

Environmental Heterogeneity and Economic Integration of Meroitic Inland and Riverine Centers in the Island of Meroe (As Seen in Naga and Wad Ban Naga)

Abdelgadir Elkhazien

Abstract

This work sheds light on dimensions and aspects of environmental heterogeneity and integrated economic roles of Meroitic inland and riverine centers in the Island of Meroe - as seen in Naga and Wad Ban Naga. Naga, as regarded here as a key Meroitic inland centre of agrarian production, occupied a large open ground on Wadi Awateib in the western Butana of fertile plains, sufficient rain and wadi systems to the east of the Nile; on the other hand, Wad Ban Naga, as regarded here as a Meroitic riverine harbour, was located on the mouth of Wadi Awateib – a strategic point on the eastern bank of the Nile between riverine and inland centers - particularly Naga at a distance of c. 13 km to the east via Wadi Awateib. Of particular relevance in the archaeological records of the sites here are e.g. the relief of Apedemak on the Lion Temple at Naga and the silo attached to an enormous square building at Wad Ban Naga.

The nature of Meroitic evidence from the southern Gezira, Sudan

Ahmed Adam

Abstract

The first millennium BCE saw the formation of the Meroitic Kingdom, the successor to the Napatan Kingdom. While it is well known from the central and northern Sudan, how it interacted with communities in the Gezira Plain is much less known. This study includes the area of Jebel Moya with a cultural depth and a history that goes back to the Late Mesolithic.

This paper, therefore, seeks to demonstrate the nature and type of cultural spread of Meroe. Investigations south of Khartoum are rarely covering the Meroitic in terms of systemic excavations, the notable exceptions being Al Khiday and Jebel Moya. The talk will incorporate the data from Jebel Moya, which is believed to be outside the sphere of direct political control by Meroe, but which nonetheless shows evidence of regional trade. There are also important faunal and botanical data, and potential evidence from nearby of more sites with occupation from 2000 years ago. These data form an important counterview to the heavily Meroitic-centric narrative of Sudanese archaeology. We expect that future research will enhance our knowledge about spread of the Meroitic Culture in the central Sudan area and its environs.

The characteristics of the environmental dimensions in the local Meroitic cults

Ammar Awad M. Abdalla

Abstract

The main centers of the local Meroitic cults emerged south of the capital of the kingdom (Royal City), whose emergence coincided with various complicated historical circumstances. Besides some local and regional political and economical changes, all these factors together formed the concept of Meroitic civilization. On the other hand, environmental aspects such as land, weather, animals, plants, and human groups were crucial for the development of some local deities, to the extent that they became official state gods. This article reassesses a group of archaeological and historical data in the light of these dimensions to explain how the nomads in the Meroitic period interacted with the political authority and what cultural output resulted from such interaction. In particular, what is involved in the qualitative change of the Meroitic pantheon through the emergence of new local deities that did not exist before and the incorporation of these deities into the official state ideology?

**A Round Peg in a Square Hole:
The enigmatic round building in Dangeil's temple precinct**

**Julie Renee Anderson, Roksana Hajduga, Rihab Khidir el-
Rashed and Mahmoud Suleiman Bashir**

Abstract

Within the sacred rectangular enclosure of the 1st century AD Amun temple at Dangeil Sudan, stands a monumental and enigmatic round building, situated north of the Amun temple's peristyle hall. Excavations revealed a circular structure over sixteen metres in diameter, with a wall four metres thick. The building stands four metres above the modern ground surface. In the past, it would have stood higher. Like the temple, the structure's thick wall comprises a mudbrick core faced on the exterior with fired bricks. From a cylindrical foundation, the brick courses then gradually step inward towards the centre of the building. This gives the building a domed appearance.

Radiocarbon dating place its construction early in the 1st century BC.

Theories concerning the building's purpose range from silo to dome-shaped tomb to local shrine. Its incorporation into the Amun temple complex suggests the latter to be the most likely, and attests to the evolution of the ritual geography of Dangeil. The building was integrated into, and co-existed with, the main religious monument. Recent excavation of its entrance and part of the structure's interior enables some theories regarding its function to be postulated and its relationship to the Amun temple discussed.

The Mammisi Temple B 561 at Jebel Barkal – a summary of the study of ceramics

Dobiesława Bagińska

Abstract

The Meroitic Temple B 561 - (a mud brick Mammisi Temple about 60 m in front of B 500, perpendicular to its dromos), has provided a surprising amount of Meroitic pottery, dating apparently from 1st to 4th century AD. Levels under the foundation and sanctuary floor have yielded Early Meroitic pottery. Studies have provided several thousand pieces of tableware, kitchen and storage ceramics and imported amphorae. From all levels we recovered over 3.800 Meroitic potsherds. All the ceramic material finds good analogies, both in form and decoration, with pottery from Meroe City, Musawwarat es Sufra, Selib, Gabati, Dangeil, Muweis, Faras and Hamadab. In my opinion, most of it dates to the period 1st BC- 4th century AD. Pottery from upper levels in B 561 suggested a late Meroitic date, belonging to a time after this temple had fallen down and its site had been converted to domestic use. The discovery of such wide-ranging vessel forms integrally connected with the Meroitic culture at Jebel Barkal will be an important reference point for general research on pottery in Sudan.

Abandoned, Resettled, Forgotten: Lower Nubia in the 3rd century BC

Henry Cosmo Bishop-Wright

Abstract

Since Cecil Firth (1915) first suggested that Lower Nubia was practically uninhabited from the end of the New Kingdom to the early Ptolemaic period, the chronology of the region has been subject to continuous debate. With published schemes differing by as much as four centuries (Griffith; Adams; Török; Williams), the date at which Lower Nubia was 'resettled' in the Meroitic period remains divisive and the assumption that it was ever truly 'abandoned' increasingly dubious.

A recent study of the Meroitic cemetery at Faras in Lower Nubia added fresh evidence to the debate by presenting a new chronology of the site that argued for a 3rd century BC foundation (Bishop-Wright 2023). Associated with this early phase were pairs of ornate bronze anklets that were suggested to be markers of a non-Meroitic group that settled the Lower Nubian river valley c. 275 BC. This paper continues the discussion by testing these preliminary conclusions against comparable evidence from other Meroitic cemeteries between the First and Third Cataracts. So doing, it seeks to improve the understanding of Lower Nubia in the 3rd century BC and reconsider its relationship with the Meroitic south, Eastern Desert and Egyptian north.

Revised as of February 2024.

Femininity and masculinity in Meroitic temples: display of a symbolic oneness

Marie-Blandine Bost

Abstract

The temple of Apedemak in Naga, erected by the co-rulers Natakamani and Amanitore displays specific decorative program in a Meroitic temple : the instauration of a gender division on each temple half. This rhetoric is used to demonstrate the concept of complementarity between both male and female elements as a dynamic principle and parts of a whole. Foremost, in order to examine the application and signification of the gender division in the religious context, it is necessary to consider the image in adequation with its medium and its location. In the case of the temple of Naga, the symmetrical (or chiasmic) relationships provide an expressive and symbolic discourse to the gender division. The temple as semiotic device for the display of a dualistic symmetry may engage further discussions on its ideological link with the dual royalty of Natakamani and Amanitore. The rules of this composition need to be discussed to understand in what extent this decorative program is an original conception of the coregents and how it occurs or is adapted in other Meroitic temples. Moreover, the analysis of the iconographic and symbolic aspects of the temple walls will contribute to a better understanding of the cult events in the Meroitic period.

Regionalism in the Napatan Empire: Evidence for settlement patterns in the Attab to Ferka region

Julia Budka

Abstract

For the Napatan Kingdom, both settlement patterns and inner structures of domestic sites are still largely unknown, in particular in the territory north of the Third Cataract. This paper will present evidence for Napatan settlements in the Attab to Ferka region, the Munich University Attab to Ferka Survey (MUAFS) concession area. Most of these sites have previously been either attributed to the New Kingdom or were simply overlooked. Of particular interest are drystone walls commonly found in the context of these settlements because these were recently interpreted as constructions for trapping Nile silts for agriculture (see Dalton et al. 2023).

Data from survey, remote sensing (high-resolution SAR-images available from the German satellite TerraSAR-X and Drone Aerial photography) and excavation will be presented. Considering data from other regions and different periods, the paper aims to contextualise these settlement remains and to address aspects of the subsistence strategies and social practices of communities in peripheral regions of the Napatan Empire. This might on one hand illustrate the character of Nubia, here in particular the region between the Second and Third Cataract, as cultural corridor between Egypt and Sudan and on the other hand specific cultural encounters and strategies in rural areas.

Reference

Dalton et al. 2023 = Dalton, M., Spencer, N., Macklin, M.G., Woodward, J.C. and Ryan, P. (2023), Three thousand years of river channel engineering in the Nile Valley, *Geoarchaeology* 38/5, 565–587, <https://doi.org/10.1002/gea.21965>

History drawn from Jebel Barkals vessels: A chronological view from the humble pot sherd

**Saskia Büchner-Matthews, Riadh Ben Brahim, Rehab
Ismail and Rihab Khider**

Abstract

The Kushite settlement at Jebel Barkal, and its possible function as a commercial centre – servicing not only local residents but visitors to the monuments, palaces, and religious buildings – benefited from its association with these elite locations: in foodstuffs, goods, and crafts. It incorporated different features in order to serve this multifaceted role, including non-elite houses and commercial areas.

As a consequence, the composition of the pottery assemblage includes both common use and everyday household pottery – such as cooking pots, serving and storage vessels – alongside a significant amount of fine, sacral, and imported wares. The occurrence of these differing categories appears to have fluctuated over time, perhaps reflecting the changing political and economic fortunes of the site itself.

On the basis of new investigations, we can now begin to construct a broad chronological overview of the varying frequency of these vessels across the settlement. Pottery recovered from settlements, however, is always complex and diverse – reflecting fragmentation, re-use, recycling, repurposing, relocation – resulting from the different life-histories and longevity of individual pots (as well as post-depositional movement stratigraphically and spatially). This creates considerable historical problems, as well as analytical and interpretative challenges, that both invites and requires multiple perspectives on its nature.

The Reign of Amanirenas: A Suggestion

Stanley M. Burstein

Abstract

Amanirenas was probably the Kandake, who resisted the Romans in the 20s CE, and the first of the line of ruling queens, who ruled Kush for much of the following century. Although the evidence indicates that Kandake was the title of the mother of a king and not that of a queen, it is generally assumed that Amanirenas and her successors were primarily queens, who assumed power on the death of the kings, who were their husbands. In the case of Amanirenas, that would have been Teriteqas, who supposedly died during the first conflict with the Romans in the mid-20s BCE.

