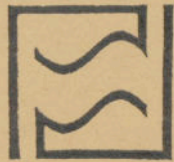


Nubian Letters

-10-



February 1988

Smidswater 8, 2514 BW The Hague
The Netherlands

NUBIAN LETTERS is an independant biannual bulletin for Nubian history and archaeology, published under the auspices of the International Society for Nubian Studies and the department of Early Christian Art at the University of Leiden, The Netherlands.

Edited by Elisabeth de Ranitz and Karel Innemée.

Voluntary subscription: Dfl. 60,- or an equivalent in other currency for members of the I.S.N.S. Non-members, libraries and institutions: Dfl. 110,- for a period of four years (1987-90) to be paid by international money-order, sent to the editorial address.

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A PROSPECTION OF THE FOURTH CATARACT

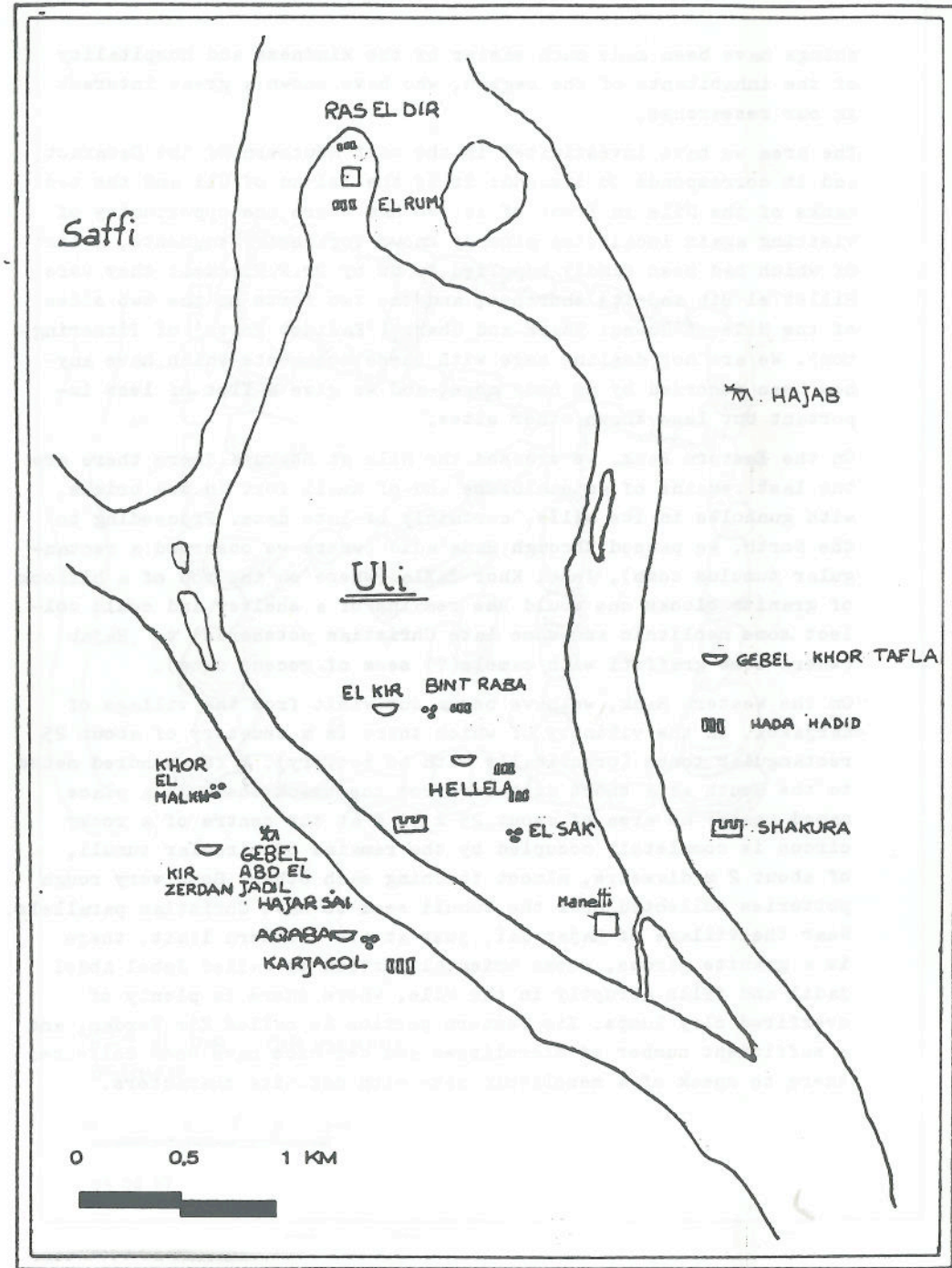
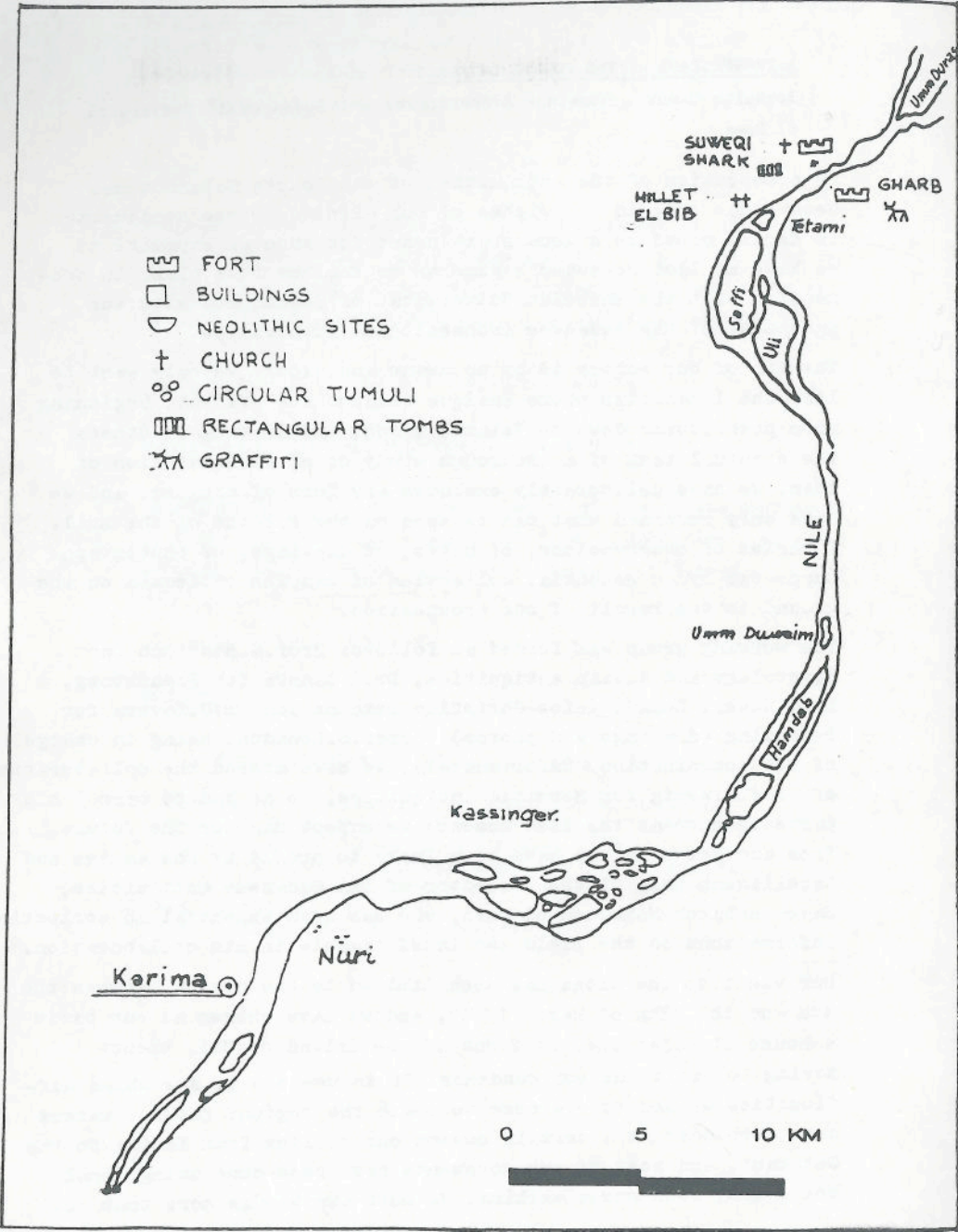
Isabella Caneva, Missione Archeologica nel Sudan dell' Università di Roma

