

# KUSHITES EXPRESSING ‘EGYPTIAN’ KINGSHIP: NUBIAN DYNASTIES IN HIEROGLYPHIC TEXTS AND A PHANTOM KUSHITE KING

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Julien Cooper<sup>1</sup>

*Abstract: The Lower Nubian borderlands of the Second Intermediate Period, situated between Kush and Egypt, was witness to one of the most culturally complex episodes in the Pharaonic period. The intersection of an ascendant Kush over local Egypto-Nubian elites living in C-Group lands provided for a set of mixed cultural expressions. This region was witness to one of the few episodes in Pharaonic Egypt where Egyptian administrators served a foreign king, in this case the ruler of Kush. A number of documents produced by this elite give us unique insights into the power of Kerma and its efforts to project that power in its newly acquired territories. A reassessment of one particular stele (Khartoum no. 18) demonstrates that its ruler of Kush ‘Nedjeh’ is not a reference to an individual King at all but rather a rare title, a counterpart to the common Second Intermediate epithet ‘strong king’. This stele, along with other documents in the new Kushite realm, reveals the attempts of Nubian rulers to adopt a new elite Egyptianizing language of power to express their local dominance.*

*Key words: Kush; Nubian ruler; C-Group; Kerma; Nedjeh; Second Intermediate Period*

While the Egyptian script was designed to uniquely express the Egyptian language, the script was adopted in a limited number of cases outside Egypt in decidedly foreign contexts. In Byblos, contemporary to the Middle Kingdom, a kind of ‘pseudo-hieroglyphic’ script was used by a local elite. Elsewhere, the so-called ‘proto-Sinaitic’ script of Serabit el-Khadim (Sinai) and Wadi el-Hol (Western Desert) allowed for some transmission of Semitic languages (Canaanite) using adapted hieroglyphic forms and phonetic values. More prolific, however, was the use of the Egyptian script in Nubia, where hieroglyphs were first used to represent an Egyptian ‘dialect’ by the Napatan

elite. By the 4<sup>th</sup> Century BCE, the hieroglyphic and demotic script was then later adapted and reformed to reproduce a whole new language in Meroitic. Like the ‘proto-Sinaitic’ script, the Meroitic script involved wholesale changes not only to the phonetic values of hieroglyphic signs, but also adapted the orthographic principles of the script to better represent the structure of a new language. But long before Meroitic and Napatan scripts, there is an earlier and less well-known phase of script adoption in Nubia, when the rulers of Kush and their Egyptian administrators at the fortress-town of Buhen contemporary to the late Middle Kingdom and Second Intermediate Period (*Kerma moyen*, *Kerma classique*) used the script in very specific social contexts, usually for the purposes of expressing royal titulature. In this period, the territorial expansion of Kush from their Kerma powerbase provided for a new set of cultural and political dynamics, creating an atmosphere whereby the Kushite royalty adopted an expression of kingship concordant with Egyptian norms. The selective use of the Egyptian script and associated iconography were designed to express a mutually understood rhetoric of power in which Kerma could project their rulership to Egyptian audiences and local groups in the Lower Nubian borderlands between Kush and Egypt. These documents, along with the onomastic material contained in the Egyptian Execration Texts, provide tantalising glimpses into the rulers of Kerma and the expression of their power in an era of Kushite ascendancy in the late Middle Kingdom and Second Intermediate Period.

## 1. Writing the ‘ruler of Kush’

Among the rulers of a generally pre-literate Nubian polity of Kush-Kerma known in historic records, only two kings are known by name out-

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<sup>1</sup> University of Oxford, Faculty of History. I am grateful to Vivian Davies and Christian Knoblauch for discussions

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side the Execration Texts. In a rock inscription northwest of the massif of Umm Nabari, deep into the Eastern Desert of Nubia, a certain personage named *Trh* is recorded, which undoubtedly reproduces the same name as the ruler of Kush *Tr(i)3hi* in the Execration Texts (𓄏𓄏𓄏𓄏𓄏𓄏/𓄏𓄏𓄏𓄏𓄏𓄏).<sup>2</sup> It is even possible that these names record the same individual, although so little is known of Kushite onomastics that it cannot be ruled out that it is the reuse of a name (or epithet?) by a descendant.<sup>3</sup> The ‘Umm Nabari’ rock inscription is quite remarkable not only because it implies that a hieroglyphic-learned scribe was in the employ of a Kerma ruler, and thus some literacy on the part of the Kerma elite,<sup>4</sup> but also because it verifies the influence of Kerma far into the Eastern Desert beyond its heartland near the Third Cataract and Letti Basin. It is important that a Kushite ruler deliberately chose to use Egyptian writing to express the territoriality and rulership – although one might speculate on who the intended audience was in such an inscription, perhaps nomadic Medjay pastoralists and/or Egyptian goldminers who were transgressing onto perceived Kushite territory in the desert.<sup>5</sup> The interest of Kush in the Eastern Desert evidenced by this inscription also goes some way to explaining how Kush could summon a Medjay contingent in the Kushite led alliance that raided the Nile Valley, as mentioned in the historical inscription in the tomb of Sobeknakht II at El-Kab.<sup>6</sup> Returning to other evidence for Kushite kings in writing, a ruler is mentioned by title as

*s3 [R<sup>c</sup>] ḥk3 n(.y) Kš'i* ‘Son of Re, ruler of Kush’ in a recently discovered Second Intermediate Period seal impression from Elephantine.<sup>7</sup> The same expression ‘ruler of Kush’ is also found within the opening curve of a cartouche in the Buhen Stele of Sepedhor, an individual who exclaims that he ‘pleased’ (*hrw*) the Kushite king in building a temple of Horus.<sup>8</sup> Despite extensive excavations at both Kerma and other *Kerma classique* centres like Sai Island, there is as yet no texts that would attest to the Kerma elite using Egyptian script for use in documentary texts (ostraca or papyri) or religious and votive objects.

### 1.1 Stele Khartoum 18

The only other instance of a Kerma ruler is the mention of a certain ‘Nedjeh’ in the late Second Intermediate Period Buhen Stele of Ka (*K3*), Khartoum Museum no. 18 (Pl. 1).<sup>9</sup> Säve-Söderbergh, who made the first study of the stele, considered this ‘Nedjeh’ to be the name of a Kushite ruler, and subsequently this personage has entered the scholarly literature as a named ruler of the Kushite polity. This ruler has also been equated with depictions of a ruler wearing the Upper Egyptian white crown on several stelae from Buhen and also considered to be the father of the Kushite ruler mentioned in the ensuing Kamose ‘war of liberation’.<sup>10</sup> Ka’s stele is set in the context of a group of stelae erected by the Egyptian elite at Buhen who, in the political vacuum of the Second Intermediate

<sup>2</sup> The inscription is in a cave, site register KRP 14, see DAVIES 2014, 35–36 and KOENIG 1990, 118–121, 124–125 for the name in the Mirgissa Execration Texts. The difference in orthography can be attributed to an attempt to reproduce vowels in the Execration Texts (vocalisation) – both names encode a pronunciation of \*/trVhV/. The Egyptian scribes who transcribed the Execration Texts needed to produce vowels for the purposes of magical recitation, a manner of transcription which was not relevant or necessary for the purposes of a rock inscription which could rely on a purely consonantal transcription of a foreign name.

<sup>3</sup> An option proposed in DAVIES 2014, 35. See also RILLY 2017, 70–71.

<sup>4</sup> For discussions on literacy in Kerma, see ZIBELIUS-CHEN 2001, 27 and VALBELLE 2004. The recent discussion of DOYEN and GABOLDE 2017 connects the lack of writing in Kerma to a strong oral culture as well as the affects pastoralism and low population densities. This thesis links the emergence of Egyptian writing in Napatan Nubia (p. 152–153) with the pervasive influence of Egyptian religion, witnessing the ‘religious conversion’ of the Napatan elite.

<sup>5</sup> For the lack of Egyptian presence in this part of the Eastern Desert, see DAVIES 2014, 36 n. 7. Egyptian miners of the Middle Kingdom seemed to have penetrated as far south as Wadi Allaqi, for which, see ČERNÝ 1947 and ROC-CATI 2007.

<sup>6</sup> DAVIES 2003, 52–54 and DAVIES 2005, 50. Kushite presence in this desert can also be confirmed in archaeological evidence of Kushite activity in this region, chiefly pottery, for which, see DAVIES 2014, 36 n. 20; MANZO 2012, 81 and fig. 24; CASTIGLIONI *et al.* 2010.

<sup>7</sup> VON PILGRIM 2015, 218–226 and FITZENREITER 2012, 44–46.

<sup>8</sup> See RANDALL-MACIVER and WOOLLEY 1911, 113; SMITH 1976, 56.

<sup>9</sup> SÄVE-SÖDERBERGH 1949, 50. For other transcriptions and commentaries, see also HELCK 1983, 80; PM VII, 138; DAVIES 2004a, 100–101.

<sup>10</sup> See SÄVE-SÖDERBERGH 1956, 58–59; SMITH 1976, 80. For an analysis of the Buhen stele exhibiting a possible Kushite or local ruler in Egyptian garb and regalia, and problems with this interpretation, see KNOBLAUCH 2012; MANZO 2016, 21–23.



Plate 1 Khartoum A18, courtesy of W. Schenk and V.W. Davies

Period Lower Nubia, rendered services to the ruler of Kush (Kerma). Following the analysis of Stuart Tyson-Smith, a resurgent Kush in the Second Intermediate Period did not sack or destroy Egyptian fortified settlements in Lower Nubia but rather Kush employed a much more pragmatic strategy of co-opting the local Egypto-Nubian elites and their concomitant administration in order to rule the Lower Nubian borderlands.<sup>11</sup> This elite is frequently called the ‘expatriate’ community. Another Buhen expatriate called Sepedhor, a relative of Ka’s, erected a stele (Philadelphia 10984) where he too extolled his services for the ruler (*hk3*) of the Kush rather than an Egyptian king or ruler.<sup>12</sup> In a seeming contradiction of political allegiances, this family, all descendants of a certain Sobekemhab, seem to have been in charge of maintenance of the local temple of the deified Khakaure (Senwosret III) at Buhen while in the employ of Kush.<sup>13</sup> At least one official in this period, Dedusobek, had the title of *i3.w* ‘interpreter’ and could thus communicate effectively with Kushites or local Lower Nubians (C-Group people).<sup>14</sup> In all likelihood there would have been some functional bilingualism and diglossia present in many of the fortress communities in Lower Nubia.

Some other Egyptian officials might well have functioned in Kushite lands. A certain Haankhef at Edfu may also have been able to freely travel between Upper Egypt and the Kushite realm: “I released my wife, my children and my property from the south of Kush in 13 days, I having brought gold and 26 female-servants...I was reimbursed for six years”<sup>15</sup> We might also wonder whether the official Emhab, whose travels took him as far as the area of *Miw* (Kurgus region) deep into Nubia, may have rendered some service to the Nubian rulers or at the very least been able to pass unmolested through the region. However, the general consensus here is that Emhab fought his way to *Miw* as part of Kamose’s Nubian

*Reconquista*. The route by which Emhab reached this region, perhaps over the desert using the Korosko road and/or the Nile, can only be guessed. Based on current evidence, it would not be until the reign of Thutmose I that *Miw* and the far reaches of Upper Nubia would be accessible to Egyptians.<sup>16</sup> The Lower Nubian frontier in the Second Intermediate Period was a world of shifting political boundaries and allegiances, providing for newfound independence for local elites as well as cultural challenges in expression between Egyptian norms and Kushite allegiance.

