

ARCL0056: Introduction to the Archaeology of Sudan

2023–2024, Term 1

Years 2/3 core/option, 15 credits, Friday, 11:00–13:00, Room 410



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IMPORTANT INFORMATION REGARDING ASSESSMENTS:

The **coursework coversheet** is available on the course Moodle pages and here: <https://www.ucl.ac.uk/archaeology/current-students> under “Policies, Forms and Guidelines”.

Please enter **your five-digit candidate code on the coversheet and *in the subject line*** when you upload your work in Moodle.

Please use **your five-digit candidate code as the name of the file** you submit.

Please refer to <https://www.ucl.ac.uk/archaeology/current-students/ioa-student-handbook/13-information-assessment>

<https://www.ucl.ac.uk/archaeology/current-students/ioa-study-skills-guide/referencing-effectively-and-ioa-guidelines>

<https://www.ucl.ac.uk/students/exams-and-assessments/academic-integrity>

<https://library-guides.ucl.ac.uk/referencing-plagiarism/acknowledging-AI>

for instructions on coursework submission, IoA referencing guidelines and marking criteria, as well as UCL policies on penalties for late submission, over-length work, the use of text generation software (AI) and academic misconduct.

1. MODULE OVERVIEW

Module description

This module is to acquaint students with the Middle Nile valley, i.e. present-day Sudan, as a region of archaeological enquiry, which may be particularly pertinent to students with interests in African archaeology, Egyptology and, more generally, fieldwork in this area.

The module offers a broad sweep of the archaeology of the Middle Nile valley from the Palaeolithic to the post-Medieval Islamic period. Lectures focus on issues surrounding major cultural transitions and current scholarly debates regarding the nature of local societies during the various periods discussed, including the beginnings of food production and the potential role of climatic change, the relationships between Middle Nile polities and Egypt through the various periods, and the rise and trajectory of state-level societies – Kerma, Napata, Meroe and Medieval Nubia. The appraisal of these societies in the context of World Archaeology will also be discussed. The module will use data from research projects of both module coordinators, including completed and ongoing fieldwork, to reflect on these issues.

Module Aims

The aim of the module is to provide a problem-driven historical overview and an introduction to major themes currently debated in the archaeology of Sudan, i.e. the Middle Nile valley and adjacent regions. On successful completion of the module, students will:

- understand the outlines of Sudanese history from prehistory to the Islamic era
- be familiar with archaeological key sites in the Middle Nile valley and be able to relate them to individual periods of the Sudanese history
- understand the geographical, historical and social contexts of a range of material and non-material cultural expressions of the Sudanese past
- understand the disciplinary underpinnings of archaeology in the Nile valley
- be familiar with and able to contribute to current debates in Sudanese Archaeology within the context of World Archaeology

Learning Outcomes

On successful completion of the module, students should be able to demonstrate:

- source-critical approaches to archaeological material from the Middle Nile valley and adjacent regions
- the ability to assess and integrate and different research resources, including research literature, objects, archives and databases
- independent problem solving based on real data sets.

Methods of Assessment

This module is assessed by means of an object report of 1200 words, contributing 40% to the final grade for the module, and an essay of 1800 words, contributing 60% to the final grade for the module.

Communications

- **Moodle is the main hub** for this course.
- Important information will be posted by the module coordinators in the **Announcements section of the Moodle page** and you will automatically receive an email notification for these.
- Please post general queries relating to module content, assessments and administration **in the Moodle Q&A forum**.
- For personal queries, please contact the co-ordinators by email.

Week-by-week summary

Week	Date	Topic	Lecturers
1	06.10.2023	Setting the scene: geographical background, palaeoecology, history of research	DQF, CN
2	13.10.2023	The Palaeolithic and Mesolithic: The emergence of sedentism and pottery	DQF
3	20.10.2023	The Neolithic and Chalcolithic: The way to food production, and the divergence of the Middle Nile valley and Egypt	DQF
4	27.10.2023	The Bronze Age Kerma culture: Towards social complexity	CN
5	03.11.2023	Egypt in Nubia: A case study in early colonialism and imperialism	CN
6		READING WEEK	
7	17.11.2023	C-Group and Pan-Grave culture: Variability in Bronze Age ways of life	CN
8	24.11.2023	The Napatan and Meroitic period I	DQF
9	01.12.2023	The Meroitic period II	DQF
10	08.12.2023	The post-Meroitic period and the Medieval period I	CN
11	15.12.2023	The Medieval period II and the Islamic period	CN

Lecturers (or other contributors)

The module is taught jointly by Dorian Q Fuller (DQF) and Claudia Naeser (CN).

