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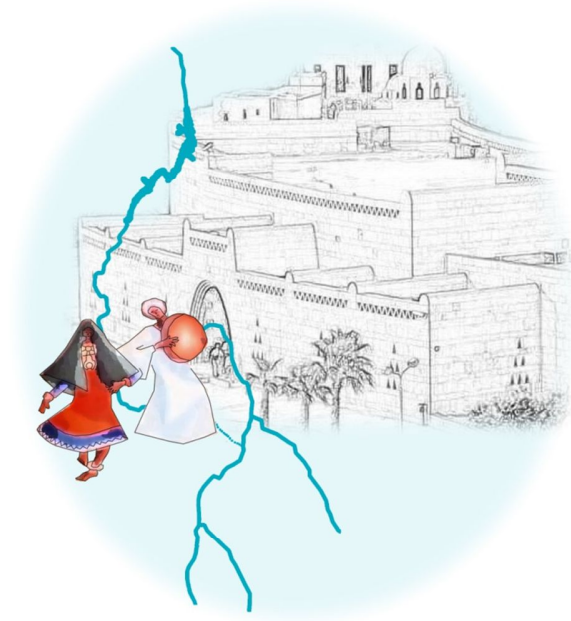
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Nubia and Nubians: The ‘Museumization’ of a Culture



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NUBIA AND NUBIANS: THE 'MUSEUMIZATION' OF A CULTURE

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INTRODUCTION

Rich in history and located in what is now northern Sudan and Upper Egypt, Nubia is among the most excavated corners of the world (Fig. 1). The archeological interest responsible for this intensive activity is the outcome of the construction of the two dams in Aswan in the twentieth century. The most spectacular salvage rescue operation occurred during the sixties when the international community was mobilized through the efforts of UNESCO and at the request of Egypt and Sudan. The birth of Nubiology, as a field of study separate from Egyptology, can be traced back to this rescue operation that began a shift in the cultural perception of Nubia.

This archeological interest in the area has not yet spilled over to the representation of Nubia in museums. The waters of dams have submerged large parts of Nubia, burying much of its history and stories in the sandy shoals beneath. This dramatic chapter in the history of Nubia is not yet finished. The loss of valuable knowledge of Nubia's place in the archeological record, the displacement of local populations and the subsequent changes in their traditions, is continuing. The Merowe Dam has been built in the last decade at the Fourth Cataract and some other dams are planned throughout the whole area (Fig. 2).

The present developments ask again for an international reaction and for new research on the idea, history, heritage and present life of Nubia and its representation in museums. If the trend is not reversed, museums will become 'the only and sole alternative' venues where Nubian culture can still be admired and understood. The responsibility of museums has, therefore, never been greater. In forgotten nooks and crannies and in dark basements throughout the museum world, the artifacts of Nubia need to be freed from the dust of the time and properly displayed in exhibitions that reveal the wealth of history and culture inherent in each.

Whenever it is possible, museums need to act not only as an erudite display of objects, but also as a conduit between the past and the present through the re-creation of new spaces for learning and engaging more effectively what heritages have left to us. In a nutshell, museums should serve in the context of ancient civilizations as a vehicle for rescuing marginalized cultures from obscurity.

From the perspective of archeology and museum studies, the purpose of my research is to contribute to the integrated knowledge of past and present Nubia. It aims to present and analyze when and how the complex concepts of Nubia and Nubians have been and are being displayed in museum contexts worldwide. Interwoven into this discussion are the related historical, sociopolitical, economic, curatorial and museum systems' problematic of displaying or not displaying Nubian collections. Such an investigation is both highly necessary and timely because not enough scholarly study has been carried out to address the historiography of collections and exhibition of the Nubian heritage properly.

I have always been interested in Nubia, and over the years my appreciation and understanding of Nubia and Nubians have increased. As a young scholar with a background in Egyptology, I focused on archeology and academic issues, as did most of my colleagues. The establishment of the chair of Nubian Antiquities at the University of Rome 'La Sapienza' caught my attention.¹ Considered until then, at the university level, just an appendix to Egyptology, Nubia was little pursued as an academic field in its own right. Gradually my approach to the study of Nubian culture and history has changed, enriched by my permanent residence in the Nile Valley as

¹ I was one of the first students of the University of Rome 'La Sapienza' to write a thesis and specialize in the newly established Chair of Nubian Antiquities. The life of this chair was brief. It was indeed suppressed when Nubia reverted to being again one of the programs of the Chair of Egyptology.

well as by my work first as a scholar and later as a UNESCO expert. I spent one year at the Egyptian Museum in Cairo² and I implemented several activities in the Nubia Museum of Aswan, indubitably the most important are the Permanent Photographic Gallery *Nubia Submerged* and the creation of the Library and the Documentation Center on Nubia.³ In Sudan I also implemented several activities including the contribution to the rehabilitation of the Sudan National Museum in Khartoum and the preparation, in cooperation with the local authorities and the Nubian community, of the concept of the Nubia Museum of Wadi Halfa.

My years of research in museums in the Nubian area and around the globe have made it emphatically clear that much of Nubian history still withers in the backrooms, storage areas and basements of museums. Extracting these objects, though they might no longer be *in situ*, has proven to be a fascinating, sometimes quite surprising and fruitful enterprise: one that has surpassed my earlier penchant for excavation in the field. I realized how important and vital it was to involve local communities not only in the preservation of this heritage but also to help these communities to gain a better understanding of and recognize the significance of the history of the land they lost and of the land in which they are located today. Such efforts elicit a sense of shared history and communal pride, not only within communities, but as part of human civilization as a whole.

The Nubia Museum of Aswan was the first to be conceived as a Museum of the Nubian Civilization in its holistic vision. The museum's concept has played a major role in emancipating my conceptual vision of the idea of 'Nubia'.

Nubia is a contested field in etymological, geographical, linguistic and historical terms and approaches, but, as indicated above, it is also one of the world's best-known areas from an archeological viewpoint. The emphasis on the archeology of Nubia has dominated and hence obscured scholarly research into other aspects of Nubian life and culture. Oceans of ink have been spilled in describing the great wealth of monuments that were once spread through the region (although, fortunately, in some areas these structural documents of history survive even today). More disturbingly, little research exists about the rather more severe loss: that of the living cultures. Too often, we fail to understand that Nubia and Nubian culture, although disappearing, still exist today in the people in and from this area. Within this contemporary context, full of devastating socioeconomic stress, research and museum exhibitions should include the world of Nubians today.⁴ At the end of the twentieth and early into this twenty-first century, strongly characterized by conflicts of identity, matters dealing with people and their cultures have become very sensitive issues. This sensitivity also extends to museums. More and more museums have developed into mass-media communication tools, reshaping their traditional role. Rather than focusing on preserving, studying and presenting their collections, museums might now be required to perform a variety of social functions, as among them social inclusion, lifelong learning and recognizing group identities. One of the main tasks which any study of Nubia requires is, therefore, to gain a better understanding of what is meant by the term 'Nubia'. The various etymological, geographical, linguistic and historical paradigms that have been constructed for the history of Nubia have still left the term somewhat undefined, vaguely referring to both the ancient

² At the time, I was granted a scholarship from the Egyptian Ministry of Higher Education. The scope of this research was to compile a sort of inventory of Nubian artifacts kept at the Egyptian Museum in Cairo. The search for these documents was difficult, since a database of the museum objects had not yet been established and information in the 'journal d'entrée' was very vague and poor.

³ I have also organized several activities in capacity building in the field of conservation and education for the museum staff.

⁴ Cf. Chapters 1 and 2.

civilization and that of present-day displaced peoples. As increasing numbers of museums become interested in exhibitions highlighting the history and culture of this civilization and area, there is a real danger that individualized narratives and paradigmatic constructions will once again unbalance and will thwart a thorough understanding of the history/story of Nubia.

This research seeks to target the problem of defining Nubia in modern contexts, both through a journey into historiographic literature and by examining how the views of the past have influenced the documentation and presentation of Nubia in popular and in scholarly interpretations.

Chapter 1 provides a summary of the history of Nubia which highlights the original elements of what we call 'Nubian culture' and their continuity over time. It is on this continuity that a Nubian identity is based. Chapter 2 explores the various perceptions and constructions of Nubian history and culture generated in particular by the fact that Nubia does not exist as a political entity, as it is located in Egypt and the Republic of the Sudan. These first two chapters are an essential introduction and form the basis for discussing the impact of what I have termed the 'museumization of Nubia', a concept I loosely define as covering the widespread tendency of museums around the globe to include exhibitions of Nubian artifacts. The choice of this term is part of a trend in Nubian studies initiated at the beginning of the last century by the American archeologist George A. Reisner⁵ and continued also by modern researchers who create other terminologies to name materials they consider to be 'new' or different.

Before discussing the worldwide 'museumization of Nubia',⁶ I pay attention, in Chapter 3, to the role of museums in general, to the changes which they have undergone over time and how they work in the present world. This overview will help us to understand how a complex entity such as Nubia can be presented in harmony with the current realities of its modern context in Egypt and Sudan.

Chapters 4, 5, 6 and 7 are the core of the research and in them I present and discuss how Nubia is displayed in museums today. In Chapter 4 I examine the dynamics of dispersion of such collections in museums worldwide, the methodology and set of criteria I used to track them and make my assessment as well as the logical presentation of the collections. In Chapter 5 I offer an analysis of the display or 'not display' policies of Nubian collections worldwide. Evidences to support the analysis are presented in Chapters 6 and 7, that offer a 'virtual tour' around Nubian collections in the world. The 'tour' examines these collections in the light of their display policies; the history of their formation; identification of those instances when Nubia is presented as the subject of an independent academic discipline or, conversely, as an appendage to something else, or just simply a random choice. The tour assists in fostering a better understanding of these collections. It raises the question of whether such collections and exhibitions have a role in defining or creating Nubian heritage, independently of or at variance with the Nubians' concept of their own past. Furthermore this 'tour' helps us to reflect on the influence that the various types of collections on display have on the local and worldwide perception of Nubian heritage.

The result of this research is also intended as my own contribution to the recovery of Nubian artifacts scattered around the world and often hidden in the context of Egyptian material with which they are, in most cases, mixed. I want to mention in this respect what the French archaeologist Michel Dewachter recommends:

L'importance des moyens et des concours mis en oeuvre lors de la Sauvegarde des monuments de Nubie autorisait croire qu'un soin particulier, à défaut de l'établissement

⁵ Cf. Chapter 1.

⁶ Cf. Chapters 4, 5, 6 and 7.

d'un corpus systématique, serait accordé en priorité à l'édition des plus intéressants monuments nubiens qui, depuis le siècle dernier, se trouvent dispersés à travers plusieurs musées: il n'en fut malheureusement rien et la tâche demeure. Aussi, la Nubie ne bénéficiant plus aujourd'hui du même souci, appartient-il désormais à chacun d'entre nous de signaler de façon appropriée tous ces éléments d'un même puzzle.⁷

I have made rather extensive use of quotations in the text. Two main factors have prompted this choice: the first is that when we speak about the history of Nubia, we are speaking about a period stretching from prehistory to the modern time. Since my background is Egyptology in general and more specifically its contemporary Middle Nubian Period (c. 2494 -1230 BC), I have had to rely on the work of colleagues, specialists in the other periods of Nubian history. I preferred in some cases to quote rather than to paraphrase their work in order to avoid misinterpretation. The second and more sensitive reason is linked to the nature of my research that is not only based on my own perception but also relies on other scholars' perceptions that have characterized the idea of Nubia from the past to the present time. The use of quotations rather than paraphrasing other colleagues' feelings and perceptions documents the state of the debates in contemporary studies and offers the reader the possibility to evaluate my own interpretation of the quoted statements.

This work does not claim to be exhaustive neither in the number of the located collections, which require further research, nor in the suggestions for the improvement of their displays and their link with the world of the contemporary Nubians. This last point certainly needs much more discussion and debate. It is very much hoped that the research can provide a solid base from which to raise awareness on the existing problems and can represent an inspirational tool that will give rise to new ideas and projects.

