

*Nubian Letters*

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Jacke Phillips, the Royal Ontario Museum, Toronto

NUBIA AT THE ROYAL ONTARIO MUSEUM, TORONTO

The Aswan Dam, constructed during the 1960s at the First Cataract to provide a control over the annual Nile flood, produced benefits very few of its proponents probably had even considered. Due to the consequent flooding of much of the riverbank south of the dam following its completion, UNESCO sponsored and coordinated a massive international campaign to 'Save the Monuments of Nubia,' an area now encompassing southern Egypt and northern Sudan. The feat of raising the Abu Simbel temple above the flood waters was its most highly publicized and best remembered achievement. A similarly massive campaign of survey and excavation was also mounted by UNESCO, beginning in 1959 and continuing non-stop for a decade, co-ordinating the work of numerous academic and other institutions around the world. The project introduced a great number of scholars (who otherwise would not have considered working here) to a surprisingly diverse but nonetheless cohesive series of cultures little studied before. The overwhelming mass of information and material resulting from this intense work is still being studied and continues to be published.

Although many returned to their own specialization(s), chiefly Egyptology, the finds granted these institutions by the Egyptian and Sudanese governments continued to attract some of those responsible for the publication of their UNESCO work and, more importantly, a number of their students. Their interest, and physical accessibility to the finds, provided the impetus for a new discipline of 'Nubiology' where, essentially for the first time, the material was studied for its own sake rather than



as a provincial backwater of Egyptian culture, or as a footnote to it.

Public interest waned with the completion of the dam and lack of continued exposure to the culture. Exhibition rooms devoted entirely to Nubia have long been in the Egyptian Museum in Cairo and the Sudan National Museum in Khartoum, where they would be expected. The Muzeum Narodowe in Warsaw also has had permanent Nubian galleries since 1972, chiefly displaying the spectacular frescos from Faras cathedral excavated by the Poles in the 1960s. Elsewhere, a varying number of exhibit cases in the Egyptian rooms of the University Museum in Philadelphia, the Ashmolean Museum in Oxford, Boston's Museum of Fine Arts and the Royal Ontario Museum in Toronto, among others, have displayed Nubian artefacts, chiefly because the museum had sponsored excavations or otherwise acquired enough objects and curatorial interest to warrant it. Temporary exhibitions also were held, including the memorable 1978 Brooklyn Museum 'Africa in Antiquity' exhibition, [1] a smaller show of Boston artefacts in Brockton, Mass. in 1981-1984 [2] and the current (1992) exhibition at the Oriental Institute Museum in Chicago. Much of this 'sudden' recent public accessibility to the Nubian cultures is the direct result of the UNESCO campaign and two decades of subsequent intense study by its veterans and their students. Recently, more concrete developments have occurred. Just last July, the British Museum opened its new Nubian gallery, and also in 1991 the Ashmolean completely reorganized its Nubian material on display. [3] Two new permanent galleries also opened in 1992 in North America.

[1] The Brooklyn Museum, Africa in Antiquity: The Arts of Ancient Nubia and the Sudan (Brooklyn 1978).

[2] Timothy Kendall and Susan K. Doll, Kush: Lost Kingdom of the Nile (Brockton 1981).

[3] See John Taylor in Minerva (November-December 1991), 28-30 and Robert G. Morkot in Minerva (January-February 1992), 24-27.

The Royal Ontario Museum (ROM) in Toronto is, with Warsaw, a 'granddaddy' in the formation of specifically Nubian exhibition galleries outside the two countries incorporating Nubia, albeit a long-misplaced one. Originally conceived and planned in the early 1970s, the idea of a permanent gallery devoted to the civilizations of Nubia underwent numerous lengthy delays and alterations before it finally opened in January 1992 with much fanfare as 'the first permanent Nubian Gallery in North America,' beating out the other new gallery, in Boston, by only a few months. The collection of more than 3000 artefacts is the most extensive in Canada, and among the major collections in the world.

The past two decades have seen an explosion of interest in Nubian studies in Toronto, more so than other centres. For various reasons, the ROM was unable to participate fully in the UNESCO campaign. The late Winifred Needler, then Curator of the Near Eastern Department (now the separate Egyptian and West Asian departments), joined the staff of the Egypt Exploration Society excavations at Buhen in 1962-1963, as the ROM's sole contribution. [4] However, since the appointment of Dr. Nicholas B. Millet in 1970 as Curator of the Egyptian Department at the ROM, all curators have arrived with extensive interest and training in Nubian archaeology and have continued their work there. Dr. Millet directed the UNESCO excavations at Gebel Adda, a Meroitic to Islamic site in southern Egypt, in 1963-1965 for the American Research Center in Egypt, and he continues as a major scholar of the still-undeciphered Meroitic script. Anthony J. Mills (Assistant Curator, 1972-1983) co-directed with H.A. Nordstrom the UNESCO-sponsored survey from Gemai to Dal (south of the

