

Archaeology, development and conflict: a case study from the African continent

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Abstract

Apart from wars, other contexts of social conflict have recently become a setting in which archaeologists are faced with acute, sometimes armed, violence. On the African continent, a region often overlooked in discussions of “archaeology in conflict”, rapid economic development has led to several such scenes. The paper discusses a particularly poignant example from the Middle Nile valley in Sudan, where large dam projects have been met with various levels of opposition by affected populations. Local communities opposing the construction of further planned dams on the Nile are increasingly stressing ‘cultural survival’ and fear of ‘developmental genocide’ as two of their major motivations for fighting these projects. Assuming a close link between the developer and archaeological salvage missions, affected people have started to use the expulsion of salvage teams from their territory as a strategy of resistance – posing an ethical dilemma for the archaeologists who struggle to find a position in the increasingly violent controversies accompanying these contested development projects.

Keywords

Development projects, salvage archaeology, social conflict, Africa

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Introduction

The problematic relationship between development projects and the preservation of cultural heritage has been in the focus of academic debate for many years (see e.g. Goodland and Webb 1987; Taboroff and Cook 1993; Brandt and Hassan [eds.] 2000; World Commission on Dams 2000; Naffé et al. [eds.] 2008). While development projects often destroy archaeological sites and monuments at an alarming rate, the intensive archaeological salvage campaigns connected to them greatly enhance our knowledge of the (pre)history of the affected regions (e.g. Adams 2007). Major dam projects along the Nile are a case in point. The construction of the Aswan High Dam on the First Nile Cataract in Egypt in the 1960s provided immense impetus for the study of the Middle Nile valley and contributed significantly to the development of the concept of 'world heritage' (Adams 1992; Hassan 2007; Ahmed 2012). Recently, the construction of the Merowe Dam at the Fourth Nile Cataract in Sudan brought about intensive salvage work in the region which previously had been virtually unknown in archaeological terms (Welsby 2008, 2009; Grzymiski 2010 for summaries). However, the increase in archaeological knowledge in these contexts is not only intrinsically linked to the irrevocable loss of archaeological sites, but also to the endangering of a wide spectrum of other kinds of cultural heritage, the violation of human rights and the humanitarian disasters that often accompany the forced resettlement of local communities from the affected areas (e.g. Dafalla 1975; Welsby 2008; Hafsaas-Tsakos 2011; Kleinitz and Näser 2011; Hänsch 2012; Näser and Kleinitz 2012).

Increasingly, local communities are contesting various aspects of large development projects, such as the terms and conditions of resettlement and compensation, and even archaeological salvage – as in the case of the Merowe Dam (Welsby 2008; Näser and Kleinitz 2010a, 2012; Hafsaas-Tsakos 2011; Kleinitz and Näser 2011). General debates about the impacts of large-scale development projects have rarely brought these aspects together in more than a rhetorical way, and contributions about archaeological practice and practitioners' ethics have largely by-passed these issues (but see Ronayne 2008; MacEachern 2010; Näser and Kleinitz 2010a, 2012; Hafsaas-Tsakos 2011; Kleinitz and Näser 2011). The context of contested development projects has not so far figured in discussions on 'archaeology in conflict' (e.g. Starzmann et al. [eds.] 2008; Perring and van der Linde [eds.] 2009; Schipper and Bernhardsson [eds.] 2010). Drawing on a poignant case study from the Middle Nile valley, namely the Merowe Dam project and further new dam projects in the region, the following contribution aims at both adding 'contested development projects' to the agenda of the ongoing debate on 'archaeology in conflict' and, vice versa, introducing the notion of 'archaeology in conflict' to the discussion of the role of archaeology in the context of contested development projects.

The Merowe Dam project as a development success story: an 'official' narrative

In early March 2009, the first two of the ten turbines of Sudan's largest infrastructure project, the Merowe Dam³ at the downstream end of the rocky terrain of the Fourth Nile Cataract, were taken into service. The occasion was celebrated in the presence of the Sudanese president, Omar al-Bashir, numerous representatives of the Sudanese state and its people, and guests from countries that had been involved in financing and implementing this ambitious project, including China, Saudi Arabia, the Emirate of Qatar, the Sultanate of Oman, France and Germany.⁴ Highlighting the symbolic and

³ Initially the dam had been called 'Hamdab Dam'; for the reasons connected to the change in name see Näser and Kleinitz 2012: 270, note 2.

⁴ 'Merowe Dam an answer to ICC allegations' (posted on DIU website on 10/03/2009: http://www.merowedam.gov.sd/en/admin-en/newspublish/home.viewdetails.php?news_id=128). All websites referred to in this paper were last accessed between 03/01/2013 and 06/01/2013. Spelling and/or grammar mistakes in direct quotes have not been removed.

economic importance of the Merowe Dam project at the occasion, the head of the responsible government institution, the Dams Implementation Unit (DIU)⁵, Osama A. M. Al-Hassan, stated that “the project symbolizes the nation’s dignity, determination and independence of decision-making; asserting the key role of electricity as a basic infrastructure for realizing sound economic, social and cultural development in Sudan”.⁶ With a projected output of 1,250 MW, the Merowe Dam roughly doubles Sudan’s power capacity and is thus essential for Sudan’s economic growth (Bosshard and Hildyard 2005; Failer et al. 2006).⁷ Apart from producing hydropower, other purposes of the dam project include the development of centralised agricultural irrigation schemes, flood protection and sedimentation reduction (Failer et al. 2006).⁸ In conjunction with the construction of the dam, several other infrastructure projects were realised, such as the building of an airport and a ‘hospital city’ at Merowe town, as well as more than 1000 km of modern roads and several bridges that were to “contribute to the cohesion and co-existence among the citizens in different areas in the country”.⁹

Plans for the construction of a dam at the Fourth Cataract had been mooted since the 1940s and revived in the late 1970s and 80s, but funding was hard to obtain especially after economic sanctions were imposed on Sudan in the mid-1990s by parts of the international community (Al-Hakem 1993; Failer et al. 2006; Grzymiski 2010). Construction finally began in 2003 with funding from China and the Arab world, and with technical expertise and a work force mainly provided by Chinese companies (see Kleinitz and Näser 2011 for a summary).¹⁰ The Merowe Dam project – which is currently the largest completed hydroelectric power project on the African continent (Bosshard and Hildyard 2005) – has been described by Sudanese observers not only as a major feat in engineering and an economic boon, but as a “national symbol”¹¹, and “a dream come true”¹². Former government ministers reportedly described the dam as “a big miracle in spite of the blockade being imposed on [Sudan]” and as a “victory for the Sudanese will”¹³. Elsewhere, a government minister, referring to the Merowe Dam, is reported to have stated “that Sudanese people remained capable of realizing

⁵ Initially, the Merowe Dam Project Implementation Unit (MDPIU) was responsible for the dam project. The unit was later re-organised into the more powerful Dams Implementation Unit (DIU) (see Kleinitz and Näser 2011; <http://www.merowedam.gov.sd/en/establishment.html>).