The purpose of this paper is to suggest that this reconstruction of events is not supported by the evidence and is in need of revision. An alternative reconstruction will be proposed that accounts for the use of the title Kandake by Greek and Roman writers to describe the position of Amanirenas and her successors. Specifically, it will be argued that the trilingual decree of Cornelius Gallus provides evidence that Teriteqas was already dead in 30 BCE and that he had been succeeded by his son, who was still a minor and for whom, therefore, Amanirenas exercised power as Kandake.

Memory, Identity, and Site Reuse in Meroitic/Post-Meroitic Burials in the Third Cataract Region

Michele R. Buzon, Sarah A. Schrader, Stuart Tyson Smith

Abstract

Sites in the Third Cataract Region of the Nile River in Sudan display long-term use and reuse, reflecting the connection of people to particular locations for burial and providing possible examples of cultural memory. At Tombos, two female flexed burials with human bone and basketry dating to the Meroitic period were found intact in the shaft of an 18th Dynasty New Kingdom shaft tomb, which contained mostly disturbed original remains. At Abu Fatima, two burial pits (one with mummified remains) containing reed that dates to the Meroitic period are built directly off a Kerma Ancien burial pit. At Hannek (on the west bank), one burial child dating to the post-Meroitic period was found amongst several New Kingdom/Napatan burials. Mortuary practices, goods, and skeletal analyses of these later burials are contextualized within broader site usage and the consideration of concepts related to destruction, usurpation, memorialization of kinship, and ethnic/political ties to the past. The use of previous space invokes potential long-term entanglements and both individual and societal choices to explicitly connect the present with the past.

**Between Temple and Palace.
Some Suggestions on the Iconography of Natakamani in
Napata and Naqa**

Emanuele M. Ciampini

Abstract

The Natakamani reign is a pivotal period in the Meroitic history. Architecture and iconography (above all royal iconography) are two of the most important types of evidence for the ideological and cultural self-presentation of the power, centred on the royal couple. In this perspective, Napata and Naqa offer interesting samples for such models: in both the sites the representation of Natakamani testify to the main iconographical models of the Meroitic kingdom, representative of the Meroitic eclecticism.

The great palace of Natakamani in Napata, despite its poor condition, still stresses the evidence for a model of the royal iconography, represented by several glazed tiles reproducing Dionysian motifs connected with the kingship. The hellenistic patterns of these decorative elements are a well-known topic; the same hellenistic patterns repeated in some divine representations, whose origin has been supposed to have been the icon of Serapis as hypostasis of the deity and the king; at Naqa, the royal couple is represented according to the traditional Meroitic model. Particular attention must be paid to the connection of these iconographies with some patterns spread in the Meroitic culture, such as the frontal representations of deities, that can be a new, representative pattern in the Meroitic kingdom. Starting from this evidence, the paper aims to focus on some iconographies of Natakamani period, trying to outline the evolution of some patterns that better might express the concept of the kingship.

**Tradition or necessity?
Isotopic insight into the continuity of Meroitic agro-
pastoral integration into the urban economy of medieval
Soba**

Joanna A. Ciesielska

Abstract

Following the disintegration of Meroe state in the fourth century CE, the populations of the Nubian Nile valley experienced a major socio-political shift. The city of Soba soon replaced Meroe as the largest urban centre in the region, but its beginnings and ties to the Meroitic kingdom remain vague at best. Isotopic analysis of subsistence strategies and mobility among local inhabitants shed light on continued reliance on semi-sedentary pastoralism as one of urban economic bases. Mixed water sourcing in tandem with almost complete reliance on sorghum/millet and large grazers' produce speak to the seasonal movement of the entire groups of people with their herds across differing ecological settings, i.e. between the Nile valley alluvial plains and the extensive grasslands of the local hinterland. Evidence suggests enduring agro-pastoral symbiosis and synchronic interaction of various economic activities in the urbanised context of this powerful metropolis, whose model of animal exploitation appears to have been very similar to Kushite states. Does this integration of flexible subsistence adaptations into the broader pattern of social interaction attest to the continuity of traditional lifeways or ensures long term resilience in times of climatic or economic hardship?

Recent Advances in Meroitic Ceramic Chronology and their Historical Implications

Romain David

Abstract

Studies on Meroitic pottery have multiplied in recent decades thanks to excavations in urban contexts in Central Sudan (Hamadab, Wad ben Naga, Muweis, el-Hassa, etc.). While they have served the study of production techniques and technologies through an increasing reliance on laboratory analysis, issues related to the dating of productions, their evolution and the study of underlying historical phenomena have remained marginal despite this growing corpus. This presentation aims to summarise recent advances based on the to-be published documentation of several sites in the Meroe region. While the archaeological investigations led by the Louvre Museum at Muweis provided relevant material to explore the evolution of the facies throughout the whole Meroitic period, the excavations conducted by the Sfdas at el-Hassa and at Damboya allow us to identify a shift in production during the second half of the 1st century AD. A revised chronology of certain productions makes it possible to isolate reliable markers in order to move away from the overly broad designations of Early, Classic, Late and Final Meroitic, and to discuss the theories in use since the work of W.Y. Adams or P. Lenoble on the origins of the Meroitic industry, its heyday, and its end.

Re-examining the iconographic composition of Bar. 26 (Barkal West Group)

Montserrat Díaz-de-Cerio

Abstract

When Bar. 26 was discovered in 1995, one of the most relevant aspects was the fact that the funerary chambers preserved part of the decoration. Although the presence of an astronomical ceiling stands out, beyond this, the decoration presents another series of relevant compositions. This study examines the existing symbolism in the different motifs represented in the decoration and its parallels in Egyptian and Nubian tombs. We will first analyze these motifs separately and finalize with an approach that views the iconographic composition as a whole. The selected repertoire, entirely of Egyptian influence, serves to illustrate to what extent the beliefs and their expression had settled in the mindset of the Nubian elite. When and where these compositions were used, and who used them are some of the many questions that we wanted to answer in this work.

Exploring the borderland: where does the kingdom of Meroe end and Egypt begin?

Audrey Eller

Abstract

During the Meroitic period in the Kingdom of Kush, and the Ptolemaic and Roman eras in Egypt, the two political entities shared a border in Lower Nubia and engaged in several conflicts in an attempt to extend their influence. Defining a clear boundary during extended periods and over this vast territory is challenging, leading to debates among historians such as Adams, Burstein, and Török.

Given recent significant advancements in Meroitic studies, it is now possible to re-evaluate this issue and propose new perspectives. By taking the Meroitic point of view into account, we can add nuance to long-standing interpretations that heavily relied on an Egyptian perspective influenced by Egyptology. It is therefore necessary to reopen the discussion on the existence of a definitive and impenetrable border, considering the likelihood of a complex intermingling that likely better reflects the historical reality.

This paper aims to reassess the border problem by using Meroitic written sources (stelae, graffiti, inscriptions, papyri, etc.) and available archaeological data from Lower Nubia. By juxtaposing these findings with the Egyptian point of view, the objective is to provide a comprehensive analysis of this complex issue.

Trade at Napata: Insights from a newly found non-royal settlement at Jebel Barkal

**Geoff Emberling, Tim Boaz Bruun Skuldbøl, Saskia
Büchner-Matthews**

Abstract

Trade in the empire of Kush has been considered to have been a royal monopoly. David Edwards, in his influential model of Kush as a Sudanic State, suggested that control of trade, particularly in high value materials, was essential to support of Kushite kings. This perspective was supported by excavation of Irene Vincentelli at the site of Sanam, located near the major royal centre of Napata (Jebel Barkal), in which royal seal impressions were found associated with ivory and semi-precious stones in large storehouses and workshops. However, this model has been developed in the near complete absence of excavations outside the royal sphere.

In this paper, we discuss evidence for trade recovered in excavation of a recently discovered settlement area at Jebel Barkal, one of the capital cities of Kush. Initial analysis of the material, thus far studied and dating to the Napatan and Meroitic periods, do imply that access to imported, certain types of vessels and goods, was sporadic even limited at times. The flow as well as origin of goods varies, which forms questions about royal versus private trading initiatives in different periods.

The Economic Foundations behind the Rise of the Napatan State

Fakhri Hassan Abdallah Hassan

Abstract

The kingdom of Napata emerged following the withdrawal of Pharaonic control over northern Sudan towards the end of the Second Millennium BC (c. 1250 B.C). During the subsequent phase, limited information is known about activities across the region. However, during the 9th Century BC, a cultural entity stabilized and coalesced around the Fourth Cataract, which ultimately grew into a state known as Napata. Where did this chiefdom come from?

This paper aims to present evidence that supports a local origin for the Napatan kingdom, and that it developed from an as-yet-unknown local family from the El Kurru. Using recent excavations by the University of Dongola to refute theories that the Napatan kings were not Sudanese, it will outline growing evidence for the indigenous power base behind the early Napatan state. In addition, it will present the origin of the Napatan state in its African context, rather than from an Egypto-centric model.

In particular, this paper will outline a useful theoretical framework for interpreting the early state, examining the natural and human resources that contributed to its development and how this can inform wider theory of state formation in the ancient world.

Meroitic flora and fauna according to the late roman sources

Eugenio Fantusati

Abstract

The informations on Meroitic flora and fauna provided by the Roman sources not always appear completely trusted and for this reason these last must be examined with caution.

The Roman writers, in fact, that only in a few cases personally visited Nubia, alternated in their works without any differentiation, reliable informations to data deprived of any foundation and far from the real situation of the African country.

Nevertheless the classical sources appear meaningful to understand the mythologizing phenomenon of the Meroitic culture effected by the western authors. Such operation invested obviously flora and fauna, ideal subjects, whose descriptions, even if often fruit of imagination, equally contributed to handing down the interest for the Kushite world.

The paper passes in review a literary tradition handed down from 1st century BCE to 3rd century CE (and destined to remain lasting over the centuries). Namely the examined reports are referable to Diodorus Siculus, Strabo, Pomponius Mela, Pliny, Arrianus and Aelianus.

Despite the distortion of the Meroitic habitat, the main reason of this trend has to be mainly referred to a diffused revision of the available knowledges in order to amaze the reader and to solicit his curiosity for a distant and mysterious world.