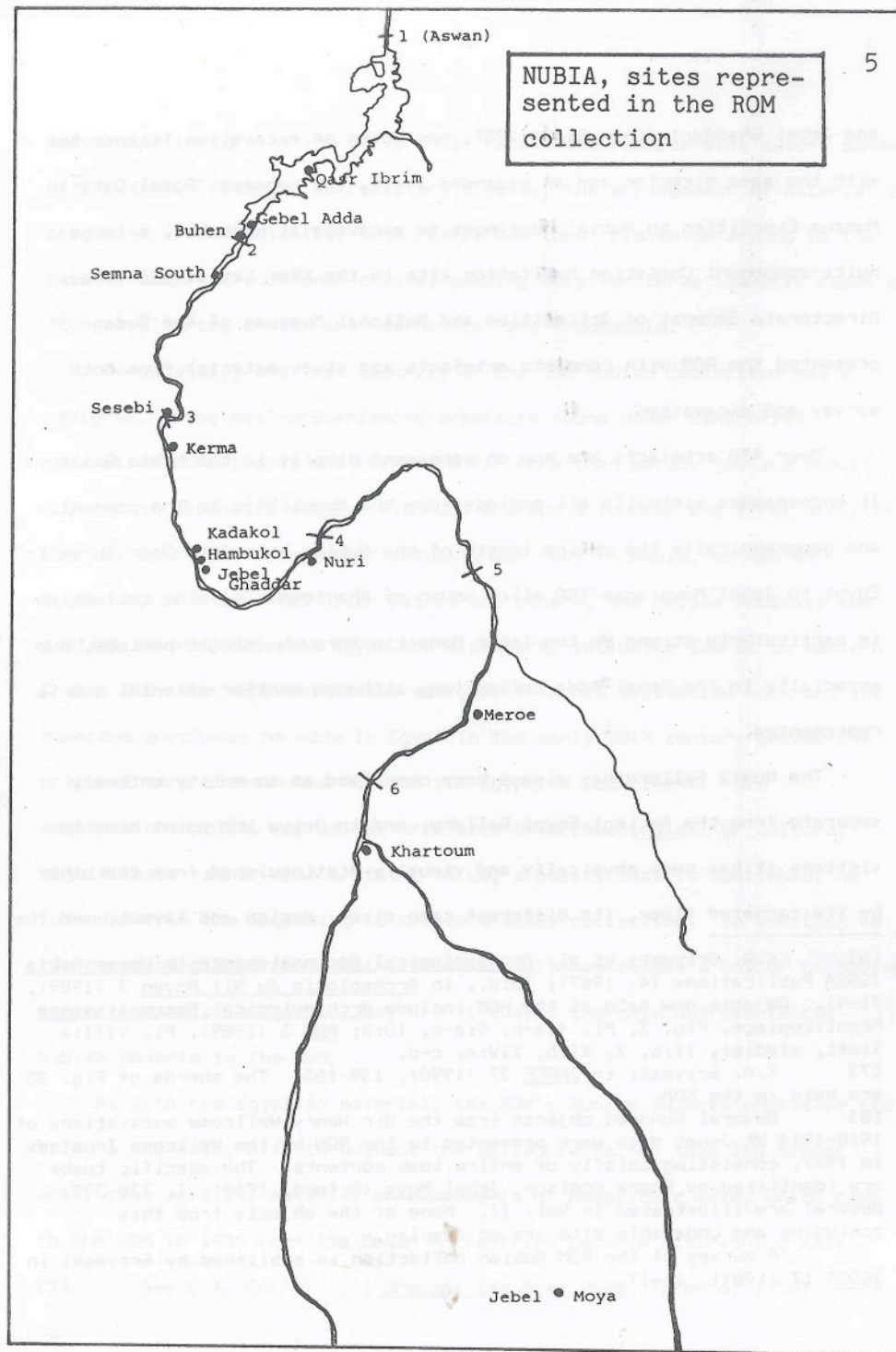
[4] A specialist in Predynastic Egypt, she also published a rock-drawing from nearby Gebel Sheikh Suliman in JARCE 6 (1967), 87-91.



Second Cataract) in 1963-1965 for the Sudan Antiquities Service; he is now readying the survey for publication. [5] Dr. Krzysztof A. Grzymski (Assistant Curator since 1984) had worked under Shinnie at Meroe and with the Polish Centre for Mediterranean Archaeology at Old Dongola, and has been active in Nubian fieldwork since his arrival at the ROM. Both present curators received their doctorates with Nubian theses. Their cross-appointments at the University of Toronto have made it one of the few institutions able to offer multiple graduate courses on the subject for many years.

The ROM itself has been active in Nubian fieldwork since the mid-1970s, when Dr. Millet was granted a survey permit by the Directorate General of Antiquities and National Museums of the Sudan for a hundred-mile length of the Nile on both banks from Fakrinskotti to El-Khandaq (between the Fourth and Third Cataracts), and began work in 1976. For various reasons, among them the initial stages of renovation and expansion of the ROM's new galleries, the 'Dongola Reach Survey Project' was postponed indefinitely after several aborted efforts and a single short season which located 10 sites. It was taken over by Dr. Grzymski for an eighty-mile length between Ed-Debba and El-Khandaq, with the exception of the Polish concession at Old Dongola. Four survey seasons in 1984-1986 identified a further 105 sites, with test excavations at five -two habitation sites (at Urukutti and Hambukol) and three cemetery graves (at Bukibul, El-Ghaddar

[5] The ROM holds no material from this survey. Preliminary survey reports are found in Kush 13 (1965), 1-12; 14 (1966), 1-15; 15 (1968) 200-210.





and Jebel Ghaddar). [6] Since 1987, now under an excavation license but with the same director and an expanded staff, the renamed 'Royal Ontario Museum Expedition to Nubia' continues to excavate at Hambukol, a large multi-component Christian habitation site in the Khor Letti. [7] The Directorate General of Antiquities and National Museums of the Sudan presented the ROM with complete artefacts and study material from both survey and excavation.

Over 430 artefacts are now on permanent display in the Nubia Gallery. It encompasses virtually all periods from the Mesolithic to the present, and geographically the entire length of the Nubian Nile from Qasr Ibrim in Egypt to Jebel Moya some 150 miles south of Khartoum. [8] The collection is particularly strong in the later Meroitic through Islamic periods, due especially to the Gebel Adda collection, although earlier material too is represented.

The Nubia Gallery has always been conceived as an entity entirely separate from the Ancient Egypt Gallery, and to drive the point home to visitors it has been physically and visually distinguished from the other by its carpeted floor, its different case sizes, design and layout, and the

[6] K.A. Grzymski *et al*, Archaeological Reconnaissance in Upper Nubia (SSEA Publications 14, 1987); *ibid.*, in Archeologie du Nil Moyen 3 (1989), 71-91. Objects now held at the ROM include Archaeological Reconnaissance Frontispiece, Fig. 3, Pl. 4:a-b, 9:a-b, 10:b; ANM 3 (1989), Pl. VIII:a (left, middle), IX:b, X, XI:b, XIV:a, c-d.

[7] K.A. Grzymski in JARCE 27 (1990), 139-163. The sherds of Fig. 25 are held in the ROM.

[8] Several hundred objects from the Sir Henry Wellcome excavations of 1910-1914 at Jebel Moya were presented to the ROM by the Wellcome Trustees in 1947, consisting chiefly of entire tomb contents. The specific tombs are identified by Frank Addison, Jebel Moya (Oxford, 1949), I, 270-399. Several are illustrated in Vol. II. None of the objects from this confusing and undatable site are on display.

A survey of the ROM Nubian collection is published by Grzymski in JSSEA 17 (1987), 15-17.

colour and texture of its walls which recall the reddish-pink desert sands of the area. After an introductory display, the arrangement of material is presented chronologically, from 'Early Khartoum' clockwise around to the case of modern traditional crafts, pausing only for three thematic cases of 'Economy,' 'Arts, Crafts and Adornments' and 'Household.'

