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## Egypt and Nubia

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### THE EGYPTIAN EMPIRE IN NUBIA IN THE LATE BRONZE AGE (c. 1550–1070 BCE)

#### *Introduction: self-definition and the imperial concept in Egypt*

There can be little doubt that the Egyptian pharaohs and the elite of the New Kingdom viewed themselves as rulers of an empire. This universal rule is clearly expressed in royal imagery and terminology (Grimal 1986). The pharaoh is styled as the “Ruler of all that sun encircles” and from the mid-18th Dynasty the titles “King of kings” and “Ruler of the rulers,” with the variants “Lion” or “Sun of the Rulers,” emphasize pharaoh’s preeminence among other monarchs. The imagery of kingship is of the all-conquering heroic ruler subjecting all foreign lands. The king in human form smites his enemies. Or, as the celestial conqueror in the form of the sphinx, he tramples them under foot. In the reigns of Amenhotep III and Akhenaten this imagery was extended to the king’s wife who became the conqueror of the female enemies of Egypt, appearing like her husband in both human and sphinx forms (Morkot 1986). The appropriate terminology also appeared; Queen Tiye became “Mistress of all women” and “Great of terror in the foreign lands.” Empire, for the Egyptians, equals force – “all lands are under his feet.” This metaphor is graphically expressed in the royal footstools and painted paths decorated with images of bound foreign rulers, crushed by pharaoh as he walked or sat.

This imagery and terminology indicates that the Egyptian attitude to their empire was universally applied irrespective of the peoples or countries. Their response to their subjects was not distinguished in racial terms; all were foreign. Practically, however, there is evidence that the Egyptians did have different responses to the control, integration, and administration of African and Asian regions. The Egyptian response to Nubia differed from the response to Asia for a number of reasons, both historic and geographic. In this chapter, however, I will limit my discussion to the relations between Egypt and Nubia.

*Changing interpretations of the Egyptian empire in Nubia*

In 1964, Adams summarized the then generally accepted view of Egypt's relationship with Nubia during the Late Bronze Age (New Kingdom, *c.* 1550–1070 BCE), and offered his own interpretation based upon preliminary results of the UNESCO campaign in Nubia. The UNESCO campaign, associated with construction of the Aswan dam, produced a vast amount of new archaeological and epigraphic material, not all of which has yet been published or synthesized. While rejecting many of the older interpretations that were based on prejudicial and problematic premises, Adams' (1964, 1977) characterization of the Egyptian empire still perpetuated a number of views established at the beginning of the twentieth century.

A significant change in Egyptological attitudes to the Egyptian empire in Nubia is found in the conference papers and syntheses of the late 1970s and early 1980s (e.g., Kemp 1978; Frandsen 1979; Leclant 1980; O'Connor in Trigger *et al.* 1983; Israelit-Groll 1983). These works embraced not only new material, but also new approaches within archaeology. All were rooted in the evidence, and not in theory building. They were, nevertheless, informed by contemporary theoretical approaches to imperialism. Prominent features of these studies include the emphasis on the role of ideology in imperial expansion, and a questioning of the role of trade and the assumption that empires were necessarily economic exploiters. Kemp, Frandsen, and O'Connor particularly emphasize the integration of local elites into Egyptian imperial administration and argue against the direct exploitation model.

More recently, S. T. Smith (1991) has been among the few Egyptologists to discuss theoretical models of imperialism. Finding the arguments in Eisenstadt (1979) to be somewhat overgeneralized, he detects more relevance for Egyptian activities in Nubia in the model proposed by Horvath (1972) and Bartel (1980, 1985) and the specific applications of D'Altroy and Earle (1985) and Alcock (1989). Building on this theoretical discussion, Smith (1995) went on to publish the material from the UNESCO excavations at Askut, and offered a model for the economics and ideology of imperialism in Nubia. A further result of the UNESCO Nubian campaign of the 1960s was the publication of the tombs of indigenous Nubian princes of the 18th Dynasty at Debeira (Säve-Söderbergh 1967–8; Säve-Söderbergh and Troy 1991) and Toshka (Simpson 1963). Kemp, O'Connor, and Frandsen had already emphasized the role of these individuals, but Säve-Söderbergh and Troy (1991) provided an important reappraisal in the light of the new material.

With the exception of these studies, the period of the Egyptian New Kingdom occupation of Nubia has been rather neglected in recent years. This is due in large part to an understandable change in attitudes within Nubian studies itself, laying much greater emphasis on indigenous phases rather than on Egyptian "colonial" monuments.

My approach (Morkot 1994, outlined in Morkot 1987) examines the Egyptian domination of Nubia in the New Kingdom through various themes: military, political geography (Morkot 1991b), administration, economics (Morkot 1995a), and ideology. In considering all of these separate issues, I have emphasized the chronological framework. That is, New Kingdom Egyptian rule in Nubia lasted for close to 500 years. Clearly there must have been considerable changes over that period. One specific area that I wished to address was the “collapse” or end of imperial rule and its aftermath.

The older interpretation of Egyptian imperialism in Nubia saw Egypt as an active-progressive center that subordinated and transformed a passive and backward periphery. With the end of Egyptian involvement, Nubia then “reverted.” This view has been challenged and modified by a number of recent writers, but the idea of reversion to some form of nomadic or “tribal” society has persisted. In contrast, I view the Kushite Kingdom that (eventually) came to dominate Egypt as the “25th Dynasty” (c. 740–656 BCE) as a “successor state,” the development of which is inextricable from the imperial system of the Egyptian New Kingdom (see below). Indeed, to view this successor as *immediately* filling the power vacuum left by Egyptian withdrawal, if not actually being responsible for that withdrawal, itself necessitates a radical revision of our interpretation of the limits of Egyptian control.

Earlier archaeologists proposed that the period of Egyptian rule was marked by a decline in population in the late New Kingdom, and argued that the end of the period was marked by hydraulic crisis that contributed to imperial collapse. Although this interpretation is now generally rejected, many of the conclusions that derive from it are still accepted. The idea that the Egyptians simply left Nubia in c. 1070 BCE and that nothing happened until the Kushite Kingdom appeared some 300 years later is inherently unlikely. This is not an interpretation suggested by even the most cursory glance at other postimperial and post-colonial societies. Working from the premises that: (1) there was no reason to accept that there was a major depopulation of Nubia during the Late New Kingdom, and (2) there was no hiatus in either archaeology or history, led me to consider, among other alternatives, that there was indeed a flaw in our chronological interpretation (James *et al.* 1991). I still feel that this highly controversial alternative is worth considering.

Other scholars have also challenged conventional interpretations. Bruce Williams (1980) offered a reinterpretation of the post-New Kingdom archaeology of Lower Nubia. And David O'Connor (1987, 1991) questioned the location of some Nubian territories. This has led to a rethinking of how far the Egyptians expanded and campaigned in Nubia, and Nubian responses to Egyptian imperial expansion. S. T. Smith (1991: 94 n.12) also rejects the depopulation theory.

The most significant questions that arise from this questioning of traditional interpretations are:

- 1 Was the administration of Nubia entirely controlled by “colonial” Egyptians?
- 2 Were there large numbers of Egyptian settlers in Nubia?
- 3 Was the Egyptian economic exploitation of Nubia one-sided plunder?
- 4 Was the Egyptian response to Nubia fundamentally different from her response to Asia?
- 5 Did a hydraulic crisis cause the population of Nubia to decline rapidly from the later-18th Dynasty onwards resulting in an almost depopulated country by the end of the viceregal period?

### *Egyptian policy in Nubia in the Old and Middle Kingdom*

The Egyptian New Kingdom presence in Nubia cannot be considered *in vacuo*, but has to be seen as the third phase of a complex relationship that stretched back for some 2000-plus years.