⁷ Dewachter, 1979.

CHAPTER 1

Nubia and Nubians: An Outline of the History of Nubia

Land of the sands and waters of the Nile, Nubia, geographically, ethnologically and spiritually evokes memories of humankind's earliest known existence and early organization. Archeological evidence indicates that the Nile region has been continuously inhabited since the Lower Paleolithic period (from c. 500,000 years to the present). Nubia in particular has been a core area for major socio-cultural and economic changes since the Late Paleolithic. Evidence of pottery manufacturing and cattle domestication has been found in the Nubian area, both along the Nile and in the desert, dating back to the Early Holocene (c.9000 BC). These changes have been of paramount importance not only for the development of the Nubian culture, but also for those of North Africa and more importantly to that of Egyptian.⁸

The first description of the Nubian culture is traditionally linked to the American archeologist George Andrew Reisner. During his *Archaeological Survey of Nubia*, undertaken in view of the construction of the Aswan Dam in the area stretching from Shellal to Wadi el-Sebua (Lower Nubia in Egypt), between 1907 and 1912, George Reisner⁹ and his colleague Cecil Firth¹⁰ brought to light about 8,000 tombs and 121 cemeteries. This was the first of the great salvage programs that became the dominant feature of archeology in the middle of the twentieth century, and in many ways it set the pattern for those that followed. Today, thanks to a century of systematic excavations, Lower Nubia can be unquestionably considered the best-known region in Africa, including Egypt itself.

On the basis of his discoveries and later excavations,¹¹ Reisner developed his typology and chronology, thereby giving the modern world its first glimpse of the main outlines of Nubian culture and history. He divided the history of this land into phases and utilized the term 'Group' to indicate the changes in material culture. Today, many scholars reject the term 'Group', arguing that it indicates not only changes in material culture but also physical changes in the population. In fact, Reisner and his team attributed each major cultural advance or change to the arrival of some new population group which reduced the whole of Nubian history to a series of disconnected episodes.¹² Other studies seem to demonstrate that the multi-migration theory does not have a sound biological basis.¹³

Reisner's cultural periods and their chronological relationship have been amply confirmed by subsequent work and still remain the standard interpretation of Nubian history. If he was substantially correct about the individual characteristics of the Nubian cultural phases, his explanation of the relationship between the phases appears much less satisfactory.¹⁴ Particularly controversial is his theory that says all the Egyptian material found in Nubia was somehow 'out of fashion' compared to what was in contemporary use in Egypt, stressing the idea of a *backward periphery*.

⁸ Gatto, 2011: 21-29.

⁹ Reisner, 1910.

¹⁰ Firth, 1915.

¹¹ Reisner, 1909: 5-6.

¹² In this study, for the sake of simplicity, I shall refer to these phases as Reisner's 'Groups', since these categories are still commonly used, despite their obvious limitations.

¹³ Adams, 1968: 194-215; Van Gerven, Carlson, Armelagos, 1973: 555-564.

¹⁴ Adams, 1970: 269-277.

William Adams, the American archeologist pioneer of the UNESCO *International Campaign to Save the Monuments of Nubia* in the 1960s, says:

The main achievements of the UNESCO Campaign has not been in advancing our knowledge of the different Nubian cultural phases individually, but in improving our understanding of their interrelationship. This has allowed the acquiring of a whole new perspective on Nubian cultural history and its place in the general historical development of Africa, the Mediterranean, and the Near East.¹⁵

The artificial divisions of Nubian history do not end with Reisner. Scholars currently working in the Sudanese part of the area are continuing to create other terminologies to name materials they consider to be ‘new or different’.¹⁶

¹⁵ Adams, 1967: 68-78.

¹⁶ An example are the archeological excavations conducted at the IV Cataract in the frame of the *Merowe Dam Salvage Archeological Project*. Since this area was poorly known before this campaign, archeologists working there have used new terminologies, such as *Early Kush* to name some of the findings. Therefore we have an *Early Kush I, II, III* etc.

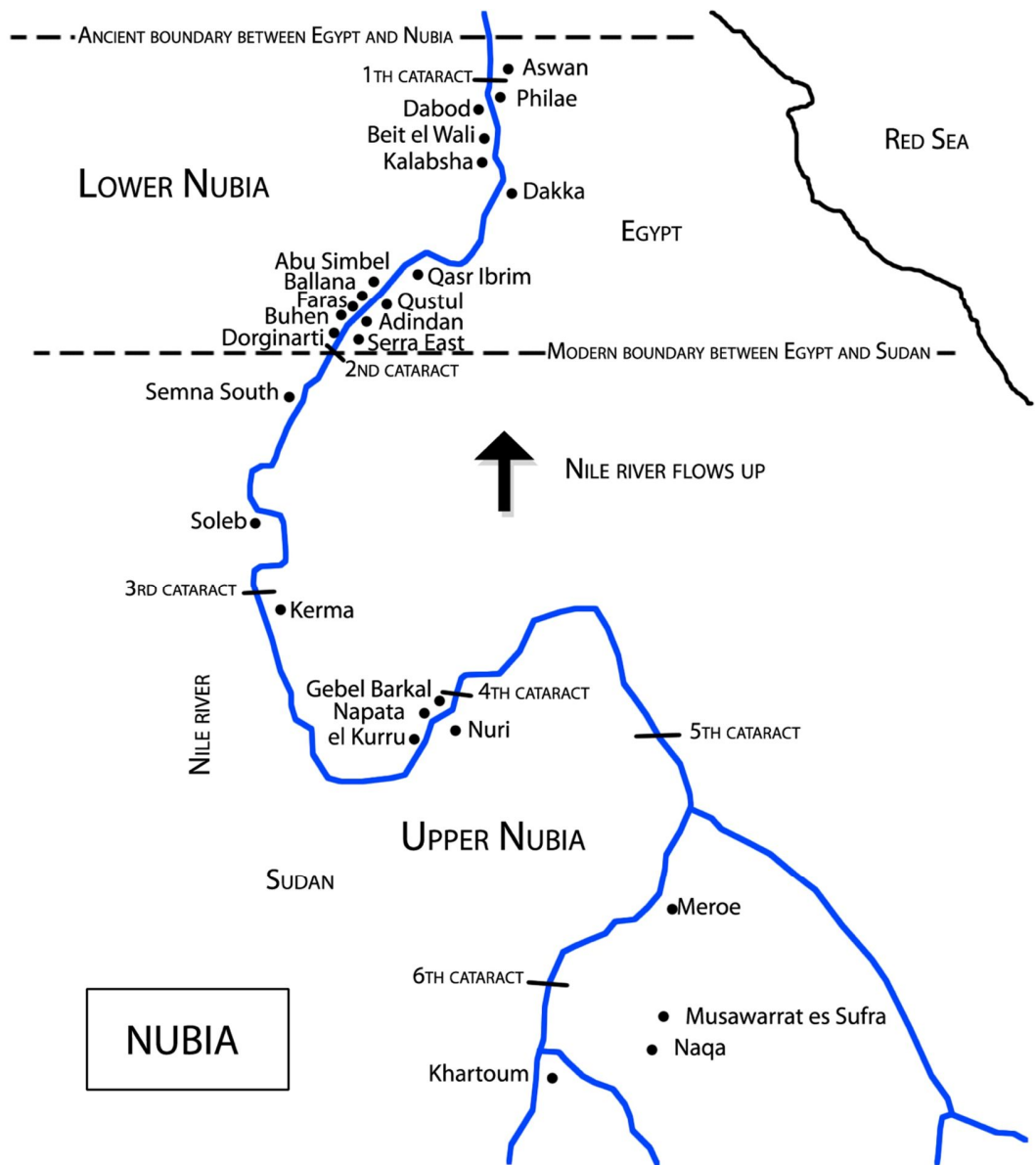


Fig. 1: Map of Nubia

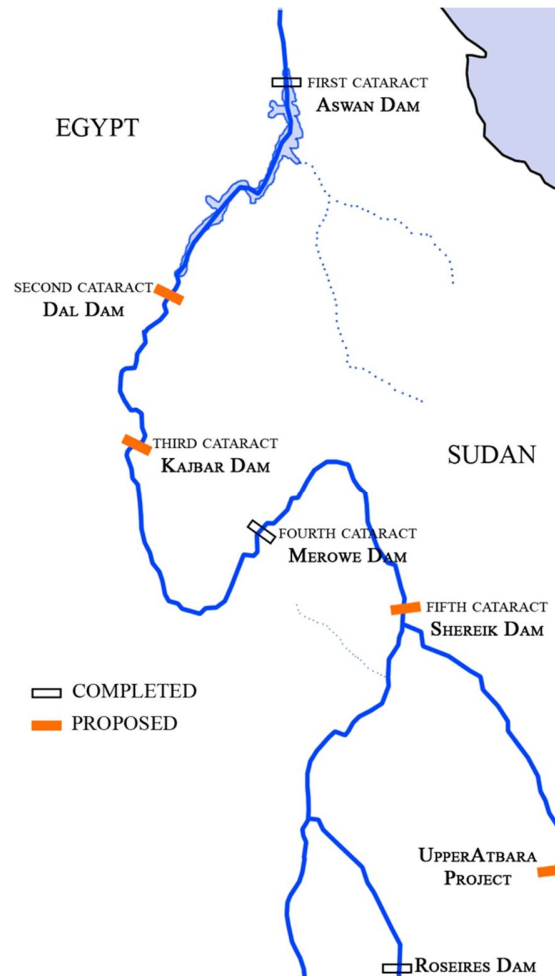


Fig. 2: Map of built and planned dams in Egypt and Sudan (Ancient Nubia)

Prehistory

The *International Campaign to Save the Monuments of Nubia* during the sixties has shed light on a period which was, at the time, very little known in area studies: Prehistoric Nubia. Previously, scholars believed that this period was a culturally conservative *cul-de-sac* both in Nubia and Egypt. Prehistoric technological and typological attributes were unchanged for a long time. As Fred Wendorf, director of the Combined Prehistoric Expedition in Nubia during the Campaign, states:

The UNESCO Campaign not only disclosed the presence of numerous rich prehistoric settlements ranging in age from Early Paleolithic to the beginning of written records. These sites also yielded convincing evidence that they were occupied by groups whose lithic

technology and typology were as fully complex and as progressive as those from other parts of the world or more precisely, Egypt.¹⁷

The first Neolithic evidence in Nubia was found by Myers in the area of the Second Cataract before the Second World War.¹⁸ Slightly earlier is Arkell's work on the prehistory (Mesolithic and Neolithic period) of the Khartoum region.¹⁹ The prehistoric sequence in Lower Nubia was established during the UNESCO Campaign and only recently revised;²⁰ it shows how the same communities lived both along the banks of the Nile and in the desert where they relied mainly on cattle-breeding. The adoption of a productive economy happened earlier in Lower/Upper Nubia and its nearby deserts (eighth millennium BC) and it was only during the fifth millennium BC that it spread southwards to the Khartoum region and northwards to Upper Egypt.

A Group or Early Nubian

The so-called A Group is the cultural unit that characterized the fourth millennium in Lower Nubia. Its spatial and chronological distribution was subject to regional variability. It is highly likely that an A-Group-related unit was present in Upper Nubia as well, but for the time being only some scanty information gives on this matter.²¹

In the A Group context, both local and Egyptian elements have been found. At the architectural level, local elements consist of simple settlements and tombs dug in the Pleistocene or Holocene alluvial substratum.²² The artifacts, which consist of pottery (Fig.3), jewelry and cosmetic palettes, demonstrate a high level of decorative awareness. While female steatopygous figurines (Fig.4) might have served some spiritual, magical or religious function.

