CHAPTER SIX

LOWER NUBIA BETWEEN KERMA AND MIDDLE KINGDOM EGYPT (2055–1650 BC)

Guard your borders, secure your forts,
Troops are useful to their lord.1

1. The Egyptian Occupation of Lower Nubia

In his Instructions2 King Amenemhat describes the ideally righteous, benevolent and glorious regency3 of a ruler who

É travelled the far South, turned back to Delta marshes,
stood on the edges of the world and saw its contours,
Attained the outer limits of this mighty Egypt[,] [É ] set each thing rmly in its place[,] [É ] bated lions, captured crocodiles;
[É ] conquered Nubians and brought back Medjay,
and [É ] made Asiatics crawl like dogs4

but who was at the same time vulnerable through the solitariness of his god-like royal office5 and was most per diously betrayed and assassinated6 just by those whom his arms had had encircled:

I gave to the poor and raised the humble,
advanced the man from nowhere like the man of means;
But it was he who ate my food who mustered troops,
the one I circled with my arms hatched plots therein,

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1 Instruction to King Merikare, Lichtheim 1973 101.
3 Blumenthal 1996 117.
5 Cf. Parkinson 1996 146f.
Those clothed with my fine linen thought me dressed in weeds, and those perfumed with myrrh spilled out my water.\(^7\)

The splendid verses repeat familiar phrases of the discourse on a prince’s disappointment and his moral duty to surmount his disillusionment. Parallels may frequently be encountered in the pessimistic literature of the Middle Kingdom.\(^8\)

Amenemhat’s exclamation

I was not steeled for this! I did not think it!

arises from the historical experience of disruption and insecurity of the generations of princes and intellectuals who, throughout the First Intermediate Period, continued to see the sense of a united kingdom and take the measure of the catastrophic dangers of disunity. Formulating the ideals of an unyielding royal authority of divine origins, the Middle Kingdom discourse on the role of the ruler\(^9\) rests upon the lessons drawn from this experience and supports the struggle for unity. The new Nubian policy of the re-united Middle Kingdom Egypt (2055–1650 BC) may be understood before this background.

Commenting on the daybook inscription from Memphis,\(^10\) Redford presents an acute summary of the ideological-political context of the formidable swiftness and brutal impetus with which the rst rulers of the reunited Egypt turned against the Lower Nubian C-Group polity:

[W]e see a court and government immensely rich, powerful, and efficient, able to work its will not only inside the country but beyond the borders as well. Moreover, one senses the resolve to be ruthless, the Pharaohs of the 12th and 13th Dynasties viewed hither Asia and the Levant as theirs to exploit to the full. Titles denoting colonization, occupation, and military surveillance turn up mainly in the Nubian theater.\(^11\)


The early Middle Kingdom witnessed the unfolding of an aggressive ideology of domination and an ever-expanding Egypt whose ruler conquers violently all foreign lands (the foreign lands belong to the king) and defends his frontiers. The Instruction for King Merikare speaks thus about the king’s political wisdom:

Strengthen your borders, your frontier patrols;
   It is good to work for the future,
One respects the life of the foresighted,
   While he who trusts fails.

The Boundary Stela of Senusret III erected in regnal year 16 (c. 1856 BC) at Semna presents a unitary portrayal of the empire builder’s duties:

I have made my boundary further south than my fathers,
   I have added to what was bequathed me.
I am a king who speaks and acts,
   What my heart plans is done by my arm.
One who attacks to conquer, who is swift to succeed[.]
[Æ]
One who attacks him who would attack[.]
[Æ]
As for any son of mine who shall maintain this border which my majesty has made, he is my son, born to my majesty. The true son is he who champions his father, who guards the border of his begetter. But he who abandons it, who fails to fight for it, he is not my son, he will not be born to me.

Royal legitimacy and the expansion of Egypt’s boundaries were organically interconnected:

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12 Redford 1995 165.
14 Lichtheim 1973 100 (39), 101 (62–63).
15 The traditional name of this document is incorrect, both the Semna and Uronarti boundary stelae of Senusret III are literary/victory stelae, see Meurer 1996 32.
17 Lichtheim 1973 119ff. Lichtheim translated the last sentence as ‘he was not born to me’. The translation he will not be born to me was suggested to me by Professor J.F. Quack.
Hail to you, Khakaure, our Horus, Divine of Form!
Land's protector who widens its borders,
Who smites foreign countries with his crown,
Who holds the Two Lands in his arms embrace,
[Who subdues foreign] lands by a motion of his hands.

How [the gods] rejoice:
you have strengthened their offerings!
How your [*people*] rejoice:
you have made their frontiers!\(^{18}\)

The motion of his hands is an equivalent here of oral display as a form of action:\(^{19}\)

The tongue of His Person restrains the Nubian;
His phrases put the Asians to flight.\(^{20}\)

Conquest is also justified by the inferiority of the conquered:\(^{21}\)

Since the Nubian listens to the word of mouth,
To answer him is to make him retreat.
Attack him, he will turn his back,
Retreat, he will start attacking.
They are not people one respects,
They are wretches, craven-hearted.\(^{22}\)

The notion of the foreigner's inferiority fits into a more complex pattern, however. As Jan Assmann writes:

Die Ausländer werden in diesem Weltbild nicht als Partner politischen Handelns wahrgenommen. Sie sind wie wilde und scheue Tiere, die sich auf jeden Angriff hin zurückschrecken und auf jeden Rückzug hin anblicken und zuschnappen[.] Wichtig ist: der Ausländer ist nicht der Böse, auch nicht der Rebell. Er gehört gar nicht in die durch die Verwirklichung der Ma'at geschaffene Rechtslandschaft der geordneten Welt hinein, in der nach Gut und Böse unterschieden werden kann. Er muss abgeschreckt und eingeschüchtert, aber nicht bestraft werden.\(^{23}\)

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\(^{18}\) From two hymns in the praise of Senusret III, Lichtheim 1973 198f.
\(^{19}\) Eyre 1996 415 433 426.
\(^{22}\) Lichtheim 1973 119.
We have seen in Chapter IV.3 that the historical Pepinakht, a high official under the Sixth Dynasty King Pepy II, nomarch of Elephantine in the times of the violent occupation of A-Group Nubia, was transformed in the late Old Kingdom into the local saint Heqaib, *He-who-is-master-of-his-heart*. The small original chapel of Heqaib at Elephantine was enlarged first in the early (?) Eleventh Dynasty, then again in the early Twelfth Dynasty. Heqaib’s cult elevated Egyptian aggressivity towards Lower Nubia into the sphere of religion and political ideology and formulated it as a divinely sanctified, normative behaviour.