Weekly Module Plan

The module is taught through lectures and discussions. Students are required to undertake set readings and complete pre-class activities in order to be able to actively participate in the discussion. Lectures will be held 11:00-13:00 pm on Friday, Room 410 in the Institute of Archaeology.

Workload

This is a 15-credit module which equates to 150 hours of learning time including session preparation, background reading, and researching and writing your assignments. With that in mind you should expect to organise your time in roughly this way:

20 hours	Staff-led teaching sessions
50 hours	Self-guided session preparation (reading and other activities), about 5 hours a week
40 hours	Reading for, and writing, Essay 1
40 hours	Reading for, and writing, Essay 2

2. ASSESSMENT

This module is assessed by means of an object report of 1200 words, contributing 40% to the final grade for the module, and an essay of 1800 words, contributing 60% to the final grade for the module.

Each assignment and possible approaches to it will be discussed in class, in advance of the submission deadline. If students are unclear about the nature of an assignment, they should discuss this with the module co-ordinators in advance (via office hours or class Moodle forum). You will receive feedback on your written coursework via Moodle and have the opportunity to discuss your marks and feedback with the co-ordinators in their office hours.

The IoA marking criteria can be found in the IoA Student Handbook (Section 13: Information on assessment). The IoA Study Skills Guide provides useful guidance on writing different types of assignment.

Please note that **late submission, exceeding the maximum word count** and **academic misconduct (unacknowledged use of text generation software and plagiarism)** will be penalized and can significantly reduce the mark awarded for the assignment and/or overall module result. Please do consult

- <https://www.ucl.ac.uk/archaeology/current-students/ioa-student-handbook/13-information-assessment> with sections 13.7–13.8: coursework submission, 13.10: word count, 13.12–14: academic integrity
- <https://www.ucl.ac.uk/students/exams-and-assessments/academic-integrity> for UCL's guidance on academic integrity
- <https://library-guides.ucl.ac.uk/referencing-plagiarism/acknowledging-AI> for UCL's guidance on how to acknowledge the use of text generation software.

Assessment 1: Object report (1,200 words)

This assessment contributes 40% to the final grade for the module. The submission deadline is **midnight Friday, 17 November 2023, on Turnitin**. The marked report will be returned to the students by Friday, 15 December 2023.

Assessment task: Discuss the significance of one object on display in the Petrie Museum or the British Museum in relation to the themes addressed in class. Focus your reasoning on the object and include a detailed description of its form, material, and manufacture, and discuss its origin and archaeological context. A (non-exhaustive) list of potential objects will be provided on Moodle. Discuss your choice with the module co-ordinator **by 7 November 2023**.

Your report should comprise:

- a clear (but brief) **introduction** to set the scene and outline your approach,
- the **main part** with a well-structured, fully-referenced description that summarises your reading,
- a **conclusion** with your OWN assessment/evaluation: please feel free to agree or disagree with conclusions reached by different authors you have read. What do YOU think is significant? It is not about who is right or wrong, but about how the evidence is interpreted.

Please note: The use of software to generate content is not allowed for this assessment and will be penalized. The use of software for language and writing review and improvement is permitted, and **the software and the way it has been used must be indicated in the relevant boxes on the coursework coversheet**. UCL defines language and writing review as checking "areas of academic writing such as structure, fluency, presentation, grammar, spelling, punctuation, and language translation".

Assessment 2: Essay (1,800 words)

This assessment contributes 60% to the final grade for the module. The submission deadline is **midnight Thursday, 11 January 2024, on Turnitin**. The marked essay will be returned to the students by Friday, 9 February 2024.

Pick ONE of the following titles:

PLEASE USE THE EXACT TITLE, NOT AN APPROXIMATION.

