

Geoff Emberling

Geoff Emberling returned to northern Sudan in winter 2008 as co-director (with Bruce Williams) of the Oriental Institute Nubian Expedition. Their work in the Fourth Cataract salvage project is reported elsewhere in this volume. The team excavated one Kerma cemetery completely (about 105 burials) and began work in a slightly later cemetery, as well as conducting a survey of a small seasonal island in the Nile called Umm Gebier. This season did not produce results as immediately spectacular as last year, when we found an ancient gold-extraction site, but the burials in particular present rich possibilities for further research on an ancient rural community. The National Corporation for Antiquities and Museums in Sudan has provisionally offered the Expedition a substantial gift of finds from their work, and it is hoped this will develop into an interesting exhibit in Chicago. Geoff published a brief popular article on the 2007 season in the Italian magazine *Pharaon* (“Alle fonti dell’oro”), and a longer scholarly report has been submitted to the Gdansk Archaeological Museum African Reports series as a tribute to the generosity of the Gdansk mission, which allowed the Chicago team to work in their concession. Geoff also gave lectures on the season’s finds to several different audiences in Chicago.

In the course of developing special exhibits and associated symposia, Geoff gave a lecture on “Geographical Knowledge in the Ancient Near East” here at the Oriental Institute and co-edited, with Katharyn Hanson, a book of essays on looting in Iraq which served as the Institute’s special exhibit catalog, *Catastrophe! The Looting and Destruction of Iraq’s Past* (OIMP 28).

INDIVIDUAL RESEARCH

Geoff once again co-taught, with Seth Richardson, an undergraduate core class, “The Assyrian Empire” with the help of Teaching Assistant Alexandra Witsell. This continues to be an excellent collaboration.

Geoff has continued over the past year to work as time allows on constructing the final stratigraphic sequence of the third-millennium B.C. “Temple Oval” at Tell Brak in northeastern Syria, which he excavated with co-director Helen McDonald from 1998 to 2004. They have made significant progress in making stratigraphic connections over a very large excavation area, as well as the more mundane tasks of data entry and database organization. Geoff has also continued to develop his ideas about the rise of Tell Brak as a city in the fourth millennium B.C. in lectures in Chicago and Toronto.

Finally, Geoff has continued to present and develop ideas about museums in lectures in Milwaukee and Toronto. As the model of the Oriental Institute suggests, museums do not have to base their value on acquiring antiquities. Rather, research and new discoveries can be a basis for generating interest in our field and educating the public.
