

Virtual Lecture Transcript:

"Backwater Puritans?" Racism, Egyptological Stereotypes, and the Intersection of Local and International at Kushite Tombos

By Stuart Tyson Smith

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Liska Radachi:

Hello, everyone, and good afternoon, good evening or good morning depending on where you are joining us from. I'm Liska Radachi. I'm the US director at ARCE and I want to welcome you to the final in our four-part series, Africa Interconnected Ancient Egypt, and Nubia. So, this virtual lecture series has delved into the history and interconnections of ancient Egypt and Nubia, the study of which has been largely marginalized by Western scholarship. And this series has addressed the biases behind this lack of attention and examine how Egyptology, Nubiology and other disciplines have intersected. And today's lecture with Dr. Stuart Tyson Smith, is titled Backwater Puritans, racism, Egyptological stereotypes, and the intersection of local and international at Kushite Tombos. So, before I introduce Dr. Tyson Smith, for those of you who are new to ARCE, we're a private nonprofit organization whose mission is to support research on all aspects of Egyptian history and culture, foster a broader knowledge about Egypt among the general public, and support American Egyptian cultural ties. And as a nonprofit, we rely on our ARCE members to support our work. So, I first want to give a special welcome and hello to all of our ARCE members joining us today. And if you're not already a member and are interested in joining, and by either visit our website arce.org to join online and learn more. We provide a suite of benefits to our members, including our private member only lecture series, so members have access to those lectures as well. Our next public lecture is March 27th, at 1:00pm Eastern Time, and is a special lecture and musical performance with Dr. Nicholas Mangialardi, Ahmed Harfoush, and the Harfoush jazz band titled Zikra, remembering, 'Abd Al-Halim Hafiz. And you can register on our website at arce.org and find out more information. It's going to be a wonderful event; I really encourage you to attend if you can. And as a final remember to all of our members joining us today, you will receive a reduced rate to our annual meeting as part of your member benefits, which this year again will be virtual, and it will take place April 22nd through 25th. Our registration is now open, and we hope to see you all there for a great few days of paper presentations. And now I'm going to introduce you to our fantastic speaker today, Dr. Stuart Tyson Smith is a professor of anthropology and director of the Institute for social, behavioral, and economic research at University of California, Santa Barbara. Smith's research centers on the civilizations of ancient Egypt and Nubia with a theoretical focus on the social and ethnic dynamics of colonial encounters and the origins of the Kushite state whose rulers became Pharaohs of Egypt's 25th dynasty. He has also participated in and led archaeological expeditions to Egypt since 1997, and to Sudanese Nubia, where he co-directs the UCSB Purdue University Tombos expedition to the third cataract of the Nile. This research has been

funded by multiple grants from the National Geographic Society and the National Science Foundation. And in addition to numerous articles and book chapters, Dr. Smith has published three books; *Askut in Nubia: The Economics of Ideology of Egyptian Imperialism in the Second Millennium BC*, *Valley of the Kings for children*, and *Wretched Kush, Ethnic Identities and Boundaries in Egypt's Nubian Empire*. And in 1993, he took a break from academia as an Egyptological consultant for the hit MGM movie *Stargate*, commenting on the script and recreating spoken ancient Egyptian for the film. How cool is that? He returned to the Hollywood consulting in 1998 and 2000 for the universal remake of *The Mummy* and its sequel, *The Mummy Returns*, and most recently 2018's web production *Stargate Origins* Catherine. Professor Smith holds a PhD in archaeology from the University of California, Los Angeles. So welcome, Dr. Tyson Smith.

Stuart Tyson Smith:

Thank you very much for that kind invitation- introduction. And let me go ahead and share my screen. Yeah. There we go. Okay. This unfortunate representation from National Geographic magazine of Kushite Pharaoh Piankhi's siege of Memphis in 726 BCE reflects Egyptological and more popular perceptions of Nubia and Nubians as a periphery to civilized Egypt, interlopers in the broader Mediterranean world. Even though Kushites Pharaohs have ruled Egypt for decades by this time, they are still depicted as barbarians at the gate. John Wilson- just one second- writing in the 1950s reflects this dismissive attitude towards Nubians when describing the Kushite dynasty, and I quote, from a capital at the fourth cataract, Piankhi, an Ethiopian, by which he means a Nubian, ruled the Sudan and Nubia. His culture was a provincial imitation of earlier Egypt, fanatical in its retention of religious form. The story of Piankhi's conquest of Egypt is an extraordinarily interesting human document, particularly in the contrast between this backwater Puritan and the effete and sophisticated Egyptians. He goes on to say, thus Egypt fell under the nominal rule of an Ethiopian from the despised provinces and under the effectual rule of a woman. The woman he refers to is the God's wife of Amun, Amenirdis, who you see here in a statue from the Egyptian Museum. So, he manages to be both racist and sexist at the same time. For Egyptologists, maybe it has historically been perceived as an uncivilized periphery. Depictions of Nubians from earlier periods of Egyptian history like Tutankhamen's painted box, reinforce these ideas and surely served as an inspiration for this rather odd National Geographic illustration as well as some of Wilson's and other Egyptologists' ideas about Nubia. Note the way the Kushite soldiers are represented, their musculature and poses and their anachronistic costume and weaponry. The modern artist, however, goes even farther than his or her Egyptian prototype racializing the depictions. Note the contrast between Egyptian straight and Kushite curled here. This is not present on Tut's box in keeping with New Kingdom military traditions, Egyptians had adopted the Nubians tightly curled hairstyle and Egyptians in general anyway had curly hair. The same can be said of the juxtaposition of costume in the reconstruction, which are almost all of roughly cut hide for the Kushites and neatly trimmed and in hand linen for the Egyptians. In contrast, some of the Nubians on Tutankhamen's box are wearing kilts and the Egyptian soldier in the middle wears a kind of loincloth with leather webbing that was also borrowed from Nubia and appears on some of the Kushite soldiers as well. Whether or not they were really wearing them by Piankhi's reign, the Kushite hide kilts would have

been much more finely finished in keeping with the Nubian mastery of high-quality leather work. And you can see some examples here from our excavations at a Kerma period cemetery, a bit south of Tombos, and you look at the beautiful stitching on this, you found entire kind of leather skirts and other garments. This perforated leather, the picture in the middle with incredibly fine hemming, perhaps from a pillow, and then the braided leather, just amazing leather workers. So, they would have looked much nicer. And in fact, you can see on the box, the leather kilts that the Nubians are wearing are in fact, neatly trimmed. Finally, the Kushite soldiers attacked savagely with daggers. The Egyptians have swords, yet the Egyptian soldier is the one with the dagger in Tutankhamen's scene. The National Geographic artist has created a new topos of the Kushite other with an implied contrast between primitive and barbaric Nubians conquering their more civilized Northern neighbor. This kind of representation of Kush serves to reproduce and perpetuate a colonial and ultimately racist perspective that justified the authority of Western empires, in this case in "black African" whose peoples could not create or maintain a civilized life without the help of an external power. In America, of course, the topos subordinate Nubians played into justifications for segregation and discrimination, often informed by the representation of foreigners in Egyptian art as kind of parallel to our modern conditions. But it's important to recognize that Tutankhamen's artisans and the others who preceded and followed them had a specific purpose in mind, the creation of negative ethnic stereotypes that emphasized the inferiority and disorganization of the "barbarians" and surrounded the inner order. And by the way, that applied equally to people from Western Asia, as well as from other parts of North Africa. This is masterfully rendered in microcosm on Tutankhamen's bog with the Egyptian soldier confidently striding on the battlefield, surrounded by a chaotic array of dead and dying Nubians. [inaudible] paints a similar picture of barbaric chaos with a description of the very ethnic components of Xerxes as Persian army, including Nubians clad in leopard skins, wielding crude weapons. In both ideologies, foreign enemies were used to represent the disorder that surrounded a civilized inner order, emphasizing the moral and political authority of their core civilizations. I think the leopard skin quote is what inspired the leopard skin kilts here, which I don't know from the earlier depiction of Nubians. At Persepolis, the Persians themselves, however, had a different idea when depicting Nubians. Here Nubians are exotic, rather strange giraffe kind of squished a bit in the back, but depicted in an ethnic stereotype that is not necessarily negatively marked as unsophisticated and barbaric. Instead, Nubians and other foreigners with their gifts represent the diversity of the Empire paying homage to the Persian king as an all-lord, whose rule encompasses numerous peoples. The iconography that surrounded the Persian king further emphasize the notion of order from diversity by interweaving iconography from across the Empire and drawing on elements from the Iron Age international style, like the rosette, the frieze of rosettes you see running across the top of this image. And this is a topic I'll return to for Nubia. Of course, Kushite kings depicted themselves with their own take on Pharaonic kingship, like this distinctively Kushite image of Tanutamani and his mother Qalhata from their tombs at El-Kurru. And you'll note that the skin color is represented as red in a conventional Egyptian fashion. It's important to recognize that color conventions are about symbolism and they're not necessarily a literal representation of skin color. In fact, there would have been quite a diversity of skin color and phenotype in Egypt at this period of time.

