

THE ORIGIN OF THE KINGDOM OF KUSH

(NAPATA-MEROË)

By D. M. DIXON

IN view of the great part played by the Kingdom of Napata-Meroë in the diffusion of Egyptian civilization in Africa,¹ the problem of its origin is of interest to Africanists and Egyptologists alike. In a recently written but not yet published paper,² I have discussed the evidence for Egyptian contact with the lands of the Upper Nile and beyond, prior to the ninth century B.C. During the Twentieth Dynasty, the area between the First and Fourth Cataracts was abandoned by the Egyptians and thereafter for nearly three centuries an almost complete blanket of silence descends on events in that land.³ During the ninth century B.C., however, there arose in Upper Nubia an independent kingdom whose chief centre was at Napata.⁴ This district (fig. 1), for such it was rather than a single town, lies just downstream of the Fourth Cataract where the Nile, entering the area of Nubian Sandstone, forms the easily navigable Dongola Reach which extends as far as Tumbos, with flat, cultivable, alluvial land on either side of the river. On the west bank, about a mile west of the river near the modern village of Kareima, rises the spectacular flat-topped mass of Gebel Barkal,⁵ the 'Holy Mountain' (*Dw wrb*) of the Egyptian inscriptions, under the eastern edge of which a great temple of Amūn had been built in the Eighteenth Dynasty and subsequently added to and repaired by Ramesses II.⁶

The exact location of the ancient administrative centre of Napata has not been determined with certainty, but the excavations of the Oxford Expedition under Griffith produced some evidence which suggests that it may have been at or near the modern district headquarters of Merowe, four miles downstream from Gebel Barkal on the east bank of the river. Masses of potsherds and rubbish lying on the surface for a kilometre inland from the river-bank indicated the site of a considerable town. Near Merowe hospital a large cemetery was uncovered and further upstream the remains of

¹ General references: B. Davidson, *Old Africa Rediscovered* (London, 1959), 47 ff.; A. J. Arkell, 'The Valley of the Nile', in R. Oliver (ed.), *The Dawn of African History* (London, 1961), 7-12; R. Oliver and J. D. Fage, *A Short History of Africa* (Penguin Books, Harmondsworth, 1962), 39 ff.

² 'The Egyptian Penetration of Africa down to the end of the New Kingdom'.

³ For a discussion of the course of events see my *History of Nubia from the decline of the Ramesside Empire to the fall of Meroë* [in preparation], chaps. i and ix.

⁴ The earliest occurrence of the name Napata (Egyptian *Np-t*) is on the 'Amada stela of Amenophis II (1436-1413 B.C.) wherein this king records that he hung the body of a Syrian prince on the town wall (*Urk.* IV, 1297-8).

⁵ J. H. Dunbar, 'The Holy Mountain', *Antiquity* 3 (1934), 408-13, pl. i; *JEA* 32 (1946), pl. XI; H. N. Chittick, *JEA* 43 (1957), 42 ff., pl. IV; J. Pirenne, *Histoire de la civilisation de l'Égypte ancienne*, III (Paris, 1963), fig. 30, facing p. 133.

⁶ G. A. Reisner, 'The Barkal Temples in 1916', *JEA* 4 (1917), 213-27.

a sandstone temple. Upstream and east of this temple were discovered the badly eroded ruins of a complex of mud-brick buildings, in some rooms of which were found elephant tusks and quantities of unworked obsidian, quartz, and other stones, which suggested that here the kings kept their stocks of raw materials.¹

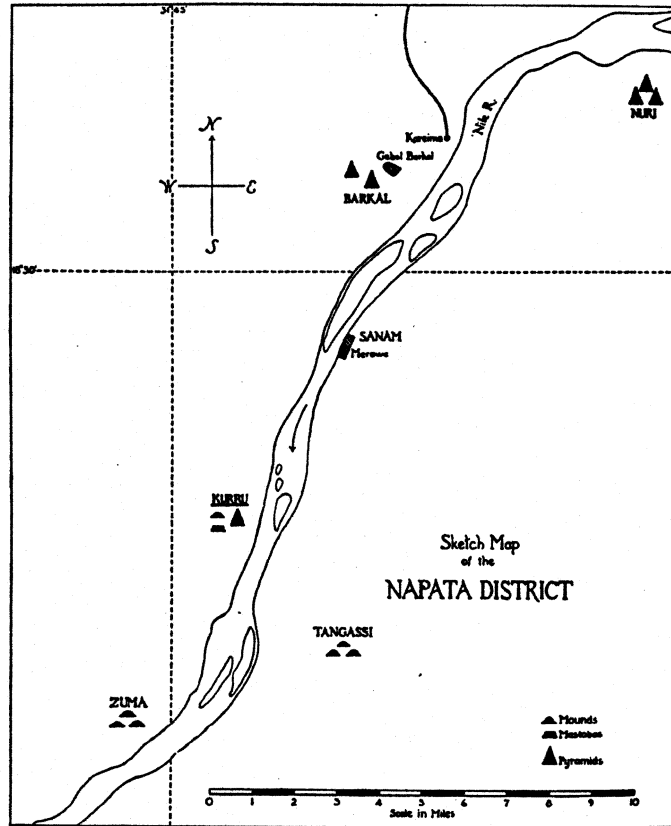


FIG. 1

About a mile west of the Nile and about ten miles downstream from Gebel Barkal, lies El-Kurru, the site of the earliest of the royal cemeteries of the kingdom.² About six miles upstream of Gebel Barkal, on the opposite side of the river, is another royal cemetery at Nûri,³ while close to Gebel Barkal, on the south and west, are two small groups of pyramids.⁴

¹ F. Ll. Griffith, 'Oxford Excavations in Nubia', *LAAA* 9 (1922), 67-124, pls. 4-62 (the temple: pp. 79-114, pls. 4-49; the 'Treasury': pp. 114-24, pls. 50-62); id., *LAAA* 10 (1923), 73-171, pls. 12-66 (the cemetery). See also Sauneron and Yoyotte, *BIFAO* 50 (1952), 176, n. 7.

² Reisner, *Bull. Mus. Fine Arts*, Boston, 19 (1921), 21-38; id., *Sudan Notes and Records* 2 (1919), 237-54; definitive report: D. Dunham, *El Kurru (The Royal Cemeteries of Kush)*, I, Boston, 1950).

³ Dunham, *Nuri (The Royal Cemeteries of Kush)*, II, Boston, 1955).

⁴ Dunham, *Royal Tombs at Meroë and Barkal (The Royal Cemeteries of Kush)*, IV, Boston, 1957). A series of prominent burial mounds at Tangâsi on the east bank about eleven miles downstream from G. Barkal date from post-Meroitic times (P. L. Shinnie, *Kush* 2 (1954), 66-85). Similar mounds exist at Zûma on the other side of the river, fifteen miles below Barkal.