1. How has the Mesolithic in the Middle Nile valley been characterised by archaeological research? Which similarities and differences in comparison to other regions were established? Which reasons have archaeologists given for the trajectory witnessed in the Middle Nile valley?
2. Discuss the chronological framework and the reasons archaeologists have given for the transition to food production, i.e. the Neolithisation, in the Middle Nile valley. Weigh the evidence **using one or two sites** as case studies. Which of the scenarios suggested by previous research do you find convincing, and why?
3. What is the evidence for social complexity and hierarchy in early Nubia? Select a period (e.g. Neolithic, A-Group, C-Group, Early to Classic Kerma) and discuss the evidence for social complexity in the context of **one or two archaeological sites**. To what extent do categories such as chiefdom or state have relevance for interpreting these data?
4. What can be learnt about the social organization and cultural traditions of prehistoric peoples of the Middle Nile valley from the study of cemeteries and grave assemblages?
5. How did Egyptian presence in the Middle Nile valley affect the course of cultural-historical developments in the area? You may wish to focus on a particular period, such as the Middle Kingdom or New Kingdom. Also, consider the nature of Egyptian conquest in terms of colonialism or imperialism.
6. What is the evidence for the production, distribution, use and disposal of metal artefacts during either the Kerma period, or the Napatan and Meroitic periods?
7. How have the Middle Nile polities of the 1st millennium BC and AD been characterized? Which criteria have been used, and how persuasive do you consider the arguments brought forward based on the archaeological evidence?
8. Which factors have been named as having contributed to the end of the Meroitic Kingdom? Weigh alternative hypotheses – which do you consider most convincing and why?

Please note: The use of software to generate content is not allowed for this assessment and will be penalized. The use of software for language and writing review and improvement is permitted, and **the software and the way it has been used must be indicated in the relevant boxes on the course-work coversheet**. UCL defines language and writing review as checking "areas of academic writing such as structure, fluency, presentation, grammar, spelling, punctuation, and language translation".

3. RESOURCES AND PREPARATION FOR CLASS

Preparation for class

You are expected to read **two Essential Readings and undertake pre-class online activities on Moodle** each week. Completing these is essential for your effective participation in the activities and discussions that we will have in class, and it will greatly enhance your understanding of the material covered. **Further readings are provided on the Online Reading List** for you to get a sense of the range of resources on a specific site and current research on a given topic, and for you to draw upon for your assessments. The online reading list is accessible through the Moodle page of the module, or directly here: <https://rl.talis.com/3/ucl/lists/CFAAC3BC-4987-80BE-ADB3-4F47A3CE1DAE.html>.

Recommended basic texts and online resources

This section provides general reference works for the module as a whole, with useful bibliographies. **Do also refer to this list for background research for essays. All titles are in the IoA Library.**

Essential reading

Emberling, G. and B. B. Williams (eds) 2021. *The Oxford Handbook of Ancient Nubia*. New York: Oxford University Press. **E-BOOK**

Raue, D. (ed.) 2019. *Handbook of Ancient Nubia*. Berlin and Boston: De Gruyter. **E-BOOK**

Edwards, D.N. 2004. *The Nubian Past*. London and New York: Routledge. **E-BOOK**, EGYPTOLOGY E 120 EDW

Adams, W.Y. 1977. *Nubia: Corridor to Africa*. Princeton: Princeton University Press. **E-BOOK**, EGYPTOLOGY B 60 ADA; Arabic translation by Mahgoub El-Tigani Mahmoud 2004. النوبة رواق إفريقيا. Al-Fatima Brothers.

Other introductions, overviews and major syntheses

Cabon, O. and V. Francigny 2017. *Historie et civilisations du Soudan: De la préhistoire à nos jours*. Paris: Éditions Soleb. **E-BOOK**

Török, L. 1997. *The Kingdom of Kush. Handbook of the Napatan-Meroitic Civilization*. Handbuch der Orientalistik. 1. Abteilung: Der Nahe und Mittlere Osten 31. Leiden: Brill. **E-BOOK**, EGYPTOLOGY B 60 TOR

Trigger, B. 1965. *History and Settlement in Lower Nubia*. Yale University Publications in Anthropology 69. New Haven, CT: Dept. of Anthropology, Yale University. EGYPTOLOGY B 60 TRI

Welsby, Derek A. 1996. *The Kingdom of Kush: The Napatan and Meroitic Empires*. London: British Museum Press EGYPTOLOGY B 60 WEL

Specialist journals publishing recent research

Sudan & Nubia: <http://www.sudarchrs.org.uk/resources/publications/journal-sudan-nubia/>

Der antike Sudan: <https://www.sag-online.de/der-antike-sudan-mitteilungen-der-sag-e-v-mittsag/mittsag-titel-inhalt-und-download/>, includes articles in English

