ORIENTAL INSTITUTE NUBIAN EXPEDITION (OINE) PUBLICATION REPORT

BRUCE WILLIAMS AND LISA HEIDORN

We begin this year's report by noting the passing of James E. Knudstad on October 3, 2019 (fig. 1). Sadly, this news traveled slowly, even in Britain. He lived with his spouse, Rosa Frey, for many years in a beautifully restored residence in Cornwall. Jim spent his life as what he called a "digging architect." He had little interest in accumulating publications or the trappings of academic life, and instead he and Rosa worked far and wide on others' excavations. Almost no part of the ancient Near East, including Egypt and Sudan, was untouched by his trowel or unsurveyed by his theodolite. His work enriched Nubian studies particularly, and the Oriental Institute Nubian Expedition (OINE) especially. We have previously featured his work and both Rosa's and Jim's photographs in our annual reports. Here we will note that our knowledge of many major sites would be deeply impoverished without his work. He led the excavation at Serra East and Dorginarti for the OINE in 1963–64, and he later went on to excavate major sites in the Second Cataract region for the Sudan Survey. Instead of sampling, as so often happened in salvage operations, Jim worked comprehensively and systematically. While he certainly recovered ground plans, the normal state for archaeological remains, he was in his element recording standing walls and buildings. He not only created plans for all his sites but also provided elevations and sections and meticulously recorded details in measured sketches. In addition, he retained all the survey data, which allowed a later OINE architect, Nadejda Reshetnikova, to create fully digital plans that can be scaled and transformed into three-dimensional models (fig. 2). The latter work was made possible by Larry Lissak, who programmed a process to convert sur-

TOP: Figure 1. James Knudstad with his survey pole leaving Serra village and heading toward Serra East (1963). BOTTOM: Figure 2. Rendering of late Christian Cerro Matto (Serra East) by Nadejda Reshetnikova using Knudstad's survey records.

TOP: Figure 3. A typical Lower Nubian house before the flooding of the region by the Aswan High Dam. Photo by James Knudstad. BOTTOM: Figure 4. The Batn el-Hajar cataract in Lower Nubia before the flooding of the region under Lake Nubia (Nasser). Photo by James Knudstad.

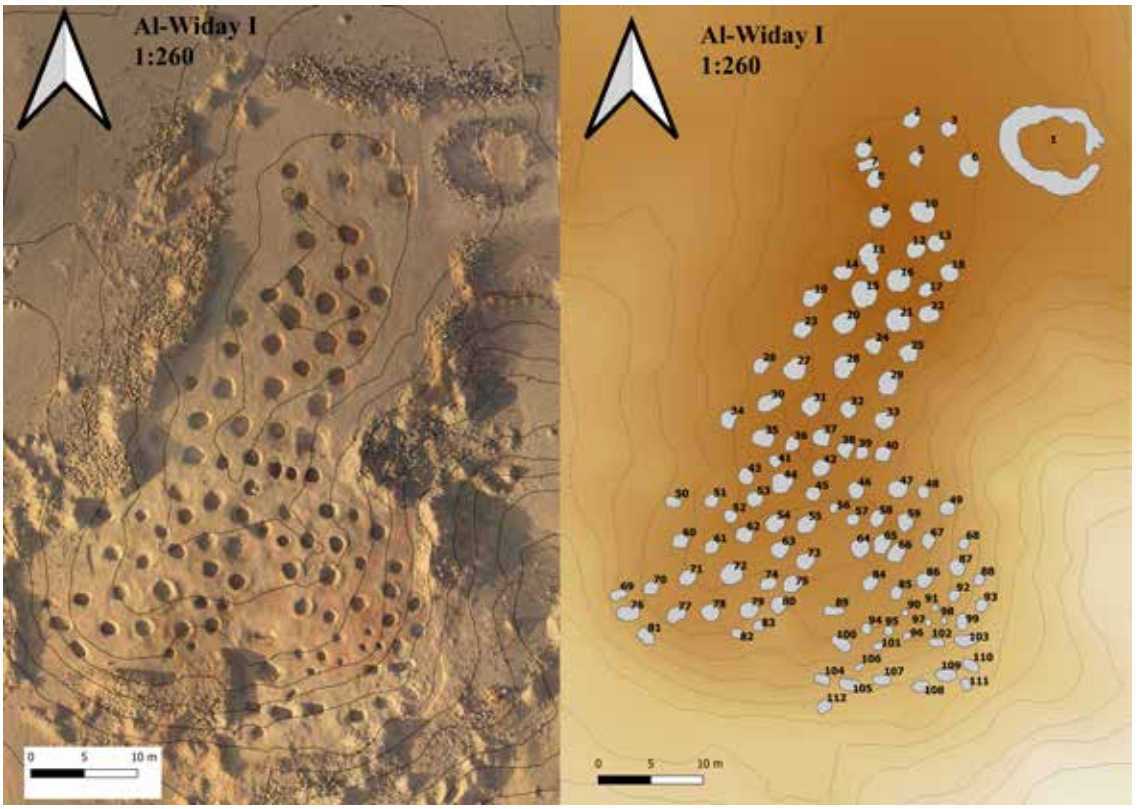

Figure 5. A geo-rectified photograph (left) and a plan (right) of Al-Widay I cemetery. Photo by Adrian Chlebowski.

vey data from angles to coordinates. As a result, it has been possible to reconstruct a large part of the town of Serra East and the fortress of Dorginarti in three dimensions.