Urbanization and the Lion God Apedemak in Ancient Meroë

Mohamed Ali

Abstract

I explore here the relationship between urbanization and the local lion god Apedemak in the ancient Meroitic state around 300 BCE to 350 CE. The Meroitic civilization showed significant urban development and cultural evolution. The lion god Apedemak was the center of their religious beliefs and played a central role in the spiritual and social fabric of the urbanized Meroitic society. I examine here the influence of urbanization on the worship and perception of Apedemak, highlighting the deity's association with power, protection, and divine favor. I analyze archaeological and iconographic evidence, such as temple reliefs and inscriptions, to reflect on the relationship between urbanization and the lion god's cult. Additionally, I explore the potential social and political implications of Apedemak's veneration and negotiation of powers in an urban context, including its role in affirming the authority and legitimacy of the ruling class. By investigating the connections between urbanization, material culture, and the lion god Apedemak, this study sheds light on the complex relationship between religion, urban development, and cultural identity in the ancient Meroitic state.

Meroitic Nubia, a glass story

Vincent Francigny

Abstract

Apart from short episodes of political tension and warfare, the relation between Rome and Meroe was mostly built on diplomacy, the development of trade routes and the spreading of roman cultural influence beyond the borders of its empire. For centuries, Meroites would live in good terms with their neighbors and import products from a large network in which Egypt played a key role. Despite the distance, Roman lifestyle would, in return, penetrate Elite circles, inspire Kushite art and architecture and, eventually, introduce new ideas to a constantly evolving religious landscape.

Among all the archaeological discoveries that reflect the long-lasting connection between these two worlds, glassware is often one of the highlights as it was not produced within the kingdom of Meroe. With different origins and purposes, also widespread within the kingdom's territory, glass is a rich source of information to understand the perception that Meroites had of the outside world.

**Influence of cultural forms of meroitic kingdom on state
formation in Darfur, Sudan:
A divine kingship perspective**

Gafar Ali Fadol Ibrahim

Abstract

This study is to investigate the cultural relationships between both kingdoms of Meroe and Darfur in the Sudan from the divine kingship perspective. The riddle it tries to dismantle is the mysterious roots of the nature of the early state established by the Dago dynasty in Darfur then transferred peacefully to the Tunjur dynasty who in turn passed it on to the Keira dynasty whose era has fully come into light. Its significance is based on the notion that Darfur is a corridor which plays a key role in communicating urban cultural values of the Nile valley to the rest of Africa.

Two of its major objectives are to reconstruct and contextualise theory of state formation in Darfur within the wider frame of the Meroitic studies. The qualitative comparative analysis approach is used for exploring the concept of philosophy of the state through the lenses of Plato, Hegel and Marx in order to draw sounding results that might help in interpretation and understanding of prehistoric Darfur. Its novelty and argument are driven from the fact that ancient history of divine kingship institution in Darfur remained vague and touched by few scholars in their various scientific disciplines. Hence the study seeks to contribute to human knowledge in the fields of intangible cultural heritage and history.

Vital findings reached reveal that the institution of kingship ideology rather than the king himself is sacred and that Darfur has developed and diffused an indigenous type of state formation into sub-Saharan Africa. It recommends conducting future intensified archaeological excavations in such country for uncovering different cultural forms of state formation to promote and reinforce social and historical research.

Excavating Meroe

Krzysztof Grzymski

Abstract

The dramatic events taking place in Sudan led to the termination of field projects in that country. However, we may find one positive element in this unfortunate situation – it forces students of Meroitic civilization to turn their attention to the analysis of the excavated material, to re-thinking the long-term research goals and, perhaps, to undertake the study of the relevant museum collections. When fieldwork is impossible, “excavations”, as it were, may continue among the contents of university and museum magazines and storerooms.

**The inscriptions of the burial chambers of pyramid Beg. S.
503 –
a case of „Fachkräftemangel“ (lack of specialists) in
Ancient Meroe**

Jochen Hallof

Abstract

The study of the inscriptions of the burial chambers of pyramid Beg S. 503, recently excavated and documented by the Qatari Mission of the Pyramids of the Sudan (QMPS) and the Deutsche Archäologische Institut (DAI) Berlin, reveals a scary low level of skillness of the writers and painters who performed the decoration of the tomb of the queen's wife Khenu-dua. Clearly they have used fine copies of Egyptian religious texts, certainly stored in archives in the palace complex as model of the inscriptions in the two burial chambers. However, they were unable to transform the Demotic or Hieratic signs of these archival materials correctly into hieroglyphs. Moreover they were not able to line off a correct plan for the distribution of inscriptions and representations so that the texts do not refer to the representations and the inscriptions were always too long or too short for the space available on the walls.

Beg S. 503 is a striking example of the result of the „policy of isolation“ of the Napatan state against Egypt after the end of the 25th Dynasty. Qualified specialists, trained in Egypt, were not available to perform the decoration of the tomb in a highstanding level, even for one of the members of the royal family.

An overview of Safeguarding the archaeological sites & Museum Collections before and after the armed conflict in Sudan

Hassan Hussein Idris Ahmed

Abstract

The aim of the paper is an overview to examine the system of Safeguarding and protection of the archaeological sites & Museum Collections before and after the Armed Conflict between the Sudan Armed Forces (SAF) and the Rapid Support Forces (RSF) in Sudan. Sudan is one of the countries signed the UNESCO conventions of Hague 1954 for protection of Cultural Heritage during armed conflict, and 1972 Convention for protection of Cultural and Natural Heritage, and 2003 Convention for protection of Intangible Heritage. The preservation of Sudan's cultural heritage is very important to the development of its history and tourism. The role of the National Corporation for Antiquities and Museums (NCAM) according to 1999 Antiquities Ordinance is to meet the needs of the long-term safety and protection to the archaeological sites and museum collections. The archaeological fieldwork conducted in the Sudan has yielded very important information, collections and has enormously increased our knowledge of the history of the Sudan. The attention should be focused on natural disasters and to man-made disasters, such as the threat of armed conflict, war, theft, burglary, terrorism, and vandalism, which are the main factors of destruction to the cultural heritage. The illegal excavation destroys the archaeological context, and results in loss of sites, collections and information, which affects our understanding of our cultures.

Armed conflict caused great threats to cultural property, countries must attempt to prevent or reduce these dangers. In 15/04/2023 the Armed conflict between the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) and the Rapid Support Forces (RSF) was suddenly happened in Khartoum and spread in wide areas of the country. The ongoing crisis has put the Cultural Heritage at risk, and Safeguarding cultural heritage in Sudan is essential for

the whole community. This armed conflict has placed the Sudan's tangible and intangible heritage at a great risk. To mitigate this risk, NCAM, has organized with the help of international agencies and partners, two workshops in Cairo from June 2023 to February 2024, under prof. Ibrahim Musa the Director of the National Corporation for Antiquities & Museums, with the participation of NCAM senior staff, cultural experts, and International cultural Agencies and archaeological missions working in Sudan. The International Agencies, Donors and Funders and missions participated in these workshops have expressed solidarity and support to NCAM efforts to protect Sudan Cultural Heritage. They recommended the an organization structure for the establishment of the Emergency Committee, with sectoral regions of Sudan. Also, the recommendations include that the documentation made by the local and foreign archaeological mission has to be delivered to NCAM, and creation of a GIS platform with different levels of information for all types of Sudanese cultural heritage within the concept of endangered area.

However, as the armed conflict continues across the country more archaeological sites and museums will be endangered, and protection needs are necessary. It is an essential step in the field of the protection of the archaeological sites and museum collections facing the armed conflict. Sudan needs a plan to outlines the possible disasters, such as fire, theft and flood that may affect the archaeological sites, collections and records, and to ensure that effective and active measures are taken for the protection, conservation, and action should be taken in the event of any disaster. The proper site management can minimize the negative impact of these threats. It is our duty towards the future generation to preserve, conserve and protect Sudan's cultural heritage.

Two Anthropoid Coffins from the 25th Dynasty: the higher elite vs the lower elite

Hend Elfiky

Abstract

Publication of an elaborate type of two anthropoid coffins brought back from Egypt in 1824 within the Drovetti collection and now kept in the Turin Museum. These items date to the 25th Dynasty (722-664 BCE). It consists of an inner coffin, a mummy of Tami, the daughter of the priest of Amun Ankh-khonsu, and another coffin of Tariri, a non-royal lady, who lived in the Theban area during the Kushite Period.

Coffins from the post-New Kingdom period are a great source of information for studying funeral traditions, religious symbolism, and individual identities. By the 25th Dynasty, the distinction is more strongly marked in the higher and lower models, not only in the number of components and their form but also in the religious conceptions that they embody.

This research compares two coffins from the 25th Dynasty, representing distinct social strata: one belonging to the royal elite and the other associated with a non-royal individual. The objective is to identify similarities and differences in the coffins' form, decoration, and religious symbolism, providing insights into the religious and funerary beliefs of varying social status.

The Protection of the Sudanese Cultural Heritage Throughout and Following the 15th of April Crisis

Ismail Hamid Mohamed Elnour

Abstract

Since its independence from Great Britain and Egypt in 1956, Sudan has experienced internal conflict. During the last decades Sudan has faced different conflicts, ethnic tension, and competition over resources. One of the significant conflicts in Sudan was the South Sudan War (1984 -2009) Darfur conflict, (2003 -2019), Blue Nile and South Kurdufan conflict. These conflicts obviously resulted in widespread displacement, loss of life, and allegations of human rights abuses. In a certain times These conflicts escalated into a full-scale civil war, with both government and opposition forces engaging in widespread violence, including targeted killings, looting, and destruction of property.

The recent armed conflict is the conflict between the Sudanese Armed Forces and the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces broke out on the 15th of April 2023. The fighting mostly concentrated around the capital city of Khartoum and the Darfur region. Whereas, bombings and gun battles have been taking place in the heart of the capital Khartoum, in residential neighbourhoods, with buildings badly damaged. Therefore, this ongoing crisis in Sudan, poses significant threats to the preservation of Sudanese cultural heritage.

Recognising that safeguarding Sudanese cultural heritage necessitates a multidimensional approach that combines awareness-raising, security measures, international cooperation, capacity building, and community engagement, this article seeks to discuss and introduce the various approaches and methods that can be adapted and applied to preserve Sudanese cultural heritage and the universal cultural heritage in Sudan for future generations.

**Some considerations on the dating, protection, and
enhancement of the Meroitic District of Jebel Barkal
(Italian Archaeological Mission in Sudan)**

**Francesca Iannarilli, Federica Pancin, Silvia Callegher,
Martino Gottardo**

Season 2022 in the Meroitic district of Jebel Barkal led to the discovery of a previously uninvestigated building, apparently of large size and high architectural and decorative level. The new area, named B3500, has been exposed for about 34 m in length through several surveys, but drone investigations have revealed a far greater size and potential.

The materials that have so far come to light seem to be distinguished by an accurate decoration, which could backdate the use of the royal district as compared to the main building in the area, the so-called Palace of Natakamani (B1500).

