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Excavating 'Areika': Cuthbert Balleine and the 1907 Eckley B. Coxe Jr. Expedition to Nubia

T. O. Moller

On 4th January 1907, David Randall MacIver, Curator of the Egyptian Section of the Penn Museum, Philadelphia, dispatched a letter from Derr in Upper Egypt to his sponsor, Eckley Brinton Coxe Junior.¹ In it, he explains that he had been granted an archaeological concession that gave him 'liberty to work anywhere I like from Sebuia in the north to Wady Halfa in the south, provided only that I do not endanger the already very rickety stone temples'. He continues that he 'had the good luck to find my friend Wrigall [sic]' who 'put all his notes and information at my disposal' (PU-Mu. 1008, Randall-MacIver 1907a, 1-2). Separately, Arthur Weigall, Chief Inspector of Antiquities, records that he furnished Randall MacIver with 'a list of the best-known cemeteries' in Lower Nubia (Weigall 1907, 29), which included information concerning an extensive burial ground in 'the hamlet of Shablûl ... forming part of the village of Arêkah' (Weigall 1907, 100). Weigall in particular emphasises that he anticipated that Randall MacIver's work would focus upon burial grounds.

The first season of the 'Eckley B. Coxe Junior Expedition to Nubia' ran from January to April 1907 (PU-Mu. 1008, Randall MacIver 1907d, 1), part of an increased influx of American-sponsored missions that penetrated the archeological communities of Sudan and Egypt in the first two decades of the 20th century (Doyon 2018, 181). In addition to excavating the Shablul cemetery, it discovered a pharaonic era fortress, additional cemeteries located within its vicinity, and a variety of domestic dwellings, along a 4km stretch of Nile's West Bank, part of the so-called 'Korosko Bend'. These were published in a volume entitled *Areika*, which explains that the discovery of the fortress was accidental (Randall MacIver and Woolley 1909, 5).

The results of this archaeological mission have largely avoided the attention of subsequent scholars, having been eclipsed by the Coxe Expedition's later work at the sites of Karanog (Woolley and Randall-MacIver 1910a; Woolley and Randall-MacIver 1910b; Woolley 1911; Griffith 1911) and Buhen (Randall-MacIver and Woolley 1911a; Randall-MacIver and Woolley 1911b). In particular, although the Shablul Cemetery is noted for providing the first significant collection of decorated pottery now recognised as 'Meroitic' (Bishop-Wright 2021, 229), the site of Karanog is acknowledged as 'the first big Meroitic cemetery on record' (Bierbrier 2019, 499). Examining the first season of the Coxe Expedition provides a useful vignette into the working practices of the team, the effects of which were seen through subsequent excavation seasons. Using the letters of Randall MacIver kept as part of the Eckley B. Coxe Jr. Nubia Expedition Records in the Penn Museum Archives (PU-Mu. 1008; Rodgers 2017), and further documentation kept in the University of Oxford, this paper will firstly locate the Areika sites in the Korosko Bend of the Nile, before providing a brief discussion of their respective dates. Finally, it will discuss the personnel involved, showing that the role of assistant in this inaugural season was filled by Cuthbert Balleine and not, as has generally been accepted, (Charles) Leonard Woolley.

Locating Areika

The landscape of the Nile valley south of the First Cataract changed irrevocably during the 20th century, as a result of the construction of the Low and High dams at Aswan, between 1898-1902 and 1960-1970 respectively (Carruthers 2022, 7).² Consequently, those studying this region are reliant upon the reports

¹ Throughout the course of his life 'David Randall MacIver' signed his name in a variety of ways. Reference will be made in this format when discussed in the main body of the text.

² I have chosen to omit the prefix 'AD' when discussing modern dates.

