Teaching collaborative archaeology and heritage management in Sudan

Abstract: Over the past seven years, archaeological outreach activities and participatory research have increasingly been incorporated into different archaeological projects in Sudan while sites have faced growing threats from economic activities, mining, and climate change. To respond to such disciplinary shift and challenges in site protection, a training course on collaborative archaeology and heritage management planning was designed and offered to Sudanese archaeologists and students at Old Dongola in early 2021. This article assesses the course based on evaluations submitted by participants and the instructor's self-reflection and observations. It explores an improved approach to capacity building in the two specialized fields in the context of Sudan, and concludes with the proposition that the approach and objectives of collaborative archaeology should be foregrounded in courses of this kind. Rather than just offering training *per se*, courses should be set up in collaboration with local communities and produce, by design, meaningful outcomes for communities, while training the participants.

Keywords: capacity building, collaborative archaeology, heritage management, Old Dongola, Sudan

Disseminating or popularizing archaeological outcomes is not new in archaeology in Sudan or anywhere else in the world. Ever since the 19th century, archaeology has

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been actively seeking a way to connect with society through museums, popular books and magazines, newspapers, radio, TV and, more recently, podcasts, blogs and other social media. In Sudan, active archaeological dissemination and outreach programs for the Sudanese population were designed as early as 1938, when the Sudan Antiquities Service was formally established during the Anglo–Egyptian Condominium period (Arkell 1940; Trigger 1994). The aim was top-down and one-way in nature: to educate the Sudanese people about the history of their country through the results of archaeological research. Archaeological guides, a series of thematic pamphlets about the history and archaeology in Sudan, and museum exhibition labels were made available in Arabic as well as English, while museum entry was made free of charge for Sudanese school groups (Arkell 1940; 1944; Shinnie 1981; 1990). This effort to reach out to the Sudanese in archaeology targeted the museum context at the time, but without seemingly implementing this type of activity in the field context (Fushiya 2020: 128).

Over the past ten years community engagement and collaborative archaeology have increasingly drawn attention to the field context in Sudan. The methodology and relevant activities have been incorporated as part of standard archaeological practice in a growing number of Sudanese and international projects. The approaches vary. Some have opted for more traditional outreach activities

(e.g., lecture, site tour, book, children's book, on-site exhibition and presentation), while others have worked more closely with communities and integrated local perspectives and/or co-produced tools, materials and exhibition spaces (see Humphris and Bradshaw 2017; Anderson, Elrasheed, and Bashir 2018; Kleinitz 2019; Näser and Tully 2019; Spencer 2019; Beyin et al. 2020; Drzewiecki et al. 2020; Fushiya 2020: 191–228; Mallinson et al. 2020; Soghayroun n.d.).[1] The latter approach is often informed by extensive research on local societal values of archaeological sites and objects, memories, and understanding of local perceptions, attachment and knowledge. A new project in el-Selim, for instance, incorporates community-based participatory research from the beginning of the project, asking and discussing with the communities their interests (what they want to know), and the methods of dissemination (how they want to be informed about the results of research) (Minor et al. 2020). The PCMA's Old Dongola project has also worked on raising children and adult awareness, integrating local knowledge into the site's narrative, promoting local traditional skills, and embarking on sustainable heritage development and management (Fushiya and Radziwiłko 2019; Fushiya 2021; Larsen 2021; Obłuski and Dzierzbicka 2021). As part of it, a capacity building program for Sudanese archaeologists and postgraduate students was carried out at Old Dongola in 2021.

[1]   See also Tombos Archaeological Site: https://tombos.org/; Narrating Nubia: https://sites.lsa.umich.edu/nubia/ (both accessed: 31.10.2021). The list is hardly exhaustive because community-related activities are not always noted in archaeological reports and academic articles.

The growing importance of the participatory approach in Sudanese archaeology is evident today, while the urgent need to build capacity in conservation, protection and management of archaeological sites has been pointed out (Tabet and Seif 2019). Still, these specialized fields have yet to be included in the curriculum of archaeological departments at the seven universities that teach archaeology in Sudan. The training course at Old Dongola was designed to respond to the current lack in training opportunities, while sharing the experience in community engagement and sustainable development that the PCMA Old Dongola expedition has gained since 2019.