On the east bank of the Nile, some 150 miles across the desert south-east of Gebel Barkal, lay the city of Meroë, another important centre of the kingdom, and its capital from the sixth century B.C. onwards. Part of the ancient site is now covered by the village of Begarawiya.¹ East of the city, where a wide plain extends back from the Nile for about two miles, are the three royal cemeteries of Meroë, the West, North, and South.²

The name 'Ethiopia' applied to this Nubian kingdom by the Classical writers, and some modern authorities too,³ is unsuitable, for to the Greeks and Romans 'Ethiopia' embraced a vast area with no clearly defined boundaries, extending from India to West Africa,⁴ and 'Ethiopians' were all those dark-skinned peoples who inhabited this region.⁵ It thus included large tracts which never formed part of the Nubian kingdom. Moreover, the term was liable to be confused with the modern Empire of Ethiopia, formerly known as Abyssinia. For these reasons, it has generally been replaced by the designation 'Kush'⁶ which, by the late New Kingdom, was applied to the area stretching from Aswân upsteam to Abû Hamed.⁷

As is well known, the history of the Kingdom of Kush falls into two periods, the Napatan and the Meroitic, so named after the capital at these times. The Napatan Period extends from the foundation of the kingdom until about 591 B.C., and is subdivided into two 'phases':⁸ the first, during which the Kushite monarchs rose to the height of their power and ruled an empire extending from the shores of the Mediterranean to at least as far south as the northern Gezira,⁹ lasted until 654 B.C., when the Kushites finally lost control of Upper Egypt; the second phase covers the years from 654 to c. 591 B.C.,¹⁰ when the seat of government was transferred from Napata further south to Meroë, which retained this status until the collapse of the kingdom in the fourth century of our era.¹¹

¹ J. Garstang, A. H. Sayce, and F. Ll. Griffith *Meroë, the City of the Ethiopians* (Oxford, 1911); Garstang et al., *LAAA* 3 (1910), 57-70, pls. 21-23; 4 (1911), 45-71, pls. 6-16; 5 (1912), 73-83, pls. 6-10; 6 (1913), 1-21, pls. 1-7; 7 (1916), 1-24, pls. 1-10. Cf. Sayce, *LAAA* 3, 53-56.

² The North Cemetery and the royal tombs in the South Cemetery are published in Dunham, *Royal Tombs at Meroë and Barkal*. The remaining burials in the South Cemetery and all those in the West Cemetery are being prepared for publication (Dunham, *Kush* 3 (1955), 74).

³ E.g. G. A. Reisner.

⁴ Cf. E. A. W. Budge, *A History of Ethiopia, Nubia, and Abyssinia*, 1 (London, 1928), vii, 1-2.

⁵ On 'Aithiops' cf. G. H. Beardsley, *The Negro in Greek and Roman Civilization. A Study of the Ethiopian Type* (Johns Hopkins University Studies in Archaeology, No. 4, Baltimore, 1929), p. xii: 'Greek literature . . . gives very generally to any member of any dark-skinned tribe the name *Aithiops* which the Greek geographers derived from *aîthōs* and *ōps*, that is to say, a man with a (sun)burned face. *It is not at all restricted to the kingdom of Meroë south of Egypt* [italics mine].' Cf. also F. M. Snowden, Jr., 'The Negro in Ancient Greece', *American Anthropologist* 50 (1948), 31 ff.; id., *L'Antiquité classique* 25 (1956), 112, n. 2.

⁶ Dunham, *Sudan Notes and Records* 28 (1947), 1-2; id., *El Kurru*, 1, followed by Arkell, *History of the Sudan*² (London, 1961), 113. Some French writers, however, still use the name 'Éthiopie', cf. Leclant, *Kush* 5 (1957), 98, n. 1.

⁷ Cf. J. Vercoutter, *Kush* 7 (1959), 128, 132.

⁸ Dunham, *Sudan Notes and Records* 28, 9-10; id., *AJA* 50 (1946), 387.

⁹ On Kushite activity in this region see my *The Kushite Empire in the South* [in preparation], ch. iv.

¹⁰ Arkell, *Kush* 3, 93-94; id., *Hist. Sudan*², 145-6, 148.

¹¹ The traditional date for this event is A.D. 350. Following U. Monneret de Villard (*Storia della Nubia cristiana*, Rome, 1938, 37), Shinnie (*Kush* 3, 82-85) places it somewhat earlier. Cf. Dunham, *Royal Tombs at Meroë and Barkal*, 7 (A.D. 339); F. Hintze, *Studien zur merotischen Chronologie und zu den Opfertafeln aus den Pyramiden von Meroë* (Berlin, 1959), 30 ff. (c. A.D. 320).

Reisner believed that during the rule of the Twenty-second (Libyan) Dynasty in Egypt (945–730 B.C.) Nubia remained a province of that land ruled by one of the king's sons. On the break-up of Egypt into a number of semi-independent principalities soon after the death of Shoshenk I, Nubia too, according to Reisner, became independent under its Egyptianized Libyan governor, who thus became the ancestor of the Kushite royal family.¹ This man Reisner² identified with the 'Commander of the Army, Pashedenbastet, son of King Shoshenk' whose name occurred on a fragment of an alabaster vessel found in the pyramid of Queen Akheqa at Nûri;³ and he thought that Pashedenbastet was the father of Kashta,⁴ the first of the Kushite rulers about whose activity anything is known. In that case, Kashta's occupation of Upper Egypt and his action in forcing the Divine Adoratress Shepenwepet, the daughter of Osorkon III, to adopt his own daughter Amenirdis, would have to be seen as part of a struggle between rival Libyans for supremacy in Egypt—an unconvincing theory.

Although his later discoveries in the earliest royal cemetery, at El-Kurru, caused Reisner to modify his views regarding Pashedenbastet, they seemed to him to strengthen his theory of the Libyan origin of the Kushite monarchy.⁵ The highest point in the cemetery at El-Kurru (pl. XI)—a low knoll at the north-west end of the central of the three parts into which the site is divided by two wadis⁶—was occupied by a circular tumulus (Ku. Tum. 1) of gravel with rubble pitching, beneath the centre of which was a burial-pit, orientated north to south, with a step along the east side and a side-chamber on the west⁷ (pl. XII, *a*). Lower down the eastern and southern slopes of this knoll were three other similar graves—Ku. Tum. 2, 4, and 5. In the first (pl. XII *b*), the shallow open pit, orientated north to south, was roofed with transverse stone slabs and within the mound were traces of roughly rectangular stonework.⁸ Still lower down the east slope stood a more developed form of tumulus (K. 19), probably originally cased with masonry, which was enclosed by a well-built horseshoe-shaped sandstone masonry wall.⁹ On a side-spur north of this tomb was another tumulus of the same type (Ku. Tum. 6) against the east face of which was built a plain mud-brick chapel (pl. XII, *c*).¹⁰ Just below K. 19 stood a row of eight stone mastabas (K. 14, 13, 11, 10 (pl. XII, *d*), 9, 23, 8, and 7). Of these, K. 14 appeared to have been planned as a cased tumulus and converted later into a mastaba, for the rubble mound was clearly apparent inside the masonry of the mastaba.¹¹ With this exception, all the mastabas as far as K. 9¹² were of the same type and had burial-pits just like those of the tumuli with the same north-to-south orientation. The superstructure was a practically square block of sandstone masonry with nearly vertical sides, but the form of the top could not be determined. On the east side was a plain sandstone masonry chapel, and round the whole, a rectangular sandstone enclosure wall about 0 m. 80 cm. high with rounded top. The next two

¹ *Sudan Notes and Records* 2 (1), 43, 50, 56, 66.