This paper therefore aims to present the material evidence that characterises this new area of investigation, highlighting its potential for an extensive excavation and at the same time enhancing its status for a better use of the archaeological site.

Furthermore, given the urgent and desperate situation that Sudan is currently facing, some concerns about the heritage of Karima will be expressed, including considerations on the possibilities of communication and protection in regard to Jebel Barkal's antiquities even in these complicated times.

Sennacherib's Victory over the Kushite and Egyptian Forces at Elteqeh

Dan'el Kahn

Abstract

One of the most well-studied episodes in biblical history and the history of the Neo-Assyrian Empire is Sennacherib's third campaign to the west. While 2 Kings 18:14-16 describes the surrender of Judah and the payment of an enormous amount of tax, the following chapters (2 Kings 18-19/Isaiah 36-37) describe an enormous defeat of Sennacherib's forces by the Angel of God. Egypt and Taharqa, the king of Kush, are mentioned as participants in these affairs. Many scholars claim a Kushite victory over Assyria.

Nevertheless, according to Assyrian royal inscriptions, Sennacherib conquered Phoenicia and Philistia. He then encountered the forces of Egypt and Kush in a pitched battle at Elteqeh. The Assyrians claimed victory.

Sennacherib's third campaign was also depicted in reliefs at his royal palace in Nineveh. Reliefs decorating Room XXXVI of Sennacherib's palace depicted the famous conquest of Lachish. These were regarded by scholars as artistic compensation for failing to conquer Jerusalem. John Russell argued that the third campaign was the focus of the decoration in Sennacherib's throne-room. At least three of its episodes were recorded there: the escape of Luli from Sidon, the surrender of a city without any attempt to conquer it by force. Immediately adjoining this scene, and therefore in temporal and geographical proximity and continuity, are war preparations by the Assyrian army and a pitched battle, most probably against the Egyptian-Kushite army in the next scene. The outcome of the battle is clear. The Assyrians routed and

killed the fleeing enemy. The Assyrian reliefs verified and supplemented the written annals.

Administrative sources pertaining to the Levant corroborate the Assyrian historical records and reliefs. Western tributaries, among them Ekron, Moab, Ammon, and Judah, continued paying taxes to Assyria, and in the province of Samerina, Assyrian deportees continued using Assyrian laws three years after Sennacherib's campaign. Thus, it is clear that Assyria won the battle against Egypt and maintained control in the southern Levant.

Temple B 1100 and the Archaeology of the Coronation at Jebel Barkal

Timothy Kendall

Abstract

In 1987, during our second season at Jebel Barkal, the MFA-Boston Mission first noticed the scattered blocks of a destroyed, unrecorded temple that had been built directly in front of the Jebel Barkal pinnacle. We named it "B 1100." Like temples B 200 and 300, which lay just west of it, most of its masonry had been quarried away by stone scavengers, and no floor plan survived. Then, in 1996, while excavating in the Napatan palace (B 1200), we discovered a text on a stone door jamb, which allowed us to identify B 1100 tentatively as the temple containing the sanctuaries of the two royal uraeus goddesses: the Pr-wr ("Great House") of Nekhbet and the Pr-nsr ("House of Flame") of Wadjet.

From unambiguous sources, notably the Coronation Text of Horemheb and the Kawa relief picturing Taharqo's coronation, we know that the Pr-wr was the temple that the king entered after leaving his palace (in company with Amun) and there he received his crowns from the crown goddess Weret-Hekau (whose role was probably played by a royal lady, transformed by "Magic"). (From other data, we know that this goddess could also assume the identity of one or both royal uraei.) In 1997, excavations in B 1100 confirmed that it did indeed house the Pr-wr and Pr-nsr, while other data proved that the pinnacle itself had been anciently conceived as a statue of both royal uraei.

Apart from being a residence of Amun, Jebel Barkal with its "uraei" must also have been understood to be the primeval source and archetype of the crown. From within the mountain, the god would have seemed to issue the crown to Weret-Hekau in her temple, who, in turn, placed it upon the king's

head. Once crowned, the king then apparently completed the coronation ceremony by mounting the steps of B 600 before the multitude and seating himself upon the throne within.

The ceremony was clearly much older than Kushite times. From its surviving blocks, we could determine that B 1100 had at least three building phases: 1) a talatat phase, probably attributable to Horemheb (which may have replaced an earlier mud brick phase); 2) a Dynasty 25 phase, likely built by Taharqa as a probable third temple in his B 200-300 series; and 3) a Meroitic phase built by Amanitore and Natakamani. Each phase had replaced an earlier, which had been destroyed by falling rocks.

Patterns of expression: using handmade pottery motifs as a window into a Kushite world-view

Loretta Kilroe

Abstract

Handmade pottery decorated with elaborate imagery is prolific across Kush, occurring in simple tombs across the Middle Nile Region right up to the royal and elite burials at Meroe. These decorative motifs draw upon a very different artistic background from that observed in formal art and iconography, but were clearly considered appropriate additions to funerary spaces. Although such indigenous symbolism was evidently a key part of Kushite expression and belief, its study and interpretation has been limited.

This paper will discuss the decoration common on handmade pottery – stand-alone motifs including giraffes, ostriches, humans, trees, and other uncertain shapes as well as geometric patterning – and its distribution across the Middle Nile Region. I will explore reasons why this decoration may have been segregated from formal iconography used in funerary and temple contexts as well as being separate from wheelmade pottery designs. Finally, I will suggest how we might begin to interpret these motifs using ethnographic models, using them as a gateway for analysing invisible socio-cultural aspects of Kushite society and belief.

Faces of the Meroitic world: Investigating the human form among the ancient graffiti at the ceremonial centre of Musawwarates-Sufra

Cornelia Kleinitz

Abstract

Numerous anthropomorphs, i.e. depictions of the human form, are among the thousands of graffiti that were incised into the sandstone walls of the ceremonial building structures at Musawwarates-Sufra during the Meroitic period of the Kingdom of Kush. Who is represented, who were the authors/artists and what were their motivations for creating anthropomorphic graffiti in the context of this major ceremonial centre? This talk provides an overview of this hitherto untapped corpus of representations of the human form in Meroitic period (informal) art. It introduces the range of anthropomorphic motifs and compositions, situates them in their location context, deliberates possible marking scenarios and discusses interpretations of authorship and motivation on the basis of comparative materials from Musawwarat and the wider Meroitic world.

The collapse of the Meroitic kingdom (c. 300 BCE – 350 CE): An insight from isotopic studies of the past climate and environment

Iwona Kozieradzka-Ogunmakin

Abstract

Previously investigated factors that led to the collapse of the Meroitic kingdom (c.300 BC–AD 350) in the Middle Nile Valley include socio-political and economic instability. Recent studies have been focused on potential contribution of the environmental factors investigated through the application of isotopic studies. Adding to the growing body of research concerning climatic and environmental changes as a contributing factor, this paper will present the results of stable carbon ($\delta^{13}\text{Cca}$) and oxygen ($\delta^{18}\text{Oca}$) isotope analysis of human and animal dental enamel in 79 samples from 13 archaeological sites located between the First Nile Cataract and the Blue Nile. The results show increasing $\delta^{18}\text{Oca}$ values towards the end of the Meroitic through to the Post-Meroitic period combined with less negative $\delta^{13}\text{Cca}$ values, suggestive of an environmental shift towards more arid conditions that likely contributed to the fall of the Meroitic kingdom.

Isis in Naga

Karla Kroeper

Abstract

The presence of Isis representations, be it as statues, statuettes, or reliefs in Naga are found in various forms transcending Egyptian iconography implicating cultural and cultic change. If the various find spots in different buildings also imply diverse functions of the buildings or parts of the buildings, this can be considered in a more detailed examination. If relief decoration schemes can even be used to identify the purpose of a building (temple, palace, presentation hall, or other building types) when other features are not definable, may be worth to examine here based on recent finds in Naga.

On some titles in the Lower Nubian Wayekiye-family

Josefine Kuckertz

Abstract

The eight generations of the Wayekiye-Family, living in the southern part of Lower Nubia reaching from Maharraqa up to the Second Cataract, span a period of c. 180 years or more. The earliest members of the family can be dated to the first decades of the 2nd century CE, the latest to the second half or even the end of the 4th century CE. Name giver is Wayekiye (A), an important man of the fourth generation; the same name was again given to his nephew of his wife's side (Wayekiye B, of the 5th generation). Several individuals of the family have left inscriptions in Egyptian Demotic as well as in cursive Meroitic. Textual information and titles have enabled scholars in reconstructing – or at least in producing a supposed reconstruction of – the political and social history of the stretch of land south of the Roman border, if not the whole Lower Nubian area from Assuan/Philae southwards.

The titles investigated here mainly belong to two spheres, to the realm of Ptolemaic-Roman temples and to the Meroitic administration. Some considerations are put forward how far the title-holders are involved in either sphere.

From Meroitic Winged Disc to Spinning Disc in Byzantium: Transformations of a Solar Motive in the Architectural Details

Magdalena Łaptaś, Alicja Chmielewska

Abstract

The aim of our paper will be to trace the development of the solar motive from Meroitic to Byzantine time. This subject matter is very extensive, therefore our starting point will be reusing of Meroitic lintels in the Faras Gallery. We will try to prove that Christians deliberately used lintels with images of the sun surrounded by cobras as the Christological and apotropaic symbol. The Sun as a life-giving symbol played an important role both in ancient as well in Christian time in the Mediterranean. The Christians connected it with Resurrection (among others).

In the second part of our speech, we will present the afterlife of the winged discs (spinning discs) in Byzantine architecture and art, especially in the sculptural programs, which were developed to present liturgical and astronomical symbolism. The bricks adorned with such symbolism were placed within the sacral architecture. Such masonry was placed on the exterior walls of the churches to announce the God's nature of the sacral architecture.

**Embodying the otherness:
What meroitic self-representation owes to the Egyptian
depiction of the Kushites**

Léa Legoux

Abstract

Numerous representations of characters associated with Kush appear on Egyptian reliefs since the Old Kingdom. While the Napatan-Meroitic kingdom emerges at the beginning of the first millennium BC, some elements of this iconography are picked up by the Kushite – formerly subjects of these representations – to create a new image, deeply linked to the identity of local populations. The uneven adoption of a Pharaonic visual rhetoric informs us about the potential ethnic components of the Meroitic conception of state, which presents clear differences with the Egyptian one at the same time. To what extent these borrowings show evidence of the persistence of a pictorial semiotics existing in Nubia since the New Kingdom and reinforced during the twenty-fifth dynasty? By analyzing the stylistic and symbolic aspects separately, one can emphasize the twisted purpose of some remaining depictions such as friezes of prisoners and the meaningful use of colors in the ornamentation of the sanctuaries.