The course fulfilled these two objectives to a degree that could be expected of a short, one-time course. There is naturally a limit to how much can be taught about two specialized fields in such a short time. Nevertheless, the teaching experience, discussions with Sudanese archaeologists and students, as well as local residents, and their course evaluation, provided many insights into what steps to take next and how to improve this kind of a field-based training course. This article describes the course given in Dongola in 2021, and discusses the importance of capacity building in the described fields in the Sudanese context, ending with some recommendations for the future.

TRAINING COURSE FOR VALUES-BASED HERITAGE MANAGEMENT AND COMMUNITY ARCHAEOLOGY IN OLD DONGOLA

The training course "Training for values-based heritage management and community archaeology" was organized at Old Dongola in 2021, between 23 March and 2 April. Postgraduate university students from Sudan and employees of the Sudanese National Corporation of Antiquities and Museums (NCAM) were invited to participate. Representing the Old Dongola Project, the author/instructor contacted NCAM and the heads or representatives of archaeological departments at the Universities of Khartoum, Bahri, al Neelain, and Gezira to select two persons per institution interested in the course and capable of following the training in English. Recent graduates of archaeology and related subjects (history and geography) were also sought out locally. The number of trainees

was limited in order to ensure an effective learning experience. Rather than opting for a larger participation, the course was designed to maximize dissemination of the approach among Sudanese students of archaeology by choosing participants from different universities. As a matter of fact, a direct request from the NCAM to increase the number of participants implied official interest in the training course in general, as well as particular topics. Inspectors collaborating with international projects, who have been involved in community engagement, were especially interested in enhancing their knowledge and experience.

The course was attended and completed by three NCAM inspectors and nine postgraduate students and recent gradu-

ates (10 females and 2 males[2]); four among the latter came from the area (el-Ghaddar and Letti, all graduates of the University of Dongola). Most of the participants were contacted by the author a year beforehand with information about the course and the preparations for it.[3] The meetings also helped to establish English comprehension levels. Participants were instructed to prepare a presentation and encouraged to read the relevant literature[4] before coming to Old Dongola. Reading materials, articles on general community/public archaeology, Old Dongola, and the World Heritage Program were distributed in digital form. Participants in possession of their own laptops were asked to bring them, while the rest were offered shared use of a laptop prepared by the Project. For ease of communication, a WhatsApp group was created, and the participants could contact each other or the instructor for any inquiries. The course was given in Old Dongola by the author as an instructor, and the participants stayed at the Polish House. Many of the participants came prepared with a presentation, and some had read the reading materials.

THE COURSE FRAMEWORK

The overall aim of the course was to create an opportunity for the participants to consider archaeology (largely sites and monuments) in the context of contemporary society, and to discuss the role of archaeology in society, Sudanese society in particular.

The goal was to raise awareness about the contribution that archaeologists can make toward responding to social issues and reducing their impact (if not solving them). It was achieved by introducing the concepts and methods of collaborative archaeology with case studies from different parts of the world, not limited to Old Dongola and Sudan. Emphasis was placed on what the issues have been between archaeology and society, and how solutions were explored (or not) in other countries. The purpose was to convey ideas about how archaeology could positively and negatively influence the everyday life of local people and vice versa, and how community participation and considering local viewpoints could benefit both archaeology and local communities. The concept of heritage values—that is to say, heritage values are multivalent and given by people, rather than intrinsic (Mason 2002)—was introduced to show that the importance of archaeological heritage is not defined by archaeological and historical values alone, and that different individuals, groups of people and institutions are relevant to managing archaeological sites. "Collaborative archaeology" in the course was based mainly on a community-based participatory research (CBPR) (Atalay 2012: 44–88), while the values-based approach (Mason 2002) was linked to social values (Jones 2017) in order to consider the challenges and opportunities of protecting and managing archaeological sites in a given social context.

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2   One of the two male students could not attend due to a family emergency.

3   The course was originally planned for March 2020, but was postponed a year due to limitations imposed on travel by the global Covid-19 pandemic.

4   Mostly in English save for some materials from UNESCO, ICOMOS or ICCROM that are available in Arabic.

The following are the stated learning objectives:

- Explain general concepts of heritage values, community archaeology, and the World Heritage Program.
- Compare different approaches of community engagement activities and plan an engagement program.
- Evaluate opportunities and challenges of inclusive heritage management at Old Dongola.
- Improve presentation skills and learn to write a project proposal in English.

