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Professor Dr Ibrahim Musa Mohamed Hamdon – Director General of NCAM An homage to his work

Ghalia Gar el-Nabi

Introduction

Professor Ibrahim Musa, who passed away on January 14th 2024, was the leader of NCAM during one of the most difficult periods in its history.¹ He completed his education at Khartoum, Geneva and Cambridge Universities respectively. His family came from Darfur and this permitted him even in the 1980s to work on the archaeology of this little studied area, doing a PhD at Cambridge with Dr John Alexander on the Archaeology of Darfur in the 1st Millennium AD. He went on to teach archaeology in Libya and Yemen, while continuing to contribute to academic study on Sudan. He returned to Sudan to be Head of the el-Neelain University Archaeology Department, and Dean of the Centre for the Dialogue of Civilisations.

On his appointment to NCAM in 2022, he was responsible for overseeing major changes in its relationship and engagement with local communities. This included opening the first community museum in Sudan, the Khalifa House Community Museum in Omdurman, and holding events in the El Obeid Sheikan Community Museum in Kordofan, and the Millet Festival March 10th–14th in Darfur Community Museum, in Nyala, the capital of South Darfur.

The outbreak of war

When the war broke out on April 15th 2023, Professir Musa was immediately concerned with the safety of Sudan's heritage, and with great difficulty travelled to Cairo in May to set up the Sudan Crisis Committee, which works directly with UNESCO, ICCROM, the British Museum, and other international agencies and missions. Through this committee, he was able to work on fundraising to support the entirety of the NCAM staff through 10 months of conflict, and also identify and mitigate risks facing Sudan's heritage.

On arrival in Cairo, he helped set up an initial workshop that ran June 5th–7th 2023, communicating with the international missions working in Sudan. This initiated both a centralised catalogue of Sudanese heritage and the risks it faced, and a map of where these risks are located. The country was divided into sectors and critical risks identified. This workshop, funded by the Cultural Emergency Response, was followed by a UNESCO and ICCROM funded workshop on July 8th–10th, which developed a wider system for reporting damage. The proposed fundraising initiated projects to protect Sudanese heritage, which have since been carried out with support from donors, working with NCAM staff under his management. In particular, many of these projects aimed to protect at-risk museums during the war.

Jebel Barkal World Heritage Site and Community Museum Project, Northern State

Dr Sami Elamin the Director of the Northern region, initiated a series of projects with refugee children at the Jebel Barkal Museum while Professor Ibrahim Musa organised a programme of community peace tents, which hoped to involve local communities in the protection of local heritage at Jebel Barkal. This project was funded through the Safeguarding Sudan's Living Heritage project (SSLH), that will in the future support local community meetings to safeguard local heritage. The programme was further supported by the UNESCO Emergency Relief Fund, who will carry out a catalogue of the collections in relevant museums while running workshops with local communities to protect the archaeological sites.

¹ See Obituaries (307-608) for further detail.

Merowe Land Museum, Northern State

Following the July meeting in Cairo, the vulnerability of the abandoned Merowe Land Museum was highlighted, due to flooding from the river and its location in a military base that was the first site attacked at the start of the war. The Cultural Emergency Response Fund (Prince Claus) provided two stages of funding to record, package and move the collections to the Jebel Barkal Museums. SARS assisted with funding the management side of these works, including providing internet and additional guards to the WHS due to the threat of extra visitors. This was completed through the flood season. The new collections including traditional living heritage, need to have a new home in the Jebel Barkal Museum and an application has been made to the US Ambassador's Fund to complete this in the coming year.

Meroe World Heritage Site, River Nile State

This World Heritage Site encompasses Meroe City as well as the pyramid sites, Mussawarat es-Sufra, Wad Ben Naga and Naga. All came under threat last year, both from flooding and military conflict. In response, several projects were initiated, by local missions, as well as the Sudan Archaeological Research Society, who provided local assistance to River Nile Inspector Mahmoud Suliman. The Aliph Foundation provided funding to protect Meroe City from flooding, which was completed as the waters rose around the city. In addition, they supported guards for these sites at a critical time in the war. The missions' collections were also moved to safety where possible, and repairs made to damaged magazines following incursions in the area.

El Obeid Sheikan Community Museum, North Kordofan State

The collections of the Sheikan Museum were under significant threat during the war, and were moved to safety. Staff have also been actively involved in protecting and recording the intangible heritage in north Kordofan throughout the conflict. Attacked over 60 times, the city has a huge refugee population and the assistance of the SSLH Project helped NCAM staff to continue this vital work.

Wad Medani Gezirah Community Museum, Gezirah State

Following the start of the conflict, over 300,000 people fled to the Wad Medani area. The NCAM team from the Ethnographic Museum also moved, and with the assistance of the SSLH project were able to reopen the closed Gezirah Community Museum, and over a period of three months, hold events for refugee children and local communities, as well as recording heritage and restoring and enhancing the museum. Eventually Wad Medani was occupied, and the team moved east to Kassala.

Sennar Community Museum, Sennar State

The Sennar museum was under severe threat due to the conflict, and NCAM staff assisted by SSLH funds were able to record, and protectively package the collections. These were then put into secure storage. This catalogue is in the process of being completed.

Edammer Museum, River Nile State and Kerma, Northern State Community Museums

Two further museum collections were also considered vulnerable and were recorded and protected, in Edammer and Kerma. This work is ongoing, and the preservation of these collections is being continued thanks to UNESCO Emergency Relief Funds.