² Loc. cit., 43.

³ Dunham, *Nuri*, 130, fig. 97, pl. 80 *j*.

⁴ *Sudan Notes and Records* 2 (1), 43; *JEA* 6, 54.

⁵ *Sudan Notes and Records* 2, 238.

⁶ Dunham, *El Kurru*, Map ii; Reisner, *Sudan Notes and Records* 2 (4), pl. 5.

⁷ *El Kurru*, 12–13.

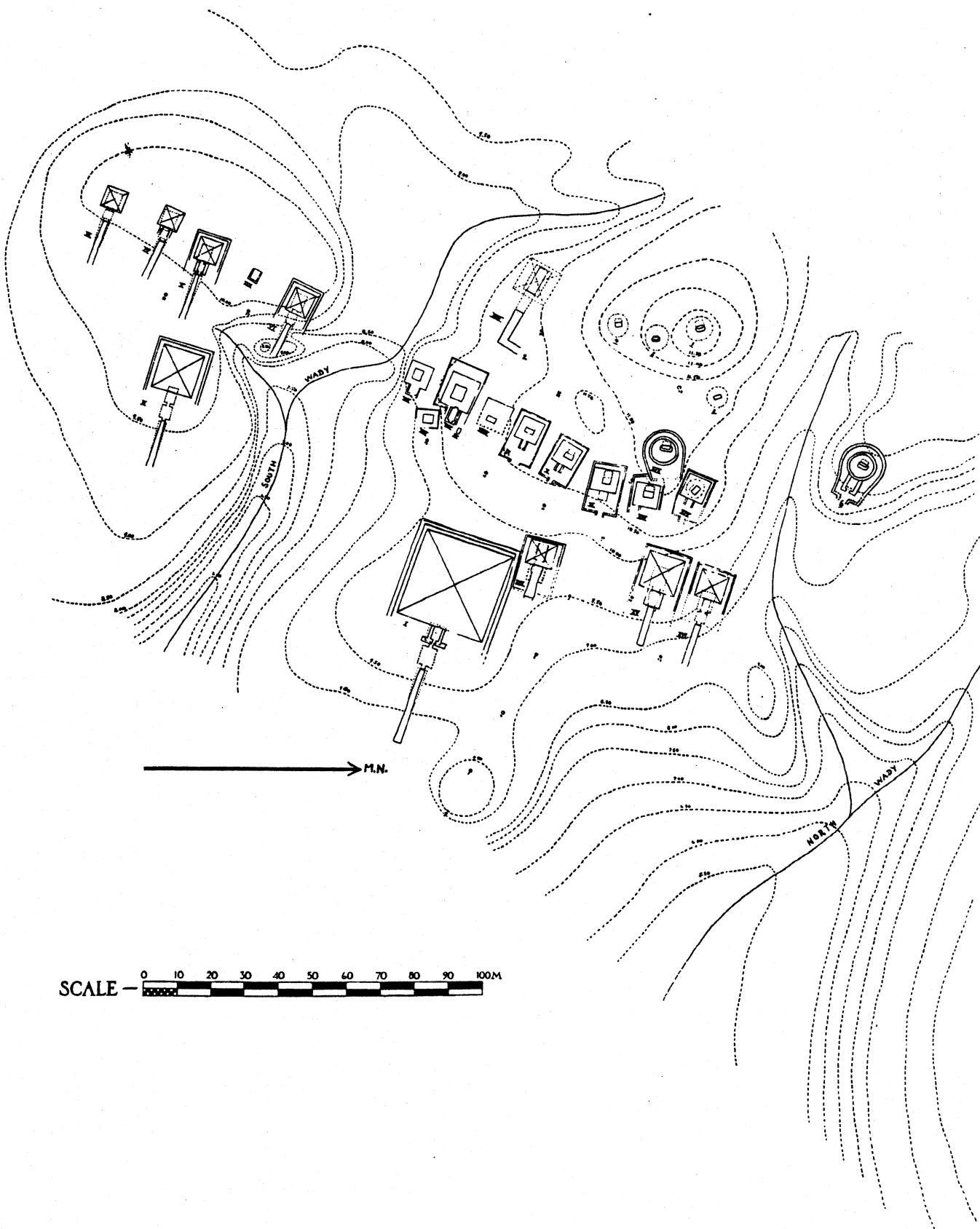
⁸ Ibid. 15.

⁹ Ibid. 72; pl. 24 *a*.

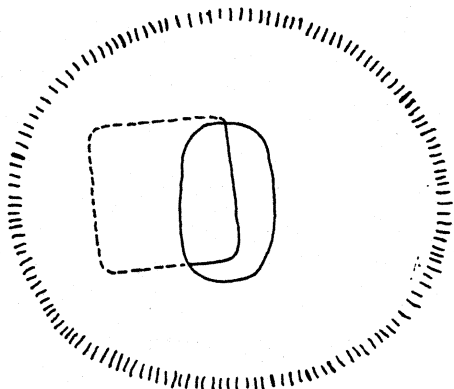
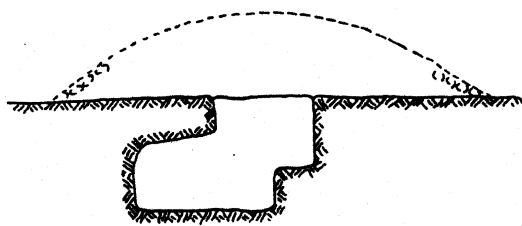
¹⁰ Ibid. 21; pl. 4 *b*.

¹¹ Ibid. 54; pl. 15 *b*. Reisner, *Sudan Notes and Records* 2, 240.

¹² *El Kurru*, 47–49, 51; pls. 12 *b*, 13, 14 *b*, 15 *a*.

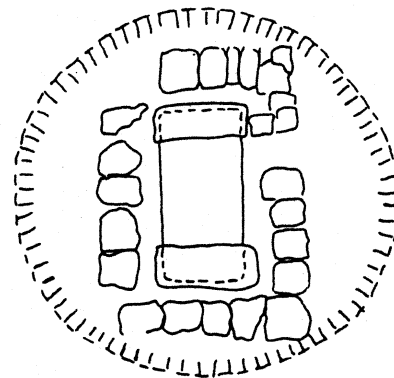
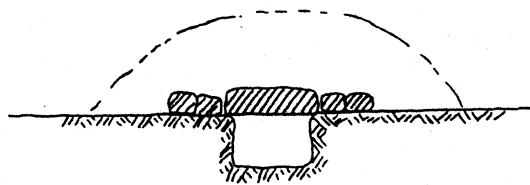


