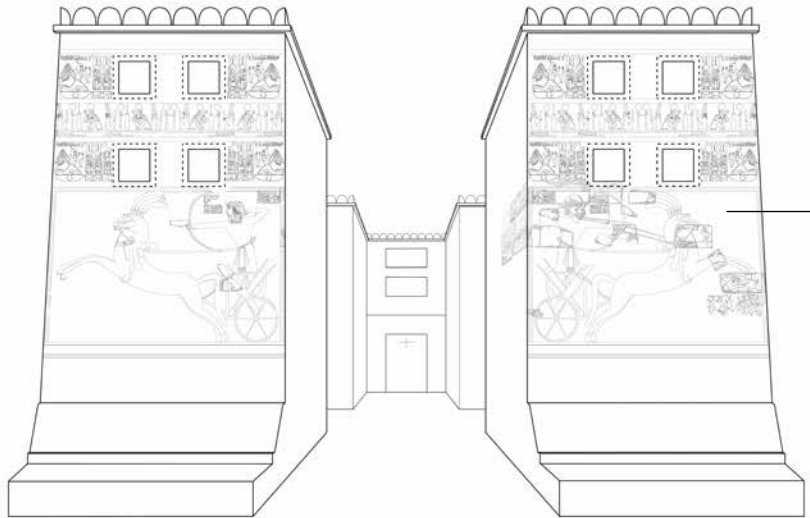
Under the leadership of Field Director W. Raymond Johnson, newly available computerized tools have now been incorporated into the Epigraphic Survey's documentation program. Since 2012, digital artist Krisztián Vértés has developed a technique for replicating, in electronic format, the painstaking method described above. With the support of the University of Chicago Women's Board, Matt Whealton, and Marjorie M. Fisher, a suite of Wacom desktop and portable drawing tablets, along with Apple laptop computers and tablets and the accompanying peripheral devices, has been purchased. Scanned photographic enlargements or

electronically rectified 3D photogrammetric images are digitally "penciled" on small portable tablets at the wall and then "inked" on larger tablets in the studio. This can help streamline the process of making adjustments to the "inked" drawings following the exhaustive field collation process and can allow more flexibility in the manipulation of the finalized drawings when it comes time to prepare them for publication. In order to share the latest developments of these techniques, we have launched a new website, *Digital Epigraphy*, which incorporates all material from previous versions of the online PDF manual and will be updated regularly as the process of innovation continues. The website may be reached at [www.digital-epigraphy.com](http://www.digital-epigraphy.com).

All of the Epigraphic Survey's artists have now been instructed by Krisztián Vértés on the use of the new equipment, and the digital drawing technique is being applied to several of the Survey's field projects. At Medinet Habu, it is being used to record hundreds of large-scale relief fragments from the Western High

Right: Reconstruction of towers and passageway of the Western High Gate of Ramesses III, Medinet Habu. Drawing by Keli Alberts

Below: Reconstruction of fragmentary chariot scene of Ramesses III, Western High Gate, Medinet Habu. Drawing by Keli Alberts





Gate of Ramesses III, first revealed during the Oriental Institute's excavations in 1931–1932. A similar gate, much of which is still preserved, stands at the eastern entrance to the Medinet Habu precinct; its western counterpart, however, was breached during a civil war at the end of the New Kingdom and subsequently destroyed. The sandstone blocks of this gate were thereafter buried in rubble or removed for use in later structures. The gate fragments revealed by the excavation number in the hundreds, and most of them are inscribed with the scenes and texts that once adorned this monumental edifice. Under the supervision of epigrapher Jen Kimpton, these fragments are now being cataloged and documented, and it is now apparent that many fragment groups can be pieced back together to re-create the original scenes and architectural elements. Epigraphic artist Keli Alberts has restored two such scenes that flanked the great gate, which depict colossal figures of Ramesses III shooting arrows at Syrian and Nubian enemies from his speeding chariot, while the interior chambers contained reliefs depicting the king at leisure with the women of the royal court. In 2015, the Epigraphic Survey, with funding provided by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), began systematic cataloging and photography of the gate's fragmentary remains, followed by a comprehensive program of epigraphic documentation. Once each of these inscribed blocks has been photographed, drawn, measured, collated, and finalized, the digital drawings can then be used to create virtual reconstructions of whole wall surfaces, and ultimately of the entire monumental gate complex.