Pending the publication of the material from the Old Kingdom Town site at Buhen (being undertaken by David O’Connor), which will certainly require some reevaluation of our current understandings, the relationship between Egypt and Nubia in the Egyptian Early-Dynastic/Old Kingdom may be summarized as follows. In the late Predynastic phase, equivalent to the Nubian A-Group (*c.* 5000–3000 BCE; Trigger’s Early Nubian, Adams’ A-Horizon) there were strong trading contacts between the two regions. These have recently been summarized by H. S. Smith (1991). The radical hypothesis of Bruce Williams (1980) – that the pharaonic monarchy first appeared in Nubia during this period – has been rejected by the majority of both Egyptologists and Nubian archaeologists. There is now more material from Abydos that predates the Nubian material Williams worked with. Indeed, the archaeological material from Abydos, Hierakonpolis, and other sites further north is forcing a complete reevaluation of the emergence of the pharaonic state. Nevertheless, Williams was certainly justified in revising the earlier model that saw A-Group society as non-hierarchical. It is clear that during the period of state formation in Egypt, Nubia was undergoing a similar process. This was probably due in large part to increased economic contacts between the two regions. By the time of the unification of Egypt there were three principal powers in Lower Nubia – and they may have been united into one state based at Qustul. However, we have no documentary evidence to illuminate this, and the evidence at present is derived from the cemetery sites of Seyala (H. S. Smith 1994) and Qustul (B. B. Williams 1986, 1992).

Egyptian military expansion into Nubia in the 1st Dynasty seems to have been an attempt to suppress a powerful southern neighbor (H. S. Smith 1991). However, there is no evidence of what motivated Egyptian actions. Was Nubia somehow involved militarily in Egypt? There is a consensus among archaeologists working in Nubia that the indigenous population was driven out by the Egyptian campaigns and that for the major part of the Egyptian Old Kingdom the Nubians adopted a nomadic lifestyle in the surrounding semi-desert regions.

Table 9.1. *Comparative chronology: Egypt and Nubia*

Central Sudan	Upper Nubia	Lower Nubia	Egypt	Near East
?	?	A Group	Pre-Dynastic	EB I
?	?		Early Dynastic	EARLY EB II BRONZE
?	Pre-Kerma		Old Kingdom	EB III
?	Kerma	C Group	1st IP	MB I
?			Middle Kingdom	MIDDLE MB II A BRONZE
?			2nd IP	MB II B
?	Province of Kush and independent princes	Province of Wawat	New Kingdom	LATE BRONZE
	"Kurru"		3rd IP	Iron I A B
Napatan	Napatan	25th Dynasty		Iron II A-B C
			Late	Persian
Meroitic	Meroitic	Meroitic	Ptolemaic	Hellenistic
			Roman	Roman
Post-Pyramidal Meroitic	Ballana	Ballana	Byzantine	Byzantine
Kingdom of Alwa	Kingdom of Makouria	Kingdom of Nubatia		

The strong cultural similarities with people who appear in Nubia in the late Old Kingdom suggest that they may have regained control of the Lower Nubian Nile valley in the 5th Dynasty – perhaps forced back into the valley by increasing desiccation of surrounding regions. It is also possible that while adopting a *semi-nomadic* lifestyle they had continued to come into the Nile valley seasonally to raise crops.

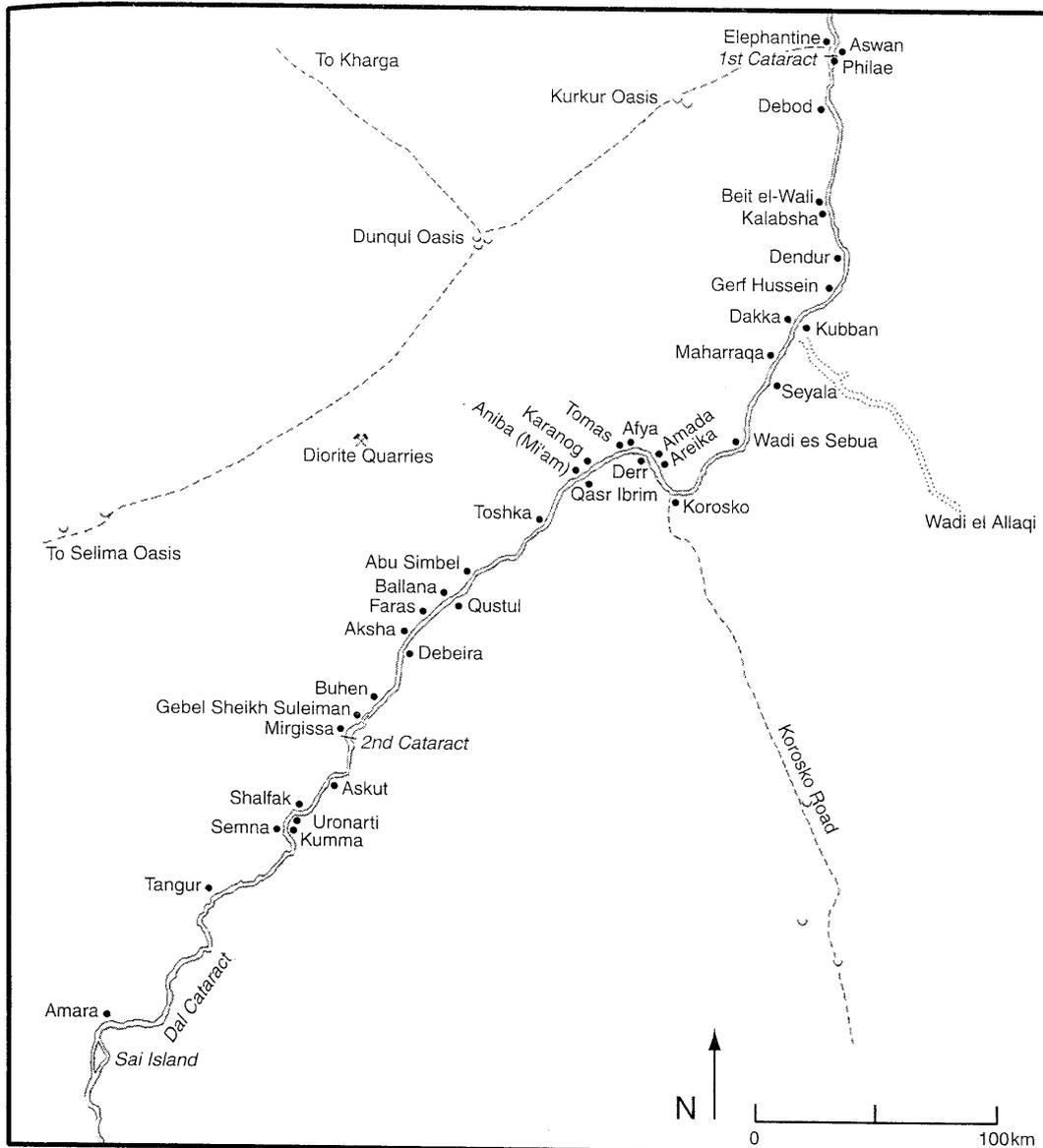
The Egyptian presence in Nubia during the Old Kingdom seems to have been sporadic rather than constant. S. T. Smith (1991: 83) characterizes this phase as an example of Horvath and Bartel's "Eradication Imperialism." Although there is evidence of direct exploitation of resources, notably the diorite from the quarries at Toshka to the west of Buhen, the full economic importance of Nubia to Egypt is still unclear. It might be assumed that some gold and semi-precious stones were acquired from the deserts and presumably from trade with Upper Nubia, and, through Upper Nubia, with the central Sudan. The excavations at Kerma are now producing material from the so-called pre-Kerma phases, and it is likely that the center was already emerging as a point of contact between the Egyptians and Nubians.

The activities of the Middle Kingdom pharaohs began with military forays in the 11th Dynasty. Again Nubia seems to have been divided into multiple states with powerful rulers, some of whom may have already adopted pharaonic style (Morkot 1999a). Middle Kingdom military activities were prolonged, continuing into the reigns of 12th Dynasty rulers Amenemhat I and Senusret I. One official's rock inscription records that he had been campaigning in Nubia for twenty years on behalf of pharaoh. As in the Old Kingdom, there seems to have been an attempt to completely subjugate the population, although this time not to force them out of the country. References to crop destruction, felling of trees, and razing of villages indicate the intensity of the campaigns. The Egyptians built a series of massive fortresses – but these were for control of the Nile traffic. Most are situated around the 2nd Cataract, with Buhen the major depot at the northern end (see Fig. 9.1). Two other major forts controlled the Nile valley in Lower Nubia.

The extent to which the Egyptians integrated the Nubian population in this phase is still questionable. There is archaeological evidence for a flourishing local culture, and conventional interpretations assume that the Egyptians were not interested in the indigenous population. Instead, the focus of attention was the trade with the south. This phase can be seen as an example of Horvath and Bartel's "Equilibrium Imperialism" (S. T. Smith 1991: 83). It ended with Egypt's withdrawal. Having initially supported the Kerma "state" as a trading partner, perhaps militarily, Kerma's power grew to such an extent that it was able to take over Lower Nubia (a cause or result of Egyptian withdrawal).

