

# List of Sessions at the ICNS 2026



This document provides a comprehensive overview of all the sessions that have been proposed and accepted for the ICNS 2026 conference in Munich.

For individual oral paper submissions, please indicate the number of the session you wish to apply to, as well as the title of the session (e.g., Session no. 1, General Session). Thank you.

Unless otherwise stated, all sessions follow the 20min-per-paper schedule.

While you may wish to contact the session organisers prior to submitting your abstract, this is not mandatory. For details about the individual submission please see the Call of Papers.

Please note that some sessions are closed (see the list below, sessions 31-33). Participation as a speaker in these sessions is only possible for invited individuals.

## General Sessions at the ICNS 2026

### 1. General Session

Coordinated by ICNS 2026<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> ICNS Munich 2026 Organising Committee

This session will host papers on a range of topics related to archaeological, historical, philological and interdisciplinary studies of Sudan and Nubia.

### 2. Recent Fieldwork: Preliminary Reports

Organised by Christian Perzlmeier<sup>1,2</sup>, Karla Kroeper<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> SMAEK Munich

<sup>2</sup> ICNS Munich 2026 Organising Committee

This session will host papers on new fieldwork activities/projects and recent discoveries. Preliminary reports can include projects that are just beginning or planned for the future.

### 3. History of Nubia and Sudan

Organised by Christian Perzlmeier<sup>1,3</sup>, Chloë Ward<sup>2,3</sup>, Julia Budka<sup>2,3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> SMAEK Munich

<sup>2</sup> LMU Munich

<sup>3</sup> ICNS Munich 2026 Organising Committee

This session welcomes any papers which consider the history of Sudan and Nubia up to the present day. We are particularly interested in contributions which utilise historical methods and contextualise Nubia and Sudan within broader socio-political and historical contexts, including international relations, be they in the distant past, more recent, or in the *longue durée*. Papers which discuss specific historical events, periods, or political movements (e.g. the Mahdist state; the Darfur Peace movement; the October Revolution; etc.) and the events leading up to and including the current war in Sudan are also welcome.

#### **4. Text and Languages in Nubia and Sudan**

Coordinated by ICNS 2026<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> ICNS Munich 2026 Organising Committee

Nubia and Sudan are well-known for their vast array of languages, many of which come from distinct language families. For this session, we invite contributions on all topics related to language and specific texts. These may include hieroglyphic, Meroitic, Old Nubian, Greek, Coptic, or Arabic texts and sources. Contributions on modern Nubian languages are also welcome.

#### **5. Museums & Collections**

Organised by Christian Perzlmeier<sup>1,2</sup>, Chloë Ward<sup>2,3</sup>, Karla Kroeper<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> SMAEK Munich

<sup>2</sup> ICNS Munich 2026 Organising Committee

<sup>3</sup> LMU Munich

The main aim of this session is to discuss any current work using museums or their collections linked to Nubia and/or Sudan. All papers relevant to museums, including on permanent and temporary exhibitions, as well as any recent and ongoing research using museum objects and collections are invited. Contributions may also consider community engagement linked to museums or their objects, museum archaeology, interdisciplinary research in museums, and the potential role of museums in post-war reconstruction efforts. Given the recent looting of museums in Sudan, in particular the Sudan National Museum in Khartoum, we also welcome papers focusing on the ongoing impact of the war on museums and collections and efforts in managing the consequences, as well as the potential support that the international community could provide our Sudanese colleagues.

#### **6. Archives and the History of Archaeology in Nubia and Sudan**

Organised by Chloë Ward<sup>1,2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> LMU Munich

<sup>2</sup> ICNS Munich 2026 Organising Committee

Archives and the history of archaeology are increasingly emphasised in archaeological research, particularly in terms of post-colonial critiques and better integration of alternative, often

marginalised, perspectives and peoples. While the broad potential of such research is understood, archival and historical research methods often remain sidelined in theoretical and methodological outputs and archaeological knowledge production. Archival and historical research are frequently reduced to side projects, individual biographies/site histories, or ‘back-up’ plans when fieldwork is impossible, rather than meaningfully integrated and problematised within archaeological research design.

The main aim of this session is to discuss current research concerning the use of archives and the history of archaeology in Nubia and Sudan. We invite papers that address either archives (including legacy data) or the history of archaeology in the region but particularly encourage discussion of broader methodological and theoretical contributions, as well as those that emphasise interdisciplinarity. Given the ongoing war, many archaeologists working in Sudan have turned to revisiting existing data in their research, and we would also welcome papers that engage with the potential challenges, limitations and ethical dimensions of such work under the circumstances.

## **7. Community Archaeology in Nubia and Sudan**

Coordinated by ICNS 2026<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> ICNS Munich 2026 Organising Committee

This session brings together papers on community archaeology projects, engagement, and outreach. We welcome contributions on all aspects, including those relating to:

- community archaeology during times of conflict;
- communication with local communities;
- community engagement programmes;
- public outreach;
- decolonisation of archaeological practice;
- community engagement in post-War Sudan.