At first glance, these seem to imitate Egyptian forms, but this breaks down under closer examination. Tunatamani wears the Kushite cap crown with double uraei as well as jewelry emphasizing the Ram imagery that Kushite culture lent to the iconography of Amun. He also wears a distinctive fringe cloak that became a standard part of the Kushite Royal regalia. His mother wears the same cloak, but as the usual Egyptian queen's vulture crown. These royal tombs also highlight the prominent role of Queens and Kush compared to the more subordinate roles in Egypt. Their scale and layout is equivalent, and both have similar funerary vignettes and texts. As Susan Doll has demonstrated, the texts and selections of religious motifs in these tombs while they superficially look Egyptian move beyond traditional Egyptian theology. Over the course of the 20th and into the 21st century, like Wilson, many Egyptologists emphasized Nubian inferiority. For example, in 1909, Breasted summed up that Kushite dynasty by asserting that and I quote, "Assyria was never dealing with a first class power in the conquest of Egypt, when the unhappy Nile dwellers without a strong ruler, and for such a ruler, they looked in vain during the supremacy of the inglorious Ethiopians- again he means Nubians- withdrawing to Napata, the Ethiopians gave their attention to the development of Nubia. As the Egyptians resident in the country died out, they were not replaced by others. The Egyptian gloss which the people had received began rapidly to disappear, and the land relapsed into a semi barbaric condition" Breasted places a great deal of emphasis on the relative degree of authoritarianism in native versus Egyptian regimes, Kushite versus Egyptian regimes. Egypt only thrives with a strong ruler, which Nubia cannot provide. The notion of Kushite decline is another strong Egyptological probe. As recently as 2004, Donald Redford made a similar argument and I quote, "Although Kushite Kings continued to be buried in pyramids, according to Egyptian custom, up to the early Christian era, and to employ Egyptian art and architectural forms even longer, these cultural manifestations became increasingly bastardized and degenerate. They survived largely cut off from the north, a culture got the seed in terms of its Egyptian roots" The emphasis on imitation and rise and fall with the ebb and flow of interaction with Egypt assumes that influence went only in one direction; from Egypt to Nubia, civilizing the primitive natives, who were in any case only capable of a provincial imitation that went into inevitable decline after that influence stopped. A tour itinerary for June 2020, organized by Egyptologist Glean, Manassa, Darnell, includes language that reflects a similar attitude towards Nubia today. Rather than characterizing the region as a home of a vibrant civilization with a deep and mutually influenced relationship with Egypt, the southward days takes a decidedly colonial view. And I quote, "This morning Sudan steams towards Aswan at the frontier of traditional Egypt, where ancient Nubia begins, the mighty desert slowly replaces cultivated land as we proceed up the land. It is easy to see that this is where Pharaonic civilization once ended. The lands above the great cataracts nourish the Nile valley with mineral rich silt during the floods. Nubia also provided Egypt with gold, precious woods, and ivory as well as soldiers for its military machine. As pointed out in a recent hyper alliterative article by Katherine Blouin, Monica Hanna and Sarah Bond, this view of Nubia as a source of raw materials and soldiers having nothing more to give Egypt is informed by a sense of nostalgia for the British Empire, expressed in this particular cruise by a kind of Imperial cosplay, including the colonial subtext of the divide between civilized Egypt and barbaric Nubia implied in the passage that's quoted. This viewpoint draws upon a long tradition in Egyptology. Barry Kemp articulated a common view of ancient Egypt

civilizing effect in 1978, asserting that and I quote, "Egyptian culture must have had a similar glamour in the eyes of Nubian. It is not hard to understand how in an age innocent of the esoteric delights of folk culture, most of the local products such as the decorated handmade pottery and mother-of-pearl trinkets, did not survive the flood of cheap mass produced Egyptian wares" He concludes that, and I quote, "Some recognition at least should be given to the positive side of this early attempt to extend what to the Egyptians themselves was a civilized way of life" As I've noted elsewhere, Kemp's notion of a civilizing mission is anachronistic. And it was more the 19th and 20th century justifications of Imperial domination through an appeal to a constructed past, particularly the notion of Romanization, which has now been replaced by more nuanced post-colonial perspectives like cultural entanglement, which I'm using here, far from blind fanatical adherence to Egyptian theology, the Kushite Ram told attested at Kerma, as you can see in the upper right hand side, profoundly influenced the theology and iconography of Amun-Re one of Egypt's most important deities. Temples constructed in Nubia during the new kingdom and Empire and later emphasized everyone's Ram form. And as Luca Bold among others has pointed out, the sacred mountain of Jebel Barkal became a major center for the worship of the God, explicit with and referred to in Egyptian theology as its birthplace, and the northern- southern rather- Karnak mirroring Amun's chief temple complex in Egypt. So, we see neutral influence, not a one-way assimilation. The evidence from older excavations and increasingly from newer projects like our work at Tombos contradicts Kemp's assumption of the disappearance of Nubian material culture in the face of Egyptian cultural and political hegemony, as well as the notion of Kushite isolation. Tombos lies at the headwaters of the third cataract, which you can see in this satellite image, were granted outcrops cross the bed of the Nile. The rapids of the cataract created a natural geopolitical choke point that formed an internal boundary within the New Kingdom empire, marked by Thutmose the first impressive stela and a number of smaller panels commemorating his defeat of Kush in 1502 BCE. Inscriptions were added when the colony was established, around 1450BCE, roughly around the reign of Thutmose III/Hatshepsut. And we have recently identified a massive, fortified enclosure, which you can see here outlined just overlapping with the southern part of the village. But I will talk mainly about our work in the cemetery, which is located to the northeast. We have clear evidence for settler colonialism at the site. And the introduction of Egyptian funerary practices, including small pyramids, which you can see in green scattered throughout the cemetery, as well as the provision of elite grave goods like heart scarabs, ushabti figurines, and even evidence for a copy of the Book of the Dead as far as I know the first attested from Nubia, and this is on a bizarrely transferred onto part of a person's skull, which you can see in the lower right here. And here is a visible induced luminescence image that picks out the hieroglyphs a bit better. And thanks to Rita Lucarelli and [inaudible] Monroe for identifying that this is indeed a copy of the Book of the Dead. So, we're planning on studying with different fragments of the skull that have little snippets of the text to see what we can understand about it, but really quite remarkable, and I have to say one of the strangest things we've ever found at Tombos. Nubian material culture and practices like black-topped pottery also continue to appear. And female Nubian members of the community maintain traditional burial practices linked to Kerma. As you can see with this flexed burial, and so far, all the flexed burials we found at Tombos are of women. So, indicating a very gender dynamic to the

