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The Foreign Relations of the Napatan-Meroitic Kingdom in
the Sudan from the 8th Century B.C. to the 4th Century A.D.

Abstract

This thesis is designed as a well-documented and discreet analysis of the relationship of the ancient kingdom of Cush to the external world in the light of the latest discoveries. It attempts to trace how far its rise was prompted by external factors and investigates the role of foreign pressures on its fall. The evidence is everywhere controversial, as can be seen from the diametrically opposed approaches of A. J. Arkell and W. Y. Adams, who use respectively the monumental architecture and the pottery as their main criteria of judgement. The present writer contends, however, that, whilst Arkell's theory of progressive degeneration is inadequate, the history of the later Napatan period and of the Meroitic age is much better documented than Adams thinks, if the literary evidence is fully utilised, and that the Reisnerian chronology forms an acceptable interim standpoint, provided that it is not given an authoritative status which its originator would never have claimed.

The attitude taken to the Meroitic kingdom is that, at first, the Sudanese were encouraged by the desire for an outward higher culture to imitate Egypt as closely as they could, but that, during the prosperous period of the fourth-third century B.C., their civilization advanced sufficiently to be able to generate many of its own ideas in building, pottery and writing. Only later with the onset of

decline did the old lack of originality return - until all that was distinctively Meroitic vanished. The writer is willing to admit that the Meroites strongly influenced the peoples on their boundaries or within their territories, for example the Blemmyes and the Noba, but cannot see that Cush was ever a powerful focus for the diffusion of culture throughout Africa. He believes that kingships there arose from a primitive substratum of society older than Egypt or Cush, and were essentially an outcome of Neolithic alterations in human ecology.

The view is advanced that the geographical and geological characteristics of the Sudan, which made its people semi-nomadic pastoralists rather than farmers, prevented the land ever becoming fully assimilated to Egypt, and determined that the entourage of the king and the priesthood should continue to be merely a thin veneer upon a people whose former way of life continued undisturbed, except possibly in Lower Nubia. This region became exceptionally prosperous in the first centuries A.D.

Bryan G. Haycock.

The Foreign Relations of the Napatán-Meroitic Kingdom
in the Sudan from the Eighth Century B.C.
to the Fourth Century A.D.

by

Bryan G. Haycock, B.A., Ph.D. (Dunelm.)

Thesis submitted for the Degree of Master of Literature.

1965.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

I. Periodicals

- B.I.F.A.O. = Bulletin de l'Institut français d'Archeologie orientale. Cairo.
- J.E.A. = The Journal of Egyptian Archaeology. London.
- Kush. = Kush, the Journal of the Sudan Antiquities Service. Khartoum.
- L.A.A.A. = Liverpool Annals of Archaeology and Anthropology. Liverpool.
- M.F.A.B. = The Museum of Fine Arts Bulletin. Boston.
- P.S.B.A. = The Proceedings of the Society for Biblical Archaeology. London.
- S.N.R. = Sudan Notes and Records. Khartoum.
- Z.A.S. = Zeitschrift für ägyptische Sprache und Altertumsurkunde. Berlin etc.
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II. Books

- Arkell, 1961. = A. J. Arkell, A History of the Sudan to 1821. Second Edition. London. 1961.
- Bevan, 1927. = E. Bevan. A History of Egypt under the Ptolemaic Dynasty. London, 1927.
- Dunham, R.C.K. = Dows Dunham. The Royal Cemeteries of Kush. Volumes I-V. Boston. 1950-1963.
- Hintze, 1959. = F. Hintze, Studien zur Meroitischen Chronologie und zur den Opfertafeln aus den Pyramiden von Merce. Berlin, 1959.
- Hintze, 1962. = F. Hintze, Die Inschriften des Löwentempels von Musawwarat es Sufra. Berlin, 1962.
- Macadam, 1949. = M. F. L. Macadam, The Temples of Kawa. Volume I. Text and Plates. Oxford. 1949.
- Macadam, 1955. = M. F. L. Macadam, The Temples of Kawa. Volume II. Text and Plates. Oxford. 1955.
-

Preface

From the time of the expedition of Ismail Pasha in 1821 the Sudan attracted a number of pioneer travellers and archaeologists, Caillaud, Linant de Bellefonds, Hoskins and others, whose drawings and descriptions of sites are often still of the greatest importance to scholars, but when Richard Lepsius demonstrated that the Meroitic monuments belonged to the last centuries B.C. and the first A.D., and not to some remote period at the birth of civilization, as was previously commonly believed, interest languished despite the discovery of the Napatan royal stelae in 1859-1860. At the end of the nineteenth century the establishment of the Mahdiya meant that no archaeological work could be undertaken for twenty years. In the twentieth century the work of G. A. Reisner and F. Ll. Griffith, which first elucidated the outlines of early Sudanese history, received much less recognition than it deserved in learned circles, which continued to be obsessed with classical Egyptian and Mediterranean archaeology to the exclusion of all else. As a result active field work on Meroitic sites almost ceased after 1931. Such archaeological work as the Sudan Antiquities Service attempted had to be tailored to their limited funds, so they naturally concentrated on prehistoric, post-Meroitic or Christian sites which would require nothing like the capital outlay needed for work on any extensive Meroitic site, and could not lead to the discovery of temples needing preservation, nor to the finding of objects needing museum-space.

Only after the Second World War did archaeologists generally begin to appreciate the urgent need to investigate the less advanced ancient cultures which produced no vast buildings and few outstanding art objects - until then the spirit of the collector and the refined antiquarian was still too strong. Archaeology was only gradually becoming the universal study of the early history of Man, and interest was still centred on a few Mediterranean and West European countries where scientific excavation had begun. Even in countries such as Britain, where interest, if still uninformed, is widespread, raising funds for archaeology is often difficult. In developing lands like the Sudan knowledge about ancient times and public awareness are rapidly growing, but, not unnaturally, expenditure on more practical needs is usually given priority.

The present revival in Meroitic studies owes something to the much publicised Aswan Dam scheme, which has stirred the archaeological conscience of many countries. Qasr Ibrim and Faras within the flood area are Meroitic sites of the first importance, but in such rescue-work all periods, and not this alone, have to be investigated equally. The excavations of Professor F. Hintze of Humboldt University, Berlin, at Musawwarat-es-Sufra, financed by the German Democratic Republic, and the privately supported work of Mme. M. Schiff Giorgini and Professor J. Leclant at Sedenga are concerned much more specifically with the country of Napata-Meroë and its New Kingdom antecedents. Professor P. L.

Shinnie anticipates that sufficient funds will be available to enable him to recommence extensive excavation at Begrawiya next season. One must hope that this time international interest will be sustained, and local enthusiasm thrive, so that in due course the early history of the Sudan may be reconstructed more completely than at present. Certainly the time is ripe for a new advance, since nearly all the large unpublished material left by Reisner and Griffith at their deaths has now been edited by Professor Dows Dunham and Dr. M. F. L. Macadam.

This study cannot claim to be a definitive treatment of the external relationships of the Napatan-Meroitic kingdom, and will be much supplemented and modified by future work, but it has been deemed worthwhile because one can now show more clearly which features of Meroitic culture are kindred to the African peoples of the savannah belt south of the Sahara, with whom the Sudanese have always had much in common, which are riverain and related to or influenced by the cultures of Egypt, Asia or the Mediterranean world. Thanks to the development of African history Meroe can now be appreciated, at least partially, in both its contexts, not regarded as merely a barbarized version of Pharaonic Egypt.

The present writer is rather suspicious of theories that Cush served as the main route through which iron-founding and other skills were diffused throughout Africa. Geographically it was much isolated by desert and swamp to west and south. The first to third cataract region was, however, plainly both a "funnel" for

the diffusion of Egyptian culture southwards to Napata, and later Meroe, and also a convenient line of approach towards Egypt for warrior-peoples pushing northwards, such as the Noba. The Nile gave a degree of unity to the regions bordering on its banks and there must, therefore, have been considerable population movements and fairly close contact at most periods within this zone of Africa. The Meroitic state is certainly worth study because in it many of the forms of evolved divine kingship were superimposed, partly through influence from the Lower Nile Valley, upon an illiterate and largely tribal people, and because its frontiers impinged both upon some of the most civilized and upon the most backward races of the ancient world. Though Meroites did not venture far from the great river which gave them especial blessing, emergent nations must have tended to copy the higher culture in their vicinity. Relations between ancient peoples were not as intimate as hyper-diffusionist theories assume, but even hostile tribes could imitate each other.

The ideas incorporated in this thesis have been helped greatly in ripening by discussion with Dr. M. F. L. Macadam (under whose kindly scholarship I formerly studied the Demotic Graffiti of the Dodecaschoenus and from whom I derive my particular interest in the kingdom of Cush), Professor Fritz Hintze of Humboldt University, Berlin, Professor P. L. Shinnie of Accra University, Professor J. M. Plumley of Cambridge University, and Professor J. Leclant of the Sorbonne, but all matters of interpretation are purely my responsi-

bility. My task has been considerably facilitated by the frequent opportunities afforded by my lecturing post at the University of Khartoum to visit all the Sudanese archaeological sites, to observe current archaeological work, and to meet all the leading excavators.

The Foreign Relations of the Napatan-Meroitic Kingdom in the Sudan
from the Eighth Century B.C. to the Fourth Century A.D.

Introduction

The kingdom of Cush can be compared in nature with the kingdoms in Asia, Asia Minor and Greece which began to develop on the fringes of the earliest areas of high civilization in the lower river valley of the Nile, in Mesopotamia and to a lesser extent in the Fertile Crescent of Syria-Palestine and in Crete. These regions had long been dominated culturally by Egypt, and had frequently passed under the political influence or control of Mesopotamian or Egyptian rulers but for reasons of geography, language, population or culture they never became assimilated completely by their conquerors and therefore, in due course, they resumed a distinct existence. Finally, by a process of self-defence and by cultural advancement, sometimes aided by the penetration of a new vigorous warrior class, powerful realms began to develop outside the areas of the earliest civilized states. The strongest of these grew to such an extent that they were eventually able to attack the old cities or the Pharaonic kingdom, and to subjugate them for a time. However, the Asian warrior states differed from Greece or Cush in that there were few natural boundaries outside the land of the Two Rivers, and monarchies thus tended to increase in power suddenly, blossom for a generation or two, then plunge into decline and disappear. Egypt, Cush and Greece had more definite natural boundaries, and hence at all periods since the development of large social units they have tended to preserve a national entity, even if the region was divided between warring factions or towns.

It would be generally true to say that these secondary peoples, even after obtaining independence and empire, continued to be culturally dependent on the older civilizations in many ways, but few can have been so dependent as the Cushites were on the Egyptians for the forms of their higher civilization. Rising races in Asia came into contact with many peoples, several of which must have been at a comparable level of social development, and several more advanced, whereas Pharaonic Egypt was the only state which had invaded the Sudan, and almost the only advanced area with which the early Cushite leaders came in touch. Akkadian cuneiform served as an international language even in Egypt of the XVIIIth Dynasty, but the Hittites, the Assyrians, the Phoenicians and the Babylonians also wrote in their own languages. By a surprising contrast people of the Sudan, although in contact with the written script of the Egyptians from its earliest beginnings, did not develop any form of writing of their own even at the period when their temporal power was so great that they easily overran Egypt, nor in fact for several centuries after their withdrawal southwards - a period during which they continued to use the Egyptian language for the few inscriptions they erected. It seems that a script for writing Meroitic did not become established until the late third or early second century B.C. perhaps through contact with the Greek language used by the governing class of Ptolemaic Egypt. Even then for religious purposes Egyptian was still used, where possible, until the reigns of Natakamani and Amanitëre because of the innate conservatism of Cush.

Similarly the gods of Egypt of the Ammon and Isis circles were the only ones mentioned in inscriptions (apart from a solitary mention of Dedwen by Aspelta) until the third century B.C. when the Cushite god Apedemak, the Lion-God, was allowed to have temples, but always in association with Ammon who himself had sometimes been called "the Lion over the South Country" from the New Kingdom in Cus.

Because of this extreme cultural dependence of the Cushites the historian A. J. Arkell, the writer of the standard general history of the Ancient Sudan, A History of the Sudan to 1821, tended to the view that there was nothing whatever original in their

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- * Throughout this thesis the Graecized form Ammon will be used, as will the similar forms Isis, Osiris and Horus. The true Egyptian form Amūn is unsatisfactory for the purposes of this study since Meroitic spellings show that this word was taken into their language as Amani or even Amni, with a very short second vowel.
- + M. F. L. Macadam. 1949., Plate 2-3. Stela of Panakht. Title of Amūn in the entablature (XVIIIth Dynasty, Reign of Tutankhamūn). ꜥmn-Rꜥ, nb nswt tꜣwy mꜣi hr hnty hr-ib Gm-pr-ꜥtn. The translation "Lion over the South Country" has been challenged by Clère (Bibliotheca Orientalis, Sept. 1951) who suggests "lion on the battlefield" because hnty basically means "front". However, this title appears only to occur in the Sudan which might well be regarded as the battlefront of Egypt. Dr. Macadam maintains that his translation conveys the correct implication.

civilization, and that all their individual deviations were barbaric. On page 38 he writes "But to the end it was the Egyptianised Kingdom of Napata running gradually downhill to a miserable and inglorious end. There were interludes of prosperity when contact with the outside world was free and friendly, and new inspiration and energy (the effect of new ideas from outside) were infused into the kingdom, but they became rarer, until the last two or three centuries were ones of unrelieved degeneration and gloom when compared to the glories of the past". This view may still to some extent be maintained, but following the excavations of Professor Hintze at Musawwarat-es-Sufra which have revealed many masterpieces of Meroitic art of the third century B.C. it is now clear that at any rate in the southern regions of the kingdom the art of Meroe passed through several powerful creative periods. Subjects such as elephants, lions and crocodiles made much more frequent appearance^{*} in Meroitic art than previously in Egyptian,

* Of course all these animals were known to the Egyptians, and occur as signs in the hieroglyphic writing, but the large representations of elephants and lions on the rear inside wall of the Arnekhamani Lion Temple at Musawwarat, the frieze of captured elephants on the rear-outside wall, and the figure of a crocodile on the outside of the pylon, cannot be paralleled. For details of some of these representations see F. Hintze, Kush x pp. 183-4 and Plates LI(a), LII(a), LV(a), LVI(a) and (b).

and portrait reliefs of high skill were produced. The best work of the third century B.C. to the first century A.D. owed much to craftsmanship in vogue under the Ptolemies and Romans, but is sufficiently original to claim appreciation in its own right, not merely as an aberrant form of Egyptian art.

Similarly, the invention of the two forms of the Meroitic script should not be disregarded as an achievement since Meroitic was apparently the first language in the African continent, apart from Ancient Egyptian, to be written: considerable modifications were needed to turn the essentially syllabic and pictorial hieroglyphic and demotic into a true alphabet, and to provide the necessary extra sounds for letters occurring in Meroitic. In the Napatan Period (654-315 B.C.), when only the complex and foreign Egyptian hieroglyphic was used, literacy was almost non-existent outside a small circle of royal courtiers, who tried vainly to perpetuate the traditions of the XXVth Dynasty, but during the second and third centuries A.D. the ability to write was, to judge from the vast number of inscribed tomb-stones, widespread in the small settlements of northern Nubia. This had undoubtedly been helped by the adoption of Meroitic, the local language, though there can be no

* Meroitic as a name for the language of Cush is both descriptive and unambiguous, and has the advantage of following the usage of Griffith, still the main authority on the language, of Dr. M.F.L. Macadam in Temples of Kawa and Professor F. Hintze. Certainly the language cannot be referred to as Cushitic because this was taken as the term for a group of Ethiopian languages at a time when it was thought that the ancient Cush was Abyssinia, not the Sudan. "Kaschitisch" recommended by E. Zylarz, Kush IV pp. 21-22 is unsound because it is easily confused with "Cushitic", and because it suggests that the aleph in A.E. K 3 š represents "a", not "u".

doubt that several other tongues were also in spoken use.

For any consideration of the "Foreign Relations of the Napatan-Meroitic Kingdom from the 8th Century B.C. to the 4th Century A.D." the aspect which needs to be most closely studied will clearly be the cultural connections between Cush and other countries. Political relations are interesting, and will also repay some consideration, but comparatively little new information about this field has become available subsequent to the publication of Professor F. Hintze's Studien zur Meroitischen Chronologie. Before relations between Cush and its neighbours can be studied, a brief excursus will have to be made to consider the earlier history of the Sudan as it appears in the light of the latest discoveries. Older views on this subject need amendment because of the intensive archaeological study which Nubia has recently been receiving, which has revealed many interesting new historical facts.

In the last century archaeology grew out of the study of classical history, and was concerned almost exclusively with Western Europe, certain Middle Eastern countries which had very conspicuous ruins (Greece and Egypt) or were regarded as having played a specially important part in the evolution of thought and religion (Palestine and Mesopotamia). Today archaeology has become fully international, though some countries have been investigated fairly extensively, and others hardly studied at all. It is important to try to see the Napatan-Meroitic kingdom and its institutions as a

part of a rich and variegated international scene. Part of the purpose of this thesis will be to consider how far a more sympathetic approach to the Meroites makes possible a fuller appreciation of their social and cultural achievements.

Chapter 1The Beginnings of the Napatan State

To the present day it is still the function of the ancient historian to observe data rather than, like his colleague in more recent fields, to interpret in terms of cause and effect. Where, as in the case of early Sudanese history, the evidence is everywhere slight (and from some regions totally lacking because no excavation has yet been undertaken there) great caution has to be observed to prevent historical reconstruction becoming a mere branch of fiction. Nevertheless, in the view of the present writer, the theory propounded by Professor V. Gordon Childe in many works that the development of human society was directly and necessarily related to the ability of societies to produce a surplus of consumable goods, contains a large measure of truth, though this strictly materialist view should be tempered by the observation that some societies which found conditions easy at an early stage, such as the peoples of Central Africa or the fish-eating Indians of the San Francisco region, had no incentive to further development. Clearly the only type of food surplus which encouraged progress was a surplus wrung from an unwilling earth by hard work and the development of community organization, which could only be increased by still further changes to meet the needs of the environment.

The further assertion[†] by Professor Childe that only those societies could progress that could produce a sufficient surplus

* e.g. What happened in History pp. 58-61, p. 69, pp. 94-102.

+ What happened in History pp. 117-118 and pp. 124-127.

to allow the rise of specialists not engaged full-time in the production of food seems still more indisputable. The growth of economic power was closely linked with the growth of chieftaincy and priesthoods since the economic potential of a state tended to become vested in the person of its ruler, or sometimes in estates and temples belonging theoretically to its gods.

Early agriculture, which normally involved fertilisation of the fields by cutting down the vegetation and burning it as it lay on the ground ("slash and burn" cultivation), was inefficient and ultimately robbed the soil of so much of its goodness that fields had to be left fallow for years. In the Near East only in the lower sections of the great river valleys of the Nile and of the Tigris and Euphrates did regular deposits of silt make it possible to maintain large populations. Elsewhere the number of people that could be supported was probably scarcely more than by animal husbandry and hunting. As a result of the coming of the Neolithic age, when man first became a producer instead of a parasitic hunter and food gatherer, Egypt and Mesopotamia hurried on into the Bronze Age and the emergence of states, but elsewhere the Neolithic was to prove far longer lasting. For the first time people living in adjacent

* The Aspelta Election Stela lines 13, 15 and elsewhere provides direct evidence of ancient awareness of this by stressing how much the maintenance of the temples and of the Cushite people depended on having the right king.

areas found themselves at widely differing cultural levels.

Throughout the rest of ancient history until the beginning of the Christian Period, and to some extent up to quite recent times, the nature of the relationship between Egypt and the Sudan was governed by the fact that, whereas the Egyptians rapidly became overwhelmingly agriculturalists, the Sudanese had only a small amount of land along the river-banks and in the rainlands of the Butana which was suitable for agriculture without artificial irrigation. Elsewhere,^{*} therefore, they depended almost wholly on cattle-raising and hunting. Rainfall was certainly somewhat higher than at present, or at least a greater degree of vegetation⁺ meant that moisture was retained longer, but it was fairly slight even in Neolithic times and certainly not sufficient to allow rain-cultivation except in certain wadis which collected water.

Nevertheless, during predynastic times the cultures of Egypt and the far north of the Sudan had much in common, especially in their pottery, even if Nubia remained poor and showed no signs of

* The C-group practised some agriculture, but the cattle skulls in and around their tombs, and occasional engravings of cattle or rock carvings at Tumas show that the basis of their economy was cattle. Cf A. J. Arkell, 1961, p. 49.

+ Present researches in the Gezira suggest that even comparatively small plantations of trees can help cloud formation and localized rainfall.

emergent monarchy. It was only when Egypt became a single state, about 3100 B.C., that northern Nubia became a foreign country although a province regularly under control of the Old Kingdom Pharaohs. The inscription of Djer, third king of Egypt, at Jebel Sheikh Suleiman on the west bank of the Nile just south of Buhen illustrates the early date of the first Egyptian military expeditions. The excavations^{*} of Professor W. B. Emery at Buhen have shown that quite soon the repeated invasions were accompanied by settlement, apparently of copper workers and perhaps of some administrators. Letters to Buhen from the king seem to have been very frequent during the Fourth, and more especially, the Fifth Dynasties. The most famous warlike expedition of the Period was that of king Snefru of the IVth Dynasty, recorded in the Palermo Stone, which carried off 7,000 men and 200,000 cattle, sheep and goats, probably ravaging the whole of Nubia to the Fourth Cataract, but such raids continued sporadically until the VIth Dynasty, and even into the First Inter-⁺mediate Period. Between these military campaigns in times of

* J.E.A. 48, Introduction. Kush XI, pp. 116-120.

+ H. G. Fischer. Nubian Mercenaries of Gebelein. Kush IX pp. 44-80, especially page 77. When Dmī boasts that he "enslaved Wawat for every lord that arose in this district" he means that he carried out a raid for slaves or Nubians to be conscripted to the army.

greater quiet some of the chiefs of Nubia recognized the king of Egypt as their overlord, and, if required, brought troops to serve in his armies even in distant Asiatic wars. In addition trading expeditions, sponsored like all major commercial activities by the king, and the despatch of officials to collect stone were probably fairly common throughout the period from the third or fourth dynasty, though literary evidence is only available from the Sixth Dynasty, when leading officials became sufficiently conscious of their own importance to write detailed tomb biographies.

During the Old Kingdom there is little reason to believe, as at most later periods of ancient history, that Egyptian influence passed beyond the natural frontier which divided the Sudan into two at the Fifth Cataract, but thanks to the recent discoveries at Buhen there is not longer any reason to doubt that in this zone the pressure of the Pharaonic state was almost as intensive as during the Middle Kingdom. In view of this it may seem surprising that the A-group

* There is a graffito at Aswan showing king Merenrê I receiving the submission of the Nubian chiefs except the chief of Yam, who was probably quite independent.