The text on Ka’s Buhen stele explicitly states that he was in the employ of the Kushite ruler (Pl. 1)



- (6) ..... *dd=f ink b3k*  
 (7) *kn n(.y) hk3 n(.y) ks iw=i i'ird.wy*  
 (8) *hr mw n.w Kš.w hr šms.w p3*  
 (9) *hk3 {n.y} ndh iw=i iyi.kw*  
 (10) *ḏ(.w) wd3(.w) [n] hr.w(=i)*
- (6) ... *He says: I am a brave servant*  
 (7) *of the ruler of Kush, I having washed my two-feet*  
 (8) *upon the waters of Kush in the following of the*  
 (9) *ruler nedjeh (?), I having returned*  
 (10) *safe and hail [to] (my) family.*

The philological commentary of Säve-Söderbergh is comprehensive and he noted the many

<sup>11</sup> TYSON-SMITH 2003, 80–83. On this political arrangement and the growing power of Kerma, see also VOGEL 2004, 150–152; KUBISCH 2010, 322–325; ILIN-TOMICH 2016, 8–9.

<sup>12</sup> SÄVE-SÖDERBERGH 1949.

<sup>13</sup> For the stele of Sobekemhab, see BARNES 1955, 19–21. His descendant Sepedhor also boasts of building the temple of Horus, see SÄVE-SÖDERBERGH 1949, 55. The family trees are reconstructed in TÖRÖK 2009, 105–106 and SMITH 1976, 73–76.

<sup>14</sup> SMITH 1976, 48.

<sup>15</sup> GUNN 1929, 5–14. The ‘six years’ is generally considered to be in compensation for six years of service in (or for) Kush, although the text is somewhat ambiguous in this regard. For this stele, see also KUBISCH 2008, 227–230.

<sup>16</sup> For Emhab’s biography, see now the commentary of KLOTZ 2010. Note that Klotz’s commentary on Emhab’s ethnicity (p. 217–218) perhaps downplays Emhab’s other name *T3mrrw* – the name could mean something like ‘The-beloved’ or be a foreign word. His ethnicity should be left open to discussion. For the *Miw* and Kurgus frontier, see DAVIES 2017a, 7–8.

parallel texts and necessary emendations so there is no need to duplicate a treatment of the grammatical issues here. In relation to ‘Nedjeh’, the text provides an orthographic peculiarity which most have emended to an error, namely the genitive particle *n* between *hk3* and ‘Nedjeh’, explained by Save-Söderbergh as a copying mistake replicating the orthography of *hk3* on line 7 of the stele.<sup>17</sup> One should note that the positioning of the classifier of the word *hk3* ‘ruler’ (Gardiner A40) is on the wrong side of the genitive particle in both line 7 and line 9 (𓆎𓆏𓆑).<sup>18</sup> The order of signs may have been just a space-saving measure, the flat *n* fitting neatly under the small sign *k* even when A40 should directly follow *k*. This writing of *hk3* with an *n* followed by the classifier A40 (𓆎𓆏𓆑) is also found in the aforementioned Buhen stele of Sepedhor. Thus, on line 7 of Ka’s stele (and line 9 of Sedephor’s stele) this arrangement of signs is most likely a space-saving measure, which, according to Säve-Soderbergh, was ‘thoughtlessly copied’ onto line 9 of the text. While one should not go as far as Säve-Soderbergh and call the style of the stele ‘barbarous’, the orthography and palaeography of various signs and word forms are inscribed in a manner consistent with other inscribed material of the Second Intermediate Period.<sup>19</sup> The writing of the ‘name’ *Ndh* is clear, but it is important to note that the name is determined with the ‘classifier of force’ A24 𓆒 and not a classifier that would be regularly expected with proper names (A1 𓆎).<sup>20</sup> The palaeography of A24 with a bent figure and arms emanating from the head rather than the torso is somewhat idiosyncratic, but comparable examples exist in other Second Intermediate Period Stele.<sup>21</sup> The stele has quite a number of small palaeographic errors and flawed incisions, perhaps attributed to the craftsman’s inexperienced use of his tool.<sup>22</sup> Elsewhere the scribe carved the hieroglyphs in rather idiosyncratic ways, so the zig-zag of the water-ripple *n* is merged into the

knee and feet of the seated man sign (A1) (see Pl. 2).

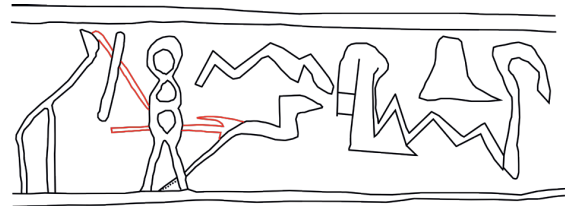


Plate 2 Inset and detail of the word Nedjeh on Khartoum 18, photograph and line drawing by author. The red lines mark shallow incisions not part of the intended orthography. I would like to thank Ikhlass Abdel Latief and the National Corporation for Antiquities and Museums (NCAM) for permission to publish this photograph.

## 1.2 Modelling Kingship

Although Egyptian culture could be said to be the most obvious source of external influence in Nubia, especially in regards to modelling a royal hierarchy in iconography and writing, there were a number of analogues, archetypes, and influences from which rulers of Kerma could model the written expression of their polity. Recently, a seal impression with hieroglyphic writing *s3*-[*R*<sup>c</sup>] *hk3* *n*(.y) *Kš*i ‘Son of Re, Ruler of Kush’ was found at

<sup>17</sup> SÄVE-SÖDERBERGH 1949, 53. KUBISCH 2008, 167 kept the *n* in line 7 but ignored *n* in line 9.

<sup>18</sup> Strictly speaking, the sign here does not have the chin-beard unlike the prototypical Gardiner A40, but it is identical to the palaeography of the same sign used for *Wsir* in line of the stele.

<sup>19</sup> In this manner one should also compare the distinct palaeography from a similar period in the corpus of Edfu stele, in SAYED 1979, 170–171 as well as KLOTZ 2010, 218.

<sup>20</sup> Coined as ‘action of force’ in GOLDWASSER 2006, 25.

<sup>21</sup> For very similar forms in an Abydene stele, see KUBISCH 2008, 163, l. 3–4 where it used *nht*. Comparable palaeog-

raphies in Edfu stele include Hildesheim 4589; CG 20499; JE 52456, see KUBISCH 2008, 185, 225, l. 5–6, 228, pl. 3, l. 13. The line drawing of Khartoum 18 made available to the author, courtesy of William Schenk and Vivian Davies, differs slightly from the photograph in the depiction of this horizontal line.

<sup>22</sup> The craftsman evidently had trouble with producing neat curves, many of the signs exhibit shallow incisions emanating at tangents from curves, as is the case with the *q*-cobra in the name *Ndh* and in many parts of the Wedjat-eyes in the lunette.



Fig. 1 Seal impression at Elephantine, *s3*-[R<sup>c</sup>] *hk3 n(.y) Ksi* 'son of [Re], ruler of Kush'



Fig. 2 'The ruler of Kush' (*p3 hk3 Ksi*) on the Stele of Sepedhor, line 9

Elephantine (Fig. 1), dating to a 17<sup>th</sup> or 18<sup>th</sup> Dynasty context.<sup>23</sup> This is the only example of the Kushite ruler appearing on a written seal in the Kerma period. As von Pilgrim concludes, the seal is not an unattested epithet of an Egyptian king but a real case of the ruler of Kush authenticating his kingship.<sup>24</sup> Hyksos seals also use a similar construction of *hk3 n(.y) Rtnw* or *hk3 h3s.wt*, and Fitzenreiter has favourably compared some of the features of the Elephantine seal impression to Hyksos seal designs and titulary.<sup>25</sup> It would seem



Fig. 3 Rock inscription north of Gebel Umm Nabari, Eastern Desert, *Trh mr.y Hr nb h3s.t* 'Tereh, beloved of Horus, lord of the hill-country' (see also Pl. 3)

possible then that the Kushite kings may have been influenced in their political expression not just from Egyptians but also possibly the Hyksos. A Kushite 'cartouche' is also present on the Buhen stele of Sepedhor (Fig. 2) and it might even be possible that such cartouches were copied from a seal type such as that found at Elephantine. Based on the aforementioned inscription of *Trh* just north of Gebel Umm Nabari (Fig. 3; Pl. 3),<sup>26</sup> Kushite kings could also identify themselves with Horus's cult and therefore had no problem adopting Egyptian titles, deities, and religious epithets for their own purposes. But in the rock inscription at Umm Nabari, the authors of the inscription also incorporated a typically Kushite royal emblem, inscribing the lion as part of the king's name. It is uncertain exactly how this glyph is to be read here, but the likelihood would be that it was a determinative for the concept of 'king' or possibly the royal name itself.<sup>27</sup> There is some tantalising evidence for a

<sup>23</sup> FITZENREITER 2012, 43–46 discusses the difficulties of reading the damaged section above the bird either as the *r*<sup>c</sup>-disc, or simply leaving the expression as *s3 hk3 n(.y) Ksi*. The reading of the *r*<sup>c</sup>-disc is kept in VON PILGRIM 2015.

<sup>24</sup> VON PILGRIM 2015, 225. Given the parallels in titulary on Egyptian cartouches, it seems the reading *s3-r*<sup>c</sup> is more likely although this cannot be certain.

<sup>25</sup> FITZENREITER 2012, 49–51 points out parallels with Hyksos seals, particularly in regards to *s3-R*<sup>c</sup> found in Hyksos seals and the comparison of *hk3 h3s.wt* and *hk3 Ksi* to mutually designate polities. For a *hk3 n(.y) Rtnw* seal impression, see MOURAD 2015, 36 and BIETAK and FÖRSTNER-MÜLLER 2009, 111–112. VON PILGRIM 2015, 225 points out that the cartouche-plaque of the seal is most reminiscent of Egyptian seals from Dynasty 12 to 18, citing a particular example from the reign of Ahmose.

<sup>26</sup> DAVIES 2014, 35–36. Compare also the Argin Stele (SNM 14221), located 10 kilometres downstream from Buhen, which evokes 'Horus, lord of the hill-country', see KNOBLAUCH 2012, 90–92.