A prospection of the antiquities of the Fourth Cataract has been since long in the wishes of our Mission, whose headquarter in Karima provides a good start point for such an expedition. We have at last succeeded beginning to realize this plan, in connection with the Humboldt Universität of Berlin and with the agreement of the Sudanese Archaeologica Authorities.

The aim of our survey is by no means ambitious: we only want to list the localities where antique remains are evident, beginning from prehistoric down to Islamic times, and leaving to others the eventual task of a thorough study or of an excavation of them. We have deliberately excluded any form of digging, and we have only recorded what can be seen on the surface of the soil. A series of observations, of notes, of drawings, of photographs supported by an essential collection of samples collected on the ground is the result of our prospection.

The working group was formed as follows: Prof.S.Bosticco for Egyptology and Nubian antiquities, Dr.I Caneva for Prehistory, Dr.A.Roveri Donadoni for Christian remains and Mr.G.Lovera for Recording (drawings and photos) - Prof.S.Donadoni being in charge of the coordination. Unfortunately, we have missed the collaboration of Prof.S.Wenig for Meroitic antiquities, as he had to cancel his participation at the last moment: we expect him for the future. From another side, we have been lucky to profit by the active and intelligent help of the Inspector of the Sudanese Antiquities, Sayed Babiker Mohammed el Amin, who has been essential in collecting informations on the field and indefatigable in his collaboration.

Our visit to the sites has been limited to the period between the 4th and the 12th of March 1987, and we have chosen as our basis a house at Hajar Sai, in front of the Island of Uli, thence moving to visit the surroundings. It is useless to say which difficulties we had to overcome to reach the region: the low waters have forbidden at a certain moment our sailing from Karima to the Cataract, and most of our movements have been done using local boats and, even more, walking. We must acknowledge here that the