THE ROYAL CEMETERY AT EL-KURRU



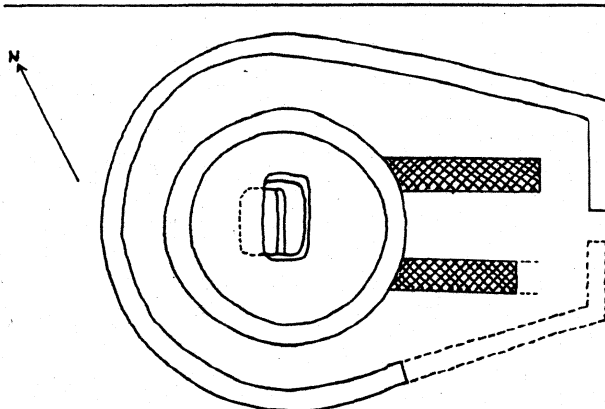
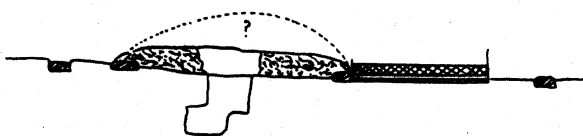
0 1 2 3 4 5 M.

a. K. Tum. 1



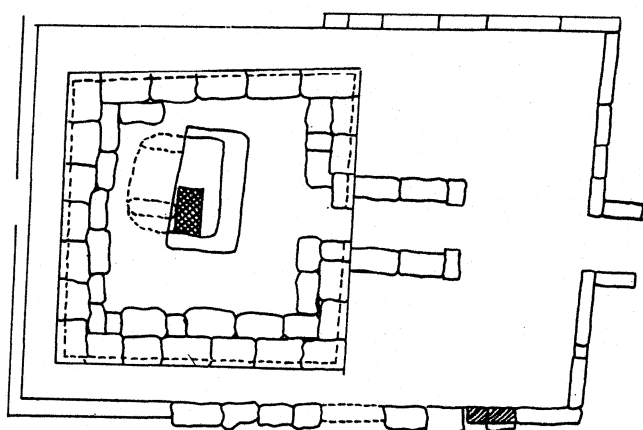
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b. K. Tum. 2



0 1 2 3 4 5 M.

c. K. Tum. 6



0 1 2 3 4 5 10 M.

d. K. 10

PLANS AND SECTIONS OF GRAVES AT EL-KURRU

mastabas, K. 23 and K. 21, though like the earlier mastabas in all else, had a simple open pit without side-chamber for the burial-place, orientated north to south as before.¹

In all but one of these tombs the burial had been completely plundered, but judging by the surviving remains in the tumulus Ku. Tum. 2, dating from the fourth generation (c. 800-780 B.C.), the body was laid on its right side with the head to the south.²

These thirteen tombs were clearly the earliest in the cemetery and were assigned to five generations of ancestors of the kings of Kush preceding Kashta, the ruler who began the occupation of Egypt. No names were recovered from the excavations which could be assigned to any of the ancestral tombs.³

An indication of the prosperity of these early rulers of Kush is afforded by the considerable quantity of gold found in their tombs, despite extensive plundering. Most of it, however, came from the debris or siftings and there can be no certainty that it formed part of the original deposit. In the tumulus Ku. Tum. 2, however, the upper part of the body was intact. Round the neck were two gold necklaces, one of large double-cone beads, from which were suspended as pendants a double figure of Pataikos and a hawk-headed deity and a large natural nugget of gold inscribed with Egyptian hieroglyphs (fig. 2). The second string consisted of gold udjat-eyes alternating with ball beads of garnet. On the left hand was a plain gold finger-ring, and by the head a gold ear-ring.⁴

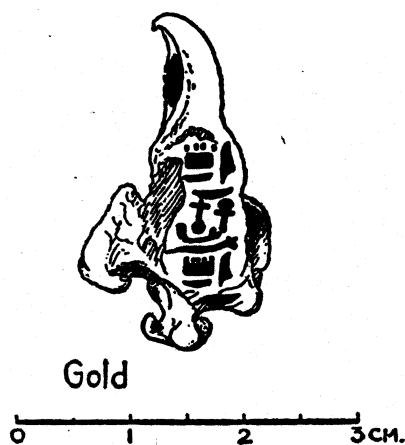


FIG. 2

The ancestral tombs were followed by three mastabas numbered K. 8, 7, and 20, which belonged to Kashta and two of his queens. The first two were similar in plan to the older mastabas and had open pits like K. 23 and 21, but differed from them in that their superstructures were built of smaller stones and the burial-pits were orientated east to west, the traditional Egyptian orientation which is found in all the royal tombs of Kush from this time onwards.⁵

Now according to Reisner's chronology, the youth of the man buried in Ku. Tum. 1 fell within the reigns of the earliest kings of the Twenty-second Dynasty of Egypt.⁶ In the tumuli was discovered a considerable quantity of gold, including the already mentioned nugget inscribed with Egyptian hieroglyphs. In addition, these graves, and the mastabas, yielded fragments of alabaster and decorated faience vessels of Egyptian manufacture.⁷ Reference has already been made to the alabaster fragment from Nuri

¹ Dunham, *El Kurru*, 76-77, pls. 2 a, 24 b.

² Ibid. 15. If the upper end of a tibia found at the north end of the burial pit in the mastaba K. 10, dating from the same generation, was in its original position, an indication is afforded that the body had in this case been placed on its left side with the head to the south and facing west (ibid. 48).

³ Ibid. 2. ⁴ Ibid. 15-16, figs. 2 c-d; pls. 5 d, 52 a-b, 57 b, 3-6.

⁵ Ibid. 44-46, pls. 11 b, 12 a.

⁶ Reisner, *Sudan Notes and Records* 2, 246. Cf. Dunham, *El Kurru*, 2, who allowing 20 years per generation, in place of Reisner's 30, and taking 751 B.C. as the commencement of Pi'ankhi's reign, places the earliest burial at El Kurru at c. 860 B.C.

⁷ *El Kurru*, 13, 14 (fig. 1 b), 19, 21, 72, 75 (fig. 24 f), 77.

bearing the name of Pashedenbastet. In Ku. Tum. 1, 2, 4¹ and K. 19 were found stone arrow-heads with recessed and tanged bases² which were stated by Reisner to be 'of well-known Libyan types'.³ Finally, in the tomb (K. 53) of Tabiry, one of Pirankhi's queens, was found a battered granite stela, the text of which mentions this lady's ancestry and titles.⁴ Among the latter is one which Reisner⁵ read as 'the great chieftainess of the Temehu (southern Libyans)'.