<sup>27</sup> See DAVIES 2014, 35 n. 17 and MANZO 2016, 24–25 and the references therein for the striding lion in Kushite iconography and as a symbol of Kushite kingship. The exact trans-

literation and translation of the lion in this inscription is in doubt but it seems certain that it determines the name *Trh*. The lion-glyph could be a Kushite ideogram for 'lion' or even 'ruler' rather than the regular Egyptian word (*m3i*), but a case can also be made, for the name *Trh* itself might mean 'lion' or a rebus for 'god, lord'. The hieroglyphic form of the Meroitic royal name *Taneyidamani* uses the writing *T-r-y* and the glyph of a lion in his name (𐎓𐎎𐎏) (alt. 𐎓𐎎𐎏) suggesting the rebus writing of the lion in this Meroitic royal name is to be read *Try - t(a)-re-ye* (BREYER 2012, 139; ZIBELIUS-CHEN, 2011, 276–278 and also HINTZE 1960, 141 who translated *tñyi* as 'lion'). However, Zibelius-Chen's commentary also posited that the *nb*-glyph in the other writing of the King's name could be taken as the rebus-value for the Meroitic word for 'lord' (*tre*), cognate to Old Nubian 𐎎𐎎𐎏 *tell* 'god' and a root present in other Nilo-Saharan languages (BENDER 1996, 91). In this case, the lion would also communicate 'lord' as an icon of Kushite kingship. As there are no direct comparisons for Kushite epigraphy in this period, both options should be seriously considered. A meaning of 'lion' or 'lord' (or both) for a root *t-r-y/h* perhaps solves the coincidence of the lion-glyph appearing at the end of the same consonan-



Plate 3 The Inscription of *Trh* at Umm Nabari in the Eastern Desert. Photo courtesy of W.V. Davies.

local solar cult in Kerma based on the representation of a solar disc on a lintel on the eastern Deffufa (K II) and the likely presence of an indigenous solar deity called *Masa*.<sup>28</sup> Therefore, the adoption of ‘Son of Re’ for the ‘ruler of Kush’ seal would not necessarily be an adoption of Egyptian royal epithet without some local Nubian religious cachet. Inscribed Egyptian objects in *Kerma classique* burials suggest that the Kerma court cannot have been ignorant of the hieroglyphic script even if they chose not to write connected hieroglyphic

texts or reproduce their own language in this script.<sup>29</sup> Another Middle Nubian culture, the eponymous Pan-Grave culture, also seems on at least one occasion to have used the script in the same period to write down a personal name on a bucranium interned in the Pan-Grave cemetery at Mostageddah.<sup>30</sup> On occasion, local Lower Nubian kinglets also used Egyptian iconography to express their rulership. At some point in the late First Intermediate Period or early Middle Kingdom, a group of shadowy local kings in Lower

tal sequence almost 1500 years apart. A word *try/h* for lion might also be cognate with Nilo-Saharan terms for felines such as Birgid *tagir* ‘leopard’, Midob *tarhar* ‘wildcat’ or Nyima *tuwer* ‘leopard’ (for the lexemes for ‘lion, leopard’ in Nilo-Saharan languages, see RILLY 2010, 474–475).

<sup>28</sup> For the lintel and its meaning, see BONNET 2000, 120–122; BONNET 2004, 161. For the religion of Kerma, see TÖRÖK 2009, 155–156; BONNET 2004, 156–160; KÜCKERTZ and LOHWASSER 2016, 25–27 and the discussion in MINOR 2014. There is a possibility that the later Meroitic sun-god, *Masa* (or *Mash*) is found in the earlier Nubian names *Msmgs* and *Msrks*, names in the list of ‘Pre-Meroitic’ Kushite names in pMoscow 314 of the late Middle Kingdom, see RILLY 2007b, 5–11 and EL-SAYED 2011, 210–211. For a possible statue of *Masa*, see BREYER 2005, 137–142.

<sup>29</sup> See supra n. 4. As noted by DAVIES 2003, 53 and DAVIES 2004b, 101, many of these inscribed objects were likely plundered from Egypt as a result of Kushite raids in Egypt, one of which is documented in the tomb of Sobeknakht II.

<sup>30</sup> For the original publication of the piece, see BRUNTON 1937, pl. 76 no. 66; for the most recent reading, see EL-SAYED 2011 and COOPER and BARNARD 2017. A Pan-Grave vessel from Hu (PETRIE 1901, pl. 40, no. 16) is inscribed (post-firing) with what might be a *s3* or the *b3*-bird, although it must remain moot whether this was designed to convey Egyptian language and/or symbology rather just a relatively common zoomorphic motif in the Nile Valley.

Nubia,  $K3-k3-R^c$  and *Sgrsnti*, chose to express themselves with the title ‘Son of Re’.<sup>31</sup> Even earlier still, one might consider the Qustul incense burner, and the Siali seal impressions of A-Group contexts as an adoption of Egyptian elite iconography. But the attribution of these early representations to the indigenous expression of a local Nubian state has been seriously questioned, and it is possible that they represent Egyptian imports.<sup>32</sup> Nevertheless, there is some isolated evidence for several different phases of Nubian polities adopting Egyptian script, titulary, and iconography in their expression of kingship, but this only surfaced momentarily until the Napatan dynasty.

The ‘borrowed’ elements of Egyptian iconography were not incorporated by Nubians without thought, but were deliberately chosen to suit local conditions and specific aspirations of the Nubian polities. Such Egyptian iconography, especially regarding kingship, was probably only employed in Nubia in specific episodes of pronounced diplomatic contact where it suited Nubian rulers to be treated as political equals and/or rivals of Egyptian monarchs.

## 2. The King Nedjeh

Returning to the supposed Kushite name in Ka’s Buhen Stele, Redford suggested reading the name of the ruler as ‘Nedjeh-ken’, taking  $kn$  to be a honorific transposition with  $Ndh$ ,<sup>33</sup> but the position of the classifier prevents this reading. Usually,  $hk3 n(.y)$  would be followed by a placename, which has been entertained in respect to ‘Nedjeh’ on at least one occasion in the scholarship. But the classifier employed here, the man holding a stick ( $\text{𓅓}$  A24), would not suit such an interpretation.<sup>34</sup>

Indeed, this classifier is not commonly found on personal names either. If it were not for the previous sentence referencing the ‘ruler of Kush’, one might interpret  $Ndh$  not as a proper noun but rather a general noun ‘ruler of *nedjeh*’. Unfortunately, there is no noun  $ndh$  in the Egyptian lexicon apart from the word for ‘fang’ or ‘teeth’ which always has a nominalising suffix  $-t$  ( $ndh.t$  or metathesised variant  $nhd.t$ ). This meaning is of course quite semantically unsuitable in this context, and is furthermore unlikely to be used in a personal name. A personal name is known with this lexical formant, one  $Bm.w-ndh$   $\text{𓅓}$   $\text{𓅓}$   $\text{𓅓}$   $\text{𓅓}$   $\text{𓅓}$   $\text{𓅓}$ , a herald in the reign of Thutmosis III, the owner of Theban Tomb 84.<sup>35</sup> The use of the classifier  $\text{𓅓}$  D40, a counterpart to A24, means that we are dealing with the same word as in Ka’s stele,  $ndh$  [FORCE]. There is no obvious link between  $Bm.w-ndh$ , Ka’s family, or the ruler of Kush that would explain the use of the same onomastic formant.  $Bm.w-ndh$  is recorded in a rock inscription at Shellal near Aswan,<sup>36</sup> and his tomb depicts ‘tribute scenes’ from several African lands of *Itr*, *Miw*, *Kš* and *T3-nhs.y* in addition to Asiatic centres.<sup>37</sup> Although there is a mutual ‘Nubian connection’ between the two instances of  $ndh$ , this does not seem sufficient to explain how the names of a Kushite King and a New Kingdom military official contain the same rare word.

One of the strangest aspects of this Kushite Nedjeh figure from the Buhen Stele is the name itself. Due to the recent publications of lexicons of African loanwords and onomastic material in hieroglyphic Egyptian, there is now a fairly extensive repertoire of Nubian place- and personal names, many of which can be connected to specific polities or ethno-linguistic blocs, such as (pre-)Beja in

<sup>31</sup> The other ruler in this shadowy Lower Nubian dynasty, Iyibkhentre, did not use  $s3-R^c$  but used a Golden Horus and  $nsw bi.ty$  to express his titulary. For the possible 11<sup>th</sup>–12<sup>th</sup> Dynasty date of these rulers, see now WILLIAMS 2013, 1–7 contra TOROK 2009, 100–102 who prefers a 13<sup>th</sup> Dynasty and Second Intermediate Period date. At least one of these rulers, *Sgrsnti*, carried a Nubian name and is therefore likely of Nubian ancestry.

<sup>32</sup> WILLIAMS 1987 prefers to attribute these objects to a local monarchy, while ADAMS 1985 has rejected this general thesis. For the manifest difficulties in interpreting the iconography, see ROY 2011, 211–243.

<sup>33</sup> REDFORD 2004, 10.

<sup>34</sup> REDFORD 1997, 5 but commenting (n. 30) that Nedjeh might also be a ruler. The Stele of Sepedhor has this same construction: DEFINITE ARTICLE - RULER - INDIRECT GENITIVE - TOPONYM ( $p3 hk3 n(.y) Kš$ ).

<sup>35</sup> As noted by SAVE-SÖDERBERGH 1949, 54 and BARDINET 1999, 44–45. For his name, see Urk. IV, 955.10; 1370.14 (without classifier). The name is also preserved in a hieratic graffito ( $\text{𓅓}$   $\text{𓅓}$   $\text{𓅓}$   $\text{𓅓}$   $\text{𓅓}$ ) at the Sun Temple of Userkaf, published in HELCK 1969, 115–116 l.3. For his statue, see HAYES 1933, 6–16. His name is also recorded in the tomb of Userhat (TT56), BEINLICH-SEEBER and GAFAR SHEDID 1987, 72.

<sup>36</sup> DE MORGAN 1894, 92 no. 107.

<sup>37</sup> For text and commentary of these scenes, see HALLMANN 2006, 10–17.



the Eastern Desert and (pre-)Meroitic and other Eastern Sudanic languages with later Kush.<sup>38</sup> It should be noted that the common label of ‘Meroitic language’ is somewhat arbitrary considering that ‘Meroitic’ was probably spoken in much of Upper Nubia greater than the isle of Meroe.<sup>39</sup> Furthermore, spoken (pre-)Meroitic must have existed well before its manifestation in inscriptions of the Meroitic Kingdom. While there is still some dissenting opinion on the genetic affiliation of the Meroitic language, the lexical correspondences provided by Rilly have garnered acceptance amongst Nilo-Saharan linguists.<sup>40</sup> The name *Ndh* in this context is distinct as there are very few African names or loanwords in Egyptian texts containing the grapheme *d* – and thus this word is less likely to derive from any African languages neighbouring Egypt.<sup>41</sup> Considering that Nedjeh is a purported ruler of Kerma, the evidence is even more revealing, as Rilly has shown in his analysis of the Execration Texts that none of the rulers of Kerma (Kush) and Sai possessed this phoneme in their names. This is due to phonology of this grapheme in Egyptian, which is generally taken to represent a sound close to an emphatic (ejective) palato-alveolar affricate [tʃʷ] or, for those linguists not favouring the emphatic realisation of Egyptian *d* and *d*, a sound close to a voiced palatal stop [j] or voiced palato-alveolar affricate [dʒ].<sup>42</sup> Such affricate consonants or their close approximates may have existed in some African languages neighbouring Egypt such as the Cushitic languages,<sup>43</sup> but are not

reconstructed in Meroitic.<sup>44</sup> Even more clinching for this argument is the presence of the grapheme *h*. The pharyngeal sound reproduced by the grapheme *h* [h] is attested in some African loanwords in Egyptian texts, particularly those deriving from the Eastern Desert (pre-Beja) and Lower Nubia, but is not reconstructed in any Meroitic or Eastern Sudanic language, pharyngeal sounds being a typical feature of Afroasiatic languages but not encountered at all in the Nilo-Saharan macro-family common in Upper Nubia. Several scholars, based on the names of Kushite kings and other onomastic data have suggested the likelihood that members of the Kerma polity spoke an Eastern Sudanic language, likely a form of pre-Meroitic,<sup>45</sup> making it even more unlikely that a Kushite ruler would have either *d* or *h* in their name as both these sounds are unknown in Meroitic or any of its linguistic relatives. The word *Ndh* itself must consequently originate from a rare Egyptian lexical root or from some other language family not indigenous to Upper Nubia. It is therefore unlikely that ‘Nedjeh’ is an indigenous Kushite-Kerma name for a local Upper Nubian king. Conversely, an Egyptian name for a Kushite ruler seems equally unlikely.