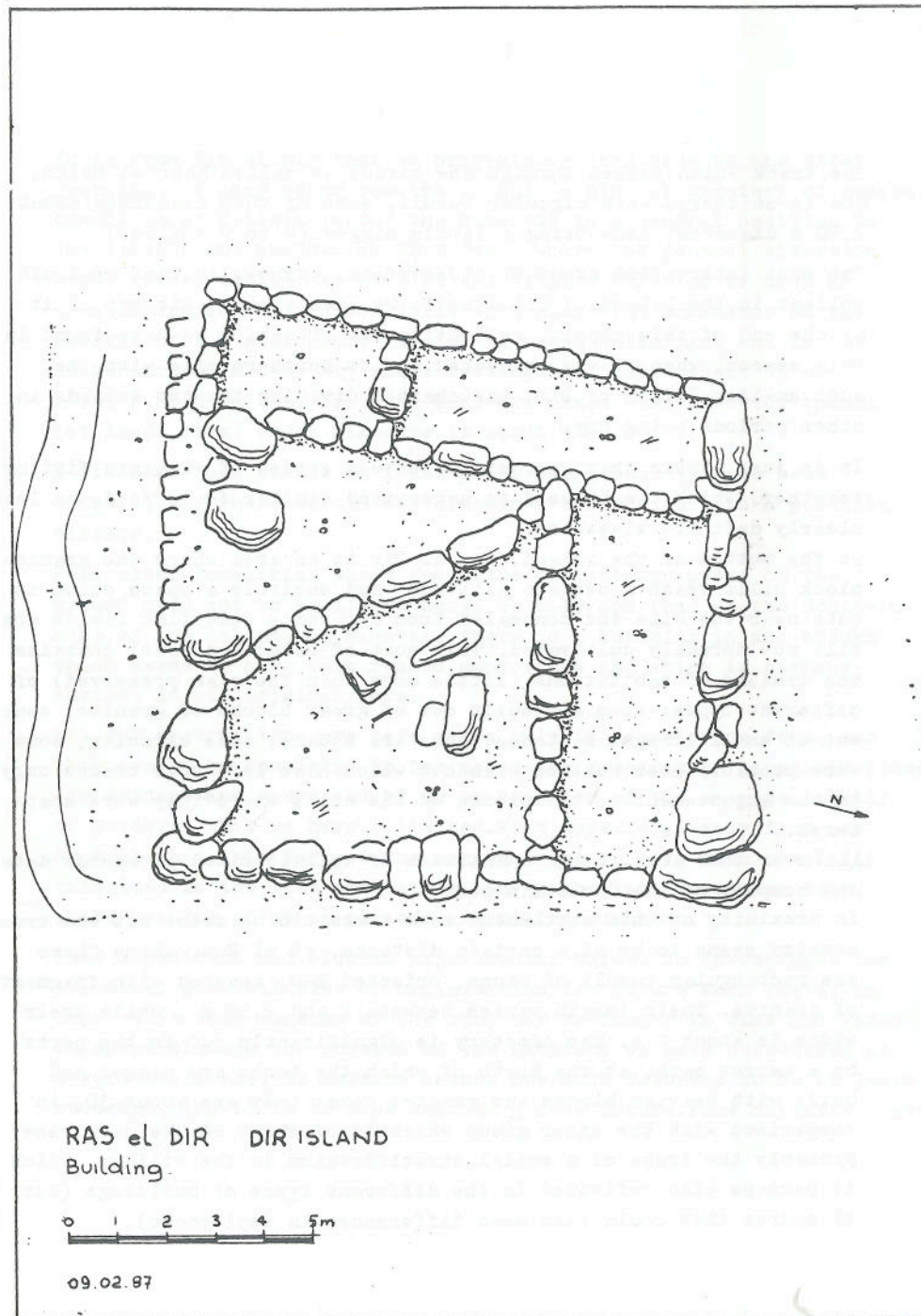


things have been made much easier by the kindness and hospitality of the inhabitants of the region, who have shown a great interest in our researches.

The area we have investigated is the most Southern of the Cataract, and it corresponds to its end: it is the Island of Uli and the two banks of the Nile in front of it. We had there the opportunity of visiting again localities already known for their monuments, a list of which had been kindly supplied to us by Dr.F.Hinckel: they were Hillet el Bib and its churches, and the two forts on the two sides of the Nile at Suweqi Shark and Gharb ('Kalidob Forts' of Titherington). We are not dealing here with these monuments which have anyhow been recorded by us once more, and we give a list of less important but less known other sites.

On the Eastern Bank, we crossed the Nile at Shakura. There there are the last remains of an enclosure and of small fort in mud bricks, with gunholes in its walls, certainly of late date. Proceeding to the North, we passed through Hada'adid (where we observed a rectangular tumulus tomb), Jebel Khor Tafla (where on the top of a hillock of granite blocks one could see remains of a shelter and could collect some neolithic and some late Christian potsherds) to Hajab (where some graffiti with camels(?) seem of recent date).

On the Western Bank, we have begun our visit from the village of Karjakol, in the vicinity of which there is a cemetery of about 25 rectangular tombs (practically with no pottery). A few hundred metres to the South at a short distance from the track there is a place named Aqaba: an area of about 25 x 30 m at the centre of a rocky circus is completely occupied by the remains of circular tumuli, of about 2 m diametre, almost touching each other. Some very rough potteries collected near the tumuli seem to have Christian parallels. Near the village of Hajar Sai, just at its Northern limit, there is a granite circus, whose oriental portion is called Jebel Abdel jadil and falls abruptly in the Nile, where there is plenty of overfired clay lumps. Its Western portion is called Kir Zerdan, and a sufficient number of microlithes and ceramics have been collected there to speak of a mesolithic site with definite characters.



The track which passes through the circus is called Khor el Malkh, and is scattered with circular tumuli, some of them measuring about 2,50 m diametre, some being a little bigger (4 to 7 m diam.).

The most interesting group of observation, anyhow, is that we could collect in the Island of Uli itself. We give a schematic map of it at the end of this report, reflecting the situation we have found in this season, when it was connected at its Northern edge with the much smaller Island of Dir, the channel dividing the two islands in other periods being dry.

It is just at Dir that we could observe a series of elements fitting together, which can be used to understand similar features found less clearly definite elsewhere.

At the bottom of the island, Ras el Dir is an area where the granite block hills reach a certain altitude and encircle a space which is both near the Nile and concealed from it, while some flat fields are till now normally cultivated. This sort of natural citadel contains the remains of habitations (little more than the plan preserved) of different types: some are built out of great blocks of granite, some out of small irregular stones, some are square, some circular, some were probably poor huts of branches which have left some traces only in the adjustment of the blocks on the hills where they were scattered.