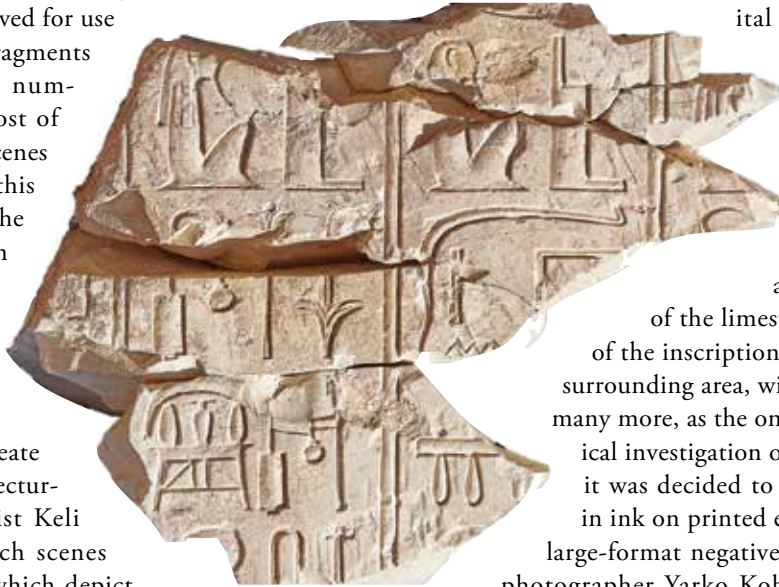
To the north of Medinet Habu, in the tomb-field of el-Assasif, the Epigraphic Survey is in the process of recording the reliefs in the Tomb of Nefersekeru (TT 107), steward of Amenhotep III's jubilee palace at Malkata. Although the grand tomb complex of this high-court official was left incomplete and abandoned, the few sections of wall decoration that were com-

pleted on its façade bear incised relief details of the highest quality, reflecting the apogee of New Kingdom sculptural achievement and well meriting the careful attention to detail embodied in the Chicago House Method. Here, too, the Survey's senior artists Margaret De Jong and Susan Osgood are employing a hybrid of traditional pen-and-ink and innovative dig-

ital recording methods to ensure that these reliefs are recorded at the maximum level of accuracy. Though of exquisite quality, the reliefs of Nefersekeru are quite damaged due to flooding, which has caused cracking and salt-induced deterioration

of the limestone. Several broken fragments of the inscriptions have been recovered from the surrounding area, with the potential for discovering many more, as the ongoing cleaning and archaeological investigation of the tomb proceeds. Therefore it was decided to record the in-situ inscriptions in ink on printed enlargements, based on the fine large-format negatives produced by Chicago House photographer Yarko Kobylecky, but to document the limestone fragments using the portable Wacom drawing tablet. This approach will facilitate manipulation of the fragment drawings in digital form and, ultimately, the placement of identified fragments into their proper locations, once the drawings of the in-situ reliefs have been collated, corrected, approved, and scanned. Collation of the drawings at TT 107 is now nearing completion, and epigraphic recording of the fragments will continue at the tomb during the upcoming winter field season.

On the east bank of the Nile, at Luxor Temple, the Epigraphic Survey continues its long-term commitment to documenting not only the standing monumental structures built during the Eighteenth Dynasty, but also the tens of thousands of inscribed fragments, collected from all over the Theban region, that are now organized and stored in blockyards around the temple precinct. Conservation and study of these fragments has been a major component of the Survey's fieldwork at Luxor for the last thirty years, and newly available technologies have now accelerated the documentation program. In 2016, in response to the



Top: Fragments from the Tomb of Nefersekeru recovered in 2018. Photo by Yarko Kobylecky  
Bottom (from left to right): Overview of the Tomb of Nefersekeru (TT 107) — cleaning operations, February 2018. Photo by Ray Johnson; Sue Osgood recording fragment from the Tomb of Nefersekeru on digital tablet. Photo by Ray Johnson; Detail drawing of inscription from the Tomb of Nefersekeru, showing added fragment (in red). Drawing by Margaret De Jong

evolving political situation in the Middle East and the resulting threats to cultural heritage region-wide, the Survey initiated a digital database and photographic/3D photogrammetric documentation initiative. The goal of this project, coordinated by epigraphic artist/architect Jay Heidel, is to catalog and provide a complete digital photographic record of the approximately 50,000 inscribed wall fragments in the Luxor Temple blockyard. With a high-resolution camera, digital photographer Hilary MacDonald, assisted by architect Gina Salama, takes multiple photographs of each fragment from a series of carefully targeted angles, with precise control of distance and lighting. Once these photos are processed on the computer, they are combined using Agisoft Photoscan software to create a three-dimensional point cloud or model of the block, over which the refined digital composite is laid, resulting in an orthorectified image of the inscribed surface that is precise to within one millimeter. This highly accurate digital image may then be used as a background photo for the digital drawing process described above. Digital drawing and collation of a fragment group from the time of Ptolemy I are already well under way. Funded by private donations, the initial three years of this program have produced 2D digital images of 6,000 inscribed blocks and 3D images of over 2,000 blocks, focused primarily on Amenhotep IV/Akhenaten *talatat* from the dismantled monuments of Egypt's heretic pharaoh. This winter and in the coming field seasons, the program will be expanded to include a wider range of fragment groups within the Luxor Temple corpus, until the objective of creating a comprehensive archive of this material is achieved.

