



NINO Symposium, Leiden, 11-12 December, 2009

Objectives

For thousands of years the natural citadel of Qasr Ibrim in northern Nubia occupied a strategic position, dominating all contacts (commercial, military and cultural) between Egypt and the Middle-Nile region (the present-day Sudan). As an administrative, religious and military centre it flourished under Pharaonic, Kushite, Meroitic and Nobadian rule, with frequent interludes (Roman, Blemmye, and Muslim Egyptian), ending as a forgotten outpost of the Ottoman Empire. All of these various empires and civilizations left archaeological and textual remains that are of great potential value for our understanding of the many contacts between the Mediterranean basin and Africa during these periods. Much of the material from Qasr Ibrim was brought to light during excavations undertaken by the Egypt Exploration Society (London) from 1963 onwards, as part of the Nubian salvage campaign. As the findings of the British excavations are now gradually being made available, the moment has come for a critical assessment. Owing to the richness and variety of the material such an undertaking can only be of an interdisciplinary nature.

The Leiden conference proposed here aims to be a first step towards a more synthetic study of Qasr Ibrim's role in the history of North-Eastern Africa. It brings together a group of experts who each have knowledge of one or more aspects of the site's archaeological and textual heritage or its broader cultural setting. The meeting will focus on the role of Qasr Ibrim as an intermediary between North and South, a role that can best be assessed through the study of the profound cultural and religious transformations that marked the region throughout its long history. The speakers will therefore be asked to refrain as much as possible from stock-taking and instead to pay full attention to issues of cultural contact and cultural change as witnessed by the source material. In this way a fruitful discussion between the various disciplines involved (archaeology, epigraphy, papyrology, Egyptology, Coptology, etc.) can be assured.

Choosing Qasr Ibrim for a case study of cultural exchange is at the same time an homage to the doyen of Nubian archaeology, W.Y. Adams, who himself worked for many years at Qasr Ibrim. His classic *Nubia: Corridor to Africa*, first published in 1977, is much more than 'merely' a comprehensive history of Nubia. It has developed an authoritative model for interpreting the dynamics of Nubian history precisely in terms of

economic and cultural exchange. Over thirty years later this approach can still be a source of inspiration and it seemed appropriate, therefore, to invite Professor Adams as the main key-note speaker of the conference.

Practical information

The conference will take place on Friday 11 and Saturday 12 December 2009 on the premises of the National Museum of Antiquities (Rijksmuseum van Oudheden) in Leiden, The Netherlands. Both days will be devoted to lectures and discussion by the invited speakers and a limited number of other guests in one of the lecture halls of the Museum. On Friday evening a public lecture in the main hall, in the shade of the rescued Nubian temple of Taffeh, will be addressed to a broader audience.

The conference is organized by the Department of Egyptology of Leiden University and the Netherlands Institute for the Near East (NINO), also in Leiden. It is supported by the National Museum of Antiquities (RMO) and various other sponsors. Responsible for the scientific part of the program are Joost Hagen (Leiden University) and Jacques van der Vliet (Leiden University/Radboud University Nijmegen), assisted by Carolien van Zoest (NINO).

By participating in the conference the speakers commit themselves to the publication of their papers in the proceedings of the conference, which will appear in one of the monograph series of the Netherlands Institute for the Near East (NINO).

List of speakers, with submitted titles or proposed topics of lectures

Prof. Dr. W.Y. Adams (Lexington, Kentucky):

- Introductory lecture: "Qasr Ibrim: Connecting the dots"
- Public lecture: "5000 years of cultural continuity and change in Nubia"

Dr. P.J. Rose (Cambridge):

(Site and excavations/environmental issues)

Prof. Dr. J.D. Ray (Cambridge):

(Pharaonic period / Demotic texts)

Dr. J. Hallof (Würzburg):

"Meroitic ostraca from Qasr Ibrim"

T. Derda (Warsaw): (Roman period)

Prof. Dr. J.H.F. Dijkstra (Ottawa):

"Qasr Ibrim and the religious transformation of Lower Nubia in Late Antiquity"

Drs. J.L. Hagen (Leiden):

(Medieval period, esp. Coptic and Old Nubian texts)

Dr. A. Łajtar (Warsaw):

(Medieval period, esp. Greek texts/epigraphy)

Prof. Dr. G. Khan (Cambridge):

(Islamization)

Dr. N.K. Adams (Lexington, Kentucky):

"Influences from abroad: The evidence of the textiles"

Dr. A.J. Veldmeijer (Amsterdam):

(Footwear from Qasr Ibrim)

Dr. H. Barnard (Los Angeles):

(Ibrim and the desert)

Prof. Dr. W. Godlewski (Warsaw):

(The politics of Nobadia)

Prof. Dr. L. Török (Budapest):

(Synthesis and prospects) (not yet confirmed)

Subsidiegevers:



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