+ The tomb inscription of Weni at Abydos describes how in the reign of Pepi I he was in charge of the Egyptian army in six Palestinian campaigns. Each year a substantial contingent of Nubians under their own chiefs served in his army. K. Sethe. Urkunden I, pp. 101-105.

culture gradually evolved into the B-group, and then disappeared into that of the related C-group^{*} during the Old Kingdom with no apparent constraint whatever from Egyptian culture, except such as might be deduced from the fact that a small number of Egyptian stone jars were found in A-group graves at Faras. The explanation must be that, for all the brilliance of the Egyptians in the pyramid age, their civilization could contribute little but luxuries brought by pedlars or returning soldiers to the poor land of Nubia, whose people could not afford to develop industries for themselves and were often despoiled by punitive expeditions of what few goods they might possess. The coming of civilization can seldom have benefited

* How far the C-group were indigenous still remains somewhat an open question. It is clear that the thin cultivated area of northern Nubia was always subject to immigration by desert tribes, and it may be that, as A. J. Arkell is inclined to suppose (1961, pp. 46-54), the C-group were, at least partially, just such an immigrant group at the end of the Old Kingdom or the beginning of the First Intermediate Period. At the same time their pottery is so similar to the tradition of the A and B groups that they must have been at least a closely related people.

those peoples who lay on its fringes* - at least at first. There are, however, a few hints that during the VIth Dynasty (the period when the Egyptians were most interested in trading with the kingdom of Yam, and consequently in controlling the people further north who also provided troops) the chieftain of Wawat was rapidly expanding his control throughout all the small northern principalities which ultimately by the beginning of the Middle Kingdom had disappeared. Indeed, already by the time of the ^δPepinakhte expedition late in the reign of Pepi II a war was fought against Wawat and Irtjet which seem to have been regarded almost as a single enemy state. There was apparently no doubt of the military superiority of the Egyptians, but it needed two major expeditions to per-

* Later Nubia formed a tenuous link between the more affluent cultures of Meroe, whose rainlands offered greater potentialities, and Egypt, but at this time almost certainly no form of civilization had yet developed south of the Atbara - so Nubia was wholly on the edge of civilization, except that traders probably went still further south to seek ebony, ivory and animal skins. Nubia acted, therefore, as a funnel of Egyptian culture to the rest of the Sudan, though probably not to any appreciable extent to the rest of Africa.

+ Inscription of Harkhuf. K. Sethe. Urkunden I, pp. 125-128.

^δ Inscription of Pepinakhte. K. Sethe. UrkundenI, p. 133, line 4 ff.

suade the chiefs to surrender and come to Memphis to submit to the king. Already the first steps were taken towards the growth of a more substantial state^{*} in Nubia.

The First Intermediate Period (c 2220-2050 B.C.) saw the rapid collapse of the centralism of the Old Kingdom in Egypt, and must have meant that the chiefs of Nubia could regain their independence, even if they were frequently raided from Upper Egypt. Bonds between Egypt and Nubia, however, remained close, since many Nubian soldiers are known[†] to have served in the armies of competing princes, especially in southern Egypt. The effect of Pharaonic culture must have been far greater on these mercenaries than on the troops who were employed to fight for the Old Kingdom rulers and who were presumably sent home when each campaign was done, but Egypt may not have influenced those who remained in Nubia much because it is very probable that of the soldiers who served many years in the armies of the Egyptian princes few ever returned home to the comparative

* By nature Nubia was thin and vulnerable, and could never resist the wrath of the greater Egyptian kings, but during the Middle Kingdom the stela of general Montuhotpe at Buhen (Sesostris I - year 18) and the Semna Decree and dispatches (Sesostris III - Ammenemes III) tend to show that their difficulties in imposing their will had become much greater - as indeed does the construction of the chain of fortresses.

† H. G. Fischer, Kush IX pp. 44-80.

discomforts and barbarism of their ancestral villages. The stelae of the Nubians of Gebelein show that some of them were probably married to Egyptian ladies, and some had taken Egyptian names and had resided there for several generations: doubtless they were ultimately absorbed by the local population. Meanwhile, within Nubia two major states, Cush and Wawat, had emerged to replace the confusion of small states of the Old Kingdom.

As a result of the upheavals of the First Intermediate Period, which had probably been aggravated by the presence of large numbers of Asiatic and Nubian mercenaries (and even at times of external groups of invaders) Egypt developed a strongly defensive mentality towards the outside world, an attitude which had apparently not existed in the Old Kingdom. Already in the First Intermediate Period the eastern frontier at Suez had been fortified by towers, walls and canals - "The Walls of the Prince" - known from the Instructions to Merikare and the Story of Sinuhe.

* H. G. Fischer, Kush IX pp. 56-62.

+ Kheti the king in his Instructions to Merikare stresses the importance of the defences of the Delta against raiding Asiatics. Wawat probably extended to Kubanieh only a little south of Gebelein, where there was an important C-group cemetery (see H. Junker. Bericht über die Grabungen der Akademie der Wissenschaften in Wien auf den Friedhöfen von El Kubanieh Nord im Winter 1910-11 for an account of these burials.)

After a series of raids during the later XIth Dynasty and the early years of Ammenemes I, which probably failed to pacify Wawat and Cush, an impressive project was embarked upon to turn the whole region of Wawat from Aswan to the Second Cataract and ultimately to Semna into an extensive defended zone into which Nubians from further south were only allowed to penetrate under the strictest rules.

*

This scheme must also have been intended to protect the ships and caravans trading with Sai and Kerma in the land of Cush, which would otherwise have been liable to attack by the people of Wawat, who were doubtless anxious to levy dues on all persons passing through their territory, if not to practise outright robbery.

The culture of the C-group inhabitants of conquered Wawat changed hardly at all during the Middle Kingdom except that their graves often contain imported beads and occasionally copper knives and other luxuries. The thoroughly Egyptian pottery found in the forts is scarcely ever discovered outside, and the implication that conquerors and conquered had hardly any social contact seems inescapable.

* The purpose of the forts has been discussed by many authors, for example, A. J. Arkell, 1961 pp. 65-66, I. Greener, High Dam over Nubia. Their nature and situation make it clear that they were intended to guard communications and keep the C-group population in order, but from the Semna Decree and Semna Despatches an equally important role was to make it difficult for raiders from south of Egyptian territory to strike at Egypt without travelling great distances in the desert.

During the First and Second Intermediate periods the C-group and Kerma peoples met with little outside interference, but it is unfortunately far from certain what degree of political unity they obtained. Throughout the period from the VIth to the early XVIIIth Dynasty Kerma was a place of considerable economic and political importance as the extensive excavations of G. A. ^{*}Reisner showed, and the seat of powerful chiefs, with whom in their great tumuli were buried at times hundreds of sacrificed ⁺servants, and great numbers of livestock, but, as is sometimes rather overlooked, there were also other important centres. One of these was in Lower Nubia at [♯]Areika

* G. A. Reisner. Harvard African Studies. Volumes V and VI. - Excavations at Kerma.

+ id. Vol. V, p. 65 ff.

♯ See T. Sève-Söderbergh. Ägypten und Nubien, p.83 note and p. 131 ff. He attributes the important palace site which the original excavators Randall-Maciver and Leonard Woolley (Areika) wished to assign to the XVIIIth Dynasty when little was known about the C-group, to the period of independence preceding the Egyptian conquest. At Areika there was found a seal impression of a Nubian prince with a feather in his hair (like a Libyan or the Nubians pictured as "determinatives" in the Inscription of Weni. - K. Sethe Urkunden I, pp. 101 and 103). The ruler held a captive on a string after the fashion of an Egyptian Pharaoh. At Buhen and Kuban such things were found at Middle Kingdom levels. One knows also of a ruler of Cush called Ndh whose realm included Buhen (T. Sève-Söderbergh J.E.A. 35, 50 ff.). Recently rock pictures of a Nubian chief picking up and smiting his enemies, a localized version of the traditional Egyptian scene, have been discovered by Professor J. Leclant at Tomas (unpublished).

in the Korosko bend, perhaps the C-group capital of Wawat in the Second Intermediate Period. The stela of Kamose^{*} may suggest that somewhere there was a paramount chief. Certainly one Cushite ruler was powerful enough for the Hyksos in difficulty to try to procure his assistance.

During the Middle Kingdom also, when Wawat was overrun by Egypt, it is not quite clear what was the position further south. Kerma perhaps continued to flourish since many imported objects were found there in tumuli which perhaps belong to the late Middle Kingdom. Reisner believed[†] that these foreign objects represented evidence of Egyptian political control rather than mere trade, but this is still much disputed.

In early times trade, like military raids, occurred because economically advanced nations developed wants which they were unable to satisfy from their own resources (often the items needed were luxury goods for court or temples), but, from the point of view of this thesis, it is important to note that reactions were produced in adjacent areas, which led to the growth of kingship for self-defence and the management of trade. On the other hand the chiefs of Kerma did not copy Egyptian models of kingship. Their type of burial with mass human sacrifices was appropriate to a primitive patriarchal society, which had ended in Egypt a thousand years before. While

* See below for more discussion of this stela.

† Reisner. op.cit. V, p. 40 and 61 ff. VI, pp. 3 ff., 512 ff., and 541 ff.

the pressure towards the creation of a monarchy in the northern Sudan was external, the form of that monarchy evolved locally to meet the needs of a still barbaric society. This is an interesting observation, for it gives forewarning of the need to examine closely how much of the background of the Meroitic monarchy was Egyptian, how much of it was the fruit of centuries of evolution in the Sudan.

These were the distant and ultimate roots of the kingship of Napata-Meroe and they should not be ignored, since many facets of the later kingship of the Meroites show survivals from this age. The description of the customs of the Meroites given by Diodorus^{*} Siculus shows survivals from the age of human sacrifice in the expectation that the personal friends and retainers of the king would kill themselves in order to go with him to the next world as a proof of true friendship: Professor W. B. Emery⁺ discovered ample evidence at Ballana and Qustul that human sacrifice at Sudanese royal obsequies persisted right until the dawn of the Christian period even close to the frontier with Egypt. In monarchies which remained essentially tribal and patriarchal, where the king was thought of as literally

* Diodorus Siculus, Book III, 6 ff. This has been previously mentioned in the Introduction. In confirmation of the accuracy of the observations of Diodorus, Reisner, SNR v, p. 181, writes "Evidence of sati-burial was found in almost every tomb at Meroe".

+ W. B. Emery and L. P. Kirwan. The Royal Tombs of Ballana and Qustul. See particularly Vol. I, pp. 25-26.

"the father of his people" and more especially of his courtiers, it was not surprising that this first form of monarchy should persist, and that he should expect not only to take his animals with him, but also a representative selection of his human servants to look after himself and his livestock.

It is very probable that the kings of the XXVth Dynasty, who usually resided in Egypt and came into contact with ideas of kingship other than those of Cush, and their immediate successors who retained at least a facade of Egyptianization, were content to do without human sacrifice, and to rely on the magical substitute, shawabtis, which had been sufficient for Pharaohs since remote days. Nevertheless, they persisted in the ancient Sudanese custom of burial on beds until the time of Taharqa, and followed the custom of having their chariot horses slaughtered and buried near their pyramids from the reign of Piankhy to that of Tanwetamani. Most likely by the time of Harsiotef⁺, at the latest, human sacrifice had

* D. Dunham. SNR 28, 6-7., A. J. Arkell, 1961, pp. 119-120.

+ This inference may reasonably be drawn from the presence of skull fragments belonging to several individuals (RCK IV, p. 222) in the tomb of Harsiotef. These should represent dead people who accompanied the king. The skull of a young man in the mid-twenties cannot possibly be that of the king, who reigned at least thirty-five years according to his Annals, and seems to have been an adult at his accession. (Objection to this identification proposed by Professor D. Dunham has already been raised by Dr. M. F. L. Macadam and Professor F. Hintze).

reappeared, and thereafter continued into the period described by Diodorus.

The Cushite kings of both lands also continued their ancestral customs in a number of other ways. Invariably until the time of Aspelta only mothers and maternal relatives are named by the monarchs themselves, though their sisters or daughters, the God's Wives of Thebes, had no hesitation in mentioning their fathers. Doubtless, this was because rights of succession to the crown were matrilinear rather than patrilinear. Indeed Taharqa even erected^{*} a shrine to the memory of his maternal relations at Kawa instead of one to his forefathers as an Egyptian king would have done. The position of the Queen-Mother or Candace can be well equated[♯] with that of Queen-Mothers among the Ugandan tribes of the great African lakes in recent times. No satisfactory parallel can be found among the contemporaneous kingships of Egypt and Asia.

Whether or not there was a direct connection between the principality of Kerma and the Napatans remains uncertain, but it is extremely likely that the XXVth Dynasty was derived[†] from the

* M. F. L. Macadam, 1949, Kawa VI, 25.

♯ Speke, Roscoe and Oberg who visited Uganda in the later nineteenth century give accounts showing that the Queen Mother enjoyed high social status, and even had her own court distinct from that of the king.

† For a discussion of the state of the question see D. M. Dixon, J.E.A. 50, pp. 125-128. He is unable to offer any substantial new evidence.

older princely class of Upper Nubia in the New Kingdom with an admixture of blood from the surrounding desert-tribes. It is possible that there were also a number of Libyan immigrants. Libyan mercenaries must, however, have been much more inclined to go to Egypt, where the people were rich but passive, rather than Nubia where the inhabitants were almost equally poor and warlike, and probably did not desire their services. It is necessary, therefore, to seek the roots of Napatan-Meroitic mores in the primitive chieftaincies of the Nile Sudan during the First and Second Intermediate Periods before the onset of the New Kingdom Pharaohs, and to conclude that the inspiration drawn from Egypt, which at the beginning of the XVIIIth Dynasty crushed out the lives of the kingdoms of Cush and Wawat, remained to some extent superficial and only affected closely the most important people of the land. The long incorporation of the northern Sudan in a world empire powerfully affected the psychology of the Sudanese rulers, who from the time of Kashta and Piankhi tried hard to recreate this imperial power with themselves as sovereigns - but failed to eliminate most of the local customs of Nubia.

The resolve of king Kamose^{*} of Thebes at the end of the XVIIth Dynasty (about 1590 B.C.) no longer to share Egypt with an Asiatic Hyksos king reigning at Memphis and a Nubian ruler holding Wawat -

* For his stela see L. Habachi, Annales du Service 53, pp. 195-202 and M. Hammad, Chronique d'Egypte. 30, pp. 198-208.

formerly controlled by Egypt and therefore still regarded by the strongly nationalist party in Upper Egypt as a rightful possession - marked an important stage in the history of the Sudan since the application of this policy by his successors led to the thorough conquest of northern Nubia, and its administration as an external province of the Pharaohs. During the Middle Kingdom foreign cultural influences had apparently met with passive, but almost complete, resistance by the C-Group, but probably the New Kingdom rulers, whose military triumph over local opposition was much more overwhelming, were more successful in making them accept assimilation and Egyptian culture. One of the causes of their greater success may be that this time they took over many existing aspects of the established social order. The ancient administrative divisions of Nubia, Cush and Wawat, continued to function under Deputies who were most likely given all the prerogatives of the old native chiefs, the princelings of small districts were not driven out, but continued to serve as minor officials under the new regime. Indeed it may be that the office of the paramount chief of Nubia,

* W. Y. Adams, J.E.A. 50 p. 111 has many reservations about this view, and thinks that most of the C-Group evacuated Lower Nubia, and never became Egyptianized. This will be discussed further below.

+ See T. Säve-Söderbergh, Aegypten und Nubien p. 184. Also L.A.A.A. 8, page 100, Kush VIII, pp. 25-44, and Kush XI, pp. 159-174.

who is often supposed to have lived at Kerma^{*} - though without decisive evidence - was maintained in the person of the King's Son, the Governor of All Southern Lands, who by the mid-XVIIIth Dynasty came to be known usually as King's Son of Cush.

The many large new towns which sprang up as far south as Napata, but especially between the First and Second Cataracts, depended, like those of the Old and Middle Kingdom, on the Egyptian garrisons and priests who resided in them, and on the unceasing demand of Egypt for gold, copper, ivory, ebony, certain kinds of stone, animal skins and other exotic products of the south, but for the first time many of the inhabitants were Nubians. Indeed for one reason or another the established C-Group cultures apparently disappear⁺ after

* See A. J. Arkell, 1961, p. 78.

+ W. Y. Adams, J.E.A. 50, p. 104 ff. has recently expressed his dissent from the generally accepted view that the C-Group of the Nile Valley all became Egyptianized (see e.g. A. J. Arkell, 1961, pp. 96 and 109), and concludes that because of an alleged decline in the Nile flow, Lower Nubia became virtually uninhabited both by Egyptians and C-Group, the latter of whom withdrew southwards. This view he supports by claiming that even under the earlier XVIIIth Dynasty the C-Group and Kerma people were resistant to Egyptianization, and kept their own style of graves until they suddenly disappeared. D. M. Dixon is apparently prepared to argue on similar lines in a forthcoming article: see J.E.A. 50, p.123, note 9, and page 131, note 4. (contd. page (26))

the middle of the XVIIIth Dynasty, and Egyptian style pottery replaced that of local type. Temples sprang up in all the most sacred centres. Many were dedicated explicitly to the dynastic god Ammon, but some, like the temple of Sesostris III at Semna, of Amenophis III at Sulib, of Queen Teye at Sedenga, of Ramesses II at Gerf Husein, Wadi es Sebua, Abu Simbel and Aksha, to the rulers themselves in divinised form associated with the deities of the temples, in fact if not always in name. Even Jebel Barkal, the holiest place of all, was given a temple of Ammon-Ré, lord of the

The present writer does not feel competent to add anything to the discussion of this point, but would simply comment that nomads leave little to make them archaeologically accessible, that the inscription of Pennē shows that, whatever the difficulties of agriculture in the XXth Dynasty, a number of fields continued to be cultivated round Aniba, and that it is difficult to see how Penhāsi, the King's Son of Cush, could have interfered so decisively in the reign of Ramesses XI with barbarian soldiers if most of his own territories were completely uninhabited.

The Dhutmose Letters show that supporters of Penhasi were active north of Buhen during the campaign of Piankh after year 25 of Ramesses XI.

- * Ramesses II is very much in evidence closely associated with the following deities:- at Abu Simbel, Ré-Harakhte, at Gerf Husein, Ptah, at Wadi es Sebua - Amūn and Ré-Harakhte.

Thrones of the Two Lands, by Tuthmosis I or III, and so the Nubians came to accept the gods of Egypt as identical with their own. At the same time Egyptian was the language of officialdom since the Sudanese had no written script of their own.

The area affected by the New Kingdom conquests stretched to south of Napata, and probably the river-boundary lay at Kurgus in the mid-XVIIIth Dynasty. Nevertheless, it is very likely that for the first time the Sudan south of the Atbara was affected by raiding expeditions, and that in this age Egyptian influence, which from the Old Kingdom had sometimes reached Kerma, was now spreading much further upstream. This is important to note because by the early Napatan Period Cush was not longer to be just a small state in the Dongola Reach, but the whole region at least to the latitude of Khartoum was to become unified as a true Sudanese kingdom, centred at first near Jebel Barkal, then increasingly at Old Meroe in the Butana.

The historian A. J. Arkell believes that the traditionally phrased victory inscriptions of this period utterly misrepresent the true nature of the relationship between the New Kingdom Pharaohs

* Cf. A. J. Arkell, 1961, p. 91.

O.G.S. Crawford, Fung Kingdom of Sennar, p. 65.

suggested that the heights of Hau mentioned in a victory text of Amenophis III (?) represent the Hawawit of the Sixth

(Sabaloka) Cataract. See Breasted, Ancient Records II, pp. 339-40.

+ A. J. Arkell. 1961, pp. 95-97.

and their Sudanese subjects, and that by the beginning of the XIXth Dynasty the conquest was so complete that the local chiefs did not even attempt resistance. Recently, however, evidence^{*} of a local rising of the principality of Akita at the end of the XVIIIth Dynasty has become available, and it is therefore very likely that the Egyptians were quite right to mistrust the Cushites and to remember realistically that they remained at heart a foreign people. During the XXth Dynasty the kings, who were unable to maintain control over the succession to many of the greatest offices, allowed the development[†] of a dynasty of King's Sons

* Unpublished stela of Akhnaten is mentioned by Professor W. B. Emery in J.E.A. 48, Introduction.

† J. Černý, Kush VII, pp. 71-75, T. Sève-Söderbergh, Aegypten und Nubien, p. 177. There seems little doubt that Penḥāsi, the King's Son under Ramesses XI, was a descendant of the preceding hereditary viceroys known from the graffiti at Amara West. His ambitions undoubtedly played a major role in the separation of Cush and Egypt. For details of the career of Penḥāsi and the fall of the New Kingdom in the Sudan, see Sir A. H. Gardiner, Egypt of the Pharaohs, page 304 ff.

The Amara material shows clearly that one of the main residences of the King's Son was at Amara which had been developed into a well fortified city under the early Nineteenth Dynasty (see H. W. Fairman J.E.A. 25, pp. 139-144)

which, even if of Egyptian origin, came ultimately to be Cushite in sympathy. Meanwhile, also, local princes of Nubian descent were allowed to gain very senior posts in the administration: for example Pennē the Prince of Aniba was suffered to become Deputy of Wawat during the reign of Ramesses VI. For a time loyalty to the dynasty and probably also to the culture of Egypt was enough to hold the empire together, but ultimately the only sanction against rebellion was that this would be sure to fail. Therefore, in the increasing anarchy of the reign of Ramesses XI, Cush and Egypt drifted apart and resumed separate existences with little contact.

The New Kingdom faltered and fell, like all imperial systems, when its rulers were no longer sufficiently powerful or well-organized to retain by the sword what their ancestors had seized, and, so far as can be judged, most aspects of the high civilization which had grown up during five hundred years of the Egyptian regime at once came to an end. There are no known inscriptions from the fortress chain after the viceregal inscription from Buhen engraved in the reign of Ramesses XI, probably by Penhāsi. No doubt these places, deprived at once of their importance as the "fettters of the

* The letters of Dhutmose published by J. Černý as Late Ramesside Letters show that Piankh the High Priest of Amun tried to recover Cush in or after year 26 of Ramesses XI, but there can be little doubt that he did not succeed. Cf. Sir A. H. Gardiner, Egypt of the Pharaohs, pp. 313-314.

Sudan" and as centres of trade with Egypt, languished and were largely abandoned, becoming mere quarries for the population settled nearby. Probably also the ending of Egyptian rule meant that tribes from the desert or from farther south, who were less cultured and perhaps more vigorous than their relations of Northern Nubia, could encroach and establish their own principalities. Accordingly Cush may have lost its unity soon after the externally imposed administration faded away. On the other hand, the effects of the New Kingdom domination and colonization of Nubia should not be underestimated as formative influences upon the Napatan state. The truly Sudanese culture of the C-group had ended, and did not *

* The present writer regards black incised pottery, such as frequently occurs in Meroitic and post-Meroitic contexts, as merely a norm among people lacking the skill and enterprise to produce more beautiful work. Similar pottery was common in the late decadent days throughout the Roman Empire after the disappearance of terra sigillata. However, Adams claims (J.E.A. 50, p. 113) that the similarities between C-group and Napatan-Meroitic incised wares are not merely general, but particular in every detail. Other aspects of Napatan civilization were often more Egyptianized - pottery is frequently a very conservative culture form. The danger in the argument of Adams is that subsequent scholars may feel inclined to go further than he does on the archaeological evidence of household objects, and underestimate the Egyptianized character of Napata, just as A. J. Arkell, through considering primarily the monumental art, overestimates the debt.

revive in its old pure form. The Ammon cults had become so firmly established that the god, thoroughly assimilated to his local counterparts, was still worshipped in the XXVth Dynasty. Above all there were so many ruins left from the New Kingdom period as tokens of a more enlightened age that any Sudanese king powerful enough to become a patron of art was bound to cast himself as a successor of the New Kingdom Pharaohs.