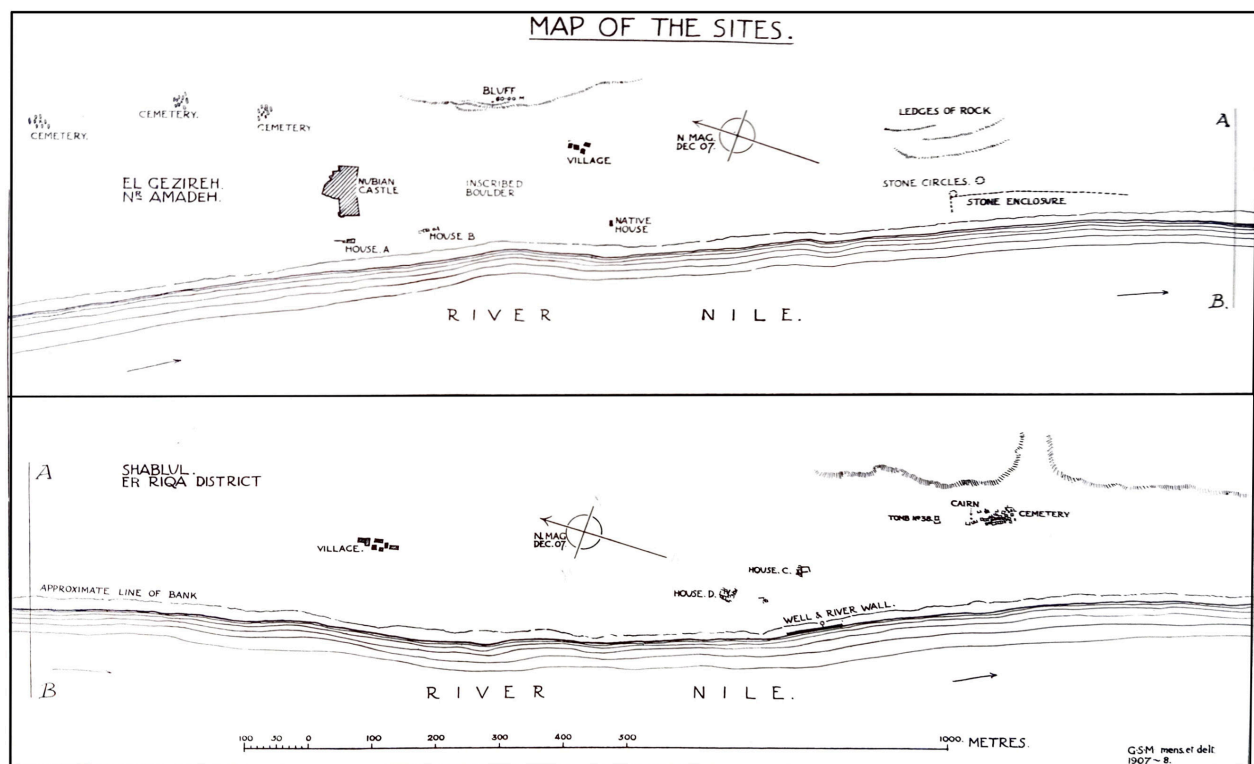


Figure 1. Map of the Areika excavations, December 1907 (Randall MacIver and Woolley 1909, pl. 43).

and maps of the first half of the 20th century to locate Areika.

Rather than being one archaeological site, the *Areika* volume is concerned with a series of excavations scattered along the Korosko Bend (Randall MacIver and Woolley 1909). The *Areika* volume included an hand drawn map (Figure 1), making it possible to conceptualise the relationship of the sites to each other. In addition, in Volume 4 of the Coxe Expedition series, the authors later included a map of the Nile, which located the Shablul cemetery (Figure 2). This map included major sites including Abu Simbel, Qasr Ibrim and Dakka. Unfortunately, the overall usefulness of these diagrams is limited for the fact that they do not contextualise the sites against the complex archaeological data found in Upper Egypt.

In the 1920s, the water level of the Aswan Low Dam was increased. In response to this, between 1929-1931, Walter Emery and Lawrence Kirwan documented the range of archaeological sites on the Upper Nile, producing a 'topographical map of the Nile Valley showing the positions of cemeteries' (Emery and Kirwan 1935) running over a series of plates. In 1995 Joseph Wegner used these maps to locate the Areika Fortress (Wegner 1995, 130 n. 9). Wegner's use showed that these maps constituted the most accurate presentation of the region's topography, reflecting the irrevocable change in the Nile landscape that the Aswan Dams caused. In addition, later maps, which show the location of these cemeteries in relation to the wider Nile spanning across the cataract region from Aswan to Khartoum, are similarly lacking in detail as that produced by Woolley and Randall MacIver in 1910 (Edwards 1996, 35, fig. 6; Welsby 1996 18, fig. 2).

Even using the Emery and Kirwan maps, the fortress is difficult to locate as it is not labelled, in spite of the fact that they include buildings of a similar stature, such as Amada Temple. Instead, Wegner explains 'although named Areika after the El-Riqa district, the actual location of the site lay between the villages named Nagc el-Qarya and Nagc el Hagar el Qadim on the 1935 survey map' (Wegner 1995, 130 n. 9). These villages are represented in the extreme bottom right hand corner of Plate 63 (see Emery and Kirwan 1935).

While Wegner does not discuss this, the *Areika* volume explains that the Gezira cemeteries were 'a few hundred yards north' of the fortress (Randall MacIver and Woolley 1909, 19) and that Houses A and B were