Meroitic Paradigm and its Influence on the Later Pottery Production

Katarzyna de Lellis-Danys

Abstract

The term 'Meroitic paradigm' was introduced by W.Y. Adams and published in 2016 as 'Evolution and Revolution in Nubian pottery' in A. Łajtar, A. Obłuski, I. Zych (eds), *Aegyptus et Nubia Christiana. The Włodzimierz Godlewski Jubilee Volume on the Occasion of his 70th Birthday*. The set of identified vessels' traits diverted them from predecessors and successors. The paper presents a cognitive approach to the study by including psychological universals to understand cross-cultural relations and the impact given on later periods in Nubian history by the Meroitic pottery. It will include aspects like accessibility, functionality and existential (if applicable) persisting along the Middle Nile Valley through the centuries. The paper also aims to sketch a theoretical map of relations between the 'Meroitic paradigm' and 'Meroitic Renaissance' to outweigh the indigenous elements of the Nubian pottery production. On the other hand, the diachronic approach towards non-Nubian pottery imported to the Middle Nile Valley will demonstrate convergences between neighbouring traditions and possibly genuinely shared characteristics as explanations of some of the introduced novelties in the Nubian vessels.

Protection and management of archaeological sites in the eastern Sudan's desert: Deraheb as a case study

Magdy Mohammed Ahmed Abdalbakhit Hissin

Abstract

The purpose of this paper is to identify problems related to protection and management of wide chronological spectrum archaeological sites in the Eastern Sahara region of the Sudan. Due to the vast area application of remote sensing methods seems to be the more efficient way allowing recording archaeological sites and their contexts. Applied methods are based on acquiring data (satellite imagery, aerial photographs) and their interpretation. The process of interpretation of available very high-resolution satellite imagery may provide information about the site itself (precise location, forms of relics, area, sometimes even chronology) as well as threats (both natural and anthropogenic) in the vicinity of a site. Currently, mining is the most common threat for archaeological heritage. It is possible to distinguish at least two types of mining – individual/random and by well organised mining companies. Looting is another observed threat for many archaeological sites. Heavy rains, floods, and eolic erosion are natural hazards which can be currently observed due to climatic changes.

The Deraheb archaeological site was the first one for which the programme of protection was introduced. The area of the site was precisely defined and fenced. Satellite imagery allows monitoring (to some extent) effectiveness of the protection method.

Scarab Amulets in the Meroitic Period; Remarks on the Typology and Distribution

Mahmoud A. Emam

Abstract

The tradition of using scarabs within the funerary customs of Nubia displayed variability and provided intriguing insights into its connections with ancient Egypt. Throughout the Middle Kingdom period, scarabs were predominantly discovered in Nubia, notably within the cemeteries of Kerma and Upper Nubia. The presence of Egyptian scarabs within Kerma culture indicated commercial ties with ancient Egypt, confirming the significant interactions of Egyptian culture on Kerma and its surrounding regions, particularly during the Second Intermediate period.

Scarabs were extensively documented in the Napatan funerary context and were accessible to individuals of various socioeconomic backgrounds. Through qualitative and quantitative analyses, it is evident that scarabs/scaraboids were widely distributed during the Meroitic period, albeit with a decrease in numbers compared to the Napatan period. These scarabs were found in both royal tombs and non-royal cemeteries across various sites including Karanog, Nag Gamus, Abu Simbel, Gebel Adda, Qustul, Faras, Aksha, Abka, Amir Abdallah, Sai, Sedeinga, Kerma, Gabati, and Beg. W.

The present study aims to build upon previous research on scarab typologies in ancient Egypt and its neighboring regions to analyze 166 scarabs from the Meroitic period.

Tales of ladies and lions. Remarks on the roots of some elements of the Meroitic culture

Andrea Manzo

Abstract

The presentation will focus on two aspects of the Meroitic culture which are usually considered as highly distinctive. These are the crucial sociopolitical role of women, with a specific reference to royal ladies, which was already evident in Napatan times, and the centrality of the lion in the religious and ideological system, with a particular reference to Apedemak.

Recent investigations in Eastern Sudan suggest that similar traits were already evident in that area at least in the 3rd millennium BC. The findings suggesting this will be discussed in detail. Moreover, these elements will be also put in the broader context of the 3rd and 2nd millennia BC cultures of the Middle Nile, with a specific reference to the Kerma culture, and of the inland areas around the Nile valley, based on the archaeological data and Egyptian textual evidence. Moreover, reference to the apparently similar traits characterizing the early to mid-1st millennium BC Ethio-Eritrean highlands will be made.

The possibility that these traits, emerging in different cultural contexts from the Middle Nile valley to the Ethio-Eritrean highlands, though sparse and far in time and in space, may be somehow related will be discussed. This will provide insights into the possibility that aspects of the Meroitic culture may have some kind of links to much earlier cultures and may be rooted in a broad largely shared socio-cultural background.

**Meroitic settlements and their functional evolution during
the 2nd century AD:
What influences from the outside world?**

Marie Millet

Abstract

During the 2nd century AD, Meroitic urban settlements in the Nile valley, in the Meroe region, underwent a number of changes. The planned settlements developed outside the capital, at least from the 3rd century AD onwards, were modified, developing different types of crafts and adopting the new production techniques. This observation raises the question of influences and exchanges with the outside world. What were the requirements for transforming religious and administrative establishments such as temples and palaces into production sites? What role did the Nile play in these changes, and what routes were taken to the east and west? What kind of research is needed to better understand this transformation? To develop this argument, we will take as our starting point the examples of recent excavations and their results at Muweis and el-Hassa.

O Lord Save the Elephants: a revaluation of evidence from Upper Egypt

T. O. Moller

Abstract

In competition with the Seleukid kings, the Ptolemaic rulers of Egypt sought to include elephants in their army. They turned their attention to the region to the south of Egypt which had been a source of ivory since pharaonic times. In the first half of the third century BC, Ptolemy II and III sent hunting parties up the Nile river. This contact may be reflected in the art of Meroitic Kush, for example in the depictions of elephants at Musawwarates-Sufra which was developed around 220BC. It is generally understood however that by 220BC the Nile route had become redundant; instead elephants were transported by boat on the Red Sea. Despite this, an increasing body of evidence from Aswan may suggest that the Nile route remained active at least until the end of the third century. This paper will address the issue of chronology presented by interpreting an elephant-hunting inscription from Philae island, as well as two statues of elephants made in Aswan granite. It will use these as a starting point with which to revisit the dating of elephant-hunter graffiti discovered at Abu Simbel. In conjunction with the Kushite art, it seeks to show that direct contact between Egypt and Meroe may have been sustained using the Nile route at least until the end of the third century BC.

Resurrection Osiris: The Chapel of Osiris-Ptah neb-anhk

Essam Nagy

Abstract

The Chapel of Osiris-Ptah neb-anhk is located outside the Tenth Pylon of Amun-Re temple at Karnak along Sphinx Avenue to the Mut Complex. The chapel was constructed by the Twenty-fifth Dynasty kings Taharqa and Tanutamun.

This Egyptian archaeological mission and research project focuses on the documentation conservation and excavation of the Chapel of Osiris-Ptah Neb-anhk, and its surrounding area. The Egyptian archaeological mission managed to conduct large conservation, restoration, excavation, and reconstruction seasons to restore the chapel after the first restoration in 1921-1922. This paper will highlight the political and religious situation from the scenes of this chapel and shed light on the recent work done by the Egyptian Archaeological mission.

**Building materials for the temple in Western Dragab.
Preliminary results of the work of the Russian
archaeological mission**

Bashier Negood Hassan

Abstract

The communication will focus on building materials and construction techniques found in Western Dragab by the Russian archaeological mission directed by E. Kormysheva (seasons 2021-2022), in which I have been working since the beginning in 2019. The work was carried out in the Western Dragab about 300 m from the surrounded wall of the temple of Amun in the Royal city Meroe. The results of these excavations were not known to a wide audience up to now.

The temple buildings belong to different construction periods, where different types of material were used: sandstone, red bricks and mud bricks, bronze.

The communication will sequentially consider what kind of materials were used in each construction periods for the foundation of the structure, walls, during the subsequent restructuring of the temple, for the pavements of the sanctuary, the pronaos, the courtyard, for the main entrance. Attention will be paid also to the black stone for the broken altar of the temple, as well as other slabs from a similar material. The huge altar of Black Stone found in the temple during the excavation is similar to the altars found in the Meroitic period on the territory of the Royal city, an example of this kind is the altar in the Sun temple.

One of the materials used in the construction was bronze. A piece of bronze was found at the entrance of the temple on the northern side of the door. Its shape suggests that it is part of the pivot's fastening of the entrance door which was used to help facilitate the process of opening and closing the door. This is evidently a unique discovery for this area.

If the temple's sanctuary at Abu Erteila was paved with the black stone, then in the same position at Western Dragab was used sandstone. For the similar construction of door inside the temple in Abu Erteila iron was used, which traces were found during the excavations.

Comparison of the obtained results during the excavations at West Dragab with those found on the territory of Abu Erteila (from 2022 Russian archaeological mission) makes it possible to identify similarities and differences in the use of building material in both sites, and put the question of the reasons of possible differences within a not long chronological gap.

Towards making Sudan National Museum more accessible

Nosiba Mahgoub

Abstract

The Sudan National Museum, the main museum of the Sudan, situated in Khartoum near the confluence of the two Niles, opened in 1971. Originally, an archaeological museum housing more than 2.500 artefacts and monuments excavated from Sudanese home land, now the museum hosts one of the finest collections of antiquities in the world, it's collections are growing continuously as the result of an ever-expanding projects of archaeological fieldwork and new discoveries made by Sudanese and international scholars.

The main objective of the museum is to protect, conserve and display Sudan's rich cultural heritage for the benefit of both the Sudanese and the international community, and it aims to help visitors to understand the development of the Sudanese history. Its galleries display artefacts that range in date from the Prehistoric era through to the Islamic period.

Unfortunately the museum lacks some additional definition and subsidiary elements, In order to make the museum accessible as possible, or to be a museum for all human being categories, these elements are very essential for visiting the museum by the handicapped people, the museum in its entrances needs a ramps to enable the wheeled visitors to enter the museum smoothly.

For the blind people, the museum managers should have to provide the museum with Braille system of raised dots that can be read with the fingers by people who are blind or who have low vision. And also; in order to make their traffic through the galleries smooth and safely; a lightsome walking route should be clear as possible for this category, they should be advised to use the already existing guidelines and for example a white stick as priority for blind person to be noticeable.