Within Luxor Temple itself, we are undertaking high-resolution digital and 3D photogrammetric documentation of the central Imperial Cult Chamber, with its Amenhotep III-period wall reliefs overlain by colorful and historically unique third century AD. Roman frescos, depicting the court of the First Tetrarchy. In order to record these rare, well-preserved paintings at the highest possible level of accuracy, Krisztián Vértés has developed a facsimile drawing technique, based on the availability of accurate orthorectified photographic images taken by digital photographer Owen Murray, juxtaposed with original large-format film negatives, as well as scanned copies of historic watercolor paintings dating back to the nineteenth century. Combining all of these sources of visual data creates a multilayered, full-color digital dossier for each wall section, which is used as the background for a carefully rendered facsimile, in which the details of the paintings are enhanced, rendering the whole composition even more clearly than can be achieved by firsthand observation of the damaged originals today. The application of this drawing technique will



Above: Hilary MacDonald recording *talatat* fragments for 3D photogrammetric imaging. Photo by Ray Johnson



Left: Rendering of orthorectified 3D model of *talatat* using Agisoft Photoscan software. Images by Hilary MacDonald

be extended this year to include the adjoining offering chamber, and ultimately all of the inner sanctuaries of the temple, most of which have remained unpublished to this day. The ultimate goal of this program is the complete film, digital, and 3D color documentation of all inscribed wall surfaces and all decorated fragmentary material within the Luxor Temple complex, in order to create a comprehensive archival record of its epigraphic and architectural content.

As the Epigraphic Survey continues to expand its documentation programs, such technical adaptations of core methods to suit the particular conditions and requirements presented by the remains at each site have allowed the team to copy and analyze a wider range of carved and painted texts and scenes. These techniques have facilitated a diversified suite of operations in order to address the pressing need to record the temples and tombs of Thebes, many of which are in an ongoing state of deterioration. With each passing year, the Survey will continue to adapt in response to these challenges, thereby continuing to fulfill Professor Breasted's vision: to record and to publish the inscribed records of ancient Egypt, thereby preserving for the future the priceless historical information that they contain.



# LISTENING IS GOOD FOR PEOPLE



by Anne Flannery, Foy Scalf, and Knut Boehmer

With the centennial celebration of the Oriental Institute upcoming in 2019, we have been thinking long and hard about the history of this place and its people, as well as the fortuitous circumstances that came together in its creation. Seeking a narrative of how the OI came to be, most people have turned to *The Oriental Institute*, the 1933 book by James Henry Breasted authored for the University of Chicago survey. More recently, Jeffrey Abt profiled the Institute in his 2011 biography *American Egyptologist: The Life of James Henry Breasted and His Oriental Institute*. In many ways, these publications have helped to “open up” the hallways of this hallowed place, giving insight into the luminaries upon which all of our work is founded. Abt made extensive use of archival documentation — correspondence, memoranda, contracts, photos — but no one provided an inside look more than Erica Reiner did in her 2002 “tell-all” *An Adventure of Great Dimension: The Launching of the Chicago Assyrian Dictionary*. Written by a brilliant “insider” on the project, Reiner lifted up the rug for readers on the personalities and squabbles, often with warts and all, involved in completing one of the “great and enduring humanistic” achievements of the twentieth century. It remains one of the most enlightening portrayals inside the ivory tower of academics at work on the esoteric world which is the study of ancient Near Eastern languages.

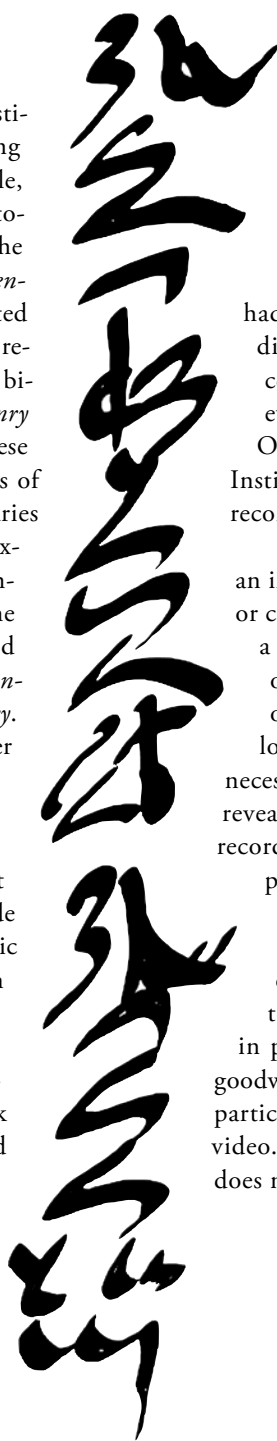
Capturing the history of a place is no easy task, and often time is not on our side. It was former Oriental Institute director Robert McCormick Adams who characterized the CAD as “a great and enduring humanistic achievement,” but it is his following words that so eloquently convey how the historical memory of a time and place is bound up within its people. He went on to describe Reiner’s *Adventure* as an “absorbingly personal memoir on a momentous enterprise by its only

surviving participant.” Adams saw the importance of the oral traditions in our living memories, and it was with particular sadness that we heard of his passing in early 2018. As one of the precious few of the former directors of the OI who was still living, his passing took a large chunk of institutional history with him before we had a chance to interview him. Luckily, the Smithsonian did, and thanks to their generosity, this past fall we received recordings of their 1994 interview with him. Such events encapsulate the mission of the Oriental Institute Oral History Project to capture the living history of the Institute and its community through the aural stories rarely recorded in print.