intercultural interaction and cultural entanglements that are going on here. The appearance of Egyptian amulets in these contexts, like these wonderful little amulets of the dwarf God Bes who became extremely popular in Nubia later on, along with the juxtaposition of Egyptian and Nubian burial practices, in the same tombs points towards an initial phase of mutual cultural entanglement, rather than Egyptian invasion, assimilation and the disappearance of Nubian culture, material culture and practices. Starting in the Ramesside period, these entanglements deepened and became more overt with the addition of a separate cemetery with Nubian style tumulus superstructures that also reflect entangled practices, as this Bat-Hathor amulet attests. One remarkable feature of Tombos is its continuity through the early Nabataean, or Third Intermediate Period, and on end of the 25th dynasty, demonstrated through a long series of radiocarbon dates and groups of ceramics, including a large number of marl clay jars imported from Egypt. So, the idea that Nubia was somehow cut off from Egypt during the so-called Nubian Dark Age definitely is not indicated for Tombos. So I will talk just briefly about the mixed practices and material culture from the tumuli and then move on to examples from the older part of the cemetery, including the evidence that we may have the- Oops, sorry, got ahead of myself, let me go back here- including evidence that we may have the continuing construction of pyramids into the early Nabataean, or Third Intermediate Period, and then the early Nabataean, Third Intermediate Period burial of a horse and a 25th dynasty pyramid and the burial of a Kushite soldier, which has really remarkable examples of Nubia's engagement with the wider world, as well as the retention of some of these Nubian cultural practices. So, starting with the tumuli, in spite of the use of tumuli, the dead were buried in East-West oriented shafts, supine with head to the west to face the rising sun in Egyptian fashion. There's also ample evidence for wrapping likely indicates mummification, as well as indication in some cases of coffins. It seems to have been kind of mix and match. There's a great diversity of expression here at Tombos, but also between Tombos and other sites like Amara West and [inaudible] to the south, and so on. At the same time, the use of beds and traditional Nubian fashion was common with trenches, you can see here appearing in many tombs where the legs to fit in and even clear remains of the termite eating legs and other framing of the beds as you can see on the right-hand side with a typically Kushite animal shaped leg. Black topped pottery, which you can also see here on the left also continues to appear. One tomb had a rich group of jewelry, including a number of Egyptian amulets, but favoring particular deities like the dwarf God Bes and Pataikos and the goddess Isis. Nubian style jewelry also continues to appear like red seashells and glazed quartz crystal. An unusually large scarab with a unique design appears to be an innovation much like the unique combinations and generation of novel text traced by Susan Doll, Susan Doll I mentioned before in the royal tombs, and this has no parallel that I know of from Egypt. It's quite large for a scarab and the scene of offering bearers with lotuses in the base is really quite unique. And yet you look at it and you think, "Oh, of course, that's Egyptian" but in fact Nubians by this time, are innovating and effectively riffing off of Egyptian things and creating something quite new. We can also see this in the-- see the larger connections in objects like this wonderful example of a Pataikos figurine, the dwarf God was extremely popular in Nubia, especially the two-sided version with a goddess on the back perhaps Isis, often leaning, headed, so maybe connected with that constellation of deities surrounding the myth of Hathor/Sekhmet and so on. In any case, you'll see them quite commonly in 25th

dynasty Royal burials at Kuru and Meroe, and there are some unique features to this amulet that makes it suggest that it may have been made locally, again, a Nubian kind of adaptation of an Egyptian form. Taken together with the objects like these that reflect a more Nubian sensibility, this pattern which is also reflected in other sites, again with a lot of variability, reflecting the individual choices that people made, contradicts the notion of the inherent appeal of Egyptian practices and material culture. Instead, these tombs show that far from abandoning Nubian culture are passively adopting Egyptian forms. Kushites were selectively adapting elements from Egypt and interweaving them with local practices and material culture. Even more, they were creating innovative new forms based on Egyptian designs, like a scarab, and perhaps this Pataikos amulet. Burials continued in the older part of the cemetery, including both the construction of new tombs and the reuse of older ones. Built over 18th dynasty tombs and debris, a large mud brick monument dates to either the end of the new kingdom, or from the radiocarbon date, possibly the early Nabataean period. Its unique stone line shaft represents a local innovation. I don't know of any other parallels. If anyone does know a parallel, please let me know. Although unfortunately, fallen beams from the granite blocking delayed further exploration in our 2020 field season, I hope we can get back and explore this tomb further. And early Nabataean-- Oh, and this is Dr. Mohamed Farouk Ali, who received his PhD from UCSB and is now a professor at Africa International University in Khartoum, and you can see him for scale, he's about six feet tall, so that, we're about two meters down. Another tomb here we can see a Nabataean period flexed bed burial again of a woman laying in the shaft of the tomb, probably a reused tomb from the New Kingdom again, reinforcing the gender dynamic of this distinctively Nubian burial practice of Tombos. Also, this large marl clay jar shows the transport amphora probably for wine shows- but could be for another commodity- shows that there was in fact no extended interruption of trade, although of course, at specific moments trade may have been restricted. But it's important to remember that smuggling occurs even when there are overt hostilities and hostilities weren't continuous but were likely periodic. Another pyramid complex added a Ramesside duck censer. And I have to say that's the cutest pot I found at the site, lying next to the entrance to the burial chamber, a radiocarbon date from the ashes that still remained inside from burning incense confirms the stylistic date of the pot and the main period of use for the tomb. So, the late Ramesside period, the early Nabataean, Third Intermediate Period burial of a horse about halfway down the shaft seal the earlier deposits, the horse was deliberately laid out and wrapped in a shroud which provided the radiocarbon date. And the preservation of the skeleton is amazing, although sadly, the DNA was too degraded to trace the horse's kind of relationship to other horses in the introduction of the horse into Africa. But in fact, the fur was so well preserved that we could tell that this horse was chestnut with white socks, very similar to my own horse, you can see here, so I was especially excited that we were able to find one of these rare horse burials. Horse burials provided another feature that represents a particularly complex long-term entanglement. And we were very lucky to find an example at Tombos. Sacrificed horses, other animals and human burials were again seen as a return to barbarism by earlier scholars, and to some extent still today, but really represents practices with a long history in the region. With the first Kushite royal burials of the 25th dynasty, horse burials reach their most elaborate form with whole chariot teams buried in intricate trappings, which you can see here. Our horse [inaudible] had a scarab