Kassala and Eastern Sudan Community Museums

Following the success of work at the Wad Medani Gezirah Museum, the team from the Ethnographic Museum moved to Kassala after the fall of Wad Medani, and held a workshop with the Kassala State Cultural Heritage Department and local community and refugee groups. The communities were so keen to continue the project that they were given a site in the Taka gardens, the old governor's palace, for a

community garden, and the heritage hall to use for a venue. The teams then studied the living heritage of the area to develop a garden that reflects all the different cultures of the eastern region. This project, funded by SSLH, will be completed over the coming months.

A new NCAM Community Policy

Professor Musa's final initiative during his time as Director-General was to instigate the creation of a new community policy to underpin all activities by the institutions for heritage protection in Sudan. The new Director General, Ghalia Gar el-Nabi has continued this initiative and held a workshop in February to create a new community oriented policy for the protection of heritage.

Since becoming Director General, she has continued to protect Sudan's heritage with the support of NCAM staff and local communities across the country. The work in the North has continued, with improved security for the collections in the Kerma Museum, as well as community meetings to protect heritage on Sai Island. The Khalifa House Museum returned to government control in March, and the NCAM team has made it secure and made an assessment of the damage to the collections. The Sudan emergency team is continuing to prepare updated reports on the risks to heritage, and reports from local inspectors are being utilised to determine dangers to heritage sites. Local communities are participating in intangible cultural heritage recording events across Sudan, and new museums and community heritage centres are being worked on in the east and north. Despite difficulties, NCAM staff have worked together and kept the heritage of Sudan alive. International communities and UNESCO are beginning a new stage of support, based on the involvement of local Sudanese communities, to promote peace-building and positive attitudes to protecting Sudan as a living heritage community. Outside of Sudan, refugee communities and NCAM staff have also been protected and supported through the assistance of international communities and SSLH.

Professor Musa's inspiration was essential to the future of NCAM, and this has continued after his passing. While there are ongoing threats to Sudanese culture and traditions, his work lives on in the local communities caring for their heritage, and through the new NCAM programmes working with Sudan's people.

Obituaries

A tribute to our beloved Sudanese colleagues

Intisar Soghayroun el-Zein

In the wake of the recent conflict in Sudan, we are deeply saddened by the loss of four of our cherished colleagues and professors of archaeology, dispersed by war. Two passed away in Egypt, one in the state of South Sudan, and one in Poland. We are deeply saddened to hear of their sudden passing. Our heartfelt condolences go out to their families, colleagues, students, and friends during this difficult time.

Their contributions to the field and to our community were immeasurable, and their absence leaves a profound void. As we reflect on their lives, we remember not only their academic excellence but also their dedication, compassion, and the countless ways they touched the lives of their students, peers, and the global archaeological community. This tragedy reminds us of the fragility of life, yet their legacies will continue to inspire future generations.

Professor Khider Adam Eisa (1947–2023), Cairo

A man of great passion and dedication to his work

Professor Khider Adam Eisa was a distinguished Sudanese scholar of archaeology and Egyptology whose career left an indelible mark on the field of Sudanese antiquities and education. His contributions spanned over five decades, shaping both academic discourse and the preservation of Sudan's rich archaeological heritage.

Professor Eisa began his academic career at the University of Khartoum, where he graduated with a degree in History in 1971. His passion for Egyptology led him to earn a diploma in Egyptology in 1976, which paved the way for his PhD in archaeology and Egyptology from the Sorbonne Paris 4, one of the most prestigious institutions in France.

His professional contributions to archaeology began between 1971-1989, when he served in the Sudanese Antiquities Service (now the National Corporation for Antiquities and Museums (NCAM)), eventually rising to the role of Director. His tenure saw a range of initiatives aimed at preserving Sudan's ancient heritage, and his leadership was critical during a transformative time for the country's archaeological sector.

In 1997, Professor Eisa spearheaded the White Nile Archaeological Survey and Rescue Excavation, an ambitious project aimed at protecting Sudan's ancient sites, which he led until his death. His efforts have preserved countless artefacts and cultural insights, ensuring that future generations would benefit from the history and culture of ancient Sudan. It reflected upon the thorny issue of the southern extent of the Kushite Meroitic Kingdom.

His academic and teaching career started in 1989, when he joined the University of Khartoum's Faculty of Education as a Professor of Archaeology and Ancient History. His teaching career extended beyond Khartoum, contributing to curriculum development and lecturing at Shendi University, Neelain University, and Imam Mahdi University, where he collaborated with the Department of History and Civilisation. He also continued part-time teaching in the Department of Archaeology at the University of Khartoum, particularly in Egyptology.

Professor Eisa was a dedicated mentor, working with large numbers of Masters and Doctoral students. His guidance has left a lasting impact on his students, many of whom have gone on to contribute to Sudan's academic and cultural landscape. Both undergraduate and graduate students owe him a great

debt for his knowledge, mentorship, and support throughout their academic journeys.

Professor Eisa was a prolific scholar, publishing tens of articles and books on Sudanese history and archaeology. His notable works include *Ancient Sudan: Its History, Culture, and Civilization*, published by University of Khartoum Publishing House in 2010, which remains a seminal reference for scholars in the field.

The legacy of Professor Eisa extends beyond his impressive academic achievements; it is reflected in the preservation of Sudan's cultural heritage and the generations of students he inspired. His contributions to archaeology, education, and cultural preservation in Sudan are monumental, and his passing marks the end of a significant era in the country's academic and archaeological history.