All over this area, large quantities of characterized potsherds date the complex to the Christian period.

In proximity of this settlement some tombs can be seen; but the true cemetery seems to be at a certain distance, at el Rum, where there are rectangular tumuli of stone, oriented E-W, covered with fragments of granite. Their length varies between 2 and 2,50 m, while their width is about 1 m. The cemetery is significantly cut in two parts by a narrow path, at the North of which the tombs are bigger and built with heavier blocks and greater care: they are about 30, in comparison with the other group which is of about 60. We have here probably the trace of a social stratification in the village, which is perhaps also reflected in the different types of buildings (but of course they could also mean differences in employment).

It is from Ras el Dir that we probably get the clue to the interpretation of many other remains in Uli: a similar cemetery of square tumuli is at Hellela (about one hundred) in a central position in the island, and another at Bint Raba, where the general situation seems rather similar to that at Ras el Dir: here too we have an area surrounded by granite hills with plentiful potsherds on the surface of the soil, some remains of stone buildings, and in the neighbourhood a cemetery where rectangular tombs (about 15 of about 2,80 m on 1 m, oriented E-W) are mixed with circular tumuli (at least five) whose diametre is about 9 m.

A field of such tumuli is found at El Sak (about 15 have been counted), but there we did not discern a connection with a possible village.

Some minor localities where fragments of pottery appear on the ground need not to be listed here. We only add that at the Southern edge of the island, at Manetti, there is a building in mud bricks which seems to have been reused many times and which is perhaps ancient in his original form.

All our observations are here given only in descriptive form, and they are to be completed by the necessary research of parallels (some are evident and easy) and by an examination of the samples, mostly of pottery, that we have collected. What appears already from now is that that this part of the region seems to have been specially inhabited in the late prehistory and in the late Christian time, while remains of other periods are till now absent.

This expedition had also an experimental value, to investigate the practical possibilities of organisation for future work there: we hope that next seasons on the spot may be longer in time and wider in space. Although the portion of the Cataract we have considered is a very small one, it appears anyhow how much deserves to be at least recorded, and it is to hope that in a near future some definite lines

of research may appear to trace the physiognomy of this somewhat neglected region.

As far as the prehistoric occupation is concerned, the region consists of at least two different environments, the river banks and the islands, characterized by different resources over the annual seasonal cycle. A common feature shared by the two areas is the geological structure, with high granite outcrops of the Basement Complex emerging out of a cover of greyish micaceous sand.

Within the limited area surveyed on the western bank of the Nile, besides sporadic finds, two extensive sites have been located, about 1400 metres apart. Both of them were localized on massive rocky outcrops dominating a kind of natural enclosure.

Kir Zerdan is about 600 m north-west of the village of Haggiar Sai, 200 m. from the river bank. A few potsherds were found on the surface, sand-tempered, well fired, decorated with rocker impressions and wavy line motifs. The lithic tools included small lunates, borers and scrapers. No bone tools or faunal remains have been recovered. A preliminary attribution of these materials to a Mesolithic context is based on comparisons with the prehistoric sequence of the southern provinces (Shendi, Khartoum). From the same perspective we may assume that a Neolithic aspect is also represented in the site by some finer potsherds decorated with rocker impressions.

The site of Aqaba is about 800 m south-east of the village, 200 m from the river bank. No significant pottery was found on the surface. The collected stone materials consisted of non mycolithic tools including side-scrapers and points. Typological comparisons with the Khartoum province are not useful in this case, due to the non-mycrolithic character of the industry.

On the Uli island prehistoric remains were few and not very diagnostic. However, lithic cores and flakes, mostly unretouched, were found on almost all the rocky outcrops in the middle of the island. Besides a few potsherds decorated with rocker impressions (Helela) and a few lunates (el Kir), the bulk of the materials seems to belong to a later context, which might be compared with the late Neolithic of the Butana region. Pottery with incised decoration was found at Bint el Raba'a and Helela, while red ripple ware occurred at Bint el Raba'a.

Compared with the Butana and southern provinces, the industries found in the fourth cataract have, in general, a less myco-lithic character and a greater variety of raw materials used, including Nile chert, agate and very few quartz pebbles.

The prehistoric inhabitants of the region seem to have preferred the top of the rocky outcrops for their settlements, close to the fertile mud but safe from the flood. The natural shelters were probably adjusted with wood and mud, as is still the practice. The river banks were probably more intensively inhabited than the islands, where the archaeological material is scarce and less diagnostic. This suggests therefore a sporadic frequentation of the islands, probably connected with dry season camp-sites. The islands were then easily connected with the banks and represented the residue grazing areas. The prevailing traces of a pastoral neolithic aspect on the island seem to give strong support to this reconstruction.

At the end we all wish to express our thanks to the many people which have helped us: all of them must find here the expression of our gratitude. A special thanks, anyhow, must be given to the Antiquities, which have accepted our proposal for this survey and have let it become a reality.

