

SUDAN & NUBIA

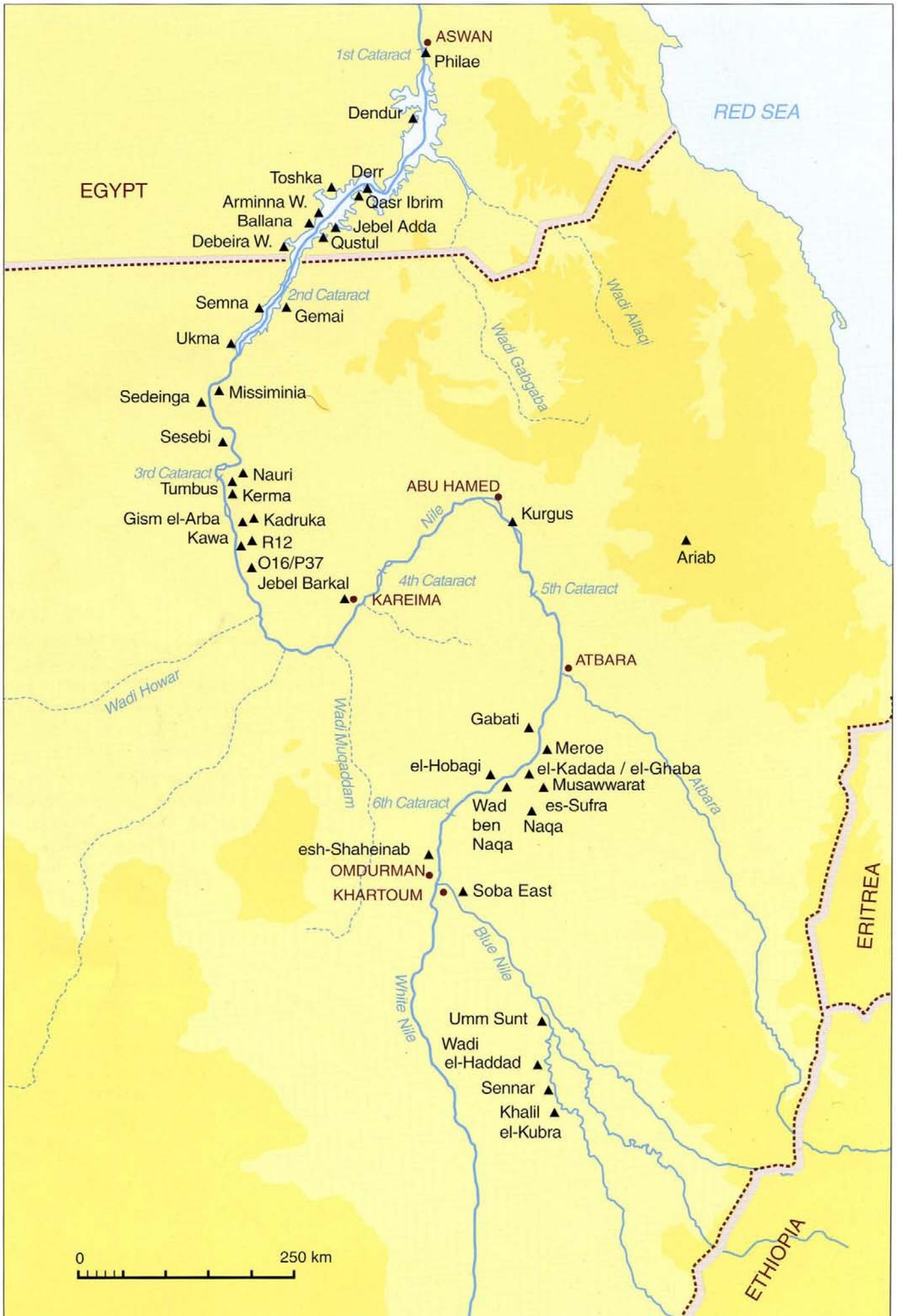
The Sudan Archaeological Research Society



Bulletin No. 5

2001





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Contents

Introduction

Vivian Davies 1

Reports

Kadruka and the Neolithic in the Northern Dongola Reach 2
Jacques Reinold

First Season of Excavation at Site R12, a Late Neolithic Cemetery in the Northern Dongola Reach 11
Sandro Salvatori and Donatella Usai

Palaeotrauma: a profile of personal injury during the Kerma Period 21
Margaret Judd

Nubians at Hierakonpolis 29
Excavations in the Nubian Cemeteries
Renée Friedman

The Textiles from the Pan Grave Cemetery 38
Jana Jones

The Zooarchaeological Report 39
Salima Ikram

Pottery from the Nubian Cemeteries 40
Serena Giuliani

Kurgus 2000: The Egyptian Inscriptions 46
Vivian Davies

Excavations at Kurgus: The 2000 Season Results 59
Isabella Welsby Sjöström

Excavations within the Pharaonic and Kushite site at Kawa and in its hinterland, 2000-2001 64
Derek A. Welsby

Musawwarat es-Sufra 71
Interpreting the Great Enclosure
Steffen Wenig

Notes on the "non-sacred" parts of the Great Enclosure 87
Dieter Eigner

The Christianisation of Nubia: some archaeological pointers 89
David N. Edwards

Medieval Plant Economy in Middle Nubia: Preliminary Archaeobotanical Evidence from Nauri 97
Dorian Q Fuller and David N. Edwards

Miscellaneous 104

Front Cover: Beaker for funerary libation from el-Kadada, chalice shape, with incised geometric decoration, fired clay. Excavation n° KDD 76/3/59.

Introduction

Vivian Davies

The appearance of this, the fifth, issue of the Bulletin coincides with the tenth anniversary of our Society's founding. It has been an extraordinary first decade, remarkably productive in terms both of fieldwork and publication - one in which we have worked closely with our colleagues in the National Corporation for Antiquities and Museums of the Sudan to fill gaps in the archaeological record and meet, wherever possible, the threats posed to archaeological sites by modern development. We have organized and supported eight major field-projects (in Soba East, the Northern Dongola Reach, Kawa, the Shendi-Atbara Reach, Gabati, the Bayuda Desert, the Fourth Cataract, and Kurgus) and published five memoirs (two others are in press at the time of writing), as well as *Sudan & Nubia*, an annual bulletin of reports 'fresh from the field'. Furthermore, we have held each year an international colloquium on current fieldwork and research, and we now additionally host the annual 'Kirwan Memorial Lecture', in memory of our distinguished first President.

The considerable funds needed to carry out this extensive programme have been forthcoming most substantially from the Bioanthropology Foundation and the British Museum, upon whose generosity we continue to rely, as we do also on that of the Society's individual Patrons. We intend to mark the Society's achievements with a special publication to be issued in the coming year. As to the future, the reports in this volume, on sites ranging in date from the Neolithic to the Mediaeval Period, amply demonstrate the huge potential for important new discoveries and scholarly progress in our area of interest, both in Sudan and Egypt, promising a second decade as exciting and rewarding as the first.



Kurgus 2000: The Egyptian Inscriptions

Vivian Davies

Following the success of the preliminary 1998 season at Kurgus (see Davies 1998; Welsby Sjöström 1998), a second season of work was carried out at the site (see Map, inside front cover, and Fig. 1) over a period of three weeks in November 2000. Further recording of the inscriptions on the Hagr el-Merwa (KRG 1) was undertaken and selective excavation begun of both the fortified settlement (KRG 2) and the cemetery (KRG 3). A joint expedition of the British Museum and the Sudan Archaeological Research Society, the team consisted of Vivian Davies (co-director), Isabella Welsby Sjöström (co-director), Renée Friedman, Margaret Judd, Joe Majer, Gillian Pyke, and Muawiya Ali representing the National Corporation for Antiquities and Museums of the Sudan. The results of the archaeological investigations are presented below by Isabella Welsby Sjöström. I report here on the epigraphic work, in which I was valuably assisted by Renée Friedman. I am grateful to Claire Thorne and the Photographic Department of the British Museum for help with preparing the illustrations.