For deaf and hard of hearing people, the museum should provide hearing-related components that are visually accessible and touched, while the audio phones in the museum provide an auditory version of written text, the presence of these elements make the deaf and hard of hearing visitors enjoy their visit to the museum, and do not missing any part of their visit to the museum.

El-Tuweina: Evolution and function of a regional centre in the Bayuda

Ulrike Nowotnick, Saskia Buechner-Matthews, Angelika Lohwasser

Abstract

The monumental site of El-Tuweina, located in the Bayuda more than 100 km away from the urban centres of the Meroitic state, raises a number of questions on its origin and function. Indeed, its nature as a residence, when compared to sites in the Nile valley, remains a matter of debate: home for a local elite, waystation for long-distance travellers and merchants, a hub for pastoralists, or a regional representation of the Kushite state?

Constructed around the 3rd century CE and occupied for ca. 200-300 years, the site underwent several phases of construction and remodelling. Its well-stratified pottery assemblage— including cooking pots, storage vessels, and table wares —provide evidence for various activities carried out across the site and the function of specific rooms and areas. By presenting the ceramics from this habitation site, we prioritise its inhabitants in the interpretation of the site and offer perspectives as to its regional significance and cultural connections.

Cooking in Meroe: Food traditions and cooking technologies in interregional perspective

Ulrike Nowotnick, Steven Matthews

Abstract

The Connecting Foodways project (DAI, Berlin) investigates the culinary traditions of sub-Saharan Northern Africa, exploring cultural interaction and transmission in technical characteristics of domestic food practices.

This includes an important case study on food technologies from a number of Early Iron Age settlements across Sudan. Here we present an analysis of cooking pots and their technical aspects from sites in the heartland of the Meroitic state (e.g. Hamadab, Muweis), which we compare with contemporary cooking pots from liminal and hinterland locations, including the Bayuda (e.g. El Tuweina), central Darfur, and Kordofan (e.g. Zankor). This includes comparison of food residues recovered from these cooking pots, via analysis of plant and animal lipids using ORA (conducted in collaboration with Dr. Julie Dunne, University of Bristol).

On this basis, we explore regional similarities and differences in everyday culinary traditions in Sudan, how these may relate to cultural transmission through household-level interaction between the Middle Nile valley and other areas, and their contribution to wider discussions of the cultural homogeneity of the Kushite state.

A Glimpse of the Building History prior to the s. c. Royal Baths at Meroë

Hans-Ulrich Onasch, Simone Wolf

Abstract

Topic will be the building history at the site of the s. c. Royal Baths at Meroë from the earliest structures at this part of the Royal City just west of the royal palaces to the building of the Royal Baths in Meroitic times. Aim is to summarize the evaluation of almost 20 years of excavations in the area of the Royal Baths. Special attention will be paid to the massive sandstone wall of the Royal City, its construction, different building-phases, destructions, and repairs. Detailed mention will be made of the two mud-brick precursors of the sandstone city wall, the drainage system for surface water, the remains of an early temple in the debris, a small number of graves near the city wall, and the historical implications for the Napatan and early Meroitic period at Meroë.

Cultic equipment from the Isis Temple at Wad Ben Naga (WBN 300)

Pavel Onderka, Jiří Honzl

Abstract

Since 2018, the Archaeological Expedition to Wad Ben Naga (National Museum, Prague) has focused on the exploration of the so-called Isis Temple at Wad Ben Naga (WBN 300). The excavations revealed largely intact remains of a multi-roomed temple dated based on epigraphic evidence to the reign of Natakamani and Amanitore (mid-first century CE) and inspired by the architecture of the Great Temple of Isis at the Island of Philae. The temple seems to have been dedicated to the worship of a Deified Meroitic Queen, as well as the triad of Philae.

The current excavations have shed new light on Meroitic sacral architecture, the conceptual design of the decorative program, as well as the linguistic milieu in which the texts of the temple were compiled and composed.

The exploration of the ruins produced numerous important finds of portable cultic equipment attesting the biography of the temple since its formal establishment through the royal foundation until its abandonment and collapse some four centuries later. The finds also illustrate actual cultic practices performed in individual rooms at various stages of the structure's development. In overall, the finds have potential to contribute significantly to the discussion on penetration of popular (and indigenous) religion into official cultic contexts.

Meroitic Burial Practices in the Third Nile Cataract Region of Northern Sudan

Osman Khaleel, Mohamed Bashir

Abstract

This proposed study focuses on the investigation of the funerary landscapes of the Meroitic town of Kedurma: Third Nile Cataract Region in Northern Sudan in order to better understand the phenomena of cultural influence and cultural continuity or change in Meroitic funerary behaviour and death customs. Nevertheless, the spatial contexts of the "places of the dead" in the study area have not yet been fully explored. This study aims to 1). Uncover new details (catalogue) about the characteristics of Meroitic burial practices, and 2). To understand the distribution patterns of funerary archaeology. In order to place the funerary archaeology of the study area within the broader context of the current archaeological map of Sudan, a holistic approach is taken: Archival and literary research, photographic sources, excavations and typology for comparisons between the synchronic sites. Therefore, this study forms the backbone of the forthcoming DNA results, which together can make an important contribution to Meroitic knowledge.

Reality or Symbolism? Reevaluating the Role of Elephants in Meroitic Culture

Tobias B. Paul

Abstract

In specialist literature, the conjecture that Meroitic depictions show war elephants has been presented as fact and was therefore widely adopted outside Sudan archaeology. However, the extensive contemporary accounts of Kushite warfare do not mention elephants; they only appear in anachronistic sources that confuse Meroites with Aksumites. After the early construction phases of Musawwarat es-Sufra and Naga, elephants become peripheral in Meroitic art compared to Egyptian art of the Greco-Roman period. Many depictions of elephants labeled as Meroitic originate from territories under Greek or Roman control and are attributed to Meroitic culture based on the circular reasoning that elephants were typical of Meroe. Therefore, they should not be used as evidence for Kushite elephant husbandry. The depiction of an elephant rider in Musawwarat's Lion Temple, part of a series of mounted deities, should not be regarded as a representation of real-world practices given its religious context. The same applies to the relief scene of elephants with bound enemies, which echoes Egypto-Kushite artistic tropes. Such symbolically charged images should not be interpreted literally but must be understood within their visual cultural context as symbols of divine and royal power, likely partly inspired by Hellenistic iconography.

Naga's sacred buildings

Christian Perzlmeier

Abstract

The sacred architecture with its multiple combinations of buildings in Naga can provide information about cult processes and necessary religious building units. In this context, it must be considered to what extent Naga can be spoken of as a city. Local Meroitic deities such as Apedemak and Sebiemeker closely associated with special buildings show a clear indigenous local development away from Egypt.

Heritage-Making: A Nubian Woman's Guide

Rifal Imam

Abstract

Can archives and artifacts, historically a Western tool and lens of oppression, function as means of freedom? Sally's Club, a multi-modal novella, is a joint initiative between LitCW and SRPP, exploring the politics of memory instigated by Western institutions' effects on heritage-making. Under British occupation, documentation was emphasized and forcefully institutionalized. Consequences still exist today as Western influence structures the "post-colonial" world. Through a multi-month autoethnography study, I collect, document, and immerse myself in various recognized memory sites (i.e. museums, books, etc) to and juxtapose them with my own experiences and heard stories of Nubia and Sudan. The literary collage, organized as an imagined museum, unfolds in four distinct yet simultaneous paths: 1. Exploring the process of research through the lens of postcolonialism and orientalism questioning the status quo of research, 2. Bringing Sudan and Nubia to academia in distinction from Egypt and Colonial Powers (e.g., the U.K.). 3. Exploring the process of identity-making as a simultaneously individual and communal project, further acknowledging that as a valid scholarly research venture, 4. Contribution to the conception of autoethnography as an effective and valuable anti-colonial methodology. The politics of memory-making, how communal Nubian and Sudanese memory is made and documented, I've found causes a questioning of my own identity and place within the community and history of Nubia and Sudan. Moreover, my inherent Western gaze, born of my Western education, affects and shapes how I interact with such spaces and further causes a questioning of identity.

Revisiting the Date of Queen Shanakdakhete

Claude Rilly

Abstract

The date traditionally ascribed to Queen Shanakdakhete's reign is controversial. It is based on two elements: her cartouche in Meroitic hieroglyphs (REM 0039) in temple Naga 500 and her assimilation with the queen buried in pyramid Beg. N. 11. Hintze, who, on the basis of iconographic parallels, first suggested that Shanakdakhete was the queen of Beg. N. 11, placed her around 180-170 BC (Hintze 1959: 33, 39). He followed Dunham, who placed the reign of the ruler of Beg. N. 11 between 177 and 155 BC, but considered her to be Queen Nahirqo (Dunham 1957: 72f). Again on the basis of Beg. N. 11, Wenig suggested 170-150 BC (Wenig 1978: 17) and Shinnie 170-160 BC (Shinnie 1996: 104). More cautiously, Török proposed the end of the second century BC (FHNII: 661), and made this queen the direct predecessor of king Taneyidamani. Accordingly, all these scholars considered the queen's cartouche in Naga 200 to be the earliest Meroitic inscription (cf. FHN III: 762).

Although it is more difficult to date inscriptions in Meroitic hieroglyphs on palaeographical bases than inscriptions in cursive script, it should be noted that the forms of the hieroglyphic signs in REM 0039 do not differ significantly from those of the texts of Queen Amanishakheto, at the turn of the millennium. On the other hand, they are clearly more recent than the hieroglyphs attested in the cartouche of King Taneyidamani on his great stele from Jebel Barkal (REM 1044), not to mention the early cartouche of this ruler on a copper alloy cylinder from the same site (REM 1140), where the hieroglyphs are still experimental. It is obviously during his reign that this second script was invented. This king, buried in Beg. N. 12, is beyond any doubt the successor to the queen of Beg. N. 11. I therefore propose to reattribute the latter pyramid to Queen

Nahirqo and suggest a date for Shanakdakhete close to the reign of Amanishakheto. The possibility that Shanakdakhete (whose name means “Mut gave birth to her”) and Amanishakheto (meaning “Amun conceived her”) are one and the same person cannot even be ruled out, given the shifting nature of Meroitic anthroponomy (Rilly et al. 2021: 229-230, 263; contra: Kuckertz 2021: 311). It is to be hoped that future excavations of Temple 500 by the Munich team will clarify these hypotheses.

