

SUDAN & NUBIA

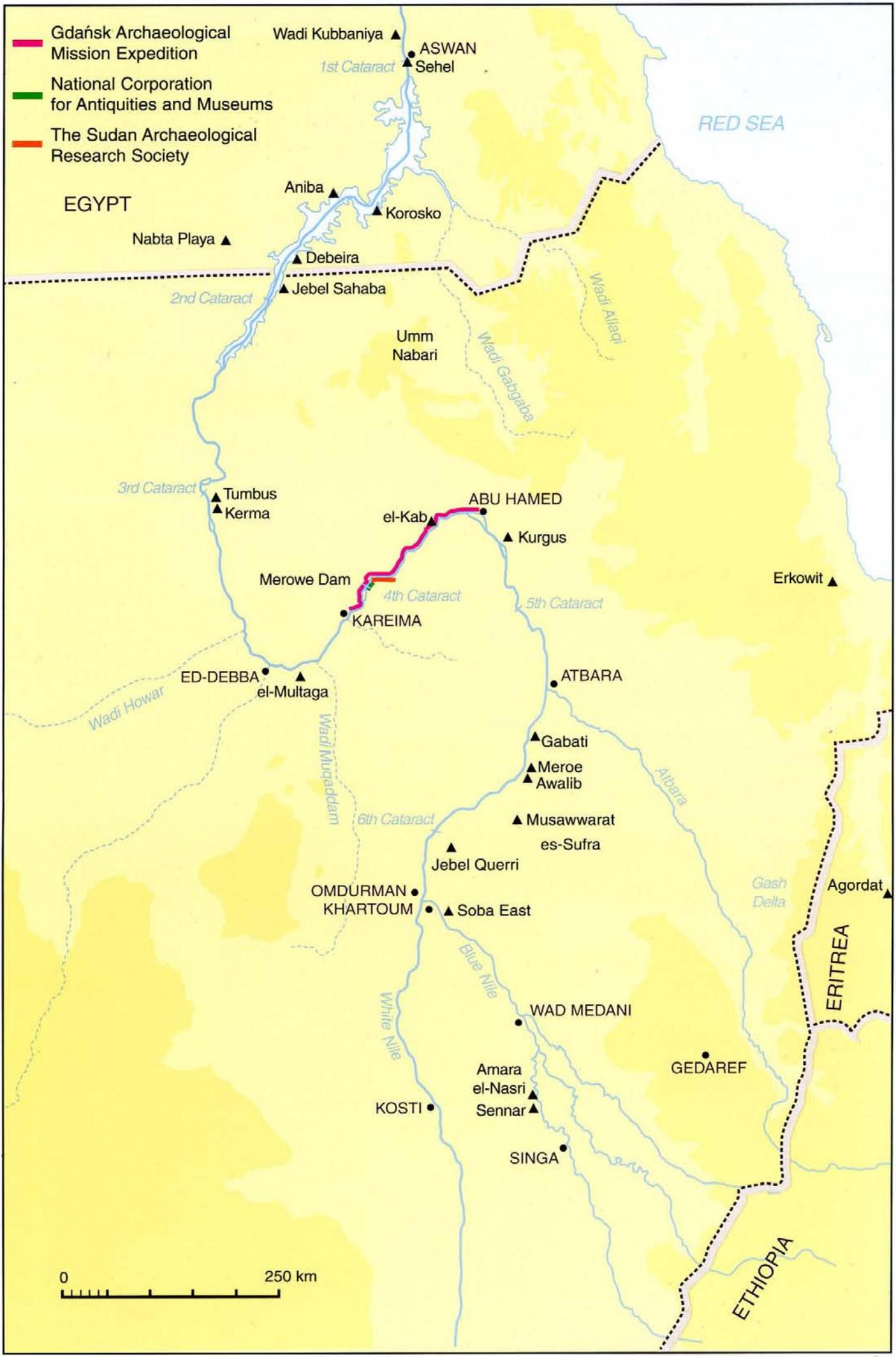
The Sudan Archaeological Research Society