Fortunately, the vast majority of the ROM Nubian collection has a pedigree, being well-provenienced artefacts found under controlled excavation conditions, and therefore far more than merely 'museum quality' objects of aesthetic value. Although the ROM's founder and first director, Charles Trick Currelly, never actually set foot in Nubia, he was an Egyptologist who worked under Petrie and others, and helped excavate and publish several sites in Egypt and elsewhere, including Zakros in eastern Crete. [9] The material he was assigned from his excavation work and the numerous purchases he made in Egypt in the early 20th century became the original core of both the ROM and its Egyptian Department. His acquisitions policy emphasized artefacts of archaeological or cultural significance rather than artistic value, a policy that is continued; he intended from the beginning to create a study collection. In addition to his persistent Egyptian acquisitions, Currelly purchased a number of Nubian ceramic vessels in Egypt. They are virtually the only unprovenienced Nubian objects in the ROM.

As with the Egyptian material, the ROM's Nubian objects emphasize its culture and daily life throughout the millennia rather than its higher arts. The earliest material on display is of Mesolithic date, which came to the ROM in 1950 when the Sudan Antiquities Service distributed many

[9] See C.T. Currelly, I Brought the Ages Home (Toronto, 1956).



finds from F. Debono and A.J. Arkell's 1944-1945 excavations at Khartoum to various Commonwealth museums. [10] The microliths and ceramic vessel fragments clearly show the attention to detail and surface decoration characteristic of these early pastoralist/agriculturalists. Both 'A' and 'C' Group periods also are represented by fine-ware bowls typical of the cultures, all presumably from Lower Nubia although they arrived without provenience through Currelly. A separate case is devoted to the Kerma culture, including clay vessels, beads, mica strips, a dagger and a pair of hippopotamus-leather sandals from Reisner's excavations at Kerma in 1913-1916. [11] This culture, generally contemporary with the late Old Kingdom through early New Kingdom in Egypt and the 'C' Group of Lower Nubia, has rightly been called the first urban civilization of Sub-Saharan Africa. Among its numerous achievements are superbly crafted ceramics, among the finest hand-made wares ever produced. Reisner originally identified the vessels as wheel-made, and the some of the technology required in their manufacture has yet to be duplicated.

Throughout most of its history, Nubia's fate has been linked to Egypt in a yin/yang of political domination and self-determination. During the periods of internal stability and central political power in Egypt, Nubia to varying degrees was under its control, and during the less unified periods in Egyptian history Nubian control of its own and surrounding areas was considerable. Since the study of Nubia traditionally has been through Egyptian eyes (or, rather, records) the extent of our knowledge of individual periods in the Nubian cultural sequence is directly proportional

[10] Many can be identified with those illustrated by Arkell, Early Khartoum (Oxford, 1949), although specific correlations are difficult.

[11] These were generously loaned by the Boston Museum of Fine Arts, as the ROM collection lacks any Kerma material.

to Egyptian interest in - and ability to traverse through - Nubian lands.

In the Old Kingdom, for example, the Egyptians built and occupied a town at Buhen. They erected a large fortress in the Middle Kingdom, one of a chain of over thirty between the First and Second Cataracts that protected the Egyptian presence in the area and maintained Egyptian control over the flow of trade from farther south. There is no evidence for copper in the area around Buhen, but a number of Old Kingdom smelting kilns, copper slag fragments and other related paraphernalia leave no doubt that the Egyptians smelted copper here. Thanks to Miss Needler's work there, the ROM received 16 artefacts from both the Old Kingdom town and Middle Kingdom fortress in 1965, including bellows nozzles and copper slag fragments illustrating smelting technology. [12] As a centrepiece to this case, a scale model of the Middle Kingdom fortress illustrates the massive scale of Egyptian presence here. Other material relating to the Egyptian Middle and New Kingdom presence in Nubia, including copper and ceramic vessels from Semna South [13] and other artefacts from Buhen, Gebel Adda and the New Kingdom cemetery at Sesebi (Sudla) [14] are also on display. The variety of objects illustrate the changing Egyptian relationship with Nubia, from Old Kingdom trade and Middle Kingdom military control to New

[12] See W.B. Emery, H.S. Smith and A. Millard, The Fortress of Buhen I: The Archaeological Report (EES Memoire 49, 1979) and H.S. Smith, The Fortress of Buhen II: The Inscriptions (EES Memoire 48, 1976). Although many ROM objects are published here, they are not so identified in the concordance, I:197-223. Nonetheless, excavation catalogue numbers 76, 209, 279, 1238, 1376, 1392, 1544 and 1597 are now held in the ROM.

[13] These were donated by the University of Toronto in 1969. Prof. R.J. Williams of its Department of Near Eastern Studies had participated in the University of Chicago Oriental Institute excavations of L.V. Zabkar there in 1966-1968 as the University's contribution to the UNESCO campaign.

[14] The ROM supported financially the 1936-1937 excavations of A.M. Blackman, and was given 37 objects of New Kingdom and Post-Meroitic date. Only one has been published, by Blackman in JEA 23 (1937), Pl. XVII.2 (upper row, centre).



Kingdom political and cultural supremacy coupled with town and temple construction, each designed to maintain the flow of luxury goods from the south to Egypt.

In time the tables turned, and the Nubians ruled Egypt as the Twenty-fifth (or Kushite) Dynasty in 712-656 B.C. By now, its aristocracy and royalty in Napata (at the Fourth Cataract) had absorbed a considerable veneer of Egyptian influence and ideology, including the use of Egyptian language, writing and symbolism. Shawabti also were employed, but only by royalty and with distinctly Nubian characteristics. The ROM is fortunate in possessing ten shawabti from George Reisner's excavation of the royal pyramids at nearby Nuri in 1916-1918. [15] They are arranged to illustrate the Nubian royal practice of matrilineal succession also characteristic of African cultures farther south. The king's successor was his sister's son - not his own, in contrast to Egyptian custom.

After Nubia lost control of Egypt, contact with its northern neighbour decreased considerably. Sometime in the 6th c. B.C., the court moved from Napata to some 150 miles farther south at Meroe. Gradually the Egyptian veneer was replaced by local and more southern characteristics. Together with local gods such as the lion-headed Apedemak, worship of some of the more powerful Egyptian deities - Osiris, Isis and Amon, locally called Asore, Wosa and Amani - whose temples were first constructed under Egyptian New Kingdom rule and enlarged under the Kushite Dynasty, continued with strong state support centred at Gebel Barkal (at the Fourth Cataract). Details of their worship, however, became increasingly Nubianized.

[15] See Joyce L. Haynes and Ronald J. Leprohon in JSSEA 17 (1987), 18-32. These were donated by the Commissioner of Archaeology representing the Government of the Sudan in 1926.

