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## UNDERWATER ARCHAEOLOGY BENEATH THE PYRAMIDS OF THE BLACK PHARAOHS

A simply amazing story has appeared in National Geographic magazine this month (July 2, 2019, by Kristin Romey). It's online [here](#).



An expedition is investigating the burial chambers under some of the pyramids of Nuri in Sudan. Rising ground-water means that these are drowned in water, and so inaccessible. Indeed some may never have been accessible since ancient times. The expedition website is <http://www.nuripyramids.org/>.

### **Dive beneath the pyramids of Egypt's black pharaohs**

Somewhere below the surface of the kiddie-pool sized patch of brown water is the entrance to the 2,300-year-old tomb of a pharaoh named Nastasen. If I crane my neck back far enough, I can just make out the eastern flank of his pyramid rising nearly three stories above me.

It's a sweltering morning in the desert of northern Sudan, the land of Nubia in the time of the pharaohs. Sweat drips into the dive mask hung around my neck as I negotiate my way down a narrow, ancient staircase cut deep into the bedrock. Waterproof flashlights clank from each wrist, and a 20-pound weight belt is slung commando-style across my chest. An emergency container of air, no bigger than a can of hairspray, is secured uncomfortably in the small of my back.

At the bottom of the stairs, archaeologist and National Geographic grantee [Pearce Paul Creasman](#) is standing chest-deep in the muddy water. "It's really deep today," he warns. "There's not going to be any headroom in the first chamber."

It's a fascinating article, and some gorgeous photographs. Apparently there is a TV programme too: "Black Pharaohs: Sunken Treasures", to be broadcast today in the US.

The article ends:

On our final dive, Creasman and I float silently in water in the back chamber of the tomb, hovering above what may very well be Nastasen's undisturbed sarcophagus. We talk about the team's goal for 2020: to excavate the pharaoh's 2,300-year-old submerged royal burial chambers. It's an audacious aim and a huge logistical challenge, but Creasman is optimistic.

"I think we finally have the technology to be able to tell the story of Nuri, to fill in the blanks of what happened here," he says. "It's a remarkable point in history that so few know about. It's a story that deserves to be told."

**Read it all.**

(Note that the article is easier to understand if you first look at the map of where they are diving, in the middle of the page!)

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