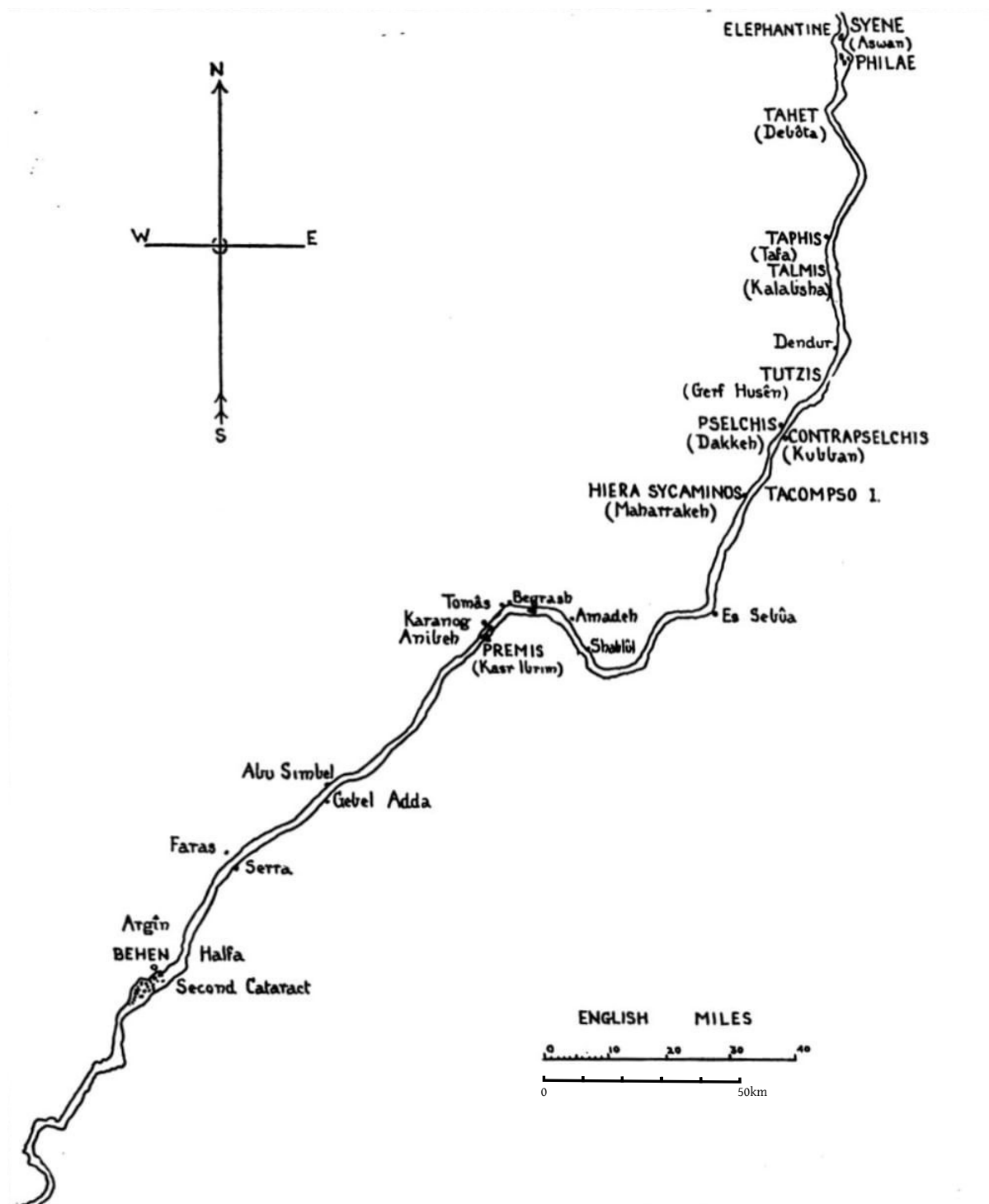


Figure 2. 'Sketch map of the River Nile Between Aswan and the Second Cataract' (Woolley and Randall-MacIver)

also located in this vicinity. In addition, it is possible to locate the Meroitic cemetery at Shablul, and Houses C and D, by studying archive 'PU-Mu. 1008'. In a letter to Coxe dated 16th February 1907, Randall MacIver explains that the excavation of the Shablul Cemetery was 'two and a half miles [=4km] further south' from the fortress, and in the other direction, 'only a mile or two [between 1.6 and 3.2km] from Koroko [sic]' (PU-Mu. 1008, Randall Mac Iver 1907b, 5). To verify these measurements, it is necessary to join Plate 63 with Plate 62 of the 1935 survey, the latter showing the Korosko district (Figure 3) (Emery and Kirwan 1935). This shows that the village of Nagc Shablul lay 4km downstream (right) of Wegner's proposed location of the Areika Fortress. Looking upstream (left) from Korosko, Randall MacIver's measurement is less exact,