### *Military expansion into Nubia in the New Kingdom (c. 1555–1070 BCE)*

The process of New Kingdom Egyptian military expansion into Nubia has been reasonably clear for a long time from the evidence of hieroglyphic inscriptions and graffiti. Relatively little new material has come to light in recent years, and that which has has tended to add detail rather than radically alter our reconstruction of events. Nevertheless, the scholarly literature still tends to underemphasize the time and effort required for the Egyptians to gain control of Nubia as



9.1 Lower Nubia.

far as the 4th Nile Cataract. Egyptian rule in Nubia during the Late Bronze Age (New Kingdom) lasted altogether for about 500 years, of which the phase of expansion amounted to a full hundred years. (Note: in the following discussion, I follow conventional chronological terminology; dates written as +“150,” for example, are those of Egyptian domination calculated from year 1 of the reign of Kamose, *c.* 1555 BCE).

It was with the three military campaigns during the co-reign of Hatshepsut and Thutmose III (+63–84) that Egyptian domination as far as the 3rd Cataract was assured and some significant control was gained over the region as far as the 4th Cataract. Thutmose III did not return to Nubia for twenty-five years (+109), when he sailed through the Dongola Reach as far as Gebel Barkal. He claims to have been the first pharaoh to do this – and there is no evidence to the contrary. This year therefore marks the establishment of the Egyptian frontier at the 4th Cataract. Military actions following his reign are relatively few and appear to have been directed principally against desert gold-mining regions. A period

of apparent peace followed (+116–212), in which diplomacy rather than war dominated Egyptian foreign policy and Nubian “luxuries” were the mainstay of international gift-exchange. From the reign of Horemheb (+215–246) on, a different situation seems to have prevailed in military activities in the south. Although much of the Nile valley appears to have remained peaceful, the regions on the southern frontier were increasingly dominated by the “rebellions” of Irem (O’Connor 1987).

The end of Egyptian rule in Nubia is still rather obscure. The evidence suggests that the viceregal government continued to operate normally until after the reign of Ramesses VI (+397–403). At some point in the late 20th Dynasty, possibly as late as the reign of Ramesses XI (+438–468), the southern province of Kush (located between the 2nd and 3rd Cataracts) was abandoned. The frontier was redrawn at the 2nd Cataract. Evidence from the administrative capital of Kush – Amara West – *suggests* that it was systematically closed down. This in itself implies that either events in Egypt or the emergence of an indigenous power in southern Nubia were causing problems. The middle years of Ramesses XI saw the viceroy active in Egypt itself. The last decade of his reign witnessed civil war and campaigns *against* the viceroy who was still in control of Lower Nubia and the provincial capital, Aniba.

The New Kingdom phase of imperial expansion in Nubia, closely paralleled in western Asia, differed from previous expansions in several ways. First, there was a clear policy of integrating the people and using them within the administration rather than removing them or (apparently) ignoring them. Second, the time factor is important. Including the period of expansion, New Kingdom Egyptian presence in Nubia lasted for nearly 500 years, as opposed to the intermittent presence during the Old Kingdom (400 years) and the confined occupation of the Middle Kingdom (260 years). Third, Egyptian ideology also reflects a different attitude. From the mid-18th Dynasty on, a distinctly imperial terminology developed. This certainly grew out of the traditional titles and images of pharaohs, but included new elements that acknowledged the superiority of the pharaoh among other rulers: that is, “King of Kings” and “Ruler of the Rulers” (Grimal 1986; also see Lorton 1974 who gives different renderings of these titles).

### *Political geography and administrative structures*

The major distinction between the model I have proposed (Morkot 1987, 1991b, 1994) and the conventional Egyptological model of imperialism concerns the limits of Egyptian control in Nubia, both geographical and integrative.

Most studies have assumed that the regions of Nubia directly integrated into the viceregal administration extended from the 1st Cataract (immediately south of Aswan) to the 4th Cataract. This region was divided into two provinces, Wawat and Kush. Wawat, in Lower Nubia, extended from the 1st to the 2nd Cataract, and Kush, from the 2nd to the 4th Cataract. In contrast, I have pre-

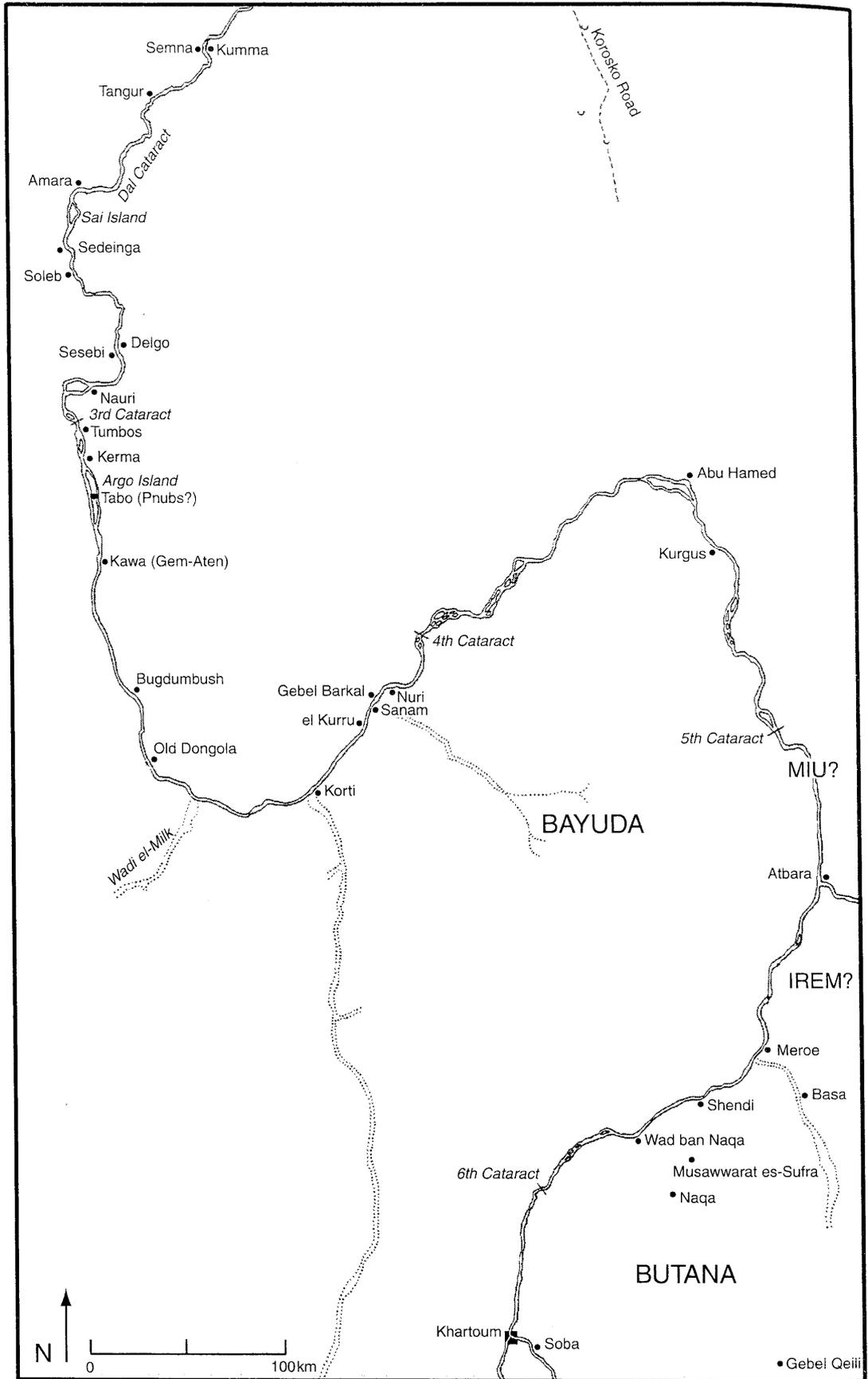
sented (Morkot 1991b) a very different model for the region south of the 2nd Cataract. I argue that the viceregal domain of Kush extended only from the 2nd to the 3rd Cataract. The region south, between the 3rd and 4th Cataracts, was a frontier zone that came under the control of the "Overseers of Southern Foreign Lands." It was also called Kush. The major Egyptian foundations in Kush lie to the north of the 3rd Cataract. They are the fortress of Sai and the temple-towns of Soleb, Sedeinga, Sesebi, and Amara West (see Fig. 9.2). South of the 3rd Cataract, New Kingdom temples have been identified only at Kawa and at Gebel Barkal. Recent excavations have also identified New Kingdom material at Kerma.

