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Wadi al-Jarf, the King Khufu's Harbor on the Red Sea coast: overview of the recent discoveries

Since 2011, a joint team of the Paris-Sorbonne University and the French Institute in Cairo (IFAO) has been excavating an exceptional harbor complex at Wadi al-Jarf along the Egyptian coast of the Red Sea. Considered now as the oldest harbor in the world, this massive installation dates back to the very beginning of the Fourth Dynasty. In 2013 the site has received a special reputation after the discovery of several hundreds of fragments of narrative and administrative papyri, the oldest inscribed papyrus ever discovered in Egypt so far. Some clearly name King Khufu and give important details and descriptions of activities in close relation to the construction of the Great Pyramid at Giza.

This lecture will first focus on the latest archaeological discoveries at the Wadi al-Jarf and then provide a quick overview on some of the papyri, which underline a complex organization and well-structured logistics for the royal projects and expeditions 4600 years ago.



Dr. Gregory Marouard is a specialist for urban, domestic and harbor archaeology. Since 2010, he has been a Research Associate in Egyptian Archaeology at the Oriental Institute. He received his PhD in Art History and Archaeology in 2010 from the University of Poitiers, France. Since 2011, he has been the senior archaeologist in charge of the excavations of the harbor of Khufu, a French Institute (IFAO), CNRS and Paris Sorbonne project directed by Professor Pierre Tallet. In June 2016, this project was awarded the prestigious Cino Del Duca prize in Archaeology by the French Academy. He is the co-director of the Tell Edfu Project (The Oriental Institute, University of Chicago) with Nadine Moeller (Associate Professor at the Oriental Institute), and has also directed several other projects in Egypt, including both the Oriental Institute Mission at Dendara and the Kom ed-Daha Survey (The Oriental Institute, University of Chicago Egypt Exploration Society Delta Survey).

For more information, please email nreast@humnet.ucla.edu