The Royal Tableaux

As already described in Davies 1998, the Hagr el-Merwa, 'Rock of Quartz', a striking local landmark, over 40m in length and 23.6m high, bears hieroglyphic inscriptions along the length of its north-east face and at the southern end of its south-west face (Fig. 2; Colour Plates XXVII-XXIX). Facsimile and photographic recording was continued in all areas, and a number of new inscriptions and figures identified, the current total being in excess of 70. This interim report is concerned largely with the most important area of decoration, where work is now well advanced, that containing the two royal tableaux, of Thutmose I and Thutmose III respectively, located near to the southern end of the north-east face (Fig. 2, A; Colour Plate XXVIII) and known from the much-reproduced drawing published by Arkell (1950, 37, fig. 4; cf. Vercoutter 1956, 69-70, no. 7; Davies 1998, 26-9, figs 3-4). A new, but still provisional, copy of the tableaux (small elements of which remain to be refined) is reproduced in Figure 3 and shows them to be substantially more complete and detailed, and generally of much better workmanship, than indicated in the Arkell drawing, though it is clear that the intractability of the rock sorely tried, and sometimes defeated, the skills of the relief-carvers.

The two tableaux are near-duplicate, consisting in each case of three major components: a stela showing a seated

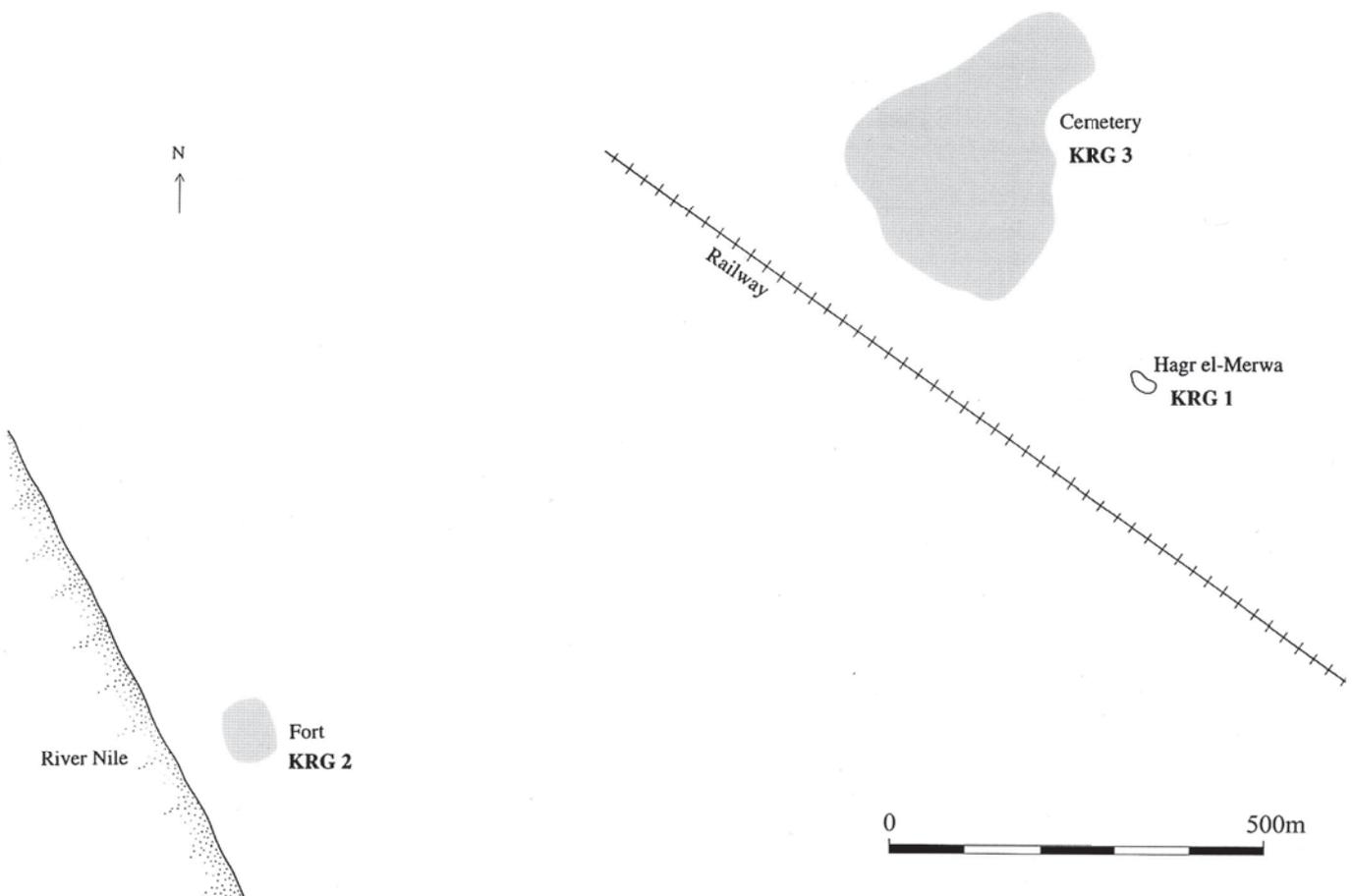


Figure 1. Kurgus: Plan showing location of archaeological features.

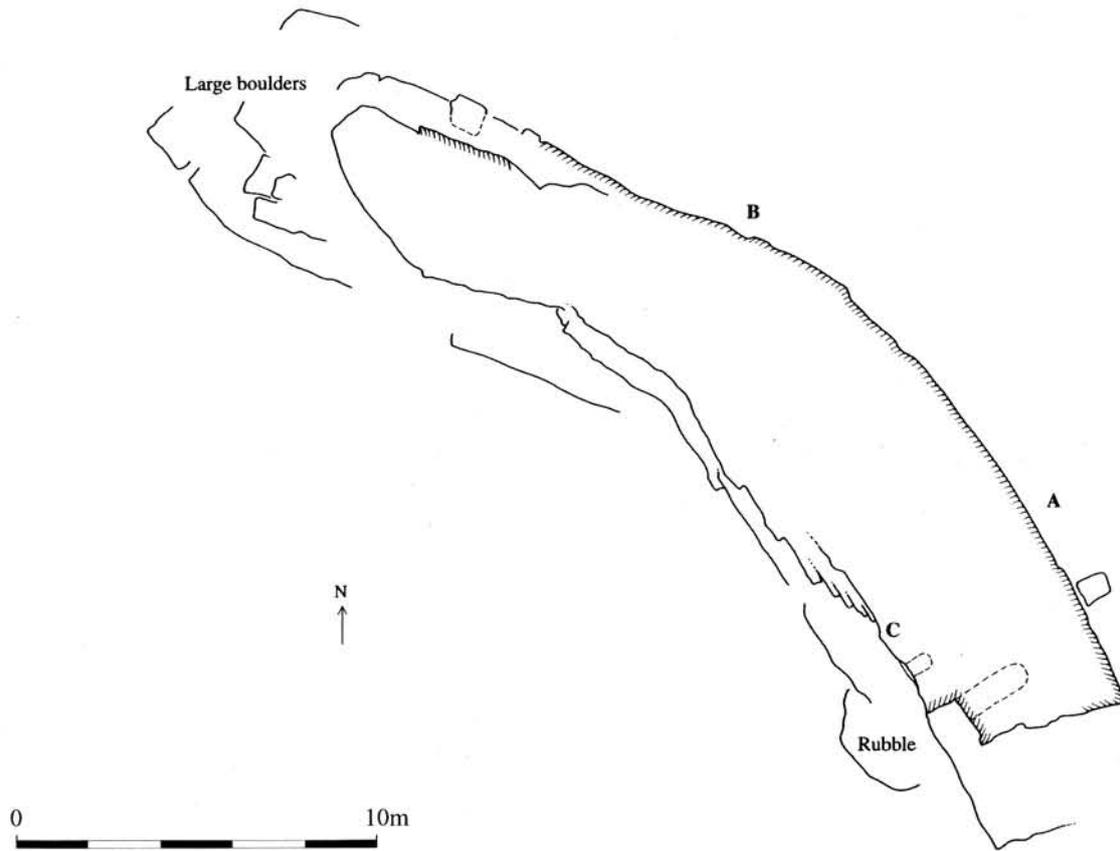


Figure 2. Hagr el-Merwa (Site KRG1): Plan showing location of inscriptions.

figure of Amun-Ra facing the Horus-name of the king surmounting four lines of inscription; to the left, a figure of a bull identified as the god Amun-Ra-Kamutef; and to the right, a figure of a lion identified as the king. The exact disposition of the various components has been largely determined by the quality of the rock surface, which is very uneven and must have been very difficult to carve. As might be expected, those of Thutmose I, i.e. the right stela, the lower lion and the lower bull, occupy the smoothest available surfaces, with little suitable space left for the later decoration of his grandson, much of which was done in red paint.