Professor Khider Adam Eisa was not only a renowned archaeologist but also a man of great passion and dedication to his work. His love for archaeology, especially Sudan's ancient history, was evident in every project he undertook. Known for his friendly and approachable nature, he was always willing to help colleagues, students, and communities. His suave demeanor and humility made him a respected figure both in academia and beyond. His kindness, combined with his deep expertise, left a lasting impact on everyone who had the privilege of knowing or working with him. He was a figure of immense knowledge and integrity, known for his dedication, leadership, and the generous spirit with which he guided both academic and heritage preservation efforts in Sudan. His passing is a great loss not only to those who knew him personally but to the entire academic and archaeological community in Sudan and beyond.

Professor Khidir Adam Eisa is survived by his wife and four sons, beside his countless students, colleagues and friends.

Obituary: Professor Ibrahim Mousa Mohamed Hamdoun (1953-2024), Cairo



Professor Ibrahim Mousa, 2023, courtesy M. Mallinson.

A man of deep intellectual curiosity

The academic community mourns the loss of Professor Ibrahim Mousa Mohamed Hamdoun, a distinguished Sudanese archaeologist, historian, and educator, who passed away in 2024 at the age of 71. Born in El-Fasher, Sudan, in 1953, Professor Ibrahim dedicated his life to uncovering and preserving the rich cultural heritage of Sudan and the wider African region, leaving an indelible mark on the field of archaeology and the many students he taught during his illustrious career.

A man of deep intellectual curiosity and academic rigour, Professor Hamdoun obtained his Bachelor of Arts in History with high honours from the University of Khartoum in 1972, and later pursued advanced studies abroad, earning diplomas and degrees from prestigious institutions such as the University of Geneva and the University of Cambridge, where he completed his PhD in Archaeology in 1985.

Over a career spanning five decades, Professor Hamdoun held esteemed positions at universities across Sudan, Yemen, Libya, and the United Kingdom. He served as Director of the School of Archaeology and Tourism at Al-Neelain University in Khartoum from 2017 until his passing, shaping future generations of

archaeologists and historians. His previous roles included Professor, Associate Professor, and Lecturer in the Departments of Archaeology and History at Sana'a University, Qar Younis University in Libya, and the University of Khartoum.

His fieldwork extended far beyond the classroom, as Professor Hamdoun was actively involved in numerous archaeological excavations across Sudan, Libya, Yemen, and beyond. His research explored the prehistoric and ancient civilisations of Africa, with a particular focus on the Darfur region. His studies of iron technology, rock art, and early Islamic influences in central Darfur were groundbreaking and earned him international recognition.

Beyond his academic work, Professor Ibrahim played an influential role in Sudan's civil service. He was Director of the Department of Peace Agreements at the General Secretariat of the Council of Ministers from 2008 to 2012, contributing to the national dialogue on peace and reconciliation. His expertise was often sought in national and international forums, and he served on committees overseeing critical historical and archaeological projects, including border commissions and cultural preservation efforts. He was the Director General of the National Corporation for Antiquities and Museums (NCAM) from December 2022 until his death. He also headed the Emergency Committee for the Protection of Cultural heritage of Sudan.

A prolific scholar, Professor Ibrahim authored numerous publications, and scientific articles in both Arabic and English, contributing to the field of archaeology. He contributed regularly to leading academic journals and presented at international conferences, sharing his insights on the rich history and heritage of Sudan and the African continent. His books included *The Archaeology of Central Darfur in the First Millennium AD* and *Iron Technology in the Middle Sahel/Savanna*. There are more books ready for publication: *Archaeology and Contemporary Societies; Thoughts on Risk Prevention*. His dedication to teaching and mentoring was equally remarkable, nurturing the next generation of archaeologists in Sudan and abroad.

Fluent in English, French, and his native Arabic, Professor Ibrahim also worked as a translator, bringing important scholarly works to a wider audience. His dedication to the academic community was matched by his commitment to his students, for whom he served as a mentor and inspiration, guiding many through their research.

His passing leaves a profound void in the field of African archaeology, but his work will continue to inspire and inform future generations.

Professor Ibrahim Mousa Mohamed Hamdoun is survived by his wife, two sons, and four daughters. His legacy lives on through his contributions to archaeology, his scholarly works, and the many students whose lives he touched throughout his distinguished career. May he rest in peace.

Obituary: Professor Abdul Rahim Mohamed Khabeer (--2024), State of South Sudan

A passionate advocate for Sudanese cultural heritage

Professor Abdul Rahim Mohamed Khabeer (b. Omdurman, Sudan) was a highly respected archaeologist and academic whose contributions to Sudanese archaeology, particularly in prehistoric studies and the geology of archaeological ceramics, had a significant impact on the field. His multifaceted career, spanning decades of academic, research, and administrative leadership, shaped the landscape of Sudanese higher education and archaeological research.

Professor Khabeer's academic journey began in his hometown of Omdurman, where he attended Omdurman National Secondary Government School (1968–1972). He then pursued a degree in archaeology

at the University of Khartoum, earning his BA with honours in 1977 and later completing a Masters degree in 1982 from the same university. His thirst for knowledge took him to the University of Southampton, UK, where he obtained his PhD in 1996, specialising in prehistoric studies and the geology of archaeological ceramics. His doctoral studies solidified his reputation as a specialist in the material culture of Sudan's prehistoric and Kushite periods.