For several centuries Cush remained in a state of barbarism during which there were no new inscriptions and the fine temples of the New Kingdom were allowed to fall into ruin. Probably the only contact with the outside world was when Sesonchis I (945-924 B.C.), the founder of the XXIInd Dynasty, carried out a raid and allegedly made the Nubiāns pay tribute. The spirit of renewed vitality and of the revival of culture did not pass through the

* I have at an earlier date argued this point in my article "The Kingship of Cush in the Sudan" to be published in Comparative Studies in Society and History in July, 1965. The passages there and here were written before seeing the remarkably similar line of argument adopted by Dr. D. M. Dixon, J.E.A. 50, p. 132.

+ Libyan XXIInd Dynasty war-records are always execrably vague. There are a number of slight hints about this war in several inscriptions, but see especially J. H. Breasted. Ancient Records IV, { 724.

land until the ancestors of the XXVth Dynasty^{*} became established at Napata towards the middle of the ninth century. At first these, though rich, were no more than prosperous local chiefs who strengthened their position by control of the various trade routes which converged on the Nile in the Dongola region, and perhaps through their influence over the venerable shrine of Jebel Barkal. No remains to show the activity of these rulers outside Dongola have been discovered, but their tombs contained a few inscribed objects probably imported from Egypt. Taharqa speaks[†] of the extraordinary good fortune of his grandfather Alara, who was unexpectedly given the kingship, although he only called himself by the princely titles, "Great Chief, Son of Re, Alara". It is, therefore, likely that the enlarged state of Cush which included both northern and central Sudan (see Chapter II below) was not founded until the fifth or sixth generation of the Napatan house.

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- * The only evidence about these precursors of the Napatan Dynasty comes from the excavations of Reisner in their cemetery at El Kurru, published D. Dunham, RCK I, El Kurru. The preliminary Report, SNR II, pp. 237-257, is more informative.
- Cf. D. M. Dixon. "The Origin of the Kingdom of Kush", J.E.A. 50, pp. 121-132, who writes in favour of the local origin of the Dynasty. See also W. Y. Adams, idem pp. 109-115.
- + Taharqa stela of Year 6 = M. F. L. Macadam, 1949, IV, 17.

Throughout the Near East the period after the New Kingdom was one of fragmentation, when small kingdoms could blossom without being crushed by powerful neighbours, and even the old established states of Egypt, Babylon, Assyria and the Hitties had become weak or had collapsed. Egypt in the eighth century was divided between a dozen city rulers who scarcely paid even nominal respect to the rival Pharaohs of the XXIInd and XXIIIrd Dynasties so the rise of the Napatans in the Sudan would not have met with external opposition.

Chapter 2Cush and Egypt: the XXVth Dynasty

In this study it is not intended to treat in detail all that is known of the XXVth Dynasty since many of its activities concerned the history of Egypt exclusively and hardly affected the development of the Napatan-Meroitic kingdom in the Sudan. In any case the political history of the Cushites and Assyrians in Egypt has been very adequately investigated by H. von Zeissl.* Instead the comparatively untouched questions "How far did the XXVth Dynasty remain truly Cushite?" and "What was the effect of the conquest of Egypt upon Cush?", which fall much more within the scope of this thesis, will be considered.

Even a superficial consideration of the refounded Cush of the Napatans reveals that it differed fundamentally in geographical

* H. von Zeissl. Aethiopen und Assyrier in Aegypten. Beiträge zur Geschichte der Aegyptischen Spätzeit. Glückstadt, 1944.

+ As seen above, opera citata, W. Y. Adams and D. M. Dixon take this even further by arguing that Lower Nubia in "the Third Intermediate Period" (after the New Kingdom) and the Napatan Period, was completely uninhabited. Adams, J.E.A. 50, p. 111 argues, nevertheless, that "the Egyptianization which appears in the royal tombs before Piankhi was undoubtedly the legacy of many centuries of cultural contact and intermittent experiences of Egyptian domination". Dixon, idem, p. 131, suggests that "there is no real evidence for the presence of Egyptians in any
(contd. page (35))

structure from the New Kingdom province. Naturally the Egyptians had tended to develop those parts of the province reaching southwards to the Second Cataract which were nearest to Egypt and easiest to reach by the river without having to navigate cataracts. The King's Son had to visit Thebes frequently, so the most important residence of this official was in Lower Nubia at Aniba. The largest towns of Egyptian Cush were evenly spaced between Aswan and Halfa and in the immediate neighbourhood of the Second Cataract. Napata had remained only a secondary town of the southern division of the province of Cush, the ancient principedom of Kerma, the main town of which was

capacity in the Napata district, or indeed anywhere in Upper Nubia, in the period between the close of the Twentieth Dynasty and the rise of the kingdom of Cush". Throughout Meroitic history it seems clear, however, that, whenever the Egyptians lost interest in Lower Nubia, the Cushites moved in; a substantial period of effective occupation of the region approaching Aswan would have been an indispensable preliminary to the Napatan adventure against Thebes. If the Napatan ancestors derived some of their considerable wealth from trade, as everyone since Reisner has assumed, it is hardly likely that they did not do business with such a promising market as Egypt. The weakness of the argument ex silentio against the presence of Egyptian priests or traders in Upper Nubia, is that there is really no evidence at all to justify reaching any conclusion.

* Amara West where the other Deputy, the Deputy of Cush, resided.

As has been seen above, all the garrison towns north of the Second Cataract depended for their very existence on the trade with Egypt and the determination of the Pharaohs to retain their control of this region, and so disappeared or sank into insignificance when the Empire came to an end. It is noteworthy that during the Napatan period of Meroitic history few of these towns recovered their importance except Qasr Ibrim - an obvious site for a fortress - which was re-developed, probably by king Taharqa, as a military base to hold the northern frontier of Cush. The main towns of the new Cush, an independent Sudanese kingdom fearing rather than depending on Egypt, lay farther south at Napata, Amara, Sanam Abu Dom, Kawa, Argo, Sedenga, Sulb and Sai in a region where there was more agricultural land and a number of trade routes converged.

The northward expansion of the Napatans which eventually led them to the conquest of Egypt usually receives all the attention of Egyptologists, but in the context of the history of the Sudan their southward drive must be considered equally important, because their acquisition of territories in the "island of Meroe" (Butana) proved much more lasting: this region was in due course to supersede

* See above in Chapter I.

+ Cf. J. M. Plumley, Illustrated London News, July 11th, 1964

Dongola as the heart of the kingdom. Because of the choice of Napata as capital, the old river boundary at Abu Hamed, which perhaps marked the limit of the zone which the New Kingdom Pharaohs sought to control, was soon crossed, and already by the time of Piankhy, as Reisner showed^{*} (a conclusion with which Arkell fully agrees⁺) Meroe had become a city sufficiently important to be governed^o by relatives, sometimes sons or brothers, of the reigning monarch at Napata. At the same time this enlargement of the

* J.E.A. IX, p. 37.

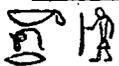
+ Arkell, 1961, pp. 121 and 140.

o Indeed Napata may have been superseded by Meroe quite early as the usual royal residence, although it long maintained its religious importance because of its celebrated Holy Mountain and temple of Ammon, and as the place of enthronement and burial of kings. Tanwetamani "came to Napata unopposed" (Dream Stela line 7-8), no doubt either by his relatives or desert tribesmen, "from the place where he had been" (ibid line 6), which was doubtless already Meroe, when he succeeded Taharqa as ruler of all Cush in 664/663 B.C.

More evidence comes from the time of Aspelta (? who founded the Sun-Temple) from the fragmentary inscription of Psammetichus II published Kemi 8, 39-40 and pl. 3., and Sauneron and Yoyotte, BIFAO. 50, pp. 157-207 with plates. This says the army of Psammetichus II arrived at  which is the residence of (Contd. page (38))

boundaries of the traditional Cush must have provided more soldiers for the long struggle first against the Libyan princes of Lower Egypt, and subsequently against Assyria. The expansion of Cush to include all the Nile Valley in the Sudan first transformed it into a country sufficiently powerful to be able for a time to advance to the centre of the international stage instead of essentially a dependency of Egypt the primary importance of which was derived from its goldmines. These provided the Pharaohs with most of their wealth during the New Kingdom.

In order to understand the factors which led to the dominance of the Napatans in Egypt from about 750-654 B.C. and facilitated their intervention, it is necessary to recall at this point that during the New Kingdom Upper Egypt had been administered separately

the  (Meroitic Qēre = "king") and the town of Tj Dhnt (the Bluff - probably Jebel Barkal) and that, after a fight, the Cushite ruler apparently retired to a place which may be "his residence of Meroë". Unfortunately these last signs are much spoiled.

For discussion of these points see also M. F. L. Macadam, 1955, pp. 238-241.

The West and South Cemeteries of Meroë seem to have been in use by at least the time of Piankhy. See G. A. Reisner, J.E.A. IX, p. 34 ff. and MFAB. XXIII, p. 18.

from Lower Egypt under its own "vizier", whose power and responsibilities had been gradually assumed during the XIXth and XXth Dynasties by the First Prophets of Ammon at Thebes. Finally in the time of Hrihor (towards the end of the reign of Ramesses XI, about 1090 B.C.) these High Priests succeeded in establishing an ^{*}autonomous theocracy in the Thebais where every significant action of the leaders had to receive the approval of a divine oracle. Over the centuries the king, who usually resided in the Delta, adopted ⁺various methods of control, including intermarriage with the leading priestly families, outright installation of their own sons as leading prophets in the temple of Ammon, and occasionally ⁶military intervention against their opponents. This latter probably became quite frequent in the complicated civil strife which raged in Egypt during the late Libyan period, and doubtless exacerbated relations between the two sections of Egypt. Thebes alone was never strong enough to resist the Libyan princes of the XXIIInd

* For more detail, see Parker and Černy, A Saite Oracle Papyrus from Thebes, page 35 ff.

+ I have considered this subject closely in my unpublished Ph.D. thesis, "A Study of Social and Economic Factors operating in Egypt from the Death of Ramesses III to the Commencement of the XXVth Dynasty".

⁶ See R. A. Caminos, The Chronicle of Prince Osorkon, pp. 32-34.

and XXIIIrd Dynasty, but it is not inconceivable* that as early as the late ninth century Nubians were interfering to support Theban dissidents against the northern dominance. Certainly the stage had been well set for the eighth century penetration of Upper Egypt by Kashta or Alara with full local support, and the use of this region by Piankhy in the next generation as a springboard against the northland.

It seems clear from the Piankhy Stela that the people of "the southland, the districts of the residence", as the Thebais is called, were regarded as being loyal to the Napatans, if possibly easily intimidated into surrender at the thought of a strong attack from northern Egypt upon them. Indeed this stela⁶ seems to show that the defending forces regularly stationed in Upper Egypt were commanded by Libyan princes, doubtless local city rulers by their titles. Much the most notable figure in Thebes under the Cushites was Montuemhat the hereditary Egyptian mayor and governor of Upper Egypt who took precedence⁷ over the Napatan prince Harkhebi, the

* Little is known about the persistent, and often successful, enemies of Prince Osorkon, eldest son of Takelothis II.

+ Piankhy Stela line 6 - t3 rsyt, sp3t hnt.

⁶ id., line 8 mentions two "mayors" as generals, Puerem and Lasmersekny (?).

⁷ Vide Parker and Černy, op. cit. Plate I, and Adoption Stela of Nitocris, J.E.A. 50, p. 71 ff.

High Priest of Ammon, and perhaps over the father of Harkhebi, Haremakhet, the son of king Shabako, who held the same office at an earlier date. Similarly Ramose* "the eyes and ears of the king of Lower Egypt, the controller of the treasury of the Lord of the Two Lands, Taharqa" who also directed many other aspects of the administration, was probably a native Theban.

Everything tends to show that the Upper Egyptians were quite willing to regard the Napatan dynasty as legitimate Pharaohs and to co-operate in the extension of their rule to the rest of Egypt. In their turn the Napatans were anxious to superimpose⁺ a veneer of

* Vide. Davies-Macadam, A Corpus of Inscribed Egyptian Funerary Cones, No. 3.

+ Very probably the acceptance of the pyramid as the form of royal tomb by Piankhy and his successors can be regarded as symbolic of their adoption of much of Egyptian culture, and their wish to be buried in a manner befitting their new status as Pharaohs and educated men, not as barbarians in tumuli. The tombs preceding Piankhy's at El-Kurru gradually developed from plain mounds, to mounds encased with sandstone, to solid stone superstructures (? the tomb of Kashta). This seems to reflect the gradual acceptance or grafting of Egyptian ideas, voluntarily chosen, not imposed.

There can be no doubt that the pyramid was a symbol very dear to the Egyptians, associated with the first piece of land to rise

Egyptian culture on their Cushite traditions, and to foster the classical art of Egypt which began to revive^{*} in their time after after languishing under the barbaric sway of Libyan warlords.

above the primeval watery chaos on which the Sun-God Rē^x perched, and with the hope of birth and re-creation. The pyramid had gone out of use for royal burials in the New Kingdom, but little pyramids in the forecourts of the hypogea commemorate the older tradition, which was also perpetuated in private funerary architecture, notably at Deir el Medina (reproduced. I. E. S. Edwards, Pyramids of Egypt, figure 29). This funeral tradition was followed even in the Sudan at Debeira and Sulb during the New Kingdom.

Probably the Napatans, when they reached Memphis, were very impressed by the grandeur of the pyramids of Giza, but they may have been still more responsive to the idea of adopting this form of burial because they knew small tombs of this type already existed in their homeland.

* For an authoritative opinion that the XXVth Dynasty marked an important stage in the development of art in Egypt as well as the Sudan, see Egyptian Sculpture of the Late Period (Brooklyn Museum, 1960) Introduction, pp. XXXIII + XXXIX.

In the long history of Egypt the Sudanese domination, which even in the Thebais lasted less than one hundred years, remained a mere episode significant chiefly as the first of a series of foreign conquests to which that country fell prey and because of its artistic awakening. The greatest importance of the revival which the XXVth Dynasty introduced was for the Sudan where the relapse into barbarism had been more complete, and the high civilization of the immigrant Egyptians had petered out almost without trace. As the native rulers of Cush the Napatans were not regarded as foreign tyrants whose power was based on force. Even when their might in Egypt died away, they continued to rule over their own people. Piankhy and Taharqa used their power well to build rather than to destroy, and encouraged the development of the higher arts, and their descendants tried to follow their example, though with very limited resources. In many ways the period after Tanwetamani, and still more after Aspelta, was a dark one in Sudanese history but the desire for refinement and beautiful buildings lingered on, and at last the distinctive culture of Meroe was born. For the first time civilization was something accepted in the Sudan (if the temporary honeymoon of the Kerma people with the products of Egypt be excluded), rather than an imposition at the wish of foreign rulers: it now took firmer root than in any previous age.

Piankhy had a burning avarice for gold and war-horses typical of any barbarian chief, and was extremely anxious to extort as

much as possible of both from the Libyan rulers, but fortunately this was only one facet of his complex character, and he was also fanatically enthusiastic for the worship of Ammon, had a genuine love of animals and was quite humane towards his enemies. Some of his spoils were used to enlarge the temple of Ammon at Napata, perhaps to show scenes of his wars, and he had the Piankhy Stela, now invaluable to archaeologists, inscribed in thanks to his tutelary deity. Above all, however, the credit for sponsoring art must go to his son Taharqa, who constructed temples in almost every major centre of population in Cush, and repaired others which had been deteriorating ever since the New Kingdom. These temples were constructed in an alien mode imported from Egypt, largely by labour or at least craftsmen brought from the old-established centre of sculpture at Memphis, and decorated with inscriptions written in Egyptian, but they were built under the patronage of the local

* M. F. L. Macadam, 1949, Kawa VI, line 16; IV lines 10-11 describes the ruined condition of a temple at Kawa which was so decayed that "the high land belonging to it had reached its roof". The earlier translation of Dr. Macadam "sandhill" for kayt has been shown to be inadequate. "Cornland" or "High land" is meant as can be shown from the Papyrus Wilbour, the Inscription of Penné, and the Adoption Stela of Nitocris.

+ M. F. L. Macadam, 1949, Kawa IV, 21-22. Taharqa is the only king who explicitly describes doing so, but no doubt all the XXVth Dynasty sovereigns imported specialists.

dynasty. It was probably thanks to the enthusiasm of Taharqa that sufficient interest in temple-building in stone was generated to allow it to be continued in Cush after the loss of Egypt.

In order to understand the attitudes of the Napatans it is necessary to appreciate the effect of the New Kingdom period and subsequent Egyptian influences upon them. Nearly a millenium before, Kamose had considered the north of the Sudan just as much part of a greater Egypt as was the Delta, and, although the ancestors of the XXVth Dynasty had certainly enjoyed complete de facto independence for generations, there was no conception of a Sudanese national state. At first they hesitated to take full Pharaonic titles - perhaps because they were not Egyptians - perhaps because they did not rule in Egypt with which these epithets were religiously so closely involved. Alara, the maternal grandfather of Taharqa, called himself according to that ruler, "The Great Chieftain, the Son of Re, Alara" much in the manner of one of the over powerful city princes of the late Libyan period, although he considered himself a king in the Sudan.

The Napatans who ruled only Cush after the loss of Egypt were in quite a different position because they could by then regard their Egyptian titles as an inherited right, and perhaps cherished some vague hope of regaining what their forebears had won. Even

* M. F. L. Macadam, 1949, Kawa VI, 22 ff.

Piankhy, although convinced he was ^{*}entitled to rule Egypt, evidently recognised the recent nature of his claims by giving many of the city-rulers of Egypt full royal titles. In effect, as Manetho acknowledged by making Shabako the first king of the XXVth Dynasty after the death of Bocchoris the sole king of the XXIVth, it was not until his reign that the Napatans were able to overcome the rival dynasties and obtain definite kingship of Lower Egypt.

When once they ventured to claim the status of Lords of the Two Lands, they sought to restore the unity of the Nile Valley by the subjugation of their rivals further north, and cast themselves as successors to a dissolved empire, much as Charlemagne saw himself as the restorer of the Roman state. The separation of the two countries by the inhospitable stony area between the first and third cataracts only arose gradually as the consequence of the failure of Taharqa to maintain his ascendancy in Egypt. The Egyptian-language titles of the Meroite monarchs show that they always traced back the legitimisation of their rule to the time when they were in control of the whole Nile Valley.

At Thebes the Napatans respected the autonomy of the state of Ammon and used mild methods to control it. Princely High Priests had been shown to be dangerously independent of their masters so

* The Piankhy Stela, lines 1-2, stresses, however, the great accomplishments of the king which he was born to execute, far in excess of the achievements of his predecessors.

Kashta and Piankhi innovated somewhat by stressing the role of their daughters Amenirdis I and Shepenwepet II who formed an adoptive dynasty of Worshipers of Ammon. To establish this succession firmly the existing Worshiper of the God at the time when the Napatans assumed control, Shepenwepet I, daughter of the Libyan king Osorkon III (?) was induced to adopt the daughter of Kashta. Only later, probably during the reign of Taharqa, who was a strong traditionalist, was the High Priesthood^{*} allowed to recover some of its old lustre by being given to Haremakhet the son of Shabako, from whom in the reign of Tanwetamani it descended to Harkhebi his son.

For a considerable period the conquest of Thebes by the Napatans does not seem to have affected the rest of Egypt much except that the Libyan kings of Heracleopolis and Hermopolis, whose territories fringed on the divine state of Ammon, accepted a vague Cushite suzerainty. Meanwhile the great cities of the northland, Memphis, Bubastis, Tanis, Sais, Illahun were still quite independent, and scions of the XXIInd and XXIIIrd Dynasties partitioned the land. The Piankhy Stela makes it clear that, even if the Cushites and the rulers of Thebes were very concerned at the rise of Tefnakhte,

* See Parker and Černy, A Saite Oracle Papyrus from Thebes, pp. 4-6 and p. 29. It is interesting to note that Harkhebi is shown as much darker than the Egyptians on Plate I. Evidently the Cushites were as easily distinguished from Egyptians as Sudanese are today.

"the great prince of the West, the ruler of the temples of the Delta, priest of Neith of Sais, Setem-priest of Ptah" to supreme control of the north. Piankhy did not intervene against him until soldiers from the north arrived to besiege Heracleopolis, and until Namlot, king of Hermopolis, apparently despairing of Cushite help, changed sides to Tefnakhte.

The Piankhy campaign of his year 21 achieved a crushing victory because of the mobility and discipline of his army, and showed the weakness and disunity of the Libyan princes. It marked the beginning of a new phase in the foreign relations of the Cushites. Although Piankhy withdrew to Napata on his successful return, and Memphis eventually fell to Bocchoris the son of Tefnakhte, it was quite certain that the adventure of Piankhy would be repeated with more determination by his successors, and that, in their efforts to retain control of the Delta, they would need to reside largely in Egypt. Gradually the Napatans were becoming more assimilated to

* For this version of the title of Tefnakhte see Piankhy Stela, lines 19-20. His titles are given somewhat differently in lines 2-3. From the description it seems that he held personally many of the most important priesthoods and cities of the north, and that the other Libyan rulers, even if they called themselves kings, were in no position to defy his wishes until his power was reduced by Piankhy.

+ Piankhy Stela, lines 5-8.

their northern subjects, but the process was by no means complete when they were driven southward.

At the same time one should note that the XXVth Dynasty, as champions of the Thebans against the Libyans of the north, did little to heal the long-standing bitterness between the two sections of Egypt, and perhaps aggravated it. In the Delta north of Memphis, and to some extent in Middle Egypt, their rule amounted to little more than a military occupation enforced by their possession of Memphis and Tanis, which had been royal cities even in the anarchy of the late Libyan period. Furthermore the Assyrian records of the battle of El-Teke, and Essurhaddon's and Assurbanipal's lists of Egypto-Libyan kings show that the Cushites were content to allow the city-rulers to keep their private armies and to return to rule their cities. Probably, from the short term view, to maintain the power of the competing Delta princes represented political sagacity, since any movement towards unity in that region posed a deadly threat to Napatan rule, but at the same time it meant that the loosely-linked kingdoms of Cush and Egypt lacked real strength and would collapse as soon as any Asiatic army penetrated the Delta.

Piankhy who was the first to penetrate the north, and therefore the best situated to seek friendly accommodation with the Libyan princes, rejected the opportunity, insulting them by keeping them

* That shrewd politicians outside Egypt recognised this can be seen from Isaiah XIX, 2-3.