The Egyptian imports are signs of exchange trade. However, if generally speaking the social organization of the A Group appears to have been tribal, a discovery by the Oriental Institute of Chicago in a cemetery at Qustul, not far from the Sudanese border, raised a question at which Egyptologists trembled and Afrocentrists became excited: the possibility that royalty in Nubia is older than in Egypt. The discovery in the Qustul cemetery consisted of thirty-three tombs that had been heavily plundered in ancient times. Eight of these were extraordinarily large and contained a great abundance of a variety of funerary offerings.²³ Above all, the picture on a stone incense burner indicated that 'we really had the tomb of a king,' in the words of Bruce Williams, the archeologist who studied the tombs and published the results of his research.²⁴ This hypothesis, far from being accepted even by convinced Nubiologists,²⁵ has now been completely superseded following the discoveries at Abydos (Egypt) that confirmed that the kingship in Egypt is older than that in Nubia.²⁶ Nonetheless, these tombs certainly indicate that wealthy leaders owned them.²⁷

¹⁷ Wendorf, 1968.

¹⁸ Myers, 1958: 113-141; Myers, 1960: 1974-1981.

¹⁹ Arkell, 1949.

²⁰ Gatto, 2011: 21-29.

²¹ Nordström *et al.*, 1972; Williams, 1989; Gatto, 1998: 515-519.

²² Maria Carmela Gatto (Personal Communication, 2011).

²³ Williams, 1980:12-21.

²⁴ Williams, 1980:12-21.

²⁵ Adams, 1985.

²⁶ O' Connor, 2009.

²⁷ At Qustul there were certainly king-pharaohs who did make attempts to emulate Egypt. The Egyptian themselves allowed the creation of some elitist structures. In fact, apart from the three big cemeteries, the rest has no social

The A Group culture met an abrupt, complete breakdown when the Egyptian kings of the First Dynasty (2900 BC) seized complete control of the southern trade and the flow of raw materials. The scanty archeological findings related to the following period led to the interpretation that most of the population might have become nomadic, and hence left few material remains behind.



Fig. 3: A Group Pottery



Fig. 4: Steatopygous figurine (Nubia Museum- Aswan)

Middle Nubian (C Group, Kerma and Pan Grave) and Egyptian Occupation (c. 2494 -1230 BC)

C Group

Nubian cultural phases of the C Group, Kerma Culture and Pan Grave Culture, are grouped under the general title of Middle Nubian (2900-1090 BC). While the C Group developed in Lower Nubia, Kerma flourished in Upper Nubia. The Nubian eastern desert seems to have been the homeland of the Pan Grave Culture, although archeological evidence of such a culture is only present along the Nile in both Egypt and Nubia and no trace of it has been found in the desert so far.²⁸ Throughout this period, Nubia interacted with Egypt. The nature of these contacts was varied, some were peaceful and advantageous to both, others were characterized by heavy Egyptian occupation that led to the partial assimilation of the local population into the Egyptian culture.

The chronological gap between A Group and C Group, a hiatus of almost 800 years, was one of the unresolved problems of Nubian history that caused considerable contention among scholars. Recent research has unearthed remains classified as pre-Kerma, ending the debate that over the years threw up various theories about evolution or migration.²⁹ The C Group, as mentioned, developed in Lower Nubia at the same sites where A Group remains have also been

differentiation that would allow a hypothesis of a local development of royalty. Maria Carmela Gatto (Personal Communication, 2012).

²⁸ Cf. below 'Pan Grave' sub - paragraph.

²⁹ Honegger, 2004a: 38 - 46; Honegger, 2004b: 31-34; Honegger, 2004c: 27-32; 2005: 239-247; Honegger, 2006:77-84; Honegger, 2007: 201-212; Honegger *et al.*, 2009.

found. The C Group has been divided into four sub-phases, that represent further internal development changes, including the addition of Egyptian elements at a certain point.³⁰

While the A Group is considered to have been more sedentary and dedicated to agriculture, the C Group is considered to have been pastoralist, whose culture was more nomadic culture. This conviction, although no strong supporting evidence is available, is based mainly on the representations of cattle on pottery and rupestrian drawings. While some scholars consider that pastoralism contrasts with sedentary, I prefer to argue that the presence of large cemeteries and settlements indicates that C Group was composed of sedentary shepherds. Indeed what has to be taken into consideration is the fact that the evidence along the Nile reflects only a part of the multifaceted pastoral Nubian culture. To discover the evidence of the nomadic segment of the society, the deserts are the place to look.³¹

The artifacts found do not differ greatly from those of the A Group, apart from the polished incised ware, which is the equal, artistically speaking, of the A Group eggshell on which the same motives are designed rather than incised (Fig. 5). This latter category of pottery can be considered the most striking C Group artifact. It appears at the beginning of the earliest period of the C Group and disappears with the disintegration of this cultural phase during the Egyptian New Kingdom. It seems that this kind of ceramic was inspired by the basketry work found along traditional trade routes throughout Sudan. The beauty of this pottery and the care with which it was created indicate that, for those who produced it, it was much more than just an artifact. In this regard Manfred Bietak in his extensive study of this Group and of its material culture says:

The achievements of the C Group culture ceramics are very attractive indeed and artistically superior to the ceramic production of the contemporary Egyptian civilization. From the paleo-psychological point of view this means that pottery had more meaning for the C Group people within their restricted material culture than for the population in the Egyptian Nile Valley. For this reason, they devoted more time in fashioning and decorating their pottery. Economically speaking, the pottery fabrication in Pharaonic Egypt was an industry, mass-production for anonymous consumers, while in Lower Nubia, due to its prehistoric societies, the consumers produced their own pottery according to old traditions [...] For such reasons, it is a very important diagnostic means for cultural analysis, i.e. of the origin, the development, the economy, the interrelations of this population with other neighboring cultures, and finally for historical conclusion.³²

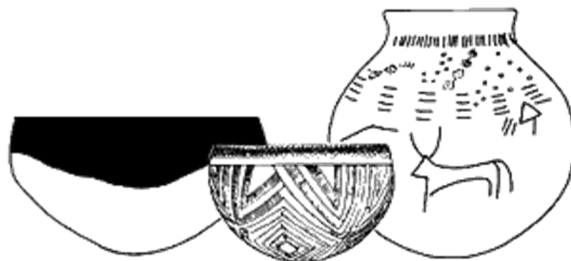


Fig. 5: C Group Pottery

³⁰ Bietak, 1968.

³¹ Gatto, 2011: 21-29. For the C Group cf. also Säve-Söderbergh 1991; De Simone, 1997: 112-124; De Simone, 2004: 242-246; Hafsaas, 2006.

³² Bietak, 1979: 107-127.

C Group is one of those phases of the Nubian culture considered a 'mute' cultural reality, whereas simultaneously in the southern part of Nubia, Kerma, is not. Findings do not show signs of a complex social, political or religious organization.³³ However, other scholars claim that this theory requires some reconsideration, since new research is pointing out that Nubia was basically a pastoral culture and that pastoral cultural assets cannot be compared with their agricultural counterparts.³⁴

Kerma: A Nubian Empire

While Lower Nubia was occupied by the C Group, the Kerma culture developed in Upper Nubia, at the Third Cataract, not far away from the fertile Dongola Plains. Kerma is generally considered to have been the first Nubian Empire, but³⁵ this is disputable since the A Group, as the Qustul tombs have shown, also had their own 'kings', or at least 'wealthy leaders'. The culture of Kerma, although stylistically appearing to belong to the same cultural horizon as the A and C Groups, clearly marks the transition between the Archaic and Dynastic phases. This theory is specifically supported by the use of writing, albeit not local but Egyptian.

The French Egyptologist Dominique Valbelle, who has worked as epigraphist for the Swiss Mission to Kerma for many years, has this to say about the nature of this Nubian Empire:

Understanding of a civilization like the Kerma culture is a permanent challenge, as it was active for more than a millennium and was subject to many external influences throughout its history. The most powerful of these exogenous forces was, of course, that of Egypt. Little is known of other African influences.³⁶

Evidence shows that Egyptian culture was used as inspiration but not copied. This process led to the original creations found in the Kerma culture. The latest studies tend to support its Nubian/local dimension which has also been found in both other contemporary and subsequent African cultures.³⁷

As a culture complex, Kerma equals the C Group, despite the substitution of a highly specialized local pottery industry (Fig.6) and the addition of social institutions (such as hereditary and perhaps divine kingship; social stratification, and *suttee* funeral practices). It has to be said that the Kerma culture did not display the full range of possibilities which appeared in dynastic civilizations of Egypt. Specifically, it lacked certain criteria that would have marked it as a dynastic civilization: state religion, imperialism and literacy.³⁸

³³ Gatto, 2010: 21-29; Adams, 1967: 26.

³⁴ Gatto, 2010: 21-29.

³⁵ Reisner, 1923; Bonnet, 1990.

³⁶ Valbelle, 2004: 176-183.

³⁷ For a complete bibliography of the work of the Swiss mission to Kerma cf. the website: www.kerma.ch

³⁸ Adams, 1970 : 272.



Fig. 6: Kerma Pottery (Museum of Fine Arts- Boston)

The most striking remains at Kerma that appear to be a sign of a local royalty are two *Deffufa* (this is a Nubian term for any prominent brick ruin) and a number of large, round tumuli. The two *Deffufa* have been variously interpreted, as being watch towers, part of a royal residence or temples. The round tumuli contained the body of the dead ruler laid out on a bed that was sometimes made of glazed quartz and sometimes of slate, with many luxury goods of gold, ivory and jewelry as valuable grave goods. The most impressive finding was the existence of a large number of human sacrifices that seem to have been part of an indigenous custom. It is most likely that the upper class at Kerma greatly admired Egyptian culture as can be understood from the fact that they manufactured for their own use acceptable imitations of Egyptian furniture, jewelry, weaponry and even architecture. Nevertheless, much that was manufactured at Kerma belonged to an indigenous cultural tradition and was produced by a large local population of craftsmen. The pattern developed at Kerma was fully adopted by the Napatan kings who made themselves Pharaohs of Egypt in the 25th Dynasty.

Pan Grave

Among the Nubian cultural groups of the second millennium, there is also what experts describe as the 'Pan Grave' group/culture. This group is named after the form of their tombs.³⁹ Their graves, shaped like 'pans' are only found along the Nile at the edge of the desert. Scholars identify the Pan Grave people in the *Medjau*. Referred to in hieroglyphic texts, from the 6th dynasty up to the Roman Period, their name meant 'foreign peoples'. It is generally accepted that this group lived in the eastern Nubian desert.⁴⁰ Renowned for their activities as policemen in the Nile Valley, in particular in Egypt, it has been hypothesized that the association between the Pan Grave group and the *Medjau* might have had something to do with changes in the definition of their name. At the moment, the evidence from the desert is too scanty to allow any more thorough clarification on the nature of the *Medjau* themselves or of their association with the Pan Grave.⁴¹ Characteristic of the Pan Grave is the presence, in the tombs of the later period, of considerable numbers of weapons

³⁹ Bietak, 1987.

⁴⁰ Sadr, 1987: 265-291; Sadr, 1990: 63-86; Sadr, 1994: 69-75.

⁴¹ The ongoing PhD research *We Have Come to Serve Pharaoh: A Study of the Medjay and Pangrave Culture as an Ethnic Group and as Mercenaries from c. 2300 BCE until c. 1050 BCE* conducted by Kate Litzka, at the University of Pennsylvania, aims to clarify the idea of Pan Grave, *Medjau* and their relations with Egypt.

and *bukrania* (cattle skulls) (Fig.7). The finds show a great similarity, sometimes difficult to distinguish, with other Nubian cultures of the second millennium (C Group and Kerma) and also with the former A Group.⁴²

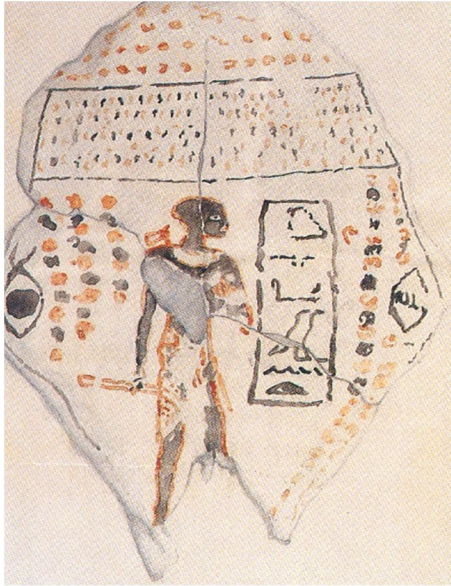


Fig. 7: Pan Grave cow skull painted with the image of a Pan Grave soldier (British Museum, London)

Egyptians in Nubia

During the period called Middle Nubian, the Egyptian presence in Nubia was constant. The intense exchange between Nubians and Egyptians is also expressed in the first written information on Nubia in Egyptian sources, dating from the Old Kingdom and corresponding more or less to the beginning of the appearance in Nubia of the C Group.⁴³ The tombs and remains of the princes of Aswan on the hill of Qubbet el Hawa offer valuable archives of information on the geographical and political situation of Nubia during this period. In these texts little mention is made of the social structure of Nubian society. The texts record the experiences in Nubia of expeditions led by officials serving as caravan leaders and troop commanders, which, it should be remembered are accounts not only of outsiders but sometimes of warring enemies.

