

NUBIAN EXPEDITION PUBLICATION PROJECT

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After a hiatus of three decades, the Nubian Expedition Publication Project produced two volumes in the past year. The first, *Beads from Excavations at Qustul, Adindan, Serra East, Dorginarti, Ballana, and Kalabsha: A-Group, Post-A-Group, C-Group, N-Type, P-Type, Pan Grave, Kerma, Middle Kingdom, and New Kingdom*, by Joanna Then-Obłuska, is a major topical study of material from excavations by the Nubian Expedition between 1962 and 1964 (fig. 1). The second, *The Second Cataract Fortress of Dorginarti*, by Lisa A. Heidorn, is the final publication of a fortress and the small town it contained that was excavated under the direction of James E. Knudstad in 1964 (fig. 2).

Then-Obłuska undertook a major study of the beads excavated in Nubia while she was in residence in Chicago for an extended period from 2014 to 2016. Beads have been neglected artifacts in archaeology since its foundation, but newer publishing technology allows for better publication of beads' most significant features, such as their colors and manufacturing techniques. In recent decades, the study of beads has come into its own with the realization of their importance—not just for adornment but also for symbolism, trade, and archaeological dating. This new volume, in addition to being one of the most beautiful ever produced here, is also a study that takes archaeology in the region in a new direction. Using previous reports,

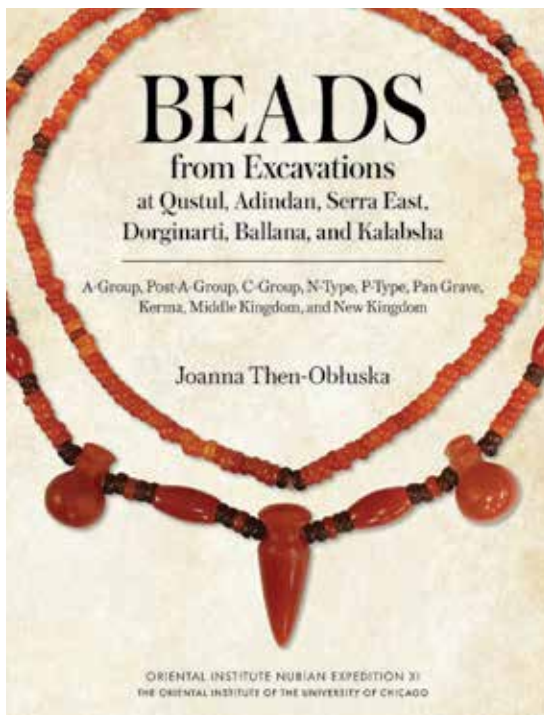


Figure 1. Cover of Then-Obłuska's beads volume.

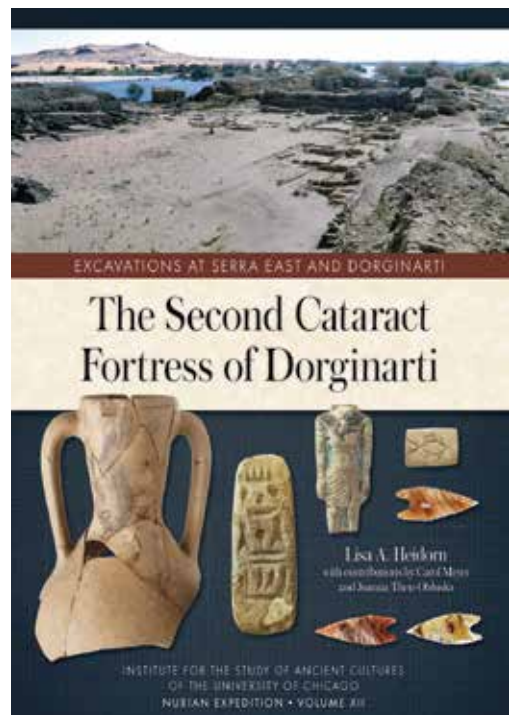


Figure 2. Cover of Heidorn's Dorginarti volume.

Then-Obłuska discovered early evidence from Ballana for a carnelian-bead workshop and objects from two graves in Qustul's Cemetery L that were probably used for shaping beads (see p. 18 of Then-Obłuska's publication). Thus the superb beads from the royal tombs in Cemetery L, across the river from Ballana, were sourced largely from Nubia, with the evidence reversing the assumed flow of such trade items only from the north.