+ Piankhy Stela, lines 149-152.

outside his palace when they came to submit on the grounds that they were uncircumcised and ate fish, and so would defile the house of the king. Taharqa as a measure of control even sent ^{*} "the wives and children of the princes of Lower Egypt" to the Sudan to be temple-servants in his new foundation at Kawa, where doubtless they were intended to serve as hostages against the good behaviour of their relations. Tanwetamani called them "the children⁺ of sedition" because he realistically regarded them as completely untrustworthy in view of the fact that some, especially Necho I of Sais, had co-operated gladly with the Assyrian invaders.

The character of the foreign relations of Cush with Egypt may perhaps be summarised by saying that the Napatans benefited culturally and politically by the acquisition of the Thebais, where they were welcome, by grafting their young and vigorous monarchy to the ancient Pharaonic stem and by developing a taste for higher forms of civilization which had disappeared in the Sudan in the dark age since the New Kingdom. On the other hand perhaps the seeds of future decline were sown when Piankhy extended his sway over the hostile northland of Lower Egypt and Shabako began a forward imperial policy which led ultimately to a disastrous series of clashes with Assyria. Nevertheless, it should not be forgotten that the ambitious building programme of Taharqa was probably based on his

* M. F. L. Macadam, 1949, Kawa VI, 20-21.

+ Dream Stela, line 17. n³ msw n bds Bds here must imply moral rather than physical weakness.

possession of the great agricultural and commercial wealth of the Delta, and that the princes of that region could never offer effective resistance unless they were powerfully supported by the great empire of the Assyrians, or in the age of Tanwetamani and Psammetichus I by imported foreign mercenaries from Arabia, Caria and Greece.

Chapter 3The Napatan Period (654 - c. 300 B.C.)

The now conventional separation of the Meroitic kingdom into two main chronological periods after the loss of Egypt, the Napatan (654 - c. 300 B.C.) and the Meroitic (c. 300 B.C. - c. 320 A.D.), can be criticised on a number of grounds of which the most significant are that the political capital of Cush apparently moved to Meroe soon after 600 B.C., and that the culture of the third century B.C. - when Egyptian was still used as the only language of inscriptions - has much in common with that of the fourth century B.C. On the other hand as a division of convenience it helps to underline that the centre of Cushite religious life, a matter of great importance in a theocracy, did not transfer from Napata, which remained the place of coronation and burial of kings, for several centuries. It also stresses the fact that after 300 B.C. Cush had to co-exist with the Hellenistic monarchy of the Ptolemies, and later with the Roman Empire, and that therefore new foreign ideas, not exclusively Egyptian, began to percolate slowly even through the conservatism of the Sudan. Very possibly Cushite pottery responded first to new techniques introduced into Ptolemaic Egypt, but the introduction of alphabetic scripts for writing the Meroitic language may also have been inspired by the realization that Greek used few letters, though the models chosen were the traditional Egyptian Hieroglyphic and

* See W. Y. Adams, Kush XII, p. 171.

Demotic. In this treatise, therefore, this main division will be accepted. The Napatan Period will be divided also for ease of reference into three sub-periods, Early Napatan (654 - c. 568 B.C.), Middle Napatan (c. 568 - 463 B.C.) and Late Napatan (c. 463 - 300 B.C.), but it is not suggested that the archaeological evidence justifies a sharp distinction between the Early and Middle Napatan stages.

The history of the kingdom of Cush after the withdrawal of the XXVth Dynasty from Egypt is unfortunately even less well documented than the preceding age, and depends very largely on a group of stelae from Napata^{*} and several inscriptions from Kawa⁺. In addition there is, of course, the strictly archaeological evidence from the Nuri cemetery and Jebel Barkal, which determines accurately the order of the kings. It is also possible to assess approximately the length of their reigns and to gain some idea of the condition of the state.

Many rulers including all those from Amtalqa (c. 568 - 553 B.C.) to Talakhamani (c. 435 - 431 B.C.) are not represented by any known historical inscriptions, and as a result little can be said of their

* Notably the "Election" Stela of Aspelta, The Annals of Harsiotef, and the Stela of Year 8 of Nastasen[~] which must have originated at Jebel Barkal.

+ The most important Kawa inscriptions of this period are the Stela of Anlamani (c. 623-593 B.C.) and the Great Inscription of Amen-nete-yerike (c. 431-404 B.C.).

activities. To this extent, the modern picture of the time may be influenced unduly by the accidental survival of some records and the destruction of others. This is partly counterbalanced, however, by the knowledge that among a semi-literate people only strong sovereigns could carry out even such small scale temple decoration as the erection of stelae. The princes from whose reigns records are extant are likely, therefore, to be amongst the most significant of the period, though some obviously effective monarchs such as Senkamanisken and Malewiēbamani have left no information. One must hope that future excavation will provide more knowledge, but meanwhile evidence is not wholly lacking, and the character of Napatan external relations can be discerned clearly.

The first observation to make is that nearly all the historical material in the inscriptions, insofar as they record political events rather than repairs to temples and other pious acts, concerns the relations of the Napatan-Meroites with other peoples or tribes within the area which is now the Sudan Republic. Most of these are impossible to locate geographically, but all the remarks of the stelae^{*} suggest that they were nomadic pastoral folk intent on stealing animals and people to be slaves. Probably also they were desirous

* The most detailed description of their activities is contained in the Great Inscription of Amen-nete-yerike.

M. F. L. Macadam, 1949, Kawa IX, lines 5-6 and 22-25.

to seize possession of the agricultural land close to the river. Usually they must have been a nuisance to the settled people of the river towns rather than a real menace, but in the time of Harsiotef they apparently emerged briefly as an organized kingdom under the control of princes of Rehrehis and tried to capture^{*} the town of Meroe itself on two occasions by surprise attack (and perhaps even succeeded for a time).

The other major external relationship of the Meroites in the Napatan Period naturally continued to be with Egypt, but here the inscriptions tell very little. Nearly all that is known comes from Egyptian and Greek sources, or from archaeology. This taciturnity must be explained by the fact that Egypt, backed by large numbers of foreign mercenaries or in the hands of formidable Persian conquerors, was a threat to the north[†] of Cush rather than vice versa.

* Harsiotef Stela, lines 99-110. "There came the foe of Rehrehis, by name Kharu, and all of theirs into Meroe. I made thy good dignity and thy strong arm to grow against him, and contended with him, and made great slaughter of him and turned him away. It was thou that did act for me so that the desert-dweller arose in the middle of the night and fled".

+ Sauneron and Yoyotte BIFAO 50, p. 198 say that under Psammetichus II Egypt would not have sent her expedition simply to provoke the Cushites: there were much more important and grave happenings to take Egyptian attention on her north. Therefore, they argue,

(Contd. page (56))

Normally only events which could be presented as victories tended to be mentioned in descriptions intended to honour the gods for their favours.

The Early Napatian Period

The loss of Egypt by the Napatians needs little explanation. In Assyria they were faced with an almost invincible military state at the height of its power, and later, in Psammetichus I, with the reviving power of Egyptian nationalism and unity, backed by a strong army of well-armed mercenary soldiers from Arabia, Caria and Greece.

the war must have been started by Cushite (?aggression and) ambition since the Napatians thought Egypt was too busy to be strong - but were proved wrong.

This argument may not be valid if, as is suggested below, the Saite Pharaohs having been repulsed from Asia in 605 B.C. by Nebuchadnezzar at the Battle of Carchemish abandoned hopes of wide conquests in that direction during the reign of Psammetichus II (who evidently still had some interest there since he visited Phoenicia) and decided to seek compensation for their losses in Asia by overrunning Cush. This probably seemed a feasible proposition to the Egyptian king at Memphis, who may not have appreciated the many natural difficulties to be overcome before the southern part of the kingdom centred at Meroe could be invaded.

For a while Tanwetamani maintained his hold on Thebes, but his eventual withdrawal from Upper Egypt was inevitable, and in 654 B.C. it passed to Psammetichus by agreement.*

* "Adoption Stela of Nitocris" Edited and commented upon by J. Legrain and A. Erman. Z.A.S. 35, 16 ff. It has recently been re-edited by R. A. Caminos, J.E.A. 50, pp. 71-101 together with plate. Caminos considers this stela evidence that Nitocris, daughter of Psammetichus I, was not made adoptive daughter of Shepenwepet II sister of Taharqa to oust Amenirdis II his daughter, but of Amenirdis herself. From this he argues that Egypt was not hostile to Cush and desirous to exclude Napatan influence from Thebes, as all previous writers have thought. The present author cannot accept all his deductions, believing that the passage lines 15 to 17 - where Shepenwepet and Amenirdis received Nitocris together and wrote before all the priests and officials, "Herewith we give you all our property in country and town. You shall be established on our throne firmly for ever and ever" - must mean that, if they were allowed to keep their empty titles, they had to relinquish control of all the important temple properties. Lines 6 to 7 seem to me to imply that Nitocris immediately became conjoint God's Wife and Worshipper with Shepenwepet. It seems almost inconceivable that Psammetichus I was willing to wait for the death of Amenirdis, who was probably still quite young, before bringing the sacerdotal state of Ammon under the direction of his family, and thus to provide the Cushites with a

(Contd. page (58))

There is no reason to think that relations at this period between Cush and Egypt were particularly unfriendly. At Thebes the shrine of Taharqa^{*} was still in use in processions in 651 B.C.

pretext for intervention at any time they desired. Indeed the numerous inscriptions of Nitocris where she says her "mother" was Shepenwepet daughter of Piankhy (see H. Gauthier, Livre des Rois IV, Part I, pp. 83-85) leave little doubt that she was adopted by Shepenwepet, not Amenirdis. Very probably Amenirdis returned to Napata at some period since no tomb of hers is known at Thebes. The Stela probably indicates that Psammetichus wished to be as kind to the royal ladies as circumstances allowed. In addition such a stela as this, describing the intrusion of political considerations on religious, had to be tactfully worded to avoid offending the local loyalties of the Thebans who had for centuries preserved a large measure of autonomy from the rest of Egypt. That there was no deliberate persecution of Cushites, at least in the early part of the reign of Psammetichus I, can be taken as certain in view of the fact that in 651 the Cushite prince Harkhebi was still High Priest of Ammon: see A. Saite Oracle Papyrus from Thebes.

* See R. A. Parker (and J. Cerny). A Saite Oracle Papyrus from Thebes, Plate I. A vignette shows the inscribed shrine of Ammon donated by king Taharqa being carried in procession to give an oracle.

Nevertheless, the links which bound the two regions of Egypt together were being continuously strengthened by Smatutefnakhte "the Eyes and Ears of the King of Lower Egypt in Upper Egypt" and other officials who had come with Nitocris. Probably Montuemhat, the Mayor of Thebes and Harkhebi the Napatan High Priest of Ammon were progressively restricted to purely religious duties, and lost their wide administrative powers. Another sign of the times was that the garrison at Elephantine "the door of the south", which doubtless lapsed during the XXVth Dynasty, was soon re-established, and all possibilities of Cushite intervention came to an end.

At Jebel Barkal, as the excavations of Reisner[†] show, Atlanersa began to build a temple (B700) which was completed by Senkamanisken, probably after the unexpected death of the founder. Below B500 a number of broken statues of kings from Taharqa to Aspelta were discovered, which showed that decoration of temples continued during the sixty years after the loss of Egypt until the disastrous sack

* Herodotus, History II, 30 writes, "In the reign of king Psammetichus (I) garrisons were stationed at Elephantine against the Ethiopians, at Pelusian Daphnae against the Arabians and Syrians, and at Marea against Libya. Even in my time garrisons of the Persians are stationed in the same places as they were in the time of Psammetichus, for they maintain guards at Elephantine and Daphnae".

† G. A. Reisner, J.E.A. IX, p. 109.

of Napata by Psammetichus II. Reisner remarked⁺ that the inscription of Senkamanisken was cut in inferior style to that of Atlanersa, but he was evidently a prosperous ruler from the size and elaboration of his pyramid, which was the first to have three burial chambers. The Anlamani Stela[†], carved in an elegant and classical hieroglyphic scarcely inferior to the Kawa inscriptions of the great Taharqa, describes the procession of Anlamani (?? 623-593 B.C.) from Napata to Kawa - where in token of his estimation for the god he established a Third Prophetship - and the short shrift received by troublesome desert dwellers of the region. Then, at Napata, the king presented some of his sisters to be priestesses of the leading gods of Napata, Kawa, Argo and Contra-Napata[♠]. These musician-priestesses did not have the special titles of the Worshipper of Ammon at Thebes, or her high spiritual standing, and were probably not dedicated to chastity in the same way. This form of dedication, therefore, represents a similar, but distinct religious tendency. The elaborate decoration of the massive sarcophagi of this king and his successor Aspelta and

* J.E.A. IX, p. 217. It was not known by Reisner that the attack took place in the reign of Psammetichus II, though he correctly attributed it to the VIth Century B.C.

+ J.E.A. IX, p. 109.

† M. F. L. Macadam. 1949. Kawa, VIII.

♠ Imn-R^cK₃n T₃-Sti is the Ammon of the temple of Sanam,

L.A.A.A. p. 9, 78, also pls. XXVI, XLIII.

the skill with which such inscriptions as the Anlamani and the Khaliut Stelae were carved can only suggest that Egyptian specialists or their descendants were still working for the kings of Cush at this period. On the other hand the Aspelta "Election" Stela (c. 593-592 B.C.) is in many ways far more Cushite in sympathy, and even mentions^{*} the kingship of Cush as an historic institution distinct from that of Egypt. It was most likely carved by a local craftsman and shows some evidence of that confusion of signs which became common in later Cushite hieroglyphic. This was doubtless because it was written during the war against Psammetichus II when all cultural relations may have been severed.

A. J. Arkell⁶ is justified in making the campaign of Psammetichus II end his second (sic! - ?? first) period of the kingdom of Cush after the loss of Egypt. There can be no doubt that the destruction or ravaging of most of the northern towns, especially

* Aspelta "Election" Stela lines 11-13. "Finally all the people cried "The god Amen-Re, Lord of the Thrones of the Two Lands is in the Holy Mountain (Jebel Barkal). He is the god of Cush. Let us go to him Let the choice be left in his hands. He is the god of the kings of Cush since the time of Re. It is in his hands to make the kings of Cush his beloved sons".

+ Useful information about this war from the Egyptian angle can be obtained from two fragmentary stelae of Psammetichus II. See S. Sauneron and J. Yoyotte, BIFAO L, pp. 157-207. See above in this chapter and in chapter 2.

⁶ A. J. Arkell, 1961, p. 144.

Napata and the temples of Jebel Barkal - where probably a fierce ^{*} battle was fought between the rival armies inside the temples - led to the lasting impoverishment of Cush and to its political isolation, which constituted the basic reasons for the weakness of the Middle Napatans. On the other hand Aspelta, who was an able and energetic monarch, tried with some temporary success to restore the power of his kingdom after the defeat of the invasion, and so it seems better to the present writer not to commence the obscure and feeble Middle Napatan Period until after his death.

* A. J. Arkell, 1961, p. 145 thinks that the battle of T₃ Dhnt recorded in one of the inscriptions of Psammetichus II may have been at Sai, but the most natural site for the most bitter battle would have been at Jebel Barkal, which could aptly be termed "The Forehead" or "The Bluff". The probability of this is increased by the information in the stela that the "land of Shas" - the region of Napata - was then occupied.

This supposition would usefully explain the savage damage done to the Barkal temples which far exceeds what was done at Kawa so far as can be seen. Temples were of course good strongpoints for entrenched armies which could take refuge behind their strong walls and gates.

See also Sauneron and Yoyotte, B.I.F.A.O. I, pp. 182-3 who wish to place it at Old Dongola.

Exactly why relations between Egypt and Cush worsened in the reign of Psammetichus II is still an open question, but to the present writer it seems merely that the Egyptians excluded from Asia^{*} by the battle of Carchemish in 605 B.C. sought in compensation to regain the other section of the ancient New Kingdom Empire in the south, and at the same time to avenge the conquest of Egypt by the XXVth Dynasty. There is no justification for the supposition of A. J. Arkell[†] that "the army of Cush was at Abu Simbel (? Pure Mountain) threatening Egypt" in 593 B.C., and that Egypt struck back in self-defence. It is certain instead from the Election Stela, lines 1-3, that the Cushite royalties were at Jebel Barkal, not Abu Simbel, at the death of Anlamani. Jebel Barkal was always called the "Holy Mountain" in Cush from at least the days of Piankhy and Taharqa, and the fact that the leading generals and courtiers, and finally the brothers of the dead king, were sent[♠] to Amen of Napata concerning the choice of a new ruler leaves no possible doubt about the identification. In any case the suggestion of Arkell that Anlamani wanted to take advantage of the defeat of the Egyptians

* 2 Kings, 24, 7. "And the king of Egypt came not again any more out of his land: for the king of Babylon had taken from the river of Egypt to the river Euphrates all that pertained to the king of Egypt.

† A. J. Arkell, 1961, p. 145. The only possible justification for
(Contd. page (64))

♠ Sauneron and Yoyotte, op. cit. p. 189.

at Carchemish to attack Egypt is extremely unlikely because he would hardly have waited twelve years before taking action.

The inscriptions of Psammetichus II and the Abu Simbel graffito show that the Egyptians succeeded briefly in occupying the whole territory which had once belonged to the New Kingdom, to Kurgus, now believed to be Kerkis, beyond Abu Hamed. Like the Romans at a later date, however, their resources, and perhaps their geograph-

identifying the place with Abu Simbel is the fact that the god $\text{R}\bar{\text{e}}^{\text{c}}$ is invoked, for Abu Simbel was a temple of $\text{R}\bar{\text{e}}^{\text{c}}$ Harakhte; but, as Dr. Macadam points out to me, $\text{R}\bar{\text{e}}^{\text{c}}$ is a god traditionally associated with kingship. There being no sanctuary of $\text{R}\bar{\text{e}}^{\text{c}}$ at Napata, Aspelta's courtiers (ll. 11 ff.) conveniently took the line of reasoning that Amen- $\text{R}\bar{\text{e}}^{\text{c}}$ who dwells in the Holy Mountain is another form of $\text{R}\bar{\text{e}}^{\text{c}}$ and also par excellence "a god of Cush" and he had been "the god of the kings of Cush since the time of $\text{R}\bar{\text{e}}^{\text{c}}$ " - who was the last of the gods to reign on earth. Therefore Ammon of Napata makes the choice in Cush just as Ammon of Karnak made the choice in Egypt, where doubtless a similar line of reasoning was adopted.

The preoccupation of the stela with kingship and coronation makes it quite clear that Napata was the site.

Cf. the observations of J. Černý, A Saite Oracle Papyrus from Thebes, page 38, who assumes without discussion that the events took place at Napata.

ical knowledge, were insufficient to allow them to march to Meroe and finish the kingdom of Cush. As a result it seems that they rapidly withdrew before Aspelta to a defensive line at the Second Cataract^{*}. Ultimately Qasr Ibrim and most of Lower Nubia were re-occupied[†] by the Cushites, probably after the death of Psammetichus II in 588 B.C., when the war came to an end.

The struggle had shown that the enlarged state of Cush was too vast, and its southern centres too distant, to be conquered easily in the conditions of ancient warfare. To this extent its existence as a separate country from Egypt had been consolidated. Nevertheless, the price had been the devastation of the cities south of Semna, the homeland of the XXVth Dynasty. Hitherto the cities of the Butana ("island of Meroe") had been expanding essentially as outposts in a new and attractive area which afforded grazing for vast numbers of cattle and a little good agricultural land. Henceforth Meroe, which had been the refuge[♠] of Aspelta, would become the home of his

* A. H. Sayce, P.S.B.A. 17 (1895), pp. 39-41.

+ There seems little doubt that at the time of the expedition of Cambyses in 525 B.C. the Egyptian garrisons were again stationed at Elephantine, as seems to have been the case in the reign of Apries to judge from the inscription of Neshor (Breasted. Ancient Records IV, pp. 506-508)

♠ M. F. L. Macadam, 1955, p. 240 shows that almost certainly one of the Psammetichus II stelae names Meroe as the base of Aspelta, there called "the kwr", Meroitic for "ruler".

weaker and more isolationist successors. Cush tried to solve the problems raised through contacts with the outside world by reducing them to a minimum, and by the age of Herodotus, if not by the Persian conquest of Egypt in 525 B.C., the land of Meroe had already become a realm of mystery and legend, as it is later shown to be by the Second Setem story.

Before passing from the Early Napatan Period it is worth noting some evidence that the hostility of Cush and Egypt was caused through the rivalry of the reigning dynasties rather than because of the antipathy of the lower échelons. Herodotus^{*} records that the garrison of Egyptian soldiers at Elephantine were dissatisfied in the reign of Psammetichus I because they had been on duty for three years without being relieved, and so marched off to Cush where they were given land as far south of Meroe as Meroe was from Egypt, which they were told to take from rebels. That such happenings really occurred is confirmed[†] by the inscription of Neshor, the commander of the southern frontier in the reign of Apries, which explains how the garrison at Elephantine, apparently mostly Arabians, Greeks and Libyans, again mutinied and were with the greatest difficulty persuaded not to go to Napata (Shas-hert), but to come back for punishment by the king. This was after the campaign of 591 B.C., but

* Herodotus. History II, 30-31.

† See Breasted, Ancient Records IV, pp. 506-508 and H. Schaefer, Beitrage zur alten Geschichte, pp. 152-153.

evidently Egyptian dissidents, or dissatisfied foreign mercenaries, still expected a friendly reception even if they had fought in that war.

The Middle Napatan Period.

Because, as seen above, there are no historical inscriptions from any of the kings of the Middle Napatan period and there are also no Egyptian references to Cush, modern knowledge has to be reconstructed on the basis of a few chance references in classical or Persian sources and upon rather unsatisfactory archaeological evidence. Practically the only information about this stage in Cushite development is derived from the excavation of royal tombs, since no temples or other monuments have been found.

Herodotus is the best source of historical information, though as usual much that he received by common report has to be treated with the greatest caution, as he himself often warns the reader. According to his account the Persian king Cambyses, after over-^{*}running Egypt in 525 B.C., sent spies in various directions to map out future campaigns. To Ethiopia (Cush) he sent men of the Fish-Eating tribe from Elephantine, who could speak the language of the Meroites, to take gifts to the king and find whether the "Table of the Sun" at Meroe really existed. When the ambassadors arrived, they were received by the ruler, but he fully appreciated why they had been sent, and denounced them as spies. Then he criticised Cambyses saying, "He is not a just man for, if he were righteous,

* Herodotus, History, III, 19-25.

he would not desire any territory but his own, nor reduce people to slavery who have done him no wrong". Thereafter, according to the account, he gave them a bow to take to Cambyses, and advised him not to attack until his soldiers could handle it as easily as the Ethiopians - and then only with much greater forces. He concluded his speech, "Till then let him thank the gods, who have not inspired the Ethiopians to add another land to their own".

After this the Cushite king examined the gifts from Persia and rejected them, except the wine which he much appreciated, and then showed the visitors the wonders of Mercoe. These Herodotus describes in the most unlikely terms - speaking, for example, of prisoners in chains of gold and of most of the Ethiopians living to be one hundred and twenty years old.

According to Herodotus, Cambyses was angry at the reception of his delegation and, having decided to attack Cush, set off immediately southwards without making proper arrangements for supplies. This expedition was lacking in food before it had covered more than one fifth of the way, and eventually, after resorting to cannibalism, the army had to return to Thebes having suffered heavy losses. The later writer Strabo^{*} alleges that the disaster took place near Premnis or Qasr Ibrim.