In more concrete terms, it is not always that easy to distinguish between intimidation and punishment or to discern the successive steps of conquest and the degrees of domination. Let us briefly survey the sources. After some fourteen years of regency in Upper Egypt, Mentuhotep II (2055–2004 BC) succeeded in extending his power over the Herakleopolitan kingdom as well. The political aims in the final stage of Egypt’s reunification also included the intimidation of the C-Group chieftain: the incursions of the troops stationed by Mentuhotep II in the fortress of Elephantine not only demonstrated the power of a new centralized state in a traditionally awe-inspiring manner but also forecasted a new Nubian policy. An inscription from el-Ballas dated tentatively to Mentuhotep II’s reign speaks about the annexation of ‘Wawat and the Oasis’ to Upper Egypt. Graffiti at Abisko near Aswan seem to attest that armed actions reached as far south as Buhén or possibly Kerma. Similarly to Old Kingdom documents using the same phraseology, these inscriptions indicate pilfering and intimidating raids rather than efforts at the establishment of a permanent occupation.

Under Mentuhotep II and during the brief reigns of his successors

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29 It should be added that Kemsit, one of Mentuhotep II’s lesser wives, seems to have been Nubian. For the somewhat problematic evidence, see Meurer 1996 113.
Mentuhotep III (2004–1992 BC) and Mentuhotep IV (1992–1985 BC), the acquisition of Nubian materials and produces could be secured in the framework of trade. This framework was special, however, insofar as every Egyptian trading expedition might have been prepared by or coupled with an aggressive action. Besides guarding the frontier, the garrison at Elephantine served as a basis for periodical intimidating raids, while the trading expeditions were escorted by Upper Egyptian forces and militia similarly to the Old Kingdom practice.30

Within less than three decades, however, the situation radically changed. A graffito inscribed on a rock at Korosko,31 the starting point of the important desert road leading from Lower Nubia to the gold-mining regions in the Eastern Desert and reaching the Middle Nile at Abu Hamed below the Fifth Cataract,32 records the conquest of Wawat in Year 29, i.e., the last regnal year of Amenemhat I (1985–1956 BC).33 Amenemhat I’s inscription signals the military occupation of Lower Nubia as far as the Second Cataract34 and the beginnings of an Egyptian domination which is described in the literature traditionally as a colonial rule practiced by a territorial empire.35 The occupation of Lower Nubia was carefully prepared by Amenemhat. Some time in the ïrst half of his reign36 he started the building of mud-brick fortresses at Ikkur37 and Kuban38 at the entrance of the Wadi Allaqi, at Aniba39 in the geographical and political centre of the C-Group territory, and at Buhen40 at its southern boundary. Nubian campaigns were recorded, however, in Amenemhat I’s tenth, eighteenth, and twenty-ninth

31 PM VII 84; Zaba 1974 31 No. 4.
32 For the signi cance of the gold-mining region of Abu Hamed cf. Chapter II.4.
34 Cf. Zaba 1974 Nos 4, 10, 52, 53, 58, 59, 61, 73.
35 See the excellent survey presented by S.T. Smith 2003 74ff.
36 For this dating cf. SŠve-Sšderbergh 1941 30ff.; Kemp 1983 130ff.
37 PM VII 37; Firth 1912 22ff.
38 Emery–Kirwan 1935 26ff. For Egyptian presence at Kuban and Buhen in the Old Kingdom, see Chapter IV.1.
39 Steindorff 1937 1ff.
regnal years, which indicates prolonged C-Group resistance. By the early reign of Amenemhat’s successor Senusret I (1956–1911 BC), stages I and II of these forts were complete. A fortified palace at Kor near Buhen, a site, which would grow subsequently into an industrial and trading (?) centre, seems to have been the short-lived headquarters of Senusret I (?) during another Nubian expedition.

The enormous fortresses at Buhen (Pl. 22), the outer fortifications enclosed an area measuring c. 450 by 150 m, the citadel c. 150 by 138 m had multiple functions. They constituted a powerful defence line protecting Egypt from aggression from the south; the garrisons stationed in them (according to the size of the individual forts, 100 to 500 or more men) controlled the C-Group population and supported long-distance trade between Egypt and Kerma as well as quarrying activities in Lower Nubia. Under Senusret I Egyptians started to mine for gold in the Wadis Allaqi and Gabgaba. The fortress of Kuban guarded the entrance to the mining area and the gold was smelted at Kuban and shipped from there to Egypt. Scales and weights for weighing gold were also discovered in the forts of Uronarti and Semna. The activities of the forts were coordinated by an intricately organised bureaucratic administration, which replaced the native political structure.