There is, however, a perfect etymological match for the word *ndh* in another unexpected language family: Semitic. In Semitic loanwords in Egyptian texts of the Middle and New Kingdom, Egyptian *d* was used to transcribe the emphatic consonant *ṣ*, and less commonly *z*, so that this word could have

<sup>38</sup> The largest compendiums of African loanwords and onomastics are found in EL-SAYED 2011 and ZIBELIUS-CHEN 2011. For Eastern Sudanic languages in historical Kerma, see RILLY 2009, 12–14 and also the phonological analysis of the Execration Texts by RILLY 2006–2007, 305.

<sup>39</sup> See the discussion in POPE 2014, 8–9.

<sup>40</sup> See RILLY 2010 and, for example, DIMMENDAAL 2015, 17.

<sup>41</sup> ZIBELIUS-CHEN 2011, 169 also excluded its Meroitic origin for this reason, as did TAKÁCS 2013, 573. The exceptions from African loanwords and onomastics from Old and Middle Kingdom loans published by EL-SAYED 2011 are: *ʒwʒbʒdi* (L. 6), *Mdʒ* (L. 211), *Hdʒwʒʒ* (L. 259, a Libyan), *Kʒdw* (L. 356), *Tghdʒw* (L. 422, a Medjay). A few names from the Wawat section of the Topographical List of Thutmose III (Urk. IV, 798–802) also have *d* (no. 21 *Kʒdʒ*, no. 35 *Dnwmn*, no. 40 *Ippdʒw*, and no. 45 *dmt*), but otherwise *d* occurs in the Punt section. There are no unequivocally African loanwords with *d* in Zibelius-Chen’s compendium of the New Kingdom and Third Intermediate Period Nubian lexical material except maybe *Dwʿ*, the

father of the *Rwi* in the Nubian polity of *Thht* ‘Debeira’. In many of these cases, the phoneme *d* (particularly when written as *dʒ*) might actually represent a Late Egyptian pronunciation of /dV/ or /tV/, see also RILLY 2007a, 211 and ZIBELIUS-CHEN 2011, 97, n. 683.

<sup>42</sup> The literature on this phonological issue is too extensive to deal with here, but consult assessments and discussions in TAKÁCS 1999, 273; OSING 2000; SCHENKEL 2012, 24; ALLEN 2013, 48–49.

<sup>43</sup> These sounds are not generally attested in reconstructions of Proto-Eastern-Cushitic of SASSE 1979, 5, except in cases of secondary palatisation, but are included in the reconstruction of Proto-Agaw, APPELYARD 2006, 14–15.

<sup>44</sup> On the lack of these sounds in Meroitic, see RILLY 2009, 18, 289; RILLY and DE VOOGT 2012, 107. Such a palatal affricate/fricative sound is present in Old Nubian *ḍ/ḍ*, see BROWNE 2002, 10.

<sup>45</sup> See RILLY 2006–2007 and also the discussions in EL-SAYED 2011, 31–33 and ZIBELIUS-CHEN 2014, 287–289.

been pronounced consonantly as something like \*/n-s'-h/ or \*/n-z'-h/ (IPA notation).<sup>46</sup> A good cognate for the meaning of *ndh* then is the Semitic root *nsh*, represented in various languages in Ugaritic *nsh* 'be victorious', Phoenician *nsh* 'to conquer, gain victory over', Hebrew *nsh*, 'splendour, glory', Arabic *nsh* 'to admonish', Ge'ez *nsh* 'be pure', Epigraphic South Arabian *nsh* 'counsel'.<sup>47</sup> Of these meanings, the nuance in Canaanite languages of 'victory' (compare also Aramaic *nshy* 'victorious and mighty') suits the meaning here, not only because Canaanite was the main Semitic language phylum from which loanwords arrived into Egyptian, but also because it is semantically appropriate as an epithet or name and corresponds to the 'classifier of force', A24 and D40. This observation, while cementing the broad meaning of the word *ndh*, does not necessarily mean that the word need be a recent Semitic loanword, as it could equally be an Egyptian cognate of the Semitic root inherited from common Proto-Afroasiatic – there being no clear way to disambiguate these options. Semitic loanwords in Egyptian are generally a feature of New Kingdom texts,<sup>48</sup> although they do occur much earlier in Middle Kingdom texts and in the context of the Hyksos domination of Lower Egypt in the Second Intermediate Period

are supposedly to be expected with greater frequency.<sup>49</sup>

Whether the root *ndh* represents a Middle Kingdom Semitic loan in Egyptian, or rather an archaic and rare Egyptian word (which is cognate to a similar Semitic root), both options demonstrate that the word on Ka's stele is most likely a descriptor of the ruler rather than a personal name for a king. This leaves us with two options on the origin of *Ndh* in this text. Either 1) a rare Egyptian word meaning 'victory' that has been used in this construction to indicate that the Kushite ruler was, like Egyptian rulers, a 'strong ruler', thus explaining the use of the classifier  $\text{𓆎}$  or 2) the name of the Kushite ruler is somehow derived or influenced by a group of Semitic speakers. The latter option presupposes the rather far-fetched notion of why a Kushite ruler would use a Semitic loan in an Egyptian text from Buhen. There are connections between the Canaanite-originating Hyksos state and the Kerma polity. This is evidenced in the Second Kamose Stele revealing the existence of a diplomatic channel between Kush and the Hyksos, while more general links are suggested by Hyksos seals found at Kerma and Kerma-like ceramics at Avaris.<sup>50</sup> Nevertheless, it is difficult to substantiate why a Kushite ruler would have a Semitic name or

<sup>46</sup> There is some discussion in Semitic linguistics whether *š* (sade) and its non-emphatic counterpart *s* (samekh) in more ancient periods represented the affricates [ts'] (or a pharyngealised variant) and [ts] respectively, see HOCH 1994, 408. This would go some way to explaining why the Egyptian consonants *d* and *t* could be used to represent these Semitic phonemes rather than Egyptian *s* or *z*.

<sup>47</sup> For the reflexes of this root in various Semitic languages, see HALAYQA 2008, 242; LESLAU 1991, 405; ZAMMIT 2002, 402; HOFTIJZER 1995, 751–752. Sabaic has the slightly different sense of 'friendship' (BEESTON *et. al* 1982, 100). The likely Semitic origin of this word *Ndh* was recently proposed in TAKÁCS 2013, 573 and also independently in the present author's doctoral dissertation COOPER 2015, 88 n. 370. Takács compared *ndh* to a Semitic root *ngh* (Ugaritic *ngh* 'to push', Hebrew *ngh* 'to butt each other') which is possible but the correspondence of Egyptian *d* for a Semitic *g* would require this to be a very old pre-Old Egyptian loan or Afroasiatic cognate. Furthermore, this etymology is semantically unlikely as a name or an epithet of a ruler compared to the sense of Semitic *nsh* 'victory'. Interestingly, BARDINET 1999, 45 guessed a similar meaning of 'aggressive, strong' for this word but connected the word to the 'tusks' of an elephant from *ndh* 'tooth, tusk'.

<sup>48</sup> HINSON 2014, 87–91 proposed some Semitic loanwords in the Middle Kingdom *Tale of Sinuhe*. The word *mt* (B110) cannot be Akkadian *mt* for both *š* and *t* do not correspond

to these Semitic phonemes in Middle Kingdom loans. The word  $\text{𓆎} \beta . y$  (B115) for Hebrew  $\text{עִפְלָה}$  'ophel' 'mound, acropolis' is an interesting and tenable suggestion. The proposed Semitic cognates for *ddb* 'incite' are impossible (*d* ≠ /g/) but could rather be a metathesis and a case of labial *b/m* variation from *ddm* 'to heap, assemble'.  $\beta \text{c}$  is probably an onomatopoeic root so caution should be placed in concluding a foreign origin.  $\text{h}^{\text{c}} m / \text{h}^{\text{c}} m$  can be explained as an Egyptian word  $\text{h}^{\text{c}} m / \text{h}^{\text{c}} m$  'to approach' (B137), particularly as these phonemes  $\text{h}^{\text{c}}$  are unlikely to co-occur in Semitic roots. *Kdm* (B29) in certain contexts seems more likely to be a toponym (see MOURAD 2013), but could be the generic Canaanite noun for 'front' or 'east'. For other Semitic loans in Middle Kingdom texts, see KITCHEN 1991, 89. Some 13<sup>th</sup> Dynasty royal names also have Semitic origins. There is Khendjer from Semitic  $\text{h}(n)zr$  'boar, pig' and it has been suggested that Wegaf's name might also be Semitic in origin, see RYHOLT 1997, 195, 219–220.

<sup>49</sup> For Semitic loanwords in Egyptian texts, see the recent treatment of WINAND 2017 who considers the corpus of foreign words as partly the result of code switching rather than simply cultural borrowing.

<sup>50</sup> For the Kamose Stele, see HABACHI, 1972, 39–41. For the 14<sup>th</sup> Dynasty seals at Kerma, see RYHOLT 1997, 113–114 and for Kerma and Kerma-like ceramics at Avaris, see FÖRSTNER-MÜLLER and ROSE 2012 and ASTON and BIETAK 2017.

epithet unless the Hyksos wielded a tremendous influence in the court of Kush. Another possibility would be that a Semitic loan for ‘victory’ arrived into the Buhen community in this period. The idea of treating *ndh* as a common adjective or noun has much to recommend it, not only because it suits the orthography of the classifier where one would usually expect A40 (𓄀) or A1 (𓄁) for a true proper name, but also because it would be explainable as a variant of the common Egyptian royal title *hk3 nht* ‘ruler of victory, ruler of strength’. This would make *ndh* ‘victory’ (or perhaps ‘victorious-one’) a synonym of the more common *nht* ‘victory’. The title *hk3 nht* is very common in the Second Intermediate Period, no doubt due to the increased importance of military affairs in a politically fragmented Egypt. A recent analysis of weapons in Kerma burials by Andrea Manzo has proposed that the Kerma elite symbolically valued military prowess and had the traits of a military aristocracy,<sup>51</sup> so epithets with military overtones would have been equally suitable for Kushite rulers as Egyptian kings. The epithet *hk3 nht* is known in the titulary of Second Intermediate Period Kings such as the Theban King Dedumose, Intef of the 13<sup>th</sup> Dynasty, Kamose (as *nsw nht* and *hk3 nht*) among others.<sup>52</sup> In the stele of Iahmose from Buhen, a similar phrase to Ka’s is used in reference to the Egyptian king Kamose: *ink ḥ3.wty kn n(.y) hk3 nht* ‘I am a brave fighter of the victorious ruler’.<sup>53</sup> The word *nht* even appears in cartouches of kings in this period (Kamose-*nht*, Intef-*nht*) and thus was probably part of the formal roy-

al name.<sup>54</sup> If we conclude that the word *ndh* is ultimately of recent Semitic origin in Egyptian, then it might have been a descriptor given to the Kushite ruler by Hyksos emissaries and diplomats such as the one mentioned in the Kamose Stele, although it is just as possible that *ndh* was an archaic or rare Egyptian word used in the particular linguistic milieu such as that of Buhen. Such an Egyptian origin would also explain the New Kingdom Egyptian personal name *Bm.w-ndh* ‘the pleasant-one of victory’.<sup>55</sup> Conversely, *Bm.w-ndh*’s name may well derive from the same Semitic loan.