A complete and comprehensive historical record is only an imaginary ideal. Even when information is written down or captured in a photograph or on film, it still only presents a partial perspective, perhaps focused on the protagonist or observer. Such a record itself is subject to the vagaries of time and the potential biases of collectors; it may be lost or undocumented. Or, it may be disposed of as unnecessary, obsolete, unworthy, offensive, too sensitive, or too revealing. None of these steps are neutral; our records and record keeping reflect a complicated web of social, cultural, political, and personal choices. This leaves us adrift in a landscape of institutional memory without a way to navigate or orient ourselves within the massive amounts of information. It may be counterintuitive, but oral histories can be even more difficult to capture than records in print. The success of the project relies heavily on the goodwill of its participants and the coalescence of technology, particularly in trying to capture both high-quality audio and video. Even with the best of intentions and organization, it does not always work out the way that you want it to.

Top: hieroglyphic transcription of “Listening is good for people” from the Dialogue of a Man and His Soul (column 67 in Papyrus Berlin 3024)

Left: Drawing of the Hieratic text of “Listen to me. Look, listening is good for people” from the Dialogue of a Man and His Soul (column 67 in Papyrus Berlin 3024)





# THE ORIENTAL INSTITUTE ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

## HISTORY OF THE PROJECT

Capturing the oral traditions of the Oriental Institute is nothing new and has been pursued off and on over the last thirty years. Charles Jones, former bibliographer in the Research Archives for twenty-two years (1983–2005) and research associate, recorded a number of conversations with faculty on audiocassette tapes as a pilot project. Although the quality of the recordings lacked today's inexpensive access to digital recording equipment, there's nothing quite like listening to Thorkild Jacobsen pontificate about Sumerian mythology over beers at Jimmy's Woodlawn Tap, the Hyde Park watering hole frequented by OI denizens for social outings. Another fairly large — but by no means comprehensive — set of materials derives from recording the Members' Lectures held at the Institute on cassette tapes in the 1980s and 1990s. These cassette tapes offer glimpses into the research of former faculty members and were the first step in documenting the voices and stories of the people who created, and continue to create, the institution. It is a pleasure to hear Samuel Noah Kramer express his views on the Sumerian Woman in his own voice, or listen to Erica Reiner discuss the Mesopotamian scientific tradition of herbal encyclopedias. It is a more casual setting than their written work, but with the added texture of voice, pauses, and the audience's reaction. It is this kind of textured experience that gives you not only the history of a place, but the feel of it, which is a key difference between written histories and oral histories. As part of the Oral History Project, these cassette tapes are being digitized and uploaded to the Institute's online platforms, such as YouTube and SoundCloud. Despite the existence of these tapes, there has never been a systematic, let alone comprehensive, recording of the OI's history in the voices that have helped to bear and sustain it. This project seeks to fill that vacuum.

The filling of the vacuum began in 2016 when Foy Scalf (head of Research Archives), Anne Flannery (head of Museum Archives), and Knut Boehmer (IT manager) came together with similar ideas to capture the life of the OI through oral storytelling on modern digital recording equipment. Before the cameras roll,

interviewees are invited to participate, and interview questions are sent to them in advance for review. The project is not seeking salacious gossip, and therefore final approval of content is offered to the participants to ensure their comfort with what is released to the public. We have used the recently renovated Saieh Hall for Economics across the pedestrian way from the OI as our location, but the project seeks to branch out to other locations and formats in the future. On the day of the interview, a two-hour window is booked to cover everything from childhood to the person's experience at the OI and wish list for the OI's future. After the interview is over, extensive editing is done in order to ensure that it is ready for publication on the Oriental Institute's social-media outlets such as YouTube. The first two years of the program have produced interviews from across the community including faculty, staff, and volunteers such as John Larson (former archivist), Robert Biggs (emeritus professor of Assyriology), Carlotta Maher (volunteer, docent, fundraiser, and recipient of the James Henry Breasted medallion), Gil Stein (former director, professor of archaeology), and Janet Johnson (Morton D. Hull Distinguished Service Professor of Egyptology). Capturing the recollections of these key figures from all areas of the institution is the only way to really understand the place and its developments over the last five decades through their shared experience.



Oral history interview with Jill Carlotta Maher, July 11, 2018.  
Photo by Knut Boehmer





Oral history interview with John Larson, former archivist, December 20, 2016

A long-format interview is wonderful for providing time and space to dig deep into a participant's life, career, and experience. Already, we have learned remarkable things, such as how little gender disparity affected Janet Johnson, the first woman to hold a professorship in Egyptology in the United States, and how the dynamic political situations of the Middle East in the twentieth century could dramatically affect the career of a young professional like Robert Biggs, emeritus professor of Assyriology. However, this long format may not be practical for people who want to listen to these stories in a more casual capacity. Recently, the Oral History team has successfully introduced podcasting into the institutional mix by setting up an Oriental Institute account on SoundCloud — a platform that allows oral histories to be downloaded easily through popular apps for offline listening without an internet connection.

As the project further establishes its footing, we look to expand its format and content to include less formal, more digestible segments. Instead of long-format interviews about everything from the subject's early life to research interests and future goals, we will be interviewing people in five- to ten-minute increments about anything from overviews of popular topics, such as cuneiform writing or Egyptian hieroglyphs, to their favorite campus memory. This enables easier and more varied recording, which will only further diversify the cache of stories and voices, giving equal opportunity to faculty, staff, students, volunteers, visitors, post-docs, lecturers, and researchers. In the future, we'd like to combine efforts across the Institute to include an oral-history component at conferences, symposia, lectures, and events in order to cast the widest possible net for compiling the elements of robust oral histories. It is important to keep in mind that there

is not a single view of institutional history, and it is one of the major benefits to an oral-history project that such a history be told from many perspectives.