The UNESCO World Heritage Program was not originally part of the work

Fig. 1. Questions, discussions and exchange of ideas were encouraged during the course (PCMA UW | photo M. Rekłajtis)

Fig. 2. Mohamed Ahmed and Saida Ahmed work on the SWOT analysis worksheet during a group exercise (PCMA UW | photo T. Fushiya)

planned for 2020, but was included because the preparations to nominate Old Dongola to the World Heritage List had become an essential part of community participation and heritage management. The World Heritage Program frames indigenous and local community participation in heritage conservation and management as necessary, and advocates a link between sustainable development and heritage. The dossiers of the two cultural heritage sites in Sudan currently inscribed on the List do not include the social aspects of heritage and the community's role in management (Fushiya and Radziwiłko 2019). Thus, teaching the concept of the Program and the increased emphasis on community participation was considered a great opportunity to discuss the wider implications of a participatory approach.

THE COURSE DESIGN

The course applied an interactive learning method to encourage course participants to become actively involved in the learning process through discussions, group exercises, hands-on practice, and presentations. Lectures were designed to teach concepts and methodologies through case studies, and comprehension of the lectures was boosted with a series of exercises and discussion sessions [*Fig. 1*]. Hands-on practice was facilitated by actual interaction with members of the local communities through *wanasa* (meetings/chats) and a Poster Workshop.[5] The final assignment required participants to use their newly-acquired knowledge and experience to write a community engage-

5   See Fushiya and Radziwiłko 2019 for the details of the workshop.

ment project proposal and make an oral presentation about it [*Fig. 2*]. A worksheet structuring the proposal writing was distributed to help in this assignment.

One of the most important aspects and the reason for giving the course in Old Dongola in the first place was creating opportunities for interaction with the local communities: the Old Dongola Community Council for Archaeology and Tourism [*Fig. 3*], a woman's group and primary school groups in el-Ghaddar. It was hoped that the Community Council, newly formed in 2020 in response to talks with the PCMA Old Dongola project, would benefit from the input and discussions of Sudanese archaeologists and students in further developing their own program

Fig. 3. A *wanasa* between the course participants and the Community Council, joined by Old Dongola team member Zaki ed-Din Mohamed (PCMA UW | photo T. Fushiya)

and activities. At the same time, participants would gain an opportunity to learn directly about the practical side of planning heritage programs and community-based development. With regard to the women's group (some of the women are also involved in the Council), it is keen on women using their handicraft skills, cooking talent and hospitality to raise their income. A *wanasa* with them was expected to consider the intangible heritage of local communities and the way in which they operate within the framework of a discussion of heritage management. Finally, a Poster Workshop provided the opportunity to work with the younger generation in the communities, in order to gather experience on how to plan a school program.

Some case studies from the Middle East and North Africa were introduced through short project films and a video-recorded presentation during the lectures. The goal was to counter the limitations of one-instructor teaching, and to enhance understanding of some topics. Films about cultural exchange (Amarna Project, University of Cambridge);[6] sustainable development (USAID SCHEP project);[7] and community-involved experimental archaeology (UCL Qatar) were well-received by the course participants.[8] Monique van der Dries (Leiden University)

6   Ancient and Modern Egypt created as part of Life in Ancient Egypt: Amarna Project in Egypt by the University of Cambridge; available at: https://www.arch.cam.ac.uk/research/projects/current-projects/life-ancient-egypt-amarna-resources-schools/film-clips-ancient (accessed: 08.11.2021).

7   *Ghawr as Safi Success Story* shows a part of the USAID Sustainable Cultural Heritage Through Engagement of Local Communities Project (SCHEP) in Jordan, run by ASOR; available at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qlq0VqJW1yQ (accessed: 08.11.2021).

8   *Ancient Iron. Experimental archaeology in Sudan (UCL Qatar)* in Arabic, UCL Qatar project in Meroe, Sudan; available at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PBCrKLx0R0I&t=5s (accessed: 08.11.2021).

also "joined" the teaching through her recorded lecture on social values and her case study site, Tell Balata in Palestine. The use of videos helped to introduce different techniques, experiences and ideas that have been applied in practice, and offered a little change from the lecturing. The participants picked the SCHEP project video to show to the Community Council, thinking it would be useful to the Council in planning community development through heritage.