## **8. Religion & Beliefs**

Coordinated by ICNS 2026<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> ICNS Munich 2026 Organising Committee

The religious landscape of ancient Sudan is characterised by various transitions, from indigenous polytheism in the early Kushite period to Christianity in the Medieval period and subsequent Islamisation. Contributions dealing with various aspects of religion and beliefs in Nubia are welcome, including those based on material evidence of religious practices or iconographic and textual sources. Papers focusing on indigenous practices, as reflected, for example, in the elaborate burials of the Classic Kerma period or the royal burials of Ballana-Qustul, are particularly welcome as are those which consider non-elite manifestations of religion and beliefs. The session may also include contributions on religion and beliefs in more recent times.

## **9. Bioarchaeological Perspectives & Recent Research**

Organised by Hassan Aglan<sup>1,2</sup>, Panos Kratimenos<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> LMU Munich

<sup>2</sup> ICNS Munich 2026 Organising Committee

Mortuary studies are among the most established techniques in the archaeology of Sudan and Nubia. Historically, the grave, architecture and its material cultural contents have proven the focus of research; however, recent decades have seen considerably more attention to the individuals laid to rest in mortuary contexts. Integration of osteological and archaeological data has led to further advances, enabling higher resolution understandings of past lifeways, health, perspectives on death and the afterlife, and social practices on both the individual and group scale. Moreover, considerable advances have been made in reflections on the ethics of research focused on the physical remains of human beings, to the great benefit of the field. This session invites contributions from researchers across the temporal and methodological breadth of bioarchaeological research in Sudan and Nubia to present their recent findings, as well as considerations of ethical best practice. We particularly welcome synthetic discussion of broad patterns of continuity and change over time, as discerned through bioarchaeological research, that highlight the lived experience, diverse traditions and human (particularly non-elite) agency which contribute to the emergence of the perspective of Multiple Nubias which forms the theme of this conference.

## **10. Anthropological Perspectives on Sudan**

Coordinated by ICNS 2026<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> ICNS Munich 2026 Organising Committee

This session aims to collect papers on anthropological perspectives on Sudan, highlighting its cultural complexity shaped by diverse ethnic groups and historical dynamics ranging from ancient kingdoms to modern conflicts. While early ethnographic work, such as E. E. Evans-Pritchard's pioneering study of the Nuer, centred on segmentary societies and pastoralism in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, subsequent scholarship has broadened its scope to encompass contemporary issues. These include ethnicity as a political construct, the impact of conflict on livelihoods and gender, the intricate legal landscape, and the lasting influence of foreign intervention and state-building on Sudanese identity.

We welcome contributions from all perspectives, especially papers on diversity, identity, urbanisation, forced migration, minority groups, diaspora communities, and socio-environmental transformations (e.g. those caused by large infrastructural developments such as dams) in Sudan.

## **11. Perspectives on Nubian Art**

Organised by Julia Budka<sup>1,2</sup>, Patrizia Heindl<sup>1,2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> LMU Munich

<sup>2</sup> ICNS Munich 2026 Organising Committee

This session explores the multifaceted expressions of art in Nubia across a wide temporal and cultural spectrum, extending from prehistoric traditions through to the Kerma culture, Napatan and Meroitic periods, and into the post-Meroitic and Medieval phases. Session contributions can address all forms of visual expression, from rock art and ceramic decorations to statues, paintings and reliefs.

By approaching Nubian artistic production not as an isolated phenomenon but as part of a dynamic network of cultural interactions in a very broad temporal framework, the papers gathered here seek to reassess Nubia's role as both recipient and innovator within the broader Nile Valley and beyond. Particular attention is given to the negotiation of identity through visual forms, the interplay of local traditions with Egyptian and Mediterranean influences, and the methodological challenges inherent in interpreting fragmentary evidence. The main aim of this session is to refine our understanding of how art functioned as a medium of communication, power and memory in Nubian societies, as such we particularly welcome submissions which integrate multiple perspectives and disciplinary approaches (e.g. archaeology, art history, anthropology). In doing so, the session emphasises Nubia's role in shaping the artistic and ideological landscapes of north-eastern Africa.

## **12. Remote Sensing: The State-of-the-Art**

Organised by Panos Kratimenos<sup>1</sup>, Hassan Aglan<sup>1,2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> LMU Munich

<sup>2</sup> ICNS Munich 2026 Organising Committee

Rapid advances in the availability of satellite imagery, affordability of equipment – particularly unmanned aerial vehicles (drones) – and understandings of methods and techniques have led to a profusion of remote sensing data in recent years. This progress has been compounded by necessity, with first the COVID-19 pandemic and then the brutal conflict across Sudan leading many researchers to pivot towards remote sensing techniques to supplement or replace fieldwork components of projects. The data derived from such methods has been put to a variety of uses, including, but not limited to, high-resolution recording of archaeological interventions, landscape approaches to past settlement patterns, reconstruction of palaeoenvironments, and assessing damage and destruction to cultural heritage. This session invites contributions from researchers who have experience of remote sensing techniques to share their methodological innovations and novel findings. Theoretical interventions considering the potentials, limitations, and other relevant considerations of remote sensing methods, as well as reflections on the long-term sustainable integration of remote sensing techniques into research design and avenues for collaborative approaches, are also highly encouraged.