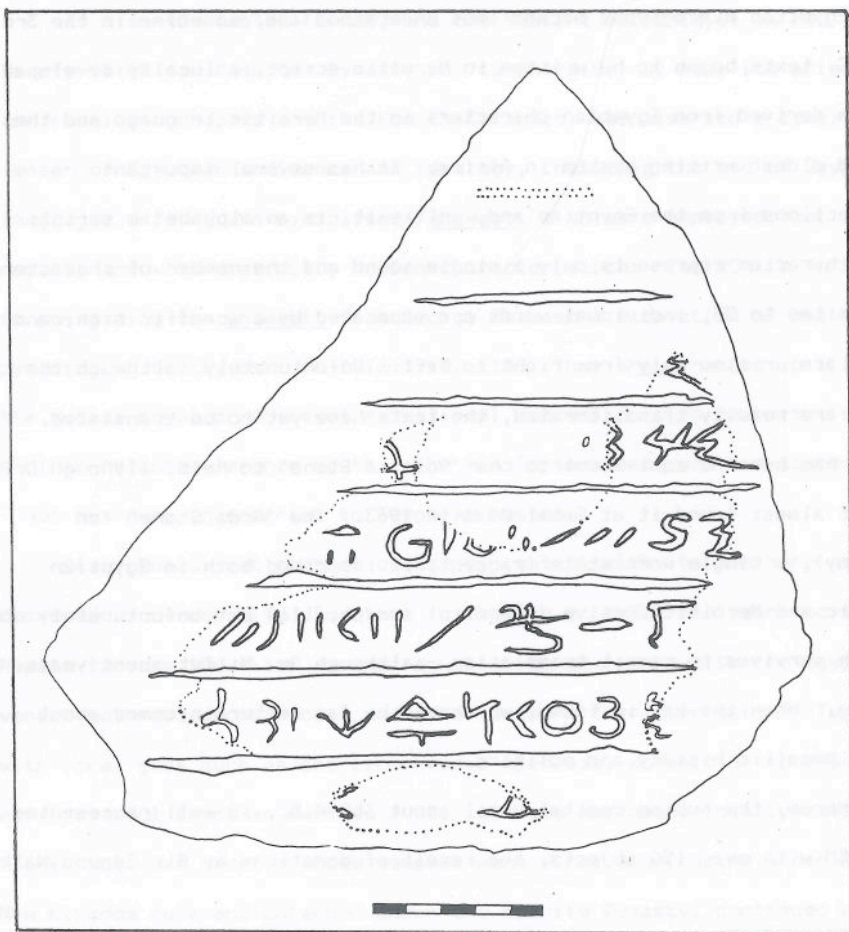
Egyptian funerary features developed a clearly non-Egyptian character, including the use of offering tables, formulaic grave stelae and the uniquely Nubian ba-statue of the deceased.

Egyptian hieroglyphs became less understood and, sometime in the 3rd c. B.C. texts began to be written in Meroitic script, a locally developed system derived from Egyptian characters in the Meroitic language and the second oldest writing system in Africa. It has several important distinctions from the Egyptian and, unlike it, is an alphabetic script: each character represents only a single sound and the number of characters is limited to 23, individual words are separated by a specific sign, and texts are written only from right to left. Unfortunately, although the signs are readily transliterated, the texts have yet to be translated. There has been no equivalent to the 'Rosetta Stone' to help, although Dr. Millet almost found it at Gebel Adda in 1963. The 'Adda Stone' (on display), a single worn stela fragment, is inscribed both in Egyptian Demotic and Meroitic Cursive (hieratic) script, [16] but unfortunately not enough survives to permit translation - although Dr. Millet spent years trying. When the key is found, we should be far better informed about later Meroitic history and politics.

Meroe, the Nubian capital until about 350 A.D., is well represented at the ROM with over 150 objects, the result of donations by Sir Edmund Walker

[16] The ROM also displays a cast of the 'Letti Stone' inscription, which combines Egyptian and Meroitic hieroglyphs in four vertical lines of text, possibly the earliest example of Meroitic writing known. The original remains in situ in the Khor Letti. The inscription was mentioned by J.H. Breasted in American Journal of Semitic Languages and Literatures 25 (1908-1909), 39-40, and the cast taken in 1984 by K.A. Grzymiski (Archaeological Reconnaissance, 22 (ROM 35), Pl. 22b).





The 'Adda Stone' c. 200-300 A.D.

before 1911 and Sir Robert Mond in 1921. [17] Although all were excavated at Meroe, their specific findspots unfortunately are unrecorded. Amongst the most important are two large faience column drums, one with a parade of three rams and a lion [18] and the other having a palmiform design. They are amongst the largest single objects of faience known, and highlight a wide-ranging variety of faience material exhibited from this site. Also on display are a number of large sandstone sculptures, including an architectural fixture in the form of a recumbant animal (a ram?) and two human heads dating about 1-150 A.D. Their style is derivative of Alexandrian art and all three probably came from the 'Royal Bath,' a unique building inspired by Roman public baths.

In addition to Garstang's material, a further 17 artefacts were donated in 1985 by the University of Calgary through Peter Shinnie, Professor Emeritus of its Department of Archaeology, from his 1971-1977 excavations. The iron tools, arrowheads, slag fragments, and clay bellows nozzles are illustrative of Meroe's iron-smelting kilns and the famous huge slag heaps that surround the city. Iron, while not as common a material as bronze, was produced at Meroe as early as the 4th c. B.C., and the slag-heaps represent centuries of production. Unlike the copper of Buhen, the geological source of Meroitic iron is known, for low-grade ores are found throughout much of the kingdom.

The majority of pottery vessels are fine ware, thin-bodied and with a multiplicity of decoration both painted and impressed with great skill,

[17] Both were financial subscribers to the 1909-1914 excavations of John Garstang for the University of Liverpool, and had been apportioned a selection of the finds. Virtually all are unpublished, or at least cannot be identified with objects published by Garstang, Sayce and Griffith, Meroe, the City of the Ethiopians (Oxford, 1911) or elsewhere.

[18] Illustrated in Africa in Antiquity II, 94 Fig. 76.





Faience column drum, Meroe, H: 37 cm., c. 100-300 A.D.

