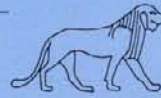


SUDAN & NUBIA

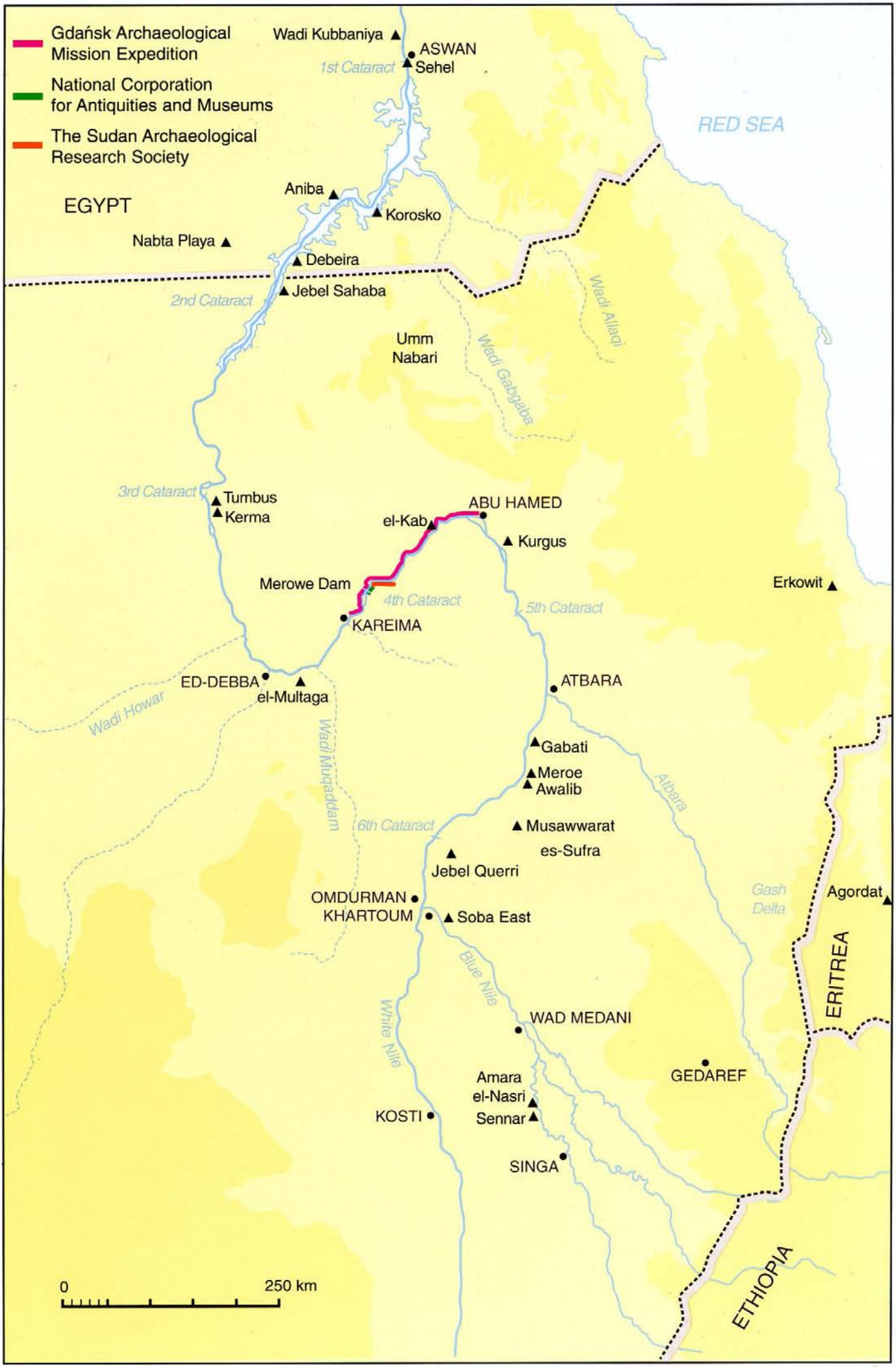
The Sudan Archaeological Research Society



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SUDAN & NUBIA

The Sudan Archaeological Research Society



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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.