We largely know the Institute and its past through its works. With the exception of Breasted, most of the personal voices of past generations from the OI community have been lost to time; it is only their academic voices in their publications that remain. Generations today know precious little about what people like A. Leo Oppenheim or Carolyn Ransom Williams were like in their everyday life, or even what they sounded like, as we tend to know them and their voice through their published writings, such as *Ancient Mesopotamia: Portrait of a Dead Civilization* or *Studies in Ancient Furniture*. For the first time, a breadth of previously lost perspectives will bear witness to a part of the Institute that has largely been left in the shadows: its people. As we have so poignantly come to learn through this project, "listening is good for people." This ancient Egyptian literary trope appears in a number of ancient compositions, reflecting the importance of oral storytelling (in addition to obedience) as presented within their own cultural lexicon. In *The Dialogue of a Man with His Soul*, the soul warns the man of focusing too much on the postmortem afterlife, telling him: "Listen to me. Look, listening is good for people. Have a good time and forgo worry." In a similar manner, the god of wisdom Thoth tells Isis in the story of Isis and the Noblewoman: "Come, goddess Isis! Furthermore, listening is good. Someone will live when another guides." We intend to heed the words of wise Egyptian sages and listen intently to the storytellers in our midst, letting them act as guides for us and future generations by preserving their words for all to hear.

## FURTHER LISTENING

This project seeks to make the oral history of the Oriental Institute available online for open access. You can listen to many of the sources discussed in this article at the following links:

- Samuel Noah Kramer, “The Sumerian Woman”  
October 16, 1975 | <https://youtu.be/Q7pROU9ajcs>
- Erica Reiner, “Hallowed Herbs”  
December 7, 1988 | <https://youtu.be/IXYLtT-j8Lc>
- John Larson, Interview  
December 20, 2016 | <https://youtu.be/WA7qjOxmCl4>
- Robert Biggs, Interview  
March 21, 2017 | <https://youtu.be/NT3CM-CNpVU>
- Janet H. Johnson, Interview  
May 14, 2018 | <https://youtu.be/EdifGKnQNlg>
- Jill Carlotta Maher, Interview  
June 11, 2018 | [https://youtu.be/MNIH5\\_u3cvA](https://youtu.be/MNIH5_u3cvA)



Image and Hieroglyphic transcription of “Furthermore, listening is good. Someone will live when another guides” from the story of Isis and the Noblewoman (Metternich Stela, Metropolitan Museum of Art 50.85)





# TRAVEL

# GEORGIA

## A JOURNEY THROUGH TRADITIONS

MAY 21-JUNE 5, 2019

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*Akhaltsikhe*

*Kutaisi*

*Mestia*

*Ushguli*

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Single supplement: \$1,125

For more information, please contact  
[nathan@mircorp.com](mailto:nathan@mircorp.com) | 877.553.9815







## PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

- EXPLORE the archaeological site of Dmanisi, where five 1.8-million-year-old *Homo erectus* skulls were discovered
- VISIT UNESCO-listed Mtskheta, the capital of the early Georgian kingdom of Iberia, including eleventh-century Svetitskhoveli Cathedral, its interior decorated in murals, and sixth-century Jvari Monastery
- DISCOVER the cave-monastery of Vardzia, begun in the twelfth century, with frescoes that represent the pinnacle of the Golden Age of Georgian painting.
- BROWSE the Museum of History and Ethnography, in the UNESCO-listed mountain region of Svaneti, to admire beautifully illuminated gospels, golden altar crosses, and icons of amazingly high quality, all from the ninth to fourteenth centuries.
- VISIT the village of Ushgul, the highest continually inhabited village in Europe at an altitude of 7,218 feet.

## TOUR LEADER

Tasha Vorderstrasse is the University Continuing Education Program coordinator and research associate at the Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago. She received her PhD in Near Eastern archaeology from the Department of Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations in 2004. Her work focuses on the material culture of the Near East, the Caucasus, and Central Asia, and the relationships between these regions and China. She led Oriental Institute trips to Georgia and Armenia in 2014 and 2015.



# VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT

## FRED ESKRA

by Shirlee Hoffman

**S**hirlee, Oriental Institute volunteer, sits down to interview volunteer Fred Eskra.

### How did you become interested in volunteering at the Oriental Institute? How long have you been a volunteer?

I retired in 2011 from a thirty-five-year career as a chemical engineer. I enjoyed engineering and the challenge of solving problems with other professionals toward a common goal. However, when I retired I wanted to do things I had never had time for previously. I had always been curious about history, especially ancient history and prehistory. I guess I was constantly trying to answer the question, “How did we get where we are?” The Oriental Institute seemed a great place to explore those interests.

### Did you have any interests or training in the ancient Near East?

My interest in the ancient Near East is probably an avocation that I developed when I was young and my father would take me to Chicago museums. We never went to the OI, but we did go quite often to the Field Museum, where the dinosaur and Egyptian exhibits fascinated me.