Encyclopedias and collections of source material

Eide, T., T. Hägg, R.H. Pierce and L. Török 1994–2000. *Fontes Historiae Nubiorum. Textual Sources for the History of the Middle Nile Region between the Eighth Century BC and the Sixth Century AD*. 4 vols. Bergen: Department of Greek, Latin and Egyptology. **E-BOOK**, EGYPTOLOGY B 60 FON

Porter, R. and R.L.B. Moss 1951. *Topographical Bibliography of Ancient Egyptian Hieroglyphic Texts, Reliefs, and Paintings. Volume 7: Nubia, the Deserts, and Outside Egypt*. Oxford: Clarendon. **E-BOOK**, EGYPTOLOGY A 1 POR. Nicknamed the "Porter/Moss"

Vantini, G. 1975. *Oriental Sources Concerning Nubia*. Heidelberg, Warsaw: Heidelberger Akademie der Wissenschaften, Polish Academy of Sciences. STORE 02-00357

Information on individual topics can also be found in Egyptological resources such as:

Helck, W. and E. Otto (eds) 1975–1986. *Lexikon der Ägyptologie*. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz. EGYPTOLOGY A 2 LEX. Individual entries in German, English and French

Redford, D.B. (ed.) 2001. *The Oxford Encyclopedia of Ancient Egypt*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. **E-BOOK**, EGYPTOLOGY A 2 OXF

Multiple voices: Mind that the resources quoted here may not be available at UCL libraries

Faraji, S. 2012. *Roots of Nubian Christianity Uncovered: The Triumph of the Last Pharaoh*. Trenton, NJ: Africa World Press.

Harkless, N.D. 2006. *Nubian Pharaohs and Meroitic Kings. The Kingdom of Kush*. Bloomington: AuthorHouse.

Monges, M.M. 1997. *Kush, the Jewel of Nubia: Reconnecting the Root System of African Civilization*. Trenton: Africa World Press.

Schmidt, P.R. (ed.) 2009. *Postcolonial Archaeologies in Africa*. Santa Fe: School for Advanced Research Press. INST ARCH DC 100 SCH

Schmidt, P.R. and R.J. McIntosh (eds) 1996. *Plundering Africa's Past*. Bloomington and London: Indiana University Press and James Currey. INST ARCH DC 100 SCH; ANTHROPOLOGY Q 95 SCH

Relevant collections of material can be found at the Petrie Museum and in the Sudan Gallery of the British Museum. Students are recommended to visit these collections. For the online catalogues see here:

- <http://petriecat.museums.ucl.ac.uk/> Online catalogue of the Petrie Museum
- <http://www.britishmuseum.org/> The British Museum, with online catalogue

4. SYLLABUS

The following is an outline for the module as a whole and identifies the Essential Readings relevant to each session. **Note that further readings can be accessed through the Online Reading List.**

The individual sessions explore the main periods of Sudanese history apropos key sites. This provides the basis for discussing core themes and trends in current research in the archaeology of the Middle Nile valley and adjacent regions.

1 Setting the scene: geographical background, palaeoecology, history of research (DQF, CN)

This lecture introduces the study area providing both, a geographical overview and an appraisal of the history of archaeological research in the region. Early Egyptocentric interpretations viewed the Middle Nile societies as poor reflections and peripheral to Pharaonic Egypt. The investigation of the region's past has been part of the colonial project from the 1820s onwards. Racist thinking entered archaeological interpretations at the turn to the 20th century. Only the last fifty years brought about a shift in perspective and an appreciation for the ancient cultures of the Middle Nile valley in their own right.

As a basis for further discussions, this class will also investigate the terms 'Nubia' and 'Nubians' and how they have been used at different periods in the past and in different present-day scholarly and public contexts. The lecture will also provide a background to the question of whether the Middle Nile valley should be seen as a corridor, linking Egypt and the Mediterranean with sub-Saharan Africa or a cul-de-sac, an issue which has repercussions on how we conceptualize the role of Middle Nile valley societies in superregional dynamics throughout the periods addressed in the module.

We will also examine the evidence for and the significance of past environmental change since the Last Glacial Maximum (18,000 bp), especially the oscillating wet and dry periods of the early to middle Holocene (10,000-4000 BC). We will explore how climatic changes would have affected the flora, fauna and available resource within different regions, including the desert, the wadi systems and the Nile

valley. The issue of how human groups adapted to changing environmental contexts will be taken up further in subsequent lectures.