Under Senusret I’s third successor Senusret III (1870–1831 BC), a new Nubian policy was introduced. Early in his reign, Senusret III extended Egypt’s boundary to the region of Hh south of the Second Cataract. The new southern frontier was established at Semna and

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41 For his reign, see Obsomer 1995.
42 For the building history of the forts, see the literature quoted above and Kemp 1983, 130ff.; Kemp 1989, 168ff.
44 Cf. the autobiography of Amen in his tomb, Sve-Sderbergh 1941, 71ff.
47 Cf. Sve-Sderbergh 1941, 73; Vercoutter 1959, 133ff.; Trigger 1976, 66f.
49 Meurer 1996 argues that Hh was identical with Semna and Kumma.
Kumma as described in a stela\textsuperscript{50} erected at Semna in Year 8 of Senusret (for its text, see Chapter II.3. We shall return to the contents of this stela in Chapter VI.2). In Year 8 a 78 m long, 10.4 m wide, and 7.8 m deep\textsuperscript{51} canal was built at Sehel (between Elephantine and Philae) to allow unhindered access for the Egyptian fleet to Nubia. The building of the canal was commemorated in an inscription at Sehel.\textsuperscript{52} The early Twelfth Dynasty forts of Ikkur,\textsuperscript{53} Kuban,\textsuperscript{54} Aniba\textsuperscript{55} and Buhen\textsuperscript{56} were rebuilt, and new forts were built north of the Second Cataract at Faras\textsuperscript{57} and Serra East,\textsuperscript{58} in the region of the Second Cataract at Dabenarti\textsuperscript{59} and Mirgissa\textsuperscript{60} and south of the Second Cataract at Askut,\textsuperscript{61} Shalfak,\textsuperscript{62} Uronarti,\textsuperscript{63} Semna,\textsuperscript{64} Semna South\textsuperscript{65} and Kumma.\textsuperscript{66} The fortresses were subordinate to the overseer of the South who controlled the territory between Cusae (in the region of Hermopolis) in Egypt and the Second Cataract: Lower Nubia was considered thus part of Egypt.\textsuperscript{67}

The territorial expansion\textsuperscript{68} beyond the Second Cataract and the building of a strategically coordinated chain of forts\textsuperscript{69} was determined

\textsuperscript{50} Berlin 14753, Meurer 1996 10 ff.
\textsuperscript{51} I.e., 150 cubits long, 20 cubits wide, 15 cubits deep, Gasse–Rondot 2003 41.
\textsuperscript{52} Cf. Gasse–Rondot 2003 41.
\textsuperscript{53} 82 by 110 m. The measurements of the forts after Arnold 1994 83. For the forts in the New Kingdom cf. Chapter IX.
\textsuperscript{54} 70 by 125 m.
\textsuperscript{55} 87 by 138 m.
\textsuperscript{56} See above.
\textsuperscript{57} 75 by 85 m. Cf. Griffith 1921 80 ff.; J. Lipinska: Faras. LÄ II (1975) 114–115.
\textsuperscript{59} 60 by 230 m, Dunham 1967 177; S.T. Smith 1991b 122 ff.
\textsuperscript{62} 47 by 95 m, Dunham 1967 115, 137.
\textsuperscript{63} Triangular, 57 by 114 by 126 m, Dunham 1967 3–112.
\textsuperscript{64} 135 by 135 m, Dunham–Janssen 1960 5, 73.
\textsuperscript{66} 70 by 117 m, Dunham–Janssen 1960 113, 128.
\textsuperscript{67} Cf. S.T. Smith 1995 39 ff.
\textsuperscript{69} In general, see S. Clarke: Ancient Egyptian Frontier Fortresses. JEA 3 (1916) 155
by a new factor, viz., the spectacular unfolding of the power of Kerma. Kerma appeared under the name Kush (Kšt) for the first time in the text of a stela discovered by Champollion and Rossellini at Buhen in 1830 in a list of prisoners presented to Senusret I. The chain of fortresses between Elephantine and Semna-Kumma was destined to defend the empire against aggression from the south, control a now considerably enlarged occupied territory and its population, and serve the purposes of long-distance trade. A similar policy is manifested by the line of forts built under the early Twelfth Dynasty along the border with Palestine and by the fortress built in the Wadi Natrun to protect the Western Delta from the Libyans. Theoretically, the Nubian forts also could secure the military hinterland for expansion towards the south, i.e., aggression directed against Kush. Indeed, a camp built in the reign of Senusret III in the northern part of the island of Sai midway between Semna and the Third Cataract attests Egyptian penetration into a territory controlled by a native chief (in the late Old Kingdom, it was controlled by Kerma, cf. Chapter IV) and the establishment there of a bridge-head for campaigns into the Kerma heartland south of the Third Cataract, such as Senusret III’s campaign


70 Middle Kingdom writing: Kšt, New Kingdom writings: Kṣt, Kws, Kṣš, Kṣšj, and nally Kšt. For the evidence, see Meurer 1997 20.


72 I cannot share the view of Adams 1984 46 according to whom [e]ven if we accord them some warlike prowess the Second Cataract Forts make no sense as territorial defenses against them [i.e., the northern Nubians]. Clustered as they were along the riverbank, the forts would have been an effective deterrent only against a maritime force. They would easily have been outflanked by an army moving overland as any native Nubian force would have moved. Adams seems to forget that patrols dispatched from the forts could effectively control all movements in Lower Nubia, of whatever nature and dimensions. Also Warburton’s designation is one-sided: During the Middle Kingdom the central government established a series of fortifications intended to prevent Nubian commerce from entering Egypt without authorization, further. It has been argued that the Egyptian fortresses in Nubia reflect military necessity, and yet it should be evident that these fortresses were incapable of protecting anything except commerce: they could not and did not form an impenetrable line which military forces could not pierce. The forts merely assured that any significant commercial activity would be dominated by the Egyptians. Warburton 2001 119, 187.

73 A. Fakhry: W di-El-Natũr n. ASAE 40 (1940) 845 848.

74 Cf. Shaw 2000 318.

75 Thus, e.g., Shaw 2000 325.
in Year 10 (c. 1860 BC). There is no evidence, however, that would indicate that the Sai camp was in use after this campaign. In the *Execration Texts* dating from the two centuries of the Twelfth Dynasty Ṣsšt, Sai, occurs as an independent native polity under the rule of its own chief (ḥqš). It is significant that the *Execration Texts* intended to magically destroy Egypt’s enemies also list the ḥqš of Kush, i.e., Kerma.

