



SOCIÉTÉ DES CULTURES NUBIENNES

POUR EN SAVOIR PLUS ...

ANTIQUITY

ANNEXE 1

The Egyptians were required to get permission from the populations of the C-Group to penetrate into Lower Nubia and reach the land of Yam, probably the kingdom of Kerma. Texts from the tombs at Qubbwet el-Hawa (west bank at Aswan) mention the expeditions of chiefs of mission such as Mekhu, Sabni, Herkhuf and their apprehension vis-à-vis the warlike valour of the C-Group.

The fall of the Egyptian Old Kingdom frees the C-Group from the raids and the Egyptian expeditions but the contacts are maintained and motivated by the need of the independent governors of the central power to engage mercenaries.

Nevertheless, the Nubian world does not seem to be cut off from the emergence of the Egyptian Middle Kingdom. One of the wives of Mentuhotep II (2064-2013 BC - XI Dynasty) is thought to have come from the South; a fragment of a relief found in the funerary temple of the king at Deir el-Bahri, shows a queen with African hair and facial features. In the Valley of the Kings an archer of Mentuhotep has been discovered, wearing on his left wrist the armband of his office. The XII Dynasty begins with the reign of Amenemhat, the son of a woman of T3-sty, born in Khen-Nekhen, the first nome of Egypt, whose main town is Elephantine. It is during this transfer of power that we should probably place, according to Claude Vandersleyen, *'some Nubian pharaohs whose names have the same structure as those at the end of the XI Dynasty, momentary rivals who did not succeed in imposing themselves'*.

ANNEXE 2

The first graves are made up of a shaft, of a superstructure in dry stone and gravel. Later the graves become rectangular, with brick or dressed stone walls, covered by great slabs; in the final phase, they are vaulted. A chapel is attached to a tumulus that could measure up to 16m in diameter. Bucrania are arranged near the inhumation. In fact, cattle were sacrificed during the funeral so as to feed the family and friends that had come to render a final homage to the deceased (these are elements common to the kingdom of Kerma). In the final phase, large ensembles were built with vaulted chambers with a superstructure and chapel.

ANNEXE 3

The capital develops and sees the development of residential quarters. The fortifications of the secondary town undergo profound modifications, which separate it from the rest of the agglomeration. The great temple, called *'deffufa'* by modern archaeology, consists of a mass of mud brick. It is consecrated to several deities, including the ram. Was the intention to reproduce the sacred mountain of Jebel Barkal, the place of the primordial residence of a ram god? In the sacred area, palaces were built.

In the cemetery, funerary structures in mud brick, recalling the *deffufa* of the royal town are associated with immense tumuli. The Egyptian influences are evident: pylon façade, entrance doorway decorated with a lintel with a winged solar disc, interior decoration covered by a blue glaze. However, according to Charles Bonnet, *'the originality of the motifs, the character of the faience vessels and the statues of vitrified quartz demonstrate the local character of this production. Even if it is possible that Egyptian craftsmen participated in the making of some of the objects, their Nubian identity is indisputable'*. The royal tumuli can reach 90 metres in diameter. In one of them the archaeologist George Reisner discovers, in the axial corridor of the grave, the bodies of 400 *'sacrificed'* companions.

ANNEXE 4

Kamose, the Theban king of the XVII Dynasty reconstructs the unity of Egypt. Access to the African corridor is vital. To eliminate the Hyksos, he engages mercenaries of the Nubian Eastern Desert, the Medjau. In face of the imminent attack from Kamose, the Hyksos king appeals to a prince of the kingdom of Kerma, promising him an equal share of Egypt after their joint victory (Kerma had occupied the town of el-Kab to the south of Thebes). Kamose entered Lower Nubia, probably reaching as far south as Buhen near the Second Cataract. There he established a buffer zone between *'Despicable Kush'* and Egypt. His successors, Ahmose and Amenhotep I pursue the advance to the South. Thutmose I gave the final blow to the prosperity of the kingdom of Kerma by making direct contacts with the merchants from the great South, denying Kerma its role as intermediary.