The Stelae

The Thutmose I stela (Fig. 4, right) is located at the highest optimum spot and roughly at the centre of this section of the north-east face. It shows the god, seated on a throne, facing left, with the head of a bearded ram, wearing a sun-disc and feathered headdress with uraeus at the front (Colour Plate XXX; cf. Davies 1998, 28, Col. Pl. XIV). The total height of his figure, including headdress, is about 90cm, while the top of his headdress is about 4.12 m above current ground level. He holds an *ankh* in his left hand and a *was*-sceptre in his right; from the top of the sceptre an *ankh* is extended towards the beak of Horus, facing right, wearing the double crown, surmounting the Horus-name of the king, 'Strong Bull Beloved of Maat', which is enclosed in a *serekb* (cf. Spieser 2000, 71-3, 176, 231 and 325, no. 146). A short column of

hieroglyphs in front of the god reads: 'Amun-Ra, he gives (or 'giving') life and dominion'. The column of hieroglyphs behind the Horus-name reads: 'A king has not reached Kush since the time of Horus except for my Person'. The decoration has been carved or hammered throughout with internal detail done in red paint, very little of which now survives. It should be noted that the figure of the god here appears to represent the earliest attested example of the Nubian form of Amun-Ra with the characteristic ram's head (cf. Onasch 1993, 241, n. 25; Török 1997, 303, n. 540). The non-canonical leftward orientation of the god's image may be explained by the physical context. So orientated, he faces (more or less) towards the direction of the rising sun. As the sun is reborn, so is his image revived, in turn passing on renewed life to the king.

The Thutmose I motif has been repeated in essentials by Thutmose III (Fig. 4, left), whose version, done in a mixture of carving and painting, is placed to the left and at a slightly lower level; in this case the figure of the god, rendered largely in red paint alone, is larger and taller, as is the *serekb* containing the king's Horus-name 'Strong Bull Arising in Thebes', although the falcon surmounting the *serekb* is smaller. In addition, much more internal detail has survived – of the falcon's head and feathering, of the god's face (his eye and curved horn) and dress (lappets, collar, belt, kilt with tail). The same label-text accompanies the god, but there is no equivalent column of inscription behind the Horus-name,

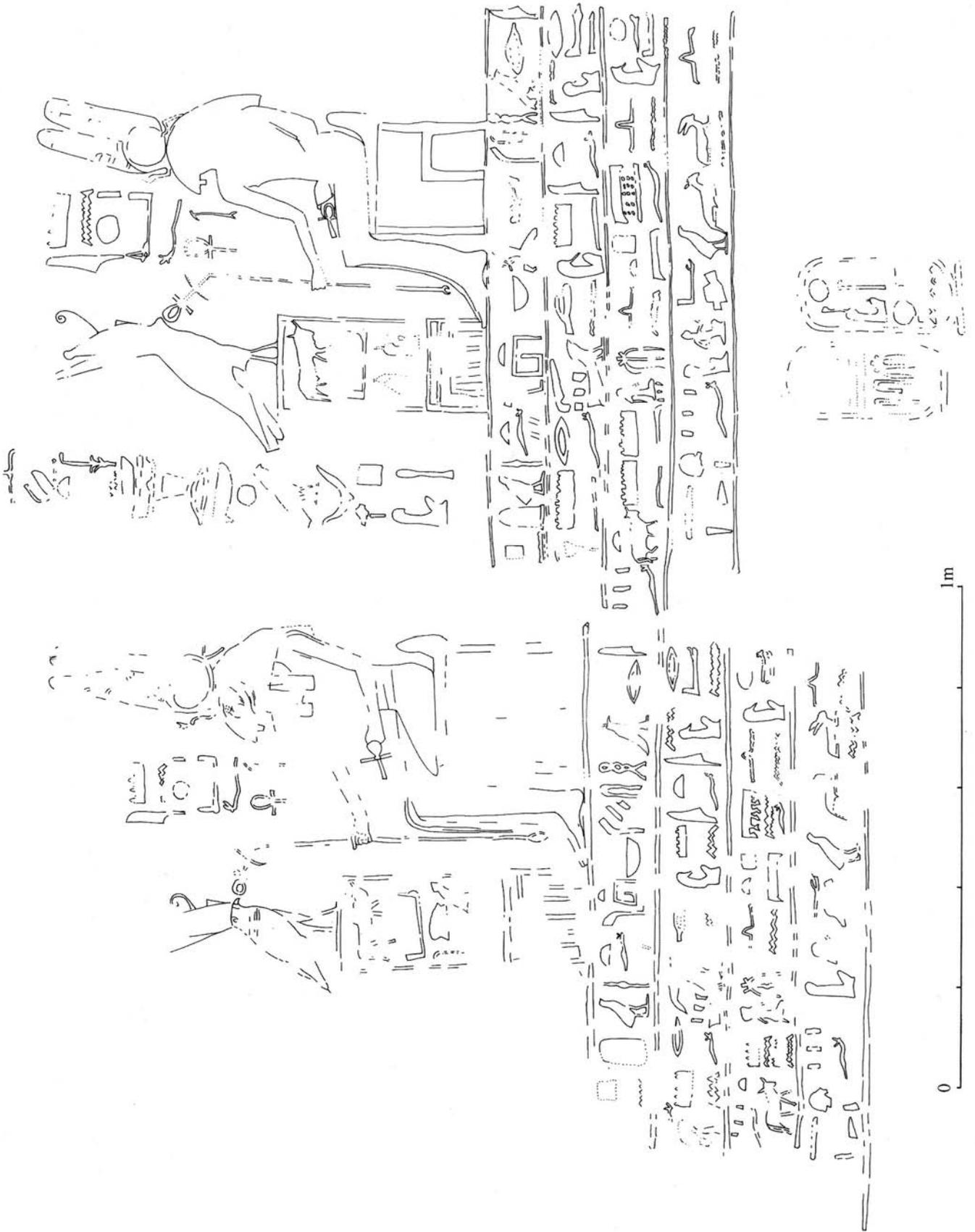


Figure 4. The stelae of Thutmose I (right) and Thutmose III (left), and cartouches of Ramesses II.



probably because the rock-surface is very pitted in this area; instead, an extended version appears elsewhere, in association with the Thutmose III lion (see below).

Differing only in details of orthography and spacing, the inscriptions immediately beneath the figures are identical in content, with Thutmose III duplicating that of his grandfather (cf. Davies 1998, 28, Col. Pl. XV). The text is a curse- or threat-formula (Morschauer 1991, 28, 56, 108-9, 126; Nordh 1996, 12-13, 86; cf., in general, Willems 1990, 38-43, 51-3; Assmann 1992), arranged in four horizontal lines, reading from right to left:

‘(1) As for any Nubian^a who shall transgress (or ‘violate’)^b this stela, (2) which (my) father Amun has given to^c me, his chieftains shall be slain, he shall endure in^d (3) my grasp, the sky shall not rain^e for him, his cattle^f shall not calve,^g (4) there shall be no heir of his upon earth’.^h

a. The writing of *nbsy* is abbreviated in the Thutmose III version, with only one determinative, though it adds the two strokes.

b. On the sense of *thy* in such contexts, see Morschauer 1991, 55-9, 129, 258 (Note that Morschauer consistently misidentifies the Kurgus text as the ‘Semnah Graffito [or Inscription] of Thutmosis I’).

c. Thutmose III *n*-signs tend to be more fully formed than those of Thutmose I, which are rather bar-like.

d. The final sign here, which I take as *m*, is indistinct in the Thutmose I version, but clearer in that of Thutmose III.

e. The Thutmose III rain-sign (Gardiner, N4) is more schematic than the Thutmose I version, which distinguishes the individual drops of moisture (so also on the latter king’s Tombos stela (*Urk.* iv, 84, 9

[reading of sign personally verified]). I understand the sign here as a rare logographic writing of the verb *hwt*, ‘to rain’ (*Wb.* 3, 48, 23).

f. The congested grouping of the Thutmose III *mmmt.f*, ‘his cattle’, reflects the relative lack of space.

g. The three short strokes here in the Thutmose I version are not the plural strokes but part of the female determinative (‘woman giving birth’, Gardiner, B3 and 4) of *ms*. This detail is unclear in the Thutmose III version.

h. The final group is clearly to be read as *tp t3*, ‘upon earth’, in both cases. On the year-date for Thutmose I erroneously read here by Vercoutter (1956, 70), see Davies 1998, 28, Col. Pl. XVI, adding to the bibliography cited there Dingenotto 1993, 63; Spalinger 1995, 274-5; Meurer 1996, 14.