## Thematic Sessions at the ICNS 2026

### 13. Cultural Heritage Protection in Conflict Situations: The Case of Sudan

Organised by Gilda Ferrandino<sup>1</sup>, Elena D'Itria<sup>1</sup>, Intisar Elzein Soghayroun<sup>2</sup>, Shadia Abdrabo<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> University of Naples - L'Orientale

<sup>2</sup> University of Khartoum

<sup>3</sup> Sudan National Museum/NCAM

This session addresses the urgent challenge of cultural heritage protection in conflict situations, focusing on Sudan's ongoing crisis. The session brings together researchers specialising in digital methodologies to explore innovative approaches for monitoring archaeological heritage in conflict zones. We welcome contributions on conflict-resistant digital inventories, remote sensing techniques, 3D documentation through photogrammetry and laser scanning, and citizen science initiatives for community-based monitoring. The overall aim of the session is to showcase practical, transferable methodologies for rapid deployment in conflict zones and which foster dialogue between researchers, institutions, and communities to create replicable frameworks for emergency heritage protection.

### 14. Multi-Stakeholder Comprehensive Safeguarding of Cultural Heritage during Times of Conflict and Climate Change

Organised by Naoyo Sekihiro<sup>1</sup>, Intisar Elzein Soghayroun<sup>2</sup>, Isabella Welsby Sjöström<sup>3</sup>, Nobuhiro Shimizu<sup>4</sup>, Tomo Ishimura<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Kyoto City Archaeological Research Institute

<sup>2</sup> University of Khartoum

<sup>3</sup> Independent researcher

<sup>4</sup> Hokkai Gakuen University

<sup>5</sup> Tokyo National Research Institute for Cultural Properties

The military conflict in Sudan that began in April 2023 has presented unprecedented challenges not only to Sudanese experts, but also to foreign experts engaged in Sudanese studies. Most had no experience of the protection of cultural heritage in conflict situations. Where and to whom should the requests for assistance be communicated, and what should be done to prepare for the official requests? What kind of assistance could be provided from outside Sudan? Answering these questions was the priority for many concerned.

As the inhabitants and primary safeguarders of cultural heritage sites, local communities have been those most directly confronted with the impact of the conflict on Sudanese heritage, exacerbated by the ongoing and relentless effects of climate change. Local stakeholders prioritise securing their own lives or restoring essential services because of the conflict, which prevents heritage professionals from accessing sites for preservation and conservation. Diplomats, as those who must officially request international assistance, were faced with the challenge of identifying the kind of support they should be requesting from cultural heritage experts and those who could help.

In this session, we will review and reassess the roles of multiple stakeholders – including cultural heritage specialists and local and international diplomats – in safeguarding tangible and intangible heritage in Sudan during the military conflict. The main aim is to explore multilateral cooperation and interdisciplinary collaboration in cultural heritage protection under conflict conditions.

## **15. Heritage Under Siege: War, Looting, and the Fate of Vulnerable Communities**

Organised by Uroš Matić<sup>1</sup>, Mohamed Bashir<sup>2, 3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> University of Graz

<sup>2</sup> University of Khartoum

<sup>3</sup> University of Münster

Ongoing conflicts around the world pose serious threats to local communities and their cultural heritage. This session brings together Sudanese and international scholars and heritage professionals to share their experiences in protecting cultural heritage and supporting affected communities during the war in Sudan. Centring the voices of those directly impacted, the discussion will address both the destruction and looting of cultural heritage and the broader theft of resources and vandalism of infrastructure, exploring how these interconnected processes affect local populations—the very people archaeologists regularly engage with and ultimately return to.

We particularly invite short, focussed contributions (maximum 10 minutes) that:

- 1) Report first-hand experiences from conflict areas, especially Sudan.
- 2) Reflect on the ethical responsibility of archaeologists and heritage professionals in times of crisis.
- 3) Discuss strategies to protect cultural heritage and support local communities under threat.
- 4) Examine the links between looting, resource theft and general patterns of exploitation.
- 5) Offer best practices and lessons learnt that can serve as a basis for future crises.

The session will focus on discussion and exchange to create space for dialogue, mutual learning and the development of common approaches to protecting cultural heritage in the context of violence and instability.

## **16. Sudan: Post-War Strategies for Cultural Heritage Preservation & Archaeology**

Organised by Mohamed Satti<sup>1</sup>, ICNS 2026<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Independent researcher

<sup>2</sup> ICNS Munich 2026 Organising Committee

Sudan's cultural heritage and archaeological sites are facing unprecedented threats due to the ongoing armed conflict, resulting in direct destruction, community displacement, and a halt in research and conservation activities. A particularly alarming issue is the looting and illicit trafficking of artefacts, which calls for focused discussions on protective measures and international mechanisms for restitution.