The Middle Kingdom names of the Nubian forts present the threatening face of a formidable conqueror: ḫsf mdšlw, Repressing-the-Medjay (Serra East), ḫsf stlw, Destroying the Nubians (Askut), ḫsf ḡššwt, Curbing-the-Foreign-Countries (Shalfak), ḫsf ḣwšt, Repelling-the-Iuntiu (Uronarti), ḏšl/dštr Stl, Subduer-of-the-Seti-land (or: Setiu-Nubians) (Semna South), ṣhm Ḥ-hšw-R ṭm śrw, King-Khakaire [Senusret III]-is-Powerful (Semna West), and ḫlw ḡḏwt, Warding-off-the-Bows (Kumma). The name of Faras, ḫw ṭšwy, Embracing/Uniting-Two-Lands, however, seems to have given expression to the conception that Lower Nubia was part of Egypt. The aggressive message

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76 For Senusret III’s rock inscription at Dal cf. J. Leclant: Egypt in Nubia During the Old, Middle, and New Kingdoms. in: *Africa in Antiquity* I 63 73 64.
80 For the title, see Lorton 1974 22 ff., 60 ff.; Zibelius-Chen 2001 24 ff.
81 For the Asiatic enemies in the *Execration Texts*, see Redford 1992 87 ff., but also cf. the note in Warburton 2001 312.
83 For the Medjay, see Chapter IV.2.
84 For the name on seals from Askut, see S.T. Smith 1995 25 ff.
85 General name for Nubian nomads.
of the fortress names is identical with that of Senusret I's and Senusret III's names and epithets. The forts were not only the places from where the land was governed: with their enormous dimensions, they also dominated the Nubian landscape and were awe-inspiring symbols of Pharaoh's omnipresent supernatural power.

The effort of building these forts was immense: e.g., the walls of Serra East, one of the smaller fortresses, contained c. 15,000 m$^3$ of mud-brick alone. The fortresses were surrounded by ditches cut from the rock or lined with masonry or mud-brick and the parapets of the ditches were also crowned with a wall. In several forts the mud-brick walls were reinforced with timber. Timber, which had to be imported to Lower Nubia, was also used in the architecture of the buildings in the interior of the fortresses. Since the Nile was impassable to shipping below Mirgissa, the Second Cataract was bypassed there by a 8 km long mud-paved slipway. The boats were placed on sledges and dragged along the wet slipway by men and oxen. Moreover, Semna and Semna South were linked by a wall, behind which boats could be beached. The fort of Serra East also enclosed a basin in which ships could safely dock. It is thus fully justified to call the Lower Nubian forts 'the mightiest fortifications ever erected in the ancient world'.

Nevertheless, Adams suggests that '[t]heir function was not to keep the Nubians under control, but rather to keep the Nile under Egyptian control. They had their counterpart millennia later in the 'castles' which reappeared in Nubia in the late Middle Ages; the absence of Egyptian forts at the cataracts above Semna suggests the possibility that the Nile above Semna was effectively controlled by another power. If so, this was a genuine international trade. Any attempt to account for the fortresses on pragmatic military grounds alone seems as futile as an attempt to account for the pyramids in terms of a need to dispose of the dead. Both are examples of the material hypertrophy which is characteristic of Egyptian civilization. Once the decision to build them was taken, the rest followed from force of habit.'

It would seem, however, that, if there was any material hypertrophy in the size and complexity of the fortifications, it was determined rather

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89 Cf. Trigger 1976 75.
90 Adams 1977 176.
91 Adams 1977 185 ff.
by a cautious assessment of the potential danger threatening Egypt from Kerma and by the deeply shocking experience of the First Intermediate Period. The monumental architecture of the fortresses also reflects the style of government of the Twelfth Dynasty:

[t]he archaeological evidence from Middle Kingdom Nubia projects into this military frontier region a massive application of Middle Kingdom administration. Behind the forts must lie a hidden mountain of scribal effort. We can only marvel at the excess of zeal and energy that the whole operation reveals.\(^92\)

It is important to add, however, that the great fortresses in Nubia, although built to defend Egyptian interests against hostile Nubian kingdoms, are also statements of power, and the part they might have played in assisting the kings of the Twelfth Dynasty to demonstrate their authority to their own potentially unruly aristocracy is a factor that should not be ignored.\(^93\)

Summing up the views concerning the motifs of the conquest of Lower Nubia and the purpose of the Middle Kingdom forts, we may agree with Karola Zibelius-Chen that

wenn auf der einen Seite das Herrschaftsverständnis des ägyptischen Pharaonentums, politisches Programm und Bürokratismus als Kraftstoff für die expansionistischen Bestrebungen angesehen werden müssen, auf der anderen Seite die machtpolitischen Umstände wie das aufstrebende Kuschitenreich als Motor für die ägyptische Annexion und wirtschaftliche Ausbeutung weiter Teile Nubiens gelten müssen.\(^94\)

In Stuart Tyson Smith’s view, economic interests played an even more decisive role in the conquest. Analyzing the changes occurring in Egypt’s Nubian policy during the advanced Twelfth and the Thirteenth Dynasty, he concludes that Egypt tried to minimize the costs of the empire and maximize the profit drawn from the exploitation of the resources of the occupied territory and from long-distance trade.\(^95\) We shall return to these changes below in Chapter VI.2. Here Smith’s conclusion concerning the role of the forts deserves to be quoted:

\(^92\) Kemp 1989 178.
\(^93\) Kemp 1997 130.
\(^94\) Zibelius-Chen 1988 239. Zibelius-Chen also refers to a politisches Vakuum in Unternubien as a motif of expansion, yet this is not valid for the early phase of the Egyptian penetration.
the Second Cataract forts of the Middle Kingdom operated as a well planned and integrated system with considerable functional differentiation, ranging from Semna fort’s apparent emphasis of garrison, to Askut’s more passive focus on support of the other forts and local activities. One need not seek to find a single, or even primary, purpose for the system. It is clear that the forts had a multi-faceted role in the Nubian policy of the Middle Kingdom Pharaohs, serving on the one hand in support of the punitive campaigns to the south and as a static defense to prevent violation of the boundary, and on the other to regulate and facilitate riverine and overland trade, monitor the local population and exploit the natural resources of the area.96

In the reign of Senusret III the garrisons were manned with soldiers recruited in Egypt.97 The Twelfth Dynasty stelae, rock inscriptions, statues and seal impressions from Lower Nubia attest various ranks of army officers ranging from infantry generals (lmy-r ms† wr, lmy-r mnršt.t) to army scribes (šš ms†) and hswty soldiers; of naval officers ranging from fleet commanders (lmy-r ḥšw) to commanders of oarsmen (lmy-r lny.t). The police are represented by titles ranging from police commanders (lmy-ht šš-pr) to policemen (šš-pr).98 Evidently, the garrisons also functioned as customs guards. The Semna Despatches99 record that units of soldiers (ḥswty) and Medjay, i.e., Nubian desert men, regularly patrolled the desert to control every movement of the natives, but they also record trading with Nubians arriving from and returning to the south100 (the chiefdom of Ṣs’t or Kerma?) at the fortress of Semna.