### What have you done at the OI since you became a volunteer? What do you do now?

When I first started at the OI I was giving tours and helping out at special events such as Mummies Night. One early highlight was working with Larry Lissak in developing a tour about beer in the ancient world. I investigated the beer-making process using exhibits such as the Hittite beer pitcher, Egyptian servant statues of Nikauinu, and cylinder seals. The real test was when I gave the beer tour on a “Night at the Museum” event and was quizzed by several amateur beer makers. I also took some of the many interesting classes offered at the OI, such as Sam Harris’s Mesopotamian Mythologies, Maureen Marshall’s Tales of the Dead (a short course in forensic archaeology), and Kate Grossman’s Dawn of Civilization course, which was the inspiration for the Beer Tour. Later, with the help of Sue Geshwender, the OI’s volunteer manager, I took on volunteer assignments with OI faculty. For the last



few years, along with another volunteer, Steve Scott, I have been working for Gil Stein, former director of the OI and now professor of Near Eastern archaeology. We have been processing Gil’s data from his dig in the 1990s at Hacinebi, a 6,000-year-old site in the Euphrates River Valley of southeast Turkey. First we digitize the film slides from the dig. Then we verify that the descriptive data on the slide and in the Excel database are consistent and make sense by comparing the descriptions and locations on the slides both in the database and from other data sources.

This volunteer work led to an unexpected opportunity, in 2016, to be a registrar of field artifacts at Gil’s current dig site in Surezha, Kurdistan. As registrar, I photographed the ancient objects from the dig, gave each object a number and wrote a short description, and then, along with location data from the archaeologists’ field reports, entered the information into the database. I also washed a lot of dishes, but everybody on the dig takes turns at that. It wasn’t all work. We took a couple of fun field trips. One was to Shanidar cave, a Neanderthal site in northwestern Kurdistan. On the way back we went swimming in the Lesser Zab River. Very refreshing on a 105F day.

### What do you particularly like about being a volunteer?

As a volunteer you meet some really interesting people among the other volunteers, faculty, and staff. And you never know what adventures you might find.

### What has surprised you?

The opportunity to go on the Surezha (Kurdistan) dig, sharing the company of working archaeologists, and experiencing the challenges they face in excavating these sites were way beyond anything I had expected from my volunteering at the OI.

### What would you say to someone who is thinking of volunteering at the OI?

If you are a person who is curious about the past and the forces that change civilizations, the OI is a great place to indulge those interests.

# PROGRAMS & EVENTS WINTER 2019





# ADULT PROGRAMS

## EXHIBITION

### **The First 100 Years: Anatolian Studies at Chicago**

*Oriental Institute Lower Level, ongoing*

The Oriental Institute is one of the world's main centers of Hittitology (the study of the ancient languages and cultures of Turkey). This exhibit looks at Chicago's contribution to the field, including the early years of Hittitology, the careers of faculty members Hans G. Guterbock and Harry Hoffner, the creation and progress of *The Chicago Hittite Dictionary*, and the Oriental Institute's expeditions to Turkey.

## GALLERY TALKS

### **Deconstructing Assyrian Palace Reliefs**

**Thu, Jan 10, 12:15–1:00pm**

Free

*Registration not required.*

The quarries supplied the stone, the king and court amassed the resources for transport, scholars produced the design, craftsmen supplied the carving skills, and Assyria ... well, Assyria provided the history and mythology encapsulated in the reliefs. Carved from a type of white gypsum locally available in northern Iraq and painted in bold colors, Assyrian reliefs lined the lower section of walls in the more public rooms and courtyards of royal palaces and temples, emanating the power and prestige of the king and empire. Join Kiersten Neumann, PhD (curator, research associate, Oriental Institute), to deconstruct the life history of Assyrian palace reliefs, from their creation, installation, and cultural context in antiquity through to modern times, as monuments subjected to vandalism and continued threats.

### **The Monuments of Tell Tayinat**

**Thu, Feb 7, 12:15–1:00pm**

Free

*Registration not required.*

The site of Tell Tayinat was excavated in the 1930s by the Oriental Institute, who found there a wide array of monumental statues in this Iron Age city. Some of these were found perfectly intact, while others were found smashed to pieces. Join James Osborne, PhD (assistant professor of Near Eastern archaeology, Oriental Institute), as we explore the stories behind these monuments' creation, use, destruction, and preservation.

### **Enclaves, Military Outposts, and Colonial Settlements: Autonomy and Cultural Encounter in Nubia**

**Thu, Mar 7, 12:15–1:00pm**

Free

*Registration not required.*

Egypt and Nubia were involved in a network of trade, exchange, or extraction throughout most of their history. The process benefited whoever controlled a substantial portion of the primary or intermediary exchange routes and could thereby directly exploit the resources so prized by rulers, their entourages, and other elites. But control of Lower Nubia fluctuated between two powers, Egypt and Kush. When Egypt was decentralized and fragmented, or obsessed with guarding her frontiers, the southerners controlled the minerals, metals, stones, and southern trade products moving along the river and land routes.

Egypt's cultural influence over Nubians varied along a continuum ranging from isolation, to an Egyptian presence with little acculturation by the local populations, to the assimilation of the cultural and religious ideals of Egypt under a concentrated presence of military, administrative, and religious personnel from the north. At different periods, including up until the recent past, the scenario is similar. Archaeological remains, mostly consisting of funerary architecture and goods, show wholesale or individual acceptance of Egyptian cultural ideals by the local population.