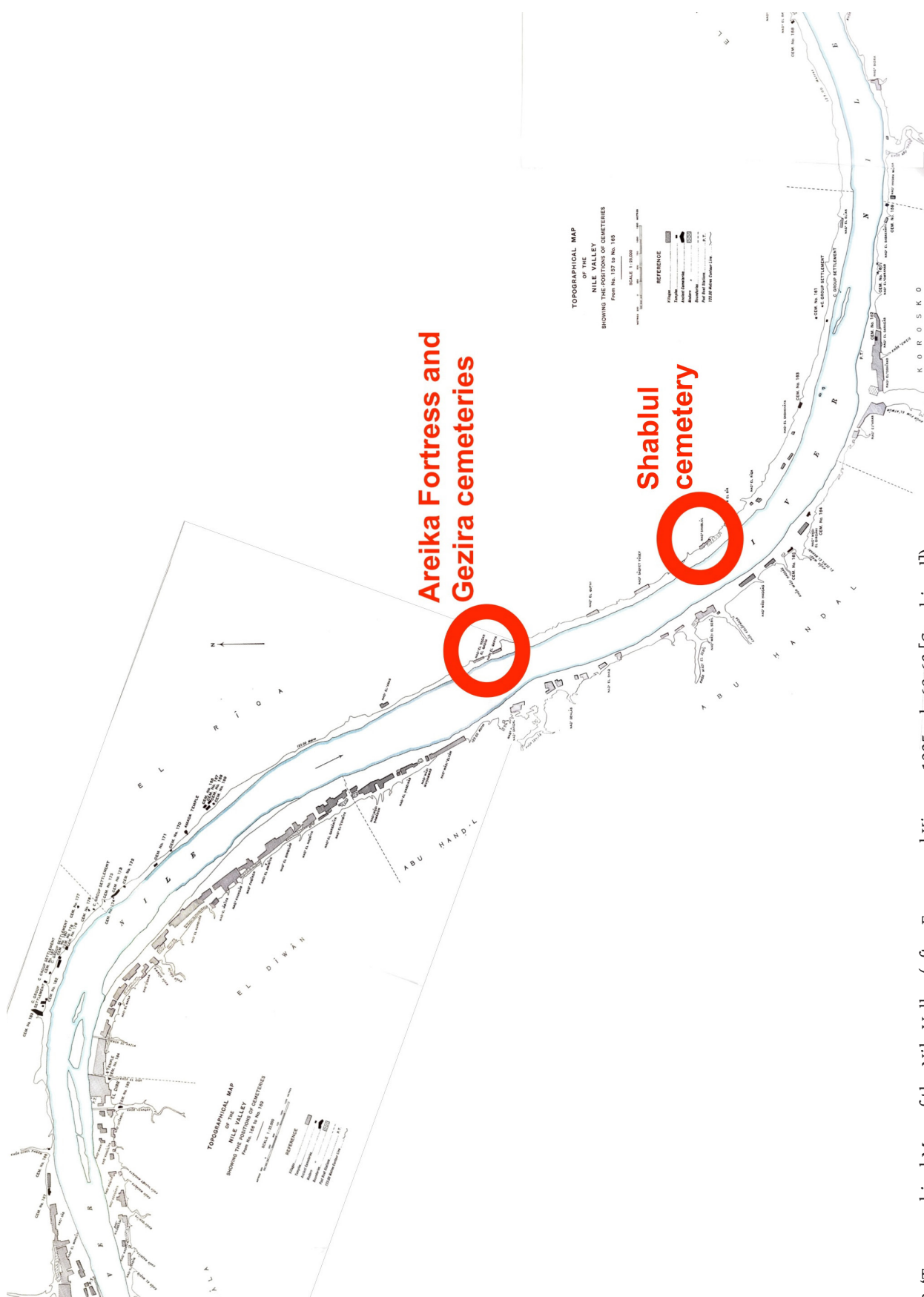


Figure 3. 'Topographical Map of the Nile Valley (after Emery and Kirwan 1935, pls 62-63 [Combined]).

however the distance between Nagc Shablul and Cemetery 163 is 3.5km, the latter of which is described as being on the west bank of Korosko (Emery and Kirwan 1935, 151).

Consulting archive 'PU-Mu. 1008' shows that Wegner correctly identified the location of the Areika Fortress. In addition, this archive is useful for positioning the cemetery and excavated houses at Shablul. It remains striking however that the location of these excavations was not explicitly documented in the 1935 Survey, acting as a contributing factor that has diminished their significance.

Dating the Areika sites

Having located the four discrete archaeological zones, this section will summarise the relevant dating information for 1) the Areika fortress, 2) the cemetery at Gezira, 3) the cemetery at Shablul, and 4) the four Meroitic houses that the Coxe Expedition excavated.