As attested by the seal impressions101 found in large quantities in the Nubian fortresses, the administrative/economic institutions established in them such as the departments of the treasury (pr-hd), granaries (šm.t), magasins (wds.w), and labor prisons (ḥnrt),102 continued to be

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97 Smith 1976 68, 79.
100 Cf. Zibelius-Chen 1988 149.
102 On this institution, see W.C. Hayes: A Papyrus of the Late Middle Kingdom in the Brooklyn Museum. Brooklyn 1955 37ff; S.T. Smith 1995 47; and see below the discussion of Areika.
modelled on urban institutions in Middle Kingdom Egypt. Seal impressions from Mirgissa and Uronarti and a rock inscription at Kumma also attest the existence of governors (ḥtm n ḫty-ʾ n ḫn). As shown by Kemp, the combined storage capacity of all the Nubian forts considerably exceeded the needs of the Egyptian garrisons and the Egyptian administrators living within their walls. Kemp suggests that the granaries in the forts (especially the large one in the fort of Askut, a fortified grain store) also functioned as bases of supply for military campaigns. Grain was shipped in from Egypt, but a smaller part of it may have been produced in Lower Nubia. On the whole, the rationalism of the Egyptian establishment in Lower Nubia is obvious.

2. Nubians and Egyptians in Lower Nubia under Middle Kingdom Domination

The regulation of trade with the Nubians figures prominently in the text of the Semna boundary stela from Year 8 of Senusret III (for the text, see Chapter II.3). According to the stela, the purpose of the forts of Semna and Kumma was to prevent any Nubian journeying north by land or in a kai-boat as well as any livestock belonging to Nubians, with the exception of a Nubian who shall come to traffic at ḫn [Mirgissa]. While the dimensions of local trade at Semna were probably not large, the trading post at Mirgissa may have been an important, perhaps the most important, centre of long-distance trade between Kerma and Egypt where cargoes arriving from the south were re-loaded on Egyptian vessels.

Pottery finds from Kerma attest a fairly large-scale import of various commodities from Upper and Lower Egypt, which constantly increased during the Twelfth Dynasty and in the earlier Thirteenth Dynasty. In

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104 Gratien 1994 188.
107 From the military point of view: Warburton 2001 221. I do not agree, however, with his generalization: “Egyptian policy was...” generally marked by a clear lack of determination (ibid.).
108 Berlin 14753, Meurer 1996 10ff.
exchange, Egypt acquired luxury goods, which, like the gold mined or the stone quarried in Lower Nubia and the Eastern Desert, constituted an essential part of Egyptian redistributive economy and royal display.

The occupation of Lower Nubia first to the Second Cataract and then to the Semna-Kumma region was a violent process. The Egyptian conquerors met with a prolonged opposition. This time, there were probably no Nubian mercenaries to strengthen the Egyptian troops: now the famed Nubian warriors fought against them. A rock inscription of Senusret I’s vizier Enyotefoqer at Gebel el-Girgawi south of Korosko (East) gives an idea of the cruelty with which the C-Group chiefdom was occupied and the manner in which the violence was justified:

Enyotefoqer, [whose nickname is] Gem, said: I am a valiant man of vigour, a pleasant man from [the city called] She-in-front-of-her-Lord, [a scribe] excellent with [his] fingers, a humble one, yet in great affection of [His] Majesty, [distributing] clothes among his troops. One has been engaged in building this house. Then the Nubians of the entire remaining part of Wawat were slaughtered. Thereupon I sailed victoriously upstream, slaughtering the Nubian on his river-bank(s) and then I sailed downstream plucking corn and cutting down their remaining trees. I (?) put fire into their houses, as one has to act against him who rebelled against the King (of Upper Egypt).

The negative attitude towards the Nubians is stressed in all kinds of inscriptions connected with the military as well as in the symbolic representations of domination occurring on the seals used by the individual garrisons. It is articulated thus in the graffito of a Twelfth Dynasty officer at Areika:

[É ] beloved of his lord, the king’s follower Khuisobek. I set out, acting for him with a troop of bowmen, being at their head [É ] I campaigned/patrolled, living on the road [É ]/guarding the road [É ] residing far from my [É ] without placing a Nubian in my heart.

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110 The Antefoker/Antefoqer of the literature.
111 Another rock inscription of Enyotefoqer on the south side of the Gebel el-Girgawi: Zaba 1974 39 No. 10A.
112 In the actual context it may have been a labor prison for captured Nubians as well as a small fortified camp supporting Enyotefoqer’s campaign, see the next sentences of the inscription.
113 Zaba 1974 99f. No. 73.
This attitude is strikingly (but understandably) contrasted by the attitude of the Egyptian military commanders towards their own men:

Year 16 [of Senusret I?]. Ameny, son of Mentjuwoser, son of Iay: I am a man of the troops charging down upon the strong one, (but) loving life and hating death.\(^{116}\)

or, more explicitly:\(^{117}\)

Enyotef, son of Hënenu, son of Djaf-Enyotef: I was born in the Year 10 of the king of Upper and Lower Egypt Shtp-šb-R' [Amenemhat I], triumphant. I am the calm man who is among the troops. I caused no harm to my assemblage of recruits.\(^{118}\)