⁶ ‘President Al-Bashir launched the power generation at Merowe Dam’ (posted on DIU website on 04/03/2009: http://www.merowedam.gov.sd/en/admin-en/newspublish/home.viewdetails.php?news_id=127).

⁷ See also ‘Merowe Dam: Pearl of Nile in Sudan’ (Sudan Tribune, 24/12/2007: <http://www.sudantribune.com/spip.php?article25295>).

⁸ See also ‘Al-Bashir affirms government keenness to provide services and enhance living conditions’ (posted on DIU website on 15/07/2009: http://www.merowedam.gov.sd/en/admin-en/newspublish/home.viewdetails.php?news_id=156).

⁹ ‘DIU celebrates handover of airport, roads and bridges’ (posted on DIU website on 01/04/2010: http://www.merowedam.gov.sd/en/admin-en/newspublish/home.viewdetails.php?news_id=175); see also ‘DIU celebrates entry of Merowes 10 units into national electricity grid’ (posted on DIU website on 24/05/2010: http://www.merowedam.gov.sd/en/admin-en/newspublish/home.viewdetails.php?news_id=183).

¹⁰ <http://www.merowedam.gov.sd/en/funding.html>.

¹¹ E.g. in ‘El Bashir launches Sadaga bridge and Karima-Dongola highway’ (posted on DIU website on 17/01/2008: http://www.merowedam.gov.sd/en/admin-en/newspublish/home.viewdetails.php?news_id=57).

¹² ‘Taha launches entry of Merowe Dam’s units (7) & (8) into national grid’ (posted on DIU website on 30/12/2009: http://www.merowedam.gov.sd/en/admin-en/newspublish/home.viewdetails.php?news_id=171); see also the DIU’s website at <http://www.merowedam.gov.sd/en/location.html>, particularly <http://www.merowedam.gov.sd/en/testimonials.html>, or ‘Merowe Dam: Pearl of Nile in Sudan’ (Sudan Tribune, 24/12/2007: <http://www.sudantribune.com/Merowe-Dam-Pearl-of-Nile-in-Sudan,25295>).

¹³ ‘DIU celebrates linkage of first and second units with the internal network of Merowe Dam electricity station’ (posted on DIU website on 23/02/2009: http://www.merowedam.gov.sd/en/admin-en/newspublish/home.viewdetails.php?news_id=126).

major accomplishments and development and effecting industrial and agricultural progress despite the sanctions being imposed on them”.¹⁴ Referring to various national development plans, the president himself is said to have reminded Sudanese citizens to “stay vigilant and alert to foil foreign plots that target derailing advancement”, while the River Nile state governor reportedly assured the citizens that “his State looks forward to sustainability of development and advancement of all aspects of life, [...] and [...] is well prepared for aborting any Western conspiracies against the country”.¹⁵ In the same vein, at the time of its first inauguration the dam was portrayed in official media to be Sudan’s answer to the International Criminal Court (ICC),¹⁶ which was about to indict the Sudanese president for crimes against humanity, war crimes and genocide in Darfur.¹⁷ Subsequently, the Merowe Dam featured prominently in the presidential campaign of 2010, in which the then and future president portrayed himself as a guarantor of rapid economic development, transporting his message via imagery of the Merowe Dam, industrial complexes and road building projects (Fig. 1). By the time of its final inauguration in April 2010, the dam was portrayed in state media as a symbol of victory over adverse conditions mostly brought about by Western attempts to foil unity and development in the country, and as a beacon for the bright future of modern Sudan and its people. The Merowe Dam, upon its completion, had become a major political statement. It was a story of perseverance and success.

Even the people who were directly affected by the dam were set to benefit from it: they were to sacrifice their homeland for a better future in resettlement schemes (Ali et al. 2010).¹⁸ As part of the mitigation measures in relation to the Merowe Dam project, a major effort was undertaken to move between 50,000 and 70,000 people living at the dam site and in the projected reservoir area to various newly established agricultural schemes (Failer et al. 2006; Hildyard 2008; Ali et al. 2010). Most of the affected people were small-scale riverine peasants (see e.g. Salih 1999; Beck 2003, 2012) belonging to three main groups, all Arabic-speaking Muslims, namely the Shaiqiyya of Hamdab who lived at and close to the dam site, the Shaiqiyya of Amri who lived a little further upstream, and the Manasir who settled in the centre of the Fourth Cataract region. The Dams Implementation Unit (DIU) reported on the successful transferral of the Fourth Cataract population to the resettlement villages or ‘cities’ with their modern homes and facilities, such as schools, hospitals and mosques.¹⁹ The schemes promised significant improvements in living standards in comparison to the dire situation at the Fourth Cataract where basic services, such as access to electricity, running water and sanitation, were lacking (Ali et al. 2010). Some time after resettlement, the DIU publicised great achievements, especially in the fields of education,²⁰ due to the stability of services provided in the

¹⁴ ‘Dr. Al-Degair: Merowe Dam is a strong boost for comprehensive development’ (posted on DIU website on 16/03/2009: http://www.merowedam.gov.sd/en/admin-en/newspublish/home.viewdetails.php?news_id=135).

¹⁵ ‘Al Bashir opens Shendi-Al-Mattama bridge’ (posted on DIU website on 19/05/2009: http://www.merowedam.gov.sd/en/admin-en/newspublish/home.viewdetails.php?news_id=141).

¹⁶ ‘Merowe Dam an answer to ICC allegations’ (posted on DIU website on 10/03/2009: http://www.merowedam.gov.sd/en/admin-en/newspublish/home.viewdetails.php?news_id=128).

¹⁷ <http://www2.icc-cpi.int/iccdocs/doc/doc639078.pdf>.

¹⁸ See also ‘Al-Bashir affirms government keenness to provide services and enhance living conditions’ (posted on DIU website on 15/07/2009: http://www.merowedam.gov.sd/en/admin-en/newspublish/home.viewdetails.php?news_id=156); ‘DIU celebrates entry of Merowes 10 units into national electricity grid’ (posted on DIU website on 24/05/2010: http://www.merowedam.gov.sd/en/admin-en/newspublish/home.viewdetails.php?news_id=183).

¹⁹ <http://www.merowedam.gov.sd/en/social.html>; <http://www.merowedam.gov.sd/en/new-hamdab.html>; <http://www.merowedam.gov.sd/en/new-amri.html>.

²⁰ ‘President Al-Bashir inaugurates pumping station and addresses mass rally at Al-Fidda’ (posted on DIU website on 23/06/2009: http://www.merowedam.gov.sd/en/admin-en/newspublish/home.viewdetails.php?news_id=150).

resettlement schemes,²¹ and agriculture, due to the use of “the highest technology used in modern agriculture”²².