These are not generalised threats but specific to the geographical context, the first four of the five being unique to this text. They are addressed to Nubian tribes, pastoralists dependent on rain-water and cattle, for whom the invoked penalties, if realised, would mean social and economic extinction. Despite the elimination of the spurious year-date (cf. above n.h), Thutmose I’s expedition to Kurgus can still very probably be accounted to have occurred in his Year 2, as this is the only year in which he is known to have undertaken a campaign in Nubia (Zibelius-Chen 1988, 193-4; Vandersleyen 1995, 255ff.; Morkot 2000, 70-2). A date early in the reign may be further supported by the presence on the rock of the name of his crown-prince, Amenmose (see below), who died before his father and is not attested beyond Year 4.

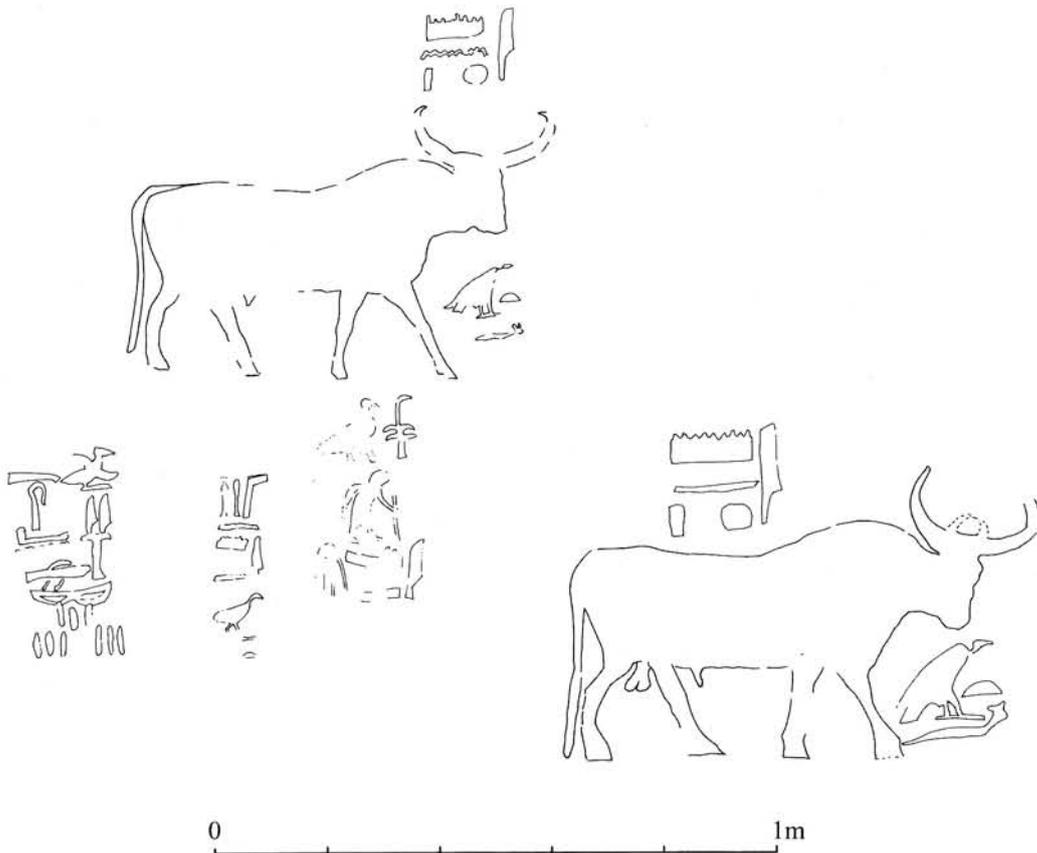


Figure 5. Bull-figures identified as the god Amun-Ra-Kamutef.

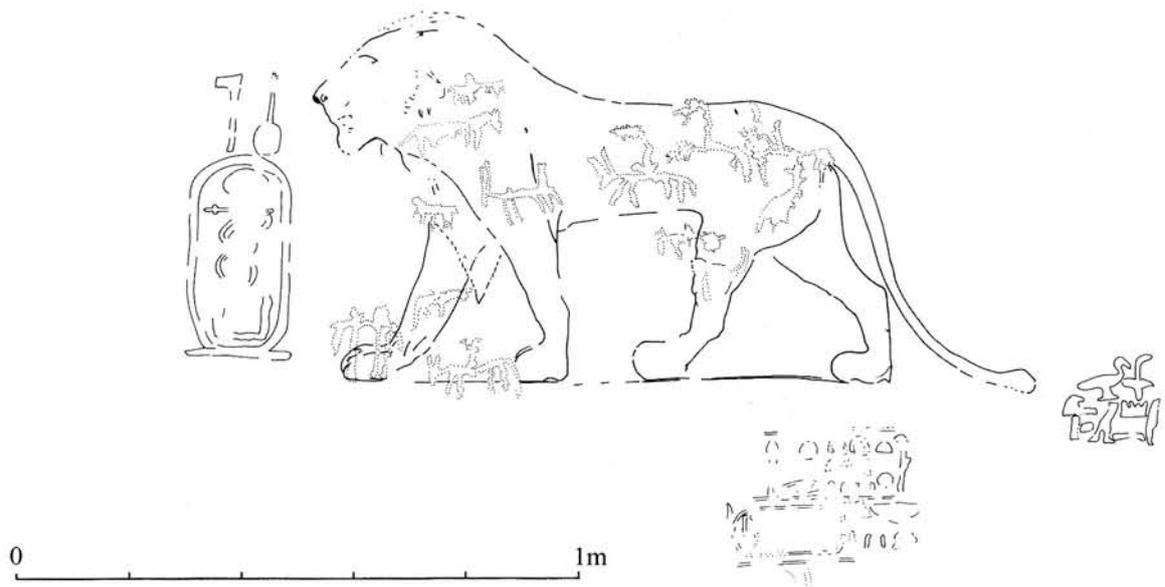


Figure 6. Figure of lion representing Thutmose I.

The Bulls and Lions

As their size indicates, the bull and lion figures are important components of the tableaux, representing different aspects of Amun-Ra and the king respectively and each, in balance, demarcating the sacred area reserved only for matter pertaining to the god and the king (Fig. 3). In the case of the bull, Amun-Ra-Kamutef (cf. Jacobsohn 1980, 308-9), the

iconography here is quite remarkable, if not unique (Fig. 5; cf. Davies 1998, 28, Col. Pl. XVII). The figure serves a dual function, one as a representation of the god, two as an enlarged version of the hieroglyph *k3*, being the first element in the writing of the god's epithet, *k3-mwt.f*, 'bull of his mother'. The images of the two bulls, both of which were carved or hammered (with no trace of paint now visible),

