



SOCIÉTÉ DES CULTURES NUBIENNES

POUR EN SAVOIR PLUS ...

PREHISTORY

ANNEXE 1

Three discoveries published in 1994 and in 1995 added data to the information given by the famous Lucy, *Australopithecus Afarensis* dating to more than 3 million years ago:

-The first was in Ethiopia, not far from Hadar, where the famous Lucy was discovered. It was of an adult some 4.4 million years old.

-The second discovery was made in Kenya, where some twenty bones allowed the identification of *Australopithecus Anamensis*, a human type slightly younger than the former (4 million years)

-Thirdly, a French-Chadian team has discovered not far from N'djamena, some 2500 kilometres from the Rift valley, a lower mandible fragment with seven teeth surviving, which were attributed to 'Abel'. The man was found in soil dated to between 3 and 3.5 million years ago.

These discoveries suggest a movement of the pre-humans towards the west, but according to Michel Brunet, they place 'some uncertainties on the kinship ties between the different hominids'.

ANNEXE 2

The first sequence is the longest, the *Khormusan* (27 000 – 16 000 BC), located between the Second and the Third Cataracts; it is characterised by seasonal encampments, moving in rhythm with the floods and droughts.

The *Halfan* stretches across some three millennia (19 500 – 16 000 BC).

In the area of the Second Cataract, the *Gemaian* is shorter (17 500 – 15 000 BC), and could be at the origin of the Cataract cultures.

Finally, the *Sebilian* (15 000 – 11 000 BC) covers an area between the Third Cataract as far as the area of Edfu in Upper Egypt.

ANNEXE 3

-The first industry, *the Balladian* to the north of Aswan and the *Qadan*

-The second, *Arkinian* and the *Shamarkian* in the area of the Second Cataract

The economic expansion unfortunately leads some populations into conflict. Excavations carried out at Jebel Sahaba revealed that some people, probably *Qadans*, bore signs of violent death.

ANNEXE 4

These vessels are decorated with continuous or dotted lines called wavy line and dotted wavy line.

In Upper Nubia, the wavy line decorates the thin walled ceramics and appears in the areas near the confluence of the Nile and of the Atbara

In the VII millennium, it evolves towards a mixed decoration, the dotted wavy line. In Lower Nubia, this motif takes the name of *Khartoum Variant* and seems to be later, while the dotted wavy line emerges much sooner, on a territory stretching from Mauritania to the east of the equatorial lakes. This unity could induce similar life styles tied to the contacts between nomads and semi-nomads.

ANNEXE 5

The inter-tropical lakes reach a maximum extent and all the depressions of the Sahara are filled by the rising level of the ground water. To the north-east, Lake Chad (more precisely paleo-Chad) reaches the foothills of the Tibesti Mountains and covers a surface area ten times greater than its current extent. Lake Turkana, formerly Lake Rudolph, located at the border between Kenya and Ethiopia contains a thousand times more water; it was in direct communication with the Sobat, a confluent to the right bank of the Nile. As for the swamps of the Sudd, in 1862 called '*chasm of despair*' by Samuel Barker, they stretched

500 kilometres further north, tripling the surface of Lake Victoria, as known today. The level of the Nile remained, according to Marianne Cornevin: *'during nearly forty centuries raised from between 6 to 9 metres above the present day level'*; and after the drought, there was no land that had emerged on which to establish encampments. The populations seek refuge on the neighbouring terraces, in the savannahs that today are desert, or on the viable plains despite the rains. Two regions are favoured: the Butana, between the confluence of the Blue Nile and the Atbara, and that lying between the island of Sai and the town of Debba. The return of the savannahs favoured the displacement of human groups and their herds. Contacts are established between the potters and fishermen of the central Sudan and the semi-sedentary inhabitants of the Fezzan (in the south-west of Libya), but the relations are easier between the populations on the east bank of the Nile (located between the rich plains of the Butana) and those further north, near the Red Sea, the configuration of the land facilitating exchanges and contacts between groups.

ANNEXE 6

These men devote themselves to hunting and fishing. Wild grasses are collected, but intensive and selective cultivation of cereals begins to create a proto-agriculture. Barley is cultivated from the middle of the V millennium, and sorghum is found as a wild species.

Axes, adzes, querns and grinders testify to this evolution.

Since the V millennium the site of Kadero, near Khartoum, confirms the existence of a sedentary population keeping cattle and smaller domestic animals. However, the domestication of bovines, sheep, goats and dogs had been effective a thousand years earlier beginning with probably wild species coming from the Sahara.

ANNEXE 7

Amongst the funeral material, the axes and mace heads, made from precious materials, suggest the role of responsibility and protection of the dead king. At his death he is honoured as such. The cemetery of Kadruka reveals its importance through the structures that govern the group, according to Jacques Reinold: *'an actual transposition into the ground of the social relations of the buried'*. In fact, the grave of the king, that is the richest in terms of grave goods, is surrounded by secondary burials often placed in a circle.

ANNEXE 8

In the late Neolithic, another ritual was observed at el-Kadada: an 'interloper', sometimes an adolescent, is found in the tomb of the king, suggesting ritual sacrifice which has been discovered in many cultures and civilisations since the end of the IV millennium. This adolescent seems to have been placed in the grave as funerary 'deposit'.