Arguments against my model (e.g., Kemp 1991) have emphasized that there has been relatively little survey and excavation in the 3rd–4th Cataract region. Therefore, the fact that there have been few New Kingdom sites identified does not mean that they were not there; they simply await discovery. However, this ignores my key argument concerning the *nature* of the sites north of the 3rd Cataract (see below). Kemp (1972a, 1972b, 1978) seems to agree with a generally held view of New Kingdom population growth. He views settlement in this region as essentially expansionist; the number of towns increased over time. In consequence, he concludes that the distribution of the towns was not commensurate with the agricultural potential of the region. In marked contrast, I have emphasized the distinctive nature and short duration of the sites in this region.

The building of new temple-towns in the Abri-Delgo Reach of Upper Nubia began about 150 years after Egyptian reoccupation of Nubia. This part of Upper Nubia had been first occupied in the war against Kerma and was continuously occupied, with a major fortress at Sai. The region was fertile, although not so productive as areas south of the 3rd Cataract, and was within a gold-producing region (although its extent remains unclear). Whether the new temple-towns were built to accommodate an expanding population from Egypt remains questionable, although with the expansion of the Lower Nubian system, land may have been needed to settle if not Egyptian "colonists," then Nubians or Egypto-Nubians. Having made a decision to absorb this area, the administration created settlements that would establish an integrated local economy, something a fortress did not do.

Expansion in the Abri-Delgo Reach follows closely upon what seems to have been a conscious reorganization of the administration of Nubia sometime during the reign of Amenhotep II (+116–139) or Thutmose IV (+139–148). The initial development of the imperial administration seems to have rapidly followed military expansion, creating offices, etc., as circumstances dictated. The subsequent period of consolidation and, apparently, relative peace saw a reorganization directly paralleling that of the Egyptian administration. There were two provinces headed by the viceroy, each with its own deputy (*idnu*). The religious institutions and the military had their own heads.

The continued building works within the Abri-Delgo region suggest that



9.2 Upper Nubia.

political and ideological factors, rather than purely agricultural concerns, were important in its development. A parallel may be noted to the situation in the peripheries of the Late Assyrian Empire, discussed by Liverani (1979, 1990: 135–43), with the duty of the virtuous king to extend cosmic order, irrigate arid land, and build towns. The cultic emphases and associations with rebirth evident in the Nubian temples might go some way to support the interpretation of the building campaigns as political and religious acts.

In sum, I see the temple-towns of the Abri-Delgo Reach not as a continuing urban expansion into this region of Nubia, but as a series of foundations of much more limited duration. These towns served briefly as the principal administrative centers of specific reigns and were later replaced. As such, they parallel the “Houses of millions of years” in Egypt itself, their estates being reallocated to newer foundations. Of course, with estates in the vicinity of the settlements they would not have been completely abandoned – but the official class would have moved. The sequence of the building and duration of the sites further suggest that there was not continuous expansion. The fortress of Sai belongs to the early–mid New Kingdom phase, followed by Soleb and Sedeinga (Amenhotep III, reused by Tutankhamun), Sesebi (Akhenaten, reused by Sety I) and Amara West (Sety I to the late 20th Dynasty).

The nature of these “urban” centers themselves must also be considered (Trigger 1985: 348; Hassan 1993; O’Connor 1993). In Nubia, as in Egypt, they were limited in number and functioned as elite residential, administrative, and cult centers rather than as residential centers for agricultural workers. Some were also production centers and had artisan populations. However, much of the artisan production would have been for the state and the elite and not for “sale” to the people cultivating the land. Other centers would have served as depots for the supply of military installations. The system of temple-town economies proposed by Trigger (1965: 109), Kemp (1972a; 1972b: 661, 667; 1978), and Frandsen (1979) provides a model for the integration of the Nubian towns and hinterland, and also for the acculturation of the indigenous population. It should be emphasized that the “urban” centers in Nubia, which were limited to perhaps half-a-dozen in Wawat and the same in Kush, and which were not all occupied at the same time, were elite centers. The majority of the population was dispersed across the agricultural land, probably in the scattered ribbon-settlements that prevailed in the region until recently. In sum, evidence from the towns of the Abri-Delgo Reach suggests that they functioned as the main administrative centers of the province of Kush during the viceregal period.

What then was the nature of Egyptian control in the 3rd–4th Cataract “frontier zone” region? There has been considerably less survey and excavation in this area. An Egyptian fortress is known to have existed somewhere in the region of Gebel Barkal and the 4th Cataract. We know that this fortress was later called Napata, but its exact location is uncertain. Several scholars have argued that Napata served as the major viceregal center. However, it seems extremely

unlikely that the principal administrative center would have been placed on the southernmost frontier, and evidence from further north contradicts this interpretation. As discussed above, I have proposed that the 3rd–4th Cataract region was left in the direct control of indigenous rulers who received military support for their regimes along with economic and other benefits. In return, they may have been directly responsible for the acquisition and transmission of “luxury” commodities, such as ivory and ebony, through trade with the central Sudanese savanna. The title “Overseer of the Southern Foreign Lands” held by the viceroys has been considered a “poetic variant” of the usual viceregal designation. However, other officials, who seem to constitute a homogeneous group, also used the title. They include the viceroys, the Chief of Bowmen of Kush (the head of the militia in Nubia), and others who are almost certainly Kushite princes. Significantly, the local rulers of Lower Nubia did not hold this title. It thus seems reasonable to conclude that it designated, quite specifically, control of the part of Kush that was *not* integrated as a province, but nonetheless owed allegiance to the imperial administration. The role of the indigenous rulers in this region is considered further below.

This model presents the 3rd–4th Cataract as an imperial margin, with symbolic frontiers at Gebel Barkal and the 4th Cataract (riverine routes) and at Kurgus/Abu Hamed (desert routes). Arguing that the region between the 3rd and 4th Cataracts was not fully integrated into the viceregal administration has a number of important implications. First, it suggests that the Egyptian system of temple-town economies was not introduced in this area and that locally prevailing economies persisted. Second, there would not have been as widespread acculturation of the non-elite population as appears to be found in the integrated parts of Nubia. This in itself has significant implications for the succeeding post-imperial phase, discussed below. Some archaeological support for this interpretation now seems to be emerging. During ten years of excavation in the Debba Bend of the Dongola Reach, K. Grzymiski and his team have identified no Egyptian material and conclude that during the New Kingdom this area was inhabited by a non-Egyptianized indigenous population (Grzymiski 1997).

### *The local elites*

There has been no major synthetic prosopography of the New Kingdom administration of Nubia in recent years. The doctoral dissertations of Michel Dewachter (1978) and Ingeborg Müller (1979) remain unpublished and any attempt to assess the administration of Nubia is thrown back on the original study of Reisner (1920) and a mass of articles and excavation reports. Most recently, Torgny Säve-Söderbergh and Lana Troy (1991) have reassessed the evidence for the indigenous princes of Lower Nubia in the New Kingdom. The importance of these rulers to the viceregal administration had already been emphasized by Kemp (1978), Frandsen (1979), O'Connor (in Trigger *et al.* 1983), and others. While the role and importance of the princes is beyond

doubt, there has been little study of the remainder of the administration and the role of other local elites.

Integration of the Nubian elite began early in the phase of imperial expansion. The children of rulers of Upper Nubia were sent to Egypt to be raised in the palace from the reign of Thutmose II (+60–63) onwards. By the co-reign of Hatshepsut and Thutmose III (+63–84) members of the ruling families of Lower Nubia had adopted Egyptian names in addition to their Kushite ones, and were employed within the provincial administration. This suggests that they too had been educated at the Egyptian court from an even earlier date (perhaps under Thutmose I, +49–60). The titles of local rulers persisted into the later 18th and 19th Dynasties, but their names are purely Egyptian; indigenous names have been dropped. The elites buried in the main centers of Lower Nubia from the same period all had Egyptian names and styles of burial. Lacking skeletal material, it is hard to *prove* that they were Nubians rather than Egyptian settlers.