Why this rare word would manifest in a Buhen Stele in place of *nht* is unclear and may never be known. There is some precedent for thinking that there was a scribal and/or dialectal idiom particular to Buhen and Lower Nubia. Uljas has identified the dropping of *n* in the third-person suffix pronoun =*sn* to =*n* amongst Buhen stele as well as a number of texts from Upper Egypt (south of Esna) from the Second Intermediate Period.<sup>56</sup> This feature might be compared to the tendency on some Second Intermediate Period stele at Buhen to elide the *n* on the toponym *Bh(n)*, although Sobekemhab’s family of stele all have the rather idiosyncratic writing of 𓄀𓄁 with a glyph resembling O1.<sup>57</sup> Many of the suffix pronoun *n*-less writings are found on a group of stele from the Buhen family of Sobekemhab (Ka’s father), but not on the Buhen family of Dedusobek, who seem to have originated from the region of Rizeiqat.<sup>58</sup> The owners of this family of stele of Sobekemhab (Khartoum 18; Khartoum 5320; Khartoum 366; Ashmolean

<sup>51</sup> MANZO 2016.

<sup>52</sup> For examples, see also RYHOLT 1997, 305–306; KUBISCH 2008, 31, 36, 50, 90, 176, 201–202. Ryholt relates this epithet specifically to the willingness of Second Intermediate Period rulers to emphasise their strength to the army.

<sup>53</sup> KUBISCH 2008, 176.


<sup>54</sup> Other examples of similar titulary in 17<sup>th</sup> Dynasty kings are included in VERNUS 1996, 833.

<sup>55</sup> Whether this name had any relation to *Bm.w-ndh*’s military career in Syria-Palestine and Nubia (see SHIRLEY 2011, 306–308) must be left open. The lexical root *ndhdh* is known as a medical condition and a theonym, see LGG IV, 604; VII, 650–651; Wb. 2, 384. For the divine name, see LEITZ 2008, 149 and also ROBERSON 2013, 23 n. 100. The name might stem from *dhdh* ‘to kill’ (Wb. 5, 607) with the addition of the *n*-singulative prefix (for which, see GUNDAKER 2011, 53–54) and is thus separate from the word under discussion. In the Coffin Texts the orthography differs between *Ndhdh*, *ndhdh*, *dhdh*, and *dhdh*.


<sup>56</sup> ULJAS 2010.

<sup>57</sup> See SMITH 1976, 90. For idiosyncratic writings of Buhen, see also BROWN and DARNELL 2013, 131 n. 44 and DAVIES 2017b, 63 n. 31.


<sup>58</sup> Both ULJAS 2010, 381 n. 37 and SMITH 1976, 80 agree that this family dates slightly earlier than Sobekemhab’s, and thus were not all contemporaries in Buhen. The region of Rizeiqat does have some tantalising links to Hyksos rulers. Temple blocks with the names of Hyksos rulers Apophis and Khayan have been found at Gebelein and an unprovenanced adze blade from the British Museum (EA66206) refers to Apophis (ḥ3-wsr-Rḥ) ‘beloved of Sobek, lord of Sumenu (site near Rizeiqat)’ – although the inscription is likely a fake and therefore has no utility in these arguments (personal communication Vivian Davies). The revision of POLZ 2006 argues against any presence of the Hyksos in the region. It might be remarked that the region of Rizeiqat-Armant was an outlet of an oasis route leading to Kharga (see DARNELL 2003, 42) and thus it is plausible that if the Hyksos had control of these routes (see also *infra* n. 72) they could have extended their influence to this region.

1893/176; Philadelphia E10984; Philadelphia E10983) have no known pre-Buhen origin, but Uljas makes an argument for their originating in Edfu and therefore claims this dialectical feature is particular to southern Upper Egypt and Lower Nubia.<sup>59</sup> Some personal names in Sobekemhab's family are suggestive of mixed ethnic origins. The daughter of Sobekemhab is called *T3-ibšk* 'She of Ibshek'.<sup>60</sup> Sobekemhab's wife's name, *Twy*, is possibly Nubian in origin although this name is frequently encountered in the New Kingdom.<sup>61</sup> A few personal names of Second Intermediate Period Buhen also seem Asiatic/Semitic in origin – although whether attributable to an Asiatic workforce in Egypt or more recent events is unknown. One *Idw-ʿmi* and his wife *Nḥwy* (Khartoum 364) likely have Semitic names.<sup>62</sup> In Sobekemhab's own family, a certain *///yḥ* , his grand-son/daughter, has a non-Egyptian name, although it is impossible to discern whether the name is Semitic or Nubian in origin.<sup>63</sup> While it is difficult to be specific, there are enough reasons to suggest that Buhen possessed a rather unique social and ethnolinguistic context, a local Egyptian bureaucracy dominated by Kush living in C-Group lands. Such a unique context possibly explains this idiomatic word-choice on Ka's stele in relation to *ndḥ*.

<sup>59</sup> ULJAS 2010, 381.



<sup>60</sup> Säve-Soderbergh considered another name in this family, *T3-ipw*  (Khartoum 5320), as an example of foreign group-writing, see BARNES 1955, 22. An Egyptian origin for this name cannot be excluded, treating it as a relative adjective 'The one of counting' possible from the verb *ip* 'to count' or other similar Egyptian roots such as Akhmim (*Ipw*). The name also occurs on Khartoum 366 (SMITH 1976, 44). If it is a foreign group-writing it would phonetically approximate \*/tʔpw/~tʔfw/.


<sup>61</sup> For this personage, see SMITH 1976, 45, 55, 75. Another Buhen *Twy* is registered as the daughter of Sobekemhab III. The name is a foreign Nubian name in pMoscow 314 (EL-SAYED 2011, 291–292) although a relatively common name in the New Kingdom. A Nubian *Twy* is also known at Saqqara, see ZIVIE 1994.

<sup>62</sup> For Asiatics and Asiatic-named individuals in this region, see SCHNEIDER 2003, 48–49, 133, 148 and MOURAD 2017, 385–391. Schneider reading *Nḥwy* as *Nḥm*. BLACKMAN in RANDALL MACIVER and WOOLLEY 1911, 180 records *Nḥwy* as does EL-SAYED 2011, 220. The name *Nḥwy* might be from Canaanite *nḥ* 'to lead, guide' or *nḥm* 'to comfort' (HALAYQA 2008, 235). SCHNEIDER 2003, 14, 49 reads the personal name  in Khartoum 370 as *Ḳm3* and not *ʿ3m*. Earlier Middle Kingdom precedents of Asiatics in Aswan are identified in MOURAD 2015, 103, 205–209.



<sup>63</sup> For the stele Ashmolean 1893/176, see KUBISCH 2008, 174.

<sup>64</sup> HABACHI 1972, 39.

If *ndḥ* is a recent Semitic loanword then it might well be another datum of evidence for linkages between the Hyksos and Kerma states, incorporating a foreign word into a royal title. Direct links between the Hyksos and Kerma/Kush are well-known from the Second Kamose Stele, where the King of Avaris, Apophis, attempts to send a messenger (*wpw.ty*) to Kush in order to rouse the Kerma ruler to attack the Egyptians while they are occupied in the north against the Hyksos.<sup>64</sup> This Hyksos messenger was captured by Kamose's forces 'above the Oasis',<sup>65</sup> indicating that Kush and the Hyksos communicated directly by the 'oasis route' rather than through the Egyptian controlled Nile Valley. This episode also indicates that Kush could receive written correspondence and perhaps possessed court scribes who could read and write, the text states that Kamose's forces captured a letter (*š.ṯ*).<sup>66</sup> But the links between Kerma and the Canaanite Delta kingdoms probably began much earlier than this event. Ryholt has argued that the Canaanite-Lower Egyptian 14<sup>th</sup> Dynasty is dynastically related to the ruling family of Kush through its Queen Tati ( in the Execration Texts,  in Hyksos seals) who begot the aptly named King Nehesy 'the Nubian', the son of the Hyksos king Sheshi.<sup>67</sup> Such a connection suggests direct

<sup>65</sup> This phrase is variably translated as 'upland Oasis route' (SMITH and SMITH, 1976: 61), or 'above the oasis' (KUHLMANN 2002, 146; COLIN 2005, 37; HABACHI 1972, 54) dependent on how one takes the expression *m ḥr.t Wḥ3.t*  (HELCK 1983, 94, 1.4).

<sup>66</sup> HABACHI 1972, 40. The presence of the letter itself along with the messenger *prima facie* suggests this, but it is possible, for example, that the letter was merely to be read by the messenger in the court at Kerma rather than received in formal correspondence. The most suitable written *lingua franca* would likely have been Egyptian.

<sup>67</sup> RYHOLT 1997, 53, 252–254. Ryholt (p. 113) remarks on the distribution of 14<sup>th</sup> Dynasty seals and Tell el-Yahudiyeh ware that this dynasty 'apparently had closer relations with Kerma... than with the Thirteenth Dynasty'. Ryholt's equation is bolstered by the orthographic similarities between the writing of this name on two very different documents, moreover the use of the group  in this name () is almost always restricted to the transcription of non-Egyptian words, in this case approximating the pronunciation of \*/tvj/. The name Nehesy is generally translated as 'southerner' or 'Nubian', but a rather different theory is provided by LOPRIENO 1988, 211–217 who argues that 'Nehesy' is a calque from a Semitic term meaning 'southerner'. Much earlier (*Kerma ancien*) trade links between Kush and the regions beyond Egypt can be found in a bowl of Levantine or Mediterranean origin, see BONNET 1997, 14.

contacts between Kush and the Lower Egyptian Canaanites at a rather early date in the late Middle Kingdom, much before the Kamose wars of liberation, and also a level of familiarity between these distant realms. Also of note is pMoscow 314, a document originating from the Hyksos controlled Fayuum which includes a list of foreigners with names of 'pre-Meroitic' origin.<sup>68</sup> Although there is no associated text explaining what these lists of Meroites represent (diplomatic-envoy, mercenaries, temple-personnel etc.), the mere existence of this list represents direct contact between Kushite peoples and the Hyksos.

The connections between Kush and Lower Egypt has archaeological correlates in the 14<sup>th</sup> Dynasty seals which Reisner excavated in the Western Deffufa at Kerma in addition to those found at various sites throughout Nubia.<sup>69</sup> Linkages between Kerma and Hyksos-Canaanite Lower Egypt are also revealed by a black vase decorated with a lotus and running spirals (BMFA 13.5083) of purported Canaanite design but Nubian manufacture,<sup>70</sup> embellished with a hieratic inscription, which was found in the Eastern Deffufa at Kerma. The inscription was read *hnppbb* and related by Posener to 'Humbaba', a mythological being of the Mesopotamian Gilgamesh epic.<sup>71</sup> More locally in Buhen, there is reason to suggest that the Second Cataract region may have been the outlet for this link via the 'oasis route'. This route allowed for Nubians and the Hyksos to trade more-or-less directly by bypassing the Theban 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> Dynasties, using the oases of Kharga, Dakhla, Farafra, and Bahariya to link Lower Egypt with Nubia somewhere in the environs of Tomas.<sup>72</sup> Archaeological indicators of this trade include

burials of the Second Intermediate Period at Buhen containing Tell el-Yahudiyeh ware dating to the Hyksos period as well as Hyksos seals and seal impressions in Nubian fortresses.<sup>73</sup> Trade in these objects emerged in the late Middle Kingdom and continued throughout the Second Intermediate Period.