Kurgus 2002: the inscriptions and rock-drawings

Vivian Davies

A third season of work, organised by the British Museum and SARS, was carried out at Kurgus from 27 October to 14 November 2002 (on the 1998 and 2000 seasons, see Davies 1998; Welsby Sjöström 1998; Davies 2001 and Welsby Sjöström 2001; also now Welsby and Davies [eds] 2002 and Davies 2003).¹ The team consisted of Vivian Davies (co-director), Isabella Welsby Sjöström (co-director), Dave Hooker, Margaret Judd, Mohammed Faroug, Ilona Regulski and Jake Wilson. Isabella Welsby Sjöström reports below on the archaeological survey and excavations. I present here briefly the main results of the epigraphic work on the Hagr el-Merwa (KRG1), in which I was assisted by Ilona Regulski and Jake Wilson.²

The Royal Tableaux

Steady progress was made in checking and collating our record of the two tableaux of kings Thutmose I and III respectively, the Hagr el-Merwa's major area of decoration, located at the southern end of its north-east face (Davies 2001, 48, fig. 3, col. pls xxvii-xxviii), the side which faces the desert (Colour plate XXXIV). One significant outcome is a corrected reading of the verb at the top of the second column of the historical inscription of Thutmose III (Figure 1). It is not *šmw* (a hapax), as previously thought, but *nm*, 'return' etc (*Wb.* 1, 188, 13ff; Hannig 1995, 142), which makes good sense in the context: 'since that my Person returned to the boundary of the north and (to the boundary) of the south...'. The discovery of earlier, indigenous rock-drawings (see below) has led to clarification of certain other details. For example, the puzzling curved protrusions between the horns of the Thutmose I bull-figure (Davies 2001, 50-2, fig. 5) are now explicable as horns belonging to an earlier, smaller drawing of cattle, otherwise obliterated by the Thutmose I figure.

¹ For permission to carry out the work, we are very grateful to Mr Hassan Hussein Idriss, Director General of the National Corporation of Antiquities and Museums of the Sudan and his senior colleagues in NCAM. Our Inspector on site was Mohammed Faroug, who proved to be extremely helpful in all matters and participated fully in the archaeological work. We much appreciate also the hospitality of Motasim Farah el-Sheikh and his family at Kurgus, who, once again, very kindly made their house available to us.

² The drawings reproduced here as Figures 2-3 and 5-6 are the work of Ms Regulski. Figure 4, still a preliminary copy, was produced by the writer and Ms Regulski. For help in preparing illustrations for publication, we are indebted to Claire Thorne and staff of the British Museum's Photographic Department. The aerial photograph published here as Colour plate XXXIV was taken by Isabella Welsby Sjöström during a flight over Kurgus undertaken in February 2003 and organised by Dr Bogdan Żurawski. Gratitude is due to both.

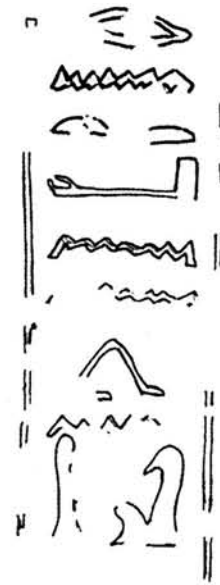


Figure 1. Historical inscription of Thutmose III, detail. (scale 1:4).

The Private Inscriptions

Improved copies were also made of a number of the private inscriptions (especially those in faded red paint) situated on the same face, to the north of the royal matter. Among these is one belonging to 'Royal Scribe, Djehutymose'. When first identified (Davies 2001, 54, fig. 11, and 56, col. pl. xxxiv), this inscription had been partly obscured by bird-lime, a very hard accretion, which we were unable to remove but which, fortunately, over time has been scoured away by the elements, so that it can now be seen more or less in its entirety (Figure 2). Interesting here is the occurrence of the hieroglyph representing a woman giving birth or a variant thereof (Gardiner 1957, 448, B4) to write the element *ms*, an unusual usage in a name. Copied in full for the first time is a group of four columns (Figure 3), in varying states of preservation, the first of which, reading from left to right, belongs interestingly to a charioteer (*snny*):

- i) 'Charioteer of His Person, Nebaw (?)'
- ii) 'Follower of his lord in all difficult places, Amenhotep'
- iii) '[Follower] of his Lord in every place, Sapaïr'
- iv) [Traces of red paint only].

All of the above inscriptions are early 18th Dynasty in date and can probably be assigned, on a number of grounds, not least location, to personnel attached to the entourage of Thutmose I – an issue best left for detailed consideration until all the prosopographical evidence has been collected.