The princes of Lower Nubia do not appear to have opposed the Egyptian authorities, although our evidence is, of course, one-sided. Upper Nubia, however, had proven more difficult to absorb. Initially the power of the Kerma kingdom had to be broken, and there was constant “rebellion” in the first century of Egyptian activity. Such factors may have led the Egyptians to use education at the Egyptian court, gift, and military support, and to “allow” a degree of autonomy, in order to maintain their authority in the 3rd–4th Cataract region.

The binding of the administration to the central government was certainly achieved through the distribution of “gift.” A few texts record the installation of the viceroy and his first tour of duty accompanied by the royal envoys, on which occasion he “rewarded” the local officials. Doubtless gift/reward was given on other important royal occasions, such as accession and jubilee. Instances of individual reward are also known.

The binding of local elites through marriage to the Egyptian crown is a more obscure issue. Despite the very clear instances of marriage between pharaohs and Asiatic princesses detailed in the Amarna archive, Egyptologists have generally persisted in arguing that pharaohs did not marry Kushite women (e.g., Frandsen 1979). This stands in contrast to the claims of some earlier Egyptologists who suggested, on the basis of superficial evidence, that some Great Royal Wives were of Nubian origin (e.g., Tiye and Nefertari). This ambivalent attitude is probably best regarded as a residue from older prejudices. While direct positive evidence is lacking, there is a strong likelihood that pharaohs did marry Kushite women.

It should also be noted that although Egyptian pharaohs married the daughters of many Asiatic rulers, policy decreed that daughters of pharaohs were not sent to be wives of foreign rulers (Schulman 1979). Requests for daughters of pharaoh by the kings of Mitanni and Assyria/Babylon were apparently refused. This contrasts with the Hittite policy by which daughters were given as wives to foreign rulers or their heirs, with a contract to ensure that the Hittite princess would be chief wife and chief queen, and that her son would be eventual king (Schulman 1979). The effect was an expansion of the Hittite empire through blood.

Another major tool in the binding of Egypt and the Nubian provinces was religion. The presence of Egypt in Nubia in the New Kingdom is seen most obviously in the temple building of the late 18th and early 19th Dynasties. Yet the very size and number of these edifices has in the past posed a problem for historians of Nubia, especially when allied with presumptions about the region's history. Earlier literature rarely regarded the temples as centers of religious belief. Instead they were seen as massive structures of limited function, built to overawe the indigenous population, or even to preside over a deserted no-man's land.

While peculiarly local features are apparent in the iconography and associations of the kings in the Nubian temples (as is common in many other imperial contexts; see Alcock and Brumfiel, this volume), the function of the temples reflects current trends within Egypt itself. The development of Egyptian religion and particularly of the royal cult in Nubia is important because, most obviously, it informs on the ideology that the Egyptians wished to impose on their dependencies. It is also significant when the later phases of Kushite history are examined. The "Egyptianization" of the Napatan and Meroitic periods (see below) has been seen as a residue of the years of occupation, gradually dissipated through the reassertion of indigenous phenomena. The importance of the Amun cult in the Meroitic period is an obvious example of continuing Egyptian influence.

Habachi (1969), followed by Trigger (1976), Kemp (1978), and others, urged that the Nubian temples should be looked at within the broader context of New Kingdom Egypt and not in isolation. Habachi's (1969) fundamental study of the deification of Ramesses II in Nubia showed it to be essentially the same process as found throughout Egypt. Even so, the royal cult generally has been interpreted as a manifestation of political power lacking religious content (Habachi 1969). Price (1984) critiqued similar attitudes in his discussion of the relationship between religion and politics in interpretations of the Roman imperial cult. He (1984: 9–10) did not deny the obvious political aspects of the imperial cult, but emphasized that initiatives could come from below, and need not all be imposed by central authority. This can be paralleled in New Kingdom Nubia where private inscriptions invoke living and dead rulers. The endowment of royal cult images by members of the elite doubtless guaranteed prestige and may have had economic benefits, but discussions of these have tended to emphasize the economic rather than religious aspects. As in Egypt, Roman imperial cults did not endure long after the emperor's death. Deceased emperors and pharaohs joined the ranks of the gods, but the most potent form of cult was that of the living ruler. The organization and exploitation of the Roman imperial cult by local elites as detailed by Price has parallels with the pharaonic cult in Nubia.

Many members of the Nubian elite also held religious offices, whether of the royal or of other cults. Female members of the elite, particularly, were involved in religion as chantresses, singers, and Chief of the Harem of local deities. As in Egypt itself, there was no church–state divide. Members of the same elite families held offices in civil, religious, and military institutions (Morkot 1994: ch. 6). The ritual of Egyptian religion involved festivals focusing on a processional "appearance" by the god. When that god was also a manifestation of, or merged

with, the living ruler, there must have been a further binding of the subject people with the dominant state and its ruler. Participation in these festivals, and the gifts of food and other commodities that are associated with them, must have served an important role in cementing the relationships between rulers and subjects.

The acculturation of Nubia's non-elite is more difficult to assess. Adams (1964: 107–8; 1977) and others, following Cecil Firth, proposed that after the expansion of Egyptian power in Nubia in the early 18th Dynasty (+5–100) there was a rapid recession, and because of hydraulic crisis a decline in the population, throughout the later 18th (+185–246) and 19th (+246–356) Dynasties. Adams (1964: 244–5) suggests that “by the end of the 18th Dynasty almost all productive activity in the region had probably ceased.” However, the apparent disappearance of a large proportion of the indigenous population in the 18th Dynasty (presumed to have been retreating into Upper Nubia) may in fact have been due to a rapid acculturation and a reorganization of the agrarian economy around the Egyptian towns. Adams (1964: 106; 1977: 235–40) argues against acculturation as a satisfactory explanation, but the evidence presented by Säve-Söderbergh and Troy (1991) suggests the contrary. The Scandinavian Joint Expedition found graves of relatively late New Kingdom date that continued typical Nubian burial traditions but contained entirely Egyptian objects (Säve-Söderbergh 1967–8; Säve-Söderbergh and Troy 1991). With the imposition of a redistributive economy the products that were handed out, and therefore the objects recovered, would have been typically Egyptian in style. It remains difficult to assess to what extent the basic features of indigenous cultures may have survived masked by Egyptian material culture.

If we accept that the majority of Nubian officials were indigenes then we raise a number of questions about what would have happened at the end of the New Kingdom. Most significantly, would they have attempted to carve out a separate state for themselves? I turn to this issue below.

### *Economy*

The older view of Egyptian economic activity in Nubia was one of exploitation. Egypt simply plundered Nubia of its resources – mineral (principally gold, but also various stones), animal (ivory, hides, ostrich feathers), vegetable (ebony), and human (as slaves). Kemp (1978), particularly, has argued that economic exploitation was a prime motive in Egyptian imperial expansion. He quite rightly stresses the investment by the Egyptians in temple building, defense, and administration, and suggests that the reorganization of local economies around the temples would have resulted in much of the local agricultural production being consumed locally. As S. T. Smith (1991: 81–2) points out, other scholars from various backgrounds have also regarded economic exploitation as significant to imperialism. He suggests that the Egyptian presence in Nubia during the New Kingdom may therefore be seen as a manifestation of “Acculturation Colonialism” (1991: 92–3).

The most recent discussions of the economy of Nubia during the New Kingdom (Morkot 1995a; S. T. Smith 1995) do not reject Kemp's arguments, but recognize that there was both investment *and* significant economic exploitation. In Lower Nubia agriculturally productive land was always much more limited than in the broad flood plain of Egypt. This would have dictated a rather dispersed settlement pattern. And even if the land was intensively cultivated, its agricultural potential was limited. Throughout history, Lower Nubia has never supported much more than a subsistence agricultural economy, with the exception of date-production. Its importance to Egypt was as a source of vast mineral wealth, notably the gold of the Eastern Desert.

Upper Nubia was more productive agriculturally. The results of a recent survey have shown that the Nile flowed through three river channels in the Dongola basin during the Kerma period (*c.* 2000–1500 BCE). It is unknown whether these still functioned in New Kingdom times. If they did, we will have to reconsider the potential of the region as an arable producer. It is certain that this was a major cattle-pasturing region during the New Kingdom. However, much of its importance must have been as the access route to the luxury commodities of the central Sudanese savanna.