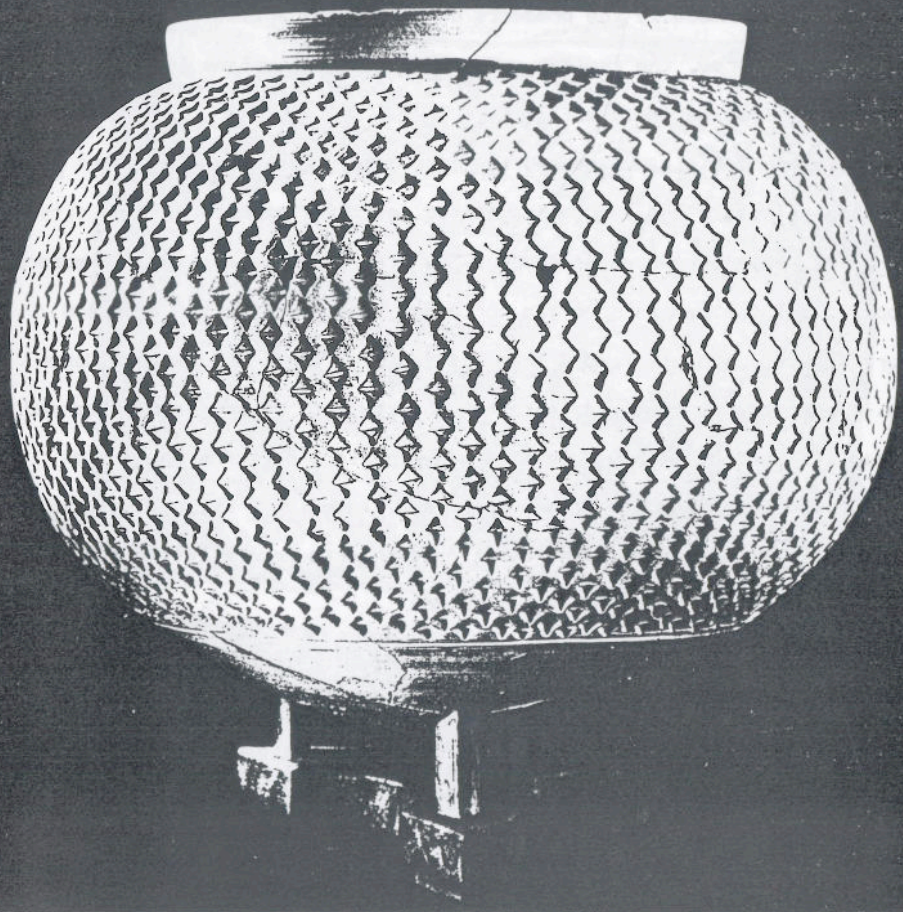
often with designs derivative of Egyptian motifs that had long permeated the Nubian consciousness and become distinctly Meroitic in their presentation. Meroitic pottery indeed is amongst the best ever produced, the finest wares probably the products of only a few artistic centres including, of course, the capital. The ROM's extremely fine impressed cups and bowls are from Meroe itself.

The later Meroitic period and its aftermath clearly show a return to a less urban lifestyle and a more fragmented political structure. The city of Meroe may have been conquered about 350 A.D. by Ezana of Axum (in modern Ethiopia), but influences from the north had long affected the arts and culture of Lower Nubia far more than the southern areas we now call Upper Nubia. These are most noticeable in the objects both of artistic value and everyday life which, although locally made, reflect patterns and styles imported from Egypt and the Roman empire and, later, the Byzantine world. The ROM is fortunate in having provenienced objects from sites in both areas of Nubia from the Meroitic period on.

The major site represented at the ROM is, of course, Gebel Adda in modern southern Egypt, consisting of material assigned to Dr. Millet as excavation director. The several thousand objects date chiefly from the Late Meroitic through Islamic periods. [19] Late Meroitic and Post-Meroitic ('X-Group') material from the cemeteries of Qasr Ibrim

[19] They are the core of the Nubian collection, formally donated to the ROM in 1973 by the National Geographical Society, a major excavation sponsor. Objects in the ROM collection were published by N.B. Millet in *JARCE* 2 (1963), Fig. 2, 4-8, 10-11, 14 (right), 16 (bowls); *JARCE* 3 (1964), Pl. IV:12, V:14, VII:20; and *JSSEA* 17 (1987), Pl. I-II.





Globular pot, Meroe, H: 14.7 cm., c. 100-300 A.D.

excavated by W.B. Emery in 1961 also is on display, [20] together with some Meroitic vessels of clay and copper from Semna South, [21] and other objects of Post-Meroitic date from Sesebi. The entire contents of the grave excavated in Upper Nubia at El-Ghaddar by Grzymski in 1985 and some large Meroitic jars found by local villagers near Hambukol were presented by the Sudanese government, and stand in contrast to the Lower Nubian material. Their joint display case emphasizes the contrast between Upper and Lower Nubian wares, chiefly a lack of wheel-made wares and painted decoration in the south. The three minimally painted and wheel-made bowls from El-Ghaddar are, apparently, the southernmost examples of Roman ceramic influence rare south of the Third Cataract. A separate display of oversize jars shows the development from wheel-made to hand-made storage vessels on that scale, and the continuing concern with aesthetic considerations in addition to functional requirements.

The three thematic cases also illustrate cultural continuity, not only between North and South but also throughout the centuries from Late Meroitic through the Christian and even Islamic eras: the use of the saqia water-wheel, common household items immediately recognisable even to the uninitiated such as tweezers and scissors, baskets, jewellery and cosmetic containers, quivers, shoes and other decorated leathers, a toilet seat covered with apotropaic signs to ward off the afreets or evil spirits, tools, and glass and metal vessels of surprising modernity - including a

[20] The ROM financially supported the excavations that year, and the 27 objects were received in 1963. See Anthony J. Mills, The Cemeteries of Qasr Ibrim (EES Memoire 51, 1982), 93 for the museum concordance listing objects received by the ROM, including clay and bronze vessels, a wooden kohl pot and an ivory inlay.

[21] Two clay vessels were published by L.V. and J.J. Zabkar in JARCE 19 (1982), 44 (at right), 47 Fig. d, and Pl. V (bottom left).



frypan with folding handle.

Nonetheless, the return to urbanization and conversion to Christianity in the second half of the 6th c. A.D. solidified the tripartite division of the country along the Nile - Nobatia (essentially Lower Nubia), Makouria from the Third Cataract to the Atbara River junction, and Alwa south of it - each with its own capital and some distinctive features as well as many common ones. The ROM is fortunate in having one of the few collections able to compare and contrast the material culture of Nobatia and Makouria; Alwa is represented by a single 'Aloa' jar. Mediterranean influences continued to be strongest in Nobatia, which also imported a considerable number of Egyptian and other goods; the two southern kingdoms were less affected. Makouria was converted to Diophysite Christianity, while Nobatia and Alwa became Monophysite; ideological as well as historical divisions between the neighbouring kingdoms aided in maintaining their individual characters, although the similarities of their culture are considerable and Christian symbolism predominated in all.