The messages inscribed on these stones reveal much about everyday activities in Nubia. They reveal that Nubian society was politically organized and at an early stage developed into 'individual chiefdoms'. It was only at a later time that the 'chiefs' of these small kingdoms united.⁴⁴ Therefore Egyptians needed the friendly cooperation of these leaders if they were to carry out their military/commercial missions. The archeological remains appear to attest to this cooperation. Commencing from the Middle Kingdom (2040 - 1756 BC), after a period of crisis in Egypt called the First Intermediate Period, the Egyptian presence in Nubia strengthened and manifested itself with the construction of massive fortresses, trading posts and Egyptian-style

⁴² Bietak, 1987.

⁴³ Bongrani- Fanfoni, 1991.

⁴⁴ O'Connor, 1986: 27-39.

temples. The many objects left to us were made from the abundant resources of gold, ebony and ivory coming from Kush (Upper Nubia) and through Kush from the rest of Africa. However, despite the strong Egyptian presence in Nubia, the local culture remained relatively untouched.⁴⁵

Following another period of crisis in Egypt, usually referred to as the Second Intermediate Period, and the beginning of the New Kingdom in 1580 BC, Egypt occupied Nubia once again. The Egyptians restored the old temples and built new ones. Their occupation was so complete that part of the Nubian population was assimilated into Egyptian culture.⁴⁶ However, the 'Egyptianization' was not total and the record shows that traces of the old Nubian culture were still present after the occupation. Probably referring in particular to this period, Reisner said that the history of Nubia is 'hardly more than a record of its use or neglect by Egypt'.⁴⁷ In a political sense this might have a ring of truth. Nubia was often strong when Egypt was weak, and indeed was tyrannized by its larger neighbor on more than one occasion. It remained in a sort of economic bondage to Egypt. Egypt's ambitions to expand and increase its wealth and the scope of its power demanded ever greater quantities of traditional raw materials, such as gold, ivory and slaves, and molded the relationship between the two groups. The upshot was that Nubia was helped to rise above a Neolithic subsistence.⁴⁸ The deities of the Egyptians clearly became subjects of worship and trade objects exhibit the influence this had on the craft style and techniques of Nubia.

The 25th Nubian Dynasty: The Black Pharaohs

In 750 BC a dynasty from Nubia ruled in Egypt for the first time: it is known as the 25th Dynasty of the Black Pharaohs.⁴⁹ The first Black Pharaohs established their capital at Napata, near the holy mountain of Gebel Barkal at the Fourth Cataract but slowly their empire expanded as far North as Palestine. Later, the capital was moved to Egypt, signifying the total identification of these Nubian kings with the Egyptian pharaohs. The kings of this dynasty met fierce opposition from both local Egyptian princes and from the Assyrians. The latter began to lay claim to the country and their aggressive campaigns are well known. In spite of all this, the 25th Dynasty saw a renaissance of classic Egyptian culture. King Taharqa was one of the most influential of these kings and he continued a sort of 'purification' of the Egyptian culture's overloaded style. This baroque style had been embellished during the Ramesside period in the New Kingdom and was most clearly visible in art and literature.⁵⁰

The acquisition of Egyptian culture by these Kushite kings, most of whom had a Nubian name, was only apparently complete. Many Nubian elements appear in the material remains of this dynasty. Art of this period exhibits a wide variety of stylistic elements testifying to the fact that Kushite artists were not just copyists but rather artists who left an individual mark on their creations. These elements are characterized by a strong and explicit realism that stands in marked contrast to the idealistic renderings found in Egyptian representations (Fig.8). The contours of the faces found in sculpted heads are deeply marked, revealing strong lines and distinctively Nubian

⁴⁵ Smith, 2003.

⁴⁶ Smith, 2003.

⁴⁷ Reisner, 1970: 348.

⁴⁸ Adams, 1970: 276.

⁴⁹ Torok, 1999: 149-159.

⁵⁰ This process of purification, if it can be called so, had already begun in the 23th Dynasty, as can be seen on the relief of Iuput II (Brooklyn Museum), where the representation of the musculature of the legs was later taken up by the pharaohs of the 25th Dynasty. I wish to thank Simone Petacchi, PhD candidate at Lille University, for a discussion on this subject; cf. also Morkot, 2003.

features. Their emblems were partly Egyptian, partly Nubian. The skullcaps depicted on these sculptures are typical of this period, distinguishing the dynasty by the carved representations of the signifying band of cloth tied at the back of the head.⁵¹

Pride in their heritage and identity emanates from such details indicating the confidence with which these ancient rulers commanded their kingdom. Even though they had their residence in Egypt, Memphis and later Thebes, the pharaohs of the 25th Dynasty were buried in Nubia, at first in Napata and later at the site of Nuri. The tombs were in the Egyptian style, but those belonging to the entourage of the kings showed Nubian customs, such as the position of the body on the bed. These characteristics of the Kushites firmly place their society on the same cultural horizon as those of the most ancient Nubian civilizations. For thousands of years, relations between Nubia and Egypt thrived, leaving deep marks on both cultures exemplified in the art of these people.

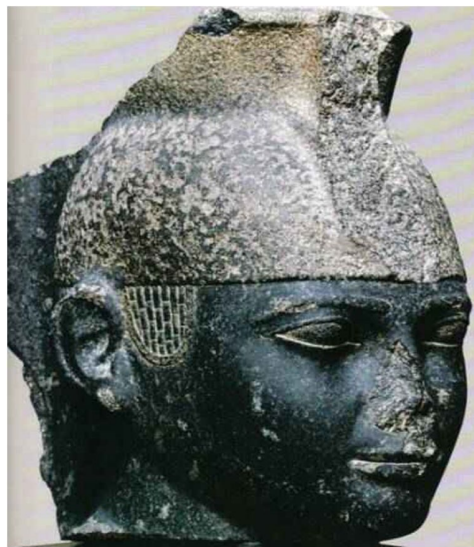


Fig. 8: Taharqa's head (Nubia Museum-Aswan)

The Meroitic period

Around 270 BC, the capital moved from Napata south to Meroe, in the Butana area between the Fifth and Sixth Cataracts, that was connected by caravan routes rather than through river transport. It is generally accepted that in the first centuries after the royal capital moved south from Napata to Meroe significant aspects of Kushite elite culture displayed features not seen during the Napatan period. As Janice Yellin says in a paper:

These new cultural forms are typically labeled as 'Meroitic' and are believed to represent cultural and/or ethnic changes that differentiate 'Meroitic' society from Napatan. What is generally called Meroitic period dated from 270 BC to 350 A.D. From 20 A.D. to 395 A.D. Egypt and Nubia were Roman provinces. However the nature of the 'disjunction' between Napatan culture and Meroitic forms in Kushite history and culture, and the processes by which it occurred, are not well understood. What was the origin of these features? To what

⁵¹ Torok, 1987; Kendall, 1999: 3-117; Kendall, 1999:164-176.

extent they do signify a break with Napatan traditions? If so, how profound was the break with the Napatan past? Do these so-called Meroitic features represent the practice of a new southern dynasty at the helm of the Kushite Kingdom or merely the inclusion of local feature introduced by a different, local group of priest? At what pace did this change occur? Was it an evolution over the time or a more rapid ‘revolutionary change’?⁵²

Whether this was an evolutionary or a revolutionary change is still under discussion, however changes are visible in the material culture as testified to by new types of stelae, new types of chapel reliefs (Fig. 9), offering tables and pottery decorations (Fig. 10); new architectural elements; the organization of burials in various royal cemeteries; and new roles for royal women. Moreover, access to female sovereignty might correlate with principles of female descent and the importance of the matrilineal succession, as this is strongly suggested in the Nubian and Ethiopian dynasties. Carolyn Fluehr-Lobban states:

The Nubian case is an excellent example of this type of matrilineal succession, as the right of kingship passed from the king’s sister (sometime also called the ‘Great Wife’) to her son. The exalted role of queen-mother occupied the semi-divine status of great progenitress and legitimizer of the king or queen. The religiously significant role of ‘God’s Wife of Amun’ with succession of this role from aunt to niece may also have provided sacred legitimacy to the regency and reinforced a basic matrilineal pattern. As historical, archeological and written sources indicate, six regnant queens reigned during the 140 year period between 60 BC and 80 A.D. By comparison, although there is a continuous tradition of queens regnant in Ethiopia from Menelik I, it is difficult to match this remarkable period of feminine regency in Nubian history.⁵³

Egyptian influences in Meroitic culture was mixed with that of local African cultures, with an admixture of some European elements which had filtered into Nubia through Egypt under the Ptolemies. At least, this is the common interpretation of the new elements which characterized Meroitic culture. However some scholars, myself included, believe that rather than influences, there were selective forms of absorption and assimilation of artistic cultures and religious traditions. These had to comply with the *mentalité* of this Meroitic society that was more detached from the desire to present itself as ‘heir’ of the Pharaonic dynasty than had been the case in the previous cultural phases.

Without doubt there was a cultural melting with the more muted elements of Nubian society. The cultural realities of groups who have not left epigraphic traces but surely contributed to the development of the Meroitic state, certainly must have had an impact on many social and cultural traditions. A relationship between these varied subgroups as well as with the ruling elite can be assumed to have existed from the very beginning, perhaps because of the original fragmentation of political identity. Nomadic groups were used mainly in a military capacity to control certain areas (Bayuda, Western Desert and so forth), as testified to by textual evidences.⁵⁴

Meroe was a flourishing center of industry and the smelting furnaces and great mounds of slag found at the site testify to the existence of a major iron-producing industry. Though iron

⁵² Yellin, 2004: 150-160.

⁵³ Lobban, 2004: 341-349.

⁵⁴ I wish to thank Simone Petacchi for his insights on the issue.