* Strabo. Geog. XVII, 54.

Modern scholars are often inclined to dismiss^{*} the writings of Herodotus much too lightly because his narratives contain many fantastic embellishments, but it is worth noting that he was aware[†] of the earlier expedition of Psammetichus II against Cush. There is, therefore, no logical reason to deny that Cambyses actually led

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- * Cf. the remarks of A. Olmstead, History of the Persian Empire, p. 321. "Herodotus, the Father of History, was also the greatest storyteller of antiquity. Critics, ancient and modern, have too often ignored his frequent, "So they say, but I don't believe them". They have asserted that his "garrulity" - to his readers, his most delightful characteristic - weakens his credibility as a historian. Year by year new discoveries from the older Orient have proved that the critics not the historian were in error. Furthermore, Herodotus knew what his successors have learned but slowly - that one good story about an individual, even though that man never existed in actual life, may better illuminate for us an alien psychology than many a dull collection of routine facts". On page 185 he writes further "Herodotus, that great storyteller, informs us that Cyrus and Cambyses imposed no formal tribute upon their subject peoples, but were content to receive gifts. Darius, however, fixed the tribute and other dues, and for this he was called the huckster (Histories III, 89). As with so many of the historian's apparently pointless anecdotes, only recently discovered information affords the true explanation. Not only was Darius a great lawgiver and administrator, but, according to his lights, he was an outstanding financier."
- + Herodotus, History, II, 161.

an expedition against Cush or that the capital of Ethiopia was at Meroe at that time. The speech of the king was, of course, a rhetorical composition of Herodotus in the approved classical tradition, but was no doubt intended to reflect what he understood as the Cushite attitude. (The story about golden chains only reflects the long-established and well-authenticated legend that the mines of Nubia were the source of fabulous wealth.) Theatrical incidents such as the presentation of the bow were not uncommon in the diplomatic relations of kings, and in the view of the present writer this may be an historical fact, especially as the Cushites were well known archers and in later tomb scenes Meroitic rulers are regularly shown armed with bows (Nubia was traditionally named "the Land of the Bow"). The suggestion of Strabo that the expedition failed at Qasr Ibrim is likely, since any force from Egypt had to storm this barren rock before marching south, but he seems confused with the ^{*}narrative of Herodotus concerning the expedition against the Ammonians when he states that the army perished in sand dunes.

* Herodotus. History, III, 26. "The Ammonians say that as they were taking dinner, a very strong south wind blew, carrying with it sand, and covered them over. In this manner they disappeared".

The other interesting information given by Herodotus^{*} is that Arabians and Ethiopians from south of Egypt served in the great army which king Xerxes of Persia led against Greece in 481-480 B.C. This war was more or less within the lifetime of Herodotus, and there can be no doubt that he had detailed descriptions of the Persian army at his disposal, so the historicity of this record is indubitable. It is, however, unfortunately unknown whether these were simply Nubian mercenaries in search of adventure or a national contingent that the Meroitic king, like the other subject princes of the Persians, was obliged to provide for his overlord. Darius I[†] mentions that Ethiopian ivory was used in the decoration of his new palace at Susa, and at one time a satrapy of Kushiya[♠] was claimed, but, if this really existed, it was probably

* Herodotus. History, VII, 69.

+ Darius I says at Susa, "This is the kingdom which I hold: from the Sacas beyond Sogdiana to Kushiya, from India to Sardis." (Herzfeld. Altpersische Inschriften No. 6), and describes the building of his palace in detail elsewhere in a great inscription published by R. G. Kent, JAOS. 51, p. 193 ff.

♠ The Canal Stelae of Darius erected in 515 B.C. name a province of Kushiya, i.e. Cush, but this might express a hoped for conquest rather than a reality. There is no further evidence that Cush was ever organized as a proper satrapy with its own administration and tribute. Certainly in the fifth century Elephantine marked the limit of direct Persian control, and the furthest point which Herodotus could reach.

close to the Red Sea coast or in Abyssinia, where the Ptolemaic Greeks ventured in later days, rather than on the Upper Nile where invasion was made excessively difficult and unprofitable by desert and cataracts.

Herodotus, History, III, 89 ff. lists Persian provinces and does not mention Kushiya, but comparison with the Persepolis lists of Darius and Xerxes reveals various omissions. These show fairly conclusively that he was using a list of Artaxerxes (465-424 B.C.) prior to the rebellion of Egypt in 456 B.C., since this country is treated as a Persian province, and so belonging to a time when a number of satrapies had already disappeared owing to the contraction of the Empire. (cf. A. T. Olmstead, History of the Persian Empire, pp. 291-293). In III, 97 he gives the following interesting information, "The Ethiopians bordering on Egypt, whom Cambyses subdued when he marched against the Macrobian Ethiopians, who dwell in the sacred city of Nysa and celebrate festivals of Bacchus ----- bring every third year, and continued to until my time, two choenices of gold ore, two hundred logs of Ebony, five Ethiopian boys and twenty large elephant tusks."

Nysa must be Philae or Biga and Bacchus is Osiris (see History II, 42). Lower Nubia had become already a sacral buffer state, as in Ptolemaic times. The absence of a satrapal organization and regular taxation prove that this region was small and not fully incorporated by the Persians.

The description given by Herodotus of how the Cushites used great bows four cubits long, almost as tall as a man, short arrows tipped with very hard stone, bone-tipped javelins and clubs of knotted acacia wood, and painted themselves with red and black war-paint, shows that the iron age of Cush had not truly begun and that in that poor land bronze had never become common except as the armament of kings and their bodyguards. Most military equipment remained of the Neolithic type. In set battles they could never resist the Assyrians or Greeks who had metal armour and metal tipped spears, but in irregular warfare could not easily be defeated because of their great mobility. The warning allegedly given by the Meroitic ruler to Cambyses about his archers was a very pertinent one.

Future research and excavation may one day show that the Middle Napatan period was not quite so decadent and uncreative as it appears at present, but there can be little doubt that it was one of the most inglorious in the history of Cush. Cut off from the source of Sudanese higher culture by hostile forces in Egypt and still weakened by the effects of the expedition of Psammetichus II the descendants of Taharqa rapidly declined in vigour. Probably the political and cultural rally of the Late Napatan period was related to the slackening of Persian pressure on the north and the consequent possibility of resuming cultural connections with Egypt.

The Late Napatan Period

Thanks to the three important historical records, the Great Inscription of Amen-nete-yerike, the Annals of Harsiotef and the Stela of Nastasen, the historical events of the Late Napatan Period can be traced in some detail. Amen-nete-yerike describes how, when his uncle (?) Talakhamani died in the palace of Meroe, there

* W. Y. Adams, J.E.A. 50, p. 113 refers to these as "three rather uninformative inscriptions", and on p. 116 suggests that the Meroitic kingdom may have been divided into two throughout most or the whole of the Napatan age. The present writer disagrees, regarding them as unusually factual and circumstantial accounts difficult to parallel elsewhere in the Nile Valley, which even admit failures (e.g. the Bedja raids on the temples of Kawa and Tore in the reign of Nastasen), and near disasters (the attacks of the Rehrehis on Meroe town in the reign of Harsiotef).

Whatever may have been the case during the Middle Napatan period they show fairly conclusively that from Malewiēbamani to Nastasen (c. 460-315 B.C.), Cush was an united, if at times enfeebled, realm. Harsiotef was active from Aswan to Meroe, Nastasen reigned over Tosete and Alwa.

Unfortunately their utility is reduced through our lack of knowledge of the geography of the ancient Sudan.

+ M. F. L. Macadam, 1949, Kawa IX, 3-5.

was a panic stricken search to find a new king, and how, after his accession, he had to drive away the Rehrehis who had come to steal cattle and men to be slaves even from the district of Meroe. He then hurriedly set out for Napata to obtain the religious sanctions necessary to his appointment. Napata, called the "Holy Mountain" of the Land of Nehas, had become little more than an ancestral shrine. From Napata the king had to strike at bands of dissident tribesmen near the Meroitic settlements, but he also employed his retinue to clear sand from the temple of Kawa which had last been cleaned forty-two years before.

It is noteworthy that much of the architectural work of the next important ruler, Harsiotef, was at Napata and nearly all of it north of Meroe. The new interest of Cush in the far north was

* id. IX 19; 36 . See the observations of M. F. L. Macadam, 1949, p. 55, (Note 34) regarding the status of Napata at this time.

+ id. IX, 45-48.

♯ id. IX, 69-74.

♯ Harsiotef lists twelve temples to be repaired, mostly belonging to Amen or the Osiris, Isis, Horus triad. The sites of these are mostly unknown, but all except one appear to be north of Meroe (lines 146-161).

symbolised by the noteworthy campaign of Harsiotef^{*} in his year 11, against his "unfaithful servants Sa-amenis and Berga" in the province of Akina or Lower Nubia during which the rebels were chased to Aswan and there killed. King Harsiotef had an Egyptian name, the only royal form of this name after Piankhy, and was interested in fostering the cults of Isis which developed to a new importance in Egypt of the XXXth Dynasty. In addition iron first occurs[†] in the foundation deposits of his pyramid.

The language used in the stelae of Harsiotef and Nastasen can be used to support the thesis of closer external contacts inasmuch as there seems to have been an abandonment of the relatively pure independent tradition of Middle Egyptian maintained in isolation in Cush until the time of Amen-nete-yenke, and a slight external influence from Demotic. The many misconceptions about basic Egyptian grammar in the Harsiotef Stela indicate, however, that it cannot have been written by a native Egyptian, and that it was probably composed by a Sudanese who had been to Egypt and acquired a rudimentary know-

* Harsiotef Stela. lines 92-96.

+ See G. A. Wainwright, "Iron in the Napatan and Meroitic Ages".
SNR XXVI, pp. 5-36.

The date of the introduction of iron is discussed more recently in a wider African context by B. Davidson, Old Africa rediscovered, pp. 82-84. The question of Meroe and iron technology will be considered further below in Chapter 6, "Conclusions".

ledge of the spoken language there. As a hieroglyphic inscription it offers little to compare with the often elegant and literary writing of the Persian period and the last flowering of ancient culture under the XXIXth and XXth Dynasties. One might suppose from their phraseology that Harsiotef and Nastasen had kicked over the traces of grammatical rules, which they found oppressive, and now wrote a very individualistic form of gibberish; this would have proved almost incomprehensible to an educated Egyptian.

Not surprisingly Harsiotef was very proud of reducing Lower Nubia, which had long been quite outside the control of his predecessors, to obedience and reaching Aswan. This may well have kindled in his people vague hopes of regaining the long lost territories in Egypt. Such expectations were, however, of course to prove delusory: the most important area of Egypt lay far away in the north. There the inhabitants knew and cared little for what was happening on the southern frontier, since the Persian enemy posed a far more dangerous menace, a continual threat to the independence of the last native dynasties. The Cushite advance was a considerable achievement, which was to be consolidated during the third century B.C., but the Napatan kingdom was not yet sufficiently powerful to attempt this, and during the XXXth Dynasty the Dodecaschoenus again passed completely outside the zone of influence of the Meroites. Indeed the success of Harsiotef, if his reign is correctly dated, was probably only made possible by the complicated dynastic struggles taking place between the XXVIIIth and XXIXth Dynasties in Egypt.

Professor Hintze^{*} believes that only half a century later the princes of Nubia between Cush and Egypt were so independent that one of them, Khababash,[†] could attack both the Persians in Egypt and king Nastasen in the Napata region.

The general impression to be obtained from the Harsiotef Stela is that the southern part of his kingdom was in a very precarious condition at his accession, as indeed it had been when his father(?) Amen-nete-yerike was called to the throne. In his ⁶second year as ruler the Rehrehis, who had long been infesting[‡] the fringes of the district of Meroe, arrived to attack him, and, although they were driven away, their defeat was not final. In his years 18 and 23 they renewed the challenge, coming to the Meroitic nome or even the

* F. Hintze, 1959, pp. 17-20.

+ For this attractive identification of the important enemy chief mentioned in Nastasen Stela, line 39, see id, pp. 18-20.

6 Harsiotef Stela, lines 73-77.

‡ Great Inscription of Amen-nete-yerike. M. F. L. Macadam, 1949, Kawa IX, lines 5-6 and 22-35.

≠ Harsiotef Stela, lines 99 ff. "Regnal year 18, first month of Proyet, day 13 of the Son of Re, Harsiotef, may he live for ever. Then came the foe of Rehrehis, by name Kharu, and all of theirs into Meroe." Line 104 ff., "Year 23, third month of Shom, day 29, of the Son of Re, Harsiotef, may he live for ever, there came the chieftain of the desert folk of Rehrehis Alu with all that was his into Meroe."

town itself as immigrants with all their property. The campaign of year 18 was again successful, but their power was not broken until year 23, when it seems that their king submitted.^{*} From the Harsiotef Stela itself it is by no means clear what solid results were produced by all this fighting, but the Nastasen Stela makes it fairly certain that the ultimate result was the recovery of the extensive province of Alwa, of which Meroe was probably the old capital, which had slipped from Cushite control since the time of Aspelta.[†] In line 15 of his stela Nastasen describing his coronation calls the "headcap of Alwa", with which he was crowned at Napata (in addition to the traditional "headcap of Bowland"), the "headcap of king Harsiotef". This was obviously intended as a compliment to the memory of his great predecessor because he had acquired the region for the dynasty. It is interesting to note, however, that even in the reign of Nastasen the two kingdoms seem separate states linked primarily in the person of the king. Perhaps this was one reason

* Harsiotef Stela, line 108 ff. "And Kar (or "the king") went(?), and he came and prayed for himself. Thy good dignity, thy mighty strong arm, the chieftain permitted him to live, and he left my army and all my cavalry unharmed."

+ The Lion Sphinx in the Museum Hall at Khartoum (unpublished) bears the titulary of Aspelta and was discovered at Khartoum North by Professor Vercoutter.

for the supposed schism after his death, which many writers feel^{*} brought about the temporary separation of Napata from Meroe.

In a sense, Harsiotef, although he was more active in the north, at Napata and even in Lower Nubia, than any of his recent predecessors, can be regarded as the sovereign who set the scene⁺ for the true Meroitic kingdom after Nastasen, and for the final decline in the importance of the old sacred cities. The extraordinary development of the "island of Meroe", can be traced directly to his victories which pacified the hinterland and kept the town

* See most recently F. Hintze, 1959, pp. 22-3 and 1962, pp. 13-19.

He does not, however, use this argument in support of his position.

+ W. Y. Adams, J.E.A. 50, p. 116, postulates a definite hiatus between the Napatan and Meroitic periods on archaeological grounds. The present writer is willing to admit a possible period of internal disintegration after Nastasen, followed by reunification under Arakākamani or Arnekhamani which was accompanied by a sudden modernization of Cushite culture to copy the Early Ptolemaic rather than the Pharaonic exemplar. Nevertheless, there seems too much in common between the Late Napatans and the Early Meroites to admit a gap in the royal succession. Adams uses passages from Garstang, Griffith and Macadam to support his argument, but none of these writers thought of a clear hiatus in the sense proposed. Dr. Macadam confirms that at the time of writing the passages quoted in Temples of Kawa II (1955) he was not in-

(Contd. page (81))

safe, and so ultimately came the decision to shift the religious centre and the main burial place of the kings to Begrawiya. Meroe had long been the most important residence of Cush, but it could not become wholly its temporal and spiritual hub until Harsiotef completed the work of the XXVth Dynasty by subduing all the East Bank, and moved the centre of gravity of the kingdom still more decisively southwards.

Nastasen can be regarded as a Meroitic king in almost the same sense as Arakakamani and the other rulers of the third century, and, in effect, the drawing of the figures at the top of his stela in very elongated form looks decidedly Ptolemaic, though the rather obscure wording of his stela cannot compare with the polished Egyptian of the Lion Temple of Arnekhmani. He differs from them mainly because he still thought it worth while to come to Napata

tending to imply such a discontinuity.

One may think that Adams in his efforts to show what is undoubtedly correct, that the Meroitic kingdom did not decline continuously from the time of the break with Egypt (*id.* pp. 116-117), makes a sharper distinction between his "Meroitic Renaissance" and the allegedly decadent Napatan Period than the evidence permits. It is becoming clear that the traditionalist view of the Napatan Age, as one of steady and uninterruptedly increasing decadence, may also legitimately be questioned.

for the religious ceremonies of installation, which apparently later rulers did not bother to do, and his tomb was in the ancestral Nuri Cemetery. He recorded the events of his coronation in great detail on his stela, the last in Egyptian recording a royal coronation there. Nevertheless, the people of Napata proclaimed that he would rule at Meroe, and he only wanted ratification from Amen of Napata, since his brothers, the other possible candidates, had already withdrawn.

* Nastasen Stela, lines 19-21.

+ id., lines 4-7, make it quite clear that Nastasen really succeeded in virtue of his position as crown prince. The text runs approximately as follows, "When I was the good son (the crown prince) in Meroe, Aman-nape, my good father, summoned me, saying, "Come for I am summoning the royal brethren who are in Meroe"

($\frac{1}{2}$ = ⌘ = ⌘). Dr. Macadam calls to my attention his observations in Kawa XLIII) and I said to them, "Come ye with us to seek him, namely (?), and they said, "We will not go with you ("me" - written - sic), for thou art his good son, and it is thou whom Aman-nape, thy good father, loves".

The fiction was thus preserved that the king was elected from among the royal brothers.

Apart from the possible struggle of Nastasen against Khababash, which he claims to have won decisively, all his external relations were within the modern Sudan. He records that in various regions he successfully extorted vast numbers of cattle and enormous quantities of gold from hostile tribes surrounding the Meroitic realm. His main failures were against the tribesmen of the north - he mentions these with unusual frankness - who ransacked gold objects⁺ belonging to the temples of Kawa (line 60) and Tore (line 64) which had been donated by Aspelta, and could not be arrested, nor could the goods be recovered. Probably here the king was troubled by mounted raiders, perhaps on camels, against whom the settled people could have no complete protection. On the whole the view of A. J. Arkell^δ that "the country was becoming increasingly insecure" under Nastasen does not appear justified by the evidence, which tends to show that the greatest crisis and the beginnings of recovery occurred under Harsiotef.

* Nastasen Stela, lines 46-59. Cf. J. Vercoutter, "The Gold of Kush", Kush VII, pp. 150-151. He supposes the "Hamitic" tribes of the Nile Valley were raiding more negro neighbours, but there is no real evidence to show whether these enemies of the Meroites were more or less negro than they were.

+ Nastasen Stela, lines 60-66.

δ A. J. Arkell, 1961, p. 156.

The general picture which emerges from the inscriptions (Archaeology is not very helpful. Few of the temples mentioned by Harsiotef for example are even approximately located) suggests that at the beginning of the period, in the time of Amen-neteyrike (c. 431-404 B.C.), external relations outside the Sudan were rare because the Cushites were hemmed in by hostile desert tribes. The Kawa inscriptions of this ruler are little more than rather incompetent and ill-phrased modifications of the nearby stelae of Taharqa, written in pseudo-Middle Egyptian. However, the Annals of Harsiotef (403-368 B.C.) show that during this period despite the real danger posed by the Rehrehis, Cushite power was recovering and external relations reviving a little, which had languished in the age since Anlamani.

Connections were not so close as in the golden age of the third to second century B.C. when a culture developed which was sufficiently powerful to be at once Egyptianized and original, but the process of modernizing Cush from the traditions of the XXVth Dynasty to fit in with the civilization of the early Ptolemies was at last beginning, if only because older traditions weakened by time were tending to lapse. Unless the nature of the changes of the fourth century in Cush, both geographical and cultural, is understood, the foreign relations of the third century cannot be fully appreciated.

Chapter 4The Earlier Meroitic Age (c. 300 B.C. - 70 A.D.)

The Meroitic Age is still an uncharted period where the main danger is that what is scarcely more than conjecture^{*} may be treated as fact. Meroe itself has scarcely been excavated except on the topmost levels: Musawwarat-es-Sufra is at present under excavation: Naga, which might provide more information than anywhere else is virtually untouched. The Meroitic language in which nearly all inscriptions are written after the third century B.C., except for the Demotic inscriptions of the third century A.D. in the Dodecaschoenus, cannot really be understood. Even if it could, we would learn very little, for the vast majority of Meroitic inscribed material consists of tombstones with utterly stereotyped formulae

* W. Y. Adams, J.E.A. 50, pp. 115-120 writes in similar terms.

Part of his summary on page 117, where he concludes there was almost no building at all for two-hundred years before Natakamani and Amanitèrè, is already out of date. Stages 2-4 of the Great Enclosure of Musawwarat fall probably from the third century B.C. to the first A.D., the Arnèkhamani Lion Temple belongs to the third century B.C., Temple F at Naga to the reign of Shanakdakhete (early second century A.D.); it is virtually certain that many of the ruined temples of Naga were constructed during the last two centuries B.C. Several of these seem to be built on the foundations of earlier destroyed temples, as is perhaps the Ammon

which give minimal historical information. The chronology of the kings is vague, even their order uncertain in some cases, and it is not clear whether the kingdom became divided at some periods into a northern and a southern state. In these circumstances it may appear unwise, if not impossible, to discuss the foreign relations of the kingdom, but fortunately archaeology and Egyptian and classical sources give some hints which are worth following up.

Politically the death of Nastasen[~] may mark a watershed in Cushite history because, if Reisner and Hintze^{*} are correct, his death was either immediately or soon followed by the division of the state into two. At the very least there seems to have been a troubled time when reigns were short and dynastic strife abounded. From the point of this thesis it is more important to note that

temple of Natakamani and Amanitēre. Finally, important building operations were executed at Basa in the first century B.C. by king Amanikhabale. Very probably the reason that so many of the temples of Natakamani have survived until recent times is because few of his successors were sufficiently wealthy to contemplate replacing his stone buildings with other than less opulent structures.

When so little investigation has been made at so many major sites, the dangers of general statements are very great.

* Hintze, 1959, pp. 22-23, 1962, pp. 13-19.

according to the main authority on this subject, W. Y. Adams,^{*} there is a very sudden alteration in the character of the pottery away from the classical Egyptian ware which had continued to be made in Cush throughout Napatan times. He considers that the origin of the characteristic decorated style may be found in foreign wares introduced to northern Cush by Meroitic pilgrims to Philae, that great shrine of Isis which stood at the boundary between two kingdoms and had been raised to a new importance by king Nectanebos II, but it seems just as likely that the first examples were brought by Greek traders or even soldiers encroaching on the distracted Meroitic kingdom.

[†] Pliny in his Natural Histories, Book VI, lists a number of Greek travellers who penetrated as far as Meroe, and even beyond. The first visitor apparently was Dalion who sailed far beyond Meroe,

* Kush XII, p. 171. In J.E.A. 50, p. 117 he appears to have altered his views somewhat.

The typical painted Meroitic pottery does not occur north of Wadies-Sebua, the Cushite frontier, and must be regarded as a notable local product, if perhaps created first in response to foreign influence.

Hellenistic Art was sometimes Iranian in character and the painted animal and floral motifs of Meroe may be derived from this tradition. However, pottery of this sort is an artistic norm in semi-barbarian cultures. Perhaps Cush was more responsive to Graeco-Persian influence than Egypt, which had its own developed art.