The Areika fortress

The Areika fortress, located between the villages of Nagc el-Qarya and Nagc el Hagar el Qadim, spanned 2,800m² (Wegner 1995, 131). It was divided into three zones, labeled A, B, and C. The Coxe Expedition dated the fortress to the 18th dynasty of the pharaonic period, based partly upon the recovery of a scarab (Figure 4) with a partially preserved cartouche, which was believed to give the throne name of Thuthmoses III (Figure 5a) who ruled between 1479-1425 BC (Randall MacIver and Woolley 1909, 9-10). A more recent evaluation has suggested that the cartouche belongs to the 12th dynasty pharaoh Senwosret II (Figure 5b), who ruled between 1897-1878 BC (Wegner 1995, 144).³

Other evidence, including ceramics, sealings and graffiti, suggests periods of Egyptian occupation between the Middle Kingdom and New Kingdom. However, the presence of several rounded buildings with centrally placed hearths in Zone C suggests that the fortress had also been occupied, at one time, by what is described as a 'Nubian chief' (Randall MacIver and Woolley 1909, 9). It is likely that this proved the Nubian inhabitants were the last to occupy the Fortress, during the C-Group Phase IIB, which corresponds to the final phase of the Middle Kingdom and the start of the Second Intermediate Period, c. 1700BC (Wegner 1995, 142). In any case, the latest possible date of any material from the fortress is in the second half of the 15th century BC.



Figure 4) Areika, Fortress, Building C 16, Scarab showing partially complete cartouche of Senwosret II or Thutmoses III. Scale unknown (Randall MacIver and Woolley 1909, pl. 9: No. 4058).

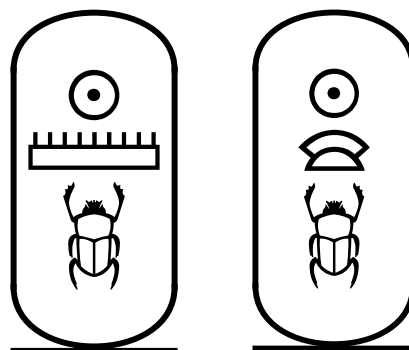


Figure 5 a-b). Throne Names of Thutmose III (left) and Senwosret II (right) (with thanks to Christina Geisen).

³ Wegner notes that Ph. 4058 is missing from the Penn Museum, meaning that it is not possible to make an independent study of the original object.

Gezira Cemeteries

Beyond a general description, no substantive material was published for the three cemeteries at Gezira, which lay immediately north of the Areika Fortress (Edwards 1996, 95). The *Areika* volume stated that the material gathered at the three cemeteries at 'Gezereh near Amada' is equivalent to that at Shablul (Randall MacIver and Woolley 1909, 19).

Of the three cemeteries, the Coxe Expedition categorised the one closest to the fortress as being 'Romano-Nubian' (Randall MacIver and Woolley 1909, 19), which today may be understood as Meroitic (Bishop-Wright 2021, 229). It possibly contained around one hundred graves (Edwards 1996, 95). Of the middle cemetery, only one grave was classed as Meroitic by merit of being constructed as a 'vertical shaft'; while the excavators believed that the ceramic material and beads recovered from the other graves may date to either the protodynastic/1st dynasty period, or the 18th dynasty (Randall MacIver and Woolley 1909, 20-21). The data contained in the Northern cemetery was not easily contextualised either; alongside Meroitic deposits there are three graves that might belong 'either to the protodynastic or Eighteenth Dynasty' (Randall MacIver and Woolley 1909, 22). The size of the last two cemeteries is unknown (Edwards 1996, 95).

As there are no accompanying images of the material, it is difficult to date the cemeteries more securely. However, it should be of interest that while the fortress appeared to fall out of use, at the latest, during the second half of the 15th century BC, the cemeteries that were presumably attached to it continued to be used for nearly two millennia, suggesting some local level of habitation must have continued around this site.

Shablul Cemetery

4km downstream from the Areika fortress and Gezira cemeteries, the excavations at the Shablul cemetery recovered examples of sculpture, Mediterranean amphorae, minor metalwork, wood, glass, bronze vessels, other bronze work, coarse pottery, oil and wine containers (Randall MacIver and Woolley 1909, 29-34; Edwards 1996, 34). The recovered pottery is thought to be of a similar quality and style to other Meroitic cemeteries in Lower Nubia including Faras. In particular, silhouette style pottery (Török 1987, 78) with images of trees, vine leaves and trefoils, is distinctive as originating from Aswan (Figure 6). The connections with Faras and Aswan enable this cemetery to be dated between the 2nd and 3rd centuries AD (Bishop-Wright, pers. comm. 25.9.2023). Separately, the material is dated to 'Phase IIB-IVA' (Edwards 1996, 34), which translates to the same time period (Williams 1991, 20). In addition, palaeographic analysis of the Meroitic texts inscribed on a variety of offering tables (Figure 7) has dated these to between AD 220-300 (Rilly and de Voogt 2012, 52; 56).

The complimentary dating methods each suggest that the cemeteries were in use between the 2nd and 3rd centuries AD. However, the graves in the Shablul cemetery were marked with sloping bricks of between two and five layers (Randall MacIver and Woolley 1909, 23-24). Although it was believed that the Coxe Expedition had exhausted the site in its entirety (Smith 1962, 71), it is possible that the team did not notice unmarked graves, which may have dated to an earlier period (Bishop-Wright, pers. comm. 25.9.2023). Due to the construction of the Aswan High Dam in the 1960s, no further information can be gathered to support this realistic hypothesis.