Join Lisa Heidorn, research associate of the Polish Centre of Mediterranean Archaeology of the University of Warsaw and associate of the Oriental Institute, for this museum gallery talk that will focus on the evidence for assimilation into, partial acceptance of, and resistance to the Egyptian ideal. Examples from the Oriental Institute's Nubian Gallery and elsewhere will illustrate the concepts of assimilation or cultural agency.

**ADULT PROGRAMS** meet at the Oriental Institute unless otherwise noted.

**REGISTER** To register, visit [oi.uchicago.edu/register](https://oi.uchicago.edu/register) or email [oi-education@uchicago.edu](mailto:oi-education@uchicago.edu).

# ADULT PROGRAMS

**MEMBERS  
SAVE 20% ON  
CLASSES!**

## HYBRID COURSES (ON-SITE OR ONLINE)

All classes can be attended either in person (on-site) or virtually (online). Classes will be live-streamed for the online audience and also recorded, meaning that all students can watch the lectures later. It is not required for on-site students to be present in person for every class.

### Introduction to Ancient Egyptian Religion (8 weeks)

**Thursdays, Jan 10–Feb 28, 6:00–8:00pm in Oriental Institute Room 210 and online**

**Instructor:** Foy Scalf, PhD (head of the Research Archives of the Oriental Institute)

General \$392, members \$314, University of Chicago Students (UChicago Arts Pass) \$98

*Registration required by Jan 3, 2019*

Why did the Egyptians wrap mummies in linen? Did they believe in a human soul? How did they envision life after death? Who was Osiris? This course will seek answers to those (and other) questions through an introduction to the religious beliefs and practices of the ancient Egyptians. Each week we will cover a thematic topic with readings, lectures, and discussions. Focus will be placed on trying to understand ancient Egyptian perspectives in order to correct popular mischaracterizations. Students will get the chance to learn about ancient Egyptian creation accounts, the pantheon of gods, the role of humans, conceptions of the afterlife, the mysteries of Osiris, ritual practices, and domestic religion.

Students will have the option of taking this hybrid course both online and on-site. Weekly classroom lectures will be livestreamed for students watching online, who will be able to participate through an online chat conference. Each lecture video is then archived for future viewing at the students' convenience. All class materials will be available to every student through an online Canvas portal. Required textbooks: Byron E. Shafer, ed., *Religion in Ancient Egypt: Gods, Myths, and Personal Practice* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1991), and Jan Assman, *Death and Salvation in Ancient Egypt* (trans. David Lorton; Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2005).

### Watercraft in Ancient Egypt (7 weeks)

**Tuesdays, Jan 29–Mar 19, 5:30–7:30pm in Oriental Institute 210 and Online**

**Instructor:** Douglas Inglis, MA (Texas A&M)

General \$344, members \$275, University of Chicago students (UChicago Arts Pass) \$86

*Registration required by Jan 22, 2019*

Boats were essential to life and death along the Nile; they facilitated travel and commerce, the construction of the pyramids, and navigating the world beyond.

During this class, we will look at the fundamental role boats played in the lifeways of ancient Egypt, as well as how they became integrated into both religious rituals and the mortuary cult. We both examine them as cultural and technological objects, and discuss how simple reed rafts developed into complex sailing machines.

### Languages of Ancient and Medieval Nubia: Adaptation and Innovation (2 weeks)

**Thursdays, Mar 7–14, 5:30–7:30pm in Oriental Institute 210 and Online**

**Instructors:** Brian Muhs (associate professor of Egyptology) and Tasha Vorderstrasse (PhD, University and Continuing Education Program coordinator and research associate)

General \$98, members \$78, University of Chicago students (UChicago Arts Pass) \$24

*Registration required by Feb 28, 2019*

The languages of ancient and medieval Nubia remain an understudied field as scholars still work to translate texts, understand grammar, and better understand the rich corpus of materials that continue to be excavated. This two-week class will provide an overview of the two local languages (Meroitic and Old Nubian) of ancient and medieval Nubia and how they adapted writing systems in use in Egypt as their own. At the end of the course, students will have an overview of what is known about Meroitic and Old Nubian and how to access further resources.

## TEACHER WORKSHOP

### Project Archaeology Intensive Workshop

**Sat–Sun, Jan 5–6, 8:30–2:30pm on both days in Oriental Institute 208**

Engage your students in archaeological thinking as they apply the tools of scientific inquiry to the investigation of nutrition. Get ideas for hands-on classroom activities that will guide students to trace the shift from hunting and gathering to the development of agriculture in the ancient world. Explore the connection of food diversity and human health. The workshop is entirely FREE for selected applicants from any K-12 school, with a preference for CPS schools on the South Side of Chicago. Meals, and the curriculum guidebook *Project Archaeology: Investigating Nutrition*, will be provided, as will the associated curriculum guidebook, including *Project Archaeology: Investigating Shelter*, and *Investigating a Neolithic Dwelling at Jarmo*.



# FAMILY & YOUTH PROGRAMS

## FREE PROGRAMS

### **Nubia: Land of the Bow | Ages 5–12**

**Sat, Feb 2, 2019, 1:00–3:00pm**

Free

*Registration recommended*

You've heard about ancient Egypt, but what about their neighbors (and sometimes conquerors!) to the south?

