

DENDARA SETTLEMENT SITE

GRÉGORY MAROUARD

Since 2012, the Oriental Institute reinvestigates the settlement site at Dendara, Upper Egypt, with a particular focus on the urban evolution during the third millennium BCE, from the Predynastic Period (ca. 3400 BCE) until the early Middle Kingdom (ca. 2000 BCE). This project is welcomed on the archaeological concession of the French Archaeological Institute in Cairo (IFAO), which allowed the OI team since 2015 to work on the extensive settlement remains situated inside and outside of the main sanctuary enclosure wall.

Because of a significant delay in the deliverance of the security clearance by Egyptian authorities, our last year fieldwork season at Dendara, originally scheduled between early September and mid-October 2017, was unfortunately canceled. The fourth campaign was postponed to next fall 2018 and will focus on two of the main areas excavated since 2015 and 2016 at Zone 1 (Late Naqada II to Old Kingdom periods), near the temple of Hathor, and Zone 4 (First Intermediate Period to early Middle Kingdom periods), outside of the main precinct of the sanctuary.

Nevertheless, this was the occasion to reorganize in Chicago all the field data, to process the photogrammetric documentation and to prepare all the plans and stratigraphic profiles in the perspective of our next operation at the site. New research has been conducted in various collections and contacts established with the Petrie Museum and the Penn Museum archives which preserve a vast and partially unpublished documentation of the first excavation campaign carried out at the site by F. Petrie (Egypt Exploration Fund) and Chr. Rosher (American Exploration Society) in 1898. An unpublished map of the site was rediscovered on this occasion and will be presented soon considering the important data recorded on this document about the topography of sanctuary and the urban area at the end of the nineteenth century.

The results of previous OI campaigns at Dendara have been presented in two international colloquia, in Milan in July 2017 at the 7th Old Kingdom Art and Archaeology (OKAA) conference and in Munich in September 2017 at the conference *AcrossBorders: From Microcosm to Macrocism: Individual Households and Cities in Ancient Egypt and Nubia*. Two joint articles co-signed with the Tell Edfu Project (cf. Edfu report *infra*) have been submitted in March 2018 and June 2018: “The Development of Two Early Urban Centers in Upper Egypt During the 3rd Millennium BC: The examples of Edfu and Dendara” and “Two sister-sites at the beginning of the Old Kingdom: Recent results on the settlement excavations at Tell Edfu and Dendara.”

Another short overview about the recent discoveries of the Pre- and Early Dynastic contexts at Dendara have been published in *ASOR journal Near Eastern Archaeology* 80.3 (“Dendara at Its Origins. New Evidence for a Pre- and Early Dynastic Settlement Site in Upper Egypt,” pp. 166–75).

Preliminary results of photogrammetry survey assisted with a drone were shortly presented in the *OI News & Notes* 235 (“Dendara from another Perspective. The Use of Remote Technologies in the Field in Egypt,” pp. 12–15).