and perhaps a bead, as well as an iron cheekpiece that reflected the presence of tack which unfortunately had been consumed by termites, organic materials don't survive very well at Tombos. Even the horse's hooves were completely consumed by termites, so you could still see the shape of them. Horses in chariotry were prestigious, valuable in a show of military power in a private context here and a royal context at Kuru, reflecting Kushites' well-equipped army as opposed to Breasted's notion of an ineffective military facing off against the Assyrians. Wear on the bones and her withers suggest that our horse was indeed part of a chariot team, but the burial was much earlier than the royal tombs getting to a time when Nubian horses and trainers were famed in Western Asia, and specifically in demand in Assyria. This is a later image of horses from Assyria palace reliefs at Nineveh. But it shows the importance of horses and chariotry, also cavalry in the Assyrian army and Nubians played a key role in this, actually traveling to Assyria with their horses and training them. Far from being an isolated backwater, Kush was heavily engaged in the wider world during its so-called Dark Age. By the 25th dynasty of Tombos, we see a strong pattern of mutual influence and cultural entanglement, rather than a new wave of provincial Egyptianization. The use of pyramids like this one dating from the 25th dynasty at Tombos, as a burial monument for private individuals and eventually kings, queens, and the elite. Like this 25th dynasty pyramid from Tombos illustrates its principle. Egyptologists often see these tombs as an imitation of Egyptian royal pyramids. But there are a number of problems with this view. First, the last royal pyramid in Egypt was built at the beginning of the 18th dynasty, hundreds of years before the first Kushite royal pyramid was built, perhaps as early as around 808, 850 BCE. Of course, the Royal pyramids of Giza and elsewhere in Egypt were still impressive monuments when Kushite Pharaohs ruled as Egypt's 25th dynasty, but the layout of Kushite pyramids is also not consistent with these earlier Egyptian royal monuments. Instead, they more closely resemble New Kingdom private pyramids, which would have provided a more immediate model to adapt in a monumental form the result of a long-term entanglement with Egypt and the Egyptian colonists who came with the conquest. This entanglement had a profound impact on burial practice, with pyramids used for both royal and elite burials down to the end of the Meroitic period. And the construction of these Meroitic royal pyramids and earlier Nabataean royal pyramids are really an innovation based on this private form, which perhaps was continuously produced across from the end of the New Kingdom all the way through into the 25th dynasty. But we need to pin that down a little more closely at Tombos. The broader process of entanglement is illustrated by the remarkable tomb of a soldier or perhaps an officer located next to the pyramid. You can see it in the foreground here with the Kushite period pyramid in the background to the left. And the tomb was a small, vaulted chamber tomb, and you can see the vaulting has collapsed on top of it after looters broke in, remove the upper torso of the deceased, presumably going after some valuable gold jewelry around his neck. And then basically calling it finished after the vaulting had collapsed. I love lazy looters. So, they left most of the contents of the tomb intact in situ. So, on the one hand, our soldier was buried in Egyptian tradition, extended with head to the west to take advantage of the rejuvenating power of the rising sun. Although organic preservation as I mentioned was poor, enough evidence remained to clearly indicate that he was mummified and placed in a coffin. You have to trust me here, but I was very careful in excavating this and there were definitely indications of heavy wrappings and as you can see, his feet and legs are very tightly bound together. This was placed on a

bed in Nubian tradition that continues to this day, the beds aren't buried anymore, but I've seen now several times a deceased carried out to the cemetery on a bed, really a remarkable thing. He also had a traditional, black-topped style beaker as you can see here, reflecting not only the continuation of an older tradition, but the adaptation, the innovation of that older tradition on the new form, this tall beaker shaped characteristic for the period. But also with the new technology, this pot was actually thrown on a wheel, that's a very characteristically Nubian decoration with even that white scum line that appeared on Kerma classic, classic Kerma pottery of the latest phase, really fascinating. To the left of the barrier was a compound bow, you can see outline of it with the dashed line here next to the bed, and a set of microlith tipped arrows, in a long-standing Nubian tradition, but also an iron spear representing the latest military technology. So again, we don't see the complete abandonment of Kushite features. Instead, we see the entanglement of features that represent international forms, Egyptian forms, and Kushite forms. As in the tumuli, he had amulets reflecting a narrow selection of Egyptian deities, including Pataikos as before, and this is the backside of a double headed- of a double-sided figure that you see here. As well it's references to Amun-Re, a goose again indicating Amun, a particularly popular kind of amulet, frogs, which also were popular in Nubia, and the cutest amulet we found which is a little cat with a nefer sign, so a beautiful cat, on its base. Quartz and hematite beads showed Nubian color sensibility resonating with the older practice of decorating tombs with black and white stones. The bi-conical shape also mimics Nubian style ivory beads, which also appear quite frequently at Tombos. A remarkable copper alloy scarab as a unique variant on a widespread cryptographic inscription expanding and adapting it to specifically reference Amun instead of a generic god. The only parallel for a copper scarab like this one comes from the cemetery at Sanam across the river from the Kushite capital at Napata. Our inscription plays with the common cryptographic form found on normal scarabs, adding in a specific reference to the God, Amun, and elaborating the little invocation and prayer on it. This object represents a sophisticated bit of theology proceeding from an Egyptian form, but innovative, and the lack of parallels to the north makes it likely that this was perhaps made in Nubia, although ideally, we need to see if we can test the metal and get a sense of this. Well, the mummy had been disturbed in antiquity, the rest of the tomb was intact and preserving a number of remarkable items and you can just [inaudible] around. I'll talk about the copper alloy bowls. You can see one of them here, an elaborately decorated cosmetic box and its contents which lay at the head of the coffin, and you can see some of the weaponry and so on and the locations there. Two of the metal bowls, two of the three metal bowls were chased with groups of bulls, a third with cows. And here's an example of one with bowls and I add a little outlining so you can see it. These are incredibly hard to photograph. Identical imagery of bulls charging ahead with horns appears on what must be a locally produced faience bowl from a queen's tomb in the royal cemetery of El Kurru. The motif is common in the international style, appearing in multiple media, in particular ivory and on metal vessels that you see here from Nimrud in Assyria, modern Iraq. The cow theme continues in another one of the vessels, this time probably a cow rather than a bull, much more placid walking along with a lotus blossom around her neck. But in the set of two circular friezes much like the other one, and then in the center medallion, if we look really carefully, I think you can just make out a rosette that was placed in there. So very much tied to the international style, perhaps even a product of Phoenician artisans imported

into Nubia, although of course, it could also be a local product. The cow theme continued in a unique and elaborately decorated wooden cosmetic box which you can see here. A cow suckling a calf appears in an open papyrus swamp background with a frieze of lotuses along a solid base. So, you can see stocks of the papyrus open, closed buds, open, closed buds, et cetera. And this would have all been open so you could have seen inside the box, really a remarkable object when it was fresh, and not in such a fragile state. Here's a little help. You can see a cow suckling a calf, and this motif matches one that plays a prominent role in ivory decoration in the international style, like this very similar motif on a furniture element from Nimrud. And there are many examples of this. It also appears on Phoenician metal bowls, and I'll give an example of it later. However, our box has the addition of a stork off to the right. That was a reference to the ben-ben bird of the creation myth in that swampy environment, another innovation playing on Egyptian solar theology. Another side continues the swamp theme, in this case with an image of the infant Horus emerging from a lotus flanked by a cow and a calf. This visibly induced luminescence photograph brings out some more of the detail here and reflects the high and the fluorescence in bright white that you see here indicates Egyptian blue, reflecting the high quality and craftsmanship involved in the creation of this piece. This motif is also common in the international style, in particular ivory plaques like these from Arslan Tash and Nimrud. The Nubian artist has again innovated, substituting the cow and the calf to the deities creating an otherwise unattested motif. The other two sides also had cattle related marshy motifs. One side very badly damaged, we're still in the process of reconstructing. But you can see two cows or bulls walking ahead and here from the inside of the box you can see a bit of the color. And it's interesting now that the inside was also painted with decoration sort of an incredibly impressive object. And -- and then there's an odd configuration under the legs of the second cow that is definitely not legs and could be a person, which I find a parallel in the Tell Basta treasure in a beautiful sort of metal bowl with the swampy motif repeating a number of different motifs. And a shout out to Christine Lilyquist for calling my attention to this in her excellent article on the topic. So, the other side -- another side, the final side had an image of a woman carrying a yoke with -- with jars accompanied by a calf in the same swampy motif. Here the top image is from the inside and the bottom image is the frieze of lotuses across the bottom of it, just to give you a better sense of the color here. And here's another visibly induced luminescence featuring a photograph where you can see more of the detail, you can see a bird down in the lower part and then more detail on the papyrus swamp and the woman and the calf that's walking along with her. And then here is a D-stretch false color image that emphasizes red. So, you can see again more details, a woman, casually sort of having her arm looped over one side of the yoke and the pots sealed and attached and so on, getting a sense of the calf as well. And this is another motif that appears in the Tell Basta treasure. So, you can see an individual walking with a yoke and then accompanied by a series of calves. But again, a kind of unique adaptation and composition based on the ties to the international style but there's not strictly speaking imitated. You'll just see the presence of faience vessels, a ceramic bottle, and an iron piece there. And I just want to give a shout out to Elizabeth Drolet who you can see in the foreground, who's our conservator, who has just done an amazing job with this material. And then the co-director, Michelle Buzon, bio-archaeologist who I've been working with at the site since we started our first field season in 2000. Here's a box in the process of excavation and