From these facts Reisner concluded that 'while the northern Libyans were entering the Delta, or soon thereafter, the southern Libyans, the Temehu, pushed into the Nile Valley in Ethiopia [i.e. Kush] coming no doubt over the old road of the oases. . . . During the reign of Sheshanq I, or possibly a little later, a Libyan chief, the man buried in Ku. Tum. 1, established himself on an estate at el-Kurruw near Napata. . . . In all probability this first chief of the el-Kurruw family seized at once on the powers of the old Egyptian Viceroy and became like all the other Libyan chiefs in the Nile Valley nominally tributary to the Libyan King of Egypt.'⁶

The fact that the chieftain buried in Ku. Tum. 1 was roughly contemporary with the early part of the Twenty-second Dynasty of Egypt in no way proves that he too was a Libyan. Apart from the inscribed nugget and the jewellery mentioned above, the major part of the gold from the tumuli, and all the alabaster and faience fragments, came from debris or siftings⁷ and there can be no certainty therefore that they formed part of the tombs' original contents. In any case, they need be no more than evidence of sporadic trade with Egypt or, more likely, casual 'drift'. It is true that arrow-heads of the type claimed by Reisner to be 'Libyan' have been found widely distributed west of the Nile Valley,⁸ but their range of occurrence does not seem to have been very closely determined. It must also be noted that at El-Kurru an almost equal number was found of the lunate arrow-tips which are typically Nubian. Furthermore, Tabiry's title cannot be cited in support of Reisner's theory, since the correct reading is 'Great One (or 'Chieftainess') of the Desert-dwellers (or 'Barbarians', *ḥstyw*)'. None of the Kushite kings or their queens bears any title(s) which can be connected with Libya. Griffith, however, apparently considered that the suffix -qa in which a large proportion of the kings' names end (e.g. Taharqa, Amtalqa, etc.) 'was identical with the Meroitic -qe and vocalized -qō, and came from Libya, being first attached to royal names in that of Shoshenq, whose name is variously written Shasha, Shashaqa, Shashanq(a) [Assyrian: Šušinqu]'. This last form, according to Griffith, = Shasha + -qa (-qo), 'the *n* represent-

¹ Not Ku. Tum. 5 as Reisner states, *Sudan Notes and Records* 2, 246.

² Ku. Tum. 1 : 4 tanged arrow-heads (*El Kurru*, 13-14, fig. 1 c); Ku. Tum. 2 : 3 with recessed base (op. cit. 15-16, fig. 2 c); Ku. Tum. 4 : 11 tanged (op. cit. 17-18); K. 19 : 14 recessed base (op. cit. 72, 75 fig. 24 f).

³ Cf. W. Hölscher, *Libyer und Ägypter*, 68: 'Pfeilspitzen aus Feuerstein und Chalcedon, die die typische libysche, geflügelte bzw. gestielte Form aufwiesen. Mit Recht schliesst Reisner daraus auf einen nicht unbedeutenden libyschen Einfluss. . . . Dass die Pfeilspitzen den auch ohne solche Funde vorauszusetzenden starken libyschen Einfluss in Nubien beweisen, ist selbstverständlich richtig.'

⁴ *El Kurru*, 87, 90, fig. 29 f, pl. 30 a.

⁵ *Sudan Notes and Records* 2, 246; id., *BMFA* 19, 28; followed by G. A. Wainwright, *Sudan Notes and Records* 28, 18, n. 26.

⁶ *Sudan Notes and Records* 2, 247; cf. id., *BMFA* 19, 28. 31.

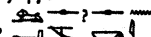
⁷ See n. 7, p. 125 above.

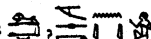

⁸ O. Bates, *The Eastern Libyans* (London, 1913), 145-6.

ing the nazalization before a guttural as in Meroitic. In the names Shabako and Shebitku the explosive in the unfamiliar Libyan suffix has been transcribed with *k*.¹

Reisner claimed that the names of Pi'ankhi's commanders in Egypt, Lamarsekny and Purem, are also Libyan.² The reading of the first, which occurs only in Pi'ankhi's inscription,³ is uncertain.⁴ The second, however, does occur in Lower Egypt and the Delta during the Libyan Twenty-second Dynasty. A limestone polychrome stela from the Serapeum at Memphis belonged to the 'Commander of the Army, Purem',⁵ and a large blue faience vase found at Tûkh el-Qarâmûs in the Delta is inscribed in hieratic: 'dedication of a vessel for the offering-table of the great Isis, mother of the gods, for the *ka* of the Great Chief of the Ma Purem, by his son Haryotes (and) his son Penhen. In year 33(?)'.⁶ The title of the father clearly dates the inscription to the time of the Libyan dynasty and the year number 33 assigns it to the reign of Osorkon I, Shoshenq III, or Shoshenq IV, the only kings of that dynasty for whom so long a reign is attested.⁷ Naville⁸ had noted that, with a minor graphic variation, the father's name is the same as that of Pi'ankhi's general. It is not impossible that Pi'ankhi did have in his army an officer of Libyan descent, which would perhaps explain why this man was chosen to receive the surrender of his fellow Libyan, Pi'ankhi's wily foe Tefnakhte of Saïs.⁹ It is possible, too, that the Kushite kings' fondness for horses¹⁰ may have owed something to their contacts with Libya. It would indeed be surprising if the relations between Kush and the peoples west of the Nile Valley did not result in some Libyan influence in Kush. However, apart from the presence of Libyan-type arrow-heads, the possible Libyan origin of the -qa termination and the name(s) of Pi'ankhi's commander(s), such influence does not, on present evidence, appear to have been at all marked. At any rate, it is far from proof that the founders of the Napatan monarchy were Libyans. Indeed, a strong indication that they were not, is afforded by Pi'ankhi's attitude towards the Libyan dynasts of Lower Egypt and the Delta. With the exception of Namlot of Hermopolis, he regarded them as ritually impure because they were uncircumcised and ate fish.¹¹ As Hölscher remarks, even if Pi'ankhi's family had belonged to a Libyan tribe which practised circumcision, he would scarcely have acted so disparagingly towards related tribes among whom this operation was not customary.¹² Säve-Söderbergh,¹³ on the other hand, thinks that Pi'ankhi's treatment of the dynasts does not necessarily prove him to be of non-Libyan origin. He gives no

¹ M. F. L. Macadam, *The Temples of Kawa*, 1 (Oxford, 1949), 124, n. 1, cf. 73-74. Cf. Sauneron and Yoyotte, *BIFAO* 50, 185, n. 1. ² Reisner, *Sudan Notes and Records* 2, 47. ³ *Urk.* III, 7, 6.

⁴ H. Ranke, *Die ägyptischen Personennamen*, 1, 328, no. 24: Šnr... sknj, . Schäfer (*Urk.* III, 7,

6) reads  Lmrskny, but adds in a footnote: 'könnte auch — sein' [for ].

⁵ E. Chassinat, *Rec. Trav.* 22 (1900), 15, no. 50.

⁶ E. Naville, *Rec. Trav.* 10 (1888), 57-58; F. von Bissing, 'Zu Tell el Yahudiyeh Taf. VIII', *ZÄS* 37 (1899), 86-87; W. Spiegelberg, 'Zu der Inschrift von Tûkh el Karmus', *Rec. Trav.* 23 (1901), 100-1; von Bissing, *Fayencegefäße* [Cat. gén. Caire] (1902), 74, no. 3842.

⁷ Spiegelberg, *Rec. Trav.* 23, 101. Cf. A. H. Gardiner, *Egypt of the Pharaohs* (Oxford, 1961), 448.

⁸ *Rec. Trav.* 10, 58.

⁹ *Urk.* III, 52, 5 (l. 140).

¹⁰ See my forthcoming paper on 'The Horse in Nubia'.