Bulletin No. 7

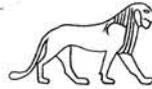
2003





SUDAN & NUBIA

The Sudan Archaeological Research Society



Bulletin No. 7 2003

Contents

Introduction

Vivian Davies

1

Kirwan Memorial Lecture

Forty Years of Archaeological Research
in Sudanese and Egyptian Nubia

Fred Wendorf

2

The Merowe Dam Archaeological Salvage Project

Merowe Dam Archaeological Salvage Project (MDASP)

Salah Mohamed Ahmed

11

Archaeological Survey on the Right Bank of the Nile
between Karima and Abu Hamed: a brief overview

Henryk Paner

15

Old Kush in the Fourth Cataract Region

Elżbieta Kołosowska, Mahmoud el-Tayeb and Henryk Paner

21

The Amri to Kirbekan Survey: the 2002-2003 Season

Derek A. Welsby

26

Survey and Excavation at el-Multaga, a Resettlement
Area related to the Construction of the Merowe
Dam: preliminary results

Francis Geus and Yves Lecoq

33

Reports

The Egyptian Conquest and Administration of Nubia
during the New Kingdom: the testimony of the
Sehel rock-inscriptions

Annie Gasse and Vincent Rondot

40

Pharaonic Inscriptions along the Eastern Desert
Routes in Sudan

Alfredo and Angelo Castiglioni

47

Kush in Egypt: a new historical inscription

Vivian Davies

52

Kurgus 2002: the inscriptions and rock-drawings

Vivian Davies

55

Kurgus 2002: report on the archaeological work

Isabella Welsby Sjöström

58

Erkowitz, a Neolithic Site in the Red Sea Hills (Sudan):
interim report on the pottery

Ghanim Wabida and Abdelrahim M. Khabir

62

Painted Plaster Murals from Meroe Townsite

Rebecca Bradley

66

New Investigations into the Water Supply at

Musawwarat es-Sufra: results from the 2002 season

Thomas Scheibner

71

The Work of the Gdańsk Archaeological Museum

Expedition in the Sudan

Zbigniew Borowski

81

An Archaeological Exploration of the Blue Nile
in January-February 2000

Victor M. Fernández

85

The Blue Nile Archaeological Salvage Project:

Amara el-Nasri

Abdel Rahman Ali Mohamed

91

Miscellaneous

List of Archaeological Mission Activities in Sudan
between 1934 and 1984

Salah Omer Elsadig

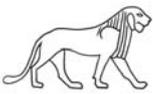
98

Front Cover: Sehel Island: rock-inscriptions of Viceroys of Kush.

Introduction

Vivian Davies

The Society's two major events of the year, the results of which are published here - the Kirwan Memorial Lecture delivered in October, 2002, and the colloquium on recent fieldwork held in May, 2003 - were extremely well attended. The colloquium incorporated a special session, led by Dr. Salah Mohamed Ahmed, NCAM Director of Excavations, on the Merowe Dam salvage project. The response has been encouraging. Since the colloquium, several organisations have applied for concessions, joining the existing four missions of Gdańsk, NCAM, the French Unit and SARS. Many more are still needed. Interested parties should contact Dr Salah at NCAM tel./fax. 249 11 786784 or the International Society for Nubian Studies c/o dwelsby@thebritishmuseum.ac.uk.



Kush in Egypt: a new historical inscription

Vivian Davies

In addition to participating in the project at Kurgus in the Sudan (this volume), the British Museum has been carrying out an epigraphic and conservation survey of decorated tombs in the region of Edfu in Upper Egypt (Figure 1), a project carried out in collaboration with the Supreme Council of Antiquities of Egypt.¹ Our current focus is the tomb of the Governor Sobeknakht at Elkab (no. 10). This is a key monument, being a rare example of a well-preserved, finished tomb of the 17th Dynasty, but despite its importance