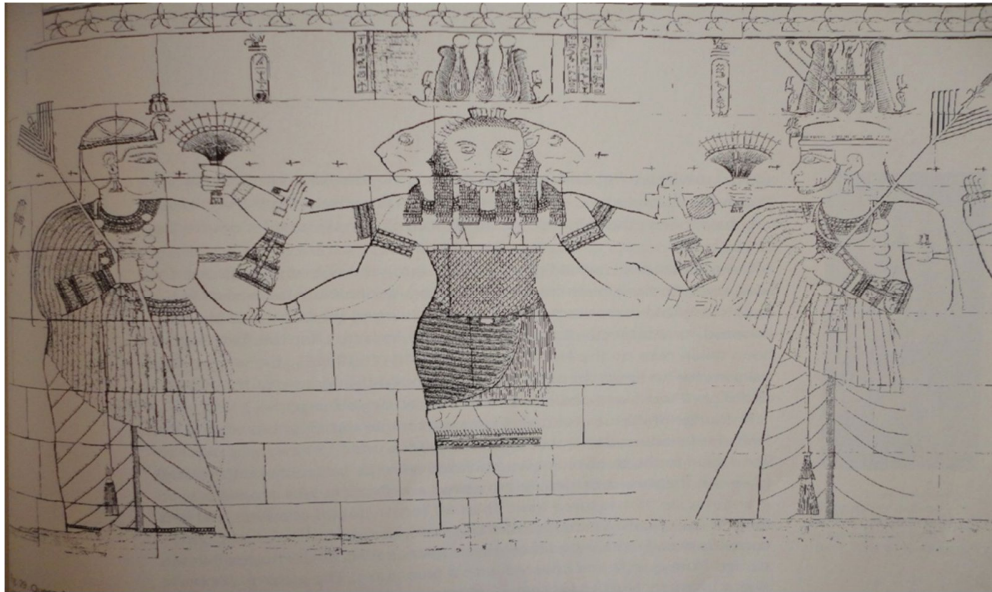


Fig. 9: Meroitic queen Amanitore and her husband King Natakamani offering to the lion-god Apedemak (Naga temple)

production at Meroe is considered to have been of only limited influence, the site is of great interest as one of the few identifiable centers of an iron industry in this part of Africa. Meroe occupied an extremely favorable economic position as it was situated in a fertile area of grassland which benefited from a good annual rainfall and was suitable to agriculture and animal husbandry.

The appearance of the Meroitic language in written form made it possible, for the first time for locals, to express themselves in their own language. Unfortunately, so far the interpretation of this language still puzzles scholars.

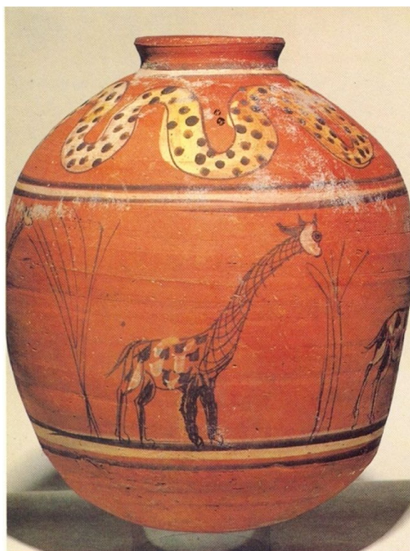


Fig.10: Meroitic pottery vessel decorated with a serpent and a giraffe. 2nd to 3rd century AD

The X Group or Ballana Culture

Around 350 Lower Nubia was taken over by a people referred to by archeologists as the X Group. Recent investigations have not resolved the X Group problem in the sense of reaching a consensus on a distinct identity for this group as either Blemmye or Nobatae. On the contrary, it now seems clear that both these groups, together with a good many others, were present in the Nile Valley between the fourth and sixth centuries, and shared in the common culture of this period.⁵⁵

The term X Group has been replaced by the term 'Ballana Culture' after the most important cemetery site. The X Group or Ballana Culture shows a mixture of Meroitic, Greco-Roman and apparently African traits. The last are traceable back to the Kerma Culture and farther beyond. All these features are found in the remains of the kings' tombs of this period excavated at Ballana and Qustul in Lower Nubia.⁵⁶ The tombs, consisting of enormous earth tumuli up to 77 m in diameter, yielded the richest treasure of grave goods ever found in Nubia. The principal person buried in each tumulus lay on a wooden bed, equipped with jewelry, weapons, bronze and silver vessels and furniture. Embossed silver crowns inlaid with glass and semiprecious stones had been placed on the head of the principal interment of the grave (Fig. 11).⁵⁷



Fig. 11: Silver crowns from Ballana (Nubia Museum-Aswan)

Other sections of the multi-chambered burial pits contained provisions vessels, tools and weapons of bronze and silver, wooden boxes inlaid with ivory, elaborate bronze lamps and items of personal adornment. The ruler's consort was sacrificed and buried with her husband, as were various retainers, some of them were clearly soldiers who seem to have met their deaths by strangulation or by having their throats cut. Horses, camels, sheep, donkey, and dogs were also killed and buried. Horses wearing their saddles and harness with silver trapping were accompanied

⁵⁵ Emery and Kirwan, 1935; Emery, 1938.

⁵⁶ Emery and Kirwan, 1935; Emery, 1938.

⁵⁷ Emery and Kirwan, 1935; Emery, 1938.

by servants who had been killed beside them.⁵⁸ There is other evidence of human sacrifice in Nubia, for example, in the tumuli graves at Kerma, and of multiple burials in the northern cemetery at Meroe that can be interpreted as sacrifices.⁵⁹

Among the most typical products of this period are the tall red ware goblets, often decorated with simple blobs or streaks of paint. In addition to pottery, both glassware and bronze were imported, and numerous fine bronze lamps and vessels were found in Ballana graves. Iron weapons were common in graves and this metal was widely used for tools and, in fact, some of the treasures from the Ballana royal tombs had been imported from Egypt. However, the royal regalia was evidently of local manufacture and testifies to the skill of the artisans in silver-smithing and inlay work.⁶⁰ William Adams, who has studied the sociological aspects of the material culture in Nubia say that:

The archeological finds also point to a sociological change. Nubia had reverted to something closer to a tribal society. There was not a clearly established 'state' religion in the X Group period, and probably no one kinglet or chieftain held sway over more than a fraction of Nubia. That the Ballana kings were the most powerful of the lot seems evident, but this does not mean that they should necessarily be regarded as the originators of the prime movers of the X Group. In the X Group, a number of different religious ideas seem to have been contending for preference. The folk religion of Nubia may have been an amalgam of Isis worship, Christian elements, and perhaps some surviving vestiges of the Meroitic imperial cult. This prevailing uncertainty, together with the establishment of Christianity in neighboring Egypt, must have created a climate favorable to the acceptance of Christianity when it was finally introduced in the sixth century. The Nubian kings, like contemporary monarchs in Europe and Asia, apparently acceded without hesitation to the establishment of a foreign-inspired faith whose power and influence very soon eclipsed their own. Thus began the third, or Medieval, stage of Nubian history.⁶¹

Although Adams' analysis is correct in its general drift, more studies are needed to clarify the nature of this historical phase of Nubian history.⁶²

Christianity in Nubia

Late Antique and Medieval Nubia was divided into three kingdoms, from north to south: the kingdom of Nobadia, with its capital at Faras, between the First and Third Cataracts; the kingdom of Makuria, with its capital at Old Dongola, between the Fourth and Fifth Cataracts; and the kingdom of Alwa, with its capital at Soba, south of the junction of the rivers Nile and Atbara.⁶³

The Christianization of Nubia officially began with the mission of Julian in AD 543. Some earlier conversions caused by the settling of a few monks in Nubia might be postulated, but they did not leave any noticeable traces. In a Greek inscription found in the temple of Kalabsha in Lower Nubia (kingdom of Nobatia), King Silko of the Nobades claimed a victory that some have thought earned him the title of the First Christian King. His role is debatable, but we do know that

⁵⁸ Emery and Kirwan, 1935; Emery, 1938.

⁵⁹ Lenoble, 1994: 107-130; Lenoble, 1996: 59-87; Dann 2007: 189-200; Dann, 2008.

⁶⁰ Torok, 1978:85-100.

⁶¹ Adams, 1970: 269-277.

⁶² Strangely, this historical phase is not the center of attention of the scholars who tend to prioritize other periods.

⁶³ Vantini, 1985; Ruffini, 2012.

Christianity was dominant by the time of Longinos in 596 and the conversion of both Makuria and Alwa, the remaining two Nubian kingdoms.⁶⁴

Closing the doors for the last time on the temple of Philae, the Christian emperors sanctioned the 'Christianization' of Nubia. The German architect Peter Grossmann who has made a profound study of the Christian architecture in the Nile Valley says:

Accepting the cross, Christian Nubia functioned under the supervision of the Patriarchate of Alexandria in Egypt. It is not surprising, therefore that many features of the remains from the inhabitants of this period echo in style, those of Egypt. Christian Nubia saw the construction of a large number of churches, but the dynamic interaction between the two cultures enriched the artistic styles and traditions of both groups.⁶⁵

Trading has always been a key factor in the development and change of language. In the flourishing, prosperous and harmonious kingdoms of Christian Nubia in which political responsibility was conflated with a moral one, communication began to reflect those interactions.⁶⁶ The language of ritual and the language of politics naturally evolved combining spoken Nubian, Greek and Coptic. Old Nubian became an accepted literary language but Coptic adapted to these changes by adding three new alphabetic signs representing sounds found in Nubian dialects. Most of the texts written in this Nubian Coptic have a religious character.⁶⁷

Masterpieces of Christian art are the mural paintings with figural representations of saints, angels, eparches and Jesus Christ (Fig. 12). The integration of contrasting configurations, including Classical, Egyptian, Greek-Egyptian and Persian motifs, as well as Byzantine and Syrian Christian influence, led to a trend in Coptic art that is difficult to define, because it is impossible to trace any unity of style.⁶⁸

Peter L. Shinnie contends that the Byzantine values of tolerance and unity in diversity and the inherent precedents for synthesis that resulted in a remarkable fusion of spiritual, linguistic, administrative and esthetic manifestations had a strong and long-term impact on the three independent Christian kingdoms of Nubia. This fusion remains most evident in the frescoes of the rock churches and was particularly motivated by the common Christian faith.⁶⁹ When, after the schism in the fifth century, Egypt turned increasingly towards Palestine and Syria, the representations of local saints and martyrs began to be influenced by the stiff and majestic style of Syrian art. Spirituality rather than naivety began to characterize the faces of the subjects represented. At the same time liturgical garments began to be characterized by more elegance and richness, highlighted by the increased use of gold in the background.

The end of Christianity in Nubia began in the Mamluk period. The patriarchs, in Alexandria, later in Cairo, absorbed with their problems in Egypt began to neglect their flocks in Nubia and rarely sent new priests in the area. The last bishop was appointed in 1372. The shortage of priests *in loco* led to a weakening of Christianity in Nubia. The last churches were built on a

⁶⁴ Vantini, 1985; Ruffini, 2012.

⁶⁵ Grossmann, 2000: 16 -19.

⁶⁶ Vantini, 1985; Ruffini, 2012.

⁶⁷ Lajtar and Van der Vliet, 2011.

⁶⁸ Dunn, 2011. A 10th-century Baghdadi bookseller, Ibn an-Nadim, reported that 'the Nub(i)a(ns) make use of Syriac, Greek and Coptic alphabets in their religious documents' (cf. Vantini, 1975:179).

⁶⁹ Shinnie [1954: 25] wonders if the sense of identity and cultural self-awareness manifested in this fusion has contributed in some part to the modern-day identity of the Christian peoples of southern Sudan, who are still struggling to maintain their faith, culture and their independence.

very modest scale during the end of the fifteenth century, even though Nubians, apparently, continued to respect the old churches since they were the religious building of their parents and grandparents.