In his travels, Knudstad took a high-quality Leica camera and Kodak film that miraculously kept its color after decades. His photographs in Nubia vividly recorded a world that now no longer exists (figs. 3–4). Scans of many of these photographs are featured in our past and future publications and are now part of the OI's archives. Knudstad's career in fieldwork lasted from the 1950s until 2014 and ranged from Nippur in Mesopotamia, Korucutepe and the Tigris-Euphrates survey in Anatolia, Tell el-Borg in North Sinai, Dakhla in the Western Desert, and Naga and Gebel Barkal in the Sudan. Rosa Frey, an archaeologist, joined Jim in his later work in Egypt and Sudan. In addition, Knudstad worked in Syria (Qasr al-Hayr), for the Smithsonian Institute's Afghanistan expedition, for the Saudi Arabian Department of Antiquities, and at many other sites throughout the Mediterranean and Middle East. We, and many others, will miss his prodigious talent and his devotion to archaeological and architectural recording.

Moving on to our work over the last year, we have concentrated on a number of new and old projects. A considerable amount of time was spent on research, drawing, and writing a manuscript on the cemeteries of Al-Widay, primarily the large cemetery Al-Widay I (AW I) located at the Fourth Cataract in the Sudan (figs. 5–6). This cemetery had 112 graves and contexts that could be arranged in an ordered sequence, so the pottery from the closed burial contexts forms the foundation for our future study of the sherds from the gold-mining site at Hosh el-Geruf, which lacked sealed archaeological contexts. This pottery from AW I will also help date the materials from the OINE's third area of focus, the nearby island of Umm Gebir, where scattered sites of many periods were

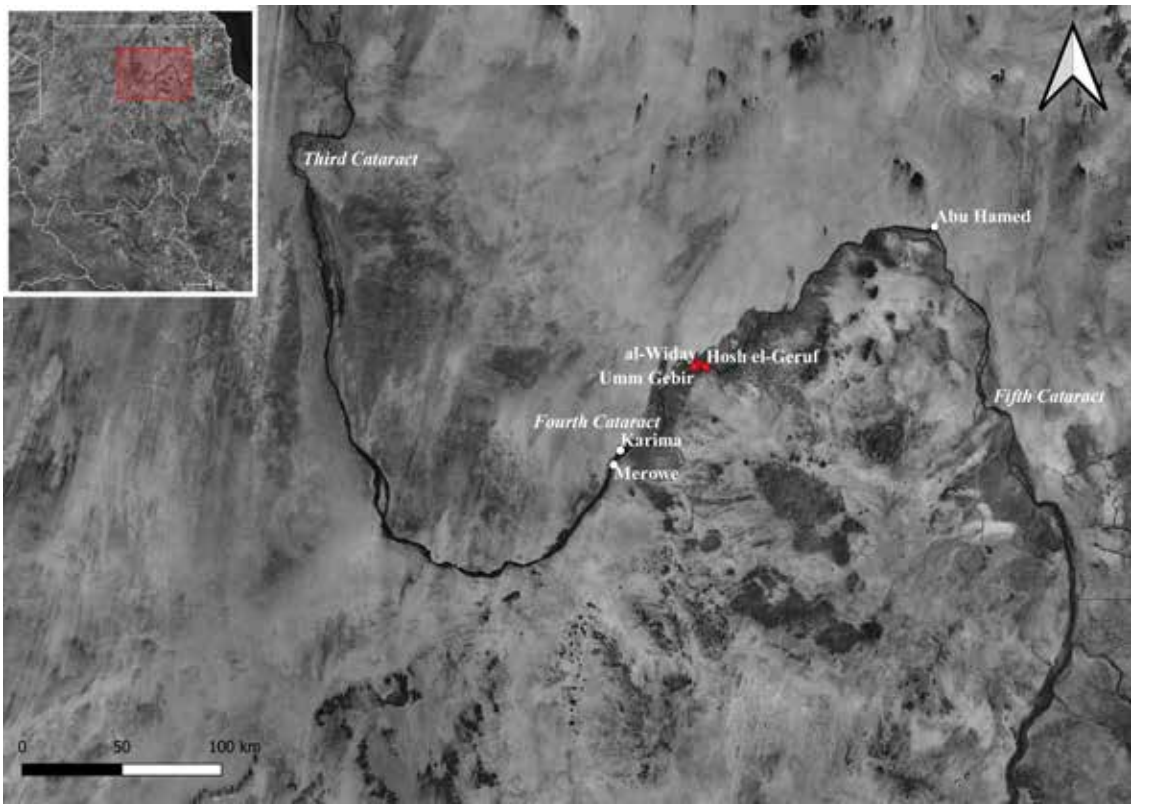

Figure 6. A geo-rectified satellite photograph of the Fourth Cataract region with the location of the Oriental Institute Nubian Expedition's three sites. Photo by Adrian Chlebowski.

found and where time and personnel restraints meant that only limited excavations could be conducted. Further major efforts were spent formatting manuscripts to fit the new requirements of the Publications office and on further editing and updating of proofs for OINE 14, the fortress at Dorginarti (Heidorn); OINE 12, the Christian Period town at Serra East (Williams); and OINE 16, the beads from the OI's Nubian excavations (Then-Obłuska).