this was like a, you know, a present. Every time we came back from the field we would go over to the box and see how far she had gotten. So, you can see elements again vessels and a couple of iron tweezers coming out here and gradually these remarkable faience vessels and other equipment appeared over time. The contents were really extraordinary. These include a variety of cosmetic equipment a set of iron tweezers, as I mentioned before, various applicators, copper alloy razors and a copper needle. But along with these were two ceramic and three extraordinary faience vessels and you can see them here. Here are the iron tweezers. So, our soldier, I mean, this guy was – as Michelle has indicated, this guy was burly. He was big. He had big muscle attachments, which means the dude worked out. He was pumped. But he also wanted to look good when he stepped out. So, he had tweezers for plucking, applicator wands for putting on cosmetics and a set of faience vessels, really remarkable. They would have contained perfumes or oil something like this. So, when he stepped out everything was properly crimped and primped, shaved. You know he was scented; he was oiled, he was a beautiful warrior, and this is, you know, it reflects a kind of different perspective on gender than we might expect from a more Western perspective. So, these faience vessels, this is in the form of an alabastron and there are faience alabastron, but none of them look quite like this one. This one is very closely imitates the stone forms of them. But in this material faience, it's just beautiful. I wish we could all touch it. The surface of it is incredibly smooth. It's just a masterwork. Even more elaborate, is this unique piece with a kind of lintwhite shape that looks like a new year's flask but in fact, a unique design with a kind of hanging bead net motif. And again, the technique on this is just masterful. This is really an incredible work of art. The way they inserted a little bits of different color and the colored lines of the bead netting. The idea that you have a hanging -- a pot hanging from a net is a long-standing Nubian tradition again. No parallel from this anywhere else so I think it must be a local product. And then the most elaborate one, this wonderful little Bes vase, with four images of a god Bes masterfully rendered. it looks like it was probably from a mold but anyone who's worked with faience can tell you this is extremely hard to shape with this level of precision. And the little frog lid is just incredible. That frog is only about a centimeter long and yet has an incredible amount of detail. And here just for comparison, is an example from a queen's tomb at Kurru of figurine of the god Bes. And I think you can see that our little Bes vase would be quite happy in the context of a royal tomb. Now one of the interesting things about this is that the closest parallel -- parallel from the -- for the frog lid comes not from Egypt or even from Nubia itself, but all the way across the Mediterranean from Sardinia. But a similar lily lid found from Sanam suggests that it was likely a local product and there's a long tradition of faience production in Nubia. Other motifs similar to those appearing in our Kushite soldiers' tomb and elsewhere and Nubia appear across the Mediterranean including cattle imagery. And here's on a metal bowl from The Metropolitan Museum. you can see several of the motifs, the kind of charging bull -- two bull -- two cows, a bull and a cow actually walking together and then the cow licking a calf in a -- a metal -- sorry, distributed around at a variety of sites throughout the Mediterranean. The simpler version of the cryptographic -- the motif on the cryptographic scarab appears -- also it appears distributed around the region as far away as Sicily and Carthage. While imported red seashell, demonstrates Kushite ties within Africa, so not just looking outward, but also across the rest of the continent. The archaeological record reflects the Kush was neither isolated nor provincial, but instead

reflects a cosmopolitan society with wide ranging context embedded in Africa, the Middle East, and the Mediterranean world. Breasted and Wilson should have recognized that the account of Piankhi's triumphant suppression of a rebellion in southern -- in northern Egypt was a masterpiece that played upon and adapted earlier Egyptian forms to legitimate Kushite rule. But the notion of the civilizing nature of Egyptian influence, and a countervailing decline in its absence, is deeply embedded in Egyptological narratives about Nubia that ultimately draw on ancient Egyptian foreigner- the ancient Egyptian foreigner topos, barbaric other against civilized Egypt. Piankhi's campaign of 726 was a sophisticated enactment of a very Kushite concept of Egyptian kingship. He spent much of his time seeking divine approval by visiting temples. He would never have assaulted the great temple of Ptah Memphis, as depicted in this National Geographic illustration. Instead, he offered mercies to those who surrenders taking them to task for mistreating resources, something I can strongly sympathize with, and criticizing Libyan fish eaters as unclean, schooling them on how to approach a pharaoh and perhaps engaging in a little bit of an ethnic put down. Kushite kings like Taharqa or rather their ideologues, deployed the Egyptian symbolism of the foreigner topos to legitimate their own authority in Kush, Egypt and abroad. This imagery both resonated with the international style and note, the imagery of a king dominating enemies and the lion trampling an enemy in this metal bowl, and it was also reproduced on modest items like the scarab and the tomb of soldiers' tomb to disseminate the message across a broad range of society. In order to accomplish this, they drew on the earlier New Kingdom Ma'at theology that emphasize the king's role in pacifying the earthly forces of chaos, symbolized by foreign enemies. But this was no puritanical limitation, instead we can see it as a clever adaptation of traditional Egyptian forms that allowed Kushite rulers to leverage power and authority in Egypt, but also internally in Kush. The motif of dominating foreign enemies continued to be deployed in Meroitic Kush with a distinctive twist, as you can see here at the lion temple dedicated to the Nubian God, Apedemak, dating from the early years of the Common Era or perhaps a little bit before. At first glance, you see the typical temple pylon scene of the king slaying enemies, but on the right-hand side you can see, not king Natakamani but the queen of Kandake, Amanitore, who ruled as Natakamani's equal. The powerful symbolism of the Kandakes played a role in the recent revolution in Sudan when Alaa Salah exhorted the crowd, proud to stand up against Dictator Omar al-Bashir. She was hailed as a new Kandake. Last I heard she is doing fine; Bashir is in jail. So, women played a central role in the revolution drawing on the Kushite precedent of female power. We can also see this dynamic in the Amanitore's placement as an equal balancing the role of the king in worshipping and receiving the blessing of Apedemak throughout this temple. This pattern demonstrates the more prominent and independent role of Meroitic queens and iconography, and apparently political life and ritual practice, than the institution of queenship in Egypt. as Welsby observed, the triple headed Apedemak in the scene does not represent Indian influence as is often asserted, but instead is a clever adaptation of Egyptian and Meroitic canons designed to balance the figures of king and queen equally between the god. Returning to the pylon, a lion appears at Natakamani's teeth mauling an enemy in keeping with their lion god patron, and on the other side, he peeks out from behind Amanitore's skirt playfully swatting at the enemies that she dominates. The motif of a lion consuming a prisoner is another one that goes back to the international style. Here you can see, of course, from much earlier from Nimrud, but