While one cannot discount the idea that the ruler of Kush was known by the moniker or *nom de guerre Ndh* 'victory', the solution of interpreting *hk3 ndh* as a title, 'victorious ruler' resolves the orthographic, linguistic, and pragmatic issues. The use of this unattested phrase *hk3 ndh* might be explained by Ka's family's unique ethnic, linguistic, and political associations in the shifting world of Second Intermediate Period Buhen which had links with Kerma, Egypt, and possibly also Canaanite-Hyksos dynasties in Lower Egypt. Thus, it might be prudent to reject 'Nedjeh' as the name of a Kushite King. This means that we are still ignorant of the name of the ruler of Kerma after the Kushite name *Wttrrs* preserved in the Execration Texts at some point in Dynasty 13.<sup>74</sup> The lack of a name for a Kushite ruler in Ka's stele would continue the tradition (or moratorium), in many sources of this period (Elephantine seal, Sepedhor Stele, Kamose Stele) of simply referring to the King of Kerma as 'ruler (*hk3*) of Kush' without any specific personal name.

### 3. The King in Writing

The lack of a formal name for Kushite rulers is even more telling in the Second Kamose stele where both the 15<sup>th</sup> Dynasty ruler of Avaris (Apophis Aawesre) and Kamose are referred to by

<sup>68</sup> RILLY 2007b, 5–11; RILLY 2007, 209–213. See also the discussions in EL-SAYED 2011, 78–80. Schneider 2003, 175 preferred to interpret the names as Libyan (Berber) in origin.

<sup>69</sup> See RYHOLT 1997, 106 n. 358, 113–115.

<sup>70</sup> Due to the presence of 'running spirals', the object has been variably associated with Aegean and Minoan traditions, but this element, perhaps originating from Aegean motifs, had already been circulating in Egyptian art since the Middle Kingdom. LACOVARA 1985, 211–212; STEVENSON 1998, 117–118 and BIETAK and ASTON 2012, 326 describe the manufacture as Nubian but broadly influenced by Syro-Palestinian designs present in Tell el-Yahudiyeh ware. For spiral designs on Tell el-Yahudiyeh ware, see KAPLAN 1980, figs. 40–41. Kaplan's example of a Tell el-Yahudiyeh juglet found at Bernasht (KAPLAN 1980, fig. 41a; UC13478) features running spirals, a triangular bor-

der, and a lotus design and is therefore the best comparison in terms of decorative pattern to this vase at Kerma. For similar floral and spiral designs on this class of ware, see BIETAK and ASTON 2012, 342, 378, 380–381.

<sup>71</sup> LACOVARA 1985, 211–213; POSENER 1981, 138–139. The difficulty of relating the word to Humbaba is the presence of three labials in a row *p-b-b*. An alternative is just to treat it as an Egyptian expression, *hnp Bb* 'Bebi brought (it)', following the interpretation of SCHNEIDER 2003, 157.

<sup>72</sup> See SMITH and SMITH 1976, 71–72 who place the outlet of this route at Tomas. For this route, see also KUHLMANN 2002, 146–147; DARNELL 2002, 169–171 and COLIN 2005, 35–47.

<sup>73</sup> RANDALL-MACIVER 1911, 133–134; KAPLAN 1980, 179–180; RYHOLT 1977, 112 n. 372.

<sup>74</sup> The reading of this name is uncertain, see POSENER 1940, 48.

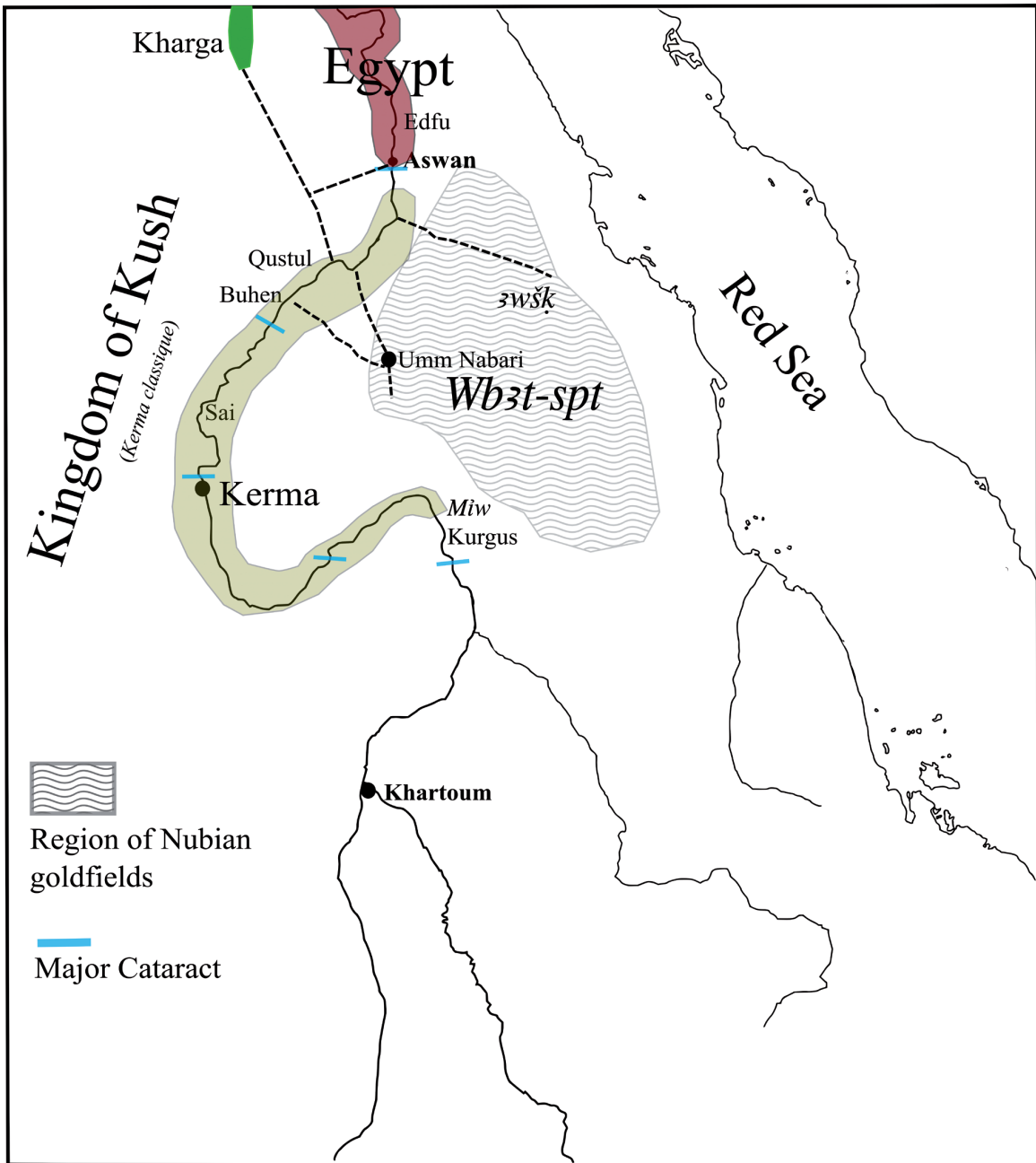



Fig. 4 Map of Nubia in the Late Middle Kingdom and Second Intermediate Period

name, but the Kushite ruler is still left as an unnamed ‘ruler’. Flammioni in a recent analysis of the Kamose Text has shown that the use of the classifiers Y1 with *hk3* (𓆎𓅓) for the ruler of Kush

and the Hyksos king stood in distinction to the use of the classifier with the white-crown of Upper Egypt, A43 (𓆎𓅓) as a statement of legitimacy of the Upper Egyptian king.<sup>75</sup> The local Nubian docu-

<sup>75</sup> FLAMMINI 2011–2012, 58–61. The writing of 𓆎𓅓 also extends to stele of this period, such as a stele of dating to Kamose’s reign at Buhen, a stele dating to Dedumose from Edfu (JE 46988) where it is used both with *nsw* and *hk3*, and another Edfu stele of an unknown date (CG 20499),

see KUBISCH 2008, 175–176; 201; 225. It is important in this context that Emhab, who likens himself to a local ruler, does not use the white-crown classifier but rather A47 (𓆎), which is regularly used of officials, see the analysis in KLOTZ 2010, 231, 234.

ments discussed here employ A40  in the Buhen Stele or no-classifier (Ø-classifier) in the Elephantine seal impression for the word *hk3*. This may illustrate that the Buhen scribes considered the King of Kerma as the true personified ruler of a Nubian polity and not just an abstract entity or amorphous ‘king’ demanded by Egyptian monarchical rhetoric. It must be left moot whether the Kerma elite saw in this sign the rhetoric of the ‘divine ruler’ or indeed whether this classifier, being a regular classifier for the lexeme *hk3* was rather arbitrarily written by the Buhen scribes of Ka’s and Sepedhor’s stelae. The ruler of Kerma was, however, likely depicted with a white-crown on at least one occasion (Buhen 691) if we accept the proposition that this and other similar stele found at Buhen were actually depicting the ruler of Kush rather than an abstract notion of an Egyptian king in an emblematic-apotropaic border stele.<sup>76</sup> Török suggested this white crowned king was a claim of Kush’s sovereignty over Upper Egypt, while admitting that the ‘expatriate milieu’ of Buhen elite were responsible for this form of representation.<sup>77</sup> In other words, the Buhen elite may have reproduced a standardised idea of ‘king’ or ‘ruler’ in the context of Egyptian norms without adhering necessarily to any informed realities of the Kerma ruler and Kushite culture.

While the depiction of a king on Buhen 691 is only debatably the ruler of Kerma, Ka and Sepedhor’s stele’s references to the *hk3* of Kush were clearly the work of the local Buhen elite. This ‘Egyptian-Kushite’ elite, possibly even Sobekemhab’s family, were also the agents likely responsible for the inscription of *Trh* at Gebel Umm Nabari (Fig. 3). This conclusion has two points favouring it: 1) Buhen is the starting point of a desert route that leads east from the Second Cata-

ract to the goldmines around Bir Murrat (Umm Nabari, Abu Siha, Umm Fit Fit) (see Fig. 4) and 2) because the notions of ‘Horus, lord of the hill-countries’ (*nb h3s.wt*) in the text is reflected in the cult of Horus at Buhen, a cult which was patronised by the very same family who inscribed the stele honouring the ruler of Kush.<sup>78</sup> The ‘ruler of Kush’ seal impression from Elephantine may also have been a product of this community, von Pilgrim has noted that the writing of ‘Kush’ (*Kšt*) in the seal impression here is identical to that on Ka’s stele.<sup>79</sup> The Buhen elite evidently were the agents who propagated the Kushite monarchy in the Egyptian script.

Different social and regional contexts required different modes of expressing Kush’s legitimacy and territoriality – it is telling that this data for Kerma’s rulers in hieroglyphic text primarily originates from the Lower Nubian frontier region and that this class of evidence is elsewhere missing from the Kushite realm. This distribution raises the question whether the Kerma elite were directly involved in these efforts to project the sovereignty, or whether this was a semi-autonomous venture of the Kerma-affiliated Egyptian elite at Buhen to project the hegemony of their Kushite patron. The hapax epithet *ndh* probably also belongs in this context, the Buhen elite creating a new epithet for the Kushite king while approximating Egyptian norms for expressing kingship.

Nevertheless, while the Kushites used this word *hk3* for themselves, there seems to have been a general moratorium against naming and elevating the King of Kerma in written or visual records in the Kushite heartland until the Napatan period. It is likely that some cultural proclivity stood behind this phenomenon,<sup>80</sup> possibly a naming taboo (or *name avoidance*) and/or reluctance

<sup>76</sup> The extensive commentary in KNOBLAUCH 2012 argues that this stele belongs to a small corpus of border markers. See also recently MANZO 2016, 21–23 who prefers the interpretation of a Kushite king.

<sup>77</sup> TÖRÖK 2009, 108–109.