The course was concluded with a festive lunch followed by a closing ceremony, and discussion with the community council once again about the council's future activities [*Fig. 4*]. A goat generously gifted by the Kushkush family in el-Ghaba was shared with the participants and the community council. Later in the evening, a group of women

visited, bringing sweets of their own making, to further discuss their heritage activities.

SUCCESSES, LESSONS LEARNED AND CHALLENGES

Based on remarks made by participants and communities during the *wanasa*, course evaluation results and the author's own observations, one can discuss what went well during the training course, what were/are the challenges of such training, and what needs to be improved. Feedback from the communities will be analyzed in a future article. The course program day by day is presented here (see page 545; for an overview of the lectures and other activities see Fushiya 2021). The parts that are the author's own observations are presented in the first-person singular ("I" or "my").

Fig. 4. At an official closing ceremony, participants received certificates of completing the course from the Community Council (PCMA UW | photo M. Rekłajtis)

The Old Dongola training course program

Day 1	*Departure from Khartoum; arrival at the expedition's Old Dongola House and settling in* **Session 1**: Welcome by local community representatives and introduction to the training course program
Day 2	**Session 2**: Heritage values and stakeholders *Exercise* 1: Heritage values and stakeholders (Old Dongola) **Session 3**: Presentation skills and case study presentations **Session 4**: Community archaeology: concept and methodology
Day 3	**Session 1-bis**: Site visit (Old Dongola) **Session 5**: Case study presentations by the participants; discussion and feedback *Exercise* 2: *Wanasa* with the Old Dongola Community Council
Day 4	**Sessions 6, 7 & 8**: Old Dongola *Nafir* and the "Inclusive heritage & sustainable development at Old Dongola" World Heritage Program (1): History, OUV and operational guideline, global strategy, social inclusivity and sustainable development *Sunset picnic at Old Dongola*
Day 5	**Session 9**: Heritage management of Old Dongola *Exercise* 3: Management challenges at Old Dongola: SWOT analysis **Session 10**: Engagement programs **Session 10-bis**: Introduction of the Poster Workshop; instructions for the final project proposal and presentation *Exercise* 4: *Wanasa* about Sudanese intangible heritage and sustainability with women skilled in the handicrafts
Day 6	<Group 1> Poster Workshop Day 1: Site visit with groups of students and breakfast <Group 2> Work on the project proposal and presentation <Everyone> **Session 11**: Knowledge exchange and integrated narrative at Old Dongola *Exercise* 5 (cont.): *Wanasa* with women skilled in handicrafts
Day 7	<Group 1> Poster Workshop Day 2: Poster-making and student presentation; breakfast <Group 2> Work on the project proposal and presentation <Everyone> **Session 12**: Local handicrafts study and women's empowerment at Old Dongola **Session 13**: Interview methods and ethics
Day 8	<Group 2> Poster Workshop Day 1: site visit with groups of students and breakfast <Group 1> Work on the project proposal and presentation <Everyone> **Session 14**: Review of the discussion with women skilled in handicrafts
Day 9	<Group 2> Poster Workshop Day 2: Poster-making and student presentation <Group 1> Work on the project proposal and presentation
Day 10	**Session 15**: Presentations of the community engagement project proposals Filling the course evaluation form Submission of the one-page project proposal **Session 16**: *Wanasa* with the Old Dongola Community Council about Old Dongola as a heritage place **Session 16-bis**: *Wanasa* with the women's group *Lunch and closing ceremony*

Successes

The greatest success is that the course turned out to be a great learning experience for the participants, the local residents, and the instructor. The participants' evaluation survey forms,[9] completed on the last day, reflect their full satisfaction. They were asked to comment on the course contents, organization, comfort of the housing, favorite and least favorite aspects, and elements in need of improvement. Overall, the course was very well received, 11 out of 12 participants giving a score of 10/10, with one 9/10. All of them found that the course would change how they study or work in archaeology, and they declared that they would like to work with local communities next time that they are in the field. The workload evaluation was the most diverse: light or too light for three participants, heavy or too heavy for six, and "average" for three. This result was rather surprising in view of the course being indeed quite intense and demanding with different topics and activities from morning to late afternoon.