Essential reading

Näser, C. 2021. Past, present, future: The Archaeology of Nubia. In: Emberling, G. and B. B. Williams (eds). *The Oxford Handbook of Ancient Nubia*. New York: Oxford University Press, 29–47. **E-BOOK**

Williams, M. 2021. Holocene environments in Northeast Africa. In: Emberling, G. and B. B. Williams (eds). *The Oxford Handbook of Ancient Nubia*. New York: Oxford University Press, 53–80. **E-BOOK**

2 The Palaeolithic and Mesolithic: The emergence of sedentism and pottery (DQF)

This lecture offers an overview of the earliest periods of Middle Nile history, from the Palaeolithic to the Mesolithic. It introduces the evidence of human fossils from the area as well as stone tool technology and other aspects of the archaeological record from these periods. Sites from adjacent regions are discussed for comparison and in order to put the Sudanese evidence in a wider context.

Two important changes in the last ten thousand years of human history were the adoption of a sedentary way of life, which included the emergence of formal burial practices, and the introduction of pottery, which both signal major breaks in economic strategies, food technologies and social organisation. In the Middle Nile valley, both phenomena appear in Mesolithic contexts, i.e. clearly predate the 'Neolithic revolution' with the adoption of animal husbandry and farming. The session explores the trajectories of these changes and evaluates them in comparison to early Holocene dynamics in other areas of the world.

Essential reading

Masojć, M. 2021. Palaeolithic hunter-gatherers of Nubia. In: Emberling, G. and B. B. Williams (eds). *The Oxford Handbook of Ancient Nubia*. New York: Oxford University Press, 81–100. **E-BOOK**

Usai, D. 2021. From foraging to food producing: The Mesolithic and Neolithic of the Middle Nile valley. In: Emberling, G. and B. B. Williams (eds). *The Oxford Handbook of Ancient Nubia*. New York: Oxford University Press, 101–124. **E-BOOK (Essential Reading for next week, too)**

3 The Neolithic and Chalcolithic: The way to food production, and the divergence of the Middle Nile valley and Egypt (DQF)

This lecture discusses the evidence for the transition to food production in the Middle Nile valley and adjacent regions. It visits the ongoing controversies surrounding the emergence of early pastoralism in the Eastern Sahara and the Kerma basin and situates them in their wider African and Middle Eastern contexts. Current debates about and new evidence on the origins of Sorghum and African millet cultivation will be briefly reviewed.

The transition to food production goes hand in hand social transformations. We will explore the pertinent evidence, such as changes in settlement patterns, the occurrence of formal cemeteries with richly furnished graves and the appearance of new categories of material culture and look into models which archaeologists have built to explain what triggered these changes and how they led to, or inversely were brought about by, social inequality or complexity.

In the late fourth millennium BC, the early Egyptian state emerges in the Lower Nile valley. We will investigate contemporary developments in Nubia, focusing on the Lower Nubian A-Group, and evaluate the evidence of growing social stratification and changing patterns of interaction between Egypt and Middle Nile polities in that era.

Essential reading

Usai, D. 2021. From foraging to food producing: The Mesolithic and Neolithic of the Middle Nile valley. In: Emberling, G. and B. B. Williams (eds). *The Oxford Handbook of Ancient Nubia*. New York: Oxford University Press, 101–124. **E-BOOK**

Winchell, F., C.J. Stevens, C. Murphy, L. Champion and D.Q Fuller 2017. Evidence for sorghum domestication in fourth millennium BC eastern Sudan: Spikelet morphology from ceramic impressions of the Butana Group, *Current Anthropology* 58:5, 673–683. **E-RESOURCE**

4 The Bronze Age Kerma culture: Towards social complexity (CN)

This lecture introduces the Bronze Age Kerma Culture which flourished in the Middle Nile valley from c. 2500 to 1500 BC. Next to surveying the evidence from the eponymous site of Kerma near the Third Nile Cataract, we will explore Kerma sites in other regions, such as the island of Sai, the Fourth Cataract and Lower Nubia. Different models for conceptualizing the social and political organisation of the Kerma culture will be discussed and situated in wider debates of the Bronze Age in World Archaeology.