As triumphal monuments generally do, also Enyotefoqer’s rock inscription overexaggerates the topoi of punishment and devastation. A total destruction of the land and its inhabitants would not have served the conqueror’s interests. The text of a stela\(^{119}\) from the reign of Amenemhat II (1911–1877 BC) records that, as a punishment, Nubian chieftains were forced to work as gold-washers. This may not have been an isolated case. While the C-Group chiefdom as a political structure was replaced by an Egyptian administration centered in the forts, it cannot be excluded from the very outset that the elite of Wawat was not destroyed physically, or even that it was allowed to participate in the control of the C-Group communities. Such participation may be imagined, however, only on a village level and/or within the framework of family/clan structures: neither form of native participation in colonial administration would necessarily leave behind written records. The survival of C-Group cultural traditions such as burial customs and finel decorated pottery (see Chapter VIII.2.1) throughout the Middle Kingdom and the Second Intermediate Period may be better comprehended if we suppose a however infringed survival of the social structure of the developed phase of the Early C-Group (see Chapters IV.3, V).

\(^{116}\) Zaba 1974 79 No. 56.

\(^{117}\) Zaba 1974 80 refers to lines 8f. of the Tale of the Shipwrecked Sailor to illuminate the general conception of the good commander behind these inscriptions: Your crew has come back safely; there are no losses to our expedition. Though we traversed the northern marches of Wawat and skirted Senmut fortress. Trans. Foster 1992 24.

\(^{118}\) Zaba 1974 54 No. 27. Translation slightly corrected by J.F. Quack (in a letter of June 2008).

\(^{119}\) From Abydos, BM 569, Sše-Sšderbergh 1941 74; Obsomer 1995 350; Wegner 1995 153.
As already noted, the administrative institutions established in the forts reproduced institutions of the government of Egypt north of Elephantine. The principal departments appearing in the evidence were listed above in Chapter VI.1. As to the direct control of the C-Group communities, the occurrences of the titles įmy-r wʿrwt n styw, overseer of districts of Nubians, įmy-r wʿryw, overseer of district men/superintendent of district inhabitants, įmy-r wʿrt, district overseer, indicate that Lower Nubia was divided into smaller regional units the inhabitants of which were controlled by Egyptian officials. The actual relationship between the wʿrwt (districts), and the territorial units controlled by the individual forts remains obscure, however.

It was the governed and not the government that differed. Although there is no textual evidence to tell about the actual principles according to which the C-Group population living in the small settlements around the Egyptian forts was allowed to preserve its village-level social, economic, and political structure, the archaeological evidence is rather unequivocal. The lack of Egyptian imports in the C-Group settlements and the scarcity of C-Group pottery in the forts seems to indicate that the inhabitants of the forts and the native settlements lived in a kind of cultural separation in the rst half of the Twelfth Dynasty. We shall see later that this situation began to change around 1800 BC, i.e., towards the end of the Middle C-Group.

The large quantities of seal impressions connected with the institution of ġhnrt, labor prison, found in the forts reveal that until the advanced Twelfth Dynasty the forced labor of Nubians (and perhaps also Egyptians deported to Nubia) put in labor prisons as a punishment constituted an important element of the fortress system. Labor prisons were operated in the forts of the line built out under Amenemhat I, Senusret I and Senusret III and in smaller forts built in the fertile areas, which were densely settled by the C-Group. Areika (Pl. 23), the only excavated example of the smaller forts, presents an excellent illustration of the changes occurring in Egypt’s Nubian policy in the course of the Twelfth and Thirteenth Dynasties. The fort of Areika, the architecture

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121 Rock graffiti at Areika, Weigall 1907 Pls LII, LIII; Wegner 1995 151f.
of which followed a type of Egyptian Middle Kingdom fortresses, was built in the early Twelfth Dynasty, probably under Senusret I, on the west bank c. 10 km downstream from Amada and c. 15 km upstream from the aforementioned site of Gebel el-Girgawi south of Korosko (East). The soldiers stationed in the original fort participated in the military control of the Amada area and the fort was also the seat of Egyptians involved in district administration. Areika also included a ḫnrt, labor prison which may have been identical with the ḫnrt mentioned in Enyotefoquer’s inscription from Gebel el-Girgawi. The Middle C-Group Phase IIa domestic pottery (mainly cooking pots, water jars, storage vats) from the fort was used probably by the natives, who were put into the ḫnrt of Areika. This pottery may also indicate that the C-Group communities were obliged to contribute to the supply of the labor prisons. Significantly, the Egyptians living in the fort of Areika used only Egyptian pottery, tablewares as well as containers, while no Egyptian ceramics was used in the contemporary C-Group settlements.

The expansion of the occupied territory to the Semna-Kumma frontier and the completion of the fortress system were coupled with a significant change in the nature of Egypt’s presence in Nubia. As shown by H.S. Smith, by the 1800s BC Egyptian officials and their families were buried in Nubia, which indicates that at this time the occupied land was governed by permanent settlers. The replacement of rotating garrisons and officials supplied from Egypt with permanent settlers was meant to minimalise the costs of occupation. The change in the system of government secured a greater autonomy for the forts and it went together with a change in the imperial attitude. Instead of

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125 For the dating on the basis of the ceramic evidence, see Wegner 1995 140ff.
127 Wegner 1995 156.
128 Wegner 1995 138ff. Wegner stresses the typological and chronological closeness of the Areika assemblages to those from Wadi es-Sebua (see below).
131 For the evidence from Buhen Cemetery K, see Randall-MacIver Woolley 1911 185, 216; for Mirgissa Cemetery MX-TC, see Vercoutter et al. 1975 229 289; and cf. S.T. Smith 1995 66ff.
132 S.T. Smith 2003 76.
133 Since I am not disposed to believe that the analysis of the historical evidence would make a sense only if it leads to the creation of a model, I prefer to refrain here from discussing theoretical issues such as the definition of the Middle (and New)
soldiers and bureaucrats who counted the days until they could return to Egypt from a subjugated foreign land, Lower Nubia was controlled by people, who considered now Nubia a continuation of Egypt in a different manner than their predecessors. For the Egyptian of the earlier Middle Kingdom it was a horror to be buried in a foreign land. The burial of Egyptians on the Middle Nile signals that in the advanced Middle Kingdom Lower Nubia was no longer a foreign land for them. A fascinating evidence for the Egyptianization of the Nubian environment is also presented by the monuments of domestic ancestor cult found in late Twelfth and Thirteenth Dynasty contexts at Askut. The changes in the Egyptian perception of the Middle Nile environment also brought about changes in the traditionally hostile and exclusive perception of the Nubians.