This session invites contributions addressing current and proposed strategies for heritage protection under crisis, including community-based initiatives, technological approaches, and global cooperation. It also aims to highlight fieldwork experiences, challenges faced by professionals, and practical post-war frameworks such as documentation renewal, collection care, local education, and legal tools for recovering stolen heritage.

## **17. Adaptability and Sustainability: Climate Change from the Past to Present in Nubia and the Middle Nile Valley**

Organised by Tomomi Fushiya<sup>1</sup>, Matthew Dalton<sup>2</sup>, Philippa Ryan<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> University of Warsaw

<sup>2</sup> The University of Western Australia

<sup>3</sup> Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew

Environmental changes have long shaped ecosystems, food production, water and soil management, economies, and cultures in Nubia. Across millennia, complex and dynamic phases of regional climatic amelioration and deterioration have transformed the landscapes and natural resources available to the people of Nubia, providing opportunities and at times limitations to human occupation. Further afield, the climatic conditions of central and eastern Africa directly affect the flow of the Nile, the lifeblood of much of Nubia and a key contributor to agricultural and pastoral productivity.

Communities along the Nile Valley have developed technologies to adapt to environmental changes and natural disasters. Yet, contemporary, anthropogenic climate change is occurring at an unparalleled rate, placing great pressure on social, cultural and economic systems. Tangible and intangible heritage in Nubia is under growing threat. In particular, recent increases in rainfall and flooding have posed serious challenges to the protection of archaeological sites, historic buildings, heritage landscapes and traditional agricultural knowledge systems. The ongoing conflict in Sudan adds further barriers to safeguarding this invaluable heritage.

We invite papers addressing climate change in Nubia across a broad temporal and disciplinary spectrum – from novel evidence for ancient climatic conditions and associated human-environment interactions, socioeconomic adaptations and resilience, to innovative methodological approaches and conservation practices. Of special interest are papers that highlight traditional knowledge and patterns of long-term resilience and sustainability nurtured in Nubia.

## **18. Old Finds, New Frameworks: Recent Research into Prehistory of North-East Africa**

Organised by Lenka Varadzinová<sup>1</sup>, Ladislav Varadzin<sup>2</sup>, Alice Leplongeon<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Charles University Prague

<sup>2</sup> Czech Academy of Sciences

<sup>3</sup> CNRS, UMR 7194 Histoire naturelle des Humanités Préhistoriques, CNRS-MNHN-UPVD, Laboratoire de Préhistoire – UPVD, Antenne Tautavel

COVID-19 and the war in Sudan have prompted a number of research teams to rethink their strategies for prehistoric research in the region. Our primary focus has had to shift to data and finds collected during past field seasons or to legacy data and findings of our predecessors. Overall, this has expanded the methodological or geographical scope of research projects, led to greater analytical depth and integration of multiple analytical approaches, improved chronometric hygiene, and encouraged deeper or broader comparisons with other areas of prehistoric developments across Africa and the Mediterranean. The latter perspective has been quite challenging because, except for the pioneering work of the Combined Prehistoric Expedition and other international expeditions in southern Egypt and northern Sudan during the Nubian Campaign, prehistoric research in Egypt and Sudan has long used different terminology and approaches with few studies attempting to bridge the existing gap so far. This session invites all researchers working on the prehistory of north-east Africa to present the

approaches they have employed to cope with both recent and long-standing challenges of prehistoric research in the region and to discuss their results and the future prospects of our field.

## **19. From Settlement Archaeology to Studying Urbanism in Nubia**

Organised by Geoff Emberling<sup>1</sup>, Artur Obłuski<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> University of Michigan

<sup>2</sup> University of Warsaw

Archaeology in Nubia has been built on regional archaeological survey since the time of Reisner (from 1907) and since Charles Bonnet's excavations at Kerma (from 1974) has grown gradually to encompass excavation of settlements. Yet with few exceptions, Nubian archaeology has not engaged with broader archaeological arguments about cities – about their economic relationships with their hinterlands and with nomadic groups or about how they contribute to sustaining (and resisting) centralised political authority. This session aims to gather studies that examine the economic, political, and social role of cities through the Nubian past.

## **20. Sensory worlds of Nubia: Advances in Research on Multisensory Experience in Ancient Sudan and Egypt**

Organised by Cornelia Kleinitz<sup>1</sup>, Ilona Regulski<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin

<sup>2</sup> ÄMP Berlin

Over the past two decades or so multisensory approaches have increasingly been applied to the study of Sudan and Egypt's pasts. By including senses besides and apart from vision – hearing, touch, smell, and taste – in discussions of archaeological objects, sites and landscapes, these approaches added valuable insights into past human experience in Nubia and beyond.

Themes concerned aesthetics; concepts of space and experience of sensory phenomena as reflected in architecture; soundscapes and other sensescape; sensory qualities of specific substances, materials and practices; the seasonality of sensory experience; among others. More recently, museum professionals have taken note of the multisensory nature of human experience and incorporated respective themes and approaches in museum displays and exhibitions.