¹¹ *Urk.* III, 54 (ll. 150-1 of the inscr.); Breasted, *Ancient Records of Egypt*, IV, § 882.

¹² Hölscher, *Libyer und Ägypten*, 68.

¹³ T. Säve-Söderbergh, *Bibliotheca Orientalis* 13 (1956), 123.

reasons for his opinion, however, and does not pursue the question. It is just possible, as Vandier suggests,¹ that if Pi'ankhi was of Libyan stock, his contempt for the dynasts may have been because he felt that they were degenerate Libyans, which in fact they were.

Whatever may have been the extent of Libyan influence in Kush, that of Egyptian religion and culture was much more marked—so much so, that it has been suggested that the Kushite kings arose from among the ranks of Egyptian priests of Amūn who fled from Thebes and sought refuge in Upper Nubia on the accession of Shoshenk I.² In support of this theory was cited the fact that Pi'ankhi, the first great monarch of the kingdom and conqueror of the whole of Egypt, bore the same purely Egyptian name as the King's son of Kush and Overseer of the Southlands, the son of Herihor, during the Twenty-first Dynasty. This is no proof, however, of the Kushite kings' descent from Herihor or of their Theban origin, for 'Pi'ankhi' is probably an assumed name, adopted by that ruler after his invasion of Egypt;³ nor does the zeal which he displayed on behalf of Amūn,⁴ or the piety towards this god expressed by his ancestor, the Chieftain, the son of Rē' Alara,⁵ seem sufficient reason for inferring an Egyptian priestly origin for the founders of the Kushite monarchy.⁶ Contrary to Eduard Meyer's assertion,⁷ the Theban 'Gottesstaat' under the Twenty-fifth Dynasty was not merely a continuation of that under the Twenty-first Dynasty and the Bubastites. The government of the Thebaïd under Shabako and his successors underwent great changes,⁸ not the least of them being the diminution in the powers and status of the High Priest of Amūn and the increased importance of the Divine Adoratresses. The vigour and individuality displayed by Pi'ankhi and, in varying degrees, by his successors, make it unlikely that they were merely descendants of emigrant Theban priests.⁹


¹ É. Drioton and J. Vandier, *L'Égypte [Les peuples de l'orient méditerranéen, II]*, 4th ed. (Paris, 1962), 675.

² Cf., for example, Ed. Meyer, *Geschichte des Altertums*, II, 2, 52; Drioton and Vandier, op. cit. 524, 537–8. (Cf., however, 569–70, 675.)

³ Cf. Macadam, *Temples of Kawa*, I, xi, 73.

⁴ Compare, for example, Pi'ankhi's instructions to his army: 'When you have reached Thebes over against Eput-esut [the temple of Karnak], enter into the water, purify yourselves in the river, array yourselves in clean linen. . . . Boast not of being lords of might, for without him [Amūn] no brave hath strength; he maketh strong the weak . . . Besprinkle yourselves with water from his altars. Kiss the earth before his face . . .' (Pi'ankhi stela, ll. 12 ff., Gardiner, *JEA* 21, 220).

⁵ Macadam, op. cit. I, 16 (stela of year 6 of Taharqa, ll. 16 ff.), 36 (stela of Taharqa, years 8–10, ll. 22 ff.). This ruler is first mentioned on the stela of Tabiry from El-Kurru (Dunham, *Kurru*, 87, 90, fig. 29 f, pl. 30 a). Repeated reference to him also occurs in the Kawa inscriptions, where he is called 'the Chieftain, Son of Rē' (inscrs. IV, 17; VI, 22; IX, 54: *Kawa* I, 121–3, 127–8). It is clear from the last monuments that he was a predecessor of Kashta. (Alara is also mentioned on the stela of Nastesen (336–315 B.C.) as 'the king Alara'

 *Urk.* III, 143 = l. 8 of the inscr. Cf. Leclant and Yoyotte, *BIFAO* 51 (1952), 9.)

⁶ Cf. H. Kees, *Das Priestertum im ägyptischen Staat vom Neuen Reich bis zur Spätzeit* (Leiden–Köln, 1953), 264, 265: 'Stützt sich diese Hypothese [that the Kushite kings were descendants of emigrant Thebans] abgesehen von der älteren Vermutung, dass bei der Machtergreifung des Scheschonk Teile der thebanischen Priesterschaft nach Äthiopien flüchteten, auf sehr dürftige Indizien: das Vorkommen des seltenen Namens Pianch(i) im Hause des Herihor und in der äthiopischen Dynastie. . . . Für mein Gefühl verbietet die Haltung Pianchis gegenüber den libyschen Königen und Dynasten in Mittel- und Unterägypten, die er mit Ausnahme des Königs Nemrut von Hermopolis als rituell unrein ablehnt, im Hause des Kashta Abkömmlinge einer libysch-ägyptische Dynastie zu sehen.'

⁷ *Gottesstaat, Militärherrschaft und Ständewesen* (Berlin, 1928), 39.

⁸ Cf. Kees, op. cit. 265 ff.

⁹ Cf. A. H. Gardiner, *Egypt of the Pharaohs*, 340.

There is much to be said for the view, which is gaining increasing support, that they were natives of Kush, the descendants of the chiefs who had ruled from Kerma, 'overlaid with a rather thick veneer of Egyptian civilization'.¹ The oldest ancestral graves at El-Kurru were covered by simple circular mounds of gravel with pebble or rubble pitching. This is a characteristically² Nubian form of superstructure which is found a thousand years earlier in C-Group burials in Lower Nubia³ and at Kerma,⁴ at the other end of the Dongola reach, during the Middle Kingdom; and it was revived in X-Group burials of post-Meroitic date at Ballâna and Qustul,⁵ Gammal,⁶ Firka,⁷ and elsewhere.⁸ It was not until the reign of Pi'ankhi, apparently, that the pyramidal form of superstructure was adopted.⁹

In all the tumulus-graves and in six of the eight mastaba-tombs which succeeded them, the burial-pit was orientated north to south, in contrast to the Egyptian east-to-west orientation, which only appears, as we have seen, in the generation of Kashta, who began the occupation of Egypt.

Owing to extensive plundering, the method of burial in the ancestral mound-graves and mastabas could not be determined, but of the kings of Kush for the first six generations, three (Pi'ankhi, Shabako, and Shebitku) were buried on beds,¹⁰ the evidence for two (Kashta and Tanwetamani) is inconclusive, and all their queens were buried in this manner.¹¹ This un-Egyptian form of burial had been practised a thousand years

¹ Dunham, *Sudan Notes and Records* 28, 3; cf. Arkell, *Hist. Sudan*², 115, 120, 136; J. Vercoutter, *Sudan Notes and Records*, 40, 14; J. Yoyotte, 'Égypte ancienne' in *Histoire universelle*, 1: *Des origines à l'Islam* [Encyclopédie de la Pléiade] (Paris, 1956), 231; Vandier, *L'Égypte*⁴, 675: '... il est difficile de donner un avis définitif sur l'origine des rois de la XXV^e Dynastie [of Egypt = Pi'ankhi and his successors], et, s'il n'est pas impossible de supposer qu'ils étaient des Libyens, il est peut-être plus vraisemblable d'admettre... qu'ils étaient des indigènes, en d'autres termes, des Nubiens, égyptianisés depuis longtemps et convertis à une religion amonienne de stricte observance. Cette hypothèse est celle qui explique le mieux les difficultés auxquelles on se heurte lorsqu'on étudie ce problème.'

