



# SOCIÉTÉ DES CULTURES NUBIENNES

POUR EN SAVOIR PLUS ...

## THE KINGDOMS OF NAPATA AND MEROE

### ANNEXE 1: NAPATA

Some scholars believe that the royal family lived at Meroe since the VIII Century BC. However, it is certain that the raid of the armies of the Egyptian sovereign Psammetichus II in 591 BC had an effect on the definitive displacement of the capital from Napata to Meroe. The reasons for this raid are obscure. The expedition was led by the generals Amasis and Potasimto, responsible for the Greek, Carian and Jewish mercenaries. The Victory stela confirms the success of the armies of Psammetichus II, but curiously the king established his border at Aswan with a buffer zone as far as Takompo in Lower Nubia. Was it a real victory or a semi-raid, or a failure in the negotiation regarding the exploitation of the gold mines? Did the king Anlamani refuse any transactions as a result of the episode of Taharqa and Tanwetamani?

### ANNEXE 2: MEROE

Herodotus was fascinated by the *'Long lived Ethiopians'*, the Nubians. Strabo was inspired by the writings of Eratosthenes to describe them. Diodorus Siculus tells of the challenge launched by the king Arkamani against the hold of the priests of Amun. In the Roman period, Pliny the Elder related the expedition led by the prefect of Egypt, Caius Petronius, against the *'Ethiopians'* that had taken Aswan. Under the emperor Nero Seneca and Dion Cassius reported the exploits of the Roman emissaries in these far off lands.

In the III Century AD the kingdom is used as a model for the novel by Heliodorus, *'Ethiopika'*, in which the hero marries *'the daughter of the king of Meroe'*. Finally, in the Christian period, a queen appears in the *'Acts of the Apostles'*: *'On the way from Jerusalem to Gaza, the deacon Philip met an Ethiopian, a eunuch, a dignitary of the court of Candace (or Kandake), queen of Ethiopia, supervisor of all her treasures. In Jerusalem to worship, he was returning (to his country), seated on his chair, reading the prophet Isaiah...'* *The Ethiopian, baptised by Philip, 'continued on his way full of joy'.*

### ANNEXE 3

In Sudan, the pyramids are much smaller, with a maximum height of 30 metres. They have no pyramidion, and end with a platform on which sat a capstone. The study of the methods of construction reveals an architectural style specific to Meroe. The remains of a cedar post were found, still present in the centre of some structures. It made it possible to have a lifting system in place to construct, course by course, the superstructure of the pyramid. A funerary chapel would be placed on the east face. Each sovereign determined the precise location of his burial. While he was alive, the hypogeum was excavated, comprising several chambers. At his death and after the inhumation, the tomb was closed and the descender was filled in. His successor erected the pyramid and the funerary chapel for the offering service. The decoration of the chapel emulated Egyptian iconography. The funerary complex was accessible by means of a ramp and protected by a brightly coloured surrounding wall.