Throughout his career, Professor Khabeer participated in and led numerous archaeological expeditions and surveys both in Sudan and internationally. He worked with the University of Khartoum part-time, and several foreign missions (1977–1982, 1990–1991), beside contributing to excavations in Saudi Arabia (Al-Faw) and Britain (Dorchester). His expertise in Sudanese archaeology, particularly in the study of prehistoric settlements and Kushite-Meroitic sites (900BC–AD350), played a pivotal role in the exploration of Sudan's ancient history. His supervision of the Kadro-1 excavations for the University of Bahri is one of the key highlights of his fieldwork career.

Professor Khabeer's academic career was marked by his dedication to building and improving academic institutions in Sudan and beyond. He served as a lecturer at King Saud University in Riyadh from 1983 to 2000, where he gained international recognition for his teaching and research contributions. He later became an Associate Professor at the University of Juba (2000–2006), where he played a critical role in the establishment of the Faculty of Arts and Humanities. As Dean of the Faculty from 2006 to 2011, he led significant curriculum reforms and fostered the academic growth of the institution.

In 2011, he became the Founding Dean of the Faculty of Arts and Humanities at the University of Bahri, where he later served as Dean of the Faculty of Graduate Studies (2013–2017). During his tenure, he was instrumental in establishing graduate programmes, including the creation of new departments and administrative units, such as the Archiving Department and Quality Unit. His efforts significantly improved the university's academic offerings and set high standards for graduate education in Sudan.

Professor Khabeer's legacy includes his contributions to the establishment of archaeology departments across several Sudanese universities. He was involved in the creation of the Department of Archaeology at the University of Juba, University of Al-Neelain (2008), and University of East Kordofan (2018). His work in updating the archaeology curriculum at Shendi University in 2020 further showcased his commitment to academic excellence and the promotion of Sudanese heritage studies.

Professor Khabeer was an active participant in international collaborations and academic conferences. He received recognition for his research and presentations at archaeological forums, including the First Saudi Forum for Archaeology (2017) and the Conference on Alternative Strategies for Conflict Resolution and Peace in Sudan and South Sudan (2015). His work extended beyond Sudan to academic institutions in Europe, including lecturing at the University of Bergen (Norway) in 2006 and serving as a visiting scholar at Wakhnen University (Netherlands) in 1993.

A prolific scholar, Professor Khabeer published 51 research articles in Arabic and English in prestigious journals across Sudan, Europe, and North America. His research spanned a wide range of topics, including archaeology, history, and cultural heritage. He also published over 140 socio-cultural articles in newspapers and periodicals, further contributing to the public understanding of Sudanese heritage and cultural issues.

As a dedicated University scholar, Professor Khabeer supervised numerous students in archaeology and ancient history, guiding the next generation of Sudanese archaeologists. His influence extended to judging committees for theses and promotions at universities in Sudan, Saudi Arabia, and Jordan, where his expertise was highly sought after.

Beyond his academic achievements, Professor Khabeer was a passionate advocate for Sudanese cultural heritage. He was an active member of the Sudanese Writers Union and participated in public lectures and media appearances, including on Sudan National TV in 2013. His dedication to both scholarly and public

discourse ensured that his work reached diverse audiences, from academic peers to the general public.

Professor Abdul Rahim Mohamed Khabeer's pioneering efforts in prehistoric studies, the geology of ceramics, and the establishment of academic institutions have left an enduring legacy. He will be remembered not only as a renowned scholar and institution builder but also as a teacher, cultural advocate, and public intellectual whose contributions have profoundly shaped Sudan's academic and cultural landscape. He is survived by his wife, two sons, and a daughter.

Obituary: Professor Mahmoud El-Tayeb (1957–2024), Poland

A Legacy in Sudanese and Nubian Archaeology



Professor Mahmoud El-Tayeb, 2005, courtesy K. Grzymski.

Professor El-Sheikh Mahmoud El-Tayeb was a pioneering archaeologist whose profound contributions to the study of Sudanese and Nubian archaeology, particularly the Meroitic (300BC–AD350) and Makurian (AD600–1400) periods, established him as a leading figure in his field. Born in Gedaref, Sudan, he spent much of his career in Poland and Sudan, dedicating over four decades to advancing archaeological research, teaching, and community engagement.

El-Tayeb's academic journey began when he moved to Poland in 1975 on an International Union of Students scholarship. After completing a Polish language course at the University of Łódź, he pursued his Masters degree at the University of Warsaw's Institute of Archaeology, graduating in 1982. His Masters thesis, titled *History of Excavations in the Sudanese Nubia, from A to X-Group Period*, supervised by Prof. J. Lipińska, reflected his early interest in the archaeology of Sudan.

He returned to Sudan from 1983 to 1990, where he worked as an inspector in the Sudan Antiquities Service, contributing to significant fieldwork projects, such as excavations at el-Hobagi, and collaborating with Patrice Lenoble, a mentor he greatly admired.

In 1990, El-Tayeb returned to Poland for his PhD studies at the University of Warsaw, where he earned his doctorate with a dissertation titled *Genesis of the Makurian Culture, in the Light of Archaeological Sources* in 1995 under Prof. W. Godlewski. His work on the Makurian culture would define much of his later research. In 2013, he achieved habilitation based on his seminal work *Burial Traditions in Nubian Early Makuria*, further solidifying his reputation as a scholar of Nubian archaeology.

El-Tayeb had a profound impact on the academic community, both in Sudan and Poland. He taught courses on Sudanese archaeology at the University of Warsaw from 1996 to 2009, where he became a beloved figure among his students. His teaching extended to the University of Gdańsk, where he lectured

on the history of Egypt and Nubia from 1997 to 1998 .