² Though, of course, not exclusively Nubian.

³ W. B. Emery and L. P. Kirwan, *The Excavations and Survey between Wadi Es-Sebua and Adindan 1929-1931* (Cairo, 1935), *passim*; G. Steindorff, *Aniba*, 1 (Glückstadt-Hamburg-New York, 1935).

⁴ G. A. Reisner, 'Excavations at Kerma', Parts i-iii, *HAS* 5, *passim*.

⁵ W. B. Emery, *The Royal Tombs of Ballana and Qustul*, II, pls. 3, 10 a, 11 a, 12 b, 13 a, 14 a, et *passim*.

⁶ O. Bates and D. Dunham, 'Excavations at Gammal', *HAS* 8, 29 ff. 69 ff., pl. 41.

⁷ L. P. Kirwan, *The Oxford University Excavations at Firka* (Oxford, 1939), pls. 3, 2-3; 4, 1; 6, 4.

⁸ E.g. Tangâsi (P. L. Shinnie, *Kush* 2, 66 ff.).

⁹ In view of the recent discovery in the Sudan of Egyptian pyramids of New Kingdom date at Sîdi Oweis el-Qûrani (El-Qûrnein), c. 20 km. north of Wâdi Halfa (T. Säve-Söderbergh, 'The Tomb of the Prince of Teh-Khet, Amenemhet', *Kush* 11 (1963), 159 ff., pls. 37, 38 a), and at Sulb (M. Schiff Giorgini, *Kush* 6 (1958), 86 ff., 97-8, pls. 8, 12-13, 15, 18-21; id., *Kush* 7 (1959), 160 ff.; cf. J. Leclant, *Orientalia* 31 (1962), 134-35) and the existence of small N. K. Egyptian pyramids at 'Aniba (G. Steindorff, *Aniba*, II, 'Cemetery S'), it is unnecessary to attribute Pi'ankhi's adoption of this form of superstructure to his sojourn in Egypt. In fact, although it is generally assumed to have been a pyramid, the superstructure of Pi'ankhi's tomb at El-Kurru (K. 17) was so ruined that its form could not be determined with certainty (Dunham, *Kurru*, 64, pls. 21, 22 a).

¹⁰ (a) Pi'ankhi (K. 17), 'free-standing rock coffin bench... with cut-outs for bed-legs' (*Kurru*, 64); (b) Shabako (K. 15), 'free-standing masonry coffin bench with niches for bed-legs' (op. cit. 55); (c) Shebitku (K. 18), 'free-standing coffin bench, the lower part rock, the upper part of masonry. Deep cut-outs for bed-legs. Ten holes in the floor of the burial chamber round the bench suggest the use of poles for a canopy' (op. cit. 67, pl. 23 c).

¹¹ For example, attached to the south wall in the rock-cut burial chamber of Queen Tabiry (K. 53), wife of

earlier in the tumuli at Kerma.¹ It was apparently not until the reign of Taharqa that the Kushite kings, presumably as a result of their contact with Egypt, abandoned their custom of bed-burial.² Somewhat later this practice was dropped also by lesser members of the ruling class and disappeared entirely, but reappeared in graves of post-Meroitic date at Meroë, where Garstang found burials on angarîbs.³

Yet another characteristic of the Kerma burial customs appears again in the late Meroitic period, namely the practice of killing wives and servants to accompany their dead lord in the next world—the so-called *sati*-burial.⁴ That the founders of the Kingdom of Napata were of local origin is further suggested by the circumstance that their descendants continued to rule in Kush for nearly a thousand years after their expulsion from Egypt.

Anatomical evidence bearing on the origin of the founders of the Kushite kingdom is meagre. That from the cemetery at El-Kurru was very scanty and fragmentary, but two female skulls from Tumulus 2 and the mastaba K. 11, both of the ancestral period, and one from K. 18, which is probably that of King Shebitku, 'fit into the so-called Predynastic Egyptian type, the basic white stock of Egypt There is no sign that it had been touched by any negroid influence in the case of these individuals of the ancestral period No prognathism, which would be an expected indication of negroid admixture, is evident in these "ancestors". Any difference between them and contemporary groups further down the Nile must be attributed to isolation rather than admixture.'⁵

It is true that on a stela which the Assyrian King Esarhaddon erected at Sinjirli in north Syria, on his homeward march after his victorious campaign against Taharqa in 671 B.C., a kneeling figure of a Kushite, with uraeus on his forehead, is depicted as a negro.⁶ Whether the figure is that of Taharqa himself is uncertain; more probably it represents his son and heir Ushanuhuru,⁷ for in the text of this stela, and in that carved on the walls of the Dog River near Beirût, this prince and Taharqa's queen are said to have been captured at the fall of Memphis.⁸ However, the fact that Taharqa, and perhaps still more his son by some dusky southern queen, may have had a trace⁹ of

Pitankhi, was a rock bench with cut-outs for bed-legs which stood in square floor-sinkages (*Kurru*, 86). In K. 54 and K. 55, the tombs of other (unknown) women, the bench was free-standing and there were no floor-sinkages for the bed-legs (op. cit. 91. 93).

¹ Reisner, *HAS* 5, pls. 8, 4; 9, 3-4; 10, 1; 11, 4; 23, 2, 4, etc.

² Dunham, *Sudan Notes and Records*, 28, 6-7; id., *Nuri*, 9, pl. 3 b.

³ J. Garstang et al., *Meroë, the City of the Ethiopians* (Oxford, 1911), 30 ff., pls. 38, 1; 40, 2.

⁴ At Kerma: Reisner, *HAS* 5, 65 ff.

⁵ A. M. Brues in Dunham, *El Kurru*, 118-19.

⁶ J. H. Breasted, *History of Egypt*, fig. 181; H. Schäfer, *ZAS* 33 (1895), pl. 7, 4.

⁷ Egyptian: Esanhûret (?), Macadam, *Kawa*, 1, 124.

⁸ D. D. Luckenbill, *Ancient Records of Assyria and Babylonia*, II, §§ 580, 585.