<sup>78</sup> The common epithet of Horus at desert and mining sites, ‘Horus, lord of the hill-country’ and ‘Horus, lord of Buhen’ is found in inscriptions at Buhen and in the Umm Nabari, for which see DAVIES 2014, 24 n. 19, 33, 34, 38. Horus *nb h3s.wt* is present on Ka’s stele as well as Khartoum 11778 and BM 489 (SMITH 1976, 48, 49) and also Khartoum 14221 (KNOBLAUCH 2012, 90). For the Second Cataract route to Murrat and the goldfields of Nabari, identifiable by inscriptions and Egyptian ceramics, see MANZO 2012, 82; DAVIES 2014, and RUFFIEUX and BASHIR 2014.

Note that the modern placename is registered as ‘Nabardi’ in the gazetteer of mines in KLEMM and KLEMM 2013, 544. It might be possible that the word *Nabari* from Gebel Umm Nabari, while having an Arabic etymology from the root *nbr* ‘elevated’ may reflect a much older Meroitic word for ‘gold’, *nbr*, itself a loan from Egyptian.

<sup>79</sup> In addition to the orthography of *Kš* in a stele from Edfu, see further examples in VON PILGRIM 2015.

<sup>80</sup> ZIBELIUS-CHEN 2001, 27–28 proposes that the Kushites did not need to propagate their power in written name but had other forms of political expression relating to ritual and monumental architecture, see also the comments in DOYEN and GABOLDE 2017, 152–153. For a comparatively common practice of naming taboo and avoidance speech amongst African languages, see STORCH 2011, 34–38.

towards depiction of the human form in iconography (*aniconism*). Such a cultural aspect is all the more likely as Kerma rulers clearly had the knowledge and means to propagate their name and figure but actively chose not to adopt widespread use of the Egyptian script or iconography in either text or statuary. There are of course some instances of figural representation in the Kerma artistic repertoire, but this seems to largely appear in the *Kerma classique* and cannot be considered a regular feature of Kushite artistic expression until later periods.<sup>81</sup> Thus even though the Kerma elite projected Egyptian features of kingship in Lower Nubia, an Egyptian-styled sealing system, and some artistic borrowings, there is not the breadth of evidence to suggest a pervasive and complete model of Egyptian elite emulation in Kerma. Indeed, certain other expressions of royal power in the Upper Nubian heartland, such as the presence of sacrifice in royal burials and distinctive temple architecture, were decidedly non-Egyptian. What worked on the Second Cataract did not necessarily find a place in the Third Cataract Kushite heartland. This use of Egyptian script by the Kerma rulers might be seen as a very confined and deliberate undertaking on the part of the ‘expatriate’ milieu, perhaps with the tacit approval or gesturing of Kushite representatives, to express their polity and monarchy in the context of diplomacy and legitimacy in a multi-polar world where Egypt and Kush were on equal footing. The intersection of the Kerma polity with a local Egyptian elite begged for more ‘Egyptian’ forms for expressing the power of the Kerma monarchy.

The comparisons between this use of Egyptian titulary and that of Egyptian titles and iconography being appropriated in Byblos are obvious, here too we see the adoption of Egyptian titles such as *ḥ3.ty-ꜥ* ‘mayor’, *ḥk3* ‘ruler’ and *ir.y-pꜥ.t* ‘noble’ to express a mutually understood prestige, but not running texts of hieroglyphic Egyptian.<sup>82</sup>

<sup>81</sup> For example, the paintings in the Kerma funerary chapel of K XI freely depict individuals in scenes reminiscent of Egyptian funerary types, see BONNET 2000, 84, 90, 94 and discussion in TÖRÖK 2009, 147–151. For figural and royal representations in Kerma culture in general, see also the extensive discussion in the thesis of MINOR 2012, 78–79, 95–96.

<sup>82</sup> TEISSIER 1996, 2; FLAMMINI 2010.

<sup>83</sup> For the territorial extent of Kush, see MANZO 2014, 1149–1150; EMBERLING 2014, 136, 144 and BONNET 2014, 81–82. Judging from archaeological material, the ‘southern boundary’ of Kushite rule probably extended at least as far

The new political arrangement of the *Kerma classique*, where the kings of Kerma ruled over a territorial entity which extended from beyond the Fourth Cataract in the south to the Aswan frontier in the north, called for a newfound expression in legitimising their territoriality and power beyond their heartland around the Third Cataract and the Letti Basin.<sup>83</sup> This new Kushite realm should rightly be termed in an ‘empire’. Kerma exercised hegemony over other distinct local Nubian dynasties such as that of Sai (and presumably other unknown and unnamed local dynasties) in addition to eclipsing over much of foreign C-Group territory in Lower Nubia, while controlling a vast region of the Nile Valley and adjacent deserts. The documents discussed here are a testament to Kush coming to terms with their new status as rulers of a large multi-ethnic polity.

The propensity of early Nubian cultures *not* to adopt widespread writing despite clear abilities to do so has much wider ramifications for Northeast African history and the phenomenon of cultural adoption more generally. A common hypothesis and assumption in the borrowing of writing systems, and even more generally technology (i.e. metallurgical techniques, plant-domesticates, architecture etc.) is that the absence of these techniques in the receiving culture indicates a lack of structural ability or know-how to reproduce the technology. The evidence and arguments presented here clearly indicates that cultural agency or deliberate community-based decisions affected how writing systems were borrowed, used, implemented and sometimes ultimately rejected. Early Nubian (elite-)culture clearly rejected the utility of hieroglyphic writing for a number of reasons which must be attributable not to ability but to cultural norms and expression. This model strongly argues against the idea that ancient Kushites (or any other cultures for that matter) were passive agents receiving borrowed techniques from a gen-

as the Abu Hamed bend. At Mograt Island there is a cemetery of the Kerma culture (WESCHENFELDER and REES 2014, 150) and Kerma material has also been found at Kurgus itself (SÖSTRÖM 2014). A hypothetical earlier Kushite border or cultural boundary in this region may be another *raison d’être* behind Egyptians placing their New Kingdom boundary at the quartzite rock of Hagr el-Merwa, with the Egyptians conquering the entirety of Kushite administered lands. For the prominence of this landmark and its importance to indigenous inhabitants of the region, see DAVIES 2017a, 1–5, 30.



erally demographically and politically superior neighbour (Egypt), but rather made conscious decisions to adopt or not adopt a technique or technology. The resultant model then posits that cultures had significant agency and decision making power in the adoption of borrowed items and adapted them to their set purpose. Seemingly more ‘advanced’ ideas and techniques would not be widely adopted without some element of trial and evaluation and test for cultural utility.

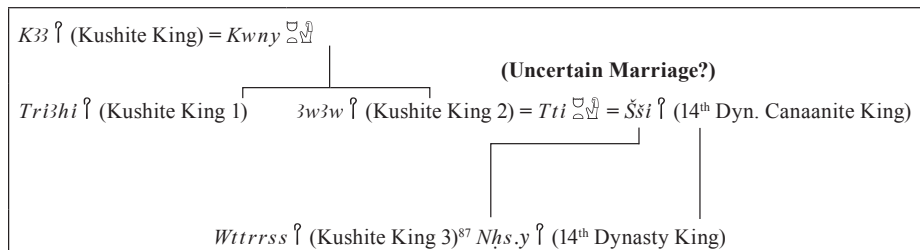
**4. Excursus: Some thoughts on the Dynasty of Kush in the Late Middle Kingdom**

The Execration Texts of the Late Middle Kingdom, chiefly the Mirgissa, Theban, and Saqqara texts are the only documents from which we can reconstruct Nubian dynasties until the emergence of the Napatan dynasty in the early First Millennium BCE. The Kushite ruler *Tri3hi* is mentioned in the Mirgissa Execration Texts as the son of *K33ny* and *K33*.<sup>84</sup> In the Theban Execration Texts, the king *3w3w* is born of *Kwny* (no doubt a variant spelling of *K3ny*, the mother of *Tri3hi*) with the name of the father not preserved.<sup>85</sup> In the Saqqara Execration Texts, king *Wttrrs* is born of *Tti* (*Tati*) and *3w33* (no doubt the same as *3w3w*).<sup>86</sup> It was this same *Tti* who Ryholt conjectures to have married into the Lower Egyptian-Canaanite 14<sup>th</sup>

Dynasty, and if so, must have presumably done so on the death of king *3w3w*. The king *Tri3hi* was the brother of *3w3w* as he has the same parents, but kingship did not pass onto his heirs (perhaps he had no sons?) but rather his brother. The much damaged earlier Helwan Execration text would also have included the name of a much earlier Kushite ruler although it is lost in the lacunae.<sup>88</sup> The dynastic lineage of Kush is preserved as follows for the mid to late Middle Kingdom, which it must be admitted is very preliminary and operates on the proviso that names were not repeated amongst individuals of the Kushite Dynasty (see family tree).<sup>89</sup>

Bruce Williams has revised the dating of the Mirgissa-Theban-Saqqara Execrations Texts to a few generations of the late 12<sup>th</sup> and the early 13<sup>th</sup> Dynasty, based on a variety of archaeological, palaeographic, and onomastic variables.<sup>90</sup> There are two possible chronological linchpins for dating this Kushite royal family, both of which are equally tenuous. The Execration Texts themselves as textual-archaeological items are difficult to date, both in terms of archaeological internment and preparations of the texts and their *Vorlage*.<sup>91</sup> If we presume *Tti* to be a consort of the Canaanite 14<sup>th</sup> Dynasty king Sheshi, this provides another chronological correspondence, although not a very secure one. According to Ryholt’s chronology, this

would put *Tati* in the Delta at some point around 1750–1700 BCE,<sup>92</sup> although the absolute dates are hardly certain for this dynasty. Using this logic,



<sup>84</sup> KOENIG 1990, 103. Presuming a father to son patrilineal succession it is likely that *K33* would also have been King before his son *Tri3hi*. This manner of succession can be assumed as *3w3w*’s son *Wttrrs* was also king.

<sup>85</sup> SETHE 1926, 33; EL-SAYED 2011, 271.

<sup>86</sup> POSENER 1940, 48.

<sup>87</sup> Compare Meroitic *wide* ‘brother’ or the Meroitic epithet of Osiris, *wettrri*, see RILLY and DE VOOGT 2012, 43; BREYER 2014, 274 with the Meroitic postpositional *-s(e)*.

<sup>88</sup> POSENER 1987, 23. Another 12<sup>th</sup> Dynasty datum for a Kushite ruler, albeit in a formulaic context and lacunae, is found in the *Annales of Amenemhat II*: ‘children of the rulers of Kush and Wubat-sepet’ [*ms.w h33.w n.w K*]38 *n.w Wb3t-spt*, see ALTENMÜLLER and MOUSSA 1991, 9.

<sup>89</sup> A family tree of this dynasty and its intersection with the 14<sup>th</sup> Dynasty is also produced in RYHOLT 1997, 254.

<sup>90</sup> WILLIAMS 2013, 73 n. 71. Particularly important for Williams’ argument is the onomastic dating of Egyptian personal names, with basilophoric names possible referencing 13<sup>th</sup> Dynasty Kings in the Mirgissa and Theban Texts such as *Sa-Hathor-Neferu* and *Sobekhotep*, although it must be admitted that these names are in use in periods before these king’s reign.

<sup>91</sup> For the internment of these objects and the associated ritual, see the summary in RITNER 1993, 136–172 and the observations on the Mirgissa material in VILA 1973.