Fig. 12: Frescos of the Cathedral of Faras

Islam in Nubia

Although Islam had already entered Nubia during the Fatimid period, the country was never part of an Islamic empire and did not come under the sway of an Islamic Caliphate until the thirteenth century. Hence it is not to be expected that its cultural manifestations would be modeled after Egypt, Iraq or Iran.⁷⁰ The process of the Islamization in Nubia was carried out to some extent by a number of Muslims who had migrated to the area during the earliest Islamic period. Historical evidence demonstrates that the major role was carried out by indigenous individuals and/or groups previously converted to Islam through the mediation of the aforementioned emigrants. It seems that a series of events led to the final Islamization of Lower Nubia. The arrival of the Kenzi tribes from the Yemen sometime after AD 350 and their settlement in the desert between Nubia and the Red Sea, was to the outcome of a process of intermarriage with the remaining Blemmye tribes in this area. The Kenzi took advantage of the anarchy in the reign of the Caliph al-Mustansir in the mid-eleventh century AD to take control of much of Upper Egypt under their chief, the Kenz ad-Dawla. The revival of Fatimid fortunes in Egypt under General Badr al-Gamali included his defeat of the Kenz ad-Dawla in the 1080s. At the end of the period of Arab incursions, many expeditions set out to colonize Nubia. Colonizing implied assimilation and implicitly the conversion of Nubia

⁷⁰ Soghayroun El Zein, 2004: 238- 242.

commenced. In 1252, Nubia was placed under the control of Sultan Baybars. Imposing the *bakt*, a tribute of one dinar taken from every non-Muslim, Baybars brought about the conversion of many Nubians. The situation did not alter much for the next few centuries, characterized by recurring unrest, sporadic raids and outright warfare. In the later Mameluk period this unrest led to the eventual depopulation of the area and signaled Nubia's entry into a long period of decline and domination by Egypt.⁷¹

The rule of Nubia was left to 'two warring tribes' whose attempt to involve the Ottoman Empire, after its conquest of Egypt in AD 1517, led to Nubia simply being annexed and garrisoned from Aswan, Ibrim and Sai. The situation did not change very much until AD 1820 when Muhammed Ali declared Nubia part of Egypt and appointed governors in the villages. Islam spread in Nubia both as an ideology and an effective socio economic system of life. The historical agents of the transmutations of the society are easily adduced: individual preachers, the first Nubian Muslims acting through trade and travel and the Sufi orders/brotherhoods. What emerged from this confluence of energies in the unique character of Nubian Islam, that never seems to have lost its pre-Christian roots.⁷² The Sudanese archeologist Intisar Soghayroun El Zein says that:

The architectural manifestation of the new dispersion was most practically the funerary buildings of the earliest religious leaders. Nubia with its unique position shows the blending of two cultural zones, African and Asiatic, which resulted in a local typical dimension of Islam expressed in its cults, practices and architecture. Central to the last point is the *qubba*, (dome), the most unique artifact of the Nubian culture.⁷³

The *qubba* certainly dominates the landscape of the Middle Nile Valley (Fig. 13). This domed structure was the tomb of local saints or heroes who not only propagated the faith but also contributed to social and cultural stability. As stated by Alexandros Tsakos and others, the *qubba* 'stabilized the state, healed the folk, and inspired the poets and the enthusiasts of the transcendental'.⁷⁴

⁷¹ Soghayroun El Zein, 2004a; Soghayroun El Zein, 2004b: 238- 242

⁷² Soghayroun El Zein, 2004a; Soghayroun El Zein, 2004b: 238- 242.

⁷³ Soghayroun El Zein, 2004b: 238-242; in the catalogue of the exhibition *From Nubia to Sudan* (Tsakos and alii, 2011) this building is commented upon as follows: 'For almost a thousand years, the medieval Nubian kingdoms of northern Sudan existed aside the Islamic caliphate and created an original and immensely attractive civilization. Nowadays the Nubia speaking tribes share the Middle Nile with Arab speaking tribes. They also share the religious experience in the unique form of Islam in the Sudan. There, the *qubbas* (tombs of saints of the Muslim faith) are more often stronger poles of ritual attraction than mosques. Moreover, the holiness of the Quran is most actively perceived in its form of *zikr*, the chanting and whirling of the darwishs (Persian for member of Sufi orders). The Sudanese sufi (Arabic for the mysticism part of Islam, as well as for its practioners), however, practice their faith of African land: and as much as their prayers follow the division of the day exemplified by traditional Islam, their *zikr* is less of a whirl and more a leap. Sudan is Africa because the Muslims jump in celebration of Allah! And since both Nubians and Arabs live in the northern Sudan, their religious and their secular community lives create this special mélange that is the Islamic Republic of the Sudan. Finally, in a balance of cultural, linguistic, and religious traditions, Nubia still exists in Northern Sudan.'

⁷⁴ Tsakos and Hafsaa -Tsakos, 2011.

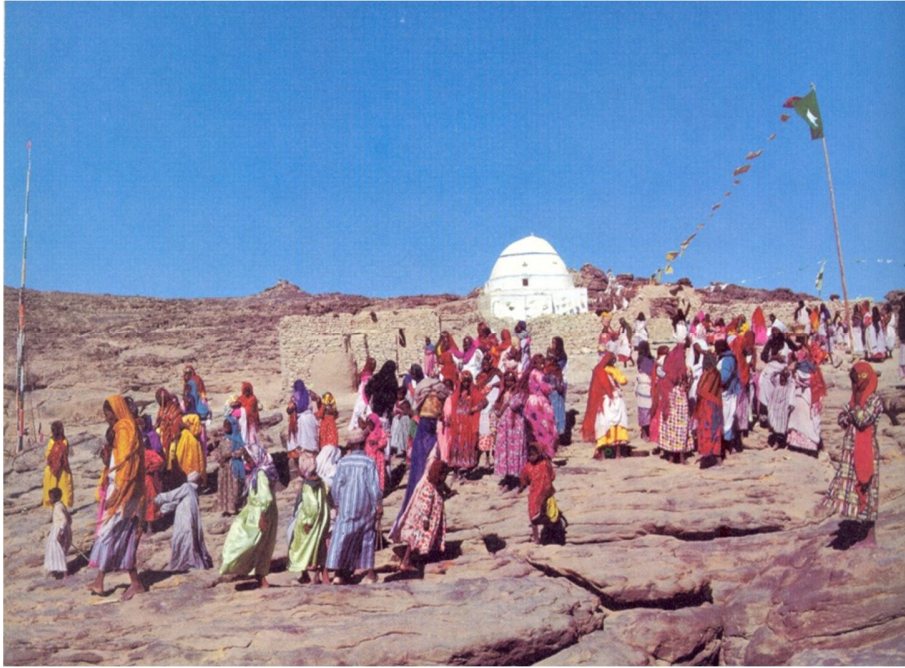


Fig.13: *Qubba* (Mothers and daughters walking in procession to the shrine of the saint during a *moulid*)

Modern Nubia: The (Hi)story of Nubiin

The history of modern Nubia begins with the 1517 invasion of northern Sudan by Selim the First and the establishment of a Bosnian garrison at Qasr Ibrim (today Egyptian Nubia).

In the historical introduction to the first small guide of the Nubia Museum of Aswan, Gaballa Ali Gaballa⁷⁵ summarizes the relatively recent historical events of the area as follows:

Nubia was a corridor for the armies that remained in conflict between the south and the north. The record of Nubian life reveals little as, like Egypt, it suffered the vicissitudes of fortune under the Mamluks and eventually the French expedition by Napoleon Bonaparte in 1798. The violent conflicts that characterized so much of earlier history did not disappear, and in the nineteenth century, nomadic groups repeatedly clashed. With the expedition of Mohamed Ali into Nubia in 1825 and the defeat of the Mamluks in Dongola, Nubia became part of Egypt. However, when the Ottomans took over, Nubia and Sudan remained provinces of the empire. Finally, with the revolt of the Mahdi in Sudan, Nubia became the battlefield upon which Egyptian troops led by British officers fought the revolutionary army. The revolution ended in Toshka (Egyptian Nubia) in August 1889 with the Darwish defeat. British ruled the Sudan exploiting its resources, dividing Nubia into Lower and Upper Nubia.⁷⁶

⁷⁵ The late Gaballa Ali Gaballa was a famous Egyptian Egyptologist. In 1997, when the Nubia Museum of Aswan opened, he was Secretary-General of the Supreme Council of Antiquities in Egypt. I decided to quote his text since this historical period is considered to be a very sensitive one in relations between Egypt and present-day Sudan. This quotation allows me to demonstrate how it is presented in museums guides of the area and by a local.

⁷⁶ Gaballa, 1997; Cf. Warner, 2000.

As the area became more settled, residents of the valley, today known as *Nubiin*, developed a more stable agricultural existence. Modern Nubia is divided into three groups, each distinguished by its dialect. For the first 145 kilometers south from Aswan, the dialect spoken is Kenzi and the people call themselves Kenzi. The next reach, stretching 425 kilometers, is occupied by Nubians who speak Mahasi, a language of several mutually intelligible dialects which is sometimes called Fadija. Speakers of Kenzi and some Fadija today are deprived of their homeland following the construction of the two dams at Aswan, the last of which in the sixties has transformed the area in a vast artificial basin called Lake Nasser. The last Nubian reach of about 350 kilometers is inhabited by those who speak Dongolawi (or Rotana) and call themselves Dongolawi. In the modern geo-political set, Kenzi and some Fadija are inhabitants of Egypt and all the rest live in Northern Sudan. Apart from some differences in their dialects, Nubians have basically similar socio-economic and cultural patterns. One of the most ancient tradition they retained is their beautiful architecture. As Hassan Fathi⁷⁷ wrote: ‘No two houses were the same, each was more beautiful than the last; each village created its own character’⁷⁸ (Fig.14).



Fig.14: Decorated entrance to a Nubian house

The Nile was the focus of life and on its banks all activities were and are concentrated. Living in scattered, extended villages separated by isolated areas, dunes and rocky hills, the Nubians continued to develop their distinctive ways of survival and growth. The construction of the dams at Aswan changed the northern area of Nubia as well as the life of its inhabitants who were obliged to live far from their homeland forever.

⁷⁷ Hassan Fathy (1900-1989) was a famous Egyptian architect who championed the use of mud-brick and traditional architecture in Egypt. He received the Aga Khan for Architecture Chairman’s Award in 1980.

⁷⁸ Hassan Fathi in: Omar El Hakim, 1999: i.v.

Kom Ombo, north of Aswan, is today home to most of the relocated Nubians from Egypt,⁷⁹ and Khasham El Qirba 300 km east from Khartoum is the new home of Nubians in the Sudan. These areas bear little similarity to Nubia with its open spaces that were so central to the psychological existence of the inhabitants. Nubian villages had unique layouts as explained below by the Egyptian architect Omar el Akim:

The homes in Nubia which made up the *nugu* extended 320 km along the Nile at irregular intervals in a staggered line more or less parallel to the river. Where the bank was steep, as in the northern area of the Kenuz district, the dwellings extended inland following the natural course of the ground, forming clustered terraces. Where the bank was relatively flat, as in the Arab and Mahas districts, the dwellings stood out in bold outlines in rows. The dwellings forming the *nugu* were clustered toward the centre, which might contain the main mosque, a communal guesthouse, a post office and a few shops.⁸⁰

Resettlement to new lands was not a solution for most Nubians. The new houses are not located near the Nile, so significant in Nubian traditions. Space for large houses that would allow the social and familiar gathering so important to the interdependent character of their culture is not available. The family network was based on sharing the same house, in which the traditional courtyard was the meeting point for family members.⁸¹ The palm trees and the water wheel, or *eskalay*, lay at the basis of the social network as well as of many marriages between members of the families sharing them. Limited economic resources led to a strong sense of cooperation and solidarity among Nubians: to underline this characteristic, they called their country *Balad al-Aman*, (Country of the Safe). The phrase, ‘strength through unity’ is a good reflection of the attitude of many Nubians intent on creating a hereditary culture of interdependence.

This chapter has briefly outlined how events developed in the area between the First and Sixth Cataracts of the Nile, commonly referred to as ‘Nubia’ by most academics and for the northern part by the communities living there today. The study of the area in the last century has improved our knowledge and awareness of the history of the people who have inhabited these lands. Although part of two different geo-political realities (Egypt and Sudan), what scientific research has brought to light, and what continues to be confirmed by new research, portrays Nubia as a country interesting in its own right rather than as an indigenous background to important and significant Egyptian antiquities.

Despite this progress in the body of scientific research, Nubian history is still beset by questions. The passage from one group to another does not often appear to have passed smoothly in the minds of modern scholars. Such questions are not confined to Egyptologists and their perspective from the hegemonic North, but also to others - as testified to by the creation of other groups, sequences or horizons generated by the current researches in the field.

Long-term debates continue. These include such questions as: Did the C Group develop from the A Group or did they come from neighboring areas? Who were the Pan Grave people? Is Kerma the place of origin for all Nubian cultures or is it only one of many phases? What was the

⁷⁹ Recently, the Egyptian government has agreed to allocate 5,320 acres, including agricultural land, to Nubians in areas adjacent to Lake Nasser. (‘Egypt Government agrees to allocate 5000 acres to displaced Nubians’, *Ahram Online*, Karim Hafez, Friday 11 Jan 2013).