Viceroy of Kush

Among the season's most important results was the reading of the names of two Viceroys. Lightly hammered into the rock, in relatively small hieroglyphs, they occur together just above and to the left of the earlier, large inscription of the 'Priest of Amun, Herald, Iry', again on the north-east face



Figure 2. Inscription of the Royal Scribe, Djebutymose.

(Davies 1998, 29, col. pl. xxiv; Figure 4). One (on the left) is the ‘King’s son, overseer of southern foreign lands, Neḥy’, a viceroy of Thutmose III, the other is the ‘King’s son, [title effaced], Setau’, a viceroy of Ramesses II (Habachi 1980, 631-4, nos 8 and 20). Setau evidently wished his name to be



Figure 4. The titles and names of two Viceroys.

closely associated with that of his predecessor, in an interesting act of homage. So as to fit the inscription into the available space, his name is slightly displaced, and it encroaches a little on Neḥy’s second title. The presence of Neḥy’s name on the Hagr el-Merwa indicates that he must still have been in office in Year 33 of Thutmose III, the *terminus post quem* for the latter’s expedition to the southern boundary (Davies 2001, 52). Previously, his highest-attested date was Year 25 (Habachi 1980, 631-2, no. 8). The occurrence of Setau’s name can possibly be associated with an historical inscription (now very fragmentary) located elsewhere on the rock, which is dated to Year 44, very probably of Ramesses II (Davies 2001, 51, fig. 6, and 53). Setau is known from other sources to have been active in Nubia in Year 44, among other things leading what appears to have been a military expedition to the lands of Irem and Ikati (O’Connor 1987, 131; Hein 1991, 19 and 93; cf. Kitchen 1999, 177; Kitchen 2000, 64). His visit to the Hagr el-Merwa may well have taken place during the course of that campaign.

Rock-Drawings

The presence on the Hagr el-Merwa of indigenous rock-drawings was noted in the last report, when it was stated that ‘their exact relationship to the hieroglyphic inscriptions requires further investigation’ (Davies 2001, 57, col. pl. xl). A detailed survey has now shown that there are many more such drawings than we had previously suspected (amounting to a substantial corpus) and that, although their exact date remains to be determined, they certainly predate the



Figure 3. Four columns of inscription giving the titles and names of various followers of the king.

early 18th Dynasty hieroglyphs.³ The figures are mainly of animals, especially cattle, but humans, who look like hunters, are also included (Figures 5-6; Colour plate XXXV). They are found sporadically along the entire length of the north-east face and in a restricted area on the opposite face, just like the hieroglyphs. They were produced mostly by pecking or hammering, with some additionally decorated in red paint. Others are done wholly in red paint. Many are now difficult to see, as they are weathered and/or obscured by the later Egyptian decoration, which has often been deliberately placed over them. One clear example of the latter process, on the south-west face, is the name 'Menkhperasonb' intruding onto a fine ibex-figure (Figure 5). Another, on the opposite face, is the above-mentioned bull-figure of Thutmose I, which almost entirely covers an earlier cattle-drawing.

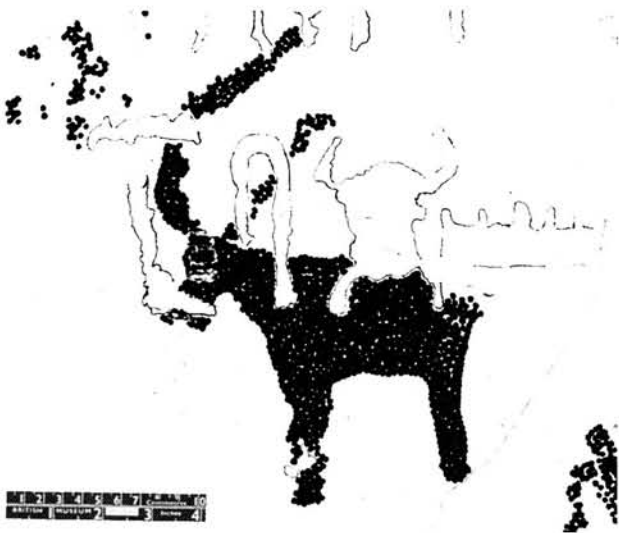


Figure 5. Hieroglyphs inscribed over indigenous rock-art.