contemporary examples like this wonderful statue of a lion munching on a prisoner from Basa near Meroe. While only a handful of royal women wielded power equivalent to kings in Egypt, in the Meroitic period, numerous Kandakes were either solo or co-ruler. Perhaps the most famous was a Kandake Amanirenas, who defeated the Romans in 25 BCE, decapitating a statue of the Emperor Augustus and carrying the head back to Meroe where it was buried under the threshold of the temple to be trod upon anytime one entered. Objects like this remarkable censer lamp from somewhat later in the Roman era reflect the cosmopolitan nature of Meroitic civilization. Meroitic rulers were also patrons of the temple of Isis on Philae Island as Solange Ashby points out in her new book, which I highly recommend, "Calling Out to Isis", Nubian priests attain the highest positions in the temple and operated with a sophisticated knowledge of Egyptian hieroglyphs, the script forms like Hieratic and Demotic while not abandoning Meroitic in devotional inscriptions. Nubian priests were the last practitioners of Egyptian religion, which arrived here until the sixth century CE, long after Christianity had replaced the old gods in Egypt. No doubt Wilson would disapprove of the political and ideological prominence of women in -- and Kushite queens compared to the more subordinate role in Egypt. But monuments like this one do not represent a bastardized and degenerate invitation of Egyptian themes, but instead provide an example of the transformative interplay between Kushite ideology and Egyptian forms, something that Janet Yellen is exploring and in various really interesting ways for the Meroitic era. So, to conclude, there is strong evidence that the Kushite-Egyptian relationship was characterized by patterns of mutual influence rather than a one-way Egyptianization of Nubian society that ebbed and flowed with the presence of Egyptians. Monuments like these pyramids were not leftovers of Egyptian influence, but it become a quintessentially Nubian form long before these particular monuments were built. Kushite leaders and military were not weaker and indecisive as Breasted charged, but instead for 100 years faced off against the greatest military the region had seen aided by iron weaponry that was surely already being produced in Meroe, as recent excavations by Jane Humphries has shown, and a sophisticated use of horses and chariotry. The Assyrians, as I mentioned before, even sought out Kushite horses and trainers before coming into conflict with the Kushite dynasty. Similarly, it is clear from recent work at Tombos and elsewhere that Nubia was not an unsophisticated backwater, there's no a priori reason to see Kushites as passive consumers, and every reason to think that they were active participants in the diverse expressions of the Iron Age international style, perhaps creating objects like our faience vessels and the bowls from Kurru and certainly being selective in their choices of motifs whether acquired through trade, specially commissioned, or made locally. The consumption of this material culture was balanced by the retention and continuing development of objects and practices that reflected ties to a deeper Nubian past. Kushites selectively adapted Egyptian imagery and practices, advancing theology, and reconfiguring the very nature of kingship and queenship on their own terms, and at the same time, influencing theology and iconography in Egypt itself. The ongoing practice of producing and consuming art in particular styles, whether local or international minor or monumental, created linkages among those who were entangled with it, reinforcing the authority of Kushite rulers for another 1000 years until the dissolution of the Kushite state. And with that, I will end it. Thank you very much. A set of acknowledgments of my co-directors and various funders, and of course, the National Corporation for Antiquities and Museums, as well as the people of Tombos

in Sudan, who have been very generous in allowing us to live and work right next to their village. Okay.

Liska Radachi:

Wonderful. Well, thank you so much for this fantastic lecture and I know we have some questions to get through. We'll do our best to answer the questions as they come through. I'm hoping you all can see me because Stuart is frozen on my screen. So, we'll do our best to get through the questions. Stuart, can you hear me okay?

Stuart Tyson Smith:

Yes.

Liska Radachi:

Okay, I was frozen up for a second. So, if you do have a question, please put it in the Q&A box right on the bottom and not in the chat. Okay, let's see. Alan would like to know, would considering the mutual influence of Nubia and Egypt also incorporate consideration of the other cultures interacting with Nubia and Egypt, so that, for instance, wouldn't Nubia act as a conduit of the cultural influence of other cultures south of Nubia to Egypt, et cetera.?

Stuart Tyson Smith:

Yeah, that's a very good question. And those things are kind of a little hard to -- to tease out in terms of how Nubia served as a kind of conduit for other African influences. I shouldn't say African influence on Egypt because Egypt is an -- in Africa and it was fundamentally an African civilization. But we do see, you know, ties in -- in the region. There are a lot of really intriguing similarities in between Egypt, Nubia, and Ethiopia, which I think have been under studied. And it would be really interesting to look at those kinds of relationships, especially in the context of the Meroitic kingdom, which was very much an interaction with the -- with Ethiopia and the land of Punt. It's a little hard to tease out some of these individual things a little but easier for Nubia because, you know, better archaeologically. It would be wonderful if there would have been more archaeology done in Eritrea, for example. But of course, politically, Eritrea has been a very difficult place. There was a moment when there was some archaeological work going on but then that was shut down by the government and of course, it's been a long process of civil war in northern Ethiopia that's created bars to that. Similarly, it would be really interesting to know what's going on around the area of like Chad, and then Darfur and Western Sudan. But those areas have also been embroiled in civil war and internal conflicts that have made it hard for archaeologists to work. One thing we do know is that Egypt and Nubia were both interconnected with other parts of Africa through trade routes that ran across the Sahara Desert. And this wonderful work of an expedition from the University of Cologne, called ACACIA, one of my favorite acronyms. I forget what the acronym stands for. But it's the acacia tree which you see all over that Sahalian Sahara, that area that transition between the Sahara and the savannas to the south. But they've documented trade routes running across from Egypt, going towards Chad, and Darfur. And then as well, expeditions have looked at the southern wadi called the Wadi Hawar, which comes from the bottom of the great bend of the Nile and goes out into an area that was occupied well into the Bronze Age, and again, might have

provided an interesting conduit for influence. But in order to assess the influence, we need to know what things look like in the other places. And sadly, we don't really do that. But I would expect that would have been the case. Again, certainly all of these cultures were engaged with one another. We just don't see it archaeologically so well. One thing we do see, though, is that all of these- there's a constellation and a group of cultures that emerge from what's been referred to as the Green Sahara. Again, the Cologne expedition and the work of archaeologists, like the late Fred Wendorf, have documented that the Sahara and going all the way back to Laszlo Massey, who was a protagonist of *The English Patient* did survive the war and came, you know, was a great proponent of this idea of the Green Sahara. So, from about 8000 to 4000 BC, you see, the Sahara was a vast savanna land and grasslands where people practicing a pastoral way of life circulated and David Windrow and colleagues had come up with a compelling argument that we see a kind of primary pastoral society with a shared symbolic set of resources, different kinds of pottery and so on, that provided the foundation for all of these cultures in northeast Africa. And so, we see some commonalities and intriguing similarities there. And there's a reason why Nubia and Egypt had such cultural resonances and that's because they're coming from the same tradition. They diverged in terms of individual practices, but for example, the popularity of cows and cattle imagery that we also see in Egypt, with goddesses like Hathor and or the horn images of Isis and so on, Nubians would have totally gotten that. And that's how you can get this kind of mutual influence going based on this kind of this common, kind of common foundation stretching back to the Neolithic.

Liska Radachi:

Okay, so interesting. Let's see, next question. What motive did the Egyptians have in downplaying the importance of Nubia?