Beyond academia, he also served as Senior Curator at the Archaeological Museum in Gdańsk, participating in research projects in the Bayuda region of Sudan. His dedication to education and cultural exchange fostered strong ties between Poland and Sudan in the field of archaeology.

El-Tayeb's fieldwork was extensive and transformative. He led and participated in numerous archaeological expeditions, both in Sudan and Lebanon, particularly in the Lebanese province of Iqlim el-Kharroub. However, his most significant contributions were to Sudanese archaeology, where he directed the Early Makuria Research Project (2004–2023), which focused on the investigation of large tumulus cemeteries at sites like El-Zuma, El-Detti, and Tanqasi, near the UNESCO World Heritage Site of Jebel Barkal.

Since 2009, El-Tayeb had been a key figure at the Polish Centre of Mediterranean Archaeology (PCMA) at the University of Warsaw, and in 2018, he became the head of its Research Centre in Khartoum. His work at the PCMA allowed him to lead groundbreaking research that increased understanding of Nubian and Sudanese civilisations. The PCMA office in Khartoum recently has been renamed after him in his honour.

One of El-Tayeb's greatest passions was sharing knowledge with local communities and students. He was committed to popularising archaeology, conducting outreach with Sudanese communities, and regularly engaging with local schools, university students, and even football teams. He believed in the power of archaeology to foster understanding and unity, transcending cultural and national boundaries. His efforts in community engagement were deeply appreciated by both Sudanese and Polish students.

El-Tayeb's final years were marked by personal and professional challenges. The outbreak of fighting in Sudan in 2023 forced him to evacuate Khartoum with his family. The devastation and loss of life deeply affected him, as it affected millions of Sudanese people, and on 12th June 2024, he passed away. He was buried in the Tatar Muslim Cemetery in Warsaw, leaving behind a profound legacy in Nubian Studies and a lifetime of contributions to archaeology.

Professor El-Sheikh Mahmoud El-Tayeb's contributions to Sudanese and Nubian archaeology are immeasurable. He not only advanced academic knowledge of ancient Sudanese civilizations but also inspired countless students and colleagues. His work will continue to resonate in the field of archaeology and beyond. He is survived by his wife, our friend and colleague Ghalia, a daughter, and a son, as well as an extended network of colleagues, students, and friends worldwide who will remember him as both an outstanding scientist and an extraordinary human being.

May Allah Almighty grant them forgiveness, shower His mercy upon them, and grant them eternal peace in Jannah. Their contributions to knowledge, culture, and humanity will remain an enduring legacy.

Obituary: Professor Herman Bell (10th March 1933–7th February 2023)

The Nubian scholar, linguist and toponymist Professor Walter Herman Bell passed away on 7th February 2023 at home in Oxford, England. Born in Richmond, Virginia USA in 1933, Herman's early life and outlook was greatly influenced by his Southern American upbringing, witnessing first-hand that turbulent period in US history where the Civil Rights Movement was struggling for justice and racial equality. Herman valued people above all else, their history, culture and languages. He respected diversity, exalted minorities and quietly rallied against inequality and discrimination. It could only be expected that Herman would combine his passion for supporting oppressed minorities with scholarship and this would become his



Herman Bell 2016.

raison d'être, which would eventually lead him to Nubia and his lifelong passion for its people, languages and culture.

Herman's academic achievements began with a BA in History and French from Davidson College, North Carolina, USA after which he headed to Europe to complete a two-year residence which included studying with Egyptologists at the German Academy of Sciences in Berlin. In Germany, Herman learned 'philological rigor'. From 1958-1962, Herman attended University College, University of Oxford being awarded the Lady Wallis Budge Junior Research Fellowship and completed an M.Litt research degree in Ancient Egyptian and Coptic. Herman married another Oxford student Ann Farrer in 1959, the ceremony being held in the Wye Valley, with Rosalind Moss as a guest (the tomes of Porter, Moss and Málek, and Junker and Schäfer were Herman's bibles). After completing his M.Litt, Herman was awarded a travel grant by University College for a survey of Nubian geographical names. This grant was instrumental in directing the focus of

Herman's academic career and so in 1962 he purchased a 1945 Bedford fire engine that he and Ann would drive from England all the way to Egyptian Nubia and eventually up the Nile from Shellal to Wadi Halfa in Sudanese Nubia through the Belly of Stones to the end of the area about to be flooded.

The early 1960s was a critical time in Nubia's history as the construction of the Aswan High Dam was underway. UNESCO's appeal for the salvage of the ancient monuments of Nubia had orchestrated a global response most famously resulting in the relocation of Abu Simbel (Nubian - *absambal*). However, Herman knew that there was no comparative response to salvage the intangible heritage of the Nubian Nile – the place names of Nubian hamlets and villages, along with geographical features and associated cultural heritage. While engaged in archaeological fieldwork in the threatened area, Herman had noted that the place names were recorded inadequately, if at all, and was determined to document as much as he could before this area of Nubia would be completely submerged. With his research award grant, Herman, Ann and a young foresighted German anthropologist named Armgard Grauer travelled together on a small wooden sailing boat up the Nile from Shellal to Wadi Halfa. While Herman conducted the urgent documentation of Nubian toponyms 'on the eve of the evacuation', this area of Nubia progressively became more and more deserted as communities were transported from their riparian homes to areas far beyond the Nile (Kom Ombo in Egypt and Khashm al-Qirba on the Sudanese border with Ethiopia). Herman's documentation was forced to finish just as the lands – along with his fire engine – were lost forever under Lake Nubia (Nasser).