ANNEXE 9

During the course of the Third Campaign conducted by UNESCO, several rock drawings were recorded. The great African fauna, elephants, hippopotami, giraffes and ostrich are proven to belong to the time of the last great pluvial period.

One of the most beautiful rock art stations was located near Wadi es-Sebua in Lower Nubia and at Abka, near the Second Cataract, with large herds of bovines.

Some thirty stations were also found in the area of Dal (to the south of the Second Cataract) with an occupation phase running from the Paleolithic to the Islamic period. As far as the Third Cataract, the drawings were abundant on each side of the river and sometimes very far into the desert.

In the region of the Fourth Cataract, thousands of rock drawings are present on the boulders that dot the islands and the sides of the wadis. The repertory of the representations is very important and runs as late as the Christian period. Some of these will disappear with the completion of the Merowe Dam, under construction just downriver from the Fourth Cataract.

ANNEXE 10

During the *Amratian* (ca. 4780-3500 BC), populations linked by the same culture occupy the eastern border of Upper Egypt and without doubt a part of the eastern desert between the Nile and the Red Sea. During the *Gerzean* (ca. 3500-3200 BC), the nilotic traditions crystallise and lead to the faster evolution of the region between the Second Cataract and the Egyptian Delta. This cultural federation supports the emergence of the same political system, which seems to be earlier than 3100 BC. For the north (Egypt) one uses the terms of pre- and proto-Dynastic. These cultural references are again found in the *Amratian* and the *Gerzean* that have traits in common with the Sudanese Neolithic.

ANNEXE 11

In 1940, the work of F. Debono near Wadi Hammamat (Egypt) discovered an archaic village that worked copper and mother of pearl. In 1994 the Castiglioni-Negro expedition uncovers a site, to the north east of the Sudanese desert in Wadi Elei (a tributary of Wadi Allaqi) where herdsmen extracted gold from copper ore. In the region of Abydos, *Badarian* cemeteries confirm close ties with the Neolithic of el-Kadada (central Sudan) and present a common range of funerary goods, the famous caliciform beakers. In their lithic industry the *Badarians* did not use quality flints from the calcareous cliffs of Jebel Silsileh. Where they unaware of this part of the Nile Valley? However, they correspond to the large Afro-Asiatic family, whose language, the Hamito-Semitic, is used to the East of the Nile as far as Ethiopia. This culture dates between 5500 and 4000 BC, and is, according to Jean Vercoutter *'as the ancestor of the Pharaonic civilisation'*.

ANNEXE 12

The excavated burials, including those of Salaya, have demonstrated the economic power of these Neolithic populations of Lower Nubia. They are not inferior to Egyptian ones of the same period; the grave goods show a Nubian sub-stratum and influences from the North.

In its final phase the economy is based on agriculture, animal husbandry and trade that is done in the plain of Dakke at the mouth of Wadi Allaqi. Gold, ivory, incense, ebony, precious stones, feline hides, ostrich feathers and cattle are the goods used to acquire Egyptian products.

Around 2800 BC this culture abruptly disappears. The causes are multiple including the desertification in the North. Egypt is part of the cause, the deadly raids of the Egyptian First Dynasty are motivated by strategic, economic and trade reasons. The relief on Jebel Sheikh Suleiman illustrates the campaign at the level of the Second Cataract, of a king from the North. This raid carried out at the gates of the Middle Nile and Upper Nubia (from where came other deadly raids) allows it to control an important territory, eliminate an intermediary and position Egyptian trade on the '*corridor of Africa*'.

ANNEXE 13

The C-Group populations demand from the Egyptians authorisations so that the latter might penetrate in Lower Nubia and reach the land of Yam, probably the kingdom of Kerma. The texts of the tombs of Qubbet el-Hawa (west bank at Aswan) mention the expeditions led by Mekhu, Sabni, Herkhouf among others, and mention their apprehension regarding the warlike character of the C-Group.

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

Nevertheless, the Nubian world does not seem to be a stranger to the emergence of the Egyptian Middle Kingdom. One of the wives of Mentuhotep II (2064-2013 BC – XI Dynasty) may have come from the south; a relief fragment found in the funerary temple of the king at Deir el Bahri, shows a queen with African hair and facial traits. In the Valley of Kings, an archer of Mentuhotep has been found wearing the brassard of his position on his left wrist. The XII Dynasty is founded with the king Amenemhat, the son of a woman from T3-sty, born at Khen-Nekhen, first nome of Egypt whose principal town is Elephantine. According to Claude Vandersleyen it is during this handing over of power that one should probably place 'some Nubian pharaohs whose names have the same structure as those at the end of the XI Dynasty, temporary rivals that did not succeed'.

ANNEXE 14

The first tombs are made up of a shaft, and a superstructure made of dry stone and gravel. Later the grave shafts become rectangular with brick walls or dressed stone, covered by large slabs; in the final phase, they adopt arching. A chapel abuts a tumulus that could have measured 16 metres in diameter. Bucrania were placed near the burial. In fact, cattle were sacrificed during the funeral so as to feed the family and friends coming to render homage to the deceased (these are elements common within the kingdom of Kerma). In its final phase, large complexes appear with tombs with a vaulted chamber completed by a superstructure and a chapel.