⁹ Taharqa's features do show a definite trace of negro origin. Cf. for example, the relief from the temple of Amûn at Barkal (Schäfer, *ZAS* 33 (1895), 116, pl. 7, 3); the granite head in the Cairo Museum (W. S. Smith, *Art and Architecture of Ancient Egypt*, pl. 178), and his colossal statue from Gebel Barkal, now in Khartûm Museum [No. 1841] (ibid. pl. 177). Ignoring the material (black granite) of which these last two monuments are made, and the rather flattened appearance of the nose, the result of chipping, both of which tend to give a superficial impression of negro origin, there remain: (a) the treatment of the hair, (b) the thickish lips, and the rather heavy jaw, though admittedly these features are not confined to negroes. Cf., too, the granite sphinx

negro blood is of no relevance to the question of the racial origin of the founders of the dynasty some two centuries earlier.¹

The proponents of both the Egyptian and native Kushite origin of the Napatan monarchy both assume the presence in Upper Nubia, prior to the establishment of the kingdom, of a group of Egyptians. According to the former, they were the priestly founders of the dynasty,² while the latter see them merely as the medium whereby the native rulers were Egyptianized. Thus Arkell³ writes: 'at Jebel Barkal a colony of Egyptian priests of Amen-Rê had been resident by this time [Twenty-fifth Dynasty] for some centuries. . . . In addition . . . there were also no doubt a considerable number of Egyptians still resident between the Second and Fourth Cataracts. . . . It seems . . . probable that they [the founders of the kingdom] were natives of Cush . . . , who had been Egyptianized by close contact with the priests of Amen at Barkal.'

There is no real evidence, however, for the presence of Egyptians in any capacity, in the Napata district, or indeed anywhere in Upper Nubia, in the period between the close of the Twentieth Dynasty and the foundation of the kingdom of Kush, for, as I have shown elsewhere,⁴ after the Egyptian abandonment of Nubia during the Twentieth Dynasty, the area between the First and Third Cataracts was almost devoid of a settled population of any sort for over four hundred years. It is, of course, not impossible that small numbers of priests and others did choose to remain at Gebel Barkal, where a temple of Amûn had been in existence since the time of the Eighteenth Dynasty, but there is no definite evidence that such was the case or that they were later joined by other Egyptians who fled from Thebes on the accession of the Twenty-second Dynasty.⁵

In the South and West Cemeteries at Meroë, among the non-royal burials contemporary with the second to the twelfth generations of the kings of Kush were a number of poorly-furnished narrow pit-burials in which the body, extended on its back, had frequently been placed in a wooden coffin, sometimes of anthropoid form. In the West Cemetery the mummy in these pit-burials was frequently covered with a bead net in the traditional late Egyptian manner.⁶ Dunham, who postulates the existence of 'a considerable group of real Egyptians' (priests, artists, scribes, etc., living with and working for the local Kushite rulers), says that these pit-burials contained 'people of Egyptian tradition who were relatively poor'.⁷

from Kawa (Macadam, *Kawa*, II, pl. 74; S. R. K. G[lanville], *British Museum Quarterly* 7 (1932), 46, pl. 19 b) and the bronze statuettes from this site (Macadam, op. cit. pl. 79); also the statuette published by Schäfer (*ZAS* 33, pl. 6; cf. pp. 114-16). Nevertheless, Taharqa was probably not as negroid as he appears in Mrs. Brunton's reconstruction (W. M. Brunton, *Great Ones of Ancient Egypt* (London, 1929), coloured plate facing p. 160; cf. p. 33), which is based on the Cairo head.

¹ Likewise the appearance on reliefs in the pyramid-chapels at Meroë and on the walls of the 'Lion Temple' at Naga' (c. 1st century A.D.) of steatopygous females, some with negroid features (S. Chapman and D. Dunham, *Decorated Chapels of the Meroitic Pyramids at Meroë and Barkal* (Boston, 1952), pls. 10 B, 11, 15 B, 16, 17, 23 E; Smith, op. cit. pl. 192), is irrelevant, for by that time the negro element in Kush was very strong.

² Cf., e.g., Drioton and Vandier, op. cit. 537-8.

³ *Hist. Sudan*², 112-13, 115.

⁴ *A History of Nubia . . . to the fall of Meroë*, chap. ix.

⁵ So Arkell, op. cit. 112-13.

⁶ Dunham, *Sudan Notes and Records* 28, 4-5; id., *AJA* 50, 383-4.

⁷ *Sudan Notes and Records* 28, 5. Cf. Arkell, op. cit. 120-1.

A full assessment of the evidence must, of course, await the appearance of the definitive report on these cemeteries. However, it seems one cannot regard these pit-burials as evidence of the presence of Egyptians in Kush prior to the foundation of the kingdom, for the earliest of them are apparently not earlier than the *second* generation of the kings of Kush, i.e. the time of Pi'ankhi.¹ If the people buried in them were in fact real Egyptians, they could presumably be artisans, etc., brought to Meroë by Pi'ankhi, or perhaps by his predecessor, Kashta. It is in any case unnecessary to account for the Egyptianization of the early Napatan monarchs by postulating the existence of real Egyptians in the region of the Fourth Cataract prior to the foundation of the kingdom. Kush had been subject to Egyptian influence in the time of the Middle Kingdom when an Egyptian trading-centre was established at Kerma,² and the employment by Nubian rulers during the Second Intermediate period of Egyptian expatriates³ and the presence of Nubian mercenaries in Egypt⁴ served to further this Egyptianization. From the Eighteenth Dynasty onwards, the great centre of Amūn-worship at Gebel Barkal had been subject to the influence of Egyptian religious culture and to Egyptian control. By the time of the Egyptian withdrawal from Nubia, therefore, generations of native Kushites had become thoroughly Egyptianized. Moreover, all around them stood tangible evidence of Egyptian civilization in the form of the great temples and other buildings of the New Kingdom. Even though they may have fallen into ruin in part, and become encumbered with sand by the ninth century, they would nevertheless have remained a source of inspiration to the native founders of the monarchy of Napata.⁵

Postscript

On Kashta in Upper Egypt see now J. Leclant, *ZAS* 90 (1963), 74 ff. The only known representation of Kashta, on a fragment of a small sandstone stela found at Elephantine, shows him with, in Maspero's words (*Ann. Serv.* 10 (1909), 10), 'un nez camard, un menton en retrait et de grosses lèvres saillantes, bref un type à demi négroïde'. However, the only published photograph of the piece (Leclant, loc. cit., 75, fig. 1) is very indistinct.

¹ Dunham, *Sudan Notes and Records* 28, 4; id., *AJA* 50, 383-4: 'South Cemetery. The site was first occupied about the reign of Pi'ankhy (2) . . . The West Cemetery was in constant use from the time of Pi'ankhy (2) until the final destruction of Meroë. . . As was the case in the South Cemetery, the burials from Pi'ankhy (2) to Malenaqan (12) are divided into the same two types, bed- and pit-burials.'

² Säve-Söderbergh, *Ägypten und Nubien*, 103 ff.

³ Säve-Söderbergh, 'A Buhen stela from the Second Intermediate Period (Khartoum No. 18)', *JEA* 35, 50 ff.; id. in J. W. B. Barns, 'Four Khartoum Stelae', *Kush* 2, 19 ff.; id., 'The Nubian Kingdom of the Second Intermediate Period', *Kush* 4, 54 ff.

⁴ Säve-Söderbergh, *Äg. u. Nub.*, 135 ff.

⁵ I am grateful to Mr. Dows Dunham of the Boston Museum for permission to reproduce illustrations from *El-Kurru*. Figs. 1 and 2 come from that volume, pp. 6 and 16; the material on plates XI and XII also comes from *El-Kurru*.