Christian Nubia is best known through its cemeteries and churches, excavated all along the Nile, rather than its towns and cities. A 1:40 model of the church at Adindan, near Gebel Adda, illustrates a particularly Nubian variation on church architecture; Nubian Christianity developed its own peculiarities due to its relative isolation from the majority of the Christian world. A multitude of texts also has survived, written in Old Nubian, Greek, Coptic and occasionally Arabic, chiefly of a religious nature although political and economic records also survive. The majority of ROM inscribed material is from Gebel Adda, and includes tombstones, letters and accounts. Comparatively little is known about the two southern

kingdoms, which were not affected by the dam and so not explored in the 1960s. Although churches and gravesites have been excavated south of the Third Cataract, recent excavations of Christian townsites of Habukol and Old Dongola are opening new avenues of knowledge about how the southern people lived rather than their religion and politics. As earlier, there is much similarity with the material remains of Lower Nubian sites, but again there are differences and certain Upper Nubian forms and decoration are not found farther north. In contrast to earlier ceramics, for example, the pottery can be more colourfully decorated than Lower Nubian wares. Again, a single exhibit case illustrates and contrasts the material objects.

Unlike the conversion to Christianity, Nubian conversion to Islam was gradual as church and state (never entirely united) increasingly became estranged, church infrastructure broke down and a wave of Arab immigration altered society in the 13-16th c. A.D. This conversion resulted in a stronger relationship with Egypt (Muslim since the 7th c. A.D.), and increased importation of Islamic goods from the north and elsewhere. Egyptian Mamluk, Fayumi and Fostat glazed vessels are common imports while trade with other Muslim countries resulted in the importation of goods from farther afield through Arab middlemen, including Chinese wares. All are represented in the gallery, together with local products clearly derived from earlier Christian forms and tombstones inscribed in Kufic script which replaced the Coptic and other grave markers of earlier periods. Typical Muslim forms also appear in local repertoire. Among the finds at Gebel Adda is an 'aeolipile,' a common object in the 11-14th c. Islamic world resembling a grenade but of uncertain use. Scholars have long debated its function, either magnifying or ignoring the importance of its often highly



decorated exterior surface; Dr. Ed Keall of the ROM's West Asian Department recently suggested it was a container for smoking hashish in private. [22]

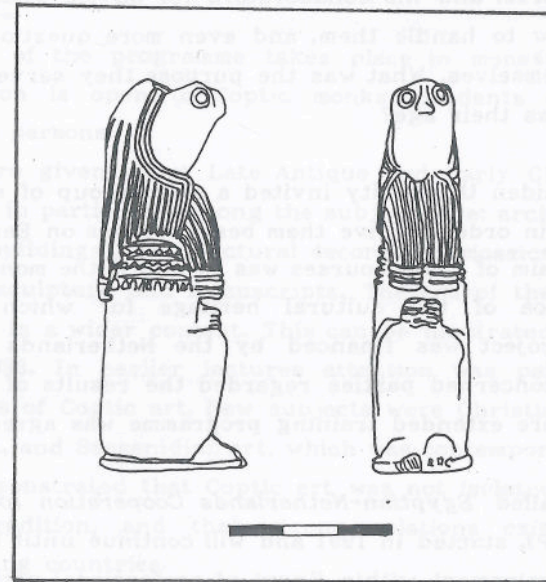
Despite British political control in the late 19th and early 20th c., a new political boundary dividing Nubia between Egypt and the Sudan, the universality of Islam and the gradual disappearance of Lower Nubia under the waters of Lake Nasser as successive dams at Aswan have raised lake levels, Nubia continues to exist as a culture and in the minds of its inhabitants. The final case of the Nubian gallery continues the ROM's emphasis on daily life and culture. Traditional rural Nubian crafts reflect their considerable heritage and simple elegance, illustrated by the tabaq (colourful woven food covering), tambour (musical instrument similar to the hand-held lyre), jebena (clay coffee pot on ring-stand), large wooden bowl and copper cooking pot, and a long broad sword of the type used by the followers of the Mahdi in his war of independence against Britain in the 1880's. They reflect the sedentary and nomadic lifestyles found in modern Islamic Sudan and, except the sword, continue in daily use.

Although a permanent installation devoted to the civilizations of Nubia, the gallery is not intended as a static exhibit. Rather, cases will be developed and updated as new information is recovered and new artefacts received, especially resulting from the ongoing excavations at Hambukol. A preliminary report of the initial five seasons is now in press, and work progresses annually.

One particularly happy benefit of the gallery's development and permanent existence is as a focus of activity and source of pride for the small community of Nubian immigrants to Canada, especially in Toronto.

[22] Rotunda 24.4 (Spring 1992), 12-17.

Their invited contributions to the gallery intensified their interest in maintaining their own cultural roots, and a lively cultural organization dedicated to presenting aspects of Nubian life to the public has been formed. Public interest and awareness has been enhanced by publicity surrounding the gallery's opening, and the organization already has been invited to participate in a number of cultural festivals in Ontario and elsewhere.



Wooden kohl tube in the form of a hawk, Gebel Adda, c. 200-300 AD



## A University in the Desert: the ENCCAP-project

Mat Immerzeel, Leiden University

### 1. Introduction

In *Nubian Letters* 19 (1993) professor Paul van Moorsel wrote about the vast experience of Leiden University in the study of Coptic art. During several visits to Coptic churches and monasteries, staff-members of the University discovered more and more art objects about which little or nothing was known. They realized that the real work still had to be started, but also that the inadequate preservation of these valuable art collections endangered the future survival of many objects. It also became clear that, within the Coptic community, the basic experience for a proper treatment of art objects was wanting, and knowledge about their historical value was limited. Monks were asking Van Moorsel and his collaborators for advice what to do with such objects and how to handle them, and even more questions were put about the objects themselves. What was the purpose they served? What was represented? What was their age?

For these reasons Leiden University invited a small group of monks to the Netherlands in 1990, in order to give them basic courses on Early Christian and Coptic art.<sup>1</sup> The aim of these courses was to inform the monks about the value and importance of the cultural heritage for which they were responsible. This project was financed by the Netherlands Ministry of Education. As both concerned parties regarded the results of this project as encouraging, a more extended training programme was agreed.

This new project, called *Egyptian-Netherlands Cooperation for Coptic Art Preservation* (ENCCAP), started in 1991 and will continue until 1995. The aim of ENCCAP is the development within Egypt of professional expertise in the conservation of Coptic art objects and of research facilities pertaining to the Coptic cultural heritage. Training programmes are organized for those members of the Orthodox Coptic community who have a day-to-day responsibility for art objects. These are mainly monks and students of the Institute for Coptic Studies in Cairo (ICS).

