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 Amûn 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

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 Npt) 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).
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

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 Nūri,³ while close to Gebel Barkal, on the south and west, are two small groups of pyramids.⁴

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 Tangası 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 Zūma on the other side of the river, fifteen miles below Barkal.
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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 Begarawiyâ.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 upstream to Abû Ḥamèd.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, pl. 6-10; 6 (1913), 1-21, pls. 1-7; 7 (1916), 1-24, pl. 1-10. Cf. Sayce, LAAA 5, 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).
4 On 'Aithiops' cf. G. H. Beardsley, The Negro in Greek and Roman Civilisation. 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 Alîbiô which the Greek geographers derived from αλπός and ὄψ, 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, Jnr., 'The Negro in Ancient Greece', American Anthropologist 50 (1948), 31 ff.; id., L'Antiquité classique 25 (1956), 112, n. 2.
7 Dunham, Sudan Notes and Records 28, 9-10; id., AJA 50 (1940), 387.
8 On Kushite activity in this region see my The Kushite Empire in the South [in preparation], ch. iv.
9 Arkell, Kush 3, 93-94; id., Hist. Sudan, 143-6, 148.
10 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 merowitischen 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 Shoshenq I, Nubia too, according to Reisner, became independent under its Egyptianized Libyan governor, who thus became the ancestor of the Kushite royal family. This man Reisner identified with the ‘Commander of the Army, Pashedenbastet, son of King Shoshenq’ whose name occurred on a fragment of an alabaster vessel found in the pyramid of Queen Akheqa at Nuri; and he thought that Pashedenbastet was the father of Kashta, 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. 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 wadis—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 west (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. 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. 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). 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. With this exception, all the mastabas as far as K. 9 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
PLATE XII

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.\footnote{Dunham, \textit{El Kurru}, 76–77, pls. 2 a, 24 b.}

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.\footnote{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).}

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.\footnote{Ibid. 2.}

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 sittings 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.\footnote{Ibid. 15–16, figs. 2 c–d; pls. 5 d, 52 a–b, 57 b, 3–6.}

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.\footnote{Ibid. 44–46, pls. 11 b, 12 a.}

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.\footnote{Reisner, \textit{Sudan Notes and Records} 2, 246. Cf. Dunham, \textit{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.}

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.\footnote{\textit{El Kurru}, 13, 14 (fig. 1 b), 19, 21, 72, 75 (fig. 24 f), 77.} Reference has already been made to the alabaster fragment from Nuri
bearing the name of Pashedenbastet. In Ku. Tum. 1, 2, 4\(^1\) and K. 19 were found stone
arrow-heads with recessed and tanged bases\(^2\) 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 Reisner\(^5\) read as ‘the great chieftainess of the
Temeḥu (southern Libyans)’.

From these facts Reisner concluded that ‘while the northern Libyans were entering
the Delta, or soon thereafter, the southern Libyans, the Temehuw, 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 siftings\(^7\) 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’, ḫḥṣywy). 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 Merotic -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:
Šūšinqu]’. This last form, according to Griffith, = Shasha + -qa (-qo), ‘the n represent-

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\(^1\) 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. Holscher, Libyer und Agypter, 68: ‘Pfeilspitzen aus Feuerstein und Chalcedon, die die typische
libysche, geflügelte bzw. gestielte Form aufwiesen. Mit Recht schliesst Reisner daraus auf einen nicht un-
bedeutenden 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
\(^6\) Sudan Notes and Records 2, 247; cf. id., BMFA 19, 28, 31.
\(^7\) See n. 7, p. 125 above.
ing the nasalization before a guttural as in Meroitic. In the names Shabako and Shebitku the explosive in the unfamiliar Libyan suffix has been transcribed with k.'

Reisner claimed that the names of Pi'ankhi's commanders in Egypt, Lamarsekny and Purem, are also Libyan. The reading of the first, which occurs only in Pi'ankhi's inscription, is uncertain. 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', and a large blue faience vase found at Tūkh el-Qarāmūs 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(?). 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.

Naville 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 Sais.

It is possible, too, that the Kushite kings' fondness for horses 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. 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.