To reflect the potential of investigations into the sensory worlds of ancient Nubia and beyond, and their increasing inclusion in communicating archaeology in museums and exhibitions, this session invites archaeologists, heritage practitioners and museum professionals to address topics concerning multisensory approaches in (but not confined to):

- Documentation of archaeological finds/objects, features, architecture and landscapes
- Interpretation of archaeological finds and features, architectural contexts and landscapes
- Public presentation of archaeological sites
- Museum displays and story telling
- Conservation/restoration of archaeological objects and structures
- Documentation of local knowledge

Discussions of applied methodologies, theoretical frameworks, as well as practical examples and experiences are much welcomed. Themes can include, for example, discussions of visual,

aural, haptic, olfactory and/or gustatory aspects – or combinations thereof – of ancient foodways; offering practices; construction, organisation and use of architectural spaces; landscapes; aesthetic concepts and preferences regarding bodies, materials and objects; crafts, etc.

## **21. Past Plants of the Nile Valley: Archaeobotanical Perspectives on Nubian Cultures, Economies and Landscapes**

Organised by Hamad Hamdeen<sup>1, 2</sup>, Dorian Fuller<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> University of Al-Neelain

<sup>2</sup> Czech Academy of Sciences

<sup>3</sup> University College London

Archaeobotany is a critical discipline for investigating the long-term relationship between human populations and their environments in Nubia, a region where the Nile River and its tributaries have profoundly shaped cultures, economies, and ecologies over millennia. This session examines methodological frameworks and contemporary research directions in Sudanese archaeobotany, contextualising the field within broader discussions in African and Nile Valley archaeology. The session will focus on methodological advancements, including macrobotanical analysis, pollen, phytolith and starch grain studies, palynology, ethnobotany, insect pest analysis related to plants, mudbrick analysis, and other approaches and techniques. Leveraging this methodological foundation, contributors will present novel data from projects encompassing various chronological periods, ranging from prehistoric hunter-gatherer societies and the emergence of agriculture and pastoralism to Pharaonic, Kerma, Napatan and Meroitic kingdoms, and Medieval and Islamic period settlements. Topics will include: the adaptation of domesticated crops and wild plants; long-distance exchange networks; the resilience of agricultural practices in the face of changing climatic conditions; and, the complex interrelationship between subsistence strategies, economy and cultural identity.

Through methodological evaluation, case studies, and comparative analyses, this session aims to solidify archaeobotanical research as a fundamental element of Nubian and Sudanese archaeology, while also highlighting potential pathways for future interdisciplinary collaborations.

## **22. Archaeometallurgy: A Multidisciplinary Approach and *chaînes opératoires***

Organised by Georges Verly<sup>1, 2, 3</sup>, Frederik W. Rademakers<sup>4</sup>, Johannes Auenmüller<sup>5</sup>, Martin Odler<sup>6</sup>, Jiří Kmošek<sup>7</sup>

<sup>1</sup> University of Geneva

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<sup>3</sup> KU Leuven

<sup>4</sup> British Museum

<sup>5</sup> Museo Egizio Torino

<sup>6</sup> Newcastle University

<sup>7</sup> Academy of Fine Arts Vienna

This session seeks to bring together recent research on metallurgical technologies, with a particular focus on the four main phases of production: extraction, smelting, melting, and finishing. Emphasis is placed on technical know-how and *chaînes opératoires*, grounded in archaeological evidence. Special attention will be given to the quality of the materials used, in

order to understand the technical choices made in light of the intended functions (teleologies) of the used tools and artefacts.

We welcome contributions that adopt a multidisciplinary methodology, integrating archaeology, scientific analysis, and experimental archaeology – viewed here as a rigorous tool for testing and refuting hypotheses.

The session will highlight detailed analyses of *chaînes opératoires*, from the procurement of raw materials to the production, use, and potential recycling of artefacts. Papers may explore technical practices, as well as the circulation of materials and knowledge. The objective is to reconstruct, as precisely as possible, the organisation of workshops, including their spatial structures, operational gestures, artefacts, and residues, in order to better understand the technological strategies employed by ancient craftspeople.

Research from all historical contexts within Nubia is welcome, provided it engages with issues of technical processes, spatial organisation, and the recontextualisation of techniques within the broader socio-economic dynamics of metallurgical production.

### **23. Reimagining Photographic Archives of Nubia**

Organised by Neal Spencer<sup>1</sup>, Shadia Abdrabo<sup>2</sup>, Tobias Moreike<sup>3</sup>, Elisabeth Sawerthal<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Fitzwilliam Museum, University of Cambridge

<sup>2</sup> Sudan National Museum/NCAM

<sup>3</sup> Weltmuseum Vienna

<sup>4</sup> British Museum

The photographic representation of Nubia in (largely European and North American) archives seems dominated by images of monuments, sites, archaeological features and landscapes lost as a result of dam and other development projects. The products of travellers, archaeologists and other researchers in both the analogue and digital age, whether initially conceived as archival or not, this material has largely been seen as a record of an unpeopled space. There remains little critical analyses of the motivations or agency of institutions, individuals nor indeed the full range of photographic subjects. Living Nubians are rarely in the frame except as anonymous representatives of local labour of village life, and almost universally excised from discussions of those behind the lens.