Stuart Tyson Smith:

It's also a very good question. And I touched upon it a bit in the lecture, and that's with this -- the fact that when you -- when you see representations of Nubia and for that matter, any other foreign place, in Egyptian iconography, it's fueling an ideology of kingship, what's been referred to as the Ma'at theology, the idea that the king, one of the key elements of kingship in ancient Egypt was that the king enforced Ma'at in the world and the archetypal enemies of Ma'at were the traditional enemies of Egypt; people from Western Asia, from Libya, North Africa, and then from Nubia. And so, the Egyptians created this foreigner topos that Antonio Loprieno has talked about, of the chaotic foreigner who was barbaric, can't even speak properly, is like an animal. There are all these tropes that appear in Egyptian ideology and representations like that, wonderful representation from Tutankhamun's box conveying this image of the Egyptian order and surrounded by chaos, and only the king can save you from the barbarians at the gate. And this is a trope, obviously, that we see in later empires like Rome and civilizations. We can see it played out-- the Assyrians themselves engaged in this kind of imagery, and message. But Antonio also points out that there is a foreigner nemesis, and this represents a more realistic portrayal of interactions with foreigners that can be in a positive light. So, there's so much emphasis on the ideological topos of the foreigner in Egyptian art, that it kind of overpowers these more prosaic indications, like the story of Sinuhe, for example, it goes to the north not to the south. But there he actually says he

basically went native and became a person, you know, from basically a Canaanite and then returns to Egypt and becomes Egyptian again. Well, this was not seen as particularly negative, it was just part of Sinuhe's journey. And similarly, we see a lot of more positive interactions. We see individuals depicted with the elements of Nubian jewelry, for example, the famous soldiers from [inaudible] who were shown in partly in Nubian costume, and so forth. So, the reality of interactions is very different from that ideology of foreignness. But for whatever reason, Egyptologists have picked up on the -- that sort of ideology of the foreign enemy. I think there are two reasons for that. One is Egyptology as a discipline has tended to privilege text and image over archaeology, although as I say, there are also more prosaic texts and images. But there's been a tendency to focus on the monumental record but also it suited Egyptological bias. For one thing Egyptology is great, you know, ancient Egypt is great which I don't argue with, but Nubia is great too, but it played into those biases, but also undercurrents of racism are sometimes quite overt racism. George Andrew Reisner, for example, an excellent archaeologist but he comes to similar conclusions about the first Kingdom of Kushite Kerma that Egyptian influence led to the rise of the civilization. And then as the superior Egyptian bloodlines were a diluted by intermarrying with local people, the civilization collapsed. Very much, you know, and Breasted is echoing very much the same kind of argument. So, there was this underlying sense of racism that black Africans could not have created a civilization like Nubia. And so, when they saw in Egyptian ideology, the inferiority of Nubians they immediately went, aha, well, there it is. There's also a subtle racism in the fact that the barbarity of Nubians tends to be emphasized over the other groups and yet Egyptian ideology treats the other groups exactly the same way. So, they didn't treat Canaanites in any more positive light in the ideology than they did Nubians. But Egyptologist in the past, especially often emphasize a Nubian inferiority.

Liska Radachi:

Thank you, and in that same kind of spirit of the foreign- foreigner and foreignness, Aaron would like to know, is there any evidence of Egyptian gods associated with foreignness such as Seth being used as propaganda against Nubia or other enemy countries?

Stuart Tyson Smith:

That is also a good question. And as far as I know, the answer is no. And that, I think, has to do with the sort of fundamental underpinning of ancient Egyptian religion and theology and that's that it lacked, you know, a strong sense of dogma. It was very flexible and generative. So Asiatic deities could be easily incorporated into the Egyptian pantheon, and we see a number of them being portrayed that way. Seth, of course, comes off as negative and with some foreign associations with the [inaudible], the desert lands that surround Egypt, so there's a bit of that Ma'at versus isfet appearing there. But even Seth, depending on the, you know, the version of the myth you see, so in the triumph of Horus, where Horus defeats Seth at Edfu, Seth ends up getting butchered and cut up and fed to all the participants in the form, not of a real Hippo getting butchered, but of a hippo cake. Something I've used in classes when I teach Egyptian religion class and so I have them actually recreate the- this kind of mystery play and its hippo cake for all at the end.

But in other versions of the myth, he joins Re on his sun bark and standing at the prow with a harpoon. So, he represents another concept of this foreigner topos, and that's the forces of chaos came and serving order. And we see this also in the way Nubians and other Asiatics are treated, of course, they're incorporated into the Egyptian army. But there's also a sense of that that these forces of chaos, when they're tamed by the king, then are kind of neutralized. It also opened Egypt up to influence from Nubia. And again, I would point to the work of Luke Gabolde, in particular, exploring the real entanglements and influences of Nubian theology, and a Nubian ram god that we know existed on the theology of the god Amun as a part of the kind of colonial encounter during the New Kingdom. But we can also see it in the tale of Hathor, the goddess and flees into the south, and then is brought back again, which was featured very prominently by these Kushite rulers as well and played a key role in the temple of Isis in Philae, for example. And so, we see these myths set in Nubia, they clearly are part of these kind of patterns of mutual influence. They're tricky to play out, though, because we have fewer texts from Nubia. The temples there are not as well preserved, which complicates things even for later periods. But especially of course, the Kerma Kingdom of Kush, the first one, we have no textual evidence, we just have iconography, but there the ram images really clear.

Liska Radachi:

Okay, let's see. Question from JJ. Hi JJ.

Stuart Tyson Smith:

Hi JJ.

Liska Radachi:

Deir el-Medina is obviously a perfect example of private NK, I think that's New Kingdom, tombs with pyramids but is there evidence for New Kingdom private burials of Egyptians or Nubians in Nubia, in the areas of the fortress settlements that are also utilizing the pyramids as part of their burial structure?

Stuart Tyson Smith:

Yeah, that's a good question. And the short answer is yes. The longer answer is that small and very small-scale pyramids on a somewhat different form, they're all freestanding than the ones that in the Theban Necropolis for example, which of course utilize the backdrop of the mountains and were often included- rock-cut component. These Nubian pyramids were typically freestanding made out of mud brick and they appear all of the major colonial centers. So, we have, you know, at least around a dozen of them at Tombos, if you include some of the smaller ones and they vary in type as they do in Egypt. You have small ones that -- when the chapels inside the pyramid, like you see in Deir el-Medina, but then you have large complexes like kind of similar but on a different plan as the ones that the Memphite Necropolis where you see these freestanding monuments often the stone elements that are quite massive. And we see these, you know, Tombos, Sasabe, Soleb, Sedeinga, Amara West. As far as I know, Amara East, I don't know that as well. I don't know about the cemetery there. But anyway, all of these colonial sites have them. And maybe a few other sites that haven't had the -- where the superstructures aren't preserved. But we also see the use of tumuli

which is interesting, well before the end of the New Kingdom, at several sites, most notably Amara West and Tombos. So, it's a very kind of entangled and mixed practice. But really, from the start of these places- oh, Aneba, the provincial capital in Nubia has a lot of these pyramids, some of which are quite early. So, it seems to be tracking very much with the shift away from pyramids is a royal monument and towards pyramids as a private monument for the elite in Egypt.

Liska Radachi:

Okay, there's several questions, generally, just wanting to know more. Can you talk more about the three headed Apedemak iconography from the temple, its influence? Just more people wanting to know a little bit more about that. Yeah.