The model of an internal redistributive economy based to a considerable extent upon the temple-towns argues against the simple plundering of Nubia's resources. Land was held by the religious foundations and administrative offices of the viceregal dominion; its produce was predominantly destined for the use of people and institutions within Nubia.

While the evidence for an expanding population in Egypt and consequent settlement of Egyptians in Nubia is inconclusive, there are indications of state-controlled manipulation of the Nubian population. Forcible removal of people from Nubia and settlement of foreigners in the country is indicated by some texts. However, it is impossible to assess the frequency of such events and the numbers involved, and consequently the total impact of such actions. These transplantsations, as paralleled in other ancient societies (notably the Late Assyrian empire; see also D'Altroy, p. 216, Kuhrt, p. 118, this volume) are usually associated with military action. Although the evidence is at present problematic, it at least suggests that the Egyptians were not averse to the forcible movement of population under certain circumstances.

I have argued (Morkot 1995a: 178–80) that although there was a limited agricultural potential in Nubia, a surprisingly large range of its products was nonetheless imported into Egypt. Among the most notable non-mineral products were those of the date and dom palms. The sources limit our ability to quantify the economic production accurately, but the few figures at our disposal suggest that cattle sent from Kush to Egypt (perhaps just to the temple of Karnak) numbered about 300 per annum. This is three times the number sent from Wawat. Wawat, however, produced about sixteen times more gold than Kush.

There is no evidence for the methods of cross-frontier trade in ivory, ebony, and the other "luxuries" of the central Sudan. It seems likely that the acquisition

of these commodities was one of the chief responsibilities of the elite of Kush. There are no records of trading expeditions such as are known for the Old Kingdom. However, the commodities appear as part of the regular annual "tribute" system.

If the administration remained largely in the control of the indigenous elite, so too the internal economy of Nubia must have. Kemp (1978) has argued that, given the extensive investment of the Egyptians in temple building, military defense, and so on, Egyptian "imperialism" was not wholly exploitative. The model of the redistributive economy also provides an explanation for the "disappearance" of the C-Group population of Lower Nubia during the 18th Dynasty – as the range of locally produced artifacts was replaced by centrally supplied goods.

The old idea of a decline in population and productivity throughout the New Kingdom can be rejected as an incorrect interpretation of the evidence. It does, however, seem clear that there was a substantial decline in gold production in Lower Nubia by the 20th Dynasty and that the gold was almost worked out by available methods (renewed gold production in the Ptolemaic period used different technology). Nevertheless, the Egyptians did not abandon Nubia as a drain on their resources. It is clear that they regarded Nubia as an extension of Egypt and that other factors forced the withdrawal from the southern region, perhaps in the reign of Ramesses IX or Ramesses XI.

### *Summary*

The literature on Egyptian Nubia underemphasizes the impact of time. Nubia in the period of the Egyptian imperial expansion is not likely to have been the same as Nubia after 300 years of Egyptian domination. I have proposed that the Egyptian attitude to Nubia was fundamentally the same as that toward Asia, and that consequently Egyptian–Nubian interaction was different than often assumed. With greater emphasis on the role of the indigenous elites, and a more complex society and economy in Nubia, the rise of an indigenous successor state is more easily explicable. Lower and perhaps parts of Upper Nubia had at the end of the New Kingdom a developed state system with an organized and trained bureaucracy, social and political hierarchies, military forces (formidable, apparently), control of local resources, and agricultural subsistence. In addition, there were, certainly in Upper Nubia and probably still in Lower Nubia, local organized political entities – "chiefdoms" or "kingdoms" – that controlled the luxury trade of the central Sudan and had their own military forces.

The model argued here would see a large part of Upper Nubia remaining under the direct control of indigenous rulers throughout the New Kingdom and therefore not Egyptianized to the same degree as the rest of Nubia. Its rulers, many raised at the Egyptian court, would have been Egyptianized and may have introduced elements of Egyptian culture and religion into their states. But the majority of the population, even if it acquired some Egyptian objects, would have

remained largely unaffected by Egyptian culture, language, and ideology. In this model the “problem” of Egyptianization is reduced. Following the end of the viceregal period, Upper Nubia would not have “reverted” but simply continued long-standing Kushite traditions.

## THE KUSHITE DOMINATION OF EGYPT (THE EGYPTIAN 25TH DYNASTY), *c.* 750–650 BCE

### *The traditional interpretation*

As discussed above, the conventional view is that following the period of Egyptian rule in the New Kingdom, Lower Nubia was abandoned for a considerable period and the people of Upper Nubia reverted to a tribal or semi-nomadic lifestyle. This state of affairs is argued to have continued until the emergence of an indigenous chiefdom, later to become a “kingdom” in the mid-ninth century BCE. This kingdom then rapidly expanded to control the central Sudanese savanna between the Atbara and Nile (the earlier archaeology of this region is still barely known) and is divided into two historical phases: Napatan (from the eighth century BCE to *c.* 200 BCE) and Meroitic. The Meroitic phase is largely coincident with the Ptolemaic and Roman periods in Egypt, continuing until about the mid-fourth century CE, when the state fragmented. Its three successors became the three Christian kingdoms of medieval Nubia. The king-list (largely compiled from tomb material) and the few “historical facts” of the Napatan-Meroitic kingdom probably mask a series of dynasties and fragmentations of the state. Throughout the Napatan-Meroitic periods the rulers (male and female) continued to use Egyptian pharaonic styles of title and regalia, combined with some indigenous forms. Egyptian gods continued to be worshipped and the Egyptian hieroglyphic script was used for official texts.

However, this later Napatan phase is dismissed in much early literature: “much of the Egyptian veneer disappeared . . . and the last pyramids and hieroglyphic texts are almost a mockery of Egyptian culture” (Adams 1964: 115). The subsequent Meroitic period was similarly characterized as a further debasement: “it was the Egyptianized kingdom of Napata running downhill to a miserable and inglorious end . . . the last two or three centuries were ones of unrelieved degeneration and gloom when compared with the glories of the past” (A. J. Arkell quoted in Adams 1964: 115). While this view of the Meroitic period has been largely rejected in more recent literature, there is still a view that the Egyptian elements of the culture are something of a “veneer.”

### *A reinterpretation*

The phase of Kushite domination of Egypt, in Egyptian terms the 25th Dynasty, lasted from about 750/740 BCE until 656 BCE, and thus forms the earlier part of the “Napatan” kingdom. As the earliest phases of Kushite expansion into

Egypt are still very obscure the initial date is somewhat arbitrary. The domination can be divided into the following phases:

- 1 Kushite expansion into Upper Egypt, under kings Kashta and Piye, with control only of Upper Egypt (*c.* 750/40–710 BCE).
- 2 Domination of the whole of Egypt with major residence at Memphis, and increasing involvement in western Asia: reigns of Shabaqo and Shebitqo (*c.* 710–690 BCE) and Taharqo (690–664 BCE).
- 3 Assyrian invasions of Egypt, in the reigns of Taharqo and Tanwetamani. Eventual ascendancy of Psamtik I of Sais; Kushites still acknowledged in Upper Egypt until 656 BCE.

A principal issue, which the literature has until recently largely ignored, is the process of state formation in Nubia (Kush; for recent discussions see Török 1992, 1995; Morkot 1994, 1995b, 1999, 2000; T. Kendall 1999). The Kushite expansion stands at the end of what is generally thought to have been a very rapid process of state formation (e.g., T. Kendall 1982). Much of the scholarly literature (e.g., Adams 1964, 1977; Kitchen 1973: 358; O'Connor in Trigger *et al.* 1983: 242–3) begins with the Kushite invasion of Egypt and continues from there without any analysis of how the Kushite state came into being. As discussed above, the conventional view is that Kush developed from an apparently modest chiefdom (mid-ninth century BCE) to a state with the military and economic resources, and presumably the political homogeneity and hierarchies, to gain control of a considerable part of Egypt. Further, it was able to do this from a homeland that is separated from Egypt proper by the sparsely (or un-)populated divide of Lower Nubia. This characterization has developed largely on the basis of the archaeological material. George Reisner excavated a cemetery at el-Kurru that contained burials of some of the “25th Dynasty” pharaohs and others that he interpreted as several generations of ancestors. This cemetery formed the focus for all discussions of the emergence of the Kushite state and largely continues to do so (see heated controversy of T. Kendall 1999 and Török 1992, 1995). While there has been very little archaeological work in other parts of Upper Nubia that has recovered material that can be attributed to this phase, the possibility that such might exist has generally not even been considered. Consequently, the literature emphasizes the archaeological and historical hiatus and the sudden emergence of Kush “from a perplexing historical void” (T. Kendall 1982: 9).