Some time in the (late?) reign of Senusret III the Egyptian garrison abandoned Areika. The site was reoccupied, apparently without any longer interval, by a C-Group community the ceramic/artifactual evidence of which spans over the second half of Phase IIa of the Middle C-Group and Phase IIb of the Late C-Group (late Twelfth and Thirteenth Dynasties). The new occupants transformed the Egyptian fort into a habitation site partly preserving the perimeter walls and the buildings in the interior of the fort and adding a number of structures with curvilinear walls built in the characteristic C-Group standing stone slab technique. The architecture of the new buildings displays close affinities with the houses of the walled settlement at Wadi es-Sebua and with houses excavated at Aniba, Wadi el-Arab, Faras and in the region between Faras and Gemai and also observed at

Kingdom stages of Nubian expansion as acculturation imperialism, acculturation colonialism, equilibrium imperialism, or equilibrium colonialism etc. For the issue, see Adams 1984; S.T. Smith 1991a; 1995; 1997; 2003; Kemp 1997, all with further literature.


138 Emery Kirwan 1935 106ff.

139 Griffith 1921 65ff.

Karanog.\textsuperscript{141} All these structures seem to date from Phase IIa of the Middle C-Group. The C-Group houses of Faras were built in the advanced Twelfth Dynasty similarly to Areika in an Egyptian fort after it has been abandoned by the Egyptian garrison, for which it originally had been built.\textsuperscript{142} The partial preservation of the fortified perimeter wall at Areika as well as the building of a fortified wall with loopholes for archers and with three gates including a main gate fortified with Egyptian-type spur walls around the settlement at Wadi es-Sebua indicate the modification of the earlier governmental structure based on the Egyptian fortresses. The rising of certain C-Group settlements which imitate features of the Egyptian forts or even occupy abandoned Egyptian forts (what could not have been done without Egyptian consent or intention) above the rest of the small native habitation sites indicates that the native population was no longer governed exclusively by Egyptian officials but its elite was included into the local level of the government of Lower Nubia. Later Middle- and Late C-Group burials in Cemetery N of Aniba offer clear evidence for marked social differences within the C-Group community. Tombs with vaulted mud-brick burial chamber, large stone circle superstructure (diameter between c. 9–15 m) with rectangular mud-brick chapel (with flat, later with vaulted roof) at the east or south-east\textsuperscript{143} may have belonged to high-standing natives participating in the government of Lower Nubia.

The walled village of Wadi es-Sebua (Pl. 24)\textsuperscript{144} indicates that some native communities performed special duties. Wadi es-Sebua controlled the entrance of an important road leading into the Eastern Desert.\textsuperscript{145} The great number of Pan-Grave\textsuperscript{146} burials in its region suggests that it may have been inhabited (partly?) by a new population, which arrived in Lower Nubia and Upper Egypt\textsuperscript{147} in the advanced Twelfth, or the

\textsuperscript{141} Steindorff 1937: 35.
\textsuperscript{142} Cf. Wegner 1995: 158 f.
\textsuperscript{143} Steindorff 1935: 29 ff.
\textsuperscript{144} For the finds from the site, see B. Gratien: Le village fortifié du groupe C à Ouadi es-Sebua Est, le typologie de la céramique. CRIPÉL 7 (1985) 39–69.
\textsuperscript{145} Edwards 2004: 98 f.
\textsuperscript{147} For Pan-Grave burials in Egypt, see W.M.F. Petrie: Diospolis Parva. The Cemeteries of Abadiyeh and Hu 1898–1899. London 1901 (reprint edn. 1972) 45 ff.; S ve-S derbergh
early Thirteenth Dynasty. The Pan-Grave immigrants preserved their distinct cultural traits until the end of the Second Intermediate Period. The occurrence of Pan-Grave burials in C-Group cemeteries in both Lower Nubia and Upper Egypt indicates, however, their swift assimilation. The people buried in the characteristic pan-graves—circular pits with low, rubble-ringed tumuli, shallow offering pits, frequently containing bucrania of goats and gazelles painted with red dots—were identified with the Medjay, an Eastern Desert people not related to the C-Group, and the Pan-Grave burials in Upper Egypt as remains of the Medjæw, Medjay, mercenaries of the Egyptian texts (cf. Chapters IV.2, 3, VI.1, 2).

However indirectly, the growing hierarchical differences occurring between the smaller habitation sites and the more complex settlements such as Faras, Areika and Wadi es-Sebua describe a process of social differentiation within the C-Group, which was promoted by the changes in the administration of the land and the permanent Egyptian settlers’ attitude towards the Nubians. As a whole, the culture of the Early, Middle and Late C-Group does not display dramatic changes. Nevertheless, the continuity of C-Group traditions in the mortuary realm and in pottery-making should not conceal the dimensions of the actual historical changes, viz., the swift development of the chiefdoms of Wawat, Irtjet, and Satju; the emergence of the united chiefdom of Wawat; the Egyptian occupation of Wawat and the establishment of a

152 For the evidence, see Bietak 1966; S. Giuliani: Medja Sources in the Old Kingdom. Discussions in Egyptology 42 (1998) 41 54.
colonial administration functioning without the participation of the surviving native elite; and, from the advanced Twelfth Dynasty, the direct as well as indirect encouragement of a renewed process of social differentiation within the C-Group population and its admittance to the local levels of the government of Lower Nubia.