The recording of the rock-art has now become a major project in its own right and will take some considerable time, at least one more season, to complete (as will the copying of the remaining Egyptian material). The recognition of the presence of this art on the Hagr el-Merwa constitutes potentially an important advance in understanding of the rock's original significance both for the local population and for the Egyptians. We may perhaps surmise that the Hagr el-Merwa, a highly conspicuous feature of the regional landscape, was a sacred place, of great symbolic importance, for the Nubian tribes of the area, possibly over a long period of time. With the rock seen in these terms, as a focal point of native culture, it becomes understandable why the conquering Egyptians should have sought it out. Placing their own hieroglyphs and figures directly over the indigenous matter was a powerful act of both suppression and appropriation, visible testimony of the new political and cosmic order.

³With the single exception of a group of quadruped-and-rider figures, which date to long after the Pharaonic Period (Davies 2001, 51-2, fig. 6).



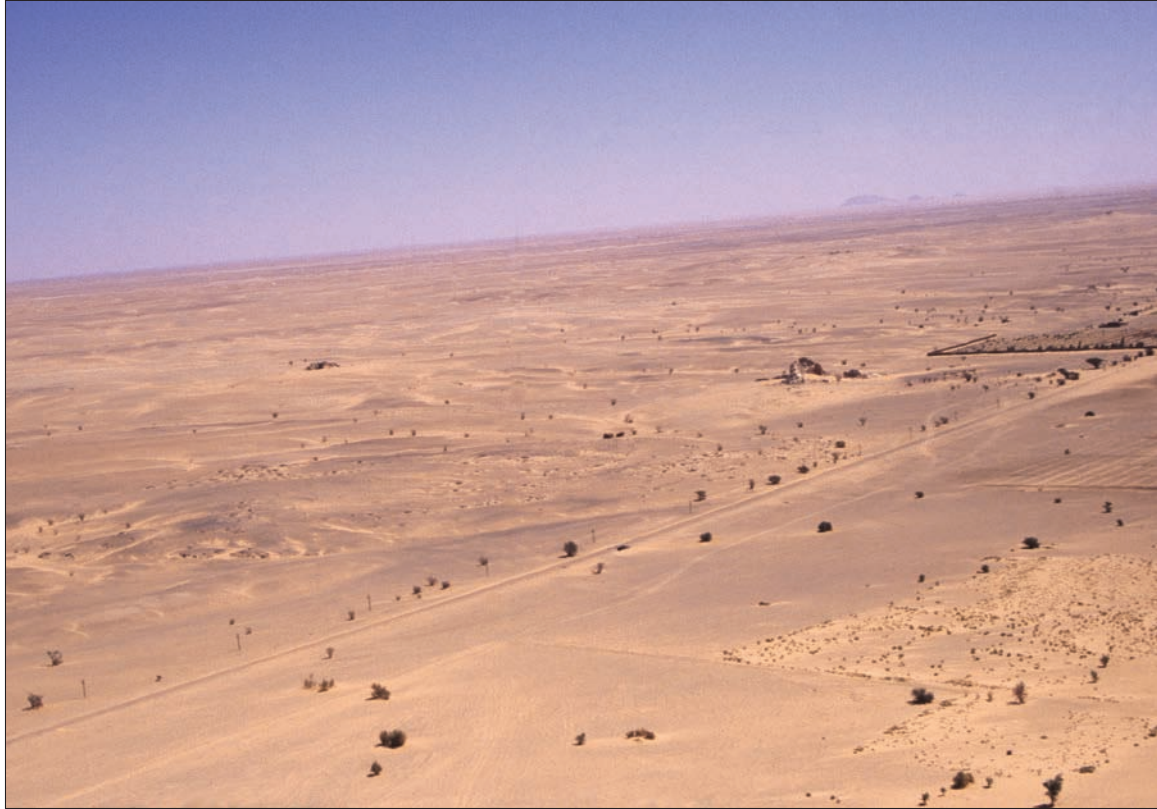
Figure 6. Rock-drawing of a hunter(?) and cattle.

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Abbreviation

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



Colour plate XXXIV. Kurgus. Aerial view, from the north west, of the Hagr el-Merwa, KRG1 (on the right, beyond the railway, near to the tongue of cultivation), and the cemetery KRG3 (on the left, beyond the railway).



Colour plate XXXV. Kurgus. Ilona Regulski recording a group of rock-drawings on the Hagr el-Merwa.