

Nubian Materials in the Collection of Tokai University, Japan

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Introduction

In 2010, Tokai University received approximately 6,000 Egyptian and Middle Eastern artefacts collected by a Japanese archaeologist, Hachishi Suzuki (1926-2010). These artefacts, which are known today as the Ancient Egyptian and Near Eastern Collection at Tokai University (AENET) (see also Jasnow *et al.* 2016), proved to include a significant number of archaeological materials from Nubia, noted while the first author was visiting the University's Research Institute of Civilization (Bunmei kenkyū jo) in last January.¹ This paper aims to briefly present this small collection with a focus on Suzuki's field surveys.

Before entering into the details, we shall introduce Suzuki's career. He studied archaeology at the University of Tokyo. After completion of his graduate studies at the same university, he received a scholarship from the Egyptian government in 1958 and studied at Cairo University until 1960. He was then appointed as an assistant of the Japanese embassy in the United Arab Republic at the start of the UNESCO Nubian Salvage Campaign. On his return to Japan in 1968, after ten years of research in Egypt, he became a part-time lecturer at the University of Tokyo before being appointed Associate Professor in 1971, and in 1974, full Professor at Tokai University. He greatly contributed to the development of Egyptology in Japan until and after his retirement in 1997.

The Nubian Collection at Tokai University

The Nubian Salvage Campaign was an international cooperation effort officially launched on 8 March 1960 by the Director General of UNESCO, Vittorino Veronese, to save monuments of Nubia that were in danger of being submerged on completion of the Aswan High Dam. It would be the world's largest dam, standing 111m tall and 3.8km wide, about 17 times the size of the Great Pyramid of Giza. While its completion was expected to dramatically increase Egypt's irrigated farmland and electric power generation, it would also block the Nile river and cause a rise in water levels of about 61m in the form of an artificial lake that would extend over a length of 300km in Egypt and 180km in Sudan. UNESCO therefore launched an international appeal to archaeologists all over the world to avoid an unprecedented tragedy (Hassan 2007).

In Japan, the background leading to the appeal dates to January 1960 when Setsuzō Sawada, a diplomat, who was head of the Japanese delegation at the Regional Conference

of National Commissions for UNESCO in Manila, was asked by Veronese to arrange a meeting with Prince Mikasa Takahito (Sawada 1961). Sawada's agreement to this request led to Veronese visiting Japan, imbuing participation in the campaign with a sense of significance. Japan took its first step in entering the partnership when the Prince accepted an appointment to the Honorary Committee of Patrons on 9 February 1960. It was against this backdrop that Suzuki, a graduate student of Cairo University at the time, was appointed to conduct two field surveys in Nubia to formulate concrete policies for cooperation (Suzuki 1970a). Subsequently, from 23 May to 1 June 1960, he attended a meeting of international experts on safeguarding the monuments of Sudanese Nubia, before finally leaving for Nubia three months later.

The first survey was conducted from 21st September to 19th October 1960, with the aim of understanding the circumstances of each country's participation in the campaign and the state of their support systems. During this period, Suzuki visited various places from Aswan to Semna,² created detailed observation records and, most remarkably, participated in another meeting of international experts held in Khartoum and in Wadi Halfa (Suzuki 1970a, 133).³ This was the first time that Japanese archaeologists had participated in work in Sudan. The second survey was conducted during a period of about three weeks from the end of January to mid-February 1961, inspecting a section that had not been completed the previous year.

The Nubian Collection assembled during these surveys includes material from Ikhmindi (Plate 1). No accurate information is available regarding the context of their discovery but, based on an excavation report of the site



Plate 1. *Sherds collected at Ikhmindi, SK57(17) 1-13.*

² According to his accounts (Suzuki 1970a), Suzuki visited the following main sites during the surveys: Aswan, Philae, Kertassi, Tafa, Kalabsha, Beit el-Wali, Dendur, Sabagura, Gerf Hussein, Koshtamna, Dakka, Kuban, Maharraka, Ikhmindi, Wadi es-Sebua, Amada, Tomas, Karanog, Ellesiya, Aniba, Qasr Ibrim, Toshka, Armina, Abu Simbel, Faras, Serra, Aksha, Debeira, Buhen, and Semna.

³ <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000155953> (accessed on 15 April 2019).

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Plate 2. Sherds and lithics collected at Amada, SK57(14) 1-2, 4, 17, 19, 20, 24.

(Stenico 1960), it is perhaps not entirely unreasonable to date these materials from the 6th century AD onwards. Other materials of particular interest are stone arrowheads and Acheulean stone tools recovered from the surface at the sites of Amada and Khor Abu Anga (Plates 2 and 3), the latter being located in a place far from the area covered by the Nubian Salvage Campaign. It is unclear how Suzuki would have reached there but, given the timing of the visit, January-February 1968, this may have served as a tour of the area excavated by the University of Colorado a few years previously (Carlson 2015; see also Arkell 1949). It should be added that, although in many cases undatable, the collection includes fragments of various objects obtained at Abu Simbel, Ashkeit, Kuban, Qasr Ibrim (Plate 4), Sabagura, Wadi es-Sebua and, most remarkably, a rim fragment of probable Meroitic pottery of unknown provenance (Plate 5, upper left).⁴ If correct, this is important because it would represent



Plate 4. Objects collected at Qasr Ibrim, SK57(8) 1-4.

the second known item of Meroitic pottery in Japan after the collection at Kyoto University, where, along with a number of broken sherds, one complete bowl excavated at Meroe was donated by John Garstang in 1916 (Nakano 2016, 116). While it would be quite difficult to situate the Japanese collection within a much broader historical picture – Suzuki left no detailed archaeological record of his works in Nubia – it nevertheless remains valuable as a medium for retracing the footsteps of a pioneer of Nubian studies in Japan.

Conclusion

Returning to Suzuki's activities, he ultimately recommended an archaeological expedition be sent to a Christian site in Sudan (Suzuki 1970a, 171) and, despite its refusal by the Japanese government, continued to be closely involved in the Nubian Salvage Campaign (Pan 2000). In fact, during his trips back to Japan, Suzuki put considerable effort into



Plate 3. Acheulean stone tools collected at Khor Abu Anga, SK109 1-3, 5-7, 9-10.

⁴ It may perhaps be suggested that this fragment was acquired on Suzuki's visit to Meroe in 1968 (Suzuki 1970b, 307).

raising awareness of the critical situation in Nubia by presenting numerous lectures and publishing popular articles. His hard work culminated in the '5000 Years of Egyptian Art' exhibition (Ejjipto bijutsu gosennen-ten) in 1963. This exhibition, for which he also served as an executive committee member, was intended to contribute to the relocation costs of the Abu Simbel temples; the total earnings of around 292,000 US dollars were donated to the international Trust Fund of the Campaign. In addition, during the 'Tutankhamun' exhibition held two years later in Japan, Suzuki worked tirelessly from Cairo as part of its management team. With the 830,000 US dollars raised from that exhibition, combined with that from the '5000 Years of Egyptian Art' exhibition, a total of 1,120,000 US dollars in private donations was sent to the Trust Fund. This was the second largest total contribution after the United States and, at the time, the world's largest private contribution.

Although not all of the aforementioned achievements are Suzuki's alone, it is only right that we highlight his laborious work behind the scenes.

We hope that the small collection presented here provides another step towards a re-evaluation of the achievements of the Nubian Salvage Campaign.

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Plate 5. Objects of unknown provenance (a fragment of Meroitic pottery, upper left).