The experience of watching whole communities of Nubians, many of whom were forced to leave their idyllic homelands, had a lasting effect upon Herman. He saw this as a human tragedy where rocks were considered of more value than human lives. For Herman, history did not just exist in the monuments, temples and shrines of this ancient land but also in the toponyms, the stories, poetry, songs and music of the people. After witnessing 'paradise lost', Herman moved back to the United States in 1965 to study for an MA in Linguistics (African Languages and History) at Northwestern University, Illinois. Staying on at Northwestern, Herman completed his PhD in Linguistics with a focus on Nubian toponymy, and joined the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill as an Assistant Professor in the Department of Linguistics for the next four years. Herman's documentation of the vanished toponymy of Nubia became



Herman and Ann on a boat on the Nile with The Great Temple of Abu Simbel in the background before it was relocated (1962).

the basis for his PhD which was published as a monograph by the University of Khartoum in 1970 'Place Names in the Belly of Stones' (Nubian - *kidin tuu*). This same year saw Herman's highly important study of the Nobiin (Mahas) Nubian language published where he revised our understanding of the language through his discovery of evidence for the existence of tones within Nubian.

Herman came back to England in 1972 to take up a one-year research post at the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London, after which he returned to Africa. From 1973-1979, Herman was a reader and then professor in the Institute of African and Asian Studies at the University of Khartoum. During this period, Herman was the coordinator of a small team that conducted an extensive survey of the languages of Sudan, encompassing Southern Kordofan and the Nuba Mountains. Identifying that many minority languages were severely endangered, he also recorded and documented the last speakers of the Haraza Nubian language. While at Khartoum University, Herman was selected to be a board member of the National Atlas of the Sudan in recognition of his documentation of the toponymy of Nubia.

By 1980, Herman had left Khartoum to take up a professorial position at King Faisal University in Saudi Arabia where he worked for the next 13 years. Returning to England, Herman settled in Oxford once more, and in 2000 became an Honorary Research Fellow at the Institute of Arab and Islamic Studies at the University of Exeter. In the same year, Herman became the consultant for the National Committee for Geographical Names, representing Sudan at the United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names (UNGEGN) up to 2007, after which he was an independent Sudan expert for UNGEGN. Herman was very proud of this position and contributed greatly to UNGEGN publications, working groups and conferences.

From the beginning of his academic studies to the end of his life, Herman published widely in many areas of Nubian languages, toponymy, folklore and poetry. In 2009, his and Ann's extensive collection of photos and his documentation, reflections and knowledge of Nubia from his survey of Nubian geographical

names were published as a book, most aptly titled: *Paradise Lost: Nubia before the 1964 Hijra* (Khartoum, DAL Group). Herman was passionate about supporting Nubians to document, research, and maintain their own languages and culture, such as developing training for Nubian youth programmes and workshops, supervising Nubian students and scholars in their dissertations, research and publications, along with supporting many other minority speaker groups to valorise, promote and document their languages and culture.

Herman never stopped working on Nubian. He set up the Nubian Languages and Culture Documentation Project to continue the work he had started five decades previously. He continuously returned to Nubia to further his toponymic documentation and with academic rigour to recheck his prior documentation. His final visit to Sudan was in 2018 where he was honoured at the University of Africa for his life-time contribution to Nubian scholarship.

A member of the Egypt Exploration Society since 1957 and Fellow of the Royal Geographical Society from 1968, Herman was also a trustee for many years of the Women's Education Partnership whose charitable endeavours to assist women from war zones into education he greatly supported.

Not only was Herman an exceptional scholar who always sought the truth, he was also a kind and generous soul who possessed an exceptional wit, formidable memory and a wonderful sense of fun and humour. Herman was a master storyteller, with a love of songs, sayings, stories and jokes. He was a man of great humility and compassion, not driven by accolades, accomplishments nor honours but by curiosity, precision and a sense of doing what was right. A Nubian proverb which perhaps captures Herman's personality, life and scholarship is $\epsilon\epsilon\epsilon\iota \Delta\overline{\sigma}\gamma\lambda \sigma\gamma\mu\sigma\gamma\pi\rho\sigma \chi\overline{\sigma}\rho \delta\gamma\kappa\overline{\sigma}\mu\eta\sigma\gamma$, which translates as 'the river in its lifetime never became a seasonal stream'.¹

Herman was my teacher and my best friend, and I along with many others miss him greatly. *Heyrrogo* Captain!

In Africa, they say that no one truly dies. Herman lives on in his son Jordan and his daughter Bethany and is survived by his wife Ann.

Dr Kirsty Rowan

Obituary: Henry (Harry) Sidney Smith (14th June, 1928–8th September, 2024)

From 1970 to 1988 the Edwards Chair of Egyptology at University College London was held by Harry Smith who has died, aged 96. Harry was one the last survivors of the generation of archaeologists who worked in Nubia during the long UNESCO salvage campaign of the 1960s. He was a greatly loved teacher and possessed one of the broadest ranges of abilities in British Egyptology, embracing philology, history, and archaeology from prehistory to the Ptolemaic Period.