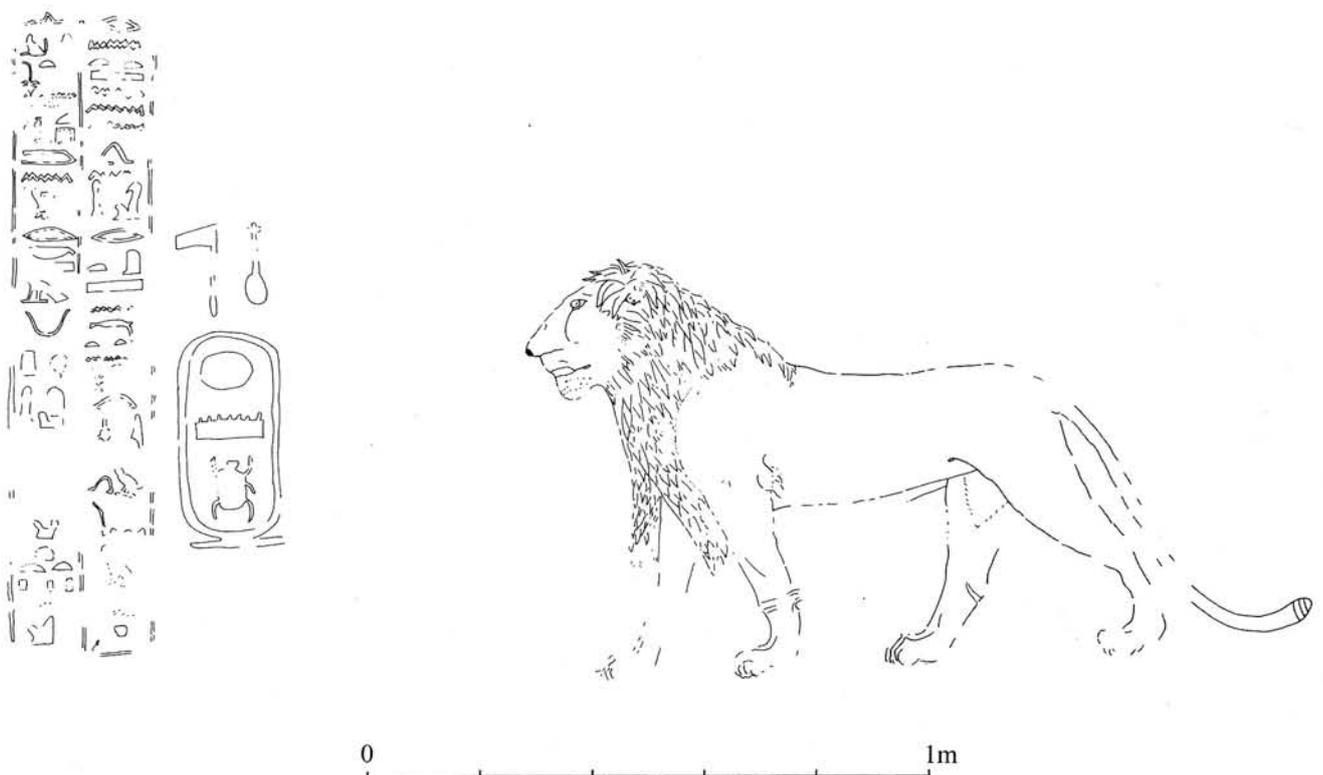


Figure 7. Figure of lion representing Thutmose III.



are very similar, although the earlier bull, which is slightly larger and better preserved, is shown with what appear to be two curved protrusions at the top of the head between the two horns, which are absent in the later. It is noticeable how the forms of the *n*-hieroglyph in the writing of the name Amun differ from each other. It is rendered as a narrow bar in the earlier version but as the full 'ripple of water' in the later (cf. the same tendency in the threat-formula above, n.c).

The lions (Figs 6-7) represent the king, as the associated cartouches indicate, the lower being 'the good god Aakheperkara', Thutmose I, the upper 'the good god Menkheperra', Thutmose III (cf. De Wit 1951, 20; Köhler 1980, 1086; Onasch 1993, 236-7). Both lions are shown in striding pose, facing left, but are not identical. The left rear leg is advanced in the case of the former, the right rear in that of the latter. The Thutmose I lion is rather stocky with a relatively large head, which has suffered from weathering (Colour Plate XXXI). Its body bears secondary decoration of a much later, post-pharaonic date, in the form of crudely hammered quadruped-and-rider figures (cf. Raven 1999, 84, 86-8, pls 2-4). The title and prenomen were entirely carved but only parts of the body were so finished, much of the initial red outline still remaining together with some internal detailing in red. The base line is also in red. The title and prenomen of Thutmose III, separated from the lion by a large break in the rock face, are also fully sunk, but the lion itself, in outline and internal detail, has been left almost entirely in red, with minimal attempt at carving (Colour Plate XXXII; cf. Davies 1998, 28, Col. Pl. XVIII). In this case the head is very well preserved as is most of the body and detailing, but the base line, if it ever existed, has disappeared. Superbly drawn and more elegantly proportioned than its earlier companion, this lion is a remarkable work of Egyptian animal art, perhaps the finest single rock painting to have survived from the ancient Nile Valley.

Historical Inscriptions

Closely associated with the Thutmose III lion, and placed immediately before his title and name, are two columns of hieroglyphs facing left and reading from left to right (Fig. 7). Roughly sunk into a poor surface, not all the signs are now clear but fortunately most are still legible. The following translation and comments are provisional:

'(1) Not any^a king has reached the southernmost limit^b from Naharin to Kush except for my Person [...] since the primeval time, since (2) that my Person travelled (?)^c to the boundary of the north (and) of the south, to *Miw* in [...]'^d.

a. There is a trace of a sign after *nswt*, probably the remains of a *nb*.

b. *hnt* is certain here. I take it as a writing of *hnt(y)*, meaning the southern(most) point of a territory (*Wb.* 3, 306, 6-8; cf., for example, *Urk.* iv, 85, 13; 807, 17; 902, 6; 1129,3; 1230, 17).

c. *šmw*, clearly a verb of motion, appears to be otherwise unknown, at least in this form. If not an entirely new word, it may be a variant of *šm* or *šm3* (*Wb.* 4, 464, 4; 470,2). The reversed-legs determinative (Gardiner, D55) may here convey the sense of 'there and back'.

d. The reading *nbt*, 'victory', would suit the context and some of the remaining traces but is far from certain.

Though short and unclear in parts, this newly established inscription is of considerable historical interest. Recording that Thutmose III visited the northern and southern boundaries of the empire in Naharin and Kush respectively and associating the southern boundary with the land of Miw, its content recalls the famous passage in the king's Armant stela (*Urk.* iv, 1245, 18-20, 1246, 1-5): 'He slew 120 elephants in the foreign land of Ny, when returning from Naharin, having crossed the river of the Euphrates (?) (cf. Vandersleyen 1994, 28, n. 8, and 33, n.34) ... setting up a stela (*wd*) of victory on its [east?] side. He captured a rhinoceros in shooting in the southern foreign land of Nubia (Ta-Sety), after he proceeded to Miw to seek him who defied him in that land. He established his stela (*wd*) there like that which he had done in the far north ...'. This *wd* of Thutmose III established in Miw must surely be the *wd* of Thutmose III inscribed on the Hagr el-Merwa (so Störk 1977, 255-6; *pace* O'Connor 1987, 122-4; cf. Zibelius-Chen 1988, 195). We know from the Annals that his stela of victory at the northern boundary of empire, in Naharin, was established next to an already-existing stela of Thutmose I (*Urk.* iv, 697, 3-5; cf. *Urk.* iv, 698, 15 - 699, 1; 1232, 10-11; 1448, 13; Spalinger 1978, 40-1; Valbelle 1990, 131-2; Galán 1995, 148-50), exactly paralleling the situation on the Hagr el-Merwa, which clearly represents the southern equivalent, the 'boundary of the south' mentioned in the new text, again in the context of the land of Miw. This places the Hagr el-Merwa/Kurgus firmly in the land of Miw and the land of Miw at least partly in the Abu Hamed Reach (cf. Störk 1977, 259-60; Zibelius-Chen 1988, 79, 165, 192 and 195; 1996, 203; also Baines 1986, 42-3, n.s). It also follows that the Hagr el-Merwa expedition of Thutmose III took place no earlier than his Year 33, when he is known to have established his Naharin stela next to that of his grandfather. In which year precisely it occurred, however, remains an open question. If Thutmose III's expeditions to the limits of the north and south took place as part of a single process of re-establishment and renewal of the boundaries of empire set by his great predecessor, the southern expedition might well have taken place within a relatively short time of the northern. No southern campaign of victory is documented for Year 34, but it may be relevant that in the Annals for that year the tribute from Kush includes a highly unusual item, namely sons of a chieftain of the land of Irem (*Urk.* iv, 708, 12; cf. O'Connor 1987, 108-10; Manzo 1999, 31; Morkot 2000, 73), a territory probably contiguous to Miw, possibly, though not certainly, to be located in the Berber-Shendi Reach and Northern Butana (O'Connor 1987; cf. Zibelius-Chen 1988, 77-8, 162 and 222; Valbelle 1990, 157; Säve-Söderbergh 1991, 5; Morkot 1991, 298; Zibelius-Chen 1994, 414-6; Török 1995, 27; Zibelius-Chen 1996, 199 and 203; Török 1997, 94; Grzymiski 1997, 99; Manzo 1999, 34; Morkot 2000, 73 and 89-90). Note that the Year-35 date for the

expedition suggested by Störk 1977, 256-7 (cf. O'Connor 1987, 124, n. 109; Zibelius-Chen 1988, 195; Säve-Söderbergh 1991, 3), though apparently convincing, is actually without foundation, as it derives from a misreading of another historical inscription on the Hagr el-Merwa.