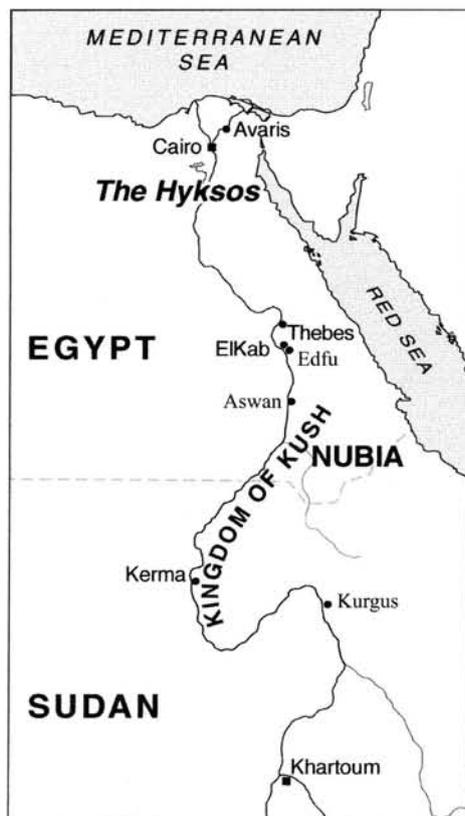


Figure 1. Map of Egypt and Nubia.

¹ For permission to carry out the project, we are indebted to Dr Zahi Hawass, Secretary-General of the Supreme Council of Antiquities of Egypt, and his colleagues on the Permanent Committee of the SCA. Much assistance has been provided by the SCA staff in the Edfu Inspectorate, under the direction of Fathy Abou Zeid. Our inspector during the last season (Feb. 2003) was Zanaan Noubi Abdel Salaam, who did a great deal to facilitate our work. We are also grateful for the co-operation of Dr Luc Limme, Director of the Belgian Archaeological Expedition to Elkab. A brief notice of the new discovery with a full list of team-members and acknowledgements is published in Davies 2003a. A version, in French, of the present paper will appear in Davies 2003c. For preliminary reports of the work on the tomb of Sobeknakht, see Davies 2003b and a future issue of *Annales du Service*.

only parts of it have ever been published and these rather inadequately.²

The tomb is rock-cut, its superstructure consisting of two internal chambers. The innermost serves to give access to the burial shaft and substructure. The outermost, the cult-chapel, is richly decorated throughout with scenes and inscriptions done in paint and sunk relief, many of them now obscured by soot accumulated over the centuries. In advance of recording the decoration in detail, we have begun a programme of cleaning the walls. This is still in progress but it has already produced (in February 2003) an important result – the uncovering of a new biographical inscription, containing an account of an attack on Egypt by the Kingdom of Kush and a group of allies. It would be premature to attempt a full publication and commentary of the text at this point, as details remain to be clarified, but in view of its great interest and relevance to the subject matter of *Sudan & Nubia*, I give here a preliminary account, with emphasis on the opening lines, which contain a number of significant toponyms.

The inscription is located in an area that was previously covered by a layer of soot – the right thickness of the doorway leading from the outer to the inner chamber of the tomb (Colour plate XXXII). It is a substantial text consisting of 22 horizontal lines of hieroglyphs, inscribed in red paint, reading from right to left. The indications are that it was a late addition to the tomb's decorative programme. Full study of the text, parts of which are missing, has just begun and much is still to be understood, but the sequence of events described is reasonably clear. It takes the form of an address to the living by Sobeknakht, 'Listen you, who are alive upon earth', which begins with a report of the invasion: '[Vile?] Kush came, aroused³ along his length, he having stirred up⁴ the tribes of Wawat (Lower Nubia), the island-[dwellers?]⁵ of Khenthennefer⁶ (Upper Nubia), Pwnt and the Medjaw...' (Figure 2). The territory affected appears to have been substantial, extending even 'into the neighbourhood of the Asiatics' (possibly a reference to the Hyksos). In scale, we are told, the event is 'unprecedented since the time of the god.' The narrative continues with an account of Sobeknakht's role in the crisis. It appears that Elkab was threatened, the 'enclosure-wall of Nekheb being destroyed'. There follows a mustering of arms 'to fight the Nubians', and then a puni-

² See Tylor 1896. Cf. Porter and Moss 1937, 184-5, and recently Davies 2001, 120-122, colour pls 44-5.