EXCAVATIONS AT JEBEL BARKAL

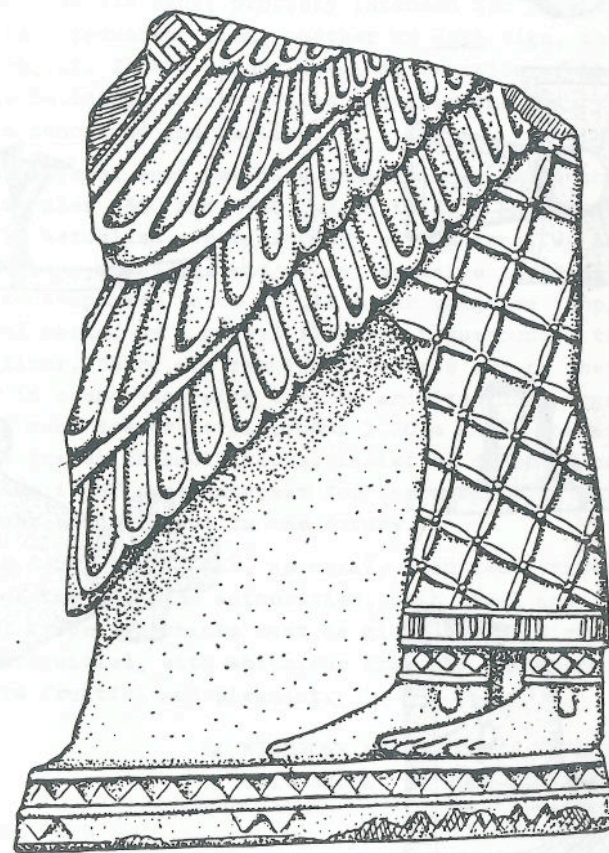
Isabella Caneva, Missione Archeologica nel Sudan dell' Università
di Roma

Our Mission has once more come to work at the Jebel Barkal from the 7th of March to the 3rd of April 1987. The staff was the same as in the past season, and we have profited once more by the assistance of the Inspector of the Antiquities Service Sayed Babiker Moh. el Amin.

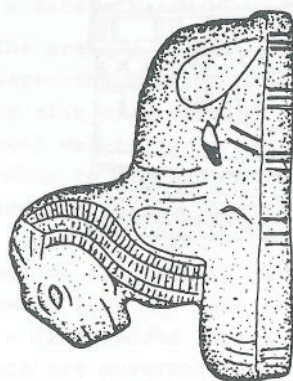
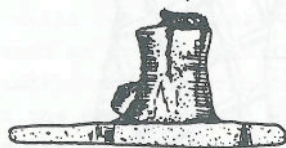
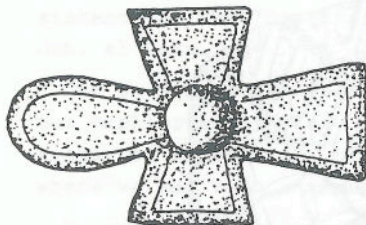
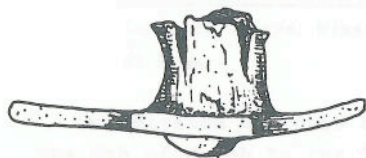
Our programme for the campaign was in a certain way determined by our earlier activities, and we had to go on in the clearance of the Palace of Natakamani, trying to understand its South West portion, where we had been engaged in the past season.

We must admit that our research there has been particularly unpleasant because of the condition to which the building has been reduced by its destroyers: they have not limited themselves to fell the walls but here they have dug savagely deep into the foundations to such an extent that in some cases it has proved really difficult to understand the structure of the plan. What appears in brief is that the Southern part of the Palace was by no means less developed than its Northern one. It may be interesting to know that we could identify the four corners of the complex and that it results that the four sides measure exactly the same, each 61,20 m. This points to a careful execution of a clearly conceived plan.

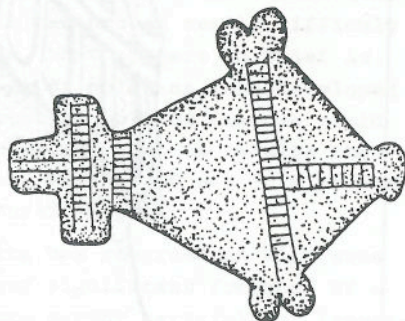
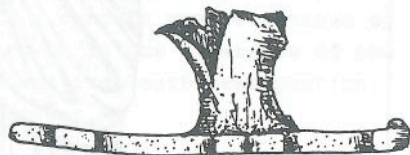
The area in which we have been working has rewarded us with some interesting minor findings. A small but significant fragment of a thin slab of green "serpentino" (a Roman marmor certainly of importation) was probably employed as a "crusta" to decorate the walls according to Classic taste. From the walls comes a certain amount of fragments of glazed tiles, different in types and in colours, that we could only partially reintegrate. Here we have also found, on the floor of the central passage, the fragment of a sandstone relief showing legs and feet of a goddess, spreading her wings in protection of a disappeared figure - probably the king. This is the only element which has survived of a sculptural decoration, the value of which was enhanced by a thin layer of gold covering it. This gilding does no more adhere to the stone, but it could anyhow be rescued and it forms a sort of unpalpable golden mould of the image.



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Bronzi
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We have also continued to explore the cellar whence in the past season we obtained many peculiar objects and a great number of cretulae. This year too we have got many more types of these clay seals, and we could also observe to a certain extent according to which criterium they were disposed off. From this underground room we have also recuperated three beautiful bronze elements, each of them supplied with a sort of nail in its back, probably intended for insertion. One of them represents a recumbent lion, another an ankh sign, the third an unidentified object. In the almost total destruction of the superstructures of the building, these details testify the luxury with which it has been conceived and realized.

During the last days of work, we have come back again to the area between the two temples 1300 and 1400, where in 1977 and in 1978 we had been trying to establish a stratigraphy of the zone. We have got some more informations about it, and we may conceive it as follows: some buildings, contemporary to or little later than the temples, are built on the level marked by a gravel floor that surrounded them? Just under such floor, there are remains of houses cut to their foundations, probably in connection with the new architectural organisation of the area. At a much deeper level (about 2,20 m under the actual ground) there are traces of habitations, insisting directly on earlier ones. This sequence is of some interest for the urbanistic history of Napata, and must be developed in the future.