As the affected would gain a better future from the loss of their homeland (Ali et al. 2010), the archaeological community would gain extensive knowledge on the past from archaeological salvage surveys and excavations of the cultural landscape of the Fourth Cataract before its irrevocable loss through flooding. After two appeals for assistance by the National Corporation for Antiquities and Museums (NCAM), about a dozen national and international archaeological salvage teams started working in the reservoir region as well as in the areas projected for resettlement, power transmission lines and roads (Al-Hakem 1993; Ahmed 2003; Welsby 2009; Kleinitz and Näser 2011). Thousands of archaeological sites were recorded by these missions under the umbrella of the Merowe Dam Archaeological Salvage Project (MDASP). Knowledge of the (pre)history of the region expanded significantly (Welsby 2009 for a summary). The developer contributed to the costs of salvage by financing the work of the Sudanese salvage team, while the international missions raised funds mostly in their home countries (Kleinitz and Näser 2011). In 2008/2009 MDASP ended with the flooding of the reservoir. Objects saved from the Fourth Cataract region are today exhibited in the Sudanese capital Khartoum (National Museum), and – based on the division of finds recovered during salvage work – also in Poland (Gdąnsk Archaeological Museum) and the United Kingdom (The British Museum, London).

In May 2012, plans for the construction of six further dams on the Middle Nile were officially announced by the DIU at a meeting of archaeologists at the British Museum in London, and a new call for assistance during the envisaged salvage campaigns was issued by NCAM. Preliminary salvage surveys had, at that point, already been undertaken by NCAM at the various new dam sites, namely the Dal and Third (Kajbar), the Fifth (Shereiḳ) and the Sixth (Sabaloḳa) Cataracts, as well as at Dagash and Mogrāt, downstream of the Fifth Cataract. The first results of these surveys were presented to the public in an exhibition at the National Museum in Khartoum from April to June 2012. The exhibition, with the title “Dams on the Nile of Civilizations”, celebrated the successes of archaeological salvage on the Nile since the International Nubian Campaign of the 1960s as well as the close collaboration between NCAM and the DIU in saving the nation’s heritage. In winter 2012/13 the first international archaeological missions began salvage work at the Fifth Cataract, where a new dam is being constructed at Shereiḳ.

The Merowe Dam project as a humanitarian disaster: a subversive narrative

In winter 2012/13, shortly after international missions had arrived at the Fifth Cataract, representatives of local communities hindered and then terminated archaeological work in their territory by expelling salvage teams. This shocking rejection of archaeological salvage work by local people seems to be modelled on the Merowe Dam case where MDASP, rather than having been successfully completed in 2008/2009, was aborted prematurely due to the actions of local people in large parts of the projected reservoir area. From the perspective of many of the affected people, the Merowe Dam project had been far from a development success story. To them it was a humanitarian disaster involving forced resettlement and repeated human rights violations, including armed force

²¹ ‘Kehaila Agricultural Scheme ready for winter cultivation season’ (posted on DIU website on 20/10/2011: http://www.merowedam.gov.sd/en/admin-en/newspublish/home.viewdetails.php?news_id=192).

²² ‘Winter season harvest started at Amri Agricultural Project’ (posted on DIU website on 13/03/2011: http://www.merowedam.gov.sd/en/admin-en/newspublish/home.viewdetails.php?news_id=190); see also ‘Damar people welcome the resettlement of Manaseer in Mikabrāb’ (posted on DIU website on 30/10/2007, http://www.merowedam.gov.sd/en/admin-en/newspublish/home.viewdetails.php?news_id=44).

(Askouri 2004a, 2004b, 2007; Beck 2012; Hänsch 2012). Archaeology had become embroiled in the conflict between local people and the developer, specifically the DIU, which unfolded in the Fourth Cataract region during the construction of the Merowe Dam and that was accompanied by various acts of resistance against the developer. Among these acts was the eviction of the archaeological salvage missions by the Manasir people from their territory (see below and Welsby 2008; Näser and Kleinitz 2010a, 2012; Hafsaas-Tsakos 2011; Kleinitz and Näser 2011).

With about 33,000 people (or 65% of the Fourth Cataract population), the Manasir were the group affected most severely by the Merowe Dam (Ali et al. 2010). Their homeland, Dar al-Manasir, was to vanish almost completely under the waters of the new reservoir. Since the early stages of dam construction, the Manasir had been the most vocal among the affected people in their protest against the terms of resettlement and compensation as they were issued by the developer, the Sudanese state with its executive arm, the DIU (see Hänsch 2012). Manasir representatives pointed out early on that international standards on human rights, resettlement issues and the environment were violated by the developer on several counts, and that the Merowe Dam project design should be reassessed (Askouri 2004a, 2004b, 2007; for further information also Kleinitz and Näser 2011; Hänsch 2012).

Although living conditions were to be improved in the resettlement areas (Failer et al. 2006; Ali et al. 2010; but see Bosshard and Hildyard 2005 for a cautionary evaluation), the terms of resettlement were considered deeply inadequate by many of the affected people. Contested items included the amount of compensation paid per date palm, the most important cash crop of Manasir agriculture (Haberlah 2007; Hänsch 2012). A second major issue was the eligibility for compensation in terms of housing and agricultural land in the resettlement schemes, as this was based on an outdated 1999 census and threatened to exclude newly formed households altogether (Askouri 2004a; Bosshard and Hildyard 2005; McDonald et al. 2009; Bosshard 2009/10; Hänsch 2012). Over the course of the years the right to resettle on the shores of the newly created reservoir, instead of having to move to resettlement areas distant from their homeland and the river itself, became a third major issue for many Manasir (Hänsch 2012).²³ Repeatedly, and without much success, Manasir representatives issued sets of demands in response to the DIU's mitigation plans, which they hoped would alleviate post-flooding hardship – but their elected committees were often not acknowledged as negotiation partners by the DIU (Hänsch 2012).²⁴

Over time, tensions deepened between the Manasir and the DIU, but also within the Manasir population between those who resolved to move to the resettlement schemes and those who chose to fight the developer for the right to stay by the reservoir (Kleinitz and Näser 2011; Hänsch 2012; Näser and Kleinitz 2012).²⁵ These frictions are tangible even in reports posted on the DIU website, with Manasir set to resettle in the Wadi Mukabrab scheme being called upon by the developer to accelerate their move and “to ignore those who spread rumors”.²⁶ The first ‘cultural night’ in a Manasir resettlement area was reportedly themed “Take the forgiveness. And call for the righteous,

²³ See also ‘Sudan dam will drown cultural treasures, destroy Nile communities’ (A. Askouri, Sudan Tribune, 29/04/2004: <http://www.sudantribune.com/Sudan-dam-will-drown-cultural,2714>).