+ Pliny. Nat. Hist. VI, 183.

and he was followed by Aristocreon, Bion (from whose work a short quotation has survived), Basilis, and Simonides the Younger, who lived at Meroe for five years while writing his account. Military men such as Timosthenes, the admiral of the fleet of Philadelphus, worked out the distance, and Eratosthenes used the latitude of Meroe in his geographical calculations. Furthermore, if Diodorus Siculus^{*} is to be believed, the great Ergamenes (presumably Arqamani ?? 250-215 B.C.) who lived in the time of Philadelphus, had received a Greek education and studied philosophy, and so was emboldened to break the power of the priesthood over the kings because he did not respect the superstitions of his people, and thereafter reigned as an absolute monarch. Very probably also it was about this time that the Meroites began training the African elephant for service in their army or for sale to the Ptolemies, to allow them to compete with the Selcucids who could obtain the Indian variety. No examples are yet known of the elephant in Meroitic art before the third century B.C., but at Musawwarat-es-Sufra it was regularly represented at that time both in relief⁺ and sculpture.

The same impression that Cush was more open to foreign cultural influence in the third century B.C. than at any time since the

* Diodorus Siculus, III, 6.

+ F. Hintze, 1962, Pl. XV. The great elephant sculpture and the elephants supporting columns from the Great Enclosure are not yet published.

end of the XXVth Dynasty comes from the inscriptions of the Lion temple so well studied by Professor Hintze*. The hymn to Sbwymkl[†] shows that there were craftsmen working for king Arnekhamani (? before 250 B.C.) who had accurate texts of Egyptian hymns to the gods which they could reproduce in hieroglyphics at least no more inelegant than those of the Ptolemies. On the other hand the hymn to Apedemak, though rather stilted, was probably an original translation from the Meroitic. There can, therefore, be little doubt that the engravers were either imported Egyptians who understood something of the old sacred language, by now confined to a small group of priests, or Cushites with many years of experience under such foreign masters. The impression that Egyptians were used is strengthened by the fact that all the hieroglyphics are cut in standard shapes, and there are none of the special forms or confusions found in the late Napatan inscriptions or the Begrawiya South funerary texts, which presumably represent the best workmanship available among the Cushites. To the observer there also appears a more subtle, but clear, difference[‡] in that the hiero-

* F. Hintze, 1962, especially pp. 21-45.

+ id. pages 32-34.

‡ Dr. Macadam informs me that there is a similar difference at an early date between the beautiful hieroglyphic of Taharqa at Kawa, known to be executed by Egyptians, and his small, rather angular work at Sanam done after he was cut off from Egypt and his source
(Contd. page (90))

glyphics of Arnekhmani are sufficiently large and well spaced to appear beautiful; the letters of the tomb texts, like those of Harsiotef and Nastasen, are small, angular, and over-compressed into a limited space. The whole subject of the deviations in Napatan-Meroitic art and writing from their Egyptian models and counterparts needs ultimately to be studied compendiously with plentiful photographs, but that is a very specialized theme which cannot be attempted within the limits of this thesis. The comments below on the foreign influences discernible in Early Meroitic art must suffice, together with the general observation that writing in hieroglyphic seems always to have been a laborious task for Cushites, especially after the Napatan Period, and the results are crabbed: representations in tomb chapels of kings enthroned seem, however, to have taken their imagination, and are often vigorously drawn.

The excellence of the best examples of the art found in Cush in the Early Meroitic Period did not consist in pure imitation under strong foreign influence. Instead the introduction of new or modified forms proved an inspiration leading to liberation from some of the conventions inherited from Egypt, especially in the newly-created cultural centres of the Butana, Musawwarat and Naga, where

of foreign craftsmen. The work of Atlanersa at Napata was very good, but the "Election" Stela, as seen above, is in a strange cramped style - probably because Cush was again cut off by war, and so local workmen had to be employed even for royal documents.

corridors. A number have external columns^{*} surrounding them partially or completely, and it is tempting to see in this some knowledge of the form of the typical Greek religious building - especially as there are no known Egyptian temples showing this feature. Most are built on mounds, which doubtless offered some protection against flooding, but often represent the remains of earlier destroyed fanes.

In the Great Enclosure the walls of the temples appear always to have been undecorated (unless they were painted or covered with a thin plaster which has since completely disappeared). In this they are quite unlike the normal Egyptian style and even the Lion Temple of Arnekhamani. A certain amount of decoration was, however, allowed to appear. Over the doorways of each chapel were fine lintels on which were protruding protomes showing groups of three heads, sometimes of lions⁺, sometimes of gods with the ram of Ammon.

* The best known example of this type is the Sun-Temple at Meroe in its later form. This most probably belongs to the third century B.C. when Ptolemaic influence was greatest. However, the central chapel of Ammon in the Great Enclosure belongs to much the same period and is not dissimilar in construction. Other temples, for example Temple F of Queen Shanakdakhete at Naga (? about 170 B.C.), have external pillars in front, if not at the sides and rear.

+ For photographs of these lion lintels see F. Hintze, Kush X. Plate LVII.

The fine door lintels hitherto discovered at Musawwarat in the
(Contd. page (93))

Presumably the purpose of these was to show to which deity each belonged. The bases of the columns before the Ammon chapel were also sculpted with figures of elephants and lions carved three-dimensionally, which were intended to look as if they were holding up the weight of the pillars, and figures of deities, mostly of the Horus series.

* Lion Temple of Arnekhamani and in the Great Enclosure (a fine door lintel, still unpublished, which had been over the doorway of the central chapel of Ammon, was discovered in 1964. It shows protomes of Ammon and Apedemak in human form, and between them the ram-head of Ammon) apparently all belong to the third century B.C. buildings, but conceivably this type of sculpture, together with the custom of carving elephants and lions supporting the base of columns came to Cush during the Achaemenian period when animal protomes were much in vogue in the Persian Empire. Motifs of this sort were spread by the Persians as far as India (see R. Ghirshman, Persia from the Origins to Alexander the Great, plates 458-459), Greece (id. plates 448-455), and Rome (id. page 353 bottom). On the other hand it has been seen that the political relations of Cush with Persia were always distant and rather unfriendly, and many of the Greek examples belong to Delos in the Hellenistic period, so more probably this form of decoration only became fashionable in the Sudan during the early Ptolemaic age of Egypt.

During the first part of the Early Meroitic Period human and divine figures seem still, when shown on flat surfaces, to have been depicted only in profile according to the Egyptian custom, but the use of decoration with protomes of gods doubtless paved the way for the next experiment - full-faced depiction of the human or divine face in flat reliefs, which is found very occasionally in the first century A.D. The two well-known examples of this artistic venture are the three-headed Lion-God^{*} on the rear outside wall of the Natakamani Lion Temple at Naga, and the rock relief of king Sherakarēr[†] (?) with the Sun-God Ariteñ at Jebel Geili. A mature art was slowly being born capable of establishing its own standards.

It is important for the purposes of this thesis to note that, whereas in earlier days, at least in stone-building, which was an alien art, the Cushites copied Egyptian models in a servile manner, their understanding and appreciation of sculpture had now advanced

* See R. Lepsius, Denkmaler V, plates 59-60.

A. J. Arkell, 1961, p. 166, regards this as an example of Indian influence, but it is more likely to be an original Meroitic conception, one face looking towards the king, one towards the queen, and one protruding a little, towards the worshipper. Such a theme could easily be an adaptation to flat relief of the sculptured heads over doorways.

+ F. Hintze, Kush VII, Figure facing page 190. See also pages 189-190.

For the identity of the Sun-God, see Macadam, 1955, p. 50.

sufficiently to allow them to erect buildings which differed from their older models in important respects, especially in the decoration and the freedom with which naturalistic portraiture, for example of kings in Meroitic dress, was permitted. The relationship of the Ptolemies in Egypt to the Meroites was no longer that of a civilized people to a rather uncouth barbarian tribe keen to imitate the cultural achievements of its more refined neighbour.

This combination of cultural dependence with the beginnings of an original nascent culture produced some superficially contradictory trends in the decoration of pyramid chapels. As Miss E. Chapman observed in her introduction to Royal Cemeteries of Kush, Volume III, the decoration of the chapels from the time of Arqamani was, so far as the pictorial art was concerned, much more purely Egyptian than in the preceding period, with decorations of Sun-boats, Osiris scenes, and many other features taken directly from the Book of the Dead. At the same time the Egyptian hieroglyphic was disappearing owing to the rise[†] of the Meroitic written language. This drove out knowledge of the older and more artificial script

* Meroitic appeared in written form early in the second century B.C. One of the earliest official inscriptions known using Meroitic in the lettering of a royal name is in the Naga Temple F of Queen Shanakdakhete. (See F. Hintze, 1959, pl. IV and pp. 36-39).

* R.C.K. Vol. III, pp. 4-5.

which had been perpetuated by generations of scribes and sculptors. Because the conservative sculptors were reluctant to allow the new script into funerary monuments, inscriptions tended to disappear after the time of Shanakdakhete until the final revival of what purported to be Egyptian hieroglyphic in the time of Amanitère (? between 20 A.D. and 40 A.D.).

Cush, then, in the third century came into contact with both of the complimentary yet diverse faces of Ptolemaic Egypt not only with merchants, soldiers and the philosopher-travellers who wrote about the older oriental civilizations with almost the mentality and detachment of modern anthropologists, but also with the traditionally minded temple decorators who revered the past. The former tried to make Pharaonic Egypt, at least superficially, part of the world of Hellenism. Nevertheless in the Sudan, as in Egypt, the traditions of the people merely bent before the influx of new ideas: they were not broken. Probably the court of Cush, like the court of Parthia, was interested in Greek thought and Greek philosophy, as Diodorus says, but these things had no appeal to common folk. It was those other Egyptians, the scribes and the sculptors of Thebes, who endeavoured, for long with much success, to keep alive and to develop the religious art of their forefathers, who really influenced the cultural life of Meroe. The most important difference is that, whereas the old architectural and decorative skills showed an increasing tendency to atrophy under the Ptolemies and to become merely grandiose - and scribes tended to concentrate on

ever more fanciful elaborations of Late Hieroglyphic - the combination of new cultural influences and the skill of imported craftsmen produced in Cush some artistic triumphs which were both accomplished and original, though small in size when compared to the massive edifices of Dendera and Edfu, and, from the Roman age, Philae, Esna, and Kom Ombo. It is interesting to note in addition that there was a clear difference between the temples constructed by, or partly by, Meroitic kings in Lower Nubia - Arqamani at Philae and Dakka^{*}, Adikhalamani at Debod - whose works were completely Egyptian in decoration and inscription, and temples of the same period further south. This may show that only Egyptian designers were employed in the far north, whereas in the Central Sudan such men worked under Meroitic direction.

Another important feature of Meroitic civilization in the Butana from at least the third century B.C. was the construction of giant hafirs (reservoirs) at Naga, Musawwarat, Basa and many other centres of population, to retain as much as possible of the rainfall of the short, wet season. Only two, those at Basa and

* For photographs and an account see G. Roeder, Der Tempel von Dakke, Plates 9 and 11, and pages 171-306 and Debod bis Bab Kalabsche Plates 10-35. For discussion see id., ZAS 63, pp. 126-142 and F. Hintze, 1962, pp. 15-16.

See also E. Bevan, 1927, pp. 245-6.

+ J. E. Crowfoot, Island of Meroe, Plates VI, VII and IV. Also pp. 14-15.

* Musawwarat, have been excavated even partially, but the latter has shown that long covered channels of stone led from a great distance to carry water from the hillsides to a deep sunken pit within the mounds of earth and stone, and both have revealed carved stone lions and frogs which acted as magical guardians. In addition the Lion Temple of Arnekhamani at Musawwarat and the Small Lion Temple close by, which were built on or near water channels, must have been intended to keep away evil forces.

The knowledge of hafirs cannot have been part of the original Napatan-Egyptian heritage of the Meroites, for such constructions depended for their utility on regular annual rainfall and would not have been worth making in the rainless deserts of Dongola. Nevertheless, the present writer is unwilling to follow A. J. Arkell⁺ in postulating an exotic Indian origin for them without any real evidence. Such pit-reservoirs occur throughout the savannah belt south of the Sahara, even outside the areas occupied by the Meroites; they were a natural and useful adaptation to semi-desert conditions to allow the maximum possible number of cattle to be maintained. No doubt the Meroites merely followed the practice of the tribes

* F. Hintze, Kush XI, pp. 222-224. Probably, as Professor Hintze affirms, in the first stage of the hafir only earth trenches conducted the water from or to the reservoir, and the stone covered channels belong to a period of re-use.

+ A. J. Arkell, 1961, pp. 166-168.

of the Butana. It is essential to avoid indulging in hyper-diffusionist theories of Meroitic connections outside Africa, or even within it, unless strong evidence can be produced. Such fancies abound in the absence of facts, but tend to dissolve before the excavator's spade. While it is certain that Alexandria, and later Axum, had trade and cultural contacts with India, Meroitic relations were probably slight, since Meroe was entirely an inland kingdom centred on the Nile: there is not even much trace of Meroitic trade with Axum. Cotton⁺ first appeared in the Sudan in Meroitic times, but was probably introduced by way of Egypt rather than directly from India.

Political Relations

It is more difficult to define exactly what were the relations between the Meroites and other surrounding peoples politically during the Ptolemaic period. There are, it is true, occasional references to the Ethiopians (for example in the Adulis Inscription of Ptolemy III), but it is by no means certain from the Inscription who the "Ethiopians" were who were forced to hand over their

* Almost the only Meroitic objects discovered in Axumite territory are a small group of bronze "milk-bowls" found at Haulti and now in the Addis Ababa archaeological museum. The subject of relations between Meroe and Axum will be discussed further in the Late Meroitic chapter.

+ R. E. Massey. SNR VI, 231-3.

elephants.^{*} "Ethiopian" is a vague term, and the dark-skinned people of Abyssinia, who were certainly brought into some form of subjection, could well be meant rather than the Sudanese. That Arqamani and Adikhalamani were still able to build temples in the northernmost part of Nubia, and even at Philae, suggests strongly that, although the early Ptolemies had a certain interest in the south, they did not try to expand at the expense of Cush, and preferred to share control of debatable regions. Indeed, as A. J. Arkell⁺ says, there had been an expansion of Cushite territory northwards, at least in the sense that the province of Akina claimed by Harsiotef, and perhaps since the XXVth Dynasty, had now been incorporated more firmly into the Meroitic Empire. Probably the willingness of the

* The elephant hunts of the early Ptolemies on the Red Sea are discussed in E. Bevan, 1927, p. 175-177. It can, however, no longer be regarded as certain that the coastal littoral was the only source of supply, since it is now proved that the Meroites had war elephants.

+ A. J. Arkell, 1961, p. 159.

See also W. Y. Adams, J.E.A. 50, p. 117.

E. Bevan, 1927, pp. 246-247, remarks that there must have been some friendly arrangement in the Dodecaschoenus rather than an alternating dominion between two hostile powers, since otherwise Ptolemy IV would have erased the cartouches of Ergamenes, as Ptolemy V did at Philae.

Ptolemies to co-exist with a non-Greek kingdom on the south was made greater by their extensive commitments in other regions, notably their desire to possess Cyprus, southern Asia Minor, Coele-Syria, the Greek Islands and a few footholds on the Greek mainland, and at the same time to open up the Red Sea route to India. In effect the weakness of the Ptolemies, as of the Seleucids, was that they were too occupied in struggling over the division of the Empire of Alexander to appreciate that the subdued peoples were beginning to stir and would eventually seek to re-establish their own states.

The explosion of Egypt took place about 207^{*} B.C. and seems to have led at once to an alteration of the relationship between Cush and Egypt since, not unnaturally, the Meroites supported the native Pharaoh established at Thebes. The rebellion was not quashed for over twenty years until 185/184 B.C. when Ptolemy V sent his Greek mercenaries under Aristonius against the south and managed to defeat both the dissident Thebans and a Nubian contingent[†] which had come to help them. It seems fairly clear, as Hintze[♯] suggests, that the buildings of Adikhalamani took place after the Ptolemaic withdrawal from Thebes when they were cut off from Lower Nubia, but it is not

* E. Bevan, 1927, pp. 238-240 and F. Hintze, 1962, p. 15.

† W. M. Muller, Egyptological Researches III. Hieroglyphic Decree 2, lines 4 and 12. See also E. Bevan, 1927, pp. 274-5 and pp. 260-1. His remark that all the rebels whose defeat was recorded at Philae were "Ethiopians" is inexact; Egyptians are also mentioned.

♯ F. Hintze. 1962, p. 15.

certain whether this was while Ptolemy IV (221-203 B.C.) was still alive, or in the time of Ptolemy V (203-180 B.C.). At some time during his reign Ptolemy VI (180-145 B.C.) had seized at least part of northern Nubia from Cush because he carried out extensive enlargements to the Adikhalamani temple at Debod, but it is reasonable to think that this occupation did not take place until after the Seleucid invasion of Egypt in 168-167 B.C. and the great Egyptian rebellion of 164/3 B.C., which perhaps received Cushite help, and nearly terminated the Ptolemies.

It is not certain that the period after Shanakdakhete was one of stagnation⁺ in Cush, but it seems likely that the signs of decline visible in the Meroe pyramids from Begrawiya N. 20 until the pyramid of Amnishakhete (N.6) - that is approximately 125 B.C. - 25 B.C. - were largely caused by the disappearance of the Egyptian craftsmen who had helped so much to stimulate the cultural achievements of the third century. Just as the frontiers of Egypt had been sealed at the end of the Early Napatan period, so they were possibly again

* The evidence regarding this occupation is discussed E. Bevan, 1927, pp. 293-5. The great officials Boethus and Herodes, who were in charge of the expansion southwards, were probably only appointed during the active period at the end of the reign of Philometor (killed 145 B.C.).

+ Some of the temples at Naga not yet excavated were almost certainly built at this period.

* closed to prevent the Cushites interfering in Egyptian affairs. It seems clear that an enfeebled Ptolemaic government had difficulty in maintaining its hold on the Thebais until the extensive destruction of Thebes and its temples in 85 B.C., and it may, therefore, have desired to limit Upper Egyptian liaison with Cush.

Because of the encroachments of the Ptolemies on the Dodecachoenus the situation in Upper Egypt and northern Cush is likely to have been complex after the final collapse of the dynasty in 30 B.C. and the Roman occupation of Thebes in 29 B.C. An uncertain area south of Elephantine had been attached by conquest to the Ptolemaic state from the time of Ptolemy VI, but very probably all this was claimed and to some extent held by Meroites or, more likely, by autonomous Nubian chieftains who paid scant respect either to the Ptolemies or the Cushite king. Accordingly, to prevent the danger of anarchy on this frontier, the first Roman Prefect, Aelius Gallus,

* Nevertheless, some finds from pyramids N. XII, and N. XIII (about 125-100 B.C.) from tomb W XX (about 100 B.C.) and from N. II (about 50-40 B.C.) of Hellenistic or Ptolemaic-Egyptian character (see G. A. Reisner, M.F.A. Bulletin XXI, p. 25 ff.) must indicate that economic isolation was not as complete as might otherwise be supposed from the rapid decay of knowledge of the Egyptian language. This may have been rather a by-product of the growth of the Meroitic script.

* forced the local princes to sign a treaty, of which two fragmentary texts in Greek and Demotic are known, establishing friendly relations with Rome whereby, according to the Greek version, they became Roman dependants. The difficulty was that the Meroitic reigning house had retained a nominal control in this region; consequently they regarded the agreement of the Nubian chiefs to a Roman protectorate as treason[†] to themselves, and made this a cause for war both with them and with Rome.

There is no need to treat the course of the war here in detail since this has been adequately done elsewhere[♠]; it is sufficient to say that the Meroites overran all Nubia, apparently without resistance from the Romans, and thoroughly defeated the local chiefs. Thereafter, the Romans being occupied with a difficult campaign in

* U. Monneret de Villard, Storia della Nubia Christiana, pp. 11-15.

+ Strabo, Geography 17, 54. "Petronius ----- first drove them back to Pselchis an Ethiopian city, then sent messengers to demand back the booty and to ask why they started the war. And they replied it was because they were wronged by the nomarchs."

♠ A. Vogliano. Uno papiro storico greco della raccolta milanese e le campagne dei Romani in Etiopia (Milano, 1940) and F. Hintze, 1959, pp. 25-26.

South Arabia to which most of the troops in Egypt had been sent, they proceeded to defeat a small Roman garrison and seize Philae, Aswan and Elephantine, which they looted. Petronius, with a much smaller army, but well disciplined and armed, was able to shatter a large Meroitic army at Dakka (Pselohis), then to storm Qasr Ibrim without difficulty, and eventually to push on and burn Napata. However, the waterless country beyond, where it was very difficult to march beside the river, decided him to withdraw. He returned to Alexandria but turned Ibrim into a great and well fortified frontier stronghold. The Meroite Candace appeared with a vast army, but now both sides were ready for negotiations, and the Cushite ambassadors were forwarded by Petronius to Augustus at Samos. He decided to withdraw the Roman troops from Qasr Ibrim to Hierasycaminos and to remit the tribute which Petronius had intended to impose on the Meroitic kingdom.

This Roman withdrawal from the greater part of the northern province of Cush, which probably stretched from Aswan to Sai - the so-called *Triacontaschoenus* - has to be seen in the general context of Roman imperial policy in the days of Augustus. During his earlier years Rome was still expanding to its natural frontiers in some regions and tightening its relationship with client-kings,

* The best account is given by Strabo, Geography 17, 54. The campaigns against Arabia and Ethiopia are also mentioned in the *Monumentum Ancyranum* where Augustus says his troops advanced "to Nabata near Meroe".

some of whom, like Herod of Judaea, had formerly enjoyed a great measure of independence. However, Augustus was a shrewd and timid politician without the driving passion of an Alexander for conquest and was, therefore, increasingly desirous to make satisfactory peace settlements with powerful Eastern rulers such as the king of Parthia.* Similarly the princeps was willing[†] to make honourable agreements even with smaller and weaker states than Parthia, if these were difficult to conquer because of distance or desert. The settlement with Meroe was moderate and sensible and in accordance with his tendency to shrink from expensive ventures far from the Mediterranean. It proved acceptable and durable because the Cushite kings were not humiliated or reduced to insignificance.

* Ghirshman, L'Iran, des origines à l'Islam, p. 227, points out that the internal weakness and instability of Parthia prevented it fighting aggressive wars against Rome.

At the very time when the Meroite ambassadors arrived in Samos, Augustus was trying to negotiate an Armenian agreement and to recover the standards of Crassus.

+ Cf. J. Boulos, Les peuples et les civilisations du Proche Orient, III, pp. 87-88 (Leiden, 1964.).

♠ J. Boulos. id., p. 56 overestimates the Roman victory when he writes, "Les Ethiopiens sont vaincus sur le haut Nil." The essence of the treaty was that Augustus, by remitting any tribute, recognized the full independence of Meroe.