Säve-Söderbergh, 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

2 Reisner, Sudan Notes and Records 2, 47.
3 Urk. III, 7, 6.
4 H. Ranke, Die ägyptischen Personennamen, i, 328, no. 24: šwr ... sknj, šmr[y ʃeʃ la. Ġeber (Urk. III, 7, 6) reads šmr[y šeʃ la. Ġeber, but adds in a footnote: 'könnte auch — sein' [for šmr[y šeʃ la. Ġeber].
5 E. Chassinat, Rec. Trav. 22 (1900), 15, no. 50.
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 (l. 150-1 of the inscr.); Breasted, Ancient Records of Egypt, iv, § 882.
12 Hölscher, Libyer und Ägypter, 68.
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 Shoshenq 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 Rē5 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 Babasti. 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

2 Cf., for example, Ed. Meyer, Geschichte der Altertum, 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. 1, 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 1, 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’ (Ols. 67, 68 = i) Urk. iii, 143 = 1. 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 tebanischen 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 ritual 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'. The oldest ancestral graves at El-Kurru were covered by simple circular mounds of gravel with pebble or rubble pitching. This is a characteristically Nubian form of superstructure which is found a thousand years earlier in C-Group burials in Lower Nubia and at Kerma, 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, Gammai, Firkâ, and elsewhere. It was not until the reign of Pi'ankhi, apparently, that the pyramidal form of superstructure was adopted.

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-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, the evidence for two (Kashta and Tanwetamani) is inconclusive, and all their queens were buried in this manner. This un-Egyptian form of burial had been practised a thousand years earlier in C-Group burials in Lower Nubia and at Kerma, 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, Gammai, Firkâ, and elsewhere. It was not until the reign of Pi'ankhi, apparently, that the pyramidal form of superstructure was adopted.

1 Dunham, Sudan Notes and Records 28, 3; cf. Arkell, Hist. Sudan, 115, 120, 136; J. Vercoultter, Sudan Notes and Records, 40, 14; J. Yoyotte, 'Egypte ancienne' in Histoire universelle, 1: Des origines à l'Islam (Encyclopédie de la Pléiade) (Paris, 1956), 231; Vandier, L'Egypte, 675: '... il est difficile de donner un avis définitif sur l'origine des rois de la XXVe 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 amnonienne 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.


4 G. A. Reinauer, '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 Gammai', HAS 8, 29 ff., 69 ff., pl. 41.

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

8 E.g. Tangâlî (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 Sidi Oweis (El-Qûrânî, El-Qûrûnî), c. 20 km. north of Wâdi Halfa (T. Säve-Söderbergh, 'The Tomb of the Prince of Têh-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 Anîba (G. Steindorff, Anïba, 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. 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. 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 angaribs.

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. 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.

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. Whether the figure is that of Taharqa himself is uncertain; more probably it represents his son and heir Ushanuhuru, for in the text of this stela, and in that carved on the walls of the Dog River near Beirut, this prince and Taharqa’s queen are said to have been captured at the fall of Memphis. However, the fact that Taharqa, and perhaps still more his son by some dusky southern queen, may have had a trace of Piśankhi, 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. A. M. Brues in Dunham, El Kurru, 118-19.
5 J. H. Breasted, History of Egypt, fig. 181; H. Schäfer, ZÄS 33 (1895), pl. 7, 4.
6 Egyptian: Eshanbüret (?), Macadam, Kawa, 1, 124.
8 Taharqa’s features do show a definite trace of negro origin. Cf. for example, the relief from the temple of Amun at Barkal (Schäfer, ZÄS 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 Khartum 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.  

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, while the latter see them merely as the medium whereby the native rulers were Egyptianized. Thus Arkell writes: 'at Jebel Barkal a colony of Egyptian priests of Amun-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 Amun 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, 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 Amun 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.

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. 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'.

from Kawa (Macadam, Kawa, 11, 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.

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

Cf., e.g., Drioton and Vandier, op. cit. 537-8.
* A History of Nubia... to the fall of Meroë, chap. ix.
+ Dunham, Sudan Notes and Records 28, 4-5; id., AfA 50, 383-4.
7 Sudan Notes and Records 28, 5. Cf. Arkell, op. cit. 120-1.

1 Hist. Sudan 4, 112-13, 115.
2 So Arkell, op. cit. 112-13.
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. 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, and the employment by Nubian rulers during the Second Intermediate period of Egyptian expatriates and the presence of Nubian mercenaries in Egypt served to further this Egyptianization. From the Eighteenth Dynasty onwards, the great centre of Amun-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.

Postscript

On Kashta in Upper Egypt see now J. Leclant, ZÄS 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 nénroïde’. 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.
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-Buru. Figs. 1 and 2 come from that volume, pp. 6 and 16; the material on plates XI and XII also comes from El-Kurru.