²⁴ See Osman Al Magdoud, then member of the Manasir Executive Committee, in an extended statement ‘The Dams Unit and instigation of disturbances in northern Sudan’, published on 03/11/2007 at <http://www.sudaneseonline.com/cgi-bin/esdb/2bb.cgi?seq=print&board=12&msg=1194104091&rn=>.

²⁵ Interests, opinions and positions to the complex issues of resettlement, compensation and how to negotiate them best varied among the affected people according to economic, political as well as gender and age specific agendas and the development of the overall situation through time (see Beck 2012; Hänsch 2012; Weschenfelder 2012).

²⁶ ‘Huge numbers of Manaseer arrive in Mikabrab’ (posted on DIU website on 17/10/2007: http://www.merowedam.gov.sd/en/admin-en/newspublish/home.viewdetails.php?news_id=42).

and avoid the ignorants".²⁷ The DIU reports are biased in celebrating the various achievements of the developer, and there are only a few references to social conflicts. When other voices are heard, the situation on the ground is usually significantly less pleasant than the DIU suggests. For example, while the DIU report stresses friendly relations between incoming Manasir and the host population in the Wadi Mukabrab resettlement area,²⁸ other sources detail accounts of strong social tensions (Calkins 2012). Where the DIU is silent, various evidence points to violent reactions by the developer against the increasingly desperate protests of the affected people (Askouri 2004a, 2004b; Hildyard 2008; Hafsaas-Tsakos 2011; Hänsch 2012).²⁹ In April 2006, for example, a peaceful protest by local Shaiqiyya communities in the Amri area was met with armed response by the dam police, killing three local men (Askouri 2007).³⁰ In June 2007, several people were shot dead during protests at Kajbar, the site of a projected new dam at the Third Cataract.³¹ In view of the larger conflicts in Sudan, such as the war in Darfur, these losses did not attract much international attention (but e.g. see Lawler 2006). When several European companies were requested to intervene or to pull out of the project by representatives of the affected people and western advocacy groups (Askouri 2004a; Bosshard and Hildyard 2005; Hildyard 2008)³², most responded by withdrawing into a position of neutrality and by relegating any responsibility for the negative effects of the dam project to the developer (but see Hafsaas-Tsakos 2011; Kleinitz and Näser 2011).³³ In August 2007, the international community took note for a brief moment when the UN Human Rights Council's Special Rapporteur on adequate housing pointed to human rights violations in relation to the Merowe Dam project, appealing to the developer, the investors and the contractors to stop construction until the resettlement issue had been solved – to no avail.³⁴

²⁷ 'First cultural night to be held in New Manaseer' (posted on DIU website on 29/11/2007: http://www.merowedam.gov.sd/en/admin-en/newspublish/home.viewdetails.php?news_id=48).

²⁸ 'Damer people welcome the resettlement of Manaseer in Mikabrab' (posted on DIU website on 30/10/2007: http://www.merowedam.gov.sd/en/admin-en/newspublish/home.viewdetails.php?news_id=44).

²⁹ See also 'Leaders of Sudan's Merowe Dam community escape assassination' (Sudan Tribune, 16/02/2007: <http://www.sudantribune.com/spip.php?article20289>); 'Barren idea? How Sudan's dam will harness the Nile but widen discord' (A. England, Financial Times, 09/03/2007: <http://www.ft.com/cms/s/0/216d6532-cde3-11db-839d-000b5df10621.html>).

³⁰ See also 'Sudanese militia kill three people in Merowe dam area' (A. Askouri, Sudan Tribune, 22/04/2006: <http://www.sudantribune.com/Sudanese-militia-kill-three-people,15209>) and the report of the German NGO Gesellschaft für Bedrohte Völker (<http://www.gfbv.de/inhaltsDok.php?id=761&highlight=manasir>).

³¹ 'Four dead in Sudan Kijbar protest' (Sudan Tribune, 15/06/2007: <http://www.sudantribune.com/spip.php?article22381>); 'Four killed over Nile dam project that threatens Nubian towns' (D. Morrison, National Geographic News, 15/06/2007: <http://news.nationalgeographic.com/news/2007/06/070615-sudan-nubian.html>). See also <http://www.rescuenubia.org/beware.html>.

³² For an online-petition for the postponement of the dam, which is addressed to the president of Lahmeyer International, the German-based technical consultant of the project, see <http://www.petitiononline.com/hamadab/petition.html>.

³³ See <http://www.business-humanrights.org/Documents/KothariMerowedamAug2007>, a statement by Lahmeyer International (<http://198.170.85.29/Lahmeyer-statement-Merowe-dam-Sudan-May-2005.pdf>) and the 'Update on the Merowe/Hamadab Dam Project, Sudan' (P. Bosshard and N. Hildyard, International Rivers and The Corner House, 06/07/2005: <http://198.170.85.29/Intl-Rivers-Network-and-Corner-House-update-Merowe-Dam-Sudan-6-July-2005.doc>).

³⁴ See 'UN expert urges Sudan to respect human rights of communities affected by hydro-electric dam projects' (<http://www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=7513&LangID=E>; compare also <http://www.un.org/apps/news/storyAr.asp?NewsID=23617&Cr=sudan&Cr1=>; <http://www.business-humanrights.org/Documents/KothariMerowedamAug2007>). The intervention was based on a 'Complaint to UN Special Rapporteur on adequate housing by the Amri Committee', which detailed the various human rights violations (available at www.hlrn.org/img/violation/Merowe%20AMRI%20COMPLAINT.doc).

By the time the floodgates of the Merowe Dam were closed in 2008 and the reservoir started filling, communities living in the centre of the projected reservoir had not yet moved out. While their representatives had continued negotiations about the places and conditions of resettlement, people on the ground were surprised by the rising waters and effectively flushed out of their homes, many losing their belongings, including their animals and their summer harvest (Hänsch 2012).³⁵ Thousands of Manasir remained as development refugees by the shore of the new lake, refusing to give up their homeland (Hafsaas-Tsakos 2011; Hänsch 2012). In May 2010 executive employees of the technical consultant of the project, Lahmeyer International, were sued by the European Center for Constitutional and Human Rights (ECCHR) for human rights violations in connection with their involvement in the Merowe Dam Project, including the drowning of Dar al-Manasir in 2008.³⁶ After lengthy negotiations, the Manasir were permitted to settle by the lake. Reports on the DIU's website now speak elegantly of compensation payments for the local people who "chose the local option" of resettlement.³⁷ Over the years, new agreements on compensation between local communities and state authorities were reached and broken, and protests by the affected groups continued. In late 2011 and early 2012, inspired by the Arab spring, members of Manasir communities staged demonstrations in Khartoum and occupied Tahrir Square in the town of Ed-Damer demanding "compensation for the ignored deal between them and the government".³⁸ Police ended the protests with arrests and violence.³⁹