³ *fg3* here is probably the same verb as *fk3/fg3* (Hannig 1995, 307).

⁴ For *snhp*, see *Wb.* 4, 167-8 (I), and Hannig 1995, 721.

⁵ A compound expression ending in *nbwt*, the latter meaning here perhaps 'islands'. It is tempting to restore a variant of *h3h-nbwt* (*Wb.* 3, 11; Vandersleyen, 1971, 154ff.; Hannig 1995, 502). This would be a rare case of the term referring to peoples located to the south of Egypt, as opposed to the north. It is worth noting that numerous and often substantial inhabited islands are a feature of the riverine geography of Nubia/Sudan (Sai, Tombos, Tabo, Mograt, to name only a few).

⁶ This example is now possibly the earliest certain attestation of this toponym (see Vandersleyen 1971, 64; Habachi 1972, 39-40, n. o; Redford 1997, 9 and 28, n. 77).

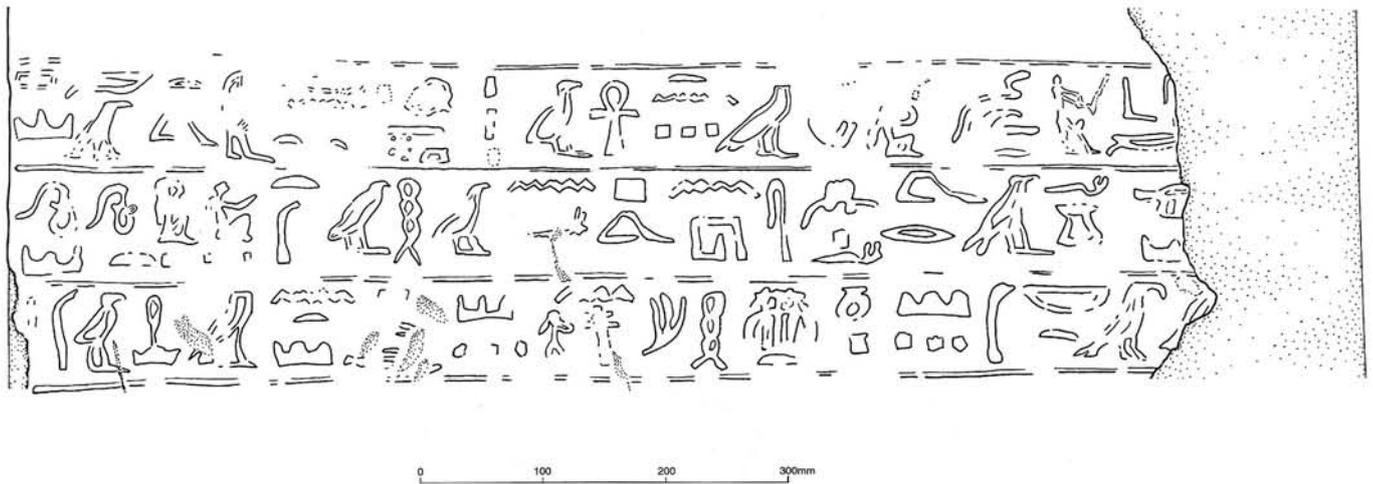


Figure 2. Opening lines of the new inscription (preliminary copy by Vivian Davies and Marcel Marée).

tive expedition southwards. The ‘might of the Great One, Nekhbet,’ the goddess of Nekheh, is prominent. She is ‘strong of heart against the Nubians, they being burnt through fire’, while the ‘[chie]f(s)(?) of the nomads fall(s) through the blast (?) of her flame.’ The Egyptian king (who is unidentified) then causes Sobeknakht much joy ‘on account of the coming of his Person...to repel the looters’ following which ‘bodies become swollen’. There is a gathering together of the population including all the dignitaries, an occasion when ‘love of [the goddess] coursed through his (the king’s) body’. As a consequence a command is issued ‘to make a monument in the temple of his [moth]er Nekhbet, to make for her a sacred barque anew, worked in electrum’ (Colour plate XXXIII).⁷ The text ends with the statement that Sobeknakht was in charge of this work, since the king recognized his qualities.