Teaching style

The interactive approach to teaching was successful in many ways. Seven out of 12 participants indicated teaching style as the best part of the course.

Prior to the course, there was concern that the differences between students and NCAM inspectors in terms of knowledge and experience could create a comprehension gap. Most of the inspectors presented years of experience in the field (sometimes more than a decade), as researchers and/or inspectors, and a few of them even had international training experience. This aspect had to be taken into account when planning the teaching. Group exercises and discussions created the proper ambience for asking questions and mutual support—although being mutually supportive is truly a Sudanese quality in general. It also helped to overcome the language barrier. The course was given mostly in English except for some videos in Arabic or with Arabic-subtitles, and the level of English significantly varied among the participants. Still, there was no indication of language issues in the course evaluation. An effective learning experience was due most certainly to efficient translations by Habab Idriss, Rehab Ismail and other participants. Simultaneously, group exercises and discussions gave particants the opportunity to learn from one another in their own language. Beyond the practicality of the learning process, active involvement of the participants was crucial in this context—a foreign teacher teaching about the social and community dimensions of archaeology to people who are members of that society. The method is ethical and it is a way to remain humble (see Zimmerman 2005).

The participants had two presentation assignments, and each one was followed by a Q&A session. For the first one participants selected a site with which they were familiar in terms of site history as well as the communities around it, e.g., a site they had worked at or one that is located in their hometown, and pre-

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9   An anonymous survey in English, with 14 questions with a rating scale (one question for 10 points, the rest for 5 points), and four open-ended questions. Four surveys were answered in Arabic and translated with the help of one of the participants, Zeinab al Bashir.

sented (with or without a Power Point) its description and the anticipated opportunities and challenges of working with communities around it [*Fig. 5*]. The presentations triggered a problem-based learning and also illustrated several common and site-specific strengths and challenges in conducting community engagement.[10] These included many social and management issues relating to communities, such as trash, farmers' wishes to expand agricultural land, gold

Fig. 5. Participants making their site presentations: top, Nuseibe Ahmed speaking about Jebel Barkal and, bottom, Habab Idris presenting Jebel Mamoun (PCMA UW | photos M. Rekłajtis and T. Fushiya)

mining, environmental changes (growing rainfall vs. desertification), different social structures, different community opinions about ancient sites, and difficult access to communities for outsiders (both Sudanese and foreigners). The presentations also revealed the benefits—rather cultural, education, emotional—of communicating with and involving local communities. These were local pride, strong local attachment, close relations with the site, regular visits, and continuous use of the site by local groups. Recent outreach initiatives by archaeologists and a good relationship among different ethnic groups in the locality were also indicated as a positive aspect.

The second presentation, which participants prepared as their final assignment, called for writing a community engagement proposal using what they had learned in the course. Many of these proposals were ambitious and difficult to fully implement within two years (which was the assigned timespan for the proposal), but they all considered different methods for engagement, and a range of interest groups and stakeholders, including local communities. Room for improvement in a number of cases lay in linking methods and activities with the objectives. Even so, the proposals reflected the participants' keen observation of issues between archaeology and society.

Community engagement
Actual engagement with local communities, especially with schoolchildren, was among the most popular aspects for the course participants. The school workshop

10   The sites selected for presentation included: Bejaraweiya, Soba, Kerma, Al Teti, Saï Island, Jebel Mamoun, al Kurru, Old Dongola, Sabaloka, el Khandaq and Jebel Barkal.

was rated the best part of the course by five participants; remarks included the following: "The presentation and visit [of] the site and the workshop with children. Because that was so exciting for me"; "School work because it gave us more knowledge about the community work". For the two-day workshop, eight groups of four children (2 boys and 2 girls) each were created and assigned one or two course participants per group. On the first day, the student groups were guided around the Dongola site by the course participants, who explained the site history to the children. On the second day, the children and their mentors created a poster together [*Fig. 6*]. This provided the course participants with practical experience in running a workshop and working with schoolchildren, while giving them also a sense of empowerment and fulfilment. One participant commented that for her/him the favorite part was "...to work with the kids because I felt I did something good for future".

Positive emotions of this kind, generated by interaction through engagement programs, is an important aspect and a reason for integrating collaboration into archaeological practice.