Archaeology in conflict

At the same time as these conflicts were brewing, numerous archaeological salvage missions were active in the Fourth Cataract region. Many of them had started work in late 2003/early 2004, just after a second urgent call for assistance had been issued by NCAM, but some teams had been active in the region for a much longer period (Paner 1998; Welsby 2000; Ahmed 2003). It is fair to say that most members of the international archaeological salvage missions, even after their second or third field seasons, were unaware of the contested nature of the overall dam project and of the deepening conflicts between local communities and the developer. One reason for this was probably the deeply entrenched belief among the archaeologists that they were, by definition, neutral parties and that

³⁵ 'Merowe Dam floods thousands in area closed to outsiders' (Sudan Tribune, 03/10/2008: <http://www.sudantribune.com/spip.php?article28812>); see also 'An emergency appeal for urgent relief of Merowe dam communities' (Statement by the Executive Committee of the Manasir Communities, International Rivers, 31/07/2008: <http://www.internationalrivers.org/resources/an-emergency-appeal-for-urgent-relief-of-merowe-dam-communities-2521>); 'Sudanese government forcibly displaces more than 6000 families affected by the Merowe Dam' (Statement by the Leadership Office of Hamdab Affected People LOHAP [London], International Rivers, 01/10/2008: <http://www.internationalrivers.org/resources/sudanese-government-forcibly-displaces-more-than-6000-families-affected-by-merowe-dam-4311>).

³⁶ A detailed account of human rights violations in connection with the Merowe Dam Project is listed in the complaint filed against Lahmeyer International. The PDF documents are available at the ECCHR website under 'Deutsche Ingenieursarbeit – ohne Rücksicht auf Verluste' (<http://www.ecchr.eu/index.php/lahmeyer-fall.html>).

³⁷ 'Compensation payment started in Manasir with large turnout' (posted on 01/02/2011 on DIU website: http://www.merowedam.gov.sd/en/admin-en/newspublish/home.viewdetails.php?news_id=187).

³⁸ 'Protest against Sudan dam enters third week' (Africa Review, 06/12/2011: <http://www.africareview.com/News/Protest-against-Sudan-dam-enters-third-week/-/979180/1285136/-/1a25i8z/-/index.html>).

³⁹ 'Sudan breaks up dam demo' (Sudan Tribune, 20/12/2011: <http://www.sudantribune.com/Sudan-breaks-up-dam-demo,41049>); 'Sudanese police in second crackdown against dam protestors' (Sudan Tribune, 22/12/2011: <http://www.sudantribune.com/Sudanese-police-in-second,41069>); 'Sudanese authorities block opposition convoy from reaching protesters in al-Damer' (Sudan Tribune, 13/01/2012: <http://www.sudantribune.com/Sudanese-authorities-block,41289>).

everyone acknowledged and valued their contribution to saving humanity's heritage (e.g. Welsby 2008; but see Kleinitz and Näser 2011; Näser and Kleinitz 2012). Few archaeologists realised that the DIU had closely associated itself with the work of the salvage missions in radio broadcasts, print media and on their website, giving the impression that the salvage operations were run by them.⁴⁰ Thus, far from being neutral, the salvage missions were increasingly associated in the 'public eye' with the DIU's agenda, which threatened local people's livelihoods and their very existence as a community.

This impression may have been further enforced by the set-up of the salvage project, which privileged the rescue of archaeological heritage over local people's living heritage, and found little room for community participation or even consultation (for exceptions see Bushra 2006; Kleinitz and Näser [eds.] 2012). Most archaeologists seem to have expected that local people accept their valuation of pre-Islamic heritage, the importance of which some missions tried to convey either in casual talks at chance meetings, during excavations, back home in the camps in local villages, or more formally in lectures in local schools. This top-down 'educational approach' may have further deepened the divide between archaeologists and the local communities, while latter were expected to accept the results of archaeological research as their heritage, and as the former were disinterested in local perceptions and valuations of the past (De Simone 2008; Welsby 2008; Näser and Kleinitz 2012; see also Brandt and Hassan [eds.] 2000 for other case studies). The scale of values that was thus communicated by the developer, as well as the salvage missions, put archaeological heritage at the top and the living heritage of the affected people at the bottom, despite multidisciplinary research including ethnography and history having been called for early on (Leclant 1990; Al-Hakem 1993; Gisema 2006).

Comprehensive Cultural Resource Management (CRM) planning could have addressed these problems early on. However, the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) that should have been the point of departure for all CRM work in connection with the Merowe Dam project had been drafted only in 2002, very late in the planning stages, by the technical consultant of the project – in what can only be called a clear conflict in interest (Lahmeyer International 2002: 3.20-3.22, 4.15, Annex 7; for an independent review and criticism see Teodoru et al. 2006; Hildyard 2008).⁴¹ Furthermore, the EIA, which contained only a short and superficial section on the mitigation of negative effects on cultural resources, was not available for consultation by the public, including the archaeological community. While the DIU was failing to observe the basic premises of comprehensive CRM planning – with dire consequences for the social and cultural sustainability of its projects and the preservation of cultural heritage (see also Brandt and Hassan [eds.] 2000; Arazi 2009) – it was publicly celebrating CRM 'successes', such as the archaeological salvage campaigns, in state-related media (e.g. Ali et al. 2010).⁴²

If archaeologists had been more observant of these issues, and if they had seen a reason to question the very set-up of the salvage project, it would have come as less of a source of surprise and bewilderment when in early 2006 the archaeological salvage missions working in Dar al-Manasir, in the centre of the projected reservoir area, were expelled by Manasir representatives. With the expulsion of the archaeological teams the Manasir hoped (in vain) to delay the flooding of the reservoir, raise national and international awareness of their plight and evacuate the archaeologists from a potential zone of conflict between the Manasir and the Sudanese authorities, as they did not

⁴⁰ See <http://www.merowedam.gov.sd/en/archaeological.html>.

⁴¹ Already in 1989 the Canadian consultants Monenco Agra had been contracted to carry out a first feasibility study (Monenco Agra 1993; see also Ahmed 2012).

⁴² See also <http://www.merowedam.gov.sd/en/archaeological.html> and numerous reports on the DIU's website.

want to be held responsible for involving foreigners in their struggle (Kleinitz and Näser 2011; Näser and Kleinitz 2012 for detailed accounts). By preventing the continuation of archaeological work in their territory, the Manasir effectively accepted the Western valuation of archaeological heritage – which had been largely irrelevant to them – and transformed it into a means of empowerment by forging it into weapon to use against the developer (Leturcq 2009; Kleinitz and Näser 2011). The archaeologists themselves were not an explicit target: most missions never experienced any hostilities from the Manasir, although some colleagues reported threats and minor attacks against their equipment.