Adams (1977) is one of the few archaeologists to have characterized the “Napatan” period as a “successor state.” Adams follows the historical theories of Arnold Toynbee. He views the emergence of the Kurru kingdom as one of Toynbee’s “heroic ages” in which Nubia, Egypt’s “external proletariat,” becomes “a classic example of a successor state: a barbarian people assuming the mantle and the burdens of empire from the hands of their former overlords” (Adams 1977: 244–5). Kush undoubtedly should be seen as a successor state, but the difference between this and other successor states is the 200 years it took

between the collapse of the colonial system and the supremacy of the “barbarians.” Unable to explain this archaeologically, Adams (1977: 247–8) was forced to comment that “it took some time for the lesson of the pharaohs to sink in.”

T. Kendall (1999) concentrated on the chronology of the Kurru cemetery and did not consider the broader issues at all. Török (1992, 1995) also discussed el-Kurru, advocating a different reconstruction, but also focusing on ideological factors. Yet any attempt to discuss the process of state formation must consider all of the bases: political (interaction of the social hierarchy, geopolitical regions, etc.), military, economic, and ideological.

In my writings (Morkot 1995b, 1999), I have emphasized the importance of a continuous tradition of kingship/rulership in Kush that can be traced back to the A-Group phase (pre-3000 BCE). I argue that such a continuous tradition (which was exploited by Egyptians during the New Kingdom) would have resulted in the emergence of independent states and power holders soon after the Egyptian withdrawal. In this context, the idea of regression to a tribal level is not convincing. I suggest that conventional discussions of the “emergence” of the Kushite state have been prejudiced by a number of factors. First, is the emphasis on the archaeological material from the cemetery of el-Kurru. This has led to the assumption that the rise and expansion of the state was under the direction of a single ruling dynasty – that buried at el-Kurru. There has been no consideration of the possibility that the Kurru rulers may have taken over (by force, marriage, or other methods) a state that was already rapidly developing.

Second, the confused chronology of the Kurru material has been ordered within an accepted Egyptian chronology, resulting, in the most favored model (T. Kendall 1999), in a “gap.” Török (1995) and others have proposed lengthening the chronology of the Kurru cemetery, and so almost closing the gap, although there still remain many archaeological problems. There has been no consideration of the emergence of the indigenous Kushite state by analogy with other postimperial contexts. This again has been influenced by interpretations of the archaeology of Nubia. Yet, in the later phases of Egyptian rule in Nubia, we have indications of a powerful state somewhere in the southern part of the domain (or across its frontier) which posed a threat – Irem. We also have evidence for powerful elite families within the Nubian administration. It is, *at the very least*, possible that the Egyptian empire in Nubia did not vanish in a puff of smoke, but withdrew in the face of rising indigenous powers.

### *Kushite imperial expansion and control*

Our reconstructions of Kushite expansion into Egypt are based largely on fragmentary data and assumptions. A stela fragment of King Kashta, excavated at Elephantine, Egypt’s southernmost town, indicates that he had adopted pharaonic style, and had advanced, presumably militarily, to the Egyptian frontier, and into Upper Egypt. In Thebes, the Kushite princess Amenirdis I was

installed as heiress to the reigning God's Wife of Amun, Shepenwepet, at Thebes. Earlier Egyptologists thought that it was Kashta who had done this, thereby gaining acknowledgment as ruler in the Thebaid. More recently, following the theory that the Kushite succession passed from brother to brother, it was proposed that Amenirdis was installed by her brother, Piye (Kitchen 1973: 151). However, all other God's Wives were installed by their fathers, and there is no evidence to suggest that Amenirdis was an exception. Neither is the *theory* of brother-succession substantiated (Morkot 1999). The likelihood is that Kashta used the inviolable office – as it already had been – as a way of having Kushite authority in Thebes recognized (Morkot 1991b; 1994: 330–64; 1999). Beyond this, nothing can be confidently said about the Kushite occupation of Upper Egypt.

The "Victory Stela" of Piye (Lichtheim 1980: 66–84; Eide *et al.* 1994: 62–112, no. 9) indicates that at the time of his campaign against Tefnakht of Sais, Piye was acknowledged as ruler of Upper Egypt and had a military force present there. One of the most illuminating of Kushite historical texts is the so-called "Sandstone Stela" of Piye (Eide *et al.* 1994: 55–9, no. 8), which predates the much better known "Victory Stela." The sandstone stela certainly belongs to a point early in the king's reign, perhaps year 4. It attributes the king's accession to Amun. Although it is not specifically stated, it is a reasonable surmise that, following his accession, Piye had travelled to Egypt to ensure the continued acknowledgement of Kushite rule in Upper Egypt and particularly Thebes. The king tells us:

He to whom I say "You are a *wer*-chief," he shall be a *wer*-chief.

He to whom I say "You are not a *wer*-chief," he shall not be a *wer*-chief.

He to whom I say "Make a *khau*-appearance (as king)," he shall make a *khau*-appearance.

He to whom I say "Do not make *khau*-appearance (as king)," he shall not make *khau*-appearance.

The inference from this must be that Piye either reappointed rulers or appointed new rulers. It is necessary to distinguish between the *wer*-rulers and those who make *khau*-appearance (i.e., *nesut*-kings – "pharaohs"). This passage clearly reflects the situation in Egypt at the time of the Kushite invasions, in which there were four *nesut*-kings who had adopted full pharaonic style with five-fold titulary and the appropriate regalia. These are referred to in the later inscription as the "*uraeus*-wearing" kings. There were other powerful local rulers, mostly of Libyan origin and closely related to the kings who carried the Libyan titles "chief" (*wer*) or "great chief" of the Ma. The broken stela does not name any of these rulers, but the "Victory Stela" of Piye's 21st year records his defeat of the Saite ruler Tefnakht and his allies, including many of the rulers of the Delta. Piye's overlordship was again recognized by both *nesut*-kings and *wer*-chiefs. All except Tefnakht came in person and swore their oaths. Tefnakht swore

his in the temple of his own city in the presence of a general and the Chief Lector Priest sent by Piye. The text of the oath is preserved on the stela although it is probably very abbreviated. If not as lengthy as the Assyrian Vassal Treaties it contains similar promises, notably that Tefnakht will abide by Piye's commands and will not make war on his own account.

Following Piye's death, his successor, Shabaqo, was again faced with the expansion of the Saite kingdom under its ruler Bakenranef. The act of "rebellion" at the change of ruler was common (almost usual, see D'Altroy, p. 209; cf. Kuhrt, p. 94) and presumably reflects the termination of treaties on the death of one of the signatories. This pattern is already evident in the Amarna Letters of the 18th Dynasty, where Egypt's relations with Mitanni are renewed on the death of rulers in either country and sealed by diplomatic marriage. Following his defeat of the Saites, Shabaqo's rule extended over the whole of Egypt, and he appears to have ruled from Memphis. Shabaqo followed the policy of earlier Libyan pharaohs and appointed a son as High Priest of Amun at Thebes. Unlike his predecessors he did not install a daughter as there were already two heiresses to the God's Wife of Amun, one his sister (Amenirdis I) and the other Piye's daughter. There is evidence for the reallocation of some offices at Thebes, although the precise dating is unclear; it may have occurred in the reign of Shabaqo or of Shebitqo. The Kushite Kelbasken was installed as Mayor of Thebes and 4th Prophet of Amun. The Nakhtefmut family had held the latter office for six generations. Later, both offices were granted to the family of Monthuemhat, which had previously occupied the Vizierate. The Vizierate, in turn, passed into the family of Nesipeqashuty.

While it is difficult to impose any form of "policy" on these changes in administrative office holders, it can be said that families that had controlled offices for a considerable period had those offices removed. Even so, Kelbasken is the only Kushite known to have been installed in a major non-religious office (as Mayor) and although there were many Kushites in Thebes, they do not generally seem to have replaced the Theban elite. In the case of the Monthuemhat family, the loss of the Vizierate *appears* to be a demotion, but we know from both Egyptian and Assyrian sources that Monthuemhat remained the most powerful individual in Upper Egypt. Monthuemhat also established a marriage alliance with the Kushite royal house; his third wife, Wedjarenes, was a granddaughter of Piye. There is a strong likelihood that Shabaqo established marriage alliances with Egyptian elite families. Although marriage between members of the Kushite royal family and the Egyptian elite are known, most Egyptologists have argued that there were no such marriages with the Libyan dynasts.

