

ORIENTAL INSTITUTE NUBIAN EXPEDITION (OINE) PUBLICATION PROJECT

Lisa Heidorn, Bruce Williams, and Artur Obłuski

Volumes 14 and 12 of the OINE series have been approved for publication and volume 13 is almost ready for submission. Beyond the publication of our extensive research on the Nubian sites excavated during the High Dam Campaign from 1959 and 1964, work on 3D images for Dorginarti is now under way and we are designing attributes to establish databases for both Serra East and Dorginarti. The latter online database project will complete the activities required by our grants from the White-Levy Foundation and the ARCE Antiquities Endowment Fund. This is surely a major milestone for the project and we believe that these volumes will make a major contribution to our understanding of the history and cultural development in northeast Africa, stretching from the fourth millennium BCE (OINE 3–4) through the early first millennium (OINE 14), and on through the early second millennium CE (OINE 12) with many stops between (OINE 1–2, 5–10) in northeast Africa.

This year marks a point when the project turns from one set of tasks to another. It is useful now to summarize the works that are now complete or nearing completion before discussing the future.



Figure 1. Oriental Institute Nubian Expedition 1964 — Serra East and Dorginarti
Back row: John C. Lorence, Mielburn D. Thurman, and Otto J. Schaden
Front row: Louise Storts, Bruce G. Trigger, Richard H. Pierce, James E. Knudstad, and Wenche Pierce
(Not present: Rudolph H. Dornemann, Sylvia Ericson, and Alfred J. Hoerth)

OINE 14 — The Second Cataract Fortress of Dorginarti

Lisa Heidorn

In the past year the manuscript has undergone outside peer review and been approved for publication by the director and Oriental Institute publications committee. At present the manuscript, figures, maps, and plates are being edited and formatted.

The book's major contribution is the augmentation of the social and political history of Lower Nubia in the period between the withdrawal of the Egyptians from the region under the last Ramesside kings and the rise of the Twenty-Fifth Dynasty rulers at Napata, a period of just over 300 years. Before now, because of limited textual and archaeological data, the area was considered mostly unpopulated and unimportant during this period. Graves with pottery of Napatan date (eighth–seventh century BCE), texts mentioning Egyptian Viceroys of Kush, a title insinuating control over the area of Lower Nubia during the Egyptian Third Intermediate Period (ca. 1000–730 BCE), and the stele of queen Katimala at Semna West (ninth century BCE) mentioning conflict and claiming some kind of control over the Mountains of Gold in the Eastern Desert as well as lands and herds of Amun, were left floating in an otherwise unwritten account of the area.

The archaeological materials from Dorginarti and the evidence just mentioned together provide enough information to suggest that Lower Nubia was not an abandoned backwater in the early first millennium BCE, as is sometimes suggested. A fortress was initially established at the site towards the end of the ninth century BCE or early eighth century, and the site's



Figure 2. The Nubian field crew of workmen, 1964, at Serra East (photo: James E. Knudstad)



Figure 3. Housing/house units along the north wall at Dorginarti (photo: James E. Knudsta)

architecture, pottery, and objects provide data to fill some of the long hiatus in the history of relations between Egypt and Nubia.

The fortress has the appearance of an Egyptian establishment because of the prevalence of wheel-made Upper Egyptian marls and silt vessels, suggesting that its provisions were supplied from Egypt. If in fact it was the Kushites who had established the fortress, or who had assumed control of it, then the pottery would indicate that they had strong links with Upper Egypt by the reign of Alara or Kashta. However, there is, as textual evidence, only the inscription of queen Katimala to prove that by the late ninth or early eighth century the Kushites had gained control in Lower Nubia or that they enjoyed close relations with the administration in Upper Egypt.

The Level III fortress was home to a permanent garrison, with houses that could accommodate families, and even a child's footprint was found in the floor plaster of the official residence. The fort at this time served as a long-term base for guarding the river and its surrounding territory and was a center for the provisioning of administrative personnel, resident soldiers and their dependents, roving military patrols, and reinforcements. Lower Nubia was considered a precarious region, and whoever controlled the passages through the Second Cataract region, where Dorginarti was situated, also controlled the luxury trade from the south and the nearby desert routes, including the gold-bearing regions in the eastern desert.