The termination of salvage work by expelling the archaeologists became an established part of Manasir resistance. In the field season 2006/07, not long after the arrival of the first archaeological teams who had been assured by NCAM that the ‘problems’ had been solved, all missions were once again expelled from Dar al-Manasir. Only our own mission, the Humboldt University Nubian Expedition (H.U.N.E.), escaped renewed eviction after negotiations with various Manasir councils and committees, and managed to run a full season of survey and excavation work under admittedly strained conditions (Näser and Kleinitz 2010a, 2012). This second wave of expulsions was connected to the demand that the dispelled missions leave all their finds behind, thus defying the national antiquities laws,⁴³ and that a local museum was to be built in Dar al-Manasir, displaying its history (Hildyard 2008; Leturcq 2009; Kleinitz and Näser 2011; Näser and Kleinitz 2012).⁴⁴ Negotiations between the Manasir and the developer, as well as other government institutions, remained unsuccessful. In winter 2007/08, several missions attempted to return to Dar al-Manasir for a last excavation season before the flooding of the reservoir, but none were successful. The salvage project was eventually aborted in this substantial part of the Fourth Cataract, with large tracts of the region remaining unsurveyed and hundreds of sites unexcavated. When the Merowe Dam reservoir was flooded in 2008, only a few external observers witnessed the disappearance of Dar al-Manasir under the waters of the new lake (Hänsch 2012).

Parts of the archaeological community blamed the short-sightedness of local representatives for the irrevocable loss of (archaeological) heritage at the Fourth Cataract, terming the actions of the Manasir “vandalism of the highest order” (Welsby 2008: 14). Archaeologists felt badly repaid for their commitment, their efforts in terms of raising funding, postponing other projects, enduring physical hardships, offering emotional engagement and injecting money into the local communities (Welsby 2008; for a critique of this position see Kleinitz and Näser 2011; Näser and Kleinitz 2010a, 2012). The developer, who was responsible for the overall shortcomings in the set-up of the Merowe Dam project that triggered local opposition and resistance in the first place, initially escaped the same level of criticism from the archaeological community (but see Näser and Kleinitz 2010a, 2012; Hafsaas-Tsakos 2011; Kleinitz and Näser 2011). Considering MDASP’s partial failure, it seems fair to negate Gisema’s (2006: 130) hope that “the salvage model for the archaeological investigation of the Fourth Cataract region, with its defining methods and objectives, if combined with a well-organized policy and strategy can act as a useful model for salvage operations, that result from dam construction and can find world-wide acceptance.”

⁴³ Ordinance for the Protection of Antiquities 1999 (<http://www.wipo.int/wipolex/en/details.jsp?id=5867> and http://www.wipo.int/tk/en/laws/pdf/sudan_antiquities.pdf, with English translation).

⁴⁴ ‘Sudan’s Merowe requests to stop excavating reservoir area’ (Sudan Tribune, 27/02/2007: <http://www.sudantribune.com/Sudan-s-Merowe-requests-to-stop,20457>).

New dams, new conflicts, old archaeology?

The recent eviction of archaeological salvage teams from the Shereiqa Dam area in the Fifth Cataract region points to repetition of the conflicts that had previously accompanied the Merowe Dam project. The fate of the people of the Fourth Cataract appears to have acted as a warning to other communities that are to be affected by the Sudanese government's new planned dam projects, and the eviction of archaeological salvage teams has been used again as a means of local activism, protest and resistance. The fact that archaeology is becoming such an easy target shows that – while it is believed by the local communities to be of some importance to the developer – it is dispensable to both parties. This should be of great concern to the archaeological community. Yet, as the DIU's implementation procedure for the six new dams on the Middle Nile seems to closely follow the 'successful' top-down approach of the Merowe Dam project, ironically labelled "sustainable" by the developer (Ali et al. 2010; see Kleinitz and Näser 2011), parts of the archaeological community seem to be prepared to repeat the Fourth Cataract salvage model. Judging from a new appeal to the international archaeological community, issued by NCAM on 01/02/2012, the future rescue projects appear to follow the same principles as MDASP, which – despite its various achievements – was marred by its ad-hoc structure, lack of funding, information and infrastructural support, and most importantly, its complete lack of community consultation and participation (see Kleinitz and Näser 2011; Näser and Kleinitz 2012).

When parties interested in joining the new salvage efforts came together alongside external observers at a meeting titled 'The Sudan Dam Appeal' at the British Museum, organised by NCAM and the International Society for Nubian Studies (ISNS) in May 2012, the goal was to organise the 'practicalities' of the new salvage campaigns (Näser and Kleinitz 2012). Colleagues who had previously worked in the affected areas presented overview lectures on the archaeology of these regions and highlighted particularly important sites that needed further investigation. A DIU representative, meanwhile, portrayed this institution as leading the salvage campaigns, but again without acknowledging financial responsibility for the actual work and its publication according to the 'polluter-pays principle'. NCAM representatives confirmed that community involvement and participation were not part of the salvage approach and that the rescue efforts were again to focus on archaeological heritage. Representatives of Nubian communities were present at the meeting and attempted to protest against the dams at Kajbar and Dal that threaten to flood their homeland. They were denied the right to speak. While the organisers of the meeting may have feared an escalation when allowing activists to enter the discussion, it is unfathomable why the developer was given the right to make a political statement at this 'practical' meeting when the affected people were not. The fact that shortly after this meeting archaeological missions were hindered by local communities from a new salvage effort at the Fifth Cataract illustrates very clearly the divisive role that archaeological salvage is playing in contested development projects that lack community involvement and participation. Affected people are increasingly finding a voice, expressing their concerns and developing the means of making themselves heard – be it by expelling archaeological salvage missions. If called upon, as at the London meeting, the archaeological community may in the future want to enter into a dialogue with all stakeholders if it wants to keep its relevance, legitimacy and professional credibility.