Journey up the Nile to Nubia, a civilization rich in gold, famous for their archers, and with more pyramids than Egypt. Discover the tombs of Nubian queens, explore the history of Nubia and Egypt, and get hands-on with artifact replicas.



### **Nowruz Celebration | Ages 4 and up**

**Sat, Mar 9, 1:00–4:00pm**

Free for children, suggested donation of \$5/adult, free for members

*Registration recommended*

Celebrate the delight of the coming Persian New Year — Nowruz! Color eggs, visit a Haft-Seen table, hunt for artifacts in the galleries, and take your New Year photo!

## WORKSHOPS

### **Junior Archaeologists | Ages 5–12**

**Sat, Jan 12, 1:00–3:00pm**

General \$14, members \$10 (1 child + 1 adult); \$7/\$5 each additional registrant.

*Registration required; adults must register and attend with child*

Let loose your inner Indiana Jones! Families dig into our simulated excavation while learning about the real science of archaeology at the Oriental Institute's Kipper Family Archaeology Discovery Center. This program includes an interactive guided tour of the galleries. Fun patches available onsite.

### **All Bones About It | Ages 8–12**

**Sat, Feb 23, 1:00–3:00pm**

General \$14, members \$10 (1 child + 1 adult); \$7/\$5 each additional registrant.

*Registration required. Adults must register and attend with child.*

Think skeletons are just for Halloween? The bones inside you would disagree: you use your skeleton every day! What's more, written on your own bones is the story of the physical activities you take part in and the food you eat. Explore how this knowledge helps archaeologists learn about the lives of ancient people while also learning how to help your own bones tell the great story of healthy living. We'll give you a kid's crash course in bioarchaeology while you get hands-on. Fun patches available onsite.



**FAMILY PROGRAMS** meet at the Oriental Institute unless otherwise noted. Children under 13 must be accompanied by an adult.

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For assistance or more information, email [oi-education@uchicago.edu](mailto:oi-education@uchicago.edu)

# MEMBERS' LECTURE SERIES

## FREE AND OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

Join us on the first Wednesday evening from September to June (with the exception of January) to learn more about the ancient Near East from some of the world's top scholars. Members' Lectures are a longstanding OI tradition that allows you access to cutting-edge scholarship, and the most current ideas in the study of ancient cultures.

### Lectures begin at 7pm and are followed by a reception

*\*Due to renovations in Breasted Hall, the February lecture will take place offsite.*



## FEB 6 | TROY AND GORDION

### The Historiography of Excavation at Two Legendary Sites in Anatolia

*Brian Rose, University of Pennsylvania*

**7pm, Social Sciences Room 122**

Brian Rose, director and co-director of excavations at two legendary sites in Turkey, Troy, and Gordion, speaks about his fieldwork over the course of the last twenty-five years, and his strategies for presenting findings to both the public and the scholarly community. Brian places his own work in historiographic perspective, with a focus on how regional, national, and global developments have shaped research agendas.

## MAR 6 | POTS FROM THE CITY OF SIN

### The Consequences of Buying Holy Land Antiquities

*Morag Kersel, DePaul University and the Oriental Institute*

**7pm, Breasted Hall**

Everyone wants a piece of the Holy Land. The demand for artifacts results in site destruction, theft, and a compromised understanding of the past. Morag Kersel discusses fifteen years of investigation that has led to insights related to why individuals and institutions want to own Holy Land artifacts. This lecture traces how pots move from the mound to the museum in order to understand competing claims and the deleterious effects left on the landscape.

**MEMBERS' LECTURES** take place in Breasted Hall\* at the Oriental Institute. Lecture titles, abstracts, and dates are subject to change.

For up-to-date information, please visit [oi.uchicago.edu/programs](https://oi.uchicago.edu/programs)





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Chicago, Illinois 60637  
[oi.uchicago.edu](http://oi.uchicago.edu)

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## INFORMATION

### MEMBERSHIP

#### YOUR PARTNERSHIP MATTERS!

The Oriental Institute depends upon members of all levels to support the learning and enrichment programs that make our Institute an important — and free — international resource.

As a member, you'll find many unique ways to get closer to the ancient Near East — including free admission to the Museum and Research Archives, invitations to special events, discounts on programs and tours, and discounts at the Institute gift shop.

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ADULTS

***\$10 suggested donation***

CHILDREN 12 OR UNDER

***\$5 suggested donation***

### MUSEUM & GIFT SHOP HOURS

*Closed Monday*

*Sun-Tue, Thu-Sat: 10am-5pm*

*Wed: 10am-8pm*

### THE MUSEUM IS CLOSED

January 1

July 4

Thanksgiving Day

December 25

### ACCESSIBILITY

The Museum is fully wheelchair and stroller accessible. The University Avenue west entrance is accessible by ramp and electronic doors.

### PARKING

FREE parking half a block south of the Museum on University Avenue, after 4pm daily and all day on Saturday and Sunday.

### GROUP VISITS

For information about group visits, please go to:

[oi.uchicago.edu/museum/tours](http://oi.uchicago.edu/museum/tours)