The Edwards Chair was endowed by Amelia Edwards for her protégé (Sir) Flinders Petrie, who finally retired, to Jerusalem, in 1934. He was succeeded by his junior colleague Stephen Glanville, formerly an Assistant Keeper at the British Museum and later by Bryan Emery: both were influential in the direction of Harry Smith's work.

Henry Sidney Smith was born on 14th June 1928. His father, Sidney Smith, an Assyriologist, was an

¹ I am very grateful to Marcus Jaeger for supplying me with the Nubian proverb from his PhD dissertation 'Wise Sayings and Proverbs among Andaandi and Mattoki speaking Nubians,' (2024) University of Cologne, and to Armgard Goo-Grauer who was able to share with me some of her experiences, and I am hugely grateful to Herman's family Ann, Bethany and Jordan for approving and checking this obituary and permitting the use of the images of Herman in Nubia.



Harry Smith (left) with Ali Hassan, on the *Thutmose*.

Assistant Keeper at the British Museum (1919-1926), Director of Antiquities in Iraq (1926-31), and from 1931, the Keeper of Egyptian and Assyrian Antiquities at the British Museum. His mother (a second cousin of his father), Mary Parker, was an artist who trained at the Slade School. Their closest friends were the archaeologist (Sir) Max Mallowan and his wife, the crime writer, (Dame) Agatha Christie. Consequently, Harry with his parents and younger sister spent many family holidays at Christie's house, Greenway, in Devon: one of Mary Smith's paintings still hangs there. Christie dedicated *The Moving Finger* to Sidney and Mary Smith and, later, *At Bertram's Hotel* to Harry 'because I appreciate the scientific way he reads my books'.

Harry was educated at Merchant Taylors School from 1940 to 1946. He later said that he really didn't know what he wanted to do as a career, but he won a scholarship to study Classics at Cambridge in 1946. Family friend, Stephen Glanville, by then Professor at Cambridge, persuaded him to change to Oriental Studies – Egyptian, Coptic and Arabic. Following National Service, Harry began his studies, graduating in 1953 with a starred first-class degree. He then worked in Egypt with Bryan Emery, who had succeeded to the Chair at University College London. Returning to Cambridge as the Lady Wallis Budge Research Fellow and Assistant Lecturer at Christ's College, Harry began studying Demotic, again with Glanville, a leading expert. Glanville's sudden death in 1956, at an early age was quite a blow to Harry. To succeed Glanville at Cambridge, J. Martin Plumley was appointed as Professor in 1957. Harry became a full Lecturer in 1959.

Although a fine philologist, Harry did not want 'just a desk job' but to be involved in fieldwork, so he went to Beycesultan in Turkey with Seton Lloyd, and to the Assyrian royal city of Nimrud in Iraq (Max Mallowan's site), to train in settlement archaeology.

The 1950s saw the end of British colonial rule and Egyptian and Sudanese independence. The break in British-Egyptian relations following the Suez crisis led the Egypt Exploration Society (EES) to start work in the very north of Sudan, where Bryan Emery selected the great fortress of Buhen. When the Egyptian government under President Nasser decided to build the new High Dam at Aswan, there was renewed, and even greater risk, to the archaeology of Nubia (not to mention the contentious issue of relocating its population). As soon as the decision to construct the dam was made, Emery who, with Lawrence Kirwan, had carried out the Second Archaeological Survey at the time of the heightening of the original dam, was consulted by both the Egyptian and Sudanese governments on a plan of action for the region that was to be permanently submerged. This led to the UNESCO campaign of survey and excavation. All work in Egypt stopped and foreign archaeological missions transferred to Nubia. Emery's work at Buhen became the major UK contribution to the UNESCO campaign. Excavation began in 1957, and Smith joined the team in the 1959-1960 season, direct from Beycesultan.

A crucial element of the EES work at Buhen was the survey carried out by Harry with some other members of the team over two seasons in 1961. The aim was to examine unexplored and unconceded areas, to investigate all dynastic sites below River Level 180, and to complete archaeological mapping southwards from the termination of the earlier Nubian Surveys. The work was to be carried out from a houseboat, the *Thutmose*, but was largely on foot. The team was Harry Smith along with David O'Connor, Martin Minns, Ali Hassan (an inspector at Mallawi), and 15 Quftis. The first season started at Adindan

(near Buhen) 4th January 1961 and moved northward to Korosko which was reached on 26 March 1961. The first season identified 50 previously unknown cemeteries and 20 settlements ranging from the A-Group to Christian periods. The location of rock drawings and inscriptions were noted to assist the teams who were to record them. Smith noted the extensive pillage of sites since the second survey: in many cases this was the result of dealers moving in.

The second season began on 11th October 1961 at Korosko going as far north as Maharraqa: this time Harry was accompanied by O'Connor and Minns, along with Sayyid Ibrahim Amer the inspector at Tanta, with the addition of Mrs Smith. Additional work saw the excavation of the fortress of Kor (Buhen South in 1965) (Smith 1966) and the cemeteries of Qasr Ibrim (1961).

A small volume relating to both seasons of the 1961 survey was published in Cairo in 1962 (Smith 1962). The relatively modest scale of the 1962 publication stimulated Harry's major re-assessment of the material for Reisner's 'B-Group' published in 1966 (Smith 1966). In this he reviewed all of the archaeological material from Firth's First and Emery's Second Archaeological Surveys, and the material excavated by Junker at Kubaniyah, north of Aswan. He forensically questioned Reisner's premises and interpretation, and ended by demonstrating that the 'B'-Group, as Reisner had perceived it, had never existed. It was, in essence, a dustbin for empty and robbed graves, and graves with few artefacts. Those of value were early and predated the classic A-Group, rather than representing cultural decline. Smith agreed with Bill Adams that there was a strong connection between the 'A' and 'C' Groups and that there was a significant pastoralist population in Lower Nubia during the Egyptian Old Kingdom. What Harry Smith did in his study of the B-group was demonstrate convincingly the errors in interpretation that Reisner had made, based upon the idea that Nubian cultures declined due to population movement from the south, and were reinvigorated by population movement from the north.

