

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

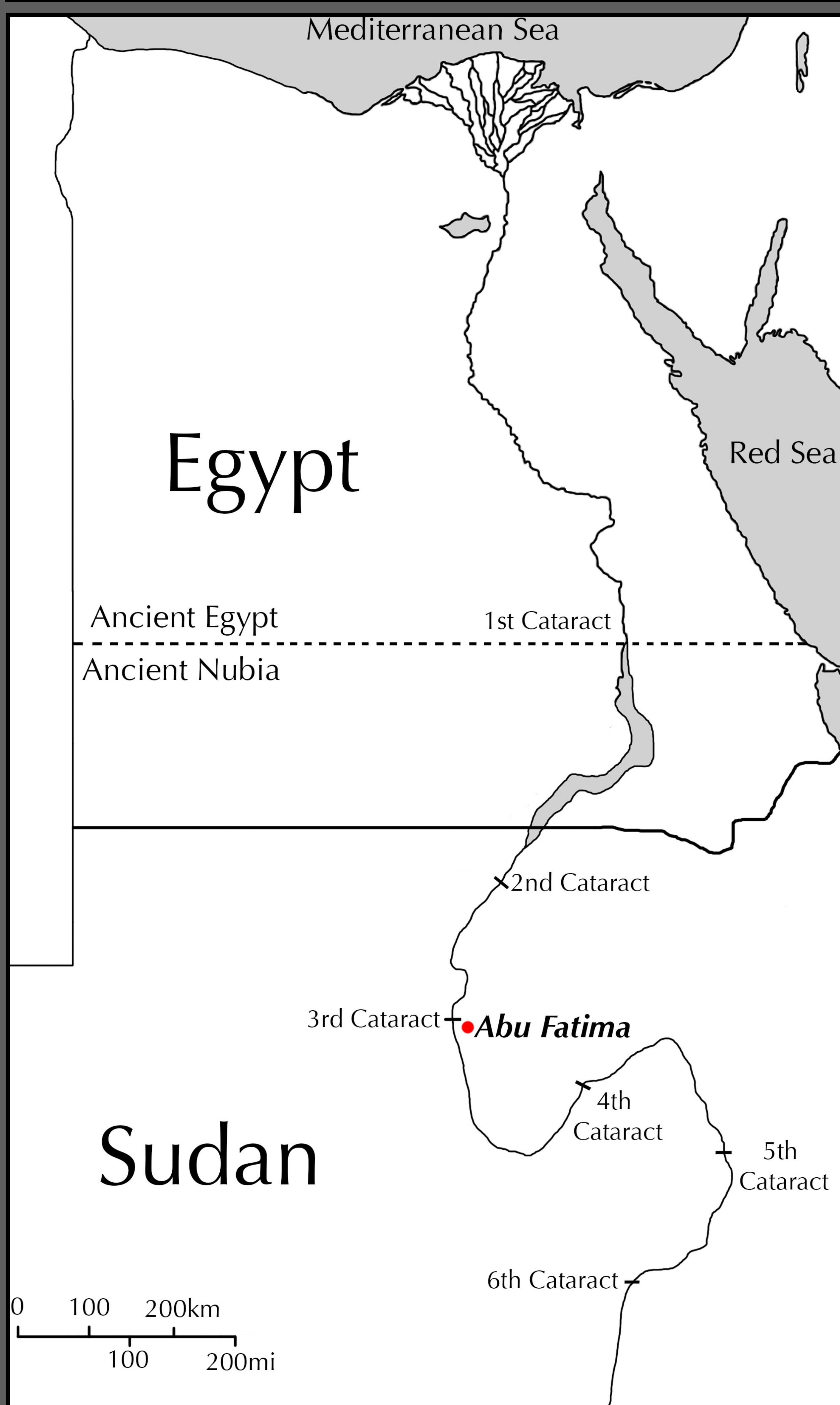


Figure 1

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 Kerman society.

Works Cited.

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Acknowledgements.

I would like to thank my friends and collaborators, Michele R. Buzon and Stuart Tyson Smith. Furthermore, this research would not have been possible without the support of Sudan's National Corporation for Antiquities and Museums and the local communities at Tombos and Abu Fatima. Funding for this project was provided by the National Science Foundation (BSC-1359210; BCS-1359496).