It is already well known that during the Hyksos Period, when Egypt was divided, the Kingdom of Kush, based at Kerma in Upper Nubia just south of the 3rd Cataract (now part of northern Sudan) (Figure 1), had extended its power northwards, controlling the Nubian Nile Valley up to Egypt’s southern border at Aswan, a state of affairs reflected in the Kamose stela and other sources of the period.⁸ It is now evident, from the new text, that Kush’s power and reach were much greater than has previously been realized: that it was capable of organizing a substantial military force, with allies

drawn from a wide geographical area (including, it would seem, the land of Pwnt),⁹ a force that did not simply threaten Aswan but actually penetrated deep into Upper Egypt (perhaps sweeping in through desert routes), possibly right up to the limits of Hyksos control.

The full implications of this new information remain of course to be worked out and it is certainly far too soon for detailed conclusions. However, one interesting question on which the text appears to have obvious bearing concerns the origin of the Egyptian material deposited in the royal tumuli and associated funerary chapels at Kerma. These great tumuli, the burial-places of the kings of Kush, date to the Classic Kerma Period, more or less contemporary with the Second Intermediate Period/17th Dynasty/very early 18th Dynasty in Egypt.¹⁰ As is well known, they contained a large number of Egyptian objects, including statues and stelae, many of which can be linked by inscription to sites in Egypt.¹¹ The reason for their presence at Kerma has been a matter of long debate. In an excellent, recent review of the subject, Dominique Valbelle assessed the various hypotheses and noted that one scenario ‘would imply a series of direct incursions of Kushite troops into all the sites mentioned in the

be argued that Pwnt is unlikely to have been hugely distant from Kush. On the close relationship between Pwnt and the Medjaw, see, for example, Giuliani 1998, 1, ‘The Medja were traditionally the ones who crossed this territory [Eastern Desert to the Red Sea]...and provided a link between the Nile Valley and the country of Punt’.

¹⁰ See Bonnet 1997, 89ff., and Bonnet 2000, 8 and passim.

¹¹ Reisner 1923, 505-31; Porter and Moss 1952, 175-80; see now Valbelle 1998. It may be possible to link the ‘Governor, Hereditary Prince, of Nekhen, Sobeknakht’ mentioned on a vessel found in Tumulus KIII (Khartoum 1087; Reisner 1923, 523, fig. 344, no. 46, 524, no. 46; Porter and Moss 1952, 178; Hintze and Hintze 1967, 12, no. 46; Edel 1980, 42, no. 4 [my thanks to Dr Detlef Franke for this reference]; Ryholt 1997, 162, n. 591), with one of the similarly titled Sobeknakhts of our tomb no. 10 at Elkab, especially as Nekhen and Nekheh were twin-towns and officials from Nekhen figure prominently in the tomb. However, the case remains to be made and will need to wait on a fresh study of the vessel’s inscription and a complete prosopographical record of Sobeknakht’s tomb.

⁷ It is unclear whether we are to understand here that the existing barque had been lost (or damaged/defiled) during the assault on the town. It is possible that the latter barque is the one represented on the barque-shrine erected in the temple of Nekhbet by Sobekhotep III (see Eder 2002, 37-8, 207-8, taf. 9-11, 219, taf. 24, 221, taf. 26, 261, taf. 65b, 262, taf. 66, and 263, taf. 67). To judge from the hieroglyph in the new inscription, the replacement barque was of a different form.

⁸ Vandersleyen 1995, 202-3.