This incisive study of the 'B' Group was not his only important work on early Nubia. A paper written with Lisa Giddy looked at Nubia and Dakhla Oasis in the late 3rd millennium (Smith and Giddy 1985), and in 1991 he returned to the subject with an important study of the A-group (Smith 1991). This was followed up by his re-examination of the material from the First Archaeological Survey excavated by Cecil Firth at Seyala (Smith 1994). Here he looked at the issue of state formation and centralisation in Nubia which had been brought to the fore by Bruce Williams' publications of the Oriental Institute of Chicago's excavations in the great A-group cemetery at Qustul. These, as is typical of his academic papers, are written with a keen analytical eye, formidable knowledge of the vast amount of archaeological material, and with extensive acknowledgement of the work of colleagues.

Following the UNESCO campaign, Harry continued to teach at Cambridge until he was appointed as Reader in Egyptology at UCL in 1963 as a successor to Anthony Arkell. There, one of his duties was overseeing the Petrie collection of 78,000 objects ranging from the palaeolithic to Islamic period. Harry was devoted to the collection and greatly encouraged Barbara Adams, who joined as a curatorial assistant in 1965. Following a fund-raising campaign in 1986-87 that resolved some of the issues the Museum faced, she and Harry, with others, founded the Friends of the Petrie Museum (as it then became known) in 1988. Harry was its President until 2021.

On Emery's retirement in 1970, Harry succeeded him as Edwards Professor and following Emery's sudden death in Egypt in 1971, he continued the work at Saqqara, excavating during the autumn term each year. Emery's later work had focussed on the Sacred Animal Necropolis ('SAN') with its miles of underground galleries containing millions of mummified animals. He later initiated the important Survey of Memphis with his former students David Jeffreys and Lisa Giddy.

Emery's death left the publication of the Buhen and Saqqara excavations unfinished. In the main report volume for Buhen, Emery's relatively brief architectural chapters are supplemented with Harry's

perceptive analyses, Anne Millard's lengthy catalogue of the objects, and Juliet Clutton-Brock's study of the famed 'Buhen equid' (Emery *et al.* 1979). The volume is certainly as monumental as its subject. But if the fortress volume is impressive for scale, for some of us it is the wealth of material in the *Inscriptions of Buhen* that is more alluring (Smith 1976). This volume combines Harry's philological expertise with his analytical reconstruction of Buhen's history, its changing occupants and transformation from a fortress into a town over a period of a thousand years. Particularly significant is the study of the Egyptian garrison under Kushite rule. Harry also published the rock inscriptions at Gebel Turob and 'Hill A' near Buhen (Smith 1972).

Between the Buhen seasons, Harry married Hazel Flory Leeper, who had been Glanville's assistant and had been instrumental in organising the new Egyptology library at Christ's College, Cambridge. She later ran the dig house at Saqqara, proficiently dealing with the large teams of archaeologists and avoiding the spartan regimes traditionally favoured by some British expeditions. She also served as photographer for some of the work at Saqqara. Hazel died in 1991.

Harry served for many years on the Committees of the Egypt Exploration Society and the Sudan Archaeological Research Society. He was elected a Fellow of the British Academy in 1985 and Vice-President of the Egypt Exploration Society. In 1988 Harry retired from the Edwards Chair, and from excavation, but continued to teach until 1994.

Harry had published a considerable number of excavation volumes, annual reports, and academic papers whilst excavating and teaching. The earlier years of his 'retirement' were spent completing the remaining publications in collaboration with one of his last students and great friend, Sue Davies, and a number of colleagues. The result was five volumes on the Sacred Animal Necropolis and related inscriptions, along with a considerable array of academic papers on demotic documents, written with Sue Davies and Cary Martin.

His final work was *Nubian Memoirs* (2022), an account of what he regarded as a very significant and enjoyable time of his life. It demonstrates his humanity, deep concern for what was happening in the destruction of communities, and his ability to talk easily to people he met in their own language.

In addition to the annual excavations and publications, Smith was, of course, a teacher, and a greatly loved and respected one. Of those students who have been able to stay in the Egyptological world, they continue every aspect of Harry's expertise: philology, demotic studies, archaeology, history, and Nubian studies. He was welcoming to Egyptian students and Inspectors who came to the Department to study. A large celebration was held at UCL for his 90th birthday, and friends and former students continued to visit and stay at the house in Upwood.

Although physically frail, his death was sudden and unexpected on the morning of 8th September. The International Conference for Meroitic Studies began the next day in Münster. It was dominated by the issues of the current war in Sudan, the looting of the Khartoum National Museum, and the threat to Sudan's National Heritage and to Sudanese archaeologists and scholars. The news of Harry's death spread quickly via social media and although many of those present had never met him personally, he was a respected and legendary figure to them.

Robert G. Morkot.

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Buhen dig house: A.J. Mills, David O'Connor, Robert Deane, Margaret Drower, Molly Emery, H.S. Smith, Ricardo Caminos and Martin Minns (© EES Archive).