The second historical inscription, first noted by Vercoutter (1956, 68-9), is located underneath the lion of Thutmose I (Fig. 6). Initially drafted in red and then rather clumsily carved, it is now fragmentary, consisting of the beginnings of two horizontal lines of text, reading from right to left. Traces suggest there may once have been a third line. The inscription begins with a year-date and includes in the second line a cartouche, the hieroglyphs in which are effaced save for the last sign. The original length of the lines cannot now be determined, so it is impossible to be absolutely sure that the year-date is that of the king originally named in the cartouche. Vercoutter tentatively read the year-date as 35 and the sign in the cartouche as *w3st* and concluded that the inscription must be attributed to either Thutmose III or Amenhotep III, while favouring the former (followed by Störk 1977, 256-7, see above). As the facsimile copy shows (Fig. 6), this numeral, which is slightly eroded, cannot be 35 but is almost certainly 44, and the last sign in the cartouche looks more like *mr* than *w3st*.

‘(1) Year 44 under the Person of [] (2) lord of appearances, [.....] beloved of (?) [.....].’

This new reading of the year-date eliminates Amenhotep III as a candidate, leaving Thutmose III as the only Eighteenth Dynasty possibility. However, the high year-date allows one other candidate, Ramesses II (cf. Von Beckerath 1997, 201). The title ‘lord of appearances’ (*nb ḥꜥw*) would normally precede a nomen (Von Beckerath 1984, 38), in which case the *mr*-sign, if such it is, favours Ramesses II as opposed to Thutmose III (Von Beckerath 1984, 238 and 227 respectively).

If the latter inscription is indeed of Ramesses II, it was probably carved at the same time as the two cartouches of his identified on the rock during the first season (Davies 1998, 29). These are to be found centred immediately beneath the Thutmose I horizontal threat-inscription, the prenomen on the right, the nomen on the left, both facing right (Fig. 4). Previously interpreted (Arkell 1950, 37-8, fig. 4) as representing the names of Thutmose I, the signs were lightly hammered in the rock and are now effaced, particularly in the nomen. The prenomen has also suffered some erosion but is better preserved. They read: ‘(1) Usermaatrasetpenra (2) [Ra]mesesmi[amun]’. These names represent the first *in situ* inscriptional evidence for post-Thutmose III activity upstream of Gebel Barkal and for Ramesside penetration this far into Kush (cf. Hein 1991, 92-3; Zibelius-Chen 1996, 196ff.), perhaps to be connected with campaigns against the land of Irem (cf. O'Connor 1987, 130-5). It does not, of course, follow that the area had remained accessible throughout the intervening period. One point to note is that while there is evidence of Atenist activity downstream at Gebel

Barkal (witness the erasures of the name of Amun etc. on the Gebel Barkal stela of Thutmose III: Reisner and Reisner 1933, 25 and *passim*), there is none such on the Hagr el-Merwa.

The cartouches in question are located above and to the left of an area of the rock, the surface of which is very pitted and uneven. Indeterminate shapes can be made out, which may or may not represent traces of original decoration, among them possibly the front of another large lion-figure (I am grateful to Renée Friedman for this suggestion). It is not impossible therefore that the cartouches were once part of a larger motif.

Other inscriptions in Area A

A few privileged individuals were allowed to have their names inscribed in very close proximity to the sacred area delimited by the animal figures. Prominent among these with their names and titles located behind the lower bull (Fig. 5) are, from right to left, the ‘King’s eldest son, Amenmose’,^a ‘High priest of Amun, Djehuty[...?],’^b and ‘Standard-bearer, Hekanakht, of (the company) He who subdues the nine bows’.^{c,d} There are also two such inscriptions at the other end (Fig. 3). One, located next to the tip of the lower lion’s tail, names the ‘King’s son, Amenemhat’^e (Fig. 6; cf. Davies 1998, 29, Col. Pl. XIX), the second, located above the first and to the right, the ‘King’s son, Amenmose’^f (Fig. 8). I believe they are all to be dated to the reigns of either Thutmose I or III, though it is not always clear to which one in particular they should be assigned.

a. The crown-prince, Thutmose I’s eldest son, who died before his father (highest attested date is year 4 of his father) (see Dodson 1990, 92, no. 5; Vandersleyen 1995, 249-52).

b. It is unclear whether the name is complete as copied, since the surface in this area is eroded. Probably contemporary with the former. A high priest of Amun named Djehuty is attested from the reign of Ahmose (see Lefebvre 1929, 226, no. 2; Bierbrier 1977, 1242).

c. The man and his company appear to be otherwise unattested (see Chevereau 1994, 126, no. 15.134 [incomplete]). Date uncertain.

d. I take *dy* here as a variant writing of the verb *d3/d3i/d3r* (*Wb.* 5, 414, 4ff., 418, 3ff.; Patané 1985, 94-7).

e. Possibly a son of Thutmose III (see Dodson 1990, 92, no. 7) or an otherwise unattested King’s son of Kush (see Davies 1998, 29).

f. Possibly the crown-prince again, this time without his defining epithet *smw*. If not, he is otherwise unattested either as a son of the two kings in question or as a King’s son of Kush.

The Private Inscriptions

The task of identifying, numbering and recording the private inscriptions continues. A small group has been discovered to the left of the sacred tableaux in area A, including one carved for the ‘Scribe, Neferkhered’ (Fig. 9), but most are to be found to the right, scattered along the northern end of the north-east face in area B (Fig. 2, Colour Plate XXXIII) (cf. Davies 1998, 29, Col. Pls XX-XXV). To date, I have found nothing to suggest that they are anything other than Thutmoseid in date. A small selection is published here,



Figure 8. Inscription of King's son, Amenmose.

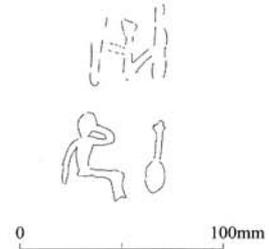


Figure 9. Inscription of Scribe, Neferkhered.



Figure 10. Inscription of Wab-priest of Amun, Djebutymose.



Figure 11. Inscription of Royal Scribe, Djebutymose.



Figure 12. Inscriptions of the officials *Wia* and *Horiu*.

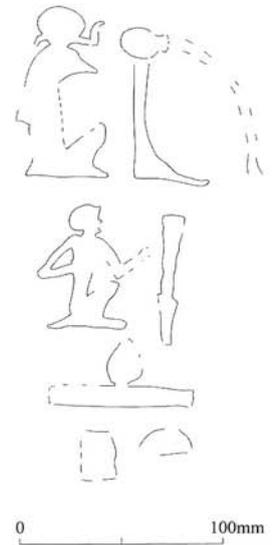


Figure 13. Inscription of *Wab*-priest of *Ra*, *Senbotep*.

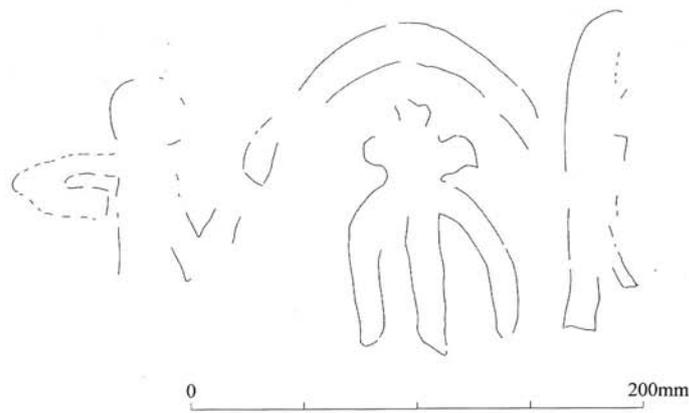


Figure 14. Inscription of Follower of the King, *Abmose*.

