



SOCIÉTÉ DES CULTURES NUBIENNES

POUR EN SAVOIR PLUS ...

UNESCO CAMPAIGN

1960-1972

ANNEXE 1

Nature had allowed them to observe the lateral banks that were formed when the Nile waters decreased. They made use of these 'embankments' to protect themselves from the inundation and to create small basins. The Pyramid Texts of the third millennium BC speak of the word *dni*, meaning 'dike' or 'dam'.

Since the Old Kingdom a dam was erected in the Wadi Garawi, near Cairo. Around 2300 BC Merenrê, sovereign of the VI Dynasty (2270-2200 BC), asked the governor of southern Egypt, Uni, to dig canals near the First Cataract. His successor, Pepy II (2270-2200 BC) continued these works, digging five canals for the royal fleet.

In the Middle Kingdom, Sesostri III (1872-1854 BC) had a canal opened, 80 metres long, to facilitate the passage of ships to Lower Nubia. Amenemhat III built a dam at Semna-Kumna, to the south of the Second Cataract, on boulders that blocked the river. At this place, the banks narrowed and three fortresses guarded the area: the forts of Semna south and Semna west located on the west bank and Kumna on the east bank.

The dam was completed by canals on the east bank, allowing the passage of vessels and, at the time of low water, served as a barrier to avoid unnecessary discharges. The arrangement of the dam created a lake that extended over 60 kilometres, submerging the Attiri and Tangur rapids to reach Dal in times of high floods. This hydraulic construction facilitated the passage of expeditions while prolonging them.

Around 1785 BC, and probably in the third year of the reign of Amenemhat V, the dam gave way under the pressure of too heavy floods.

ANNEXE 2

The Egyptians have illustrated this phenomenon by the myth of the return in Egypt of a lioness called '*the Far One*', announcing the flood. The inundation was concomitant with the reappearance at sunrise of the star Sothis. The temple clergy then celebrated the New Year and at Karnak, the beautiful feast of *Opet* was prepared, confirming the flood.

ANNEXE 3

In 1882, Egypt counted some 6 million inhabitants. After the construction of the dam, the population rose to 9 million, then to 12.5 million in 1917 to reach 16 million in 1934. After the Second World War, the reduction in infant mortality contributes to the population growth, but worse is to come. In 1980, statistics announce 40 million inhabitants with nearly 1 million births per year.

ANNEXE 4

In the Mediterranean Basin, the North African coast and a part of the sea bed, sink with a rotating movement towards the north (substructure movement). The convergence towards Europe is some 2 centimetres per year. The land crest of the African tectonic plate is being dragged under the European cliffs. The pressure of the earth's crust, tied to the substructure movement, is called subsidence. The phenomenon is observable in Libya where there has never been any silt deposited to keep the ground above water.

ANNEXE 5

Apart from the digging of the Jonglei canal, designed to collect the waters of the Sudd swamp, reducing loss resulting from evaporation, a project using nuclear energy was to break through the rocky barrier that prevented the Nile from reaching the oases of Kharga, Dakhla and Farafra in the Egyptian desert.

ANNEXE 6

Amongst the losses, it was necessary to count the fortresses of the Middle Kingdom, temples and churches but above all precious information on the Nubian cultures, still little studied. The limited means of investigation and exploration made the Sudan campaign of 1960-1972 a failure. On the other hand, the raising of the first dam had permitted Egypt to inventory the sites and monuments spread between Aswan and the Second Cataract.

ANNEXE 7

All are nostalgic for their country, for 'the golden age founded on innocence, where crime was unknown'. Their Nile has become a lake that they wish to call Nubia, in memory of their blessed land.

The older generation continue to pass on to their grand-children this legend that ties them to their roots:

*'When the earth lost faith, the Creator inundated it, it was a deluge.
God had ordered Noah to build his ark
And to embark with him all the animal races
To be the source of a new life.
Once humanity had died, God ordered the earth
To absorb the waters at the Sixth Cataract of the Nile.
The ark stopped at Kush
And from it came out the two brothers Kush and Misrayem, the children of Cham, the son of Noah.
Later, Misrayem emigrated to the north
And became the father of the Misryines, the Egyptians
And Kush became the father of the Kushites, the Nubians.'*

They see themselves as the first men after the deluge, with the conviction of belonging to an ancient world.