How can these institutional archives be read against the grain to re-centre Nubian experience and agency? Who were the Nubian photographers, or those crucial to enabling photography, and can their biographies be reinstated? What might an archive that looks beyond institutional collections, and their epistemological encodings, comprise? Can a more progressive photographic archive of multiple Nubias be fashioned, and what would it enable?

Following presentations, the session will culminate in a round-table discussion.

### **24. GIS, WebGIS and EOS for Heritage Monitoring in Sudan: The IMAHP Project in Focus**

Organised by NCAM and SFDAS

Main organiser for contact: SFDAS ([khartoum.sfdas@gmail.com](mailto:khartoum.sfdas@gmail.com))

This session introduces the IMAHP (Innovative Monitoring Approach for Heritage Protection in Sudan) project, which aims to develop an open, collaborative, secure, and sustainable

infrastructure for managing archaeological data. The project, led by the SFDAS (*Section Française de la Direction des Antiquités du Soudan*) and NCAM (National Corporation for Antiquities in Sudan), was launched in the context of heritage preservation since the beginning of the armed conflict in Sudan. It is structured around three interconnected components. First, it emphasises the clear, relevant, and user-friendly integration of historical and recent field archives into an open-source GIS environment. Second, IMAHP uses Earth Observation Systems (EOS) to support archaeological site monitoring, environmental analysis, and detection of looting practices. Third, the project is developing a WebGIS combining GIS-based research and results from advanced spatial analysis data. Secure access and specific geographic analysis features are being developed within the WebGIS to meet the needs of archaeologists and heritage professionals in their practices.

Following a demonstration, the session invites contributions from projects working with GIS, WebGIS and EOS in archaeological or heritage contexts in Sudan. The session format will facilitate discussion on methods, challenges and future directions for spatial data and collaboration in heritage protection.

To present the different components of the IMAHP project, there will be three targeted presentations (each lasting maximum 20 minutes). They will focus respectively on demonstrating the GIS tools, the WebGIS platform, and highlighting the relevance and added value of the spatial analysis component for heritage protection.

Three 20-minute periods will then be allocated for contributions from other projects and research exploring GIS, WebGIS, Earth Observation Systems (EOS), spatial analysis, and sustainable data management in archaeological and heritage protection contexts.

The session will conclude with a 20-minutes session dedicated to open discussion and live exploration of the tools developed by IMAHP, including a “sandbox” space within the WebGIS platform for participants to test and interact with the system.

## **25. Multiple Nubias: Of Animals and Men**

Organised by Julia Budka<sup>1,2</sup>, Giulia D’Ercole<sup>1,2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> LMU Munich

<sup>2</sup> ICNS Munich 2026 Organising Committee

This session examines the evolving relationship between humans and animals throughout Sudan’s history, from food procurement to influencing and determining distinct lifestyles and choices. It explores the significance of animals in areas such as everyday life, hunting, agriculture, warfare, religious beliefs, and burial practices. Contributions addressing regional and local developments, *longue durée* approaches, and case studies highlighting short-lived practices are particularly welcome (for example, the heyday of bucrania during Middle Kerma times and similar phenomena).

Ideally, this session will include interdisciplinary studies that take into account archaeological, zooarchaeological, historical, textual and visual sources and methodologies.

## **26. Multiple Nubias: Ceramic Evidence**

Organised by Giulia D’Ercole<sup>1,2</sup>, Julia Budka<sup>1,2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> LMU Munich

<sup>2</sup> ICNS Munich 2026 Organising Committee

First appearing in Sudan in the 9<sup>th</sup> millennium BCE, pottery is one of the most widespread and informative categories of archaeological material and has long been essential to the study of ancient local cultures and their traditions. Over the years, research has shifted from assigning typological classifications towards considering functional and technological perspectives (i.e., the *chaîne opératoire* approach), transforming the notion that ‘pots equal people’ into more comprehensive and nuanced frameworks in which ceramics are valued for more than just their stylistic features.

Overall, ceramic objects hold significant interpretive potential, and their study is crucial for understanding the vast range of relationships among human cultures, the interactions between people and their environment and resources, and social dynamics within communities.

This session welcomes contributions dealing with the production and use of ceramics in Sudan at any time, with a particular focus on regional traditions. Papers may also consider aspects of food practices and ecology. The aim is to develop a more integrated and dynamic discussion on the enduring relationships between material culture, landscape and society.