The later fortress at Dorginarti yielded Egyptian pottery, as well as Phoenician and East Greek amphorae sherds, all dating to the sixth century BCE. The historical events surrounding this Level II foundation are much more certain, since there is textual and archaeological evidence to corroborate the reason for its existence. The re-establishment of the stronghold



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was clearly undertaken as part of the Twenty-Sixth Dynasty rulers' campaigns and raids into Lower Nubia, which is hinted at by evidence from the reigns of Psamtik I and Necho II, and which is most certainly attested by stelae recording an actual campaign of Psamtik II in the early sixth century BCE. The textual records are confirmed by graffiti left by Psamtik II's Greek, Carian, Phoenician soldiers at Abu Simbel, Buhen, and the nearby rocks of Gebel Sheikh Suleiman. Further proof is provided by the well-dated, imported amphorae at Dorginarti, which also date to the sixth century BCE.

We can only hope that other archaeological materials and texts will surface in the future resulting in the complete erasure of the "dark age" in first millennium BCE Nubia.

OINE 12 — Cerre Matto, the Churches, Houses, Workshops, and Cemetery

Bruce Williams

Built in the ruins of the Middle Kingdom fort, the Christian town at Serra East, called "Cerre Matto" in a document found there, the longest text in Old Nubian, was one of the most complete, and certainly the most coherent of the later medieval settlement sites excavated in Nubia. Its four churches, numerous free-standing houses, workshop area, and even cemetery, give vivid life to our understanding of the period. Although tiny in size, each less than 10 sq m, the churches were all complete domed basilicas. Two were named in documents, the Church of Jesus (probably the one in the center of the town), and the Church of the Cross (probably the

second of two churches erected to the south, where the cemetery was located). The cemetery was filled with low platforms, each with a little niche to hold a lighted lamp, many of them preserved, encrusted with the residue of repeated use. The houses were of much the same size, and stoutly built, in two and even more storeys. The ground floor rooms were vaulted, and the roofs flat, made of timbers, matting, and mud. Although the town was not formally planned, with exactly defined streets and alleys, the industrial area was carefully separated from the domestic buildings. With oval, circular and irregular lean-to-like structures of mudbrick and mud arranged on either side of a partition wall, it had ovens, hearths, bins and even kilns for pottery, rather surprising for a small town in an age when pottery production was precise and almost industrial.

OINE 13 — Cerre Matto, the Christian Period Pottery, Small Objects, Glass, and Texts

Bruce Williams

So many complex and standing buildings, including a church with fragmentary wall paintings, rapidly filled up the space for a volume. I decided to separate the pottery, objects, glass, and written records into a separate book, which is now receiving finishing touches for submission. There was a surprising amount of material. Christian Nubia's famous painted pottery was present in great abundance and its designs have an interesting interconnection with the Byzantine world, one not shared with Egypt just to the north. On the other hand, glazed pottery from Egypt and elsewhere in the Islamic world was surprisingly abundant in greater numbers than so far reported from other sites. It appears also to include locally-made glazed wares; a first for Nubia. As part of this project, we were able to verify that a major collection of Coptic and Old Nubian documents were indeed from Serra, making it one of the great documentary repositories, further verified by such items as an illuminated page from the *Book of the Institution of Archangel Michael*. Some years ago, Alexandros Tsakos, who has written the



Figure 4. Christian period sherd with a the head and forequarters of the mount belonging to a warrior saint, who would be shown spearing a dragon or other religious enemy



Figure 5. Christian period sherd with a unique depiction of a Nubian crown with horns, E19530

chapters on Greek, Coptic, and Old Nubian documents from Cerre Matto, translated the grave stela of a high official, eparch of Nubia Philoxenos who was buried close to the South Churches in 1025. This dates the foundation of the town over a century earlier than conventional dates for the Late Christian Period. Another team member, Robin Seignobos, who worked up the Arabic inscriptions, found in translating another work that Serra was named as a conquered town in the later thirteenth century. With no sign of disturbance, Cerre Matto lasted two and a half centuries through some tumultuous times, especially the conquest of Kasr Ibrim farther north by troops of the famous Saladin. Cerre Matto began earlier than supposed and lasted longer, more importantly, showing the Late Christian Period as one of thriving culture in Nubia. My thanks go out to fellow members of the Cerre Matto project team: Carol Meyer, Natasha Ayers, Lawrence Lissak, Dobrochna Zielinska, Nadejda Reshetnikova, Alexandros Tsakos, and Robin Seignobos.

Qasr el-Wizz

Artur Obłuski

In 2016–2017 the focus of the team was to work on a comparative analysis of Qasr el-Wizz material.

