

A View from the Conquered: Lower Nubia during the Egyptian New Kingdom (Subject to Change)

Instructor

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Summary

Around 1550 BCE, Egypt conquered its southern neighbor, Nubia and integrated the region into its growing empire. After this conquest, there were significant changes in the material culture of Lower Nubia, the region from the First to the Second Cataract. Archaeological remains paint a picture of rapid adoption of Egyptian material culture, architecture, and iconography. But was this truly the case? Or was the reality of life in Lower Nubia under Egyptian rule more complicated? This course explores Lower Nubia during the Egyptian occupation, focusing on the response of native groups to their integration into a wide-ranging Egyptian colonial empire. We will discuss changes among the Nubia elites and the archaeology of the middle and lower classes during this time, with a focus on the supposed "Egyptianization" of the Lower Nubian population.

Session 1: Introduction to Lower Nubia

This session will introduce the geography of ancient Nubia and attempt to define what was "Nubia" in ancient times. We'll cover in detail the excavation history of the region, and the impact the Aswan High Dam had upon the field. Lastly, we'll discuss the recent colonial past of the region – how have these things impacted what we know about Lower Nubia?

Required Reading:

- Näser, Claudia. "Past, Present, Future: The Archaeology of Nubia." in *The Oxford Handbook of Ancient Nubia*, by Emberling, Geoff and Williams, Bruce B., 29–48. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2020.
- Matic, Uroš. "De-colonizing the Historiography and Archaeology of Ancient Egypt and Nubia. Part 1. Scientific Racism." *Journal of Egyptian History* 11, no. 1-2 (2018): 19-44.
- Ahmed, Salah Mohamed. "History of Archaeological Work in the Middle Nile Region." in *The Oxford Handbook of Ancient Nubia*, by Emberling, Geoff and Williams, Bruce B., 7-29. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2020.

Optional:

- Save-Soderbergh, Torgny. *Temples and Tombs of Ancient Nubia: The International Rescue Campaign at Abu Simbel, Philae, and Other Sites*. New York, N.Y. : Thames and Hudson, 1987. 64-97, 187-203 ["Launching the International Campaign", "The Archaeological Campaign"]
- Fisher, Marjorie. "The History of Nubia," in *Ancient Nubia: African Kingdoms on the Nile*, ed. Peter Lacovara et al., 10-44. Cairo ; New York: American University in Cairo Press, 2012.

Session 2: Lower Nubia before the Conquest

This session we will dive into the history of Lower Nubia prior to the Egypt conquest, with a focus on its status as the "between". We'll cover in detail the various cultures living there, and their relationships with Egypt to the north, and Upper Nubia to the south. We will also discuss the Egyptian colonial communities established during the Egyptian Middle Kingdom, and their impact on the local populations.

Required:

- Hafsaas-Tsakos, Henriette. "Pots and People in an Anthropological Perspective - The C-Group People of Lower Nubia as a Case Study." In *Mélanges offerts à Francis Geus : Egypte-Soudan*, edited by Brigitte Gratien. Cahiers de recherches de l'Institut de papyrologie et d'égyptologie de Lille (CRIPEL), 163-71. Villeneuve d'Ascq: Université Charles de Gaulle-Lille, 2007.
- Hafsaas-Tsakos, Henriette. "The C-Group People in Lower Nubia: Cattle Pastoralists on the Frontier between Egypt and Kush." in *The Oxford Handbook of Ancient Nubia*, by Emberling, Geoff and Williams, Bruce B., 157–178. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2020.
- Bestock, Laurel D. "Egyptian Fortresses and the Colonization of Lower Nubia in the Middle Kingdom." in *The Oxford Handbook of Ancient Nubia*, by Emberling, Geoff and Williams, Bruce B., 271–288. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2020.
- Knoblauch, Christian. "The Burial Customs of Middle Kingdom Colonial Communities in Nubia: Possibilities and Problems." in *Nubia in the New Kingdom: Lived Experience, Pharaonic Control and Indigenous Traditions*, edited by Spencer, Neal, Stevens, Anna, and Binder, Michaela, 575–590. British Museum Publications on Egypt and Sudan 3. Leuven: Peeters, 2017.

Optional:

- Liszka, Kate and de Souza, Aaron. "Pan-Grave and Medjay: At the Intersection of Archaeology and History." in *The Oxford Handbook of Ancient Nubia*, by Emberling, Geoff and Williams, Bruce B., 227–250. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2020.
- Török, László. *Between Two Worlds: the Frontier Region Between Ancient Nubia and Egypt, 3700 B.C.-A.D. 500*. Probleme der Ägyptologie 29,. Leiden: Brill, 2009. 79-102 [Chapter 6]

Session 3: Conquest of Nubia & Integration into an Empire

This session will cover the various Egyptian campaigns into Nubia, and how they differed from prior incursions into the region. We'll discuss the integration of Nubia into an imperial machine. How did Egypt treat its acquisition? How did this differ from imperial expansion into the Levant?

Required:

- Kemp, B. J. "Imperialism and Empire in New Kingdom Egypt." in *Imperialism in the Ancient World: The Cambridge University Research Seminar in Ancient History*, edited by Garnsey, P. D. A. and Whittaker, C. R., 7–58. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1978.
- Smith, Stuart Tyson. *Wretched Kush: Ethnic Identities and Boundries in Egypt's Nubian Empire*. Routledge, 2004. 56-96
- Valbelle, Dominique. "Egyptian Conquest and Administration of Nubia." in *The Oxford Handbook of Ancient Nubia*, by Emberling, Geoff and Williams, Bruce B., 327–342. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2020.