Programme director is dr. Johannes den Heijer. Two lecturers are charged

with the teaching in Egypt: drs. Mat Immerzeel, who is coordinator and has a full-time appointment, and dr. Karel Innemée, who is appointed for one day a week. The project is financed by the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Directorate-General International Cooperation (DGIS), as well as by the Stichting Sonnewijck (Sonnewijck Foundation) through the Stichting Christelijke Kunst en Cultuur in het Nijldal (CKCN; Foundation Christian Art and Culture in the Nile Valley).

All activities are carried out by Leiden University in cooperation with the Patriarchate of the Coptic Orthodox Church, but the fertile cooperation with the Coptic Museum is also continued. The project is supported by the Netherlands Institute for Archaeology and Arabic Studies and the Royal Netherlands Embassy in Cairo.

### 2. Training programme

#### a. Lectures

This part of the programme takes place in monasteries and at the ICS. Participation is open to Coptic monks, students at the ICS and other interested persons.

Courses are given about Late Antique and Early Christian art, and about Coptic art in particular. Among the subjects are: architecture (churches and monastic buildings), architectural decoration (mosaics, wall-paintings), icon-painting, sculpture and manuscripts. The aim of these courses is to place Coptic art in a wider context. This can be illustrated by the lectures given in May 1993. In earlier lectures attention was paid to the late antique fundamentals of Coptic art. New subjects were Christian art and architecture from Nubia, and Sassanid art, which was contemporary to Early Coptic art. It was demonstrated that Coptic art was not isolated and can be placed in a long tradition, and that strong relations existed with the art of neighbouring countries.

#### b. Practical skill training

The larger part of the programme concerns 'preventive education'. Those who have a day to day responsibility for Coptic art objects, mainly monks, will receive a practical training; however, the practical aspects will be placed in a theoretical context. They will learn how to treat and to conserve art objects including icons, wall-paintings, manuscripts, liturgical vestments and



objects, sculpture, ceramics and wooden objects. Excluded is a training in restoration, which needs a specialised study. As is actually the case in many museums, the prevention of further deterioration of the already bad condition of many objects has priority. Attention will also be paid to practical documentation problems like the describing, measuring, drawing, photographing and cataloging of objects, as well as to the writing of short papers. In a final stage the writing of small publications may result from this training.

In the first half of 1993 the making of the inventory of icons was started, mainly in Deir al-Souriany and Deir Anba Bishoy, but as monks from Deir al-Baramous, Deir Anba Antonius and Deir Anba Boula also attended the courses, the indexing will be extended to these monasteries as well. All icons and related objects receive an inventory-number, which is noted in an index-book. All documentation (practical information such as size, used materials and present location) and photos taken by the monks are gathered in files. Finally, a description of the objects can be added.

Our aim is to stimulate Coptic people to continue the study of the history of Coptic Icon painting, which was started by Leiden University. Some monks of Deir Anba Bishoy are preparing a booklet about the icons of their monastery. In the future it will be followed by a more scientific article. Such contributions can be considered as additions to the Catalogue of the Icons in the Coptic Museum, which was written by Paul van Moorsel, Linda Langen and myself.

#### c. Publications

The Coptic community is also in need of publications about art and architecture, in particular in Egypt. With the help of private funding the ENCCAP-project is able to provide important publications to the libraries of the monasteries, the ICS and the Coptic Museum. There is, however, a restriction. Due to language problems many publications are not accessible to Egyptians. ENCCAP is meeting this handicap by providing translations in arabic, mainly of short articles about Coptic art, which will be available to the students.

Another import matter is informing the Coptic public in general about the

progress of the work, as well as about their cultural heritage. For this reason, the ENCCAP-staff-members are writing short contributions in English in the monthly magazine El-Keraza, which is edited by the Coptic Orthodox Patriarchate. This magazine is distributed among the Coptic communities outside Egypt.

In the near future, the work in the monasteries will continue. We do, however, realize that the expertise of specialists in the field of conservation and other museal aspects is indispensable. In september 1993, drs. P.J. Verhoeven of the Rijksmuseum voor Volkenkunde (National Museum of Ethnology) in Leiden, will assist the staff in the monasteries with practical storage matters. Our intention is to invite more conservation specialists to Egypt, for example specialists in the field of the conservation of metalwork, textiles, pottery and wood. Their help, which is considered to be an addition to the ENCCAP training programme, will be much appreciated by the staff-members as well as by the Copts themselves.

#### Address:

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ENCCAP

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The Netherlands

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1. Nubian Letters 19 (1993) 20-21.



The 8th Conference of the International Society for Nubian Studies,  
Lille-Paris, 11-17 September 1994

### NUBIA, THIRTY YEARS LATER

As the title indicates, the main theme of the conference will be an evaluation and balance of thirty years of research in Nubia. This theme will be reflected in the main papers and, as far as possible, in the communications.

The program has now been planned as follows:

11 September, Sunday: checking-in in Lille.

12-16 September: congress in the center of Lille

17 September: closing day of the congress in Paris

The morning sessions will be dedicated to the main papers, of which the text will be sent to the participants in June 1994. Fields of these main papers are: prehistory, Kerma and New Kingdom, Napata-Meroë, Christian and Islamic Period, Historiography and future of Nubian studies. The sessions will consist of a summary of the main paper, followed by discussion.

The afternoons will be dedicated to the communications. So far 112 have been announced, of which 60 are known by title. Because of this quantity it will not be possible to present more than one communication per person, except in the case of presentation of recent archaeological fieldwork. Speakers are invited to produce their own handouts before the conference. Texts of communications for publication in the proceedings should not exceed 10 pages.

The third circular letter containing detailed information concerning the conference will be sent in March 1994.

### A SHORT MESSAGE OF PROFESSOR J. MARTIN PLUMLEY :

After the meeting in Paris, mentioned elsewhere in this issue of *Nubian Letters*, I was able to inform on August 2d 1993 the First Patron of our International Society, Prof. J. Martin Plumley, Lyndewode Road 13, Cambridge (UK), about our plans for the next International Conference. Professor Plumley expressed his enthusiasm about the idea to dedicate our Congress to "Nubia, Thirty Years Later" and, hearing that the Conference will take place in nearby Lille, he uttered his wish to cross the Channel and to take part. Prof. Plumley asked me to pass his best wishes to all Colleagues involved in the preparation of the Conference of September 1994.

Paul van Moorsel.

### NECROLOGY :

In 1993, two eminent scholars and esteemed members of our International Society passed away :

Prof. Dr. Fritz Hintze (Berlin)

and Prof. Dr. Kurt Weitzmann (Princeton).

August 4th 1993,

Paul van Moorsel.