<sup>92</sup> For the date of Sheshi in the 14<sup>th</sup> Dynasty and its synchronism with the early 13<sup>th</sup> Dynasty, see RYHOLT 2010.

the three (or four if we include *Tri3hi's* father) Kushite kings mentioned in the Execration Texts must also date somewhere in this broad period of 1800–1700 BCE.

Another linchpin comes from a rather complex set of connections based on the Medjay dynasties mentioned in the Execration Texts. A Medjay chief of the polity *3wšḳ* with an Egyptian name *W3ḥ-ib* is mentioned in the Mirgissa Execration Texts as the son of *Twhy* (mother) and *Wnk3t* (father).<sup>93</sup> The same *W3ḥ-ib* is found also in the Theban Execration list, where he is the son of the same couple (*// whi* and *Wnk3t*) and in the short version of the Mirgissa list he is also stated to be a ruler of *3wšḳ*.<sup>94</sup> The figure *Wnk3t* also begot the ruler of the other Medjay kingdom of *Wb3t-spt* named *B<sup>c</sup>kw3yt* whose mother was *Th33s*, making *Wnk3t* the progenitor of two different Medjay dynasties. Presuming that the information present in the Mirgissa Execration Texts presents roughly contemporary lineages of Nubian rulers (Kush, Medjay, Sai) at the date when the texts were compiled, it holds that the ruler of Kush *Tri3hi* and the Medjay *W3ḥ-ib* were contemporaries, with *W3ḥ-ib* having a longer rule as *Tri3hi* was no longer present in the Theban Texts. In the same intervening period covered by these Execration Texts (excluding the Helwan Texts which leave few extant names), the Medjay Kingdom of *3wšḳ* went through two reigning kings (*W3ḥ-ib*, *Tghd<sub>w</sub>*), the *Wb3t-spt* polity went through one king (*B<sup>c</sup>kw3yt-It3w*) as well as another distinct line of two kings (*B3wny*,

*Twn<sup>c</sup>i*),<sup>95</sup> the Sai Island polity had three kings (*H3s3*, *Stḳtnkh*,<sup>96</sup> *3ktwi*) and Kush also three kings. This concurs with Bruce Williams' assessment that these three Execration Texts would have represented a snapshot of roughly 50 years of Nubian dynasties.

While no Medjay personage called *W3ḥ-ib* is known from any contemporary documentation outside the Execration Texts, a Medjay chief (*wr*) of *3wšḳ* called *Kwy* is known from pBoulaq 18, the accounts of the Theban palace of the 13<sup>th</sup> Dynasty.<sup>97</sup> It is noteworthy that this *Kwy* does not occur in any of the Execration Texts even though the dynastic lineage of *3wšḳ* is mentioned, with the last known ruler being *Tghd<sub>w</sub>*. The etymological studies of Zibelius-Chen and El-Sayed show that the name *Kwy* stems from the Beja word for 'friend' (contemporary Beja *kwáaya*), standing as one of the safer lexical items evidencing that the Medjay spoke a form of pre- or proto-Beja (Tu-Bedawiye).<sup>98</sup> I contend that this *Kwy* 'friend' is the same person as the individual named *W3ḥ-ib* from pBoulaq 18. The Egyptian expression *W3ḥ-ib* also means 'friend', and therefore both names have identical semantics in different languages and thus represents a translation of a proper noun.<sup>99</sup> Another Execration Text passage hints at this dual naming process. In the Theban Execration Texts, the Medjay ruler of *Wb3t-spt* called *B<sup>c</sup>kw3yt* is given an alternative Egyptian name (*dd.w n=f T3y*) "he is called Tjai".<sup>100</sup> The Egyptian attempt to literally and lexically 'translate' foreign names is

<sup>93</sup> KOENIG 1990, 106 following the interpretation of POSENER 1940, 54 on the coordination of texts and toponym.

<sup>94</sup> SETHE 1926, 36 originally read the traces as *//[tp]whi*, but the lacunae is not clear at all and on comparison with the Mirgissa list (KOENIG 1990, 106) it would seem that this is the same wife *Twhi*.

<sup>95</sup> The authors of the Saqqara and Theban Execration Texts were both aware of two dynasties for *Wb3t-spt*. While the first dynasties (A3 in both documents) refer to the same king *B<sup>c</sup>kw3yt-It3i*, the second dynasties (A4) refer to two different families, one king *B3wny* (Theban) and another *Twn<sup>c</sup>i* (Saqqara) both with different parents. Whether this indicates a third dynasty of *Wb3t-spt*, a different branch of the same family or a method of succession (e.g. matrilineality) or some sort of error cannot be ascertained.


<sup>96</sup> Alternatively transcribed as *Stjkh<sub>i</sub>* in the Saqqara texts.

<sup>97</sup> MARIETTE 1872, pl. 43, l. 3, l. 9; SCHARFF 1922, pl. 21, 69, l. 3, 70, l. 9–10.

<sup>98</sup> EL-SAYED 2011, 278–279. For discussion of this name, see also ZIBELIUS-CHEN 2006, 733. It is important in this context that no other related Cushitic language (i.e. Agaw,

Saho, Afar, Oromo, Somali) seems to contain a similar lexical root for 'friend' (BLAŽEK 2003, 323), making this a Beja isogloss.

<sup>99</sup> For the word *w3ḥ-ib*, see Wb. 1, 256.

<sup>100</sup> SETHE 1926, 34. Other examples include wives in the Helwan Execration Texts, POSENER 1987, 20. Outside these texts one might note the Second Intermediate Period Stele of Emhab who had an Egyptian name (*M-ḥ3b*) and a foreign name (*Tmrrw*). Early 18<sup>th</sup> Dynasty examples include the King's sons of Kush, Ahmose-Si-Tayit, Ahmose-Turo as well as Amenemnekh-inebny who all seem to have had Egypto-Nubian dual-names. For viceregal names, see also TÖRÖK 2009, 171–177. The name *Inbny*  (see DAVIES 2008, 44–45) is clearly foreign, having a consonantal pronunciation something like \*/ɲbnj/. A possible etymology suggests itself as stemming from the Meroitic *nob* 'the slave, peasant, man of lower origin' with a suffixed determinant *-l* or *-n*, both of which are attested in (pre-)Meroitic. The word *nob* would be later derogatively used as an ethnome in Meroitic for the Nubian/Noba peoples, for which see RILLY 2008, 216–219.

attested on the Antef II dog stele, where the dog name *bḥwkwzi*, stemming from Beja *bōk* or Ge‘ez *bḥk<sup>w</sup>* ‘he-goat’ is glossed (literally *r-dd* ‘called’) with the proximal semantics of *m3-ḥd* ‘gazelle’.<sup>101</sup> The fact that Egyptians gave Egyptian-language sobriquets to certain Medjay rulers might suggest some recurrence and entente in their contact with the Medjay vis-à-vis other Nubian polities like Kush and Sai who had purely foreign names.

Papyrus Boulaq 18 has been dated by Ryholt to the period between Khendjer and Sobekhotep III, while Krauss differs slightly in his assessment, placing the document in the reign of Khendjer’s predecessor (whoever that may be).<sup>102</sup> Using Khendjer’s reign as a heuristic mid-point, this would put *Kwi/W3ḥ-ib* and hence *Tri3hi* as contemporaries within the 13<sup>th</sup> Dynasty, probably giving this segment of the Kushite dynasty (three generations) a broad date range of about 1800–1700 BCE.<sup>103</sup> A recent study on the chronological and archaeological ramifications of the geography in the Asiatic section of the Execration Texts has dated the texts to a roughly similar period of 1900–1700 BCE.<sup>104</sup> More broadly, it is also the latter part of this period and the mid-13<sup>th</sup> Dynasty which scholars usually date the downfall and abandonment of Egyptian administered Lower Nubia, terminating somewhere around the reign of Neferhotep I.<sup>105</sup> Despite like-sounding names, there is some difficulty in equating the king *Trh* of the Umm Nabari inscription to the king *Tri3hi* of the Mirgissa Execration Texts. This would

mean that the same personage was present in Lower Nubia both as an enemy of Egypt in an Egyptian authored-document and as the ruler of the region – ‘beloved of Horus’. The only way this could be harmonised is if this king was not in control of the region early in his reign (Execration Texts) while later in his reign he began the process of asserting some authority over Lower Nubia and adjacent deserts.

The ‘victorious ruler’ of Kush mentioned on Ka’s Buhen stele would post-date this string of kings by about a century, but predate the anonymous Kushite ruler of the Kamose wars.<sup>106</sup> But one might wonder whether the ‘victorious ruler’ mentioned in Ka’s Stele and/or Ka and his family were involved in some capacity in the pan-Nubian (Kush, Medjay, Punt) raids directed by Kush in the late Second Intermediate Period as is described in the biography of Sobeknakht II.<sup>107</sup> These chronological observations should be considered preliminary, and rely on a number of linchpins provided by authorities on Second Intermediate Period chronology, but it is hoped this will provide future groundwork and data on which to discuss the chronology of early Nubian rulers. It should be stressed that these insights do not incorporate evidence from stratigraphy and local archaeological evidence at Lower Nubian centres nor the important ramifications and ongoing discussions emerging from the Khayan – Sobekhotep IV seal synchronisms at Edfu.<sup>108</sup> The task of synchronising this data must be dealt with elsewhere and by scholars with much more expertise in these matters.

<sup>101</sup> See TAKÁCS 2013, 572. MARRASSINI 2003, 150 thought this root was ultimately of Cushitic (i.e. Beja) origin. This etymology was declined by Schneider as he interpreted the *ʒ* as /r/. The pharyngeal *h* is no longer found in Beja, but there is no problem in assuming a more ancient pronunciation of *bḥk*. The phoneme *h* in earlier Beja usually becomes *h*, as in modern Beja *kehan* ‘love’ derived from an earlier root *kḥn* (cognates of Saho *kaḥano*, Afar *kaḥanu*), a root also found in a foreign personal name of the First Intermediate Period as *Mkḥnt* (EL-SAYED 2011, 211–212). But the presence of the long-vowel in Beja *bōk* might imply the elision of an older consonant or laryngeal.

<sup>102</sup> RYHOLT 1997, 193–194; KRAUSS 2006, 422–423. For the dating of the document, see also the remarks in QUIRKE 1990, 12–13 and FRANKE 1988, 254–255. The document is usually dated by reference to the vizier Ankhaw, who is a known contemporary of Khendjer and has a *terminus ante quem* in the reign of Sobekhotep III when he is replaced by

Ressonb. But this observation alone does not date the document, nor establishes the progression of kings in this segment of the 13<sup>th</sup> Dynasty. This is not the forum for disentangling the chronology of 13<sup>th</sup> Dynasty kings or making a statement on the veracity of these arguments.

<sup>103</sup> The absolute dates here follow those proposed by Ryholt, but see also the dates in KRAUSS, supra n. 102.

<sup>104</sup> STREIT 2017. See also the discussion in BEN-TOR 2006.

<sup>105</sup> SMITH 1976, 83 and TÖRÖK 2009, 100.

<sup>106</sup> GUNDLACH 1996, 72 considered that the King of Kush in the Kamose stele was directed to Nedjeh’s son or heir.

<sup>107</sup> For the Nubian raids on Egypt in the Second Intermediate Period, see DAVIES 2003 and 2004b. For the date of Sobeknakht II in the late 16<sup>th</sup> Dynasty after the reign of Nebiryrau I, see DAVIES 2010, 225 and FRANKE 2010, 296–298.

<sup>108</sup> MOELLER, MAROUARD and AYERS 2011 and the study of AYERS 2016, 29–30.

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