## **27. Tales of Entanglement**

Organised by Julia Budka<sup>1,2</sup>, Panos Kratimenos<sup>1</sup>, Chloë Ward<sup>1,2</sup>, Giulia D’Ercole<sup>1,2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> LMU Munich

<sup>2</sup> ICNS Munich 2026 Organising Committee

The theory of entanglement in archaeology has been widely discussed in Nubian and Sudanese research. Over the past decade in particular, traditional Egyptocentric views of the dynamics of Nubian-Egyptian interactions have been challenged by alternative models inspired by ‘*cultural entanglement*’. These novel approaches highlight the active role of Nubians in their interactions with Egypt, countering previous one-sided biases. Research into cultural entanglements has primarily centred on the New Kingdom, Pre-Napatan and Napatan periods. Various iterations of the concept have been applied to the archaeology of Nubia, in particular those of Philipp Stockhammer and Michael Dietler. However, the suitability of these cultural entanglement concepts is still a matter of ongoing discussion, in particular in contexts other than colonial Nubia under the auspices of Egypt.

This session invites contributions from different perspectives, particularly novel temporal, methodological and theoretical applications of this wide-ranging concept. Rather than simply debating the applicability of either Stockhammer’s or Dietler’s models of cultural entanglements, we particularly encourage papers which also engage with or incorporate broader concepts of cultural dynamics to the study of Sudan. For example, the applicability of Sheila Jasanoff’s concept of co-production, which highlights the interplay between science, technology, society and power.

## **28. Trade and Markets through the Ages**

Organised by Julia Budka<sup>1,2</sup>, Panos Kratimenos<sup>1</sup>, Christian Perzlmeier<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> LMU Munich

<sup>2</sup> ICNS Munich 2026 Organising Committee

<sup>3</sup> SMAEK Munich

This session aims to explore trade, markets and exchange in Sudan within their historical context. Riverine, maritime and terrestrial (or a mix thereof) trade routes are well known. It is well established that the production and exchange of goods, as well as of raw materials such as gold, necessitated trade centres and storage facilities in strategic locations across Sudan's vast regions. However, identifying markets in areas other than larger towns that function as trade hubs remains challenging. Recent attempts to confirm the physical location of markets by applying remote sensing and geoarchaeological methods show much potential for improving our understanding.

Trade, trade routes, markets and the control of the circulation of goods also provide valuable insights into power strategies and actors at the political level. Additionally, in recent years, new attention has been given to the human actors and to the agency of objects, particularly within the framework of microstudies.

We invite contributions dealing with trade and markets throughout Sudan's history, including assessments of diplomacy and exchange between communities and political entities. Our aim is to compile case studies from various periods to address the deep history of relevant traces of the distribution of goods and trade hubs, in order to highlight time-specific phenomena as well as overarching patterns in Sudan. We particularly welcome contributions that deal with the interfaces between markets and political economy.

## **29. In Whose Name? Terminology, Periodisation, and Power in Nubian and Sudanese Archaeology**

Organised by Giulia D'Ercole<sup>1,2</sup>, Elena Garcea<sup>3</sup>, Julia Budka<sup>1,2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> LMU Munich

<sup>2</sup> ICNS Munich 2026 Organising Committee

<sup>3</sup> Università di Cassino e del Lazio meridionale

The archaeology of Nubia and Sudan has historically relied on terminologies and cultural and chronological labels developed elsewhere, mainly in Europe and the Near East. It also has used dynastic timelines borrowed from Egypt. These categories often impose external views on local cultural and economic developments, obscuring indigenous pathways and perpetuating colonial legacies. Moreover, these categories are not trivial or unbiased, but they have significant consequences for the cultural and geopolitical landscape.

While adopting eponyms or definitions that come from local ethnographic and linguistic sources is culturally sensitive and ethically appropriate, it can fragment the country's historical narrative. General labels like "Middle Palaeolithic," "Mesolithic," "Neolithic," or "Bronze Age," even if not unanimously accepted among scholars, help increase visibility and assist in placing the local records of Sudan and Nubia within broader historical contexts and processes.

This session invites papers that critically examine and challenge the politics of naming and labelling in the archaeology and history of Nubia and Sudan, from prehistory to the present day. We welcome case studies and theoretical reflections that explore how such key terms and broad

categories have shaped and continue to shape views of the past, as well as original contributions proposing alternative frameworks.

Key questions include: Whose past do these labels represent? What perspectives are neglected or highlighted? How can we rethink the way we periodise the past to better reflect the unique and multifaceted histories of Nubia and Sudan?

By fostering an interactive discussion across different periods and geographies, this session aims to reconsider how we name and frame the past. It will also explore approaches that pay more attention to the historical and environmental diversity of the region, as well as to the fluidity of local cultural and social processes.

### **30. Transition from Napata to Meroe**

Organised by Angelika Lohwasser<sup>1</sup>, Janice Yellin<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> University of Münster

<sup>2</sup> Babson College

The goal of this round table session is to create a robust discussion among participants as to the transition from the Napatan to Meroitic Kingdoms. We hope to gain deeper insight into the reasons, the time frame and the material impact of the transition phase from what research refers to as the Napatan period to what is known as the Meroitic period. This includes investigating whether this marked the beginning of a new dynasty and, if so, where its roots lie. We also want to examine the different stages of change, as these can vary from one place to another and from one region to another.