Essential reading

Edwards, D.N. 2004. *The Nubian Past*. London and New York: Routledge. Read Chapter 4, pp. 75–88, 90–91, 94–97, 101–111; **E-BOOK**, EGYPTOLOGY E 120 EDW

Hafsaas-Tsakos, H. 2009. The Kingdom of Kush: An African centre on the periphery of the Bronze Age World System, *Norwegian Archaeological Review* 42:1, 50–70. **E-RESOURCE**

5 Egypt in Nubia: A case study in early colonialism (CN)

Through all periods of history, Egypt and the Middle Nile valley societies were closely entangled economically, culturally and politically. From the Old Kingdom onwards, Egyptians exploited resources in and adjacent to the Lower Nubian Nile valley. In the Middle Kingdom, they permanently occupied Lower Nubia, creating a fortified buffer zone towards the increasingly mighty Kerma polity. Pharaohs of the early New Kingdom pushed further south, destroying Kerma and occupying the region up to Jebel Barkal below the Fourth Cataract. This session explores the dynamics of these interactions as well as the political and economic interests which underlay them. We will investigate which resources and means Egyptian pharaohs commanded and used to dominate the Middle Nile valley.

Research of the past decades made sense of these phenomena in the framework of imperialism and colonialism. New Kingdom Egypt is often called an empire. But what do these terms signify? We will explore how new archaeological evidence, reinterpretations of historical records and a critical engagement with theories and models from modern history and political sciences change our understanding in this respect. We will also look at recent research which employs concepts like identity and agency to focus on the everyday lives of both occupiers and members of local societies, and on how Nubian groups asserted their interests in these constellations – thus again adding new dimensions to our understanding of the political and social dynamics under study.

Essential reading

Knoblauch, C. 2019. Middle Kingdom Fortresses. In: Raue, D. (ed.). *Handbook of Ancient Nubia*. Berlin and Boston: De Gruyter, 367–391. **E-BOOK**

Smith, S.T. 1997. State and empire in the Middle and New Kingdoms. In: Lustig, J. (ed.). *Anthropology and Egyptology: A Developing Dialogue*. Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 66–89. **DIGITISED READING**, EGYPTOLOGY QUARTOS A 9 LUS

Reading week: NO TEACHING

7 C-Group and Pan-Grave culture: Variability in Bronze Age ways of life (CN)

Next to the Kerma culture, two other groups have been differentiated for Bronze Age Nubia: the C-Group and the Pan-Grave culture. Archaeological evidence for them is concentrated in Lower Nubia and Egypt, and has given rise to a number of hypotheses and ongoing debates about their spatial extension, chronology, social organisation and entanglement with contemporary Egypt. The session introduces the archaeological material as well as major (Egyptian) textual sources related to the C-Group and the Pan-Grave culture. We will also use them as an example to study how archaeological interpretations of Nubian cultures have shaped in the past one hundred years, starting from the first salvage operations in Lower Nubia in the early 20th century, through the UNESCO Campaign to Save the Monuments of Nubia up to present-day archival studies of material excavated in these endeavours.

Essential reading

Hafsaas, H. 2021. The C-Group people in Lower Nubia: Cattle pastoralists on the frontier between Egypt and Kush. In: Emberling, G. and B. B. Williams (eds). *The Oxford Handbook of Ancient Nubia*. New York: Oxford University Press, 157–178. **E-BOOK**

Näser, C. 2012. Nomads at the Nile. Towards an archaeology of interaction. In: Barnard, H. and K. Duistermaat (eds). *The History of the Peoples of the Eastern Desert from Prehistory to the Present, Proceedings of a Conference at the Netherlands-Flemish Institute in Cairo and the Cotsen Institute of Archaeology at UCLA, 25–27 November 2008*. Los Angeles: Cotsen Institute of Archaeology Press, 80–89. **E-BOOK**, EGYPTOLOGY QUARTOS B 5 BAR

8 The Napatan and Meroitic period I (DQF)

In this lecture we will consider the end of Egyptian imperialism in Nubia during the 20th dynasty, controversies surrounding depopulation and cultural continuities. A particular focus will be on the evidence for the rise of a powerful kingdom in the Middle Nile at Napata (Jebel Barkal and nearby sites like el-Kurru). This new power conquered Egypt and was accepted by the priests of Amun as the rightful pharaohs known as Dynasty 25. The origins of this dynasty, however, remain enigmatic. We will also look at the archaeological signature of this new phase in Middle Nile culture-history. We will briefly consider the first four centuries of the Kushite Kingdom, i.e. the Napatan period, and issues surrounding population distribution throughout Nubia, such as whether or not Lower Nubia was depopulated in the first millennium BC.