Lessons learned

Some aspects that did not work out well and should be taken into consideration in future course planning. The three discussed here are based largely on the author's own observations. The first relates to course design and organization.

Fig. 6. The Poster Workshop exercise: Umm Salma Abu Alzine working with pupils from a local school creating their posters (PCMA UW | photo T. Fushiya)

The other two concern, on one hand, the way the course was undertaken and, on the other, the more general issues of community engagement and participatory approach in archaeology.

Course design
"Too many lectures" was indicated by four participants in their course evaluation form. This was also true for the instructor. An important thing to remember when designing another course is that an instructor that is feeling tired means that everyone else is tired as well. Nonetheless, participants also suggested in their evaluation responses that more coursework or another workshop would be welcome. This implies that there were "too many" lectures in a given day (for example, the four lectures on Day 5) but overall, the motivation to learn more and in-depth was clearly there. This is hardly surprising, because each concept and method requires more explanation time and more exercises for better comprehension, while some topics need to be discussed at length to better link local, regional, national and international contexts and historical backgrounds. Indeed, 14 days would be better suited to present all the diverse topics covered in this training course. The World Heritage content, for instance, would be ideal for a separate course. Also, as one participant suggested, different instructors would have made the teaching more efficient. Collaborative archaeology and heritage management, the latter in particular, require a multidisciplinary team. Having different teachers to pass on their expertise would help to diversify subjects, methods and tools, and would also avoid boredom for the participants and instructor.

Engaging with local communities
Having observed the interactions between the participants and local communities, I gave thought to what would be the most efficient, comfortable and meaningful way to plan and implement engagement programs and participatory research. Including the welcome and closing sessions, there were five occasions to meet and discuss with the Community Council and the women's group. This was three more than initially planned (and one participant experessed a wish for even more opportunities of this kind), but the need on the part of the communities and the participants' willingness to continue discussions led to the decision to make time for these meetings.

Another important point to consider is the suggestion made by one of the participants that we should have visited them instead of inviting them to come to us. All five occasions took place at the Polish House, which is often the case when a meeting is organized with the archaeological team. Respect for Sudanese custom certainly requires mutual visits.

Archaeological education is the primary aim of an outreach program like the Poster Workshop, but it is also a good opportunity for local people and archaeologists to meet and communicate, making it clear that the international team working in a given locality is approachable (Fushiya 2020: 169–172). Furthermore, regardless of origins, the interpretation of sites, objects and other remains for public audiences demands a thought process that contextualizes the dataset in the present local societal context (Buccellati 2006). This exercise can generate other sets of research questions for archaeologists (Perry

2018). Thus, community engagement is a useful tool to develop archaeological research as well.

An additional benefit from having Sudanese archaeologists as program designers and facilitators for the communities' learning experiences is precisely the fact that they are not a foreigner (*kwaja*). A key contact in the local education system, teacher Mamdouf Mohamed from a primary school in el-Ghaddar, who has accompanied his students to all the Poster Workshops organized in the past two years, shared with me his observation that a site visit guided by the course participants was

Fig. 7. Site tours during the Poster Workshop: top, Rehab Ismail and, bottom, Abobkr Issa Mohamed guiding student groups (PCMA UW | photos T. Fushiya)

more relaxing and therefore more efficient as a learning experience than when the tour was given by a foreign archaeologist. Students addressed the course participants as "teachers" and participants could check whether their groups had actually learned what they had been told about the history of Old Dongola [*Fig. 7*].

Community engagement programs are inevitably the most accessible and exposed part of archaeology for public audiences. A program facilitator becomes the face of an archaeological team and has the forefront role of shaping an image of archaeology (and the team) in the minds of the communities. As an instructor and specialist in collaborative archaeology, I felt a stronger need and suitability to build the capacity of Sudanese archaeologists (and other relevant scholars) to design and carry out engagement programs, and specialize in participatory research. Not only does it help to develop the field with Sudanese archaeologists, but it can also help to transform the persisting wrong, colonial image of archaeologists as foreigners in Sudan (Humphris and Bradshaw 2017; Näser and Tully 2019; Fushiya 2020: 165–169).