Our work at the Jebel Barkal has, as usual, been facilitated by the active help of the Sudanese authorities, both local and in Khartoum or in Italy. A special thanks must be given to the Directorate General of the Antiquities, with which our friendly collaboration has been once more fruitful and pleasant.

LA MISSIONE ARCHEOLOGICA IN SUDAN DELLA
UNIVERSITA' DI ROMA "LA SAPIENZA"

Karimaa, April 4th 1987

EL HOBAGI 1987

par Jacques REINOLD et Patrice LENOBLE, Khartoum, Soudan

Les tumulus à enceinte d'El Hobagi (16° 37' N, 33° 11' E, A.M.S. NE-36-0/7-N-1 à 5 et /7-0-3 et 4) ont été mis en danger en 1984, lors des travaux du renforcement de la route entre El Metemma et Es Salawa. Quatre des sept superstructures de la série (les I, II, VI et VII) ont été particulièrement affectées. Constaté entre les inspections de août 1983 et de mai 1985, le dommage a fait l'objet d'une première évaluation, dont il a été fait état à la VI^e Conférence Internationale de la Société des Etudes Nubiennes. En mars 1986, deux brefs sondages ont vérifié l'intérêt de ces monuments, d'abord en prouvant le caractère architectural des enceintes par un test sur le Tumulus III, ensuite en associant à la série funéraire un habitat entouré d'un mur maçonné, le "Hosh el Kafir". Le Directeur Général des Antiquités et des Musées Nationaux a décidé alors de confier à la Section Française la mission de fouiller le Tumulus d'Umm Makharoqa, le VI^e dans la série : le but était de révéler l'intérêt national de ces monuments, présumés pour des raisons diverses dater de la "Fin de Méroé", en attirant l'attention tant des autorités administratives que des habitants sur le caractère particulier et peut-être unique des sept superstructures funéraires. Partant, de mettre fin aux destructions.

La fouille a duré cinq mois, de janvier à juin 1987. La direction de terrain était assurée par Patrice Lenoble, membre de la Section. Ont pris part aux opérations Mahmoud el Sheikh el Tayeb et, pour un temps, Babiker Mohamed el Amin, Antiquities Officers. Les habitants du village ont été le plus possible associés aux travaux : mentionnons surtout Ahmed Safd, Abdallah Safd et El Mirghani Abdallah pour l'aide apportée. Comme prévu et annoncé, le tumulus a fourni la structure, le contenu et la date souhaités : c'est la quantité des objets -- plus de 500 -- qui a surpris. En cours de chantier, pour illustrer les diverses tâches du Directeur dans la région de Shendi et à des fins de vulgarisation, quelques scènes d'un film vidéo ont été tournées à El Hobagi, à l'instigation du Dr M. H. Basha, Chef du Département des

Fouilles. La découverte -- parmi d'autres notables cette année -- fait actuellement l'objet au Soudan de communiqués de presse.

Pourquoi attribuer au site Hobagien une valeur nationale ? Les tumulus de très grande taille abondent le long du Nil, tant en Nubie que dans la zone sahélienne. Seuls ceux du nord sont partiellement bien connus : Ballana, Qustul, Gemaf, Firka, Kerma, etc. Plus au sud, rares sont ceux qui ont été testés : El Kurru, Tanqasi, Wad ben Naqa (7) Nofalab. A l'heure des destructions malheureusement inévitables on cette période de modernisation du Soudan, les prospections ordonnées par le Directeur Général ont multiplié le nombre de sites à enregistrer d'urgence, différencié les cultures tumulaires qu'ils décrivent (proto-historique, méroïtique, "postméroïtique" et chrétiennes principalement), et estimé par probables millions les "petites" structures concernées. Une étude plus précisément centrée sur la Province de Méroé et élargissant les conclusions d'El Kadada, a permis de cerner les tombes du IV^e siècle de notre ère, dont le nombre est évalué à quelques centaines de milliers pour la seule région comprise entre VI^e et Ve cataractes. Dans ce nombre, les grands tertres à couronnes variées abondent encore. Aucun exemple, sauf peut-être à El Maroqa (Lepsius 1853 : 212-213), ne semble jusqu'ici répéter le type Hobagien, structurellement décrit comme nouveau par H.N. Chittick en 1957, et surtout défini par un mur architectural différant d'une couronne, quels que soient les genres -- très variés -- des couronnes.

Le type Hobagien était peut-être nouveau. Il est sûrement exceptionnel dans le centre de l'ancien Royaume de Méroé. Peut-être pour une aire à élargir encore, sauf à multiplier les prospections dans d'autres provinces. Comme en outre les tertres Hobagiens se dataient du IV^e siècle par leur céramique, datation vérifiée au radiocarbone sur l'habitat correspondant, ces monuments méritaient donc a priori la protection et la conservation réalisées en 1987. Par contre, la nature "royale" ou "princière" de ces superstructures rares n'est pas, elle, évidente a priori. Elle ne résulte que d'un raisonnement comparatif, à lier à des conceptions controversables sur le nombre et les déplacements des sites royaux et "princiers" méroïtiques, tant en Nubie qu'au Soudan

Central. Supputer ici le nombre des sites funéraires de la Royauté divine africaine encore à "découvrir", tant en protohistoire que pour les époques et les régions chrétiennes par exemple, pour ne citer que les vides les plus criants de notre connaissance en Soudanologie.