## **Closed Sessions at the ICNS 2026**

### **31. The “Circulating Artefact Unit” and the Fight Against Illicit Trafficking of Cultural Goods in Sudan**

Organised by Ikhlas Abd el-Latief<sup>1,2</sup>, Shadia Abdrabo<sup>2</sup>, Julie Anderson<sup>3</sup>, Faïza Drici<sup>4</sup>, Séverine Marchi<sup>4</sup>

Main organiser: NCAM ([ekhlass125@yahoo.com](mailto:ekhlass125@yahoo.com))

Coordinator: SFDAS ([faiza.drici@protonmail.com](mailto:faiza.drici@protonmail.com))

<sup>1</sup> NCAM Emergency Committee Cairo

<sup>2</sup> Sudan National Museum/NCAM

<sup>3</sup> British Museum

<sup>4</sup> SFDAS

In April 2025 in Cairo, NCAM (National Corporation for Antiquities and Museums), the SFDAS (*Section Française de la Direction des Antiquités du Soudan*) and the British Museum took part in the UNESCO workshop “Protection of Cultural Heritage in Times of Crises (for Law Enforcement, the Judiciary, and Cultural Professionals)” presenting the actions implemented in the fight against the illicit trafficking of cultural property in Sudan. The ongoing

conflict in Sudan has inflicted severe damage on its cultural heritage, rendering sites and museums vulnerable to theft, looting, and illicit exports.

The “Circulating Artefacts Unit” was created by NCAM in 2019 following intensive training for its members at the British Museum. Prior to the war, this unit was instrumental in dismantling several thefts and preventing their commercialisation worldwide. Faced with the current critical situation in Sudan and the exposure of its antiquities to looting, NCAM has decided to focus all its efforts under the official aegis of this Unit, in collaboration with the SFDAS – Unit’s headquarters in Cairo –, the British Museum, the Louvre Museum, and the official authorities (Customs, Interpol, etc.).

The aim of this roundtable is to present the results of the Unit’s work, followed by a session of exchanges and discussions with all participants and attendees wishing to share their ideas and expertise on this sensitive topic.

This session will begin with an introduction by the director of the “Circulating Artefacts Unit” and three short presentations (10-15 mins) by NCAM, the British Museum and the SFDAS, to present the work done by these three institutions and the Unit since the beginning of the conflict. These three main presentations will be followed by an open round table discussion with all participants/attendees on this delicate topic, the actions to be taken to manage the looting and trafficking of museum collections, the difficulties, legal understandings, and related topics.

## **32. Advancing the Bioarchaeology of Sudan: Three Themes for Engagement**

Organised by Brenda J. Baker<sup>1</sup>, Michele Buzon<sup>2</sup>, Sarah Schrader<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Arizona State University

<sup>2</sup> Purdue University

<sup>3</sup> Leiden University

This session introduces three themes that aim to promote the advancement of bioarchaeology within and beyond Sudan, particularly during a period of conflict. The organisers will introduce the following themes, with each overview to be followed by discussion.

1. Collections and Accessibility: Where are human remains from Sudan currently housed, both within and outside the country? This theme focuses on identifying the locations of human remains that have been excavated since the early 1900s, their current status (accessible/inaccessible), and increasing their visibility.
2. Data Access: How can we increase accessibility of bioarchaeological data, including burial documentation and results of analyses? While data may be available as supplemental information in published journal articles, paywalls may prohibit access. This theme, therefore, focuses on ways of sharing data that may be free though possibly restricted due to the sensitive nature of the data.
3. Bioarchaeological Teaching Resources and Training: How can we improve access to resources for teaching bioarchaeology and human osteology for Sudanese colleagues and students? Are workshops and webinars outside of Sudan until in-country education can resume useful to those in Sudan or currently displaced?

The ultimate goal is the creation of working groups to advance each of the three areas delineated.

### **33. Cultural Diversity in the Bronze Age: Results from the DiverseNile Project**

Organised by Julia Budka<sup>1,2</sup>, Chloë Ward<sup>1,2</sup>, Hassan Aglan<sup>1,2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> LMU Munich

<sup>2</sup> ICNS Munich 2026 Organising Committee

In order to gain a more detailed understanding of the cultural dynamics and diversity of ancient Nilotic groups, the ERC DiverseNile project has developed the concept of ‘Contact Space Biography’ – a concept which combines models of contact spaces, changing landscapes and technologies used by the region’s inhabitants. This challenges existing approaches to cultural contact in the Middle Nile by taking a bottom-up approach and moving away from categorising sites as either Egyptian or Nubian.

This session will present a broad range of results of the ERC DiverseNile project, focusing on settlements, mortuary sites, material culture and the landscape of the Attab to Ferka region in northern Sudan. Selected case studies will demonstrate how cultural diversity in the Bronze Age Middle Nile can be addressed and explore the broader potential of these new findings.