We will then consider the shift in capital and royal burial from Napata to Meroe, and other cultural and economic innovations, including agricultural changes, that characterize the transition to the Meroitic period.

Essential reading

Pope, J. 2019. 25th Dynasty. In: Wendrich, W. et al. (eds), *UCLA Encyclopedia of Egyptology*. **E-RESOURCE**

Török, L. 1997. *The Kingdom of Kush. Handbook of the Napatan-Meroitic Civilization*. Handbuch der Orientalistik. 1. Abteilung: Der Nahe und Mittlere Osten 31. Leiden: Brill. Read pp. 82–130, pp. 342–424, 488–499; **E-BOOK**, EGYPTOLOGY B 60 TOR (**Essential Reading for next week, too**)

9 The Meroitic period II (DQF)

In this lecture we will explore evidence for and debates over the organization of the Meroitic Kingdom as well as cultural manifestations of this kingdom in the archaeological record, including temples, religious iconography, artistic production and long-distance trade. We also consider key craft industries of the Meroitic period, including fine kaolinite pottery production, iron metallurgy and cotton textile production and how these crafts contributed to placing Meroe with a world system.

Essential reading

Edwards, D. 1998. Meroe and the Sudanic Kingdoms, *Journal of African History* 39, 175–193. **E-RESOURCE**

Humphris, J. 2021. Iron production at Meroe. In: Emberling, G. and B. B. Williams (eds). *The Oxford Handbook of Ancient Nubia*. New York: Oxford University Press, 975–994. **E-BOOK**

10 The post-Meroitic period and the Medieval period I (CN)

In this class, we will explore the debates surrounding the end of the Meroitic Kingdom in the fourth century AD. We will examine the evidence for cultural change in the Meroitic heartland and Lower Nubia and look at the ways in which different scholars have interpreted this evidence and its possible relationship with wider transformations at the onset of the Late Antique period. In this context, the class also introduces the archaeological cultures traditionally called the post-Meroitic and the X-Group which are mainly known from their rich funerary evidence, including the so-called royal burials in Qustul and Ballana. We will discuss the attempts to correlate the archaeological evidence with the Nobadae (Nubian-speakers) and Blemmyes (Beja-speakers) identified as ethnic groups in the textual record. Finally, we will examine the introduction of Christianity to the region, and assess the social and political contexts which led to the formation of three Medieval kingdoms in the Middle Nile valley in the later 6th century AD.

Essential reading

Lenoble, P. and N.D.M. Sharif 1992. Barbarians at the gates? The royal mounds at El Hobagi and the end of Meroe, *Antiquity* 66, 626-635. **E-RESOURCE**

Fuller, D.Q 2014. Agricultural innovation and state collapse in Meroitic Nubia: The impact of the Savannah Package. In: Stevens, C.J., S. Nixon, M.A. Murray and D.Q Fuller (eds). *The Archaeology of African Plant Use*. Walnut Creek, Ca.: Left Coast Press, 165–178. **DIGITISED READING**, INST ARCH DC 4.5 STE

11 Medieval period II and the Islamic period (CN)

This class is dedicated to the Medieval and the Islamic periods up to the present. We will explore the characteristics of Medieval Christianity in the Middle Nile valley and how it relates to the cultures and politics of the wider Medieval world, including the spread of Islam from the 7th century AD onward. We will juxtapose the archaeological evidence from churches, monasteries and the capitals in the three Nubian kingdoms of Nobadia, Makuria and Alodia with the record from non-elite settlements and manifestations of the Christian faith in rural contexts.

The history of the Middle Nile valley in the 2nd millennium AD, including the transition to Islam, is severely understudied. We will explore what archaeological and historical evidence exists, and outline the trajectory of Middle Nile valley societies through the periods of Funj and Turkish domination, the Mahdiya uprising, the colonial era and political independence into the 21st century AD.

Essential reading

Obłuski, A. 2021. The archaeology of Medieval Nubian Kingdoms. In: Emberling, G. and B. B. Williams (eds). *The Oxford Handbook of Ancient Nubia*. New York: Oxford University Press, 829–846. **E-BOOK**

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