It is probable that during the war with Rome the Meroitic rulers were Teriteqas, his wife Amanirēnas and his son Akinidad. Later Akinidad perhaps ruled with his wife (?) Amnishakhete. The third generation of the house were Natakamani and Amanitēre who reigned some time during the first half of the first century A.D. There is no doubt that this period marked a revival of the power and creative activity of Cush and also of its commercial and

* D. Dunham, RCK IV, 4 makes these rulers reign in the early first century, but this appears unlikely. Cf. Macadam, 1955, pp. 22-23, F. Hintze, 1959, pp. 24-27. Griffith, J.E.A. IV, p. 168 was probably correct to recognize mentions of Romans (Arme) in the Akinidad Stela.

+ M. F. L. Macadam, 1949, pp. 101, 117 and 1955, p. 23 shows that both Akinidad and Amnishakhete were active in building the first court of Temple T at Kawa. F. Hintze, 1959, p. 25 makes them the rulers of the northern and southern divisions of Cush co-operating together, but the view of the present writer is that most probably the Second Independent Kingdom of Napata did not exist, and they were simply husband and wife.

∅ It is quite likely that relations with Egypt had already become somewhat closer under the last Ptolemies. Diodorus Siculus claims that his account of Meroe was better than any previous one because he was able to check the details with Meroites in Egypt, when he was there in 59 B.C. In the tomb of Amanikhabale

cultural relations with the outside world. Especially prosperous was the joint reign of Natakamani and Amanitere^{*} who imported Egyptian craftsmen to assist in the decoration of several of their temples⁺. The large pyramid of Amnishakhete (Beg. N. 6), in which Ferlini discovered the famous Meroitic and imported jewellery[♠], now in the museums of Berlin

(65-41 B.C. according to F. Hintze, 1959, p. 33), Beg. N. 2 a silver goblet with a scene in relief showing a king seated in judgement on an offender was discovered of typical Hellenistic-Roman workmanship (see G. A. Reisner, M.F.A.B. XXI, p. 25. No. 4 and M.F.A.B. XXIII, p. 10 ff.). From his architectural work the reign of Amanikhabale seems to have been quite prosperous. It has been noted above that economic relations appear to have continued to some extent even in the preceding period, from objects discovered in N.XII, N.XIII and W.XX dating between 125-100 B.C. Probably, as Reisner says in M.F.A.B. XXI, relations with the Ptolemies fluctuated considerably. Doubtless they regarded the Meroites with more suspicion when Upper Egypt was threatening rebellion. See also D. M. Dixon and K. Wachsmann, Kush XII, p. 119 ff.

* G. A. Reisner, J.E.A. IX, pp. 67 ff.

+ The altar of the temple at Wad ban Naga (Budge, The Egyptian Sudan II, pp. 126-127) was purely Egyptian in style.

♠ G. A. Wainwright, SNR XXVI, pp. 25-6 argues convincingly for the genuineness of this find against the view of Reisner. Iron was still considered sufficiently valuable to be used in royal jewellery at this time. This suggests that the true iron age when this metal would become very cheap had not yet arrived in Cush.

and Munich, and Reisner found a group of "flutes" (auloi) which could have been either made in Alexandria or imported from Greece (? Corinth), also betokens an age of increasing wealth.

As always the Meroites profited from the opportunity of importing foreign architectural specialists, but on the whole the temples of this period, with the exception of a few interesting details such as the three-headed lion god and the crown prince wearing a robe covered with moon crescents on the rear wall of the Lion Temple of Naga, are much less original than those of the third century B.C. Themes such as elephants, cattle with bells and crocodiles had disappeared, to be replaced by very conventional scenes of the king and queen smiting prisoners. In short this flourish of the Meroitic kingdom was an artificial revival to imitate the building being constructed for Augustus: when in the second half of the first century the old art and culture of Egypt plunged into final decay, the Meroitic traditions, though more tenacious, were sure to go the same way. Only rock reliefs such as that of Shērakaḥēr (?) at Jebel Geili and small plaques like that of Arikankharēr retained a certain elemental vigour.

* Reg. No. 21-3-702 = RCK IV, p. 109 and Plates LIX (a) and (b).

Evaluated from the musicological point of view in AJA 50, p. 217 ff.

+ F. Hintze, Kush VII, Figure opposite page 190.

♯ Now in the Worcester (Mass.) Museum of Art. See F. Ll. Griffith, J.E.A. IV, Plate V. Also pages 21-24.

Professor Shinnie is inclined to believe that the great Amen temple of Meroe was not fully excavated by Garstang and Sayce and that it was built on a much older site at a date later than the reign of Natakamani, perhaps in the late first century A.D. - and thus that the kingdom did not sink into decadence immediately. The soldiers of Nero⁺ sent to explore and see whether the country was worth conquering in about 65 A.D. were unimpressed and reported back that there were few buildings at the capital[♠] except the temple of Amen and many other shrines. Probably, however, they were too hopeful and expected another Alexandria or at least a metropolis comparable with any large Roman city. Instead they found that the limit of Meroitic prosperity was to construct a few new temples, if foreign workmen were available, and to import some luxury items.

* Personal communication. Renewed excavation of Meroe is likely to commence next season.

+ F. Hintze, 1959, pp. 27-29 for a discussion whether the expeditions of Nero reported by Seneca and Pliny were the same or distinct - one to search for the sources of the Nile, one to map the country for prospective conquest. He shows, following Schur (Orientpolitik, p. 41), that Nero sent some German legions to Alexandria, but was overthrown before an intended campaign could commence.

♠ Pliny, Nat. Hist. VI, 29 (186) "Aedificia oppidi pauca; regnare feminam Candacen, quod nomen multis iam annis transit, delubrum Hammonis et ibi religiosum, et toto tractu sacella."

Commercial contact with Rome cannot have been more than superficial, since it did not persuade the Meroites either to mint a currency of their own or to use Roman coinage^{*}. On the other hand the Roman-Corinthian style of the Kiosk Temple at Naga and the strange baths of Meroe suggest that at least a small group of leaders were aware of the architectural achievements of Rome, but this was perhaps not before the second century A.D.

The plans of conquest which Nero cherished died with him, and so the Meroites drifted on into the late Meroitic age still observing the Augustan peace, and stood aside from the new ideas⁺ which had begun to stir the classical world.

* Great hordes of Roman coins have been discovered as far away as India: in the Sudan only two or three coins, none in stratified contexts. All may have been brought to the south as curiosities, perhaps in the Middle Ages or quite recent times. For the subject of Roman trade with the Sudan see the important article of L. P. Kirwan, "Rome beyond the Southern Egyptian frontier". "Geographical Journal", 1957, pp. 1-19, particularly page 18.

+ The New Testament passage Acts IX, 26-39, about the eunuch of the Candace who came to Jerusalem to worship, demonstrates that there must have been a Jewish or proselyte community at Meroe retaining some connection with Palestine, but the influence of small foreign groups would do nothing to modernize the thought of the people. The Dodecaschoenus Graffiti, which will be discussed below in the chapter about the Late Meroitic Period, show that the old Egyptian religion continued to flourish at Meroe and in the towns of the northern Sudan until the fall of Cush.

Chapter 5The Late Meroitic Kingdom

The Late Meroitic kingdom was an enfeebled state. This is clear from the decline of its architectural activity which has been seen above always to be a reliable indication of the vitality of Cush. The last king to have a pyramid in the older tradition made of fine cut limestone was Tarekeniwal^{*} (Beg. N.19), and even this was small and very steep sided. It is possible that he was also the builder of the Kiosk Temple⁺ at Naga, which stylistically is quite different from the nearby Lion Temple of Natakamani, is on a different axis, and seems to have caused the destruction of some of the avenue of Lions leading to the Natakamani temple. This late temple was probably copied from the Kiosk of Trajan[♠] at Philae. The

* F. Hintze dates him 85-103 A.D. (1959, p. 33) but this is calculated from the date of Natakamani and Amanitēre, itself rather uncertain. The present writer would prefer to date him about 110-130 A.D. Dunham dated him 184-201 A.D., but " . r. keniwal", who must really be the same, 119-128 A.D.

+ Cf. J. E. Crowfoot, Island of Meroe, p. 38, who suggests that the Kiosk was built in the time of Hadrian.

F. Ll. Griffith, Meroitic Inscriptions I p. 61, however, thinks Natakamani may have built it.

♠ The famous Kiosk of Trajan at Philae would have come to Meroite notice because of their enthusiasm for Isis worship, which centred there. However, one should not of course forget that Kiosks

Garstang-Sayce expedition of 1911 did not establish any reliable date for the baths of Meroe, but it is likely that they were imitated from the great baths being constructed at Rome and in North Africa in the late first and early second century.

Thereafter, from about 150 A.D. there is no evidence of any new building except for the insignificant pyramids of the kings. These were no longer faced with out stone brought from the quarry, but simply made of the rough black rocks of the cemetery scree, and even in some of the last instances, partly of burnt brick. The pyramid of Teqerideamani (246-at least 277 A.D.), the last

belonged to a long tradition both in Egypt and Cush. The earliest example extant is probably that of Sesostris I at Karnak, but the custom may go back even further.

M. F. L. Macadam, 1955, p. 50 n. 1, listed a number of such buildings, and 1955, p. 53 suggested that they might be stations on the route of the processional boats. However, a considerable number might be added to this list. See J. Leclant, Annales du Service 53, p. 116 and De la Roche, IFAO Fouilles IV Medamut 1926. pp. 31-2, 122-3.

Other Cushite examples, in addition to those at Kawa, are Napata 501, one outside B.500 and one in the avenue of the temple of Ammon at Meroe (Meroe, Pl. VI,1). There are no other examples, however, in Cush, with the possible exception of the last, which would have had the unmistakably Graeco-Roman look of the Kiosk at Naga.

significant ruler of Cush, was larger in size than most of the others. It had quite a big decorated limestone funerary chapel, but was itself built of rough black stones, and planned in the manner of the very late tombs (Beg. N. 28).

All these features of the period are signs of undeniable^{*} cultural and physical impoverishment, and clear indications that the campaign of Ezana was merely the last blow at a kingdom which had lost its dynamism and was internally disintegrating. Nevertheless, the pattern was not everywhere the same, since the Demotic and Meroitic graffiti of the Dodecaschoenus, belonging to the third and perhaps the fourth century, show that the region between Aswan and Maharraga, which had been seized by Rome as the result of the Augustan settlement, was now coming again under Meroitic influence. This northward expansion was doubtless possible rather because of the weakness of the Roman authorities in Egypt, who had insufficient forces even to deal with the incursions of the warlike Blemmye tribesmen from Lower Nubia, than to any real strength[†] possessed by

* W. Y. Adams, J.E.A. 50, p. 118 appears to question the long period of degeneracy postulated by Reisner at Meroe because Lower Nubia continued fairly prosperous, but it appears impossible to reject the whole carefully argued scheme of Reisner.

† W. Y. Adams, J.E.A. 50, pp. 118-119 points out that Meroitic culture apparently arrived in Lower Nubia fully developed and remained prosperous nearly to the end.

the Meroites, but the many inscriptions at Philae and Dakka throw an interesting sidelight on the times.

The temple graffiti are, of course, in no sense political documents, but were records that prominent officials or craftsmen or notable external benefactors were allowed to inscribe as memorials so that their names might be always before the gods; the mundane information they give is incidental, indirect and usually unintentional. However, some of them contain dates calculated in the years of Roman emperors or Meroitic kings, and thus may provide exact chronological information; others, because they mention people known from dated inscriptions, can be arranged approximately into groups. Some are records of missions sent by Meroitic kings to Philae or Dakka, others were written by officials holding Meroitic court appointments who resided or were active at Dakka and Philae or at Fares. Whilst, until the beginning of the third century, all the graffiti of Philae and Dakka^{*} are by Egyptians, thereafter it

* See however, Dakka 15 and 17, the inscription of which the "Great Assembly" of the temple of Isis had made by an "agent of the king, agent of Isis". This is dated in year 3 of a Meroitic king Aqragamani and his mother Naytal - names otherwise unknown. Griffith, 1937, p. 23 suggests a date not later than the first century A.D. (on the rather unsound ground that only Early Meroitic kings have regnal datings): Hintze, 1959, p. 33 suggests 132-137 A.D. for Aqragamani, but without any further evidence. The use

appears that the autonomous corporations there, which held great estates and controlled the whole region, were being gradually infiltrated by Nubian notables whose primary loyalty was to the Pharaoh of the South at Meroe. The Roman authorities, who probably maintained no permanent garrisons south of Elephantine and allowed the temples in the frontier region to manage their own affairs without much interference, could do little to prevent the peaceful re-assimilation of the Dodecaschoenus to Cush, even if they so desired. In fact they may not have objected at all because most of the graffiti suggest, as will be seen below, that the temple officials, even if of Meroitic origin, found no difficulty in acknowledging two masters and were primarily concerned to ameliorate frontier

of p^vsy to mean "the god" seems only attested elsewhere in the Dodecaschoenus Graffiti in texts of the third century A.D. or later.

In the Meroitic period regnal-years were probably not used in the Sudan. The reason that they occur in the Dodecaschoenus is that the people were used to dating in Roman regnal-years, and in rare instances, when the influence of distant Meroe was exceptionally strong or Roman power unusually weak, Meroitic royal dates were used instead. The only certain examples are this graffito and Philae 68 (of 265 A.D.), but Philae 223 and the Greek graffito No. 318 (of Abratoi) may also be in Meroitic regnal-years. For discussion of these see below in this chapter.

difficulties between Rome and Meroe, which might otherwise prejudice the interests of the local divinities. The reunification of Lower Nubia was accomplished only because both of the powers whose rivalry had caused the division were now too weak to compete for territory. As their unified kingship faded away, the Cushites were becoming almost independent tribes bound together solely by a common cultural heritage.

Possibly the first indication of a Meroitic royal embassy north of Maharraga is given by a graffito dated to the reign of a King Aqragamani (Dakka 15-17) but the earliest exactly dated inscription recording the presence of people from Meroe in Lower Nubia is Philae 4[†]21, which was made in year 7 of Severus Alexander (227-228 A.D.). In this the official Wayikiye or Wyngy, a member of a Nubian princely house which held high military posts from the Meroitic king, records the works which he carried out at Philae in connection with the annual festival of the induction of the shrine of Isis for "the Kings our Lords" (line 13). By this he certainly means the rulers of Rome and Meroe, as is indicated also by the date in imperial regnal-years. His titles, however, of "prophet of Sothis in the goings of the moon, priest of the five living stars, chief-magician (hry-tp) of the king of Cush" connect him closely with the cultural traditions of the Sudan. His mother's name is Tshapshi, and this makes it probable that a round-stopped stela at

* See preceding note.

+ Griffith, 1935, Plate LXVI.

Aqeba (MI89), written in Meroitic instead of Egyptian demotic, is in fact his tombstone. Here he seems to be called "He of Tshapshi" ([√](Sipesiyete[√])): we have no authority for assuming that this was one way of giving his mother's name, if so it is unparalleled in Meroitic, but the titles in Meroitic so strongly suggest the demotic ones that it does seem highly probable. The stela gives the names and titles of other worthies living at the time, some of whom are recognizable in other inscriptions in the Dodecaschoenus. The following seem to be interconnected: Ph. 224 (year 227 A.D.); Ph. 398; Bij. 9; Ph. 231; Ph. 421 (year 227-8); Ph. 120; Ph. 409; Ph. 410; Ph. 257; Dak. 30; Dak. 31; Dak. 32; MI89; MI88; Ph. 344. (There is also a Ph. 416-7 group including MI97-111. The name Manitewawi the strategus connects these up too).

The next important graffito to consider is Philae 417, which almost certainly belongs soon after 250^δ A.D. (perhaps to 252-253 A.D.)

* This point has been made before, e.g. Griffith J.E.A. III, pp. 24-29, E. Zyhlarz, Anthropos 25, 444-6.

+ Griffith, 1935, Plate LXV.

δ Tami, the writer, is also known from the Greek graffito, Lepsius, Denkmaler VI, Bl. 91, Gk. 317 where his inscription is associated with one belonging to the psentes Abratoi (Gk. No. 318). In the opinion of the present writer the graffito of Abratoi dated to year 8 of an unnamed ruler is calculated in terms of the years

and demonstrates even more clearly the relationship of the Philae temple to Rome and Meroe. Tami records how for ten years he was arebetanke measuring the goods and taxes in kind sent to the temple and was then despatched northwards by Bekemete the akarere son of Qeren the strategus of the water, probably a nephew of the Wyngy in Philae 421, to see the Dux of the Thebais to arrange the withdrawal of the Roman garrison of Elephantine who had seized the holy island of Biga. After his successful return he wanted apparently to go south to Meroe, but because of some disturbance the way was not open for three years (line 5). He mentions the visit of a High Priest from Egypt to Philae, and concludes with a prayer to Isis to grant him favour and love "before every great man at the northern and southern palaces". The Greek graffito No. 317 shows that before long he received the reward for his diplomatic activities and peacemaking, doubtless between the turbulent Blemmyes, those unruly subjects of the Meroites, and the Romans, and was installed (?) as high priest of Isis by Abratoi the Meroitic governor of Faras.

of Teqerideamani and was inscribed at the time of the Meroitic embassy of 253 A.D. (see Philae 416). The estimation of year 1 of Teqeredeamani as 246 is based on this equation which now seems generally accepted. Griffith, however, believed that the graffito of Abratoi referred to year 8 of Gallienus (261 A.D.) (See, 1937, p. 118 and p. 120)

The nearby graffito Philae 416^{*}, inscribed for Pasan[†] son of Paēse, "the great ambassador to Rome" and dated to 253 A.D. (year 3 of Trebonianus Gallus) must be connected closely in subject to No. 417 and records, it seems, the successful conclusion of the peace negotiations instituted by Tami. The visits of the envoy to Egypt in 252 and 253 are described, together with a list of the donations to Isis made by the important king Teqērideamani, by Pasan himself and by various Meroitic officials, including Wyngy, a strategus of the water. Great festivities took place for the priests and townsfolk of Philae at the expense of the Roman emperor[♁] and of the Meroitic officials who provided banquets in the name of their king.

The prayer of the ambassador to Isis from line 17 is especially interesting, "Grant me that I may be taken to Meroe, the beautiful city of thy beloved son, and keep me safe on that high

* Griffith, 1935, Plate LXIV.

† Or "Sasan", depending on the interpretation of a demotic sign.

♁ Philae 416, lines 13-14 reads, "The people of the whole town made festival presenting the obeisance of the king their sovereign and our own banquets which we had made out of poverty in the name of our king also".

This is a clear statement that the town of Philae belonged to the Roman Empire even if the temple was autonomous and the Meroites took an interest in its management.

desert together with the things which I came to fetch for thy beloved son, the king (Teqēri)deamani. Bring me back to Egypt with my brother Harwoj, the gēren-akarēre, the great ambassador to Rome ----- and give us a successful journey so that we may take them to Caesar in order that we may bring the prophetship of Isis to your beautiful throne". This is a little obscure, but it is clear that the ambassador was afraid that he might not arrive at Meroe without becoming lost in the desert on his way or being robbed of the articles he had been sent to Egypt to obtain for the

* Not simply "colleague" in view of L. 21 of the inscription, where he shows touching concern for the safety of "this only brother that I have", in such difficult times.

+ It may well be that the amphora recorded in R.C.K. IV, p. 186 from the tomb of Teqērideamani (N.28), which came from Tubusuptus, a town of Mauretania Caesariensis (that is part of Western Algeria, and a small piece of Morocco), was among these articles obtained in Egypt in 253 A.D.

G. A. Reisner (M.F.A.B. XXI, pp. 25-26 No. 10) concluded that "several singlespouted hanging lamps, each with a beautiful acanthus leaf protecting the handle and suspended from a hook ending in a griffin's head" found in tombs No. N.28 (Teqērideamani) and W.110 and W.122, all of much the same period, were also Graeco-Roman imports. However, the similar lamp from N.29 (?? Taki-

(Contd. page (122))

king. Probably some of these were official Roman gifts, since he expected to bring back presents for Caesar when he went to arrange the prophetship of Isis (perhaps for Tami). Evidently the attempt to pacify Nubia was a matter of complexity, and the envoys to Rome had to make a number of journeys between Rome or the Roman authorities in Egypt and their Meroitic master to obtain official approval for their actions.

deamani) No. 21-3-160 is certainly Meroitic because it is inscribed in that language (Dr. Macadam informs me that the inscription means "Abry-lakh (or "the great man") made it"), and its description states definitely that it was made by a Meroite. Reisner himself (ibid, No. 11) admitted that one late object from W.179 was "possibly local work, imitating Hellenistic Roman", and the present writer wonders whether several of the other late objects regarded by Reisner as Graeco-Roman were not really local copies. One might perhaps also question whether the objects mentioned by Reisner from tomb No. XVIII of about 100 A.D. (ibid. Nos. 7, 8, 9) are not also Meroitic. However, whether or not they were foreign originals or copies, they are sufficient to prove that enough external objects reached Meroe for the Meroites to want to imitate them, and to be able to do so in a competent manner.

This intensive diplomatic activity must mean that the king Teqērideamani was aware that, if anarchy prevailed in Nubia and Upper Egypt and the Blemmyes and other tribes continued with their private wars against Rome - and possibly against the settled people of the Meroitic province of Akina - it would be fatal to the external contacts of the kingdom of Cush, and ultimately to whatever remained of his own authority at Faras. The Augustan settlement, with its implied concordat between Rome and Meroe, had become a powerful safeguard for peace and order throughout the Nile Valley: the dissolution of this agreement would mean that the northern province would again become an uncontrollable frontier state, able to prey on its neighbours of the north and south.

The negotiations of the year 253 show two weak realms trying to consolidate their position by diplomacy, but the logic of events was to prove stronger than the good intentions of men. Any agreement reached in 253 must have become valueless by 255-256 when, as the result of new struggles for power in the Roman Empire, the whole of Egypt^{*} rose in rebellion. Thereafter, Philae came still more within the orbit of Cush, and there is even a date in terms

* Philae 301 (Griffith, 1935, Plate XLVII) reads from line 3,

"I being here and doing the work of Pharaoh Osiris Onnophris in year 3 of Valerianus the kings our lords, the whole world being in revolt."

* of Meroitic rather than Roman years. The eastern campaign of Aurelian against Palmyra in 272-273 restored imperial power in Egypt, as is shown by Philae 252[†] of 273 A.D., but after his murder in 275 A.D. Philae 223[♯], dated to year 31[‡] of an unnamed king, which

* Philae 68 (id. Plate XIX) "May his good name remain undestroyed for ever and ever, Petephowt son of Wersh master of the masters of Isis (chief workman) in year 20 of Biunqash, may he live for ever, beloved of Isis." D. Dunham, RCK IV, p. 3 shows with near certainty that Biunqash, "The might of Cush", means the King of Meroe, in this case Teq̄erideamani, and that the date involved is 265 A.D.

+ Philae 252 (id. Plate XLI) is dated to the year 4 of an emperor who is most probably Aurelian (270-275 A.D.). Cf. Griffith, 1937, p. 83. (Perhaps Dakka 30 belonging to year 3 of an unnamed king is also of his reign, from 273 A.D.).

♯ id. Plate XXXVII.

‡ Griffith, 1937, p. 78 thought hesitatingly of "year 31" of Commodus (190 A.D.) because no third-century Roman emperors reigned so long, and the style of the writing is too early for year 31 of the Era of Diocletian or of Constantine. As he remarks, the same individual was the author of Philae 409.