Optional:

- Spencer, Neal, Stevens, Anna, and Binder, Michaela. "Introduction: History and Historiography of a Colonial Entanglement, and the Shaping of New Archaeologies for Nubia in the New Kingdom." in *Nubia in the New Kingdom: Lived Experience, Pharaonic Control and Indigenous Traditions*, edited by Spencer, Neal, Stevens, Anna, and Binder, Michaela, 1–61. British Museum Publications on Egypt and Sudan 3. Leuven: Peeters, 2017.
- Török, László. *Between Two Worlds: the Frontier Region Between Ancient Nubia and Egypt, 3700 B.C.-A.D. 500*. Probleme der Ägyptologie 29. Leiden: Brill, 2009. 157 – 2017 [Chapter 9]

Session 4: The Princes of Tek-het and the "Egyptianization" of the Elites

The "elite" populations of Nubia are well known from Egyptian texts, and we will focus in this session on the picture presented in text compared with the archaeological remains known from the region. How were Nubian elites presented within Egyptian works versus how they depicted themselves at home in Nubia? What functions did this serve in their interactions with different groups?

Required:

- van Pelt, W. Paul. "Revising Egypto-Nubian Relations in New Kingdom Lower Nubia: From Egyptianization to Cultural Entanglement." *Cambridge Archaeological Journal* 23, no. 3 (2013): 523-50.
- Smith, Stuart Tyson, and Michele R. Buzon. "Colonial Entanglements: 'Egyptianization' in Egypt's Nubian Empire and the Nubian Dynasty." In *The Fourth Cataract and Beyond: Proceedings of the 12th International Conference for Nubian Studies*, , edited by Julie R. Anderson and Derek A. Welsby. British Museum Publications on Egypt and Sudan 1, 431-42. Leuven: Peeters, 2014.
- Säve-Söderbergh, T. "The Tomb of Amenemhet and the Princes of the-Khet." in *New Kingdom Pharaonic Sites: The Finds and the Sites (Text)*, edited by Säve-Söderbergh, Torgny and Troy, Lana. Scandinavian Joint Expedition to Sudanese Nubia 5. Uppsala: The Scandinavian Joint Expedition to Sudanese Nubia, 1991.

Optional:

- Säve-Söderbergh, Torgny. "Te-khet, the Cultural and Sociopolitical Structure of a Nubian Princedom in Tuthmosid Times." in *Egypt and Africa: Nubia from Prehistory to Islam*, edited by Davies, W. V., 186–194. London: British Museum Press in association with the Egypt Exploration Society, 1991.

Session 5: Understanding Non-Elite Responses to the Egyptian Empire

Non-elites – individuals from lower socioeconomic strata in a society – are frequently left out of historiographies. Without written accounts of their lives, or large monuments to examine, it can be difficult to ascertain how such individuals negotiated life in a colonial context. This session we'll go into depth about the available evidence for non-elite individuals, and what we can glean from a statistical approach to a large cemetery.

Required:

- Williams, Bruce. "The New Kingdom Town at Serra East and Its Cemetery." in *Nubia in the New Kingdom: Lived Experience, Pharaonic Control and Indigenous Traditions*, edited by Spencer, Neal, Stevens, Anna, and Binder, Michaela, 309–321. British Museum Publications on Egypt and Sudan 3. Leuven: Peeters, 2017.
- Näser, Claudia. "Structures and Realities of the Egyptian Presence in Lower Nubia from the Middle Kingdom to the New Kingdom: The Egyptian Cemetery S/SA at Aniba." in *Nubia in the New Kingdom: Lived Experience, Pharaonic Control and Indigenous Traditions*, edited by Spencer, Neal, Stevens, Anna, and Binder, Michaela, 557–574. British Museum Publications on Egypt and Sudan 3. Leuven: Peeters, 2017.
- Stuart Tyson Smith. "The Nubian Experience of Egyptian Domination during the New Kingdom." in *The Oxford Handbook of Ancient Nubia*, by Emberling, Geoff and Williams, Bruce B., 369–394, 369–394. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2020.

Session 6: The "After" & Conclusions

In this final class, we'll cover the "after" – what happened to Lower Nubia at the end of the colonial governance of Lower Nubia? What effects do we see of this entanglement of two cultures in subsequent cultures of the region?

Required:

- Buzon, M.R., Smith, S.T. and Simonetti, A. (2016), Entanglement and the Formation of the Ancient Nubian Napatan State. *American Anthropologist*, 118: 284 - 300. <https://doi.org/10.1111/aman.12524>
- Smith, Stuart Tyson and Buzon, Michèle R. "Colonial Encounters at New Kingdom Tombos: Cultural Entanglements and Hybrid Identity." in *Nubia in the New Kingdom: Lived Experience, Pharaonic Control and Indigenous Traditions*, edited by Spencer, Neal, Stevens, Anna, and Binder, Michaela, 615–630. British Museum Publications on Egypt and Sudan 3. Leuven: Peeters, 2017.
- Howley, Kathryn. "Power relations and the adoption of foreign material culture: A different perspective from first-millennium BCE Nubia." (2019).