Houses

In the vicinity of the Areika Fortress and Gezira cemeteries, the Coxe Expedition identified and excavated two houses, which they named A and B (Randall MacIver and Woolley 1909, 22). They published ground plans for both of these. While these were the only buildings they located in the region of the fortress, the Coxe Expedition found several more at the site of Shablul. Two of these are named C and D; however the



Figure 6. Shablul cemetery, 2nd century AD, silhouette style pottery sherds (Randall MacIver and Woolley 1909, pl. 31 [where reproduction is 3/8 scale]).

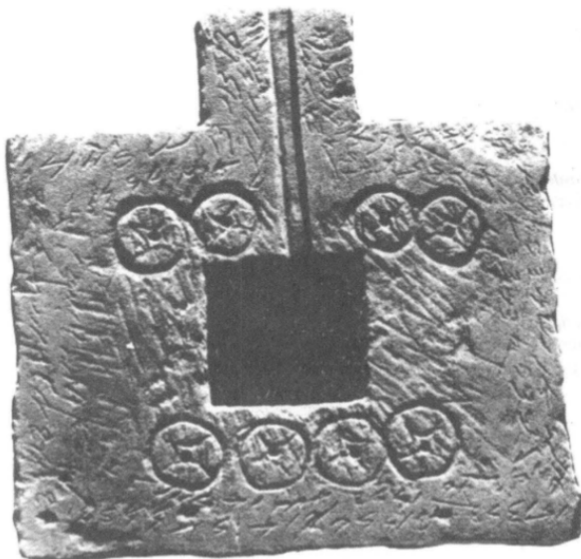


Figure 7. Shablul Cemetery (tomb unknown). Sandstone. 'REM 0379.' Length 340mm, width 330mm. Offering table with two lines of Meroitic inscription at the base. (Randall MacIver and Woolley 1909, 32; pl. 35: No. 5111).

authors note that they dug several more foundations, which 'would not repay the labour of digging to continue,' (Randall MacIver and Woolley 1909, 23). In the assessment of the Coxe Expedition, these houses date to the same period as the Shablul cemetery. As there are no accompanying images of the material, it is difficult to date the houses more securely. Based upon the date provided in Section 2.3, it is reasonable to date these to between the 2nd and 3rd centuries AD.

Personnel of the Areika excavations

The final section of this paper will explore the context behind these excavations. Using the documents kept in archive 'PU-Mu. 1008' it will show that they were conducted in a haphazard and opportunistic manner, which may have impacted upon their legacy in the history of archaeology in the region.

Personnel of the Coxe Expedition: curator

David Randall MacIver had been employed as 'Curator of the Egyptian Section of the Free Museum of Science and Art in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania' after the predecessor resigned in 1905 (Houser Wegner 2006, 13). The relationship was formalised in a contract dated 27th December 1906 (PU-Mu. 1008, Houston and Randall MacIver 1906, 1). His position had been financed entirely by Eckley Brinton Coxe Junior, who derived a fortune from a family business empire extracting anthracite coal (Beatty 1979, 44). The contract details that Coxe committed to give the Penn Museum the annual sum of USD 8,000 between the years 1907 and 1912. From this, Randall MacIver received a yearly salary of USD 2,500, with expenses to cover excavations in Egypt capped at USD 5,500 per annum (PU-Mu. 1008, Houston and Randall MacIver 1906, 1).

Randall MacIver wrote regularly and, as the years progressed, with increasing affection, to Coxe, explaining the developments of the excavations. Buoyed by the enormity of a concession that extended from Sebuia to Wadi Halfa (PU-Mu. 1008, Randall-MacIver 1907a, 1), it is perhaps not surprising that Randall MacIver split his resources between the Areika and Shablul sites during this opening season (PU-Mu. 1008, Randall Mac Iver 1907b, 5). Leonard Woolley later recorded that Randall MacIver

continued this arrangement in following seasons, where the team was split between the excavations at Karanog and Buhen (Woolley 1953, 23-25). Clearly the working practices developed during the Areika excavations set a precedent that would continue.

Personnel of the Coxe Expedition: the assistant

Since the *Areika* volume was co-authored by David Randall MacIver and Leonard Woolley, it has generally been assumed that Woolley filled the role of assistant for the Areika excavations from the first season of excavation (Smith 1962, 70; Wegner 1995, 127). Biographies published as part of the *Expedition* magazine of the Penn Museum repeatedly imply that this was the case (Mallowan 1960, 25; Beatty 1979, 44; Houser Wegner 2006, 14). The conclusion is also drawn from the most recent edition of the volume *Who was Who in Egyptology* (Bierbrier 2019, 499).