Benefits for the communities?
Potential benefits for the local communities were not an aspect taken into account when designing the course (see below) and the author has yet to ask for feedback from the communities. However, I realized running this course that involving Sudanese and local archaeologists/students in partnership-building and collaboration with communities is a must for the archaeological side of this archaeology–community relation. While not negating the role of foreign special-

ists in this collaboration, it emphasizes the advantages of Sudanese and international archaeologists complementing each other, balancing their strengths and weaknesses, and making the collaboration environment more open, comfortable and embedded in a specific local context. The social, cultural, and linguistic barriers for Sudanese colleagues are lesser than those that I encountered or felt, while the outside perspective brings different insights and approaches. Also, community members may find some issues easier to discuss with a foreign archaeologist who is not from their cultural and social realm. The supplemental character of these roles is self-evident. Even so, many participatory projects in Sudan are led by foreigners. Extending the "working together" spirit to Sudanese colleagues would be an important development.

Another illustration of how the participation of Sudanese archaeologists could be beneficial for the communities came with the first meeting of the course participants with the Old Dongola Council. During the meeting, attended by nine council members, a representative of the Council, Sarah Musa, introduced the Council's activities toward preparing the community's plan for sustainable development and heritage. The three-page plan included: 1) raising local awareness; 2) improving site presentation; 3) increasing handicraft production; 4) collecting oral histories. The course participants peppered the council members with questions about the council's structure and decision-making process, method of selection of the council members, frequency of meetings, methods of communication between them, channels for disseminating information to the communities, and the status of their activities in the absence of the archaeological team. These management aspects are important for the council to function as intended. The discussion gave the council members the opportunity to consider and explain how they are managing the process and how they would like to do it. The situation also prompted an honest expression of concern from the council, which had not been shared earlier with the archaeological team. While proud to be part of the pilot stage of this sustainable development and heritage endeavor, the council members were worried that they lacked the experience on how to proceed and what to do first; after all, this is their first collaboration with an archaeological team, and their first involvement with a community-based tourism and sustainable development project. In addition, the council and the communities would also like to know more about the World Heritage Program and the potential positive and negative (mostly the latter) impacts on the communities' life. A number of constructive suggestions and a few critical comments were made by the participants, based on their own experiences, in one case organizing a social club in Khartoum and in another, working with community projects elsewhere. As the discussion continued a loss of confidence could be sensed, the council members becoming more defensive. Despite my concerns, the council returned for another visit to share with the participants further thoughts about their activities. Nonetheless, the interaction should be empowering and motivating for both sides, hence more attention should be paid to this.

FUTURE PROSPECTS

What is the next step and how should we approach it? In lieu of concluding remarks, the author outlines a proposition for better course planning and design. Apart from the course length and the need for more diverse instructors, it would be an important improvement to make the course itself a part of the participatory research and practice. Firstly, the described training course was obviously site-centered and given entirely from an archaeological point of view. This probably helped participants trained in archaeology to acquire an understanding of the ideas of heritage management and collaborative archaeology. However, it would be better to shift the focus to a people-centered understanding of space and its meanings.

Secondly, given its potential, the course should be designed so as to foreground collaboration and give more control to the communities over what is taught and how the site and the local heritage are presented in the locality. A field school run for more than two decades in a remote area of northern Australia aims to equip archaeological students with field excavation skills (e.g., survey, mapping, documentation), as well as the ethics and essential skills to work with indigenous peoples and their heritage (Smith et al. 2021). Accordingly, the Barunga community living in the locality decide what they want the students to learn and who will participate in the teaching, while the students respect the community's rule and social structure. The students are given assignments by participating community members to explore topics that can be useful to the communities regarding their heritage, environment, medicinal knowledge etc. Thus, the direct outputs of the course, as well as the objectives of the field school, are truly "for" and "with" the communities. Having space to make their own decision is not only empowering for the communities, but one of the crucial aims of collaborative archaeology (Colwell 2016). This teaching method and trust on the part of the community are possible only thanks to decades of field school operations, and yet they encounter difficulties every time (Smith et al. 2021). However, should another training course related to collaborative archaeology be envisioned in Old Dongola, it would definitely be to the advantage of both sides to extend the partnership with the communities to the planning stage of such a course. On-the-job training will be continued when some of the participants of the course will join in the work during the archaeological season at Old Dongola as an engagement facilitator.

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