Le Tumulus d'Umm Makharoqa répond à de tels critères "royaux" ou "princiers". L'armement de la tombe (10 ou 11 lances, 2 épées, 7 carquois, etc), son équipement religieux (17 récipients de bronze enveloppés, un symbole isiaque dissimulé surtout), son "banquet funéraire" (plus de 70 bonbonnes "postméroïtiques" et bouteilles "méroïtiques"), assurent de la réalisation de l'objectif scientifique, également souhaité par le Directeur Général. Une date précise ne résultera que de l'étude, qui conclura deux années d'indispensable restauration des objets. Provisoirement, calons-la entre 270 et 400, selon l'échelle kadadienne ; comme les bonbonnes de "transition vers le Postméroïtique" voient ici le nombre de leurs types augmenté, l'échelle locale de datation peut mériter révision pour extension à la région.

Il faut se féliciter que l'intervention du Service des Antiquités conserve El Hobagi dans le patrimoine national du Soudan. La fouille d'Umm Makharoqa se complètera en temps opportun. Un débat est souhaité, qui prépare un possible projet d'exploitation d'autres superstructures funéraires homologues, à El Hobagi ou ailleurs. Un autre projet concerne l'éventuelle restauration de ces architectures tumulaires, si sujettes à dégradation en raison du manque de fondations sous leurs murs en pierres sèches. Ce projets de moyen terme peuvent attendre le débat scientifique attendu, que l'on pourrait idéalement fixer lors de la VIe Conférence Internationale des Etudes Méroïtiques en 1989, puisque ce congrès est prévu à Khartoum. Pour l'heure, d'autres tâches urgentes méritent priorité. Le seul recensement des tombes en danger n'est pas la moindre de ces tâches : la commune d'El Hobagi, exemplaire au même titre qu'El Kadada, mais tout aussi peu exceptionnelle, compte un minimum de 12 sites tumulaires notables. C'est assez dire la mesure de la menace sur les Antiquités qui pèse à l'époque moderne, au Soudan comme partout dans le monde, et à laquelle fait face le Directorate.

RODOLFO FATTOVICH, Napoli

SILVANA VITAGLIANO, Roma

1987 EXCAVATIONS AT MAHAL TEGLINOS (KASSALA): AN INTERIM REPORT.

In January-February 1987 the Italian Archaeological Mission in Sudan (Kassala) of the Istituto Universitario Orientale, Naples, carried out systematic excavations at the site of Mahal Teglinos (K 1) near Kassala in the Gash Delta under the direction of Dr. Rodolfo Fattovich. The site was previously investigated in 1980, 1981, 1982, 1984 and 1985 as part of the Gash Delta Archaeological Project (see *Nubian Letters*, 8, 1987: 12-15). The research has been supported by the Ministero degli Affari Esteri, Rome, Ministero della Pubblica Istruzione (research funds 60%), Rome, Consiglio Nazionale delle Ricerche, Rome, Centro Studi 'Uomo-Ambiente', Rovigo (Italy) and CNRS, Paris.

In this season two 4x4 m trenches were opened in the central sector of the site, in order to check again the stratigraphical sequence of the Gash Group settlement area, with particular emphasis to the lithic industry, and to investigate a cemeterial area with stelae at 105 m to the northwest of the main one discovered in 1985.

Eight occupation phases have been identified in the stratigraphical test. They might indicate a transition from a seasonally reoccupied settlement to a stable residential village in the mid-3rd millennium BC.

Five main archaeological levels have been identified in a preliminary way. The upper four levels can be ascribed to the Gash Group. They represent different developmental stages of this cultural unit. The fifth one may represent either a very simple regional facies of the Bttana Group described in the Khashm el Girba area or a local cultural unit to be tentatively identified as Protp-Gash Group. At present, the second hypothesis seems to be more probable.

The pottery evidence suggests that by the late 3rd millennium BC the people living at the site was involved in a network of contacts with the Nile Valley. In fact, zig-zag rim bands comparable with C-Group and Early Kerma decorative

patterns occur on bowls from levels II-III. A fragment decorated with incisions filled with a white paste like C-Group specimens, a wheel made sherd of possible Egyptian origin, and two fragments of a burnished bowl decorated with rows of punctated triangles like C-Group and Middle Kerma vessels have been discovered in Level I. Finger nail impressed sherds and coiled sherds similar with specimens from the Shaqadud cave in northern Butana have been found in Levels II-I. Fragments of black topped ware have been collected along the whole sequence.

These elements might date the levels I-III to the late 3rd-early 2nd millennia BC. In turn, some wiped potsherd, comparable with specimens of the Butana Group, from Levels IV-V might support a dating of these levels to the 4th-3rd millennia BC.

The preliminary analysis of the flake industry from the stratigraphical test suggests that the tools were made in situ. The industry is basically microlithic. The débitage shows sometimes traces of a 'secondary' working. Primary flakes and flakes with dorsal surface partially covered of cortex are more frequent than those without cortex. Scaled pieces are a typical element of the débitage.

Typical tools are end- and side-scrapers, denticulates, notches, burins (rare), truncations, retouched flakes, perforators, méches de foret (very rare, backed pieces and geometrics. The last ones, obtained usually from flakes without the microburin technique, include crescents, and less frequently triangles and trapezoidal pieces. The perforators, particularly, include simple perforators, multiple perforators and becs, sometimes on cores. They are often microlithic.

Some changes can be recognized in the raw material frequency in the stratigraphical sequence. Quartz is dominant in the upper layers (1-18), while agata is more frequent in the lower layers (19-44). Most materials are available in the form of river pebbles. They suggest that the Gash was exploited also as a 'mineral' source.

Lip-plugs, stone, shell and ostrich beads, figurines and other small

objects have been found mainly in the upper part of the stratigraphical sequence (Levels I-III and upper IV).

Sixteen stelae have been found in the second trench. They are pointed stones, flat stones and small pillars, about 100 cms high, like the monoliths discovered in 1985.

Three levels of stelae have been observed. On the basis of the pottery evidence, they go back to the early 2nd millennium BC. The monoliths were associated to some burials, confirming their funerary meaning.