The *DEHENET* Concept

Vincent Rondot

Abstract

As a tribute to László Török (*Across the Mediterranean – Along the Nile*, 2018, vol. 1, 391-410) Luc Gabolde and I presented the five hieroglyphic documents that tell us about the dhnw.t of Kush, i. e. the clift of mountains behind which Amun hides, being protected by the cobra uræus, as dramatically illustrated by the sacred landscape of Djebel Barkal. From the New Kingdom pharaonic temples to the relief of Shorkaror at Gebel Qeili, we witness the permanence of the dehenet concept, in Kushite realm as well as in Pharaonic one. A reexamination of Abu Simbel features adds more evidence demonstrating the longevity of the concept as well as the roleplayed by such a temple in the process of the acculturation phenomenon experienced by both nations.

What can small finds tell us about the ancient lifeways? A glance from the Meroitic Kedurma, Nile third cataract region

Sara Mamon

Abstract

This article focuses on a considerable number of small finds recorded in the three field seasons of the University of Khartoum at Kedurma, conducted between 2018-2023. Various types of materials were discovered in both the settlement and the cemetery, including pottery, wood, ivory, bone, metal, leather and fabrics.

The study is based on full documentation, including the naming of the find, the identification of its material, its measurements and the location of the find. The finds were documented by photographs in their original locations in the field, drawings and some sketches to provide further details.

The detailed study of the materials gave us a good indication on several topics, including:

- Status; depending on the location in the grave within the deceased person, his/her status in the community - ordinary person, high rank or class?
- Gender; in relation to the type of material and likely use
- Activities; such activities can be traced by the origin of the material, the type of decoration and the final processing, such as production and exchange. This could indicate the social interaction and level of craftsmanship in the ancient society that inhabited the site.

Reevaluation of Meroitic pottery in the Kyoto University Museum

Naoyo Sekihiro, Tomo Ishimura

In this presentation we introduce the collection of "Painted Pottery from Egyptian Sudan" of the Egyptian Antiquities Collection in the Kyoto University Museum in Japan and discuss its significance today. These pottery sherds were donated to Professor Kosaku Hamada, who founded first Archaeological Department in Japan. They belong to the Meroitic period, and parts of the materials were reported in the collection's catalogue of the museum in 2016. Sekihiro, one of our presenters, obtained formal permission from the museum and conducted material survey including measuring and drawing in 2017 and 2018. We published the research result at the 60th Annual Conference of the Society for Near Eastern Studies, the 14th International Society for Nubian Studies and the Academic Day at Kyoto University, and in the Newsletter of Kyoto University Museum. Further research on the related materials and background of the collection were postponed because of Covid-19. In addition, recent revolt, coup, and armed conflict have radically changed social circumstances in Sudan. Under such circumstances, we discuss the social and historical significance of archaeological materials from Sudan, which is currently under conflict, in the museum of Japan.

Symbolism in the Use Faience as Architectural Elements in Kush

Shadia Abdrabo

Abstract

Religious beliefs had a clear influence on various aspects of life in the Kushite civilization in general but particularly during the Napatan and Meroitic periods.

These beliefs had a mate dimension, commonly expressing objects made of faience. this material was used extensively in Kush since at least the beginning of the Kerma civilization period (c. 3500 BC) and was in use for a long time. It was applied extensively to decorate temples and pyramids walls particularly during the Napatan and Meroitic periods. In this context faience is not simply a material. It is linked to a rich symbolism that links the world of Living and the dead.

This paper will focus on this rich symbolism, paying particular attention to its religious and spiritual significance.

Kushite culture expressed it is complex beliefs in thought in various ways, including via the use of faience.

Inter-regional trade of the rising Napatan state: long-term Nubian monopoly on Near Eastern ivory supplies viewed from the Southern Levant

Harel Shochat and Ayelet Gilboa

Abstract

This paper evaluates Nubia's inter-regional exchange spheres and trade mechanisms based on an empirical study of prestige commodities consumption in the Late Bronze and Iron Ages (ca. 1550–600 BCE) Southern Levant. Extensive excavations have yielded hundreds of ivory artifacts dating from the mid-2nd to the mid-1st millennium BCE. The Levantine Ivory Research Project (LIRA) targeted the raw material in order to investigate ivory exchange networks by applying analytical methods — microscopy, stable isotopes mass spectroscopy, and proteomics — as geospatial tracers of the sources of the raw material.

Without disregarding Pharaonic Egypt's pivotal role as an agent of ivory artistry in the ancient Near East, this study successfully traces a continuous millennium-long ivory supply chain network that exclusively originated in sub-Saharan landscapes of East African woodlands. A diachronic perspective allows us to assess sub-Saharan trade and Nubia's commercial ties with the Southern Levant territorial kingdoms after both regions were set free of Egyptian imperial rule. We suggest the ivory exchange at its nascent stage was a private, non-institutional endeavor before it became a growth stock of the Napatan state economy.

**A Decorated Box and Contents from Tombos:
Internationalism, Identity, and Political Economy during
the Kushite Dynasty**

Stuart Tyson Smith

Abstract

The nearly intact burial of a soldier at Tombos from the Kushite Dynasty included an elaborately decorated box containing a variety of cosmetic equipment, including bronze razors and iron tweezers and applicators. The box itself is a remarkable work of art and artisan, with recent conservation work revealing a polychrome openwork design featuring different elements engaging with, but not imitating, motifs from the Iron Age International Style. A set of three extraordinary faience vessels may reflect Kushite influence on the artistic production of luxuries across the Mediterranean world during the period as well as innovation and a local adaptation of different elements. Taken together with other objects from the tomb, this extraordinary box and its contents speak to the owner's relationship to entangled international spheres of practice, his privileged position within Kushite society through access to luxuries, his personal tastes balancing local and cosmopolitan, and complex signaling surrounding an embodied, gendered identity of power and beauty.

Time for Change

Mahmoud el Tayeb

Abstract

It is high time for some reflections of the Nubian nomenclature. The Terms which had been founded by pioneer archaeologists such as Reisner, Garstang and Emery at about one century ago, such as A-Group, C-Group, Ballana Culture, Kerma Culture, X-Group and Post-Meroe should be discussed under the light of the recent progress of the scientific researches and studies.

Among the other topics for discussion is the term Kerma Culture which in fact it stand as place name rather than culture identity.

The coming of the Noba tribes to the Nile Valley. Was it invasion or infiltration? Does the archaeological evidence is in favour of the former or the latter version? Then Axumite King Ezana, his inscription and invasion, whereabouts the exact scene of the events? Then, is there any Noba of Axumite cultural impact in the Nile valley?

Worth discussion also is the Debatable end of Meroe and the term Post-Meroe.

Meroitic Pottery from the Burial Context of Kedurma, Region of the Nile Third Cataract; a Typological and Contextual Study

Yassir Ali Mohamed Tay Allah

Abstract

Pottery is one of the most reliable artefacts for reconstructing the past, as it provides important clues for understanding society and cultural change. This study is a multidimensional investigation of the technology of Meroitic (c. 500 BC - 350 AD) pottery production in the 3rd Nile Cataract region of northern Sudan. However, the study of pottery is rather unpopular in the region under investigation. Despite its crucial importance to the field of Meroitic archaeology. Its absence has a detrimental effect on all related studies, which is clearly evident in recent works on the region.

This paper examines the Meroitic pottery collected from the burial context at Kedurma during the two excavation seasons of 2021 and 2023. There, 50 burials were excavated, yielding a considerable amount of different pottery in terms of type and decoration. The method used to classify and chronology the pottery is based on a comparative study and statistical analysis and takes into account the importance of objectivity and recent data, which seem to be lacking in previous studies. This approach provides a new framework for Meroitic pottery. The analysis also addresses other important topics for pottery studies, including classification, typological and absolute dating. These topics are discussed in order to produce reliable studies in the future by providing useful approaches to ceramic chronology in the region. Most importantly, this paper aims to highlight the importance of ceramic classification and chronology and to encourage continued review of these studies.

Meroitic Kushite State and Society Between Late Antiquity and Early Middle Ages, from Kushites to Nubians

Pieter Tesch

Abstract

My proposal is for a new look at Meroitic Kush around the 4th, 5th and 6th centuries AD/CE including its external relations.

It follows up from my paper to the International Nubian Studies Conference in Warsaw in 2022, Post Meroitic or Early Nobadia, Makuria & Alwa? The transition from Late Antiquity to Early Middle Ages 300-600AD/CE'.

That paper dealt with questions such as continuity, changes, ethnic, cultural and language wise with the main focus on those ethnic groups that were identified as Nilo-Saharan speaking Noubai, Noba(des)etc, that populated Lower and Upper Nubia and beyond associated with the Nubian kingdoms of Nobadia, Makuria and Alwa. While I did refer to the south, the Meroitic heartland, the emergence of Alwa as a successor state and the rise of Axum as an imperial rival of Meroe, I felt it needed more research it is own right.

After all the south is ecological, economically and culturally different from the southern Saharan north, belonging the Sahel belt and dry Savanah area further to south and close enough to Axum'sborderlands of modern Eritrea and Ethiopia.

The changes in the Meroitic south in the shadow of Axum were as major and important as they in the north, but not always fully understood, I believe.

In Warsaw there was a round table discussion on the ethnic and cultural composition of Meroitic Kush, coming down south or up north or bothwhich remained unsolved, but the likelihood is was probably more multi ethnic than we know at the moment. And the Middle Nile region has always been diverse.

But it is not only about the events of Axumite attack by Negus Ezana but on Meroe around 350AD/CE but understand the riseof the regional power of Axum at the expense of Meroe during this period of transition involving the great powers of the time East Roman Empire and Iran/Persia as well as Axumites/Abyssinians bur also peoples along the Middle Nile, Noba, Blemmyes etc.

Sculpting statues in Meroe

Thanaa Mousa

Art in Meroe remained largely unknown, and there was no clear identification of the cultural developments that occurred in that region,,,. The transfer of the royal cemetery from Napata to Meroe coincided with the occurrence of artistic and cultural developments at the beginning of the Meroitic era, although Meroitic art was initially influenced by Egyptian art. However, it had a special taste, and the process of change began from the late third century BC until the fourth century AD, and the local tendency became more clear.

The Kingdom of Meroe contained many statues, including royal statues, whether of kings or queens, statues of deities and statues of individuals, as well as funerary statues and statues of minor arts. Meroe was one of the sites that contained the most royal statues of various styles and subjects. Among the human statues that were found in Meroe near the Roman bath, which are statues of men and women and were distinguished as being naked statues, a characteristic of Greek sculpture, dating back to the second and third centuries AD, and statues of the musical band such as the statue of the guitarist and the oboe player. Next to the human statues, the Meroites carved statues of kneeling rams to surround the road that connects to the temples of Amun in Meroe and Naqaa. The statues of lions were also carved from iron sandstone to guard the temples, in addition to the statues of frogs, which were found in Meroe and Naqaa, as well as the statues made of metal materials such as bronze and gold, which are royal statues. The shield rings that we see for the first time in Meroe are mostly made of gold.