The present writer would base his arguments for the late date on the following grounds:-

(a) Sesen (? Pasan) named in Philae 409 and 223 calls his father

(Contd. page (125))

Note contd.

Harendyotf "royal scribe of Cush" in Ph. 409 - a title held by the Harendyotf and his brother Manitawi in nearby Ph. 410 (line 7).

This Harendyotf was the son of a Wyngy, probably the person found in Philae 421 of 227 A.D. since he holds much the same titles as Wyngy has there. This Wyngy may be mentioned again in Ph. 416 of 253 A.D. Harendyotf of Ph. 410 seems also to be the author of Dakka 30.

(b) In Ph. 223 Sesen calls himself, "mr-^vsn" of year 31, son of Harendyotf a "mr-^vsn". It is very significant that the only other place where high priests for a single year are mentioned in the graffiti is Dakka 30 where Harendyotf claims several such priest-hoods (lines 3-4, 5 and 9).

(c) The mother of Sesen was called T-shen-wayikliye, "daughter of Wyngy" which establishes another unmistakable link with Ph. 421, and suggests that the maternal grandfather of Sesen was called Wyngy. At least two people called Wyngy are known, but both seem to have flourished in the third century. The dates of the Wyngy son of Harendyotf of Ph. 421 are known fairly exactly. The other Wyngy the son of Manitawi and Gerimerwe may be a grandson of the first. His graffito Philae 120 must certainly be quite late since it is associated with Ph. 121 (see Griffith, 1937, p. 66) written by a man called Petepwer (?) the elder, son of Severus, who was a senior official of the Isis temple. His father evidently named after either the emperor Septimus Severus or the emperor Alexander Severus, and is therefore unlikely to have been born before 194 A.D.
(Contd. page (126))

the present writer is inclined to identify as the thirty first of Teq̄erideamani (the year 277 A.D.), suggests that Cushite regnal years were used again during the attested Blemmye^{*} occupation of Upper Egypt in 276-277.

(d) The script of these two inscriptions compares very closely with Dakka 31 and 32 which were written by the brothers of the Harendyotf of Dakka 30, perhaps in year 3 of Aurelian (272-273 A.D.).

These facts in addition to the known Blemmye incursion into Upper Egypt in 276-7 (see next note) incline me to feel that the arguments in favour of a thirty-first year of Teq̄erideamani are very strong. Nevertheless, there are several ways of reconstructing the complex Wyngy family tree, and they fall short of certainty. The strongest objection which may be brought is that a Meroite called Sesen is known from Mer. Insc. 88 and seems to have been the father-in-law of the Wyngy in Mer. Insc. 89, Ph. 421 and Ph. 416. He should therefore have been active in 190 A.D. and might be identified with the Sesen of Ph. 223. A weakness of this may be that our Sesen seems to be grandson of a Wyngy, but this is not insuperable if Wyngy be regarded as a recurring name in this clan.

* See Vopiscus. Vita Probi XVII who says that in the confusion after the death of Aurelian the Blemmyes seized the whole of Upper Egypt, and had to be dislodged by the emperor himself. It is clear that such a moment would have been apt for the use of Meroitic rather than Roman regnal-years since the Blemmyes were theoretical dependants of the Meroites.

The final ^{*} group of inscriptions which refer to Cushite royal activities at Philae are written in Meroitic cursive, not Demotic, and must belong to a period after the death of Teqērideamani because they refer to different rulers, Lakhidamani and Malēqērebar. Probably Professor Hintze [†] is correct in attributing them to the very end of the Meroitic kingdom.

The numerous graffiti and Meroitic tombstones of the third century from Karanog, Faras and elsewhere in the northern province of Cush prove that, there at least, this age, although probably one of unrest because of the many upheavals in Roman Egypt, was not a time of outright decadence [‡]. Similarly there is sufficient evidence to show that during the reign of Teqērideamani relations between

* Griffith. Meroitic Inscriptions II, Nos. 97-111. Especially important is the long graffito No. 101.

† F. Hintze, 1959, pp. 32-33 allots the years 300-308 to Lakhidamani. This might have to be altered a little to allow eleven years longer for Teqērideamani.

‡ The Meroitic Inscription Kalabsha 94, perhaps gives the impression that a dynasty of kings, who claimed to be successors of the Meroitic monarchs, continued to rule in the north even after the campaign of Ezana in the south. Even the X-group rulers, whose remains were discovered at Ballana and Qustul, had taken over many aspects of Meroitic civilization.

Meroe, Nubia and Rome were maintained, even if sometimes communications were harassed by robbers. The decline of the monarchy occurred, as was usual in ancient and mediaeval states, because of the growth of powerful local families and the resultant centrifugal forces which could move unchecked when Meroe did not appear threatened by any powerful external adversary. Philae 416 shows that foreign objects were still imported by the late Meroites, but doubtless such treasures only occasionally found their way into tombs. An imported amphora, and a lamp which was possibly foreign were found in the pyramid of Teq̄erideamani. There can be no doubt of the continuing devotion of the last Cushites, both the kings and their subjects, to the cult of Isis. Like the Blemmye and Noba kings of later days Teq̄erideamani had close connections with the old priesthoods. As always, however, Cush was traditionalist and did not welcome change - the culture of Ancient Egypt would flicker on for long in the Sudan after it had been extinguished in its homeland. The Meroitic kingdom had outlived its ^{*}useful and creative stage, but could not alter, and took centuries to die. The story of its fall is not so much that of a realm out of contact with what was happening elsewhere as of one which had too little sympathy for

* W. Y. Adams, J.E.A. 50, p. 118 stresses the unchanging character of late Meroitic pottery. As he wrote in his study of Christian Nubian pottery, conservatism in matters of such daily use tends to be a sign of cultural atrophy.

or interest in new ideas. The future of the Sudan belonged to the less civilised Noba who were not so overawed by the past that they were unable to adopt the culture of Christian Hellenism, spiritual and physical, to their own needs.

It is not proposed here to treat the coming of the Noba to the Meroitic kingdom in detail, since this topic belongs rather to the internal history of the Sudan than to the external, and in any case has been studied very adequately, so far as the limited materials allow, by Dr. L. P. Kirwan*. Suffice it to say that in the period of Eratosthenes⁺ (250 B.C.) they lived west of the Nile, north of the latitude of Meroe. Later, according to Pliny[♯] (70 A.D.) they had reached the west bank of the Nile. Still later they were inhabiting both banks of the Nile north of Meroe and even parts of the island of Meroe according to Ptolemy[♯] (150-200 A.D.). Eratosthenes says that they had several kingdoms which, unlike those of the

* L. P. Kirwan, "A Survey of Nubian Origins", SNR XX, pp. 47-62.

In this article he lists all the ancient sources referred to below.

+ Eratosthenes quoted by Strabo. Geography XVII, 1-2.

♯ Pliny. Nat. Hist. VI, 35 "The island of Semberritae on the Nile obeys a queen. Eight days further north are the Ethiopian Nubei. Their capital of Tenupsis is on the Nile".

♯ Ptolemy, Geography IV, 748-783. Agathemerus describes their position vaguely.

Blemmyes, were independent of Meroe. ^{*}Procopius claims that up to the time of Diocletian they lived in the western oases, and were then invited to take over the Dodecaschoenus which Roman troops had finally abandoned to the Blemmyes.

From the Ezana Inscription it is clear that soon after 300 A.D. at the latest they had spread far eastwards along the river Atbara and the northern edge of the Island of Meroe until they met the Bedja and other Red Sea coastal tribes, who just at this time were being incorporated in the rapidly growing empire of Axum. Presumably it was these marauders who had threatened communications between Meroe and the north in the period of Tami. By the time of Ezana they seem to have taken possession of all the once Meroitic towns of brick of the Middle Nile region north of the junction of the Nile and the Atbara, which had once belonged to the Meroites. Possibly those who lived on formerly Cushite territory acknowledged the nominal suzerainty of the king of Meroe - otherwise it is hard to see how, if Lakhidamani and Malēqērebar reigned there after 300 A.D., they could have sent an embassy to Philae through Noba territory. Nevertheless, Dr. Kirwan is quite correct in pointing out

* Procopius, Wars, XIX, 27 ff.

+ Translated P. L. Kirwan, SNR XX, pp. 49-51 and Kush VIII, pp. 163-165. Lines 7-14.

∂ Ezana Stela line 36 "the towns of brick which the Noba had taken were Tabito and Fertoti"

∂ L. P. Kirwan, Kush VIII, pp. 166-167.

that the role of the Kasu - the Cushites - was purely passive and defensive against Ezana. It was the Black Noba who ventured to attack Axumite territory and fought in the early stages of the campaign. The Meroitic army did not appear to do battle until Ezana had routed the Noba and reached the confluence of the Nile with the Atbara. They were no more able than the Noba to resist the Abyssinians, and so were defeated, leaving Alwa (Meroe(?)) and Daro (the important palace site of Wad ban Naga(?)) a helpless prey to the enemy.

Evidently, even before the attack of Ezana introduced external intervention, the Cushite kingdom had shrunk to little more than the immediate locality of Meroe; all the rest, including probably the important Blue Nile province, had fallen away or been overrun by encroaching tribesmen. Whether Ezana was anxious to crush Meroe because it was a trade rival, as A. J. Arkell^{*} suggests, is dubious. It is more likely that, as the king claims in his inscription, he merely desired at first to punish the Noba for their incursions on his territory, but that, encouraged by the feebleness of the resistance which he met, he decided to add the Central Sudan to his empire, and to sack Meroe and the other traditional centres of the region.

It has been suggested that the fragment of an Axumite stela

* A. J. Arkell, 1961, pp. 171-172.

+ Ezana Stela, lines 7-14.

discovered at Meroe by the Garstang^{*} expedition shows that the town had been under Abyssinian rule at a date earlier than Ezana, but it is more likely that it was erected by Ezana himself after the capture of the city. Certainly the fact that he claims in his titles to be ruler of Bedja and Cush does not mean that he had an inherited right to these lands, merely that he assumed this protocol because of his successful campaigns. Indeed he⁺ mentions explicitly that the Noba were confident in their aggression because they thought that he would never dare to cross the Taldaze (Atbara). This must be a strong indication that this had never been done before by Axumite kings, whatever the provocation.

In the view of the present writer there is little evidence that Cush and Axum ever came into direct contact until shortly before the time of Ezana, when Axum began to develop into an extremely important commercial kingdom, overrunning Siyamo and the

* The fragmentary stela Khartoum 508 might belong to a predecessor of Ezana as U. Monneret de Villard thought, Storia della Nubia cristiana p. 37, but it is not at all impossible that it belongs to Ezana himself. If he really was a Christian, he may have become one after his return to Axum. See Sayce, P.S.B.A. 31, p. 189, Liverpool Annals, IV pp. 64-65. Cf. L. P. Kirwan, Kush VIII, pp. 165-166 who discusses the possibility that the author of the fragmentary stela might be Ezana.

+ Ezana Stela line 8.

Bedja country, and probably also dominating the Yemen and Aden on the other side of the Red Sea. Northern Abyssinia had remained divided into several states, among which Axum was probably of comparatively minor importance, until about the year 100 A.D. The coastline was dominated at first by South Arabian kings, and later in part by their rivals the Ptolemies, who long maintained possession of the port of Adulis. The ivory trade ^{*} route from Adulis to the elephant country of the Blue Nile south of Sennar (Cyeneum) passed through Axum, which doubtless gained in importance from exploiting this factor, but the influence of the Egyptianised culture of Meroe on the south Arabian civilisation of the Axumites ⁺ or vice versa cannot be demonstrated. This must indicate that Cush continued to be dependent almost wholly on Egypt for its external contacts while Axum still drew its inspiration from Arabia.

* See C. Préaux, "Sur les Communications de l'Éthiopie avec l'Égypte hellénistique", Chronique d'Égypte 53, pp. 257-281.

+ The Stelæ of Axum which are nearly all uninscribed are frequently carved with the shape of windows and floors and were evidently intended to represent houses for the dead, and the form of Axumite temples, several of which are known at Matara, is quite different. Throughout the earlier Axumite period until Ezana ^e the old South Arabian script was used. Thereafter Greek and Geez ^e, the ancestral Ethiopic language, came into use.

The conquests of Ezana in the Sudan over the Bedja, the Noba and the Cushites were not long maintained. His incursion into this area remained a mere episode, with no real antecedents, after which Axum and the Noba successor kingdoms of Meroe had little contact. It was no accident that Nobatia, Mukurra and Alwa continued to be pagan until missionaries came from Byzantine Egypt about 540 A.D., two hundred years after Abyssinia became a Christian state. The only result was that the outward shell of the once great Meroitic kingdom finally crumbled away: doubtless Meroe soon passed into the hands of the Noba, who had already adopted many of the forms of its civilization.

Chapter 6Conclusions

In constructing this thesis two main considerations have been borne in mind, firstly to show on a broad canvas the part which foreign influences played in creating and modifying the Meroitic kingdom, secondly to study in more detail those facets of the picture on which new evidence may throw more light or where a reconsideration of known facts favours a different interpretation. As a natural corollary to these intentions certain well-known periods which have been adequately dealt with elsewhere, and about which little or no new material is available, have been treated summarily and quite briefly, while other more obscure ages have received a degree of attention which is not justified solely by their importance, and would not be normal in straight history: the present writer regards this method as legitimate in view of the obligation of a thesis to contain a substantial proportion of original or controversial matter. This treatment of Cushite foreign relations has been modelled on the approach of Professor F. Hintze in Studien zur Meroitischen Chronologie und zu den Opfertafeln aus den Pyramiden von Meroe, but, to suit the nature of the subject and to make the result less episodic, a more continuous commentary has been attempted. Naturally this reappraisal agrees basically with earlier studies of the problems (it would be perverse if it did not), but forty years have passed since the brilliant attempts of George Reisner to assess the kingdom and the conceptions contained here differ from his in many ways.

The most important features of this work are a consideration of the differences in geographical structure between Cush of the New Kingdom and of the Napatans, an examination of Persian policy in the Nile Valley, a study of the influences operating on the art of the third century B.C. in the light of the current excavations of Professor F. Hintze at Musawwarat-es-Sufra and Naga, and an investigation of the clashes between the Nehasi and the Ptolemies in the second century B.C. Finally the relations of Merce with Rome have been given more thorough treatment than has been attempted elsewhere, particular attention being paid to the significance of the Augustan settlement and to the Demotic graffiti of the Dodecaschoenus of the third century A.D. which have never been studied from an historical angle since the publication of the Griffith posthumous Catalogue. These graffiti have produced a number of important facts including perhaps the latest accurately attested date in the history of Cush (277 A.D.).

The history of Merce can only be understood if it is realized that the country was composed of two disparate societies in an uneasy alliance, the poor semi-nomadic herdsmen who had a continual struggle to wring a living out of a hard land, and the entourage of the king who had at least a veneer of culture. The gulf between the people and their rulers was by no means as wide as in the more evolved kingdom of the Middle East in social matters; the king continued to be the father of his subjects even if they hailed him as a god, and the great hafirs of so many towns prove

that the monarchs did their best for the welfare of their people. Culturally, however, the ruler and his small circle of friends, generals and officials must have belonged to a different world. All the very limited surplus wealth was channelled into their hands, they alone could afford imported articles or conceive the construction of even small buildings in burnt brick or stone. In Egypt at least from the New Kingdom, and probably from the Middle, infinite grades of bureaucrat led down from the monarch to the peasant. In Cush in earlier times only the great tribal chiefs stood between the ruler and the common folk, and they were probably as wild and illiterate as their followers. In Late Meroitic times Lower Nubia became exceptionally prosperous and the local leaders and their associates were often apparently literate in Meroitic, Egyptian Demotic, or very occasionally Greek, but there is no sign that the rest of the country farther away from the border of the Roman Empire was affected.

The cultural gap had arisen because Sudanese culture was not developing in isolation or in contact only with countries which had similar problems, but was being continually influenced by Egypt, one of the richest and most populous lands of the ancient world, which the ruling class felt inclined, and almost obliged to emulate. Without this example always before their eyes a people at a similar level of development to the Cushites would hardly have considered building in stone or employing highly skilled craftsmen to decorate their temples and tombs. As it was, a strong kingship had grown

up and tried to express itself in a worthy manner. In this sense the very existence of the enlarged state of Cush and its salient characteristics were the result of long continued external influences. Its civilization was so much a product of the traditions of the ancient Egyptians that, when paganism faded there, Meroite culture became sterile and ultimately collapsed, and literacy did not return until the triumph of Byzantine Hellenism in the sixth century. It should be noted, however, that, whilst the formal art of Meroe always continued to be artificial and alien, the secondary graffiti of Musawwarat-es-Sufra in the Great Enclosure and the occasional instances where classicising rules were allowed to lapse there and in the Arnekhmani Lion Temple, as well as in the Lion Temple of Naga and in the decoration of a few of the pyramids, show that the people knew how to make vivid portraits when they were not too hidebound by precedent.

The substratum of Sudanese society long continued a virtually Neolithic way of life, not dissimilar to the other pastoral peoples in the vast savannah expanses south of the Sahara which stretched to West Africa. A. J. Arkell has ^{*}remarked that cultures not unlike the C-Group of Nubia were found throughout this region.

* A. J. Arkell, 1961, pp. 49-53 draws parallels with the Tama of Wadai, and mentions stelae carved with representations of cattle as far away as Mauretania. See also Kush XII, pp. 63-81 for a study of cattle with deformed horns by P. Huard.

It is often assumed that Cush acted almost as the parent of the kingships of Central Africa from Uganda to Ruanda-Urundi to the mysterious realm of Ghana in the west, but this is much more difficult to demonstrate because there is no real proof at present how old these other states were. Harsiotef mentions the Rehrehis principality, Eratosthenes the kings of the Noba west of the Nile, and the Blemmye rulers to the east. Before Roman times the Garamantes had already established a powerful inland kingdom in the Maghreb^{*}. The Arab geographers were under the impression that Ghana had existed for many centuries. There is not even much to show that Meroe, which was itself late in moving into the iron age, became a major centre for the diffusion⁺ of this knowledge which

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- * The suggestion of Ugo Monneret de Villard that they also lived in the Bayuda has found no favour elsewhere, but the references in Herodotus, History, IV, 174 and 183 do support the suggestion that they lived near the Oasis of Ammon (Siwa) at one period. Possibly they were a widely dispersed group, possibly they moved westward by Roman times.
- + For an appreciation of the connection between the introduction of iron and the growth of feudal states throughout the bilad es-Sudan see B. Davidson, Old Africa rediscovered, pp. 70-75, 82-84, p. 97. Davidson discusses the role of Cush in introducing iron, but is able to conclude only that iron became common everywhere in the savannah south of the Sahara, as at Meroe, soon after 300 B.C., and does not claim that there was a single centre of diffusion.

may well have reached Central Africa through Carthage or down the eastern coast, which was familiar to navigators.

Arguments based on the presence of divine kingships are notoriously deceptive because versions of this form of government have existed at one period or another almost everywhere from China to Mexico. The present writer would admit that the Noba and Blemmyes, who came into direct contact with Meroe, were much affected by its culture and religion, but is more dubious how far this influence spread in other directions. The substantial "tells" of parts of the Southern Sudan may one day reveal an interesting story of fruitful connections with the region further north, but that must remain hypothetical until political conditions permit proper investigation. When one ventures to consider the links of other African peoples to Cush, it becomes painfully clear that their history is even less understood than was that of the Meroites before the excavations of Reisner, and that conjecture can never be a substitute for facts established by scientific excavation.

The contention of A. J. Arkell^{*} that Byzantine bronze lamps were sent through Nubia and copied in West Africa in X-Group times may seem to militate against this cautious and largely negative conclusion. There is, however, no justification for the belief that they were sent by this devious and difficult way rather than by the more direct routes through the land of the Garamantes (the

* A. J. Arkell, 1961, pp. 182.

Ahoggar) or even by ship down the Atlantic seaboard. With reference to international trade, conservative conclusions have been generally adopted in this thesis to counterbalance the still current tendency to wild hypothesis. Unless more evidence becomes available to prove this view false, it seems preferable to believe that a few Persian, Greek, Indian and other foreign discoveries seeped into Cush from Egypt rather than by direct trade. There is little to show that the Meroites controlled any ports on the Red Sea. A number of savants from the Ptolemaic court were sufficiently interested to go to Meroe and write about its system of government, but it is unlikely that many Greek traders visited it because it had little to sell that the Mediterranean world desired except gold and ivory. These were almost certainly commodities taken to border markets for sale under official patronage rather than the objects of private trading.

The Meroitic period was a most significant one in the internal history of the Sudan, which saw the transition from a largely stone-age ecology to the full iron age: from barbarism to the military feudalism of the Noba and Blemmyes. The account of the war with Rome given by Strabo and the pictures of Cushite soldiers on the walls of the Sun-Temple at Meroe show that the army, if still poorly led and disciplined and unable to stand up to the rigid efficiency of Roman troops, had by the beginning of the Christian era developed from the skin-clad painted warriors described by Herodotus into a force of cavalry and infantry not unlike the

feudal levies which existed throughout the Sudanic region until recent times. Commercially, however, the relations with other states remained backward because of its position on the periphery of the most civilized area of the ancient world, and because of its natural environmental poverty.

The very poverty and isolation of Cush, sheltered behind its bulwark of desert and cataract, saved it many times from conquest and preserved the nation for a thousand years. Only occasionally did aggressive kings consider that expeditions against it were worth the cost and difficulty. More commonly the rulers of Egypt were content, by sealing the frontier and stationing garrisons in Lower Nubia or at Elephantine, to ensure that the Meroites could not support dissidents in the rebellious Thebais. At other times, especially during the reigns of Harsiotef and Ergamenes and after the Augustan settlement, frontier relations were probably largely amicable, if not cordial.

The ancestors of the XXVth Dynasty had become great chiefs in an important section of the dissolved New Kingdom empire during the eighth century, and did not cast themselves in the role of Sudanese kings, but sought instead to win Pharaonic stature by reunifying the Nile Valley. For them Cush and Egypt were two lands which historically were inseparable: the only difference from the past was to be that, in future, Nubians would rule instead of being ruled. History and geography, however, proved too much for this concept. The Delta had long become the dominant sector

of Egypt, and its attachments were to Asia and the Mediterranean, not to Africa. The Assyrians drove Taharqa southwards and the revived power of northern Egyptian nationalism kept away his successors. Like Roman Emperors of the East the kings maintained their ancestral titles, but gradually the vision and desire of unity faded and the Meroitic state of the Sudan pursued its own way. The division offered many advantages by ending the long tradition of foreign rule in the northern Sudan, but the high culture inherited from Egypt suffered greatly when cut off from its source, and the towns of northern Cush were always much at the mercy of external aggressors. On other frontiers the Cushites usually managed to hold their own against small tribal groups, and ultimately succeeded in crushing even the Rehrehis the most dangerous of these pastoral migrants, but the prosperity and strength of the land always depended on the goodwill, or at least indifference, of whatever group ruled north of Aswan. The development of Meroe at the expense of Napata provided only a partial solution to this threat by making the capital more secure.

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