However, it is incorrect to believe that Woolley joined the Areika expedition at its outset. Between 1905 and 1907, Woolley worked as a junior Assistant Keeper at the Ashmolean Museum of the University of Oxford (Woolley 1953, 14; Winstone 1990, 17; Crawford 2015, 7). In his memoirs, held in the library of The Queen's College at the University of Oxford, Randall MacIver notes that Woolley resigned this position there 'in the autumn of 1907' (MS 451, Randall MacIver 1942, 25) only at which point he joined the University of Pennsylvania and the Penn Museum. In addition, through the summer of 1907, Woolley published two letters in The Times newspaper reporting excavations from Corbridge in Northumberland, at which he was assisting Francis Haverfield (Woolley 1907; Woolley and Haverfield 1907). These show that his attentions were still devoted to Oxford-based work until this time.

Recounting the period before Woolley's appointment, Randall MacIver notes in his Memoirs that 'my assistant for the winter [of January-April 1907] was C. F. Balleine, a scholar of Exeter College Oxford who has just taken a first in the History Schools. Though new to the work, he proved to be a most able assistant, as well as an altogether charming companion' (Randall MacIver 1942, 24). In fact, Cuthbert Balleine, had taken a Bachelor of Arts degree in *Literae Humaniores* on 20th October 1906 from Exeter College at the University of Oxford. In addition, the college's archive reveals that, the day before his graduation, he had been elected to a Senior Scholarship lasting one academic year with a stipend of one hundred pounds from the foundation of King Charles I (College Register, 1825-1915, 425). His obituaries explain that this award was for 'travel and research', with which he first spent time in Germany (Anon. [Nature Journal] 1915, 543; Anon. [The Jersey Evening Post] 1915; Anon. [The Times] 1915). The account ledger for the Areika expedition shows that the Penn Museum paid three pounds and seven shillings for his passage back to England to meet Randall MacIver in December 1906 (PU-Mu. 1008, Randall MacIver 1907e).

Although 'new to the work', Randall MacIver's letters show the significant responsibility undertaken by Balleine. In a letter dated 16th February 1907, he explained that they shared equally the duties of running the excavations at the two archaeological sites spaced 4km apart. Each would spend either a morning or afternoon at the Shablul Cemetery or the Areika Fortress, before swapping duties by rowing boat at lunch time. In Randall MacIver's assessment, it was 'quite a neat sort of buckets in the well arrangement' (PU-Mu. 1008, Randall Mac Iver, 16.2.1907, 5), by which it is possible to understand the excavation was proceeding successfully.

Despite this, there is no mention of Balleine in the next letter, dated 23rd March 1907. The tone of this correspondence moves the weight of responsibility onto Randall MacIver alone, for in it he writes entirely in the first person singular, noting for example that 'I completely finished all that side of the cemetery which had not been hopelessly wrecked by the modern dealer' (PU-Mu. 1008, Randall MacIver 1907c, 2). Balleine does however feature as a subject in the next letter dated 19th April 1907, having fallen ill shortly before the Expedition returned to Aswan. Randall MacIver notes that he had been left to pack the finds

of the excavations himself. He also records that, by merit of travelling with a government inspector from Aswan he 'was able to plead government business, get a steam tug and avoid the bad railway journey down to Luxor, which is dangerous both for invalids and antiquities' (PU-Mu. 1008, Randall MacIver 1907d, 1). They did not have the same good fortune on the journey to Cairo, where they were faced with the trials of an overnight sleeper train being engulfed in a hot sand storm. At Cairo, Randall MacIver records 'the doctors were unanimous for an operation which was successfully performed the same afternoon (It was appendicitus [sic], which he might as well have had in London)' (PU-Mu. 1008, Randall MacIver 1907d, 1). After recovering from this operation, Balleine returned to Britain, taking up a tutorial fellowship back at Exeter College, in July 1907, to which he had been elected on 2nd June (College Register, 1825-1915, 427).

In spite of Randall MacIver's quip, the rudimentary nature of desert healthcare would doubtless have proved a sobering factor in weighing any decision to return to Egypt. In addition, there is no indication in the account ledger for the Areika expedition that Balleine drew a salary from the Penn Museum, implying that his position as assistant may have been funded as part of the senior travel scholarship that he was awarded from Exeter College, Oxford. In any case, his appointment to a Tutorial Fellowship in that institution in June 1907 suggests that he had intended to take a year's absence before starting a tenured academic position.

The legacy of Balleine

Balleine's obituaries show that he continued to work as an academic in the University of Oxford until the start of the First World War in 1914. Alongside this, from 14th January 1908 he served as an army reservist in the 1st ('University') Battalion of the Oxfordshire Light Infantry, commissioned with the rank of (supernumerary) Second Lieutenant (Anon. [Volunteer Services Gazette] 1908, 218). By 1915 he had been transferred to the 8th Battalion Rifle Brigade, in whose service as Captain Balleine he died at Flanders in Belgium on 2nd July 1915, having been hit by an enemy shell (Anon. [Nature Journal] 1915, 543; Anon. [The Jersey Evening Post] 1915; Anon. [The Times] 1915). He is buried in 'Enclosure No.2 VI. A. 30' at Bedford House Cemetery (Anon. [Find a Grave] no date).