While the people of the Fifth Cataract had given little warning that could have prepared the archaeological community for new expulsions,⁴⁵ Nubians have been vocal for years, expressing their

⁴⁵ But see remarks in: 'President Al-Bashir inaugurates pumping station and addresses mass rally at al-Fidda' (posted on DIU website on 23/06/2009: http://www.merowedam.gov.sd/en/admin-en/newspublish/home.viewdetails.php?news_id=150).

opposition to the planned dams at the Third and Dal Cataracts. In petitions, declarations and letters, they have appealed to the developer, companies and governments involved in the planned projects, as well as the archaeological community and the global public.⁴⁶ At the end of the May 2012 meeting at the British Museum the silenced Nubian representatives handed out papers detailing their concerns to those attendees who wanted to acknowledge their existence. While recognising the important role which the archaeological community has played in the past in preserving the heritage in Nubia, one of the statements calls on archaeologists to oppose the future dams as “an outdated form of technology [...] that will eliminate forever the irreplaceable cultural and archaeological heritage of Sudan much of which has not yet even been studied by the archaeologists. None of these dams is actually necessary given the existence of alternative sources for cleaner and ecologically friendly renewable energy production”.⁴⁷ Another statement details the various reasons why Nubians oppose the dams, such as: “The Nubians have been traumatized by the dams that were built on the Nile since 1902 (Aswan dam) and their trauma continued throughout the raising phases of it (1910, 1933) to the construction of the High dam in 1964. All that has brought a great deal of sufferings to the Nubians. They are fully aware that the Government of Sudan will repeat the previous tragedies. A present life example of that scenario is what has happened to the Manaseer people in the aftermath of Merowe Dam.”⁴⁸ Perhaps hoping that the archaeological community has learned from the fate of the Manasir and of the northern Nubians, the activists link their appeal for international support to the cultural survival of their people: “We urge your esteemed gathering to use its best offices to alert the international community to exert all possible pressures on the Government of Sudan to stop building dams in the Nubian lands and put an end to decades of destruction, marginalization, and isolation which has been practiced against the Nubians by the consecutive governments of Sudan.”⁴⁹

The theme of cultural survival also features heavily in an even more strongly worded “letter of protest and resistance” by the Committee of Anti Dal-Kajbar Dams that was addressed to the Chinese government and the company Sinohydro, which built the Merowe Dam and also won the contract for building the Kajbar Dam in late 2010. The authors of this letter do not only point out that the process of implementation in the Kajbar and Dal cases fails to meet the criteria established by the World Commission on Dams,⁵⁰ they also expressly predict misery for the Nubian lands, which they fear will turn into a second Darfur (Fig. 2). This choice of words conjures strong images of violence and ‘genocide’ in one of Sudan’s most devastating internal conflicts, which the authors underline by accusing the developer of the Kajbar and Dal Dams of “demographic engineering” with the aim “to enhance the Arabization of the Nubians by resettling them far from their homeland. The evacuated area will then be populated by Egyptian peasants. We consider this plan as a crime against humanity upon which we call the international community to show its responsibility and commitment to the human rights of the Nubians”.⁵¹ Indeed, these concerns reflect numerous reports of ‘land grabbing’ in Sudan and elsewhere in Africa (Hashim 2010).⁵² Resettlement, which is portrayed in developer-

⁴⁶ See, e.g. <http://nubiaproject.org>; <http://rescuenubia.org>; see also Gamal 1998 for an early warning.

⁴⁷ The 4-page statement titled “Dams in the Nubian Region” was signed by Dr. Geili Farah on behalf of the Supreme Authority for Development of Nubia and Resistance of Dal and Kajbar (SADNRDKD), Antiquities Friends Association (AFA), Nubian Project Organisation, Nubian Association in UK and dated to 15/05/2012.

⁴⁸ 5-page statement titled ‘We oppose building dams on the Nubian land because:’ by Nuraddin Abdulmannan of the US-based ‘Nubia Project’; see <http://nubiaproject.org>.

⁴⁹ From the statement titled “Dams in the Nubian Region”; see note above.

⁵⁰ See World Commission on Dams (2000).

⁵¹ See http://www.sudanforall.org/Anti-Dal-Kajbar-Dams_Executive-Summary.pdf and Hashim (2010) in more detail on the claims of demographic engineering.

⁵² E.g. ‘China refused to fund agricultural project in Sudan for lack of oil collateral: Bashir’ (Sudan Tribune, 10/05/2012: <http://www.sudantribune.com/China-refused-to-fund-agricultural,41864>); Landraub. Kein schöner

controlled media as helping peasant populations leave poverty and achieve higher standards of living, is identified by the Nubians as an attempt at eradicating their cultural identity, thus as “cultural genocide”⁵³. While the developer speaks of the development projects as furthering national unity against outside interventions, representatives of affected communities predict civil war (Hashim 2010).

Salvage archaeology: Conflicting ethics and new approaches

In the case of the Merowe Dam, a British NGO, The Corner House, portrayed the salvage archaeologists as profiteers of the dam and as passive by-standers to human rights violations, accusing them of having ignored the plea for help from the affected communities and having refused to use their influence to improve the dam project (Hildyard 2008; Kleinitz and Näser 2011 for a more detailed discussion). Subsequently, it became a matter of great concern to parts of the professional community that the archaeological missions, by their very presence, may have lent the dam project (with all its shortcomings) credibility, and that archaeologists may have implicitly sanctioned human rights abuses by remaining silent (Näser and Kleinitz 2012; see also Schmidt in press). Looking ahead to the new dam projects on the Middle Nile, where some of the affected people have already declared their opposition and asked the archaeological community for their support, and where the developer has met protests with violence, one may wonder how ethically and socially responsible salvage work can be possible – if the very set-up of the development projects, including the salvage operations, remains unchanged.

Interestingly, in contrast to the Merowe Dam, which affected a relatively remote area without monumental architectural remains, archaeologists have now begun to openly express their concerns about the large-scale destruction of the rich cultural heritage in the Third and Dal Cataract regions with their numerous ancient temples, towns and fortresses. A preliminary report submitted to the DIU in June 2011 outlines the impact of the Dal and Kajbar Dams on historically important and potentially movable monuments in the affected regions (Welsby et al. 2011). The report, which includes a cost estimate for efforts to remove some major monuments, draws devastating conclusions in predicting that the dams will “very seriously impact on the archaeological heritage of a vast swathe of the Nile Valley in northern Sudan. As an isolated phenomenon this would be highly undesirable; in the context of the destruction wrought by the successive dams at Aswan, culminating in the High Dam and the Merowe Dam it assumes much greater significance. [...] As a result of the Aswan Dams such a large proportion of the record has already vanished, to lose more will seriously undermine the study of the history and cultures of the region in perpetuity. [...] The loss of the archaeological heritage is a very serious matter and something that may be deeply regretted by later generations long after the need for hydroelectric power has been superseded by the production of electricity from solar and wind-power technology” (Welsby et al. 2011: 88-89). These sentiments are echoed in letters of concern that were sent to the DIU and other Sudanese government institutions, for example, by the International Society for Nubian Studies as well as eminent researchers on the archaeology of the region (see Kleinitz and Näser 2011).

While these statements primarily warn of the irrevocable destruction of archaeological heritage as a non-renewable resource, other initiatives by archaeologists also highlight the loss of intangible heritage and the injustices of forced resettlement that tens of thousands of affected people are facing. Prominent among these initiatives is the ‘European Committee for Preserving the Middle

Land’ (H. Jahberg, Der Tagesspiegel, 07/05/2012: <http://www.tagesspiegel.de/wirtschaft/landraub-keinschoener-land/6596904.html>).

⁵³ <http://www.rescuenubia.org/>.

