

Socializing Violence: Interpersonal Violence Recidivism at Abu Fatima (Sudan)

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Ancient Kerma (Nubia)

The Ancient Nubian Kerma Culture thrived from the 3rd-2nd millennia BCE (Table 1). The cemetery at Abu Fatima, located ~5km south of the Kerma capital city, was in use throughout the Kerma Period. Pilot excavations and osteological analysis at Abu Fatima (2015) suggest a high frequency of interpersonal violence in this population. Six of the seven adults exhumed exhibited evidence of interpersonal violence; four individuals showed signs of recidivistic interpersonal violence. This poster presents data on this initial skeletal sample and examines these findings within a social framework.

Table 1

Ancient Kerma	2,600-2,050 BCE
Middle Kerma	2,050-1,650 BCE
Classic Kerma	1,650-1,550 BCE

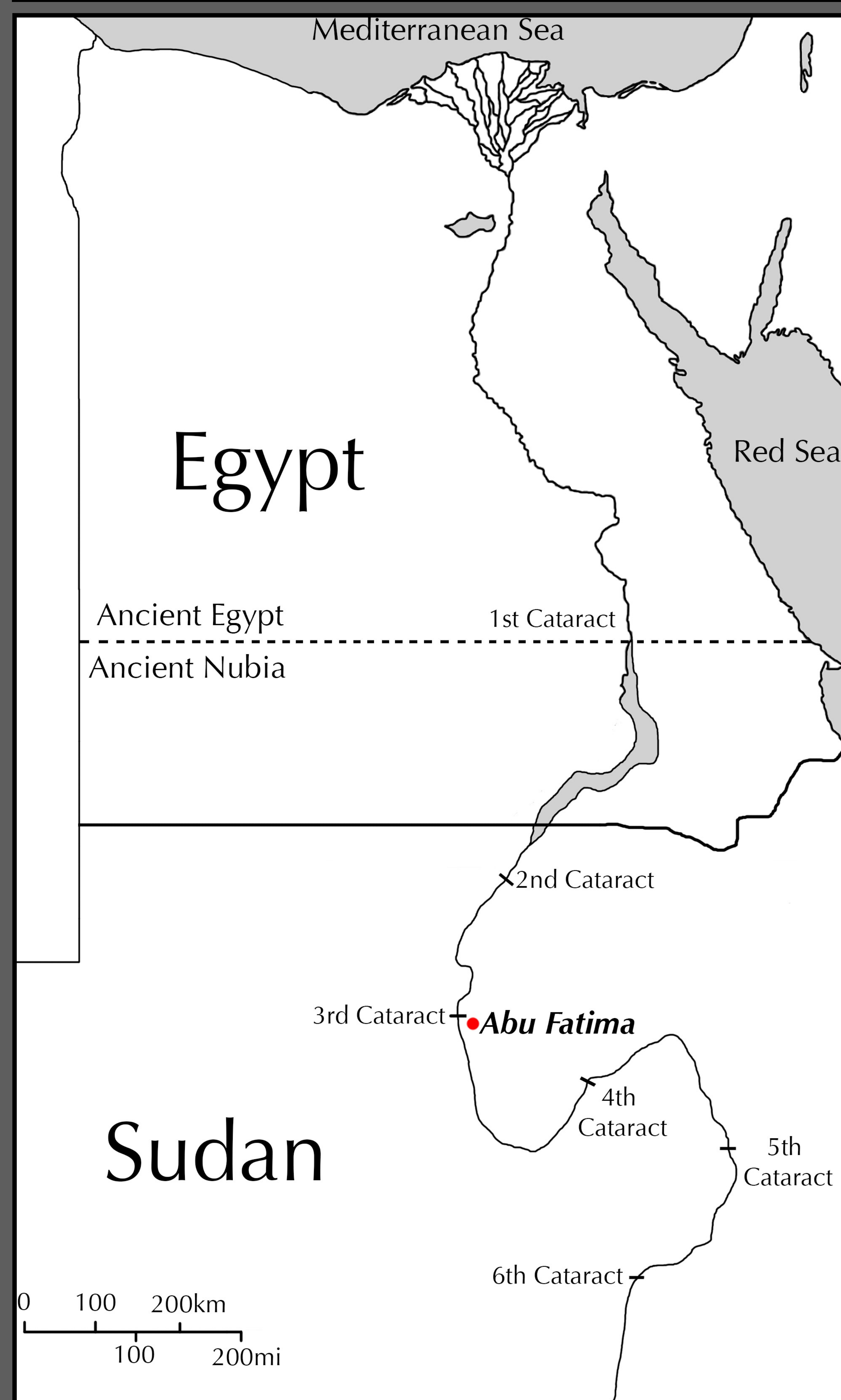


Figure 1

Interpersonal Violence at Abu Fatima

Table 2

	#1	#2	#3	#4	#5	#6	#7
Sex	Female	Female	Female	Male	Male	Male	Male
Age	Young Adult	Old Adult	Middle Adult	Middle Adult	?	Young Adult	?
Is Violence Present?	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Is Recidivistic Violence Present?		✓	✓	✓		✓	
Notes on Recidivism Determination		six healed cranial BFTs and more recent nasal fracture	nearly-healed perry fracture and more recent BFT	well-healed parietal SFT and more recent nasal fracture (Fig.2)		peri-mortem blade wound to several ribs; well-healed cranial BFT	

Young Adult = 18-29; Middle Adult = 30-45; Old Adult = 45+

SFT = Sharp force trauma; BFT = Blunt force trauma

Osteological Analysis

Interpersonal violence (IPV) was considered present if sharp/blunt force trauma occurred (1) above the hat-brim line, (2) on the face, or (3) at the distal ulna (perry fracture; Judd, 2008; Walker, 2001). Determination of IPV recidivism was based on differential stages of skeletal healing (Judd, 2002). Standard bioarchaeological techniques were used to determine sex and age (Buikstra and Ubelaker, 1994).



Figure 2

Socially-Sanctioned Violence?

- Females and males in each age cohort participated in IPV-related activities/events.
- Despite the small sample size, IPV was present and recidivistic at Abu Fatima; considering the ubiquity of IPV at Abu Fatima and other Kerma sites (see Judd, 2002), it is reasonable to infer a social context where IPV was sanctioned and/or encouraged (e.g., war, sport, intergroup conflict).
- IPV recidivism may be underreported in this study. Two individuals (1&5) had evidence of multiple IPV injuries; however, the advanced degree of skeletal healing made it impossible to differentiate traumatic events.
- Lastly, an old adult female from Abu Fatima exhibited numerous cranial BFTs, possibly accrued throughout her life; as methods for detecting recidivism in the skeletal record improve, the *person years* concept could inform the study of violence-related injuries by accounting for age and length of exposure (Glencross and Sawchuk, 2003).
- Upcoming excavation and analysis will increase the size of the Abu Fatima skeletal collection and further inform our understanding of violence in Ancient Kerma society.

Works Cited.

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