⁹ This is an interesting new example of the toponym, which will need to be drawn into the continuing debate on the location of the land of Pwnt (recent important contributions include Kitchen 1999 and Meeks 2002). If Pwnt was part of a military alliance comprising Kush and what appear to be the latter’s Nubian and desert neighbours, it could



inscriptions preserved on the Kerma statues: i.e. as far north as Choteb and Assiut in Middle Egypt, if not Memphis. Such an epic vision is not completely impossible, but remains to be demonstrated'.¹²

In Sobeknakht's inscription we now have direct testimony that one such Kushite 'incursion' did actually take place and on a substantial, if not epic, scale; moreover, the invading troops are referred to in one part of the text as 'looters' (*w3yww*).¹³ It thus becomes all the more possible that the Egyptian objects at Kerma, or at least a significant proportion of them, are indeed to be understood as trophies of (periodic?) invasion, secured by force of arms directly from tombs and temples at sites throughout Egypt.¹⁴ Buried with the Kushite kings, they would have served perhaps as symbols of the Kushites' eternal domination over the traditional enemy – an unfamiliar world-view, directly the reverse of that of the Egyptians to which we are more accustomed, but one which may actually reflect something of the political and military reality of a period when, in the words of Charles Bonnet, 'The kingdom of Kerma is without doubt the prominent civilisation of the Valley of the Nile'.¹⁵

Bibliography

- Bonnet, C. 1991. 'Upper Nubia from 3000 to 1000 BC', in W. V. Davies (ed.), *Egypt and Africa, Nubia from Prehistory to Islam*. London, 112-17.
- Bonnet, C. 1997. 'The Kingdom of Kerma', in D. Wildung (ed.), *Sudan, Ancient Kingdoms of the Nile*. Paris/New York, 89-95.
- Bonnet, C. 2000. *Mission archéologique de l'Université de Genève à Kerma (Soudan). Édifices et rites funéraires à Kerma*. Paris.
- Davies, W. V. 2001. 'The dynastic tombs at Hierakonpolis: the lower group and the artist Sedjemnetjeru' in W. V. Davies (ed.), *Colour and Painting in Ancient Egypt*. London, 113-25.
- Davies, V. 2003a. 'Sobeknakht's Hidden Treasure', *British Museum Magazine* 46, 18-19.
- Davies, V. 2003b. 'Sobeknakht of Elkab and the coming of Kush', *Egyptian Archaeology* 23, 3-6.
- Davies, W. V. 2003c. 'Kouch en Égypte : Une nouvelle inscription historique à El-Kab', *Bulletin de la Société Française d'Égyptologie* 157 (in press).

¹² Valbelle 1998, 6.

¹³ *Wb.* 1, 171, 13; Hannig 1995, 132; cf. van den Boorn 1988, 257-9; Franke 1994, 86, with n. 285.

¹⁴ With consequent disruption of cultic activity, as possibly witnessed, for example, in the case of the cult of Heqaib in Elephantine, which appears to have been discontinued during the early part of the 17th Dynasty (Franke 1994, 86). Objects originally from Elephantine have been found at Kerma; see, for example, parts of a figure of King Khahetepre Sobekhotep in Tumulus KX: Wildung 1997, 116, no. 128; Ryholt 1997, 77; Ryholt 1998, 31ff.; Eder 2000, 23, n. 49; cf. Franke 1994, 61, with n. 196, 71, n. 243, 75 and 117, with n. 254. If Ryholt's contention is correct that the 'all-wrecking storm' of Ahmose's *Unwetterstele* is a metaphor for foreign invasion and its aftermath (Ryholt 1997, 144-47), then it is worth considering whether the ruinous state of Egyptian tombs and temples there described may have been as much the result of Kushite as Hyksos intervention. For a discussion of the Hyksos looting and transportation of Egyptian monuments, see Ryholt 1997, 133-4, n. 471, 139-40, n. 500, and 143-48.

¹⁵ Bonnet 1991, 114.