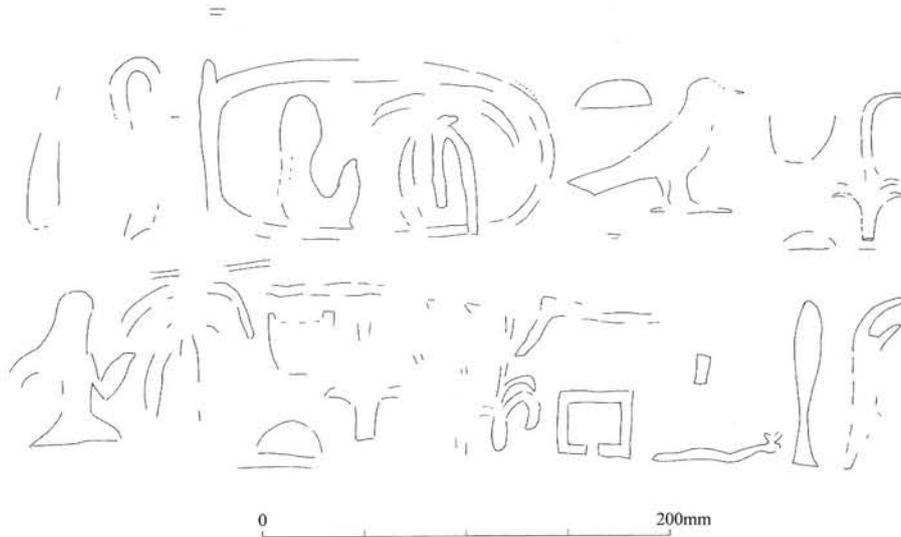


Figure 15. Inscriptions of Queen Ahmose and the Steward, Ahmose.

listed in order of location from south to north:

Figure 10. ‘Wab-priest of Amun, Follower of his Lord, [Scribe ?], Djehutymose’, hammered.

Figure 11, Colour Plate XXXIV. ‘Royal Scribe, Djehutymose’, in red paint.

Figure 12, Colour Plate XXXV. From left to right: ‘Follower of his Lord, Herald, Wia’ (enclosed in rectangular frame), in red paint, partly hammered; ‘Follower of his Lord, Herald, Wia’, hammered, probably the same man as the former (on the function of the *wḥm/wḥm-nswt* during this period, see Pardey 1997); ‘Wab-priest of [Amun], Steward of Upper and Lower Egypt, Horiu’ (followed by traces of another column), in red paint (cf. Davies 1998, 29, Col. Pl. XX). This latter title is rare (not listed in Taylor 2001) but is now paralleled by an example on the other side of the rock (see below), dating to Thutmose I.

Figure 13, Colour Plate XXXVI. ‘Wab-priest of Ra, Senhotep’, hammered and finished in red paint (cf. Davies 1998, 29, Col. Pl. XXIII). On this inscription, see now Raue 1999, 252.

Figure 14, Colour Plate XXXVII. ‘Follower of the King, Ahmose’, hammered.

The South-West Face

Inscriptions are confined to a small area at the southern end of this face, Area C (Fig. 2, Colour Plates XXIX and XXXVIII) (cf. Davies 1998, 29, Col. Pls. XXVI-VII). The decorated area is much eroded but appears to have been divided vertically into two roughly equal halves, each once bearing a series of horizontal lines, reading from right to left, comprising a name and title(s). Few have survived intact; most have disappeared altogether save for the tiniest

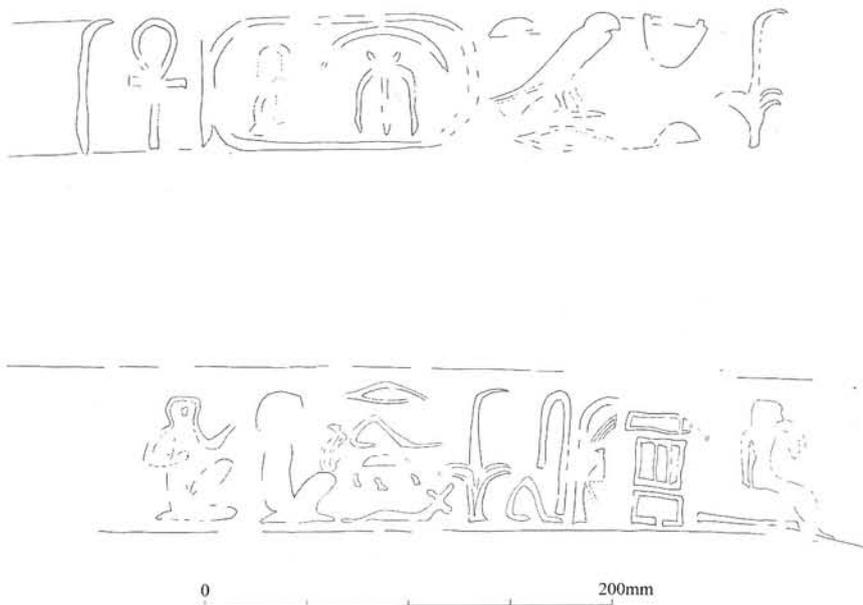


Figure 16. Inscriptions of Queen Ahmose and Child of the inner palace, Iry.

traces. As often on the other face, the hieroglyphs were initially drafted expertly in red before being rather crudely carved or hammered, though in a number of cases the second stage in the process was left unfinished or never even begun.

The right half seems to have been wholly devoted to associating favoured individuals with Queen Ahmose, the chief queen of Thutmose I, her name alternating several times with those of officials or retainers. The best preserved are the following:

Figure 15, Upper: 'Great royal wife, Ahmose, may she live'. Lower: 'Follower of his Person, Steward of Upper and Lower Egypt of the royal wife, Ahmose'.

Figure 16, Upper: 'Great royal wife, Ahmose, may she live'. Lower: 'Child of the inner palace, who follows the king at his footsteps, Iry' (cf. Davies 1998, 29, Col. Pl. XXVI).

The decoration on the left half remains to be fully recorded. At the top (Colour Plate XXXIX; cf. Davies 1998, 29, Col. Pl. XXVII) is a figure of a Nubian prisoner with a large feather on his head, kneeling, hands tied behind his back, face touching the ground; immediately beneath is the cartouche of a princess: 'King's daughter, [name unclear], may she live'. The hieroglyphs in the cartouche were crudely carved and are now eroded. They do not convincingly fit the name of any of the attested daughters of either Thutmose I or Thutmose III. Further down are the remains of a number of horizontal lines, the best preserved of which (Colour Plate XL) lists the 'Follower of his Person, Menkheperasonb', perhaps to be identified with one of the well known Thutmoside officials of that name (cf. Säve-Söderbergh 1991, 208). It was noticed, at the very end of the season, that these latter inscriptions share this area of rock with a series of animal figures, originally lightly hammered in the surface and now rather indistinct, one of which, with long curved horns and bearing the remains of red paint on its face, is perhaps meant to represent an oryx. I assume these to be of indigenous Nubian origin. Their exact relationship to the hieroglyphic inscriptions requires further investigation. These drawings are important, for their presence probably indicates that the Hagr el-Merwa was of sacred import for the native population, which may well have been a factor in the Egyptians' choice of the rock.

Conclusion

The Hagr el-Merwa represents something unique in the record: no less than a gigantic boundary stone, a conspicuous landmark chosen to demarcate not only the southern limits of political and military reach, a frontier of empire, but also by definition, and as the content and iconography of the tableaux confirm, one end of the cosmos, a frontier between the worlds of order and chaos. Amun and the king are depicted twice, in each case presenting an aspect appropriate to the context. The enthroned, ram-headed Amun-Ra, the supreme god, is the giver of life and universal dominion, both terrestrial and cosmic, to the king; as Bull-of-his-mother,

the primeval creator god, he stands as re-creator and guarantor of the cosmos in this dangerous liminal zone. The human image of the king is avoided. The king, receiving life and dominion, is represented by his Horus-name, stressing his divine nature, while the lion, an image of the king much invoked in contexts of conquest and slaughter of enemies, embodies his qualities of superhuman strength and ferocity – further emphasised here by the animal's size, the largest figure in the tableau. The secular and cosmic aspects of the boundary are fully integrated in the central inscription, threatening royal and divine retribution upon a 'real' native population, but of a type – foreign, Nubian, desert-dwelling – traditionally counted among the 'mythic' forces of chaos.

The indications are that the kings actually travelled to the site, when perhaps the central threat was proclaimed aloud (on the primary 'oral' role of such threats, Morschauser 1991, 246ff; cf. Nordh 1996, 96-9; and on 'oral display' as 'a significant part of the presentation of the king', Eyre 1996, 426). They appear to have been accompanied by a large and important entourage – members of the royal family, high officials, priests, scribes, soldiers and other functionaries, who had their names and title(s) inscribed on the rock, many at pains to describe themselves as 'Follower of the King' or 'of his Person' etc. It is hoped during the next season to complete the collection of all the remaining prosopographical details, following which a fuller assessment of these extraordinary data can take place.