The first Nubian Expedition publication using our institute's new name is the final report of the emergency excavations undertaken at Dorginarti for five months in 1964 by the University of Chicago's Oriental Institute (now the Institute for the Study of Ancient Cultures—ISAC) as part of the UNESCO Nubian salvage project necessitated by the building of the Aswan High Dam in the 1960s. Following a description of the fortress's landscape and resources, the book describes Dorginarti's architecture in detail, then presents the selection of artifacts brought back from the Sudan and stored in the ISAC Museum. The picture that emerges from the archaeological record shows the continuing importance of Lower Nubia after the withdrawal of Egyptian control in the late second millennium BCE and before the rise of the Kushite empire in the Twenty-Fifth Dynasty.

The best-known sites along the length of the Nile River's Second Cataract are the ruins of Egyptian towns and fortresses occupied during the Old, Middle, and New Kingdoms. The fortresses were part of Egypt's lines of defense and facilitated trade in this region. Trade, military, and cultural contacts existed between Egypt and Nubia throughout history because many desired commodities—raw materials and animal and plant products—stemmed from lands under Kushite control or beyond them to the south, east, and west. Although shipping via the Red Sea and the long haul through the western desert became more common from the mid-first millennium BCE onward, the Nile remained a vital conduit regardless of which state or tribal power controlled the regions along it.

The evidence from the fort indicates that Dorginarti existed in a later era than the better-known Middle and New Kingdom forts. The earliest ceramics found at the site date from the early first millennium BCE, and those from a second occupation stem from the early eighth century. The third major phase of occupation occurred after the campaign of Psamtik II into Nubia during the early sixth century BCE and did not extend past the Persian conquest of Egypt beginning in the last quarter of that century.

AL-WIDAY

In 2007 and 2008, the Nubian Expedition's work in the Fourth Cataract salvage area included excavating two cemeteries at al-Widay, roughly in the middle of the Fourth Cataract region. Although many institutions worked in the area, time was short and conditions were such that most work was done in surveys with only a limited amount of excavation. At al-Widay I the substantial cemetery was completely excavated, and the earlier, much-degraded tombs at al-Widay II were partly excavated. The former was completely excavated because no other cemetery of its size (more than 100 tombs) had been fully excavated, and the directors were particularly interested in tracing the history of a small population through time from approximately 1800 to 1500 BCE. The Nubian Expedition project is about to submit a full archaeological report of the two sites, including their tombs, objects, pottery, and human and animal remains. Because so little detail has been published on this region to date, the report is extensive and will comprise two volumes. The evidence illuminates the population that participated in the widespread cultural relations between riverine Nubia and the Eastern Desert in the early second millennium BCE and will go far in defining the connections within the region and the chronological stance of the Fourth Cataract remains.

The next phase of the Nubian Expedition's research and publication program, in 2023–24, focuses on the site of Hosh el-Geruf (figs. 3 and 4). This site was the first one investigated in 2007—a task made difficult by its lack of coherent occupational debris. But almost from the beginning it was clear that Hosh



Figure 3. View of Hosh el-Geruf from the east.

Figure 4. Group of grindstones at Hosh el-Geruf.



el-Geruf was a major gold-processing center where ores mined elsewhere in the Fourth Cataract region were reduced and the gold recovered, a bit of which was found in the form of beads at al-Widay I cemetery. Soon after its discovery, Hosh el-Geruf excited interest in the media, with stories on it in the *New York Times* and *Los Angeles Times* and by the BBC, among other outlets ranging from Kazakhstan to an Italian church publication.

In the past year, Bruce Williams gave a lecture on the site and its significance in the University of Munich series of seminars titled *Diverse Nile*. The existence of a regionally organized extraction industry in the Fourth Cataract, long considered remote, is remarkable, and its independent existence contemporary with the early kingdom of Kush farther north is more remarkable still. We expect that a volume giving much more complete information will substantially increase our knowledge of the major gold-mining and gold-processing industry in northeast Africa, especially since it is entirely local.

The accomplishment of publications and the progress toward submitting new ones is much more than a work of authorship. The project had financial support for the phase that produced the volume on Dorginarti from the Michaela Schiff-Giorgini Foundation, the American Research Center in Egypt's Antiquities Endowment Fund, and especially the Shelby White and Leon Levy Program for Archaeological Publications. This initial phase also supported the as-yet-unpublished volumes of the Christian remains

from Serre Matto (Serra East). For the research and publication of the al-Widay tombs and our current work on the Hosh el-Geruf materials, generous support has come from the Shelby White and Leon Levy Program for Archaeological Publications and the National Endowment for the Humanities Collaborative Research Program.
