

Egypt's Heartland – Regional Perspectives on Hierakonpolis, Elkab and Edfu

Special Evening lecture

Thursday, July 18, 2019.

6:30-7:30PM

Randolph Sculpture Gallery, Ashmolean Museum

Dr Nadine Moeller

New insights into relations between center and periphery:

The evolution of the administrative quarter at Edfu from the Old Kingdom to the Second Intermediate Period



The recent fieldwork by the Oriental Institute, University of Chicago, team at Tell Edfu has focused on the excavation of two administrative town quarters located on the eastern side of the tell. In an area close to the later Ptolemaic temple several structures of monumental size dating to the reign of Djedkare-Isesi (Dynasty 5) have been found, which are linked to an increased interest by the central government in establishing an important base at

Edfu for expeditions departing into the Eastern Desert. A significant number of clay sealings mentioning the title of 'overseer of prospectors (*sementiu*)' in addition to evidence for copper smelting activities and copper ore attest to this activity of acquiring important raw materials from the Eastern Desert. This part of the town is an ex-nihilo foundation directly built onto the natural bedrock and probably constitutes an enlargement of a much smaller settlement at Edfu during the earlier Old Kingdom. Over time, the administrative center at Edfu saw a significant evolution until the Middle Kingdom for which a large administrative building complex has been excavated further south that had probably functioned as the residence of the local governor. Numerous clay sealings and other finds attest to the administrative activities carried out in this building. By the early Second Intermediate Period this building complex was gradually abandoned but in its last phases of occupation a shipment of goods had arrived from north naming the Hyksos ruler Khayan, which is attested by more than 40 clay sealings. After the abandonment of the governor's residence, a large silo-court was constructed during the 17th Dynasty in this area. These silos once held the grain reserve of the town and can be considered the last phase of official institutions occupying this part of the ancient city, which was completely abandoned some time during the first half of the 18th Dynasty. Both the Old Kingdom and Middle Kingdom remains provide much new evidence for the interaction between a provincial capital in the south and the capitals in Memphis and Thebes, respectively.