The Twelfth Dynasty ended with the brief reign of Queen Sobekneferu (1777–1773 BC). Until the reign of Neferhotep I (c. 1740–1729 BC), the Thirteenth Dynasty (1773–after 1650 BC) seems to have maintained its control over Lower Nubia, even though a series of extraordinarily high Nile floods in the advanced Twelfth and the early Thirteenth Dynasty caused damages in the forts. Sealings from the forts attest to an uninterrupted Egyptian supremacy until around 1700 BC.

By this time, the Egyptian expatriates running Lower Nubia lived there for about six generations. The last decades of the Middle Kingdom saw the fragmentation of the Egyptian kingdom and the northern expansion of the Classic Kerma (Kerma Classique) state. Our sources are silent about the fate of the garrisons. Perhaps not all of them were systematically withdrawn to Egypt. Be as it may, so much is obvious that a part of the soldiers and professional expatriates stayed on with their families in and around the forts when the Egyptian kingdom collapsed and Lower Nubia came under the supremacy of the ruler of Kush residing in Kerma.

The end of effective Egyptian rule around the reign of Neferhotep I seems to have been followed by a curious period of transition. It may be supposed that, concurrently with the last reigns of the Thirteenth Dynasty, Egyptian expatriates or Egyptian dissidents (?) tried to establish an independent Egyptian-style kingdom in Lower Nubia. Three

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153 Nile level inscription of Sobekhotep II, second (?) ruler of Dyn. XIII from Kumma: PM VII 150; jewel with the cartouche of Neferhotep I, eighth (?) ruler of Dyn. XIII from Buhen Cemetery K: ibid. 139; for early Thirteenth Dynasty despatches from Semna, see Smither 1945. I refer to the rulers of the Thirteenth Dynasty on the basis of Shaw (ed.) 2000 480ff., and not to the dynasty as it occurs in Beckerath 1997 137ff. (the rulers from the Thirteenth Dynasty of the Turin Canon who are attested by monuments). Cf. Chapter VII, introduction.


155 According to Trigger 1976 82f., [t]here is no archaeological evidence that either these E. floods or their subsequent recession adversely affected the native inhabitants of Lower Nubia. Likewise, under a strong central government, the Egyptians seem to have adjusted to this cycle of ecological changes.

156 Kemp 1983 168ff. According to a suggestion made by the anonymous reviewer of my manuscript, it cannot be excluded that the kings in question were pretenders
royal names not attested in Egypt appear in rock inscriptions\textsuperscript{157} between Kalabsha and Abu Simbel. Kakare Iny is attested between the Kalabsha region and Abu Simbel (in fifteen rock graffiti),\textsuperscript{158} II-ib-khent-Re from Abu Hor to Toshka (three inscriptions),\textsuperscript{159} and Segerseni in two rock inscriptions at Khor Dehmit.\textsuperscript{160} Their chronological position is indicated by II-ib-khent-Re’s Horus name, which was modelled on Neferhotep I’s Horus name $grg-tw$.\textsuperscript{161} A contemporary graffito names an official bearing the Middle Kingdom-type titles $lny-r$ ‘$hnwt$’,\textsuperscript{162} chamberlain,\textsuperscript{163} and $hpk$ ‘skw’,\textsuperscript{164} leader of the gang (of miners), and in a graffito there appears a prophet called Khnum-hotep.\textsuperscript{165} None of these rulers had a complete titulary, but all of them wrote (but not uniformly in all of their inscriptions!) their Throne and/or Son of Re names in cartouches:\textsuperscript{166}

Kakare Iny

1. Horus name: $snfr-tw$ ‘Who makes beautiful his Two-lands
2. Nebty name: $snfr-tw$
3. Golden Horus name: $bjk-nbw$ ‘nfr
4. Throne name: $qs$ ‘$k$ ‘$R$
5. Son of Re name: $sR$ ‘lnl, Son-of-Re Iny

II-ib-khent-Re

1. Horus name: $grg-tw=fj$, Founder of his Two-lands
2. Nebty name: none
3. Golden Horus name: none
4. Throne name: none
5. Son of Re name: $It$ ‘$ib$ ‘$bnt$ ‘$R$ ‘$fj$ (?)

Segerseni

1. Horus name: none
2. Nebty name: none
3. Golden Horus name: $bjk-nbw$ ‘n$h$

to the Egyptian throne descending from the line of Mentuhotep IV. For this view, see Zibelius-Chen 2001 ff.

\textsuperscript{157} Beckerath 1984 64 dates them to the Eleventh Dynasty period. For their various datings by other earlier writers, see Meurer 1996 77 ff.; Morkot 1999b 184. Morkot \textit{ibid.} 184 ff. does not decide between a late Middle Kingdom or a Second Intermediate Period dating.

\textsuperscript{158} Sve-Sderbergh 1941 47; Zaba 1974 No. 141.
\textsuperscript{159} Sve-Sderbergh 1941 48.
\textsuperscript{160} Sve-Sderbergh 1941 43 ff.
\textsuperscript{161} Beckerath 1954 70.
\textsuperscript{162} Zaba 1974 No. 138.
\textsuperscript{163} Unknown in the Old Kingdom, rare after the Middle Kingdom, Zaba 1974 153.
\textsuperscript{164} Zaba 1974 No. 138 (identical with the bearer of the title $lny-r$ ‘$hnwt$, cited above).
\textsuperscript{165} Sve-Sderbergh 1941 47; Kemp 1983 168; Morkot 1999b 184 ff.
\textsuperscript{166} Beckerath 1984 64.
If we are not mistaken when we associate these kings with an independent Lower Nubian polity ruled by persons of Egyptian origins, we also may add that it could not last longer than the two or three decades preceding c. 1650, i.e., the Kerman occupation of Lower Nubia. One of Segerseni’s inscriptions seems to record an armed conflict in the region of the unidenti ed Pr-snbt.\textsuperscript{167}

\textsuperscript{167} For the problematic text, see S\‘ve-S\‘derbergh 1941 43f.