Stuart Tyson Smith:

Yeah, the Temple of Apedemak at Naga- I pronounce it differently sometimes, too, so don't feel bad- That temple is actually one of the most remarkable monuments and it's my favorite in part because of the, you know, the sort of girl power of monitorial out there backing enemies. And the way she is presented as really an equal or co-equal to the king is really quite remarkable. But the 300 imagery of the Apedemak is also quite unique. And it's a really interesting motif that immediately some people have suggested that it represents Indian influence, because you see these kind of multiple headed deities. There's also an image of Apedemak as a snake, as a cobra, with a lion head and little arms, which is, you know, an iconographic trick you also see in Egypt, but arising out from a plant. And some people have seen that plant as a lotus, but I, having been there and look at it very closely, but you can clearly tell it is acanthus, which would reflect classical influence not Indian influence. And in fact, I have an acanthus right in my backyard, and trust me, it's the same, it's not a lotus. And so, so but also there are problems with that Indian connection. So, the timing doesn't work out well. The part of India where there were interactions around that time period, Rome actually had colonies, trade colonies and trade diaspora in India around this period.

So [inaudible] shows -- he imported a cloth, for example, they've actually found printed cotton garments that fragments of the cloth that was imported from India among other things. So, it's clear that there was trade going on. So, the influence is a possibility. But there's no reason to look that way. And in fact, that three headed Apedemak can be better seen as an innovation, a novel adaptation by the Kushite artists to create this balance between the king and the queen. So Apedemak is looking equally at both of them at the same time, but then also gazing at the viewer. And I don't know if they found any kind of shrine at the back, but this is often a place where individuals in a temple and in fact, a nearby Temple of Amun has one of these in the back of it, it's one of these little shrines where, you know, folks could approach the god individually, rather than through the larger temple rituals. And I wonder if that Apedemak served the same purpose in the back. And I just read somewhere, and I can't remember who it was who said it, which is annoying. Maybe Denise [inaudible], it sounds like the sort of thing she might have talked about, but I'm really not sure. And that is the-- there are also these mirror handles that have four deities surrounding them. And so, one can imagine that as a kind of the mirror handle with Apedemak looking straight at you, at the king and the queen and then looking into the sanctuary, which I thought was a clever idea. But that, you know, I hadn't thought about that before I read this, and I apologize for not knowing

exactly who it was that I read it in. I just remember seeing it. But I thought it was a really clever idea and an interesting take. I don't know if you could ever prove it, but it makes a lot of sense that there would be a sort of phantom fourth head looking into the temple. But we'll probably never know, but it's a cool idea.

Liska Radachi:

Absolutely. And I know it, I just -- for everyone that's watching, we have so many questions, we won't be able to get through all of them. I will do a couple more. Maybe two more for everyone's time. Kind of switching gears a little bit. Do you feel that -- Mr. Steven Carrera wants to know that there -- do you feel there's momentum building to push back on the traditional racist framing of Nubia and Nubians in modern scholarship? He's thinking of the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston that had a blockbuster Ancient Nubia Now exhibition, but now most of the objects are back in storage.

Stuart Tyson Smith:

Yeah, it's very sad that that one of the best collections of artifacts from Nubia outside of Khartoum in Sudan is not on display. It's really tragic. So, and that the Nubia Now exhibit was brilliant. And it was really wonderful because it engaged not only with telling the story of ancient Nubia all the way from its origins in the Neolithic, you know, through the later Kingdom of Kush, but it also incorporated different voices that engaged with these kind of colonial narratives and push back against them in a way that I think needs to be the standard is we're thinking of new exhibits moving forward. So, I would love to see that I keep hearing that maybe there's some ideas about bringing it back by creating a Nubia gallery, hopefully this will create some momentum. But certainly, there is today a lot more interest in Nubia than there has been in the past which is interesting. I've been doing this for a long time now, a little bit too long, showing my age. But I've noticed over time, you know, initially when I got into studying ancient Nubia, it was very much sidelined, for example, at ARCE meetings. I can't tell you how many times I had that coveted Sunday morning slot in the meetings, that's when the Nubian session was scheduled, rather than during prime time. But now we see a lot more papers, for one thing, at ARCE meetings, a lot more interest in Nubia generally. And as witnessed by a whole bunch of lectures now that are going out, you know, in part in the kind of aftermath of BLM and the idea of being more inclusive and looking beyond the standard tropes. But Nubia is becoming a real dynamic center of research, also a lot more scholars. There are more archaeological expeditions now in northern Sudan, which is, you know, pretty much the only place unless you're going out in the desert then you can excavate in Nubia since Egyptian Nubia is under, I won't call it Lake Nasser, it's called Lake Nubia. Thank you very much. And the, you know, so there's a lot of interests. Sudan is a wonderful place to work. The colleagues there are really amazing, the, you know, inspectors are really our colleagues. And the relationship is very collegial, which is really rewarding. So, there's a lot more going on, where we're filling in a lot of the gaps. And that's what I -- when I first went, that's what I was interested in was looking at, you know, colonization, and then its aftermath. And we were actually very delighted to find at Tombos, this long continuity which is one of the few sites where it's well preserved, and you can trace that. And we're hoping now that we found that settlement, we can get it done even more. But yeah, I think there's hope for the future. And I heard a rumor, and it may just be a rumor that Boston is now

considering creating a new Nubia gallery, which would be awesome. But there's also a big Taharqa exhibit that the Louvre is preparing. It was delayed a bit by the pandemic, but it's now moving forward. And who knows, maybe that could travel, that would be awesome. You know, they were talking about it, I don't know if it's too late to set that up. But that would be really good. In fact, all those wonderful little faience vessels will be appearing in that exhibit, which is pretty cool, along with a bunch of other objects from the National Museum in Khartoum.

Liska Radachi:

Wonderful. And we'll do one more question, but I did want to let everyone know, because there's various questions, this lecture will-- is being recorded and we can have that up on our ARCE YouTube page, and the website. And also, for those of you that are asking about specific book titles and papers that were mentioned in this lecture, you'll be able to go on to the recording, and get that information there. So, we'll do one more question then. So, Sid Kitchel, hi Sid-

Stuart Tyson Smith:

Hi, Sid.

Liska Radachi:

--wants to know- yes. Kush is seen as a major source of gold over a long time. Did the Kushite Kings also mine gold and have it be part of their economy?

Stuart Tyson Smith:

Yes. So gold was an important resource, you know, throughout Kushite history. We know, I can't think offhand of much work that's been done on the mining of gold during the Kushite period, but you see it showing up in objects and you know, in the Kushite burials and so on, and they definitely would have had a local source of gold. And just like Egypt, gold was a prestigious material that was used quite frequently in royal tombs and other, you know, sort of objects of value in the kind of politically economy that thrived throughout the Kushite period. We found very little of at Tombos, though, which suits me, like a few little beads and that's it, nothing really. Because people get way too excited when you find gold things and then people go in and start digging holes in your site and it's a bummer. So that's why I appreciate the ancient looters, is let them steal all the gold, and then we'll get the rest of the stuff like all those remarkable objects from our soldier's tomb.

Liska Radachi:

Wonderful. Well, I want to thank you Dr. Tyson Smith for this fantastic lecture and for your time and being here today. And I want to also thank all of our guests and attendees at home all over the world for making the time to be with us today. This has really been such a fascinating lecture, and we're grateful for everyone to be here. So, I do want to mention, if you're not an ARCE member, we'd love to have you join so you can have increased access to fantastic virtual lectures which will be continuing even once the pandemic-- you know, if we ever get back to real life, that we are going to be continuing those, so I encourage you to join as an ARCE member at arce.org. And if you have not registered yet for our annual meeting coming up, which is April 22 through 25, also

being held virtually, please do so also on our website, and our members do of course receive a discounted rate. But I just want to say thank you again for such a fantastic lecture, and thank you all for being here, and I hope you all have a wonderful day, day, or evening, wherever you are. So, thank you so much.

Stuart Tyson Smith:

You're very welcome. Thanks everyone for attending, and also, I hope you have a great day whatever time zone you're in.

Liska Radachi:

Wonderful. Thank you.