ANNOUNCEMENT of :

Friedrich W. HINKEL,

THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL MAP OF THE SUDAN, VOLUME VI :

The Area of the Red Sea Cost and Northern Ethiopian Frontier,

With an Introduction by Sir Laurence P. Kirwan

and with contributions by

Ulrich Braukämper, Siegfried Grunert and Anthony J. Mills,

Akademie Verlag, Berlin, 1992 (ISBN 3-05-001845-3),

365 pp., 72 Line-drawings and 20 maps in folder (DMark 320.-).

This fascicle records 1322 archaeological and historical sites along the Sudanese costal area and hinterland, covering the period between the palaeolithic age and the 19th Century A.D..

An Introduction to the Geology of the Area has been given by

Siegfried Grunert and a Chapter on Peoples and Cultures by

Ulrich Braukämper.

The Bibliography includes related sources of Greek, Roman and Arab historiographs and comprises -besides material from archives- about 950 titles and 135 ancient and modern maps.

The description of sites is supplemented by a glossary, a list of abbreviations and indices as well as by special chapters dealing with the history of exploration and events in the Area and ten distribution maps. - Just to give an example of the ample information given in this important publication I would like to mention the Suakin Area, which consequently is represented in no less than 33 of the 72 Line-drawings.

The Author has dedicated this work to the Memory of Marion Hinkel (+ 1989), "daughter, colleague and partner for too short a time".

Paul van Moorsel.

ANNOUNCEMENT of:

Ch. BONNET (Editor),

ÉTUDES NUBIENNES,

CONFÉRENCE de GENÈVE /

ACTES DU VIIe Congrès International d'études nubienes

3 - 8 septembre 1990,

VOLUME I : Communications principales.

Ch. Bonnet (Genève), 1993, 390 pp.

(SFR 100 + SFR 30 for postcharges. To be ordered at Francine Mancini, 8, rue du Nant, CH 1207 GENEVA with payment by Bank cheque in SWISS FRANCS enclosed).

In this book, for which the Organizer of the Geneva Conference in 1990, Charles Bonnet, acts as the Editor and the Publisher all thirty Main Papers have been brought together. Five of them are dedicated to the UNESCO-Campaign in Nubia; the other Main Papers are dealing with Prospections, with Archaeology and History, with Problems concerning Conservation and Restoration, with the Archaeology of the Sudan, with the Neolithicum and Protohistory of the Sudan and of Egyptian Nubia, with Medieval (i.e. Christian) Art in Nubia, with Post-Medieval Nubia and with the Written Sources . These Papers are preceded by a Preface of Prof. Ch. Bonnet and by the texts of the Welcome Addresses, that have been delivered in Geneva, one by our former President, Prof. J. Vercoutter, the other by H.Exc. Prof. Ahmed M. Ali-Hakem.

Paul van Moorsel.



## SOME CONFERENCES IN THE NEAR FUTURE :

1. September 20th - 24th 1993 : Cassino (Italy), 7th National Conference on Christian Archaeology.  
(Applications to be sent to : University of Cassino, Dept. of Philology and History, 1, via Zamosch, 03043 CASSINO, Fax 776 31 14 27 in Italy.
2. November 12th and 13th 1993 : Basel (Switzerland), Colloquium on Innovation in Late Antiquity.  
(Applications : Prof. Beat Brenk, St. Alban Graben 16, CH-4051 BASEL.
3. May 26th - 31st 1994 : Tbilisi (Georgia), International Seminar on Christian Archaeology.  
(Applications : Prof. R. Ramishvili, Centre for Archaeological Studies, 14 Uznadse Street, 380002 TIBLISI (Georgian Republic).
4. September 11th - 16th 1994 : Lille (and Paris), VIIIth International Conference on Nubian Studies.  
(Applications: Prof. Dominique Valbelle, Institute for Papyrology and Egyptology, Postbox 149, 59653 VILLENEUVE D'ASQ (France).
5. September 25th - October 1st 1994 : Split (Croatia)<sup>1</sup>, 13th International Congress on Christian Archaeology  
(Applications: Dr. E. Marin, Archaeological Museum, Zrinsko-Frankopanska 25, 58000 SPLIT (Croatia)).

P. v. M.

<sup>1</sup> In spite of some doubts, till today (August 3rd 1993) the location of this Conference hasn't been changed.



## THE SUDAN ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESEARCH SOCIETY

Registered Charity Number 1005966

While there is substantial public awareness of the civilization of Ancient Egypt, it has gone largely unrecognised that an equally rich cultural heritage, in the form of many thousands of archaeological sites, survives to the south of Egypt in modern-day Sudan. These sites, dating from all periods of human activity in the country, from the Palaeolithic to the Islamic periods, include the remains of major indigenous civilizations - of Kerma, Napata (whose kings conquered Egypt in the 25th Dynasty) and Meroe, and of the Christian Kingdoms of medieval Nubia. Upstanding monuments include temples, churches, palaces and innumerable pyramids.

Unlike Egypt, in Sudan the Nile Valley and the lands to the east and west are relatively little explored archaeologically; few of the sites have received scientific attention, while most are completely undocumented. This is particularly unfortunate in view of the increasingly serious threats now posed to the sites by modern development, in particular by the construction of new irrigation and building schemes. The pace of development promises to have an equally devastating effect on the contemporary cultures of Sudan as populations are displaced because of the desertification of the sub-Saharan belt and of dam construction in the Nile Valley. Ethnographical studies are also, therefore, of prime importance.

Through a series of lectures, newsletters, and an annual seminar on recent fieldwork, the Society hopes to promote interest in the ancient and medieval cultures, and in the traditional cultures, of Sudan and to publicise the danger to Sudan's heritage. In addition the Society acts as a fund-raising body to allow it to participate directly in archaeological and ethnographical expeditions and to support other appropriate projects.

Anyone who is interested in joining the Society or who would like further information please contact The Hon. Secretary, The Sudan Archaeological Research Society, c/o The British Museum, London, WC1B 3DG, U.K. Tel: 071 323 8306





THE SUDAN  
ARCHAEOLOGICAL  
RESEARCH SOCIETY

Registered Charity Number 1005966

## MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION FORM

I hereby apply for [indicate membership category desired and complete accordingly]:

( ) ordinary membership (£12 per annum)

( ) student membership (£6 per annum)

Available to bona fide students between the ages of 18 and 25. Insert here:

Brief details of studentship .....

.....

Date of birth .....

( ) institutional membership (£25 per annum)

Insert here:

Name and address of institution .....

.....

.....

Capacity in which signed on its behalf .....

I enclose the appropriate remittance of £ .....

Name .....

Address .....

.....

.....

Postcode ..... Telephone .....

Signature ..... Date .....

Please return the completed form to The Hon. Secretary, Sudan  
Archaeological Research Society, c/o The British Museum, London, WC1B  
3DG, U.K.