

Fritz-Hintze-Vorlesung / Fritz Hintze Lecture 2025

der Sudanarchäologischen Gesellschaft zu Berlin e.V. /
of the Sudan Archaeological Society Berlin e.V.
in partnership with Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin
& Al Neelain University, Khartoum

**Found – Lost – Re-discovered:
Excavating ancient Sudan in (museum) collections**

Prof. Dr. Michael Zach (University of Vienna)

13. November / 13 November 2025

18:30 Uhr / 6:30pm (CET), Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin & Online



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by Prof. Dr. Michael Zach (University of Vienna)

Willkommen/Welcome!

The 2025 Fritz Hintze Lecture of the Sudan Archaeological Society Berlin e.V. explores the theme of ‚Museum Archaeology‘, which has gained momentum since the outbreak of armed conflict in Sudan. This year’s Fritz Hintze Lecture is organised in partnership with Al-Neelain University, Khartoum, forming part of the conference ‚Sudan Archaeology in War: Current Research and Events, Future Challenges, and our Collective Responsibility‘ on 13 November 2025.

Date/time: Thursday, 13 November 2025, 6:30pm (CET)

Place: Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin, Hauptgebäude/ Main building (West Wing), Room 2091/92, Unter den Linden 6, 10117 Berlin

Link + QR code for Zoom registration:

<https://hu-berlin.zoom-x.de/meeting/register/kGD7Fpg8RC6jfKkrJagALA>

Contact: mail@sag-online.de



Lecture abstract

Sudanese artifacts excavated until ca. the mid-20th century either by amateurs or organised missions found their way to various museums worldwide as well as private collections. This often happened in recognition of institutional or private financial contributions to fieldwork activities. Other objects simply appeared at auctions, sometimes leaving the precise context of their discovery unknown. Material that was not thought to be of interest for museum collections went unrecorded or even was discarded during excavation. Saved artifacts often were allotted to different museums and, in several cases, later used in exchange for other objects of non-Sudanese origin. Therefore, fragments of one and the same artifact (originally stored in one museum) may be found in different collections today.

Another challenge when working with collections of Sudanese artifacts concerns the limited quality (or even loss) of museum records over time, also leaving details of the origin of many objects obscure. In addition, losses from looting and destruction affected European collections during World War II, as they affect Sudanese museums in the current armed conflict.

With the creation of so-called Nubian Galleries at several prominent museums putting objects from Sudan on permanent display, Middle Nile cultures gained more prominence worldwide. Digital images of artifacts from Sudan are only available in some cases. Being often incomplete, of limited quality and (often) accessibility, these still require a visit of the collections. In a general perspective, a full documentation of collection holdings will lead to exciting and important archaeological discoveries, while contributing to the preservation and promotion of Sudanese cultural heritage globally.

Prof. Dr. Michael Zach

Michael Zach is associate professor at the Department of African Studies at the University of Vienna. His research primarily focuses on Meroitic Studies and 19th century Austrian travelers to Sudan. He is especially interested in Meroitic art, iconography and chronology as well as the histories of Meroitic objects in Sudanese and international museums, many of which lack adequate documentation of their provenance. For many years, he has been working on locating ‘lost’ Meroitic artifacts in collections worldwide.

