

## Introduction



# Should Terms Such as ‘Bronze Age’ and ‘Iron Age’ be Used in the Context of Middle Nile Valley Archaeology?

*Three Perspectives on Terminology and Archaeological, Linguistic and Geographic Categories*

The collective goal of the contributions to *(De)Constructing Nubia* is to provide new perspectives on the social landscape of Nubia during the so-called “Middle Nubian Period” (c. 2500–1500 BCE). One of the topics that repeatedly emerged at the workshop leading up to this publication (de Souza and Schröder 2025;note 2) was the question of whether the terms ‘Bronze Age’ and ‘Iron Age’ could or should be used in the context of Middle Nile Valley archaeology and, for that matter, how we should use basic terms for the archaeological entities and geography of the region like ‘Nubia’, ‘Kush’ or ‘Sudan’. As is often the case with terminology, opinions differed, and throughout the workshop these differences were not resolved. The relative stability of these conflicting positions on the question is a sign of a larger unresolved issue. Discussing terminology always brings out a range of firmly held opinions, not least since terminology and its associated categories and concepts are the basis for, and framework of, our scholarly undertaking of communicating research. These debates therefore have a very real impact on what we do.

It was in recognition of this that the idea emerged (first suggested by Claudia Näser to Friederike Jesse and Julien Cooper) to make differences in our respective standpoints productive and turn them into a conversation piece for this publication. We agreed to write three independent papers that would spell out our individual perceptions and approaches, and which could, in the optimum case, serve as a basis for wider discourse on this matter in the future. In the spirit of the workshop, which aimed to critically review ‘existing

frameworks for the ancient Nubian historical narrative' and 'search for ways of reconfiguring out-dated culture-historical frameworks to better reflect the diverse evidence from the historical and archaeological records', we hope that readers will find this approach helpful and beneficial. We thank Aaron de Souza for encouraging this experiment and for including it in this publication.

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