BOOKS RECEIVED

H. Dumont, P. Stevens, Soedan, een wetenschappelijk en archeologisch avontuur, 30 x 21,5 cm, 144 pp., 144 figs; Simon, The Hague/De Vries-Brouwers, Antwerp, 1987, ISBN 90 70952 07 6 (Neth.)/ 90 6174 478 4 (Belg.), Dfl. 49,50/ Bfr. 950.

On October, the 27th of last year this book was presented in the auditorium of the university of Gent, Belgium. The ceremony had a slightly glamorous atmosphere and so has the book. It is not a scientific publication, but written for a broad public, be it that the reader is supposed to know Dutch (there are plans, however, for an English edition). Dumont called it, not without a certain pride, a coffee-table-book. You might ask therefore, for the reason to discuss the book here. Before explaining this, it is useful to summarize the subject of the book.

Henri Dumont is a limnologist, a marine biologist specialized on lakes and rivers, who studies desert-forming and the occurrence of surface waters in the Sahel-zone. In the Autumn of 1985 he undertook a campaign to investigate the desertification in the Darfur-region, concentrating on the Malha-crater. By means of coring, taking earth-samples with a hollow drill, the development of the climate in this region during the last 8000 years was investigated. The book gives an account of this expedition in semi-scientific text, combined with mainly colour-photographs.

P. Stevens is a commander in the Belgian airforce and is co-author of the book, since the project was undertaken in close cooperation with the Belgian airforce.

A more scientific publication of the results will be in articles in Nature and the Journal of Palaeo-limnology i.a.

If it were only for a coffee-table-book, this recension would probably not have been written, but one of the remarkable aspects of the expedition (and of the book) is the way it has been organized. Dumont has succeeded to get the support of a number of international companies, providing him with two trucks, electronic equipment and other materials needed for the enterprise. Furthermore, the Belgian airforce assisted in transporting equipment and making helicopter-surveys. As a sign of this sponsoring, the trucks looked more like participants in the Paris-Dakar rallye than vehicles of a scientific expedition, with the several names of the companies in big letters on them. Also the book leaves no doubt about the trade-marks of the equipment, as a counter-effort for the generosity of the sponsors.

Commercial sponsoring of such expeditions is still rather rare, it seems. Archaeologists, too, appear to be reluctant to appeal to commercial companies for material support. Not always without reasons, because it creates certain obligations, like having to make publicity for the sponsor, in whatever modest way it may be. The independent position of the scientist seems at stake.

On the other hand, sponsoring can increase (technical) possibilities and efficiency considerably, simply by means of equipment that would have been out of reach otherwise.

In recent years we have seen an increase in commercial sponsoring of museums and temporary exhibitions, often out of a necessity when governmental financing was insufficient for ambitious plans. And many times very positive results were possible without 'selling one's soul to the devil'. If the same development were to take place for archaeological expeditions and publications, it could have equally positive results. The choice of the right sponsor can guarantee the independence of the research and the researcher. Maybe the latter will be expected to make more publicity towards the general public for his activities, and includingly, for the sponsor. The book of Dumont and Stevens also might be explained as such a gesture. But what is wrong with informing a wider public in a popular way with results of scientific investigation?

One can hesitate on principal to appeal for sponsoring, but as government-money might get scarcer in the future and the pressure of time on archeologists (the Great Dam was not the last one to be built) increase, it might get time to reconsider the idea.

As long as serious research can be guaranteed, without the pressure of the sponsor to present breathtaking results in the newspaper-headlines, the idea seems to be worth reconsidering.

K.C.I.

Nubian Culture Past and Present

Main Papers Presented at the Sixth International Conference for
Nubian Studies in Uppsala, 11—16 August, 1986

Edited by Tomas Hägg

The papers collected in this volume cover the history and culture of Nubia, i.e. Southern Egypt and the Northern Sudan, from prehistoric to modern times. The authors are specialists in various fields, including anthropology, archaeology, art history, church history, ethnology, history and linguistics, and the aim is to give critical reports on the state of research in areas of current interest, providing ample bibliographical references, as well as to suggest new approaches and point to unsolved problems. Additional comments focus on some of the major issues raised by the papers and discussed at the conference.

The papers are arranged in four groups: (1) "Ancient Nubian Cultures: Classification and Interpretation", focussing on desertification and agriculture, various problems of the Later Palaeolithic, Mesolithic and Neolithic periods in the Central Nile Valley and the Eastern Sudan and the Kerma, C-Group and Pan-Grave Cultures. (2) "Nubian Christianity: North and South", including a detailed discussion of the historical background, i.e. Meroe North and South, followed by reports on the history, archaeology, art and architecture of Christian Nubia (with its centres Faras, Old Dongola and Soba) and on the state of research concerning the Nubian church and the Old Nubian language. (3) "The Islamic Period", surveying the Islamic archaeology in Nubia. (4) "Nubian Culture in the 20th Century", providing detailed information and discussion of the conditions of the Nubian people in Egypt and the Sudan a generation after the resettlement enforced by the building of the High Dam at Aswan.

In relation to the versions included in the two "pre-publication" volumes, the papers now appear revised, in some cases substantially enlarged as well, by the respective authors, and illustrations have been added. Five additional papers have been included: the Opening Address by J. Vercoutter, comments on Session I by F. Hassan, on Session II by W.Y. Adams, and on Session IV by Ali Osman, and a paper on Soba by D.A. Welsby.

September 1987

438 p. Illustr.

ISBN 91-7402-188-5

SEK 195.00

THE ROYAL ACADEMY OF LETTERS, HISTORY AND ANTIQUITIES, STOCKHOLM

Nubian Letters

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