The final evaluation of the site will also need now to take into account the important outcome of the new archaeological investigation of the fort (Welsby Sjöström, below): that it is not, as Arkell maintained (1950, 39; 1961, 83-4), a pharaonic foundation but is of much later date. If the Egyptians had a military presence in the Abu Hamed reach, with a view to 'control of the Wadis Allaqi and Gabgaba, and the Korosko road' (Mörkot 1991, 298; 2000, 72; cf. Adams 1984, 218-9, fig. 3, and 304; Zibelius-Chen 1988, 235-6; Török 1997, 94), the Hagr el-Merwa boundary need not be indicative of its exact location. It may have been centred further north, nearer perhaps to modern-day Abu Hamed, a point on the great bend of the Nile of obvious strategic importance. Suggestive here is the recent discovery of evidence for New Kingdom gold-processing on the eastern side of the island of Mograt, which is situated within this bend (Klemm, forthcoming). Close monitoring or protection of the rock boundary may not have been regarded as either feasible or necessary, its powerful imprecations being designed to ensure compliance in just such an environment: where human jurisdiction could not easily be enforced (cf. Assmann 1992). Unlike its equivalent in the north, which has never been located and is probably destroyed, this boundary of the south has survived in remarkably good state. Over three and a half thousand years, time and climate have taken their toll of the rock, but man has shown it unusual forbearance, a respect, it should be said, still accorded to it by the modern-day inhabitants of the region.



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Abbreviations

- Urk. iv = *Urkunden der 18. Dynastie*, Leipzig, 1906-1909, K. Sethe (ed.), and Berlin, 1955-58, W. Helck (ed.).
- Wb. = *Wörterbuch der ägyptischen Sprache*, 7 vols, Leipzig, 1925-1950, A. Erman and H. Grapow (eds).



Plate XXVII. Kurgus; view of the Hagr el-Merwa, from the east, shortly after dawn.



Plate XXVIII. Kurgus; view of the north-east face of the Hagr el-Merwa.

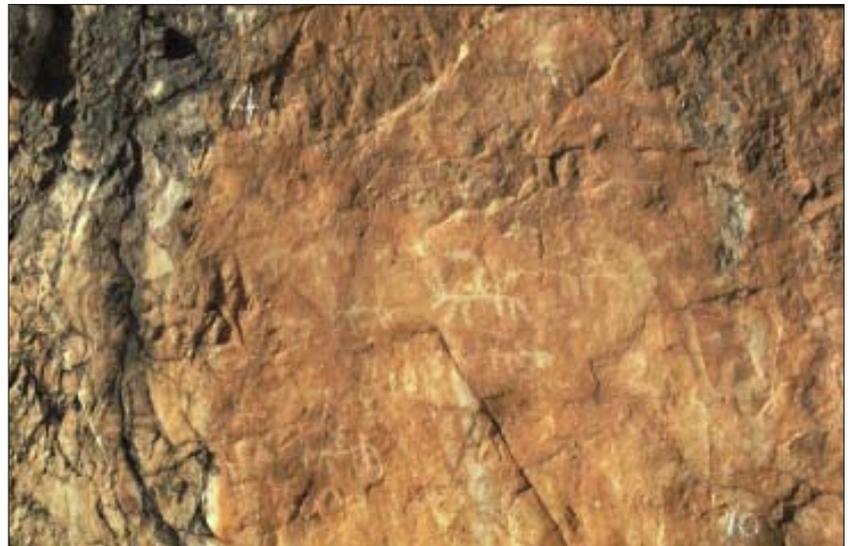


*Plate XXIX.
Kurgus; view of the
south-west face of
the Hagr el-Merwa.*



*Plate XXX. Kurgus; detail
of Thutmose I stela showing
seated figure of Amun-Ra
surmounting four lines of
inscription.*

*Plate XXXI. Kurgus;
lion of Thutmose I, head
weathered and body
decorated with figures of
later date.*



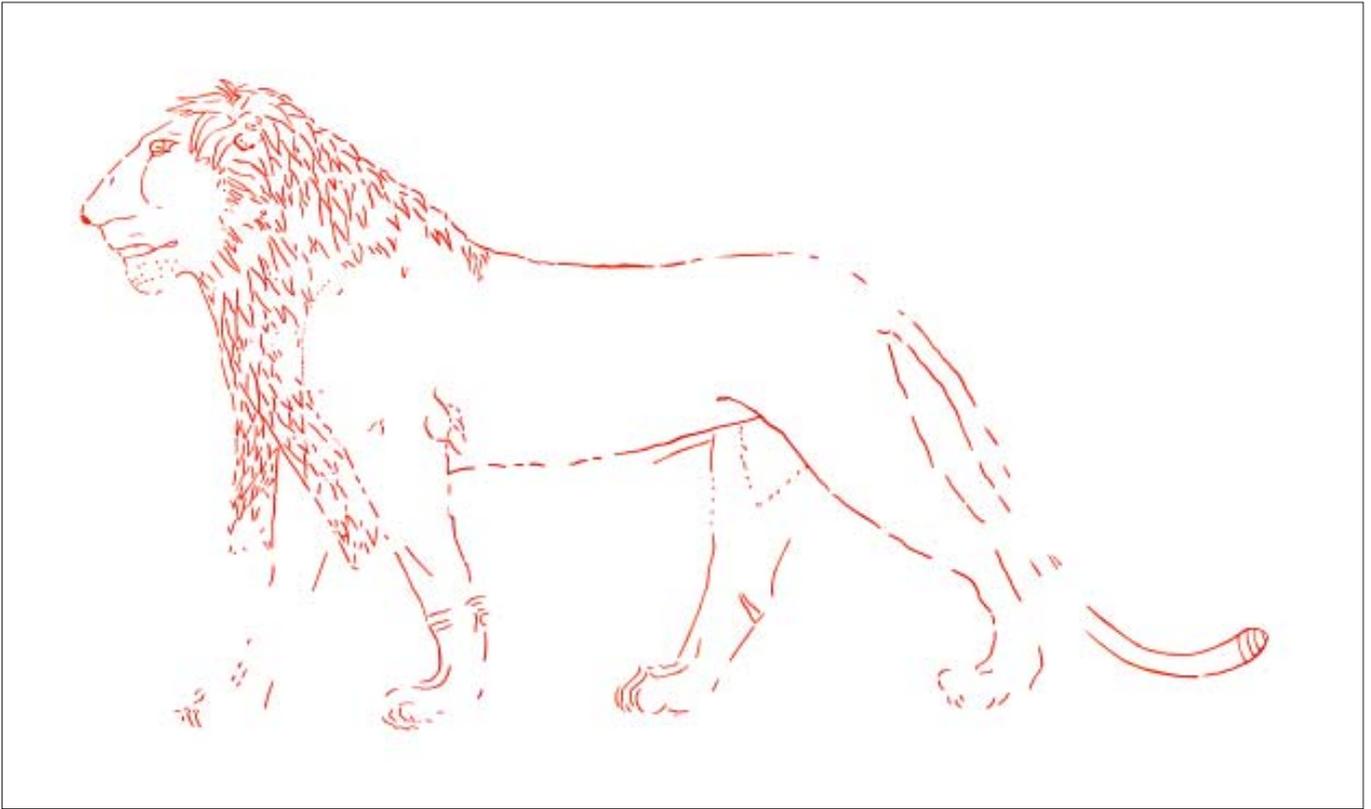


Plate XXXII. Kurgus; lion of Thutmose III.



*Plate XXXIII.
Kurgus; group of
private inscriptions
on north-east face.*



*Plate XXXIV.
Kurgus; inscription
of Royal Scribe,
Djebutymose.*



Plate XXXV. Kurgus; inscriptions of the officials Wia and Horiu.



Plate XXXVI. Kurgus; inscription of Wab-priest of Ra, Senhotep.



*Plate XXXVII.
Kurgus; inscription
of Follower of the
King, Abmose.*



*Plate XXXVIII.
Kurgus; area of
decoration on
south-west face.*

*Plate. XXXIX.
Kurgus; detail of
decoration on south-
west face including
figure of Nubian
captive and cartouche
of a princess.*



*Plate XL. Kurgus;
inscriptions and
animal-figures on
south-west face.*