Nile', which initiated a 'Petition to Stop the Dams in Sudan' with the aim to "preserve the Middle Nile – its natural and cultural landscape, its people, its heritage" (European Committee for Preserving the Middle Nile 2012; Haaland et al 2012).⁵⁴ A second, American Committee issued 'An Appeal to Stop the Destruction of Nubia' that displays a similar order of values in asking the government of Sudan to "abandon a course of action that will displace many tens of thousands of people, destroy human and wildlife habitat and devastate a significant human heritage".⁵⁵

More and more archaeological institutions and organisations are reminding their members of the political and ethical implications of salvage work in respect to the Sudan dams. After the May 2012 British Museum meeting, The British Institute in Eastern Africa (BIEA) issued a statement saying that it would only support research in the affected areas "if it is satisfied that the construction of these dams adheres to the principles laid down by the World Commission on Dams, including the carrying out of a comprehensive and publicly accessible environmental impact assessment and, in particular, the consent of the local community".⁵⁶ "Reaffirming its commitment to an African archaeology that is both socially engaged and socially responsible" the Society of Africanist Archaeologists (SAfA) issued a similar statement at its meeting in Toronto, Canada, in June 2012.⁵⁷ At the time of going to press, the World Archaeological Congress (WAC) had just passed a resolution expressing its concern over the planned Nile dams, including a statement pointing to the importance of community consultation and participation, which has proven an important element of successful CRM projects in Africa and beyond (e.g. Nicholas and Andrews 1997; Brandt and Hassan [eds.] 2000; King 2003; UNEP 2007; Schmidt in press; see Chirikure and Pwiti 2008 on successes as well as failures). This more inclusive approach sees local communities – in all their internal diversity – as active agents in all endeavours of heritage management instead of confining them to the position of passive recipients of authoritative research. It thus forms a marked contrast to the 'exclusive' and increasingly unsuccessful top-down approach, which has characterised previous salvage projects on the Middle Nile (Kleinitz i.pr.; see also Leturcq 2009).

The case of the Middle Nile dams illustrates that archaeological work cannot take place outside of its contemporary social and political context, and that there is no neutral stance that archaeology can claim (Hildyard 2008; Näser and Kleinitz 2010a, 2012; Hafsaas-Tsakos 2011; Kleinitz and Näser 2011). Equally, archaeologists cannot place themselves above and beyond social conflict in their study regions, as by their very presence they are part of the conflict (compare Perring and van der Linde 2009). Several authors have recently been calling for archaeologists to play a more active role both in protecting cultural heritage in consultation with local communities and in helping those communities in their struggle for physical and cultural survival in the face of forced resettlement (Pyburn 2007; Ronayne 2008; Schmidt in press). Such support could start with helping to avoid development conflicts by promoting the more pervasive application of existing regulations and guidelines that define minimum requirements for development projects, such as the recommendations developed by the World Commission on Dams (World Commission on Dams 2000; Brandt and Hassan [eds.] 2000; UNEP 2007). Initiatives from within the archaeological community, such as the 2007 "Call of Nouakchott for Preventive Archaeology in Africa", should also encourage archaeologists working in development contexts to actively shape these projects (Naffé et al. [eds.] 2008: 201-212; compare

⁵⁴ See also <http://preservethemiddlenile.wordpress.com/the-european-committee-for-preserving-the-middle-nile/>. For the 'Preserve the Middle Nile'-Blog see <http://preservethemiddlenile.wordpress.com/>, for the petition see <http://www.gopetition.com/petitions/stop-the-dams-in-sudan.html>.

⁵⁵ Unpublished letter presented to the American Research center in Egypt by Bruce Williams; See also: <http://preservethemiddlenile.wordpress.com/the-american-committee-for-nubian-heritage/>.

⁵⁶ BIEA News Issue 14, July 2012: <http://biea.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/2012/10/Issue14-July2012.pdf>.

⁵⁷ <http://preservethemiddlenile.wordpress.com/2012/07/23/news-from-society-of-africanist-archaeologists/>.

also Arazi 2009). Recent examples of successful CRM work in large-scale development projects on the African continent are a source of hope (e.g. Arthur et al. 2011; Arthur and Mitchell 2012). Our Sudanese colleagues, however, who have been largely silent on the matter of the Middle Nile dams, may not be able to openly choose their stance or actively promote and embrace such initiatives. Their activities have been subsumed into the powerful development success story of the DIU and other government agencies, which see all opposition to their projects as an attack against the nation and which partially use archaeology as a cover-up for the social, cultural and environmental shortcomings of Sudan's overall development approach.

Archaeology, development, conflict: a summary

Armed conflict, such as in Darfur, has been headlining the news on Sudan for many years, overshadowing other scenes of human tragedy and the loss of cultural heritage. Due to rapid economic development, several such scenes have opened at the Middle Nile where half a dozen dams are being planned and may result in the large-scale destruction of cultural heritage and the forced resettlement of tens of thousands of people. In contested development projects, salvage archaeology may encounter conflict situations that have not so far been analysed in the context of 'archaeology in conflict', which has focussed on war and civil war situations. Still, conflict situations may – as this paper argues – become more and more common in a world where contested development projects are conducted beyond the observation of base requirements in terms of human rights and social sustainability.

Increasingly, local communities are opposing development projects or aspects thereof that compromise their livelihoods and cultural identities. 'Archaeology in conflict' in such cases may mean that archaeology and its practitioners find themselves amidst conflicts between various local and non-local interest groups, making it difficult to reach a basis for professional practice within an 'established' disciplinary frame of reference. In such contested situations the role of archaeological salvage itself may be questioned, especially when it ignores its contemporary context and fails to recognise the ways in which salvage projects contribute to conflicting agendas that create and transform power relations (Perring and van der Linde 2009). Acknowledging this is a fundamental prerequisite for legitimate archaeological practice within and outside of development projects – as the affected people keep reminding us.

Acknowledgements

The point of departure for this paper was a talk given at the 2010 Vienna conference on "Archaeology in Conflict"; an extended summary of this talk has been published in the conference proceedings in *Forum Archaeologiae* 55 / VI (Näser and Kleinitz 2010b). The argument has been expanded on in Kleinitz and Näser 2011, and Näser and Kleinitz 2012. The present contribution includes further aspects of the study, which had been presented at various conferences over the past few years, starting with the 6th World Archaeological Congress (WAC6) in June 2008. Part of the research was undertaken within the study group 'Archaeotopia' of the Berlin Excellence Cluster TOPOI (Research Groups CSG-V and C-3).

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Fig. 1 Election campaign posters using images of the Merowe Dam and industrial schemes. Khartoum, 2010 (Photo: Cornelia Kleinitz).



Fig. 2 Protest graffito "Kajbar Darfor 2 Wellcome Human rights" on a compound wall at the Third Cataract, 2009 (Photo: Cornelia Kleinitz).