The sculptures also included the funerary statues, which are represented by the Meroitic "Alba" statues of a character that

was not known before in Egypt, such as the “Alba” statues of a man or a woman. The statues were either men or women with full clothes and sometimes naked. Where the importance is the human faces carved from sandstone, in which there are horizontal lines in the forehead of the head, which are known as shlokh, an ancient Sudanese custom that was carried out for girls according to the prevailing social standards, which are wounds drawn in the cheeks on both sides of the face, longitudinal or transverse.

The late Meroitic period witnessed methods of sculpture that were not known before and were not the result of external influences, including the columns of the Lion Temple in Musawwarat al-Safra, where stone columns were built on the statues of lions and elephants, and in the same way columns were found in Barkal and Wadi Baanaqa.

Meroitic in the history of writing systems

Alex de Voogt

Abstract

The Meroitic script has both contributed to and gleaned insight from a broader understanding of the history of writing systems that transcends Sudan and Nubia. Three debates stand out in which Meroitic illustrates, sometimes uniquely so, how and why writing systems develop.

First, the region of Sudan from Kerma to Ottoman times has shown that state formation and script development are largely unconnected. Previous suggestions that primary state formation required script have been contradicted and Kerma and Meroe have shown in detail how such a connection cannot be supported.

Second, Meroitic shows how the transmission of writing needs to distinguish between the form of the signs, the value of the signs and the system of writing. Meroitic uniquely shows that an alpha-syllabic system may develop even though the shape of the signs were taken from a script that functions differently.

Finally, Meroitic provides an important example of script variation as opposed to standardization. Both regional and diachronic variation of spelling conventions in Meroitic make a useful comparison with Greek and Demotic from the same time period.

This paper highlights these three aspects of Meroitic to help understand how and why Meroitic writing developed and to what extent Meroitic is unique or unusual in its historical development.

Diachronic Tendencies in the Design and Use of Kushite Sealing Devices

Vlastimil Vrtal

Abstract

The archaeological research in the Middle Nile region has to date brought to light a limited, but very heterogeneous spectrum of presumed sealing devices and seal impressions of Napatan, Meroitic, and post-Meroitic date. While in most cases, the distinction between the former's use for private and official purposes cannot be distinguished, a few types can be clearly identified as institutional seals, thus alluding to the existence of a complex, multi-tier system of administrative operations involving both personal and abstract subjects. Its contours are obscured, unfortunately, by a significant scarcity of complementary, mainly written evidence. Furthermore, archaeological data allude to the overlapping use of predominant seal types in administrative operations as well as in magico-religious sphere, reflecting common invocation of the apotropaic power of seal images, while other functions such as markers of social status can also be presumed, thus hindering the proper understanding of this system. The present contribution aims to ascertain whether some diachronic changes in the design of the sealing devices, such as substitution of scaraboid seals for signet rings under the influence of the Hellenistic tradition or transformation of the character of institutional seals, were reflected also in the socio-economic context of their production, ownership, and use, and in identities assumed by their users.

Napatan period decorated blocks in Old Dongola: Context, meaning and interpretation of the material

Dawid F. Wieczorek

Abstract

The excavations of the Funj period settlement (16th-18th c. A.D.) within the fifth century citadel of Makurian Tungul (modern Old Dongola), conducted by the UMMA Project (ERC Starting Grant) an expedition of the Polish Centre of Mediterranean Archaeology, University of Warsaw, headed by Dr. Artur Obluski, in 2023 revealed several well-preserved white sandstone decorated blocks, so far completely unknown and unexpected on the site. These blocks, which include a range of concerns, may be dated to the seventh century B.C. They are decorated with sunk relief depicting several religious scenes containing iconographic representations, hieroglyphic texts, and one meroitic inscription. This paper will focus mainly on the general presentation of the newly uncovered material, discuss the context of its discovery, meaning and preliminary interpretation. Moreover, the material in question will be also discussed alongside the assemblage of epigraphic objects of the same date previously identified on the site.

Towards a New Interpretation of Napata City

**Pawel Wolf, Geoff Emberling, Tim Skuldbøl, Burkart
Ullrich, Rudolf Kniess, Marlene Tielmann, and Kate Rose**

Abstract

The excavations of George Reisner and fieldwork since the 1980s in the temple district of Napata, the political and sacral center of the early Kushite kingdom in front of Jebel Barkal, have focused on single prominent Napatan and Meroitic building remains on either side of the central Amun Temple. Apart from magnetometric surveys, the wide and spacious areas between these buildings have never been subjected to more comprehensive archaeological studies. Therefore, our image of Napata is far from being complete. It consists of individual temples, shrines, and palatial buildings in a vast 'open topography' that lacks infrastructural elements of a nucleated town such as streets, crossroads, and plazas as well as their relative stratigraphy.

Ground penetrating radar conducted since 2020 by Eastern Atlas (Berlin) under the direction of Geoff Emberling and Tim Skuldbøl (University of Michigan) over an area of approximately 3 hectares south of the Amun Temple revealed unknown structural elements of the town's urban core and show that it extended further south than previously assumed. Test excavations alongside palace B1200 brought to light in February 2023 a partially 2.5 m deep stratigraphy of 4-5 construction horizons, providing a fundamental key to the interpretation of the geophysical evidence.

The new findings will potentially draw a new image of the town's layout: already in Napatan times, temples, shrines and palaces were just the nowadays well-known focal points of an extremely densely built urban layout with wider streets and

side alleys that dynamically changed over time—reminiscent of the urban structures we know from ‘Meroe City’.

**Desert Forts in El Ga'ab Depression, Western Dongola
Reach:
With Kushitic Evidence at State Fringes**

Yahia Fadl Tahir

El Ga'ab Depression is located in the desert west to Dongola Reach, containing a series of oases. Archeological works revealed presence of five sandstone forts. The reported forts are El Keweib (Wadi El- Kewieb), El Hufra (Ga'ab El Thowani), El Bab (Ga'ab El Bab) and El-Kab forts (Ga'ab Um Hilal). All forts are sandstone-built enclosures with towers, no rooms and a single gate.

Among these them, El Keweib locates far south-west in heart of the desert and recovered Napatan pottery sherds, while others prohibit at least Chastain uses. According to their design and geographical distribution, they are related to each other and to Gala Abu Ahmed fort, which situates to west Nile bending at Debba Town. They share similarity in shape with forts of Shofien (Old Egyptian Kingdom?) and Jawgol on the western banks of the Nile third Cataract Region.

It seems that the main functions for forts are security and trade during Napata to Christen periods.

**Late 1 century BCE-1 century CE royal burials in the
Northern Royal Cemetery and Jebel Barkal and Meroitic
activities in the Temple of Isis, Philae**

Janice Yellin

Abstract

This paper focuses on issues of continuity and change in the North Cemetery and Jebel Barkal pyramid chapels during the late first century BCE - first century CE. Meroitic religious and political activities in the Temple of Isis at Philae, the impact and importance of which are reflected in Augustus's and Tiberius's building and/or decorative programmes in Nubia and even at Karnak, are included in this inquiry. The implications of the similarities and the significant differences in the design, ritual depictions, as well as royal and religious iconography found in the royal chapels of these two cemeteries are explored here. In addition, new data concerning the date, relative sequence and identification of the pyramids' owners is discussed in light of this three-pronged investigation with particular attention being given to the dating and attribution of BEG N 2, which has interesting, anomalous features.

From clothing to body wrappings. Textile gestures in Meroitic burial rites

Elsa Yvanez

Abstract

Since the beginning of archaeological explorations in Sudan and Nubia, excavations of Meroitic and Postmeroitic graves have produced a large number of preserved textiles. These can be found either in the filling of disturbed inhumations or still in situ on human remains. In this case, textiles are usually not dressing the body of the dead but wrapping it. Detailed analyses show that the fabrics chosen for this purpose were not made specifically for funerary use – as shrouds – but were in fact reused garments. Throughout the preparation and installation of the deceased in the grave, the burial rites included a set of different gestures that transformed the nature of the textiles – from clothing to body wrappings – as well as the nature of the body itself – from a dressed individual to a wrapped and hidden deceased. This presentation will explore this concomitant evolution, merging theoretical considerations and material studies with funerary and textile archaeology. While offering a general framework for the study of textiles in funerary contexts, the presentation will also focus on the case study* of a single inhumation found well preserved in cemetery 8-B-5.A, on Sai Island. Tapping into the potentials of textile analyses and photogrammetry, we will reconstruct the different textile gestures that accompanied the funeral of this individual. By looking into textiles, a somewhat more confidential material, we hope to shed a new light on burial rites.

*This project has received the support of the Danish Institute in Damascus and the full study was conducted as part of the ERC Fashioning Sudan (funded by the European Union ERC 101039416). Views and opinions expressed are however those of the author only and do not necessarily reflect those of the European Union or the European Research Council. Neither the European Union nor the granting authority can be held responsible for them.

The lord of Miseeda. Understanding the place from the perspective of a man engraved in a rock

Dobrochna Zielińska, Paweł L. Polkowski

Abstract

On a boulder in the rocky landscape of the III cataract region, in the vicinity of the modern village of Miseeda, an impressive image of a man has been engraved. Its style and iconography indicate the Kushite period as the date of its creation, while the monumentality can be only compared with the renowned portrait of King Sherqarer in Gebel Qeilli. The fact that this image has been respected long after the existence of the Meroitic kingdom is one more argument for its significance. The paper will try to reveal the reason and function of placing such a representation in this very place. Both the earlier tradition of executing royal inscriptions in the nearby sites like Nauri and Tombos tradition of rock galleries like Wadi Sabu will be analysed. The character and rank of the depicted person will be studied in comparison with the available representations from the Kushite period.

Archaeology of Appearance Workshop

Abstract

The excavation and study of Meroitic sites and documents provide rich evidence of body ornamental practices performed at all levels of society. Specific garments, personal ornamentation, and other body industries were highly meaningful tools of sensory communication, their conscious selection and assemblage expressing identities and sense of personhood. This workshop aims at providing a common platform to formulate the archaeology of appearance in the Meroitic world beyond the sole material characteristics of the artefacts. These could include (but are not restricted to) garments made of animal skin and/or textiles, hair-dos and headwear, footwear, personal accessories, jewelry, skin modifications (tattoos, scarification, make-up), etc., through the lens of both visual and/or material evidence. Reassessing the social importance of little-discussed material categories, we wish to highlight the diverse strategies at play in body perception and modification, as well as dress ornamentation.