⁸⁰ El Hakim, 1999: 11.

⁸¹ Although not much literature is available on the subject, this culture of interdependence can still be seen among Nubians today living in the area and also outside.

real nature of the relationship between Nubia and Egypt? Did the kings of the 25th Dynasty continue to purify the extravagant Egyptian Ramesside culture or did they want to introduce Nubian elements? Did Meroe develop from Napata or was it a spontaneous creation? Who were the Blemmyes? To what extent did Greek-Egyptian, Byzantine or Syriac elements influence the iconography of the powerful Christian kingdoms of Nubia? Are the modern Nubians heirs of their ancient predecessors? These are just some of the questions and enquiries raised by the study of Nubian culture. In a more colloquial form these questions can be simplified to the phrase, ‘revolution or evolution’? At least one thing is certain: the results of these interweaving realities is a history of the formation of an identity⁸² that has survived in the vitality and individualism of the Nubians of today. Their identity is based in this continuity and it is on this continuity that, in my opinion, scholars must orient their research rather than, as it often happens, dwelling on disconnected phases of this history. In such a context, I would like to refer to the small chapter *Surviving aspects of Nubian cultures* which concludes the catalogue *Nubia: Ancient Kingdoms of Africa*,⁸³ produced on the occasion of the opening of the Nubian Gallery at the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston, in May 1999. I quote this conclusion integrally in Annex I, since such conclusions are part of those rare Nubian collection guides and catalogues that add significantly to the body of knowledge concerning the context and importance of the remaining artifacts. Through tangible material culture rather than intangible theories, they synthesize how these interweaving realities, as part of a regional milieu and not of a crystallized Egypto-centric scholarly milieu, continue to act in the present time, showing the genuine link of the present with the past (Figs. 15, 16).



Fig.15: Plaited hair on mummy of Queen Nedjemet (1070-946 BC)



Fig.16: Contemporary Sudanese girl with finely braided hairstyle much like the ancient plaits

⁸² De Simone, in press.

⁸³ Haynes, 1999. An interesting book, recently published by the American University Press in Cairo, is *Ancient Nubia: African Kingdoms on the Nile* edited by Fisher, M., P. Lacovara, S. Ikram, S. D’auria, C. Higgings, 2012.

CHAPTER 2

Perceptions of Nubia and Nubians Through the Millennia

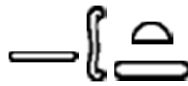
The purpose of Chapter 1 was to give a brief outline of the history of Nubia, stressing the local elements and their continuity over time, the point that offers the most solid argument in favor of the existence of a Nubian identity. This second chapter turns to various perceptions that the various interpretations of Nubian data have generated. These perceptions (sometimes contradictory) are some of the reasons related to the problematic contextualization of Nubian collections in museums.

‘Nubia’ is a word that has often confused people. This confusion is attributable to geographical, ethnographic and historical interpretations. Today, the confusion has been compounded by the fact that the name can only rarely be found on geographical maps because the area is divided between Egypt and Sudan.

The following pages examine four different ways in which the term Nubia is usually interpreted: etymologically, geographically, linguistically and historically. This is followed by a discussion of seven ‘perceptions’ of Nubia, generated by data and interpretations.

Etymological Interpretation

For the ancient Egyptians, *Nub* (*nbw*) meant ‘gold’. Nubia was very rich in precious metals, and gold was probably the principal attraction of the area for its powerful northern neighbors. However, some scholars insist that this meaning of *Nub* for Nubia is not set in stone. One reason for this uncertainty is that this toponym for ‘Gold Land’ does not appear in Pharaonic times. The word in that period referred only to the precious metal. In hieroglyphic texts, Nubia is called *Ta-Seti*, (The Land of the Bow), or simply the ‘Southern Land’.⁸⁴ Another name widely used in the ancient world is *Kush*, referring in particular to Upper Nubia (Sudan), while Lower Nubia (in Egypt) was referred to as *Wawat*. The people living in it were called *Nehesius*, by the ancient Egyptians in hieroglyphic texts. This means the burnt/bronzed (Fig. 17).



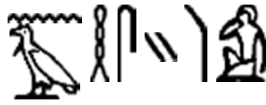
Ta-Seti (*T3-Stj*) (The Land of the Bow)



Setiu (*Stjw*) (The Land of the Bow of the Nubians)



⁸⁴ Bongrani, 1991: 10.



**Nehset / Nehsyu /
Nehsi
Nhst / Nhsyw / Nhsj
Nubians**

Fig.17: Nubia and Nubians
in hieroglyphs

The term *Noubai* is referred to for the first time by Erathostenes (c. 200 BC), quoted in Strabo's *Geography*,⁸⁵ and is linked to an indigenous term signifying 'slave'. Others are convinced that the word Nubia is linked to the *Noba* or *Nuba* who began moving from the regions south of Khartoum in the third century AD and settled in the territory then named Nubia.

The ancient Greeks also used another term to indicate the area, namely: *Aethiopia*, a name that had nothing to do with the modern state of Ethiopia. It is a Greek word meaning the 'Land of the Burned-Face People', and, at the time of Homer and Herodotus, it referred to all the lands to the south of Egypt and Libya.

Around 660 and 593 BC, when Greeks were employed in the Egyptian army and a mission to *Aethiopia* was organized by the Pharaoh Psammeticus II, some Greek poets used the term *Aethiopes* to indicate the night travel of the sun, from the West, the place of the *Hesperides*, to the East, the place of the *Aethiopes*. This exact localization of the land of the *Aethiopes*, probably suggests an etymological and rationalistic interpretation of the ethnic element. The ancient Greeks thought that the *Aethiopes* lived so close to the sun that they had burned faces: since the dawn is the moment at which the sun is nearest to the earth, it means that they must have lived where it rises. Today the Greek etymology has been called into question in favor of the hypothesis of a pre-Greek ethnic element, a derivation connected to a real population which at the time were extinct.⁸⁶ Greeks of the seventh to sixth centuries saw in the *Aethiopes*, the people living south of the First Cataract to Meroe, as being similar to those they recalled in their epic poem (Homer's *Iliad*). Arab geographers and historians of medieval times used the term *Bilad es-Sudan*, 'The Land of the Blacks', to define, more or less, the same geographical area.⁸⁷

Geographical Interpretation

In its traditional geographical definition Nubia is the part of the Nile Valley between the First and the Sixth Cataract where the Nile forms its six cataracts as it passes through the granite cliffs of the region. This corridor links Egypt to the sub-Saharan regions of Africa.⁸⁸ Current anthropological and archeological research suggests that this geographical definition is narrowly conceived given

⁸⁵ Strabo, XVII, 1, 2.

⁸⁶ De Romanis, 1999: 84-88.

⁸⁷ *Bilad - al- Sudan* means 'Land of Blacks'. The term is simply the derivation from the Arabic word 'Sauod' meaning 'Blacks' referring to the skin color of the inhabitants living in the region. It was, in fact, used principally by Arab travelers.

⁸⁸ Adams, 1977.

the evidence of Nubian cultures. These cultures exist over a much larger and more fluid area. Therefore, a cultural definition of Nubia must take into account the desert regions to the east and west of the Nile, as well as the areas of exchange and interaction between Nubians and nearby peoples.⁸⁹

The borders of Nubia in a longitudinal sense are interpreted in different ways and often according to the specific academic interest of the scholars involved.⁹⁰ Aswan is generally considered to be the northern border but the southern border is much more difficult to define. The travelers of nineteenth and twentieth century saw Nubia as a country inhabited by the Noba, who moved north- east from Kordofan. These people, named Kenzi, settled in a wide area stretching from Aswan to Wadi el-Sebua, occupying the land from Korosko to the Third Cataract Mahas, and from the Third Cataract to el-Debba Dongolawi (about 300 km northwest of Khartoum, Sudan). This view gives the name Nubia an ethno-linguistic meaning rather than a geographic one.

Those specialists searching for the first human presence in the north-east area of Africa tend to extend the term Nubia to the area even farther south of the confluence of the Nile with the Atbara. For Egyptologists, Nubia corresponds mainly to the area occupied by the Egyptians during the New Kingdom, reaching as far as the Fourth Cataract. The construction of the two dams at Aswan has restricted the area in longitude and in latitude even more.⁹¹

Whatever its etymology, the name Nubia, although not an official designation for a defined area, remains symbolic of its history and a source of pride for those who claim it as their heritage.

The geographical position and the character of the area have made Nubia a meeting place of cultures in the past and an isolated land in the present. In ancient times, when no planes flew over this desolate valley, it was crossed by many people. The Nubian Nile Valley was one of the easier routes for the inhabitants of the Mediterranean and Middle East civilizations to use in their efforts to penetrate into the African continent from its northern coasts. From the perspective of Mediterranean and Arabic peoples, it was the corridor that allowed them to pass from the 'known to the unknown' world. *Nubia: Corridor to Africa* is the term used by William Adams, one of the founders of the discipline of Nubiology. His publication is one of the first and still most comprehensive works produced in the field of Nubian Studies and the first of its kind to have a Nubia-centric approach.⁹² However, his standpoint has been considered restrictive by some scholars, in particular those who with their researches are demonstrating that, most likely, in ancient times the area was not just a 'corridor' limited to the Nile valley but extended into the neighboring deserts because of better climatic conditions.⁹³

The character of a meeting place and intersection of cultures has always been a main attraction for scholars:

[Nubia is a] fascinating subject for the study of acculturation and creolization phenomena, in other words for the long-range effects of the close contacts, coexistence and conflicts of cultures with different backgrounds, technical and political structures. The legacy of Nubia's geographical position as a highway for differing cultures and political powers throughout thousands of years is one of the most fascinating open air museums in the world, endowed with a wealth of impressive monuments in the shape of Pharaonic temples and fortresses, towns and settlements, Christian churches with galleries of frescoes, and

⁸⁹ Gatto, 2011: 21-29.

⁹⁰ Bongrani, 1991: 12.

⁹¹ Bongrani, 1991:13.

⁹² Adams, 1977.

⁹³ Gatto, 2011: 21-29.

tens of thousands of tombs illustrating the development of the indigenous population over the millennia and revealing how the populations came to terms with the many invaders and traders from north and south. What better reason for the scholarly and cultural interest of a whole world to become focused on this barren stretch of the Nile valley?⁹⁴

While Lower Nubia is one homogeneous geographic area, Upper Nubia consists of several well-defined areas, each with very different character. By and large it is an isolated country. The extreme climate of the region has made Nubia a poor country, not overly productive. Today, this isolation has been increased by the construction of the two Aswan dams in the northern area. The construction of these dams commenced at the beginning of the twentieth century with the First Aswan Dam, which inundated only the Egyptian area. It culminated with the High Dam, forming one of the largest artificial lakes in the world, Lake Nasser. The name honored the then Egyptian President, Gamal Abdel Nasser, who was responsible for the construction of the dam. The area in Sudan covered by the lake is called Lake Nubia. In the past decade, the area in the big S-bend of the Middle Nile, at the Fourth Cataract was inundated by a 174 km (108 miles) long lake, after the completion in 2008 of a dam built above the modern town of Merowe.