- Edel, E. 1980. 'Der älteste Beleg für den Titel *h3ty-p't* und sein Weiterleben bis in die römische Zeit hinein', *Serapis* 6, 41-6.
- Eder, C. 2000. 'Einige Bemerkungen zum Chnum-Tempel des Mittleren Reiches auf Elephantine', *Göttinger Mitteilungen* 178, 5-29.
- Eder, C. 2002. *Elkab VII. Die Barkenkapelle des Königs Sobekhotep III in Elkab. Beiträge zur Bautätigkeit der 13. und 17. Dynastie an den Göttertempeln Ägyptens*. Turnhout.
- Franke, D. 1994. *Das Heiligtum des Heqaib auf Elephantine. Geschichte eines Provinzheiligtums im Mittleren Reich*. Heidelberg.
- Giuliani, S. 1998. *Some Cultural Aspects of the Medja of the Oriental Desert*. <http://www.nubianstudies98.com/giuliani.pdf>
- Habachi, L. 1972. *The Second Stela of Kamose and his Struggle against the Hyksos Ruler and his Capital*. Glückstadt.
- Hannig, R. 1995. *Grosses Handwörterbuch Ägyptisch-Deutsch (2800-950 v. Chr.)*. Mainz.
- Hintze, F. and U. Hintze 1967. *Alte Kulturen im Sudan*. Munich.
- Kitchin, K. 1999. 'Further Thoughts on Punt and its Neighbours', in A. Leahy and J. Tait (eds), *Studies on Ancient Egypt in Honour of H. S. Smith*. London, 173-8.
- Meeks, D. 2002. 'Coptos et les Chemins de Pount', *Topoi*, Suppl. 3, 267-335.
- Porter, B. and R. L. B. Moss 1937. *Topographical Bibliography of Ancient Egyptian Hieroglyphic Texts, Reliefs, and Paintings, V. Upper Egypt: Sites*. Oxford.
- Porter, B. and R. L. B. Moss 1952. *Topographical Bibliography of Ancient Egyptian Hieroglyphic Texts, Reliefs, and Paintings, VII. Nubia, the Deserts, and Outside Egypt*. Oxford.
- Redford, D. B. 1997. 'Textual Sources for the Hyksos Period', in E. D. Oren (ed.), *The Hyksos: New Historical and Archaeological Perspectives*. Philadelphia.
- Reisner, G. 1923. *Harvard African Studies VI. Excavations at Kerma IV-V*. Cambridge, Mass.
- Ryholt, K. 1997. *The Political Situation in Egypt during the Second Intermediate Period, c. 1800-1550 B.C.* Copenhagen.
- Ryholt, K. 1998. 'A statuette of Sobkhotep I from Kerma Tumulus X', *CRIPPEL* 19, 31-33.
- Tylor, J. J. 1896. *Wall Drawings and Monuments of El Kab. The Tomb of Sebeknebt*. London.
- Valbelle, D. 1998. *The Cultural Significance of Iconographic and Epigraphic Data found in the Kingdom of Kerma*. <http://www.nubianstudies98.com/valbelle.pdf>
- van den Boorn, G. P. F. 1988. *The Duties of the Vizier. Civil Administration in the Early New Kingdom*. London.
- Vandersleyen, C. 1971. *Les guerres d'Amosis, fondateur de la XVIIIe Dynastie*. Brussels.
- Vandersleyen, C. 1995. *L'Égypte et la vallée du Nil, 2, De la fin de L'Ancien Empire à la fin du Nouvel Empire*. Paris.
- Wildung, D. (ed.) 1997. *Sudan. Ancient Kingdoms of the Nile*. Paris/New York.

Abbreviation

- Wb.* = *Wörterbuch der ägyptischen Sprache*. 7 vols. Leipzig, 1925-1950. A. Erman and H. Grapow (eds).



Colour plate XXXII. Elkab (Egypt)

Conservation and recording in progress in the tomb of Sobeknakht: from left to right, Lamia El-Hadidy, Iain Ralston, and Marcel Marée. The new inscription is located on the right thickness of the central doorway, shown here being examined by Iain Ralston.



Colour plate XXXIII. Elkab. A passage from Sobeknakht's biographical inscription recounting the king's granting of a new sacred barque for the temple of the goddess Nekhbet.