There is considerably less evidence for the methods of Kushite control of the elite in north Egypt. One stela does record the marriage of a Kushite princess (probably a daughter of Shabaqo) and the northern Vizier, suggesting a policy similar to that in Thebes. Following the defeat of Bakenranef, Shabaqo may have appointed a Kushite governor in Sais, but the only direct evidence for this is the

epitome of Manetho's history. Elsewhere, he probably reconfirmed or replaced rulers. Donation stelae from his reign record some of the same Chiefs and Great Chiefs who had earlier paid homage to Piye.

Taharqo followed similar policies as his predecessors. His daughter was installed as eventual successor to Shepenwepet II; a son was appointed as Second Prophet of Amun at Thebes; Shabaqo's grandson succeeded as High Priest. His policy toward the Libyan dynasts also appears to have been the same – despite the considerable upheavals and changes of alliance during the Assyrian invasions. Taharqo's successor, Tanwetamani, also confronting Assyrian invasions, adopted the same pragmatic approach to the Libyan rulers, accepting their allegiance when they came to pay fealty. The Assyrians, too, confirmed and reappointed dynasts who had previously been loyal to the Kushites. They may also have installed a new vassal, Nekau, in Sais. Later, when the dynasts reverted to Kushite allegiance, some were deported to Nineveh, and apparently executed. One Assyrian vassal, Psamtik, son of the ruler of Sais, was installed in his own fiefdom and adopted an Assyrian name, Nabu-shezzi-banni.

### *Economy of the Kushite empire*

The imperial expansion of Kush must have had enormous economic impact, but the documentation is extremely scanty. The narrative of the Victory Stela of Piye records that the wealth of conquered rulers and cities was accorded either to the temple of Amun in Thebes, to Amun Lord of Thrones of the Two Lands (which *might* be the god's Kushite temple), or to the royal treasury. Piye received the contents of the treasuries of several towns along with gifts of jewelry, gold, semi-precious stones, linen, and horses from the Libyan dynasts. The conclusion of the text states that Piye returned with ships laden with silver, gold, copper, clothing, and the produce of Syria and aromatic woods. Some of this diverted wealth was doubtless used for the support of the Kushite army and officials in Egypt, and some for the king's extensive building works in the temple of Amun at Gebel Barkal.

Trading activities with western Asia were certainly important during Kushite rule in Egypt and may have been a significant factor in Kushite expansion. Once they had established themselves in Memphis, the Kushites presumably gained some control of the old royal monopolies, including in papyrus and *byssos* (linen) which were valuable exports at this time. The principal trading partners were the Levantine cities of Tyre, Sidon, Byblos, and Ashdod. Timber from the hinterland of the more northerly cities is recorded in the building inscriptions of Taharqo, as is Asiatic copper. Exports from the Kushite heartland included ivory, ebony, and elephant-hides. These items can be found in the "tribute" of the Sea Coast paid to Assyrian kings as early as the reigns of Assurnasirpal II and Tiglath-pileser III. Horses are another possible export (Morkot 1991b, 1995b; Heidorn 1994).

*The Kushite empire: summary*

From the reign of Shabaqo (c. 710–696 BCE), the Kushites were ruling from Memphis. How they controlled their vast empire is not yet well understood. The empire fell into four major regions. These were: (1) Egypt, which was reasonably homogeneous; (2) Lower Nubia which, if not without population, probably had only a rather limited population; (3) the 3rd–4th Cataract, which was fertile and fairly homogeneous; and (4) the central Sudan as far as present-day Khartoum, separated from the regions further north by the Bayuda Desert. If we assume the 3rd–4th Cataract region to have been the original Kushite power-base, then their imperial expansion was both northward (toward Egypt) and south into the central Sudan.

There is still very little information concerning how the Kushite rulers administered their home territories. We have only one reference to a Kushite prince installed as “mayor” of a town. Administrative terms that do occur in texts are of Egyptian origin (such as *sepat*, i.e., “nome”); however, it would be rash at this point to assume that an Egyptian-style administrative system was imposed. We are forced to conclude from this admittedly scanty material that the Kushites adopted the Egyptian system within Egypt. This entailed reconfirming most officials and their families in office, placing Kushites only in positions that had formerly been occupied by members of the Libyan ruling houses. It is likely that within Kush a different system operated that had its origins within Kushite tradition.

In Egypt, the Kushites appear to have followed the same policy as earlier Libyan pharaohs in their relations with the elite. Under the Libyans, the High Priest of Amun had been a son, in the later phase the eldest son, of the reigning pharaoh. The God’s Wife of Amun was a daughter of the pharaoh, but her office was inviolable and not all pharaohs installed a daughter as God’s Wife or as her heiress. The position of High Priest of Ptah at Memphis had also been held by a royal scion, but there is no direct evidence for a Kushite occupant. The evidence from Thebes suggests that local elite families continued to exercise power, although there was some limited redistribution of offices. The Libyans had established numerous marriage alliances with the elite Theban families. There is less evidence from other parts of Egypt, although the same situation may be assumed. Some Kushite–Theban alliances are known and a royal daughter married the Vizier of Lower Egypt. Marriages with the Libyan dynasts are, in my opinion, also very likely. One wife of Shabaqo carried religious titles that are not characteristic of a Kushite queen but suggest that she was daughter of a Libyan (Morkot 1994: Appendix 6).

Following the Assyrian invasions and Kushite reconquests, Psamtik I of Sais gained control of Lower Egypt. The Kushites were still acknowledged as rulers of Upper Egypt until Psamtik’s 9th regnal year (also year 9 of the Kushite king Tanwetamani). The transfer of Thebes and Upper Egypt from Kushite to Saite

rule appears to have been effected diplomatically. Psamtik sent his young daughter Neitiqert to be the *eventual* successor to the Kushite God's Wife of Amun, Shepenwepet II. The situation is thus similar to the initial Kushite appearance in Thebes. Both Shepenwepet II and the reigning Kushite High Priest of Amun were still active some years later.

The Egyptian pharaohs of the New Kingdom had attempted to integrate local elites in both Nubia and Asia. The Assyrians later followed a similar policy. In both instances if a ruler was deposed, a member of the same family often replaced him. Indeed, one of the problems of the Late Assyrian empire derives directly from this policy (see Liverani, this volume). Leaving local rulers in control involved considerably less expenditure, but was subject to the potential of rebellion. Eventually a number of vassal kingdoms were converted into provinces because of rebellion. In Egypt, the Libyan dynasts changed their allegiance according to which power was the more imminent threat, Kushite or Assyrian. The Egyptian empire in the New Kingdom *appears* to have faced less rebellion than the Assyrian empire and certainly lasted considerably longer. Important factors may be that the Egyptian empire was far smaller than the Assyrian and military troops could be more rapidly moved to rebellious areas. It is also possible that the Egyptians interfered less with their vassal states.

In sum, the evidence for some aspects of the themes under discussion is scanty. However, it seems reasonable to state that the Kushites exploited already existing economic and power structures. They did not reorganize the hierarchies, and only occasionally appointed their own nominees. Those nominees usually occupied powerful religious posts that had previously been the preserve of the Libyan pharaohs.

In the economic realm, it is evident that during the phase of conquest considerable wealth (principally food) was reallocated to the temple of Amun at Thebes. This temple was directly under Kushite control. In addition, there is evidence that large amounts of precious materials were sent to Kush. Skilled workers were also sent to Kush and the later years of the dynasty saw extensive building works there. With Kushite involvement in western Asia, a proportion of the commodity trade no doubt also went directly to the Kushite homeland.

One question that inevitably emerges from this is to what extent was trade or the economy a significant factor in Kushite imperial expansion. Obviously, numerous factors affected the emergence of the Kushite state. Until we have a much greater knowledge of the history of the southern parts of the Kushite kingdom, we are unable to assess the role of the social, economic, and political structures of that region and the ways they affected state formation. Nevertheless, it is difficult to see why a Kushite state would expand in the way that it did and with the speed that it apparently did, if the economic circumstances of the eastern Mediterranean lands had not been influential.