This current asset to Nubia is in danger of again being dramatically modified or, I should say destroyed, by the new damming program: hydroelectric and irrigation projects are planned at Dal, Mograt, Dagash, Sabaloqa (Sixth Cataract), Roseires (heightening of the existing dam) and Upper Atbara and Sitite. According to the Dams Implementation Unit (DIU), contracts to build dams have already been awarded for Kajbar (at the Third Cataract) and Shereiqa (at the Fifth Cataract).⁹⁵

Despite its isolation and the problems that arise from the tyranny of distance, the inhabitants love the area. Hassan Dafalla, District Commissioner in Wadi Halfa during the Salvage Campaign of the sixties, lived the particular and unique historical moment of the Nubian people: the 'Exodus'. Acquiring, as he himself says, a 'degree of intimacy which can only occur under such exceptional conditions', he observed:

Since ancient times the Nubians had clung to their narrow strip of fertile land along the banks of the Nile and perpetuated life in it. They were separated from the rest of mankind by the arid expanse of the Sahara desert, and they were content with their land and what it yielded, limited though both were. They had managed to adapt themselves to all the differing aspects of their environment, harsh or soft, fruitful or barren; and down the ages they could derive a noble meaning and high moral tradition from it. They liked the sands of their desert and its bare crags. They loved the Nile which was their sole life-giver. The remains of ancient civilizations scattered at the edges of their villages were a source of pride: they used to boast that they had deep roots, and their ancestors had contributed to building the first civilization known to man. Temples and churches were evidence of their ancient link with God. The formidable cataracts blocking the course of the river at various places were gifts of nature, and a protection against the infiltration and penetration of aliens into their country. Having no neighbors, they confined themselves to the limits of their community and land, and developed a feeling of individuality. They tended to have a good opinion of themselves.

⁹⁴ Säve-Söderbergh, 1987: 20-21.

⁹⁵ Cf. Fig 2. On February 2, 2012 the National Corporation for Antiquities and Museums of Sudan has launched the appeal to the international community for Salvage Archeology and Study Campaigns in the endangered areas. On the dams in Nubia cf. also De Simone, 2008: 401-416; Leturcq, 2009: 295-328; Kleinitz, 2011: 109 -116; Hafsaas - Tsakos, 2011: 49-76.

Dafalla's comment is reflected in the fact that today those relocated Nubians are fighting to get a piece of land on the shores of Lake Nasser from the Egyptian Government to be able to return to live in their natural isolated habitat. The same can be said for those living in Wadi Halfa. Simultaneously Nubians who live in what still remains of Nubia are desperately fighting against the specter of other giant reservoirs.

Linguistic Interpretation

Linguistically, Nubia refers to the area of the people speaking the Nubian language. This would imply that, geographically speaking, today Nubia is the stretch of the Nile from Aswan through Halfa and the Mahas region and down to the end of the Dongolawi area at the Fourth Cataract (Fig. 18).

The two forms of Nubian spoken in this area are *Nobiin* in the Sukkot and Mahas area and Kenzi-Dongolawi spoken in Egyptian Nubia and in the area of Dongola at the Fourth Cataract. They are known as the Nile-Nubian linguistic group and are linguistically linked to the Old Nubian language of medieval times. Modern linguistic researchers prefer to consider Kenzi and Dongolawi separate languages.⁹⁶

How this distribution⁹⁷ should be explained is still disputed among scholars and has given rise to different theories. What is apparently the most plausible explanation, proposed by Robert Fernea, claims that the Kenzi represent emigrants from Dongola who settled near the Egyptian border at Aswan. Here they specialized in the transit trade, as the Arabic-speaking group farther south also did for the transit trade through the desert from Korosko to Wadi Hamid.⁹⁸ Another explanation for this enigmatic demographical distribution of the Nile-Nubians is that Dongolawi Nubians, historically the inhabitants of the Nubian Kingdom of Makuria, in the past could have been more powerful and dominant than those of the Nubian Kingdom of Nobatia. When Makuria invaded Nobatia (AD 701), groups of the Makurian people, known as Kenzi or Mattokki Nubians, enslaved and culturally absorbed the Nubian people.

⁹⁶ Browne, 2001; Armbruster, 1965; Asmaa M.I. Ahmed, 2004; Bechhaus-Gerst, 1989; Bechhaus-Gerst, 1996; Jakobi, 1993; Thelwall, 1982; Lajtar, Van der Vliet, 2011.

⁹⁷ Kenzi is spoken in the most northern and southern parts of the area occupied by modern Nubians, but is absent in the central part.

⁹⁸ Fernea, 1973.

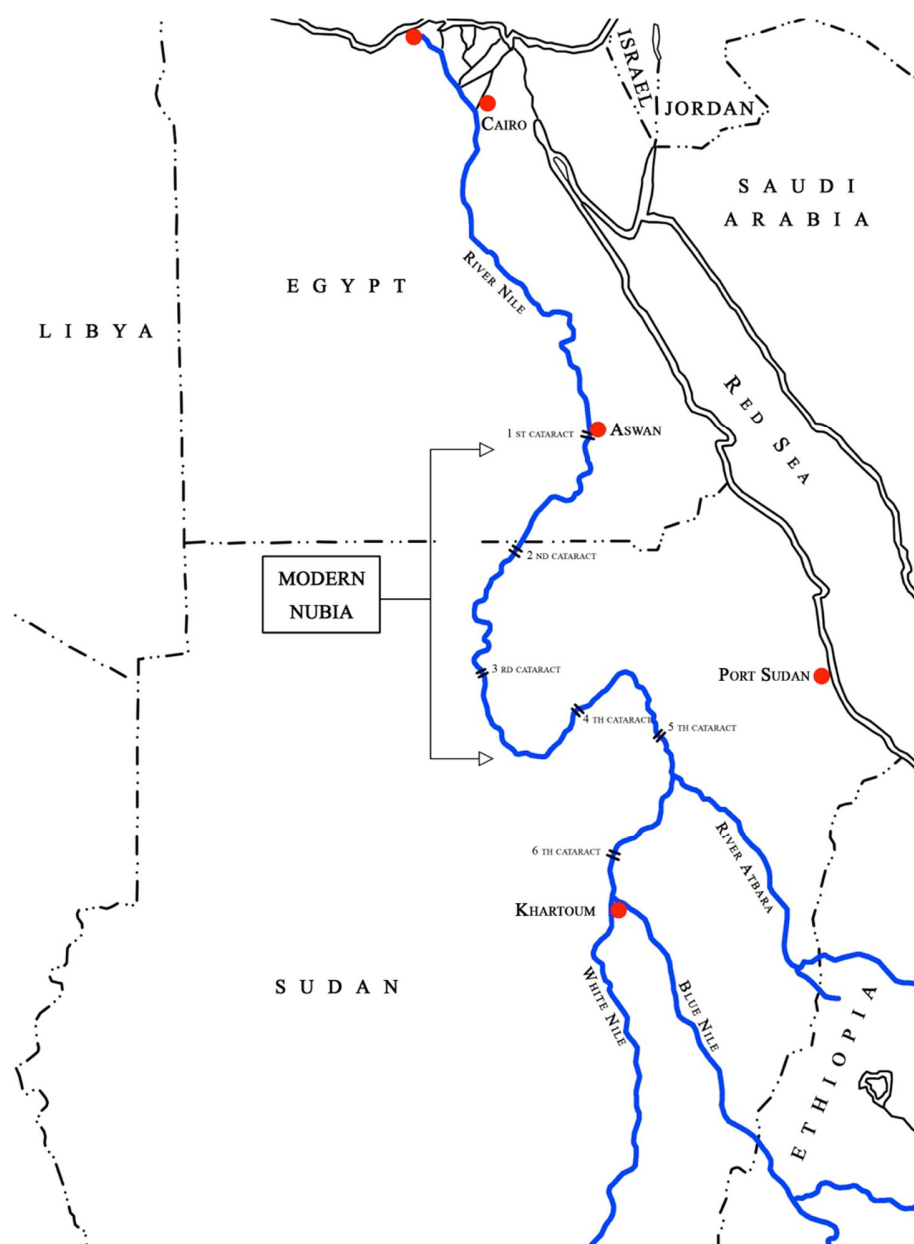


Fig. 18: Map of Modern Nubia

The Old Nubian language, used to write the texts of Christian Nubia from as early as the eighth century A.D, is considered to be the direct ancestor of the Nile-Nubian language group. It belongs to the Nilo-Saharan group, as do most of the indigenous Sudanese African languages, and it is the only indigenous African language for which the development can be traced over a millennium.⁹⁹ There were never any connections between Old Nubian and other Hamitic languages, or with ancient Egyptian and Coptic. Or, if there were any at all they are restricted only

⁹⁹ Rilly, 2007; Rilly, 2008: 2-12; Rilly, 2008: 211-225.

to loanwords. Although there is no connection between Old Nubian and the Semitic languages, its association with Meroitic is under study.¹⁰⁰

The Nile-Nubian group, with its linguistic classification described as the Nilo-Saharan phylum, shares a similar linguistic classification with many languages in both the Kordofan and the Darfur regions, among them Wali, Dair, Dilling, El-Hugeirat, Ghulfan, Kadaru, Karko, Midob and Bergid.¹⁰¹

Efforts to save the Nubian language from extinction can be primarily be credited to the Nubians themselves. The efforts of many individuals and organizations are involved in the project. The *Nubian Language Society* in Khartoum, an association of young Nubians, for example, produces booklets in the Nubian language and sponsors language training programs for the younger generations living in the villages of Northern Sudan (Fig. 19).¹⁰²



Fig.19: Cover of the booklet *Irkunila: Assarin Sorin Talay* produced by the Nubian Language Society in Khartoum

Historical Interpretation

Historically, as we have seen in Chapter 1, Nubia should be understood as the land where the Nubian people are recorded to have lived. In this sense it is very difficult to establish its limits, since there is little agreement among the sources.

It is a different picture for the information about ancient Nubian history that can be divided into written and archeological sources. The written records available from the Pharaonic period, testify to the sending of expeditions by pharaohs, mainly of an explorative, military and

¹⁰⁰ Rilly, 2007; Rilly, 2008: 2-12; Rilly, 2008: 211-225.

¹⁰¹ I wish to thank the Nubian Language Society in Khartoum for the cooperation in writing this paragraph.

¹⁰² Cf. El Hadi Hassan A. Hashim, 2012.

commercial nature. These expeditions left the marks of their passing in rock drawings, the presence of valuable precious objects given in exchange for local products that are found in tombs, temples and the remains of settlements. These documents can be royal or private, but even the latter refer to expeditions organized by the palace, expeditions that, even without specific military goals, had to be carefully organized and be supported by troops who could guarantee their safety among a scarcely known people.¹⁰³ Although these sources are very detailed in describing the Egyptian tasks in 'wretched Kush', we still do not know how far we can trust them. It is very well known that ancient Egyptians often had hidden, self-celebratory, historical realities, in particular those that did not fit into their political agenda.¹⁰⁴ The Egyptian sources are, alas, very vague about the social and administrative complexity of the Nubian people.

With the creation of the Meroitic script, the Nubians stopped using other languages, a process leading to gaps in our knowledge of this period. Meroitic script is indeed still being deciphered.

Fragmented accounts of Greek and Roman travelers and geographers have often filled these gaps, although most of them never ventured above the First Cataract and very few indeed above the Second. Therefore, much of their information is secondhand and consequently not completely reliable. In the years 449 - 430 BC, one of the first classical authors to venture to the Nile Valley was Herodotus. He gives a completely wrong geographical description of Nubia, admitting however that he never went beyond Elephantine and that all the information was given to him by the *Aethiopes*, that is, the locals. He describes Aswan as the frontier between Egypt and *Aethiopia*. He was the first author to mention Meroe. Diodorus of Sicily, who lived during the first century BC, is another classical author who probably never visited Nubia. Some parts of his encyclopedic work are reliable, as confirmed by archeological findings, others are fables or were obviously recounted to him, by unreliable informants.¹⁰⁵ Diodorus introduced a cataloging method for Central African populations, following an encyclopedic criterion used later by Pliny the Elder.¹⁰⁶ Diodorus does provide information about the course of the Nile and the number of its rocky cataracts¹⁰⁷ and accurate information about gold-mines in the area.¹⁰⁸

Amongst the Byzantine historians who wrote especially about the conversion of Nubia to Christianity and the three related kingdoms were Procopius, John of Ephesus, John of Biclarum, in the sixth century and Michael the Syrian in the twelfth century.¹⁰⁹ Most of them never actually visited the area.

The Arab geographers and historians were aware of the three Christian kingdoms of Nobadia, Makuria and Alwa,¹¹⁰ as well as of a kingdom called Al Abwab. They were as