We have described in these pages how the cemetery at Al-Widay I spread from north to south, allowing typological phases to be ordered convincingly. With two or three exceptions, the tombs all belonged to the earlier second millennium BCE, alternately called Middle and Classic Kerma or Old Kush II and III. Neither terminology is wholly satisfactory. This phase in the Fourth Cataract is quite different from the Kerma culture farther downstream, and "Old Kush" would also imply a political and social association that might not reflect reality. Nevertheless, here we use Old Kush because it is the more neutral of the two choices.

Although strongly differentiated from the Kerma culture, the tomb remains at Al-Widay made quite evident the trade relations between the two areas, and those relations extended far downstream to Egypt, thus correlating the earlier phase of the cemetery, Old Kush II (A–C), to Middle Kerma (ca. 1800–1650 BCE) and the later phase, Old Kush III, to Classic Kerma (ca. 1650–1575 BCE). Because most archeological work in the Fourth Cataract salvage was sampling, the contexts at Al-Widay I will form a major chronological standard for the period 1800–1500 BCE in the entire region.

We have noted that there was a distinct relationship between this Fourth Cataract culture and the so-called Pan Graves from Lower Nubia and Egypt but also to other archaeological groups found in the southern Atbai or Eastern Desert near the modern Ethiopian border. Despite the relationships,

the cultures in these three regions are far from identical, a situation found also today in the varied Bedja groups that inhabit the Eastern Desert.

A typical tomb in Al-Widay I was a shallow circular pit, even more pan-like than the Pan-Grave structures in both Lower Nubia and Egypt (fig. 7). The body was placed in a crouched position, mostly on the right side, and often a caprid was placed opposite the upper body. The burial shaft was surrounded by a loose circle of rocks, perhaps set in place to support the superstructure above. Among and outside the stones, the mourners placed a couple of bowls and sometimes a jar. Beads of ostrich eggshell and faience were commonly included, as more rarely were carnelian and still more rarely a scarab. The grave was filled in and a simple, convex, fieldstone tumulus erected above. While stones covered the entire tumulus, it was not thickly built of them except for the outer double ring. The organization and material remains were simple but coherent. Because this area comprises the largest group of contexts completely excavated in the region, we plan a large-scale publication that can serve as a central resource for the study of Nubia.

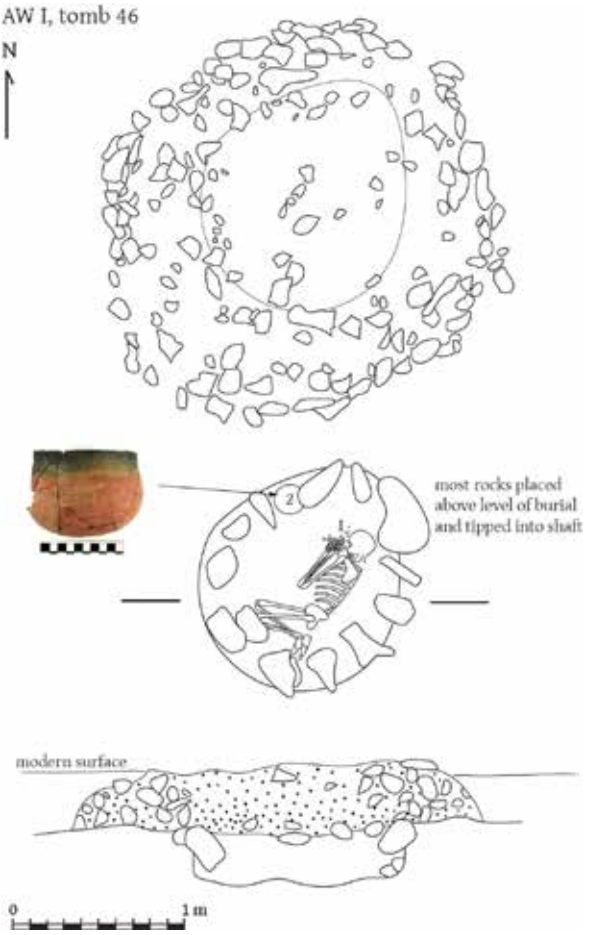

Figure 7. Vectorized drawing using field sketches and photographic records for Al-Widay I, tomb 46.