Artur Obłuski completed excavations of the Ghazali monastery in the Wadi Abu Dom of the Bayuda Desert, it being the closest analogy to the Qasr el-Wizz monastery known from Nubia so far, in terms of spatial organization. Pottery recovered from there will help Katarzyna Danyś to identify the characteristics of vessels used in Nubian monasteries. Still Qasr el-Wizz remains the only monastery in Nubia that yielded textual finds, a circumstance which will allow us to begin the study of spirituality in Nubian monasticism.

An article inspired by the study of the textual finds from Wizz written by Alexandros Tsakos, “Religious Literacy in Greek from the Christian Monastery at Qasr el Wizz, Lower Nubia,” has appeared in *Graeco-Africana et Afro-Byzantina*, Proceedings of the International Conference on Graeco-African and Afro-Byzantine Studies at the University of Johannesburg (October 27–November 1, 2014), Thekla Sansaridou-Hendrickx and Benjamin Hendrickx (eds.), Supplement to *Ekklesiastikos Pharos*, Johannesburg 2016, pp. 220–30.

Moreover, research on various aspects of the Nubian monasteries based on Qasr el-Wizz finds, like its economy, relation to Egyptian monasticism and overall comparison to monasticism on the fringes of the Byzantine World. This has been presented in several public talks, for instance, at the Oriental Institute, the Congress for Coptic Studies Claremont, California and the Papal Institute for Monastic Studies, Rome, Italy. Finally, the publication by Samuel Moawad, *Die arabische Version der Vita Dioscori: Edition und Übersetzung* (Patrologia Orientalis 56, fasc. 1, No 246, Turnhout 2016) has allowed Tsakos to reconstruct further lines of the manuscript find nr. 65-11-20, which contains previously unknown passages from (one of) the Sahidic version(s) of the Vita Dioscori.

The Fourth Cataract

With the completion of this part of the project, OINE 12, OINE 13, and OINE 14, the project will now turn attention to the excavations and survey conducted in 2007 and 2008 at Hosh el-Geruf, al-Widay and on the island of Umm Gebir in the Fourth Cataract area (see our previous

annual reports from year 2007–2008). As with the Dorginarti-Cerra Matto phase of the OINE project, we expect this to be a major effort that will result in two volumes. All the pottery sent from the Sudan to the Oriental Institute Museum in 2015 was unpacked and stored into our archaeology lab over the holiday period in 2016 and into the early months of 2017 by Bruce Williams, Kathryn Bandy, and Lisa Heidorn.

OINE 11 — Serra East, the Middle Kingdom Fortress of Repelling the Medjay and the New Kingdom Town of Teh-Khet

Bruce Williams

In addition to the Fourth Cataract publication project, the fortress of Serra East and its successors into the New Kingdom needs to be completed for publication, although major progress, the reconstitution of the survey and preparation of final plans was accomplished thanks to a grant from the Michela Schiff-Giorgini foundation. Like volumes OINE 12, 13, 14, and 15 (The Christian Monastery of Qasr el-Wizz), this volume results from the work of the Oriental Institute in the archaeological salvage occasioned by the construction of the High Dam at Aswan in the 1960s, etc. All of the sites published in the recent Nubian Expedition publications were excavated in the 1960s and were initially classified using the pottery, architectural, and object approaches of that era. Thus, it has been challenging to publish the materials with much less data than is usually required in current publications. From its inception, the project was focused on the visual side of archaeological presentation, to offer details that would make the reports serve as research resources rather than final conclusions. This approach is also used for the publication of OINE 11.

For many years, the records and materials were not accessible due to the complete renovation of the museum and its storage space, but, since 2010, we have been able to resume the work. Three areas have benefitted from the delay. Kathryn Bandy and Susan Penacho intensively restudied a large group of seal impressions found in quarry dumps at Serra East fortress, with many new types identified. Their reconsideration of the evidence for the types of objects and architecture shows that what was sealed now offers new information about the logistics of the fortress garrisons. Pottery is now studied very differently than it was when the excavation took place, and the resulting evidence for its manufacturing methods and its movement has already offered new information on the organization of ancient industry for me to incorporate it into OINE XX; this was the topic of a paper presented by Nadejda Reshetnikova and myself at pottery conference *Vienna 2 — Ancient Egyptian Ceramics in the 21st Century* in 2012 and subsequently published in the proceedings.

The architect for both seasons and director for one in 1964, James E. Knudstad, not only prepared meticulous measured sketches in addition to his final drawings, but he also recorded all of the survey data as well. This has allowed Nadejda Reshetnikova to create layered electronic drawings in AutoCAD that are completely scalable and usable for 3D presentation, a major technological leap.