Unlike Coxe (Beatty 1979, 44), Randall MacIver (Houser Wegner 2006, 14) and Woolley (Mallowan 1960, 25), up until this time Cuthbert Balleine has not received any recognition in the *Expedition Magazine* of the Penn Museum. In addition, Balleine is not included with the three other individuals, mentioned in the 'finding aid' for the archive 'PU-Mu. 1008' in the Penn Museum (Rodgers 2017). Neither has he gained an entry in *Who was Who in Egyptology* (Bierbrier 2019).⁴ Writing about the *Areika* volume, Woolley's biographer acknowledged the contributions of a variety of writers, ranging from its co-author Randall MacIver; to a chapter on the subject of the Meroitic language produced by Francis Griffith; and a foreword by Coxe (Winstone 1990, 22). Although not mentioned by Winstone, Balleine is also noted as having contributed to this volume. Of the grave structures found at the Gezira cemetery, the authors presented 'the field notes of Mr. C. F. Balleine, who devoted much time and care to the examination of these cemeteries' (Randall MacIver and Woolley 1909, 19). Up until this time, this brief recognition in the *Areika* publication appears to be the only academic acknowledgement of Balleine's contribution to the scholarship of ancient Sudan and Egypt.

Personnel of the Coxe Expedition: the excavators

Careful analysis of the archival material makes it possible to acknowledge the role of Cuthbert Balleine in the *Areika* excavations. In addition, Randall MacIver's letters make reference to a group of 'as many as 60 men' (PU-Mu. 1008, Randall Mac Iver 1907b, 4). These local employees were recruited quickly: on

⁴ The catalogue is alphabetical. Coxe: 112; Randall MacIver: 297; Woolley: 499. If Balleine were included, he would feature between Montague Ballard and Francesco Ballerini: 32.

the morning of 4th January 1907, Randall MacIver met with the local community leader, the Mamûr of Derr, who was 'anxious to assist in every way ...[and] arranged for a small supply of workmen' to set off later that day (PU-Mu. 1008, Randall-MacIver 1907a, 1). In comparison with the European members of the expedition, none of the local workers are mentioned by name.

Randall MacIver's letters suggest that during the excavation process the primary role of both he and Balleine was in supervising the labourers. It is these men who were responsible for the heavy labour involved in excavation, as was common to many digs of the period (Riggs 2017, 337). Randall MacIver notes that they had no 'understand[ing of] even such simple implements as wheelbarrows and have to work with the primitive basket and hoe' (PU-Mu. 1008, Randall Mac Iver 1907b, 2). His characterisation of the workers was entirely consistent of the attitudes of his time, describing the employees as 'a cheery school boy lot' who had, 'a deadly fear of my field glasses and think I can see over the hills and round corners' (PU-Mu. 1008, Randall Mac Iver 1907b, 5). The overall impression of infantilisation means that it is unfortunately easy to forego any acknowledgement of these local efforts in the collective endeavour of archaeological knowledge production (Riggs 2017, 342).

Yet some indication is given to the division of labour. Of the 60 strong workforce, 47 are called 'actual workers' who were split across both excavation sites, while in addition there were two boys tasked with carrying drinking water; a basket-mender; a felucca captain employed on transporting provisions for the excavators; and the crew of his own boat (PU-Mu. 1008, Randall Mac Iver 1907b, 5). While Randall MacIver does not explain any relative hierarchy among these workers, the discipline of the team is noted by the fact that when he arrived at the dig at 8am, 'the men [already] have been at work half an hour' (PU-Mu. 1008, Randall Mac Iver 1907b, 5). As at other Egyptian excavations at the start of the 20th century, it is reasonable to assume that this was regulated by a local supervisor, commonly called a 'Quft', who was doubtless more effective at maintaining order and time-keeping (Doyon 2018, 179) than Randall MacIver's binoculars. The role of these individuals in the Areika excavations is implied by Randall MacIver, but not confirmed.

Concluding remarks

Studying the Areika excavations provides an important insight into the working practices of archaeologists in the first years of the 20th century. While the identity of the local workers remains anonymous in the expedition archives, the case study of Cuthbert Balleine, and the difficulties of dating and locating the Areika sites, show that the first season of the Coxe Expedition to Nubia has not received sufficient attention in the history of scholarship concerning Sudan and Egypt.

It is possible to speculate that by February 1907 the Coxe Expedition had already over-stepped their brief. Instructed to focus on burial sites (PU-Mu. 1008, Randall-MacIver 1907a, 2; Weigall 1907, 29), the coincidental discovery of a fortress (Randall MacIver and Woolley 1909, 5) was clearly a delight for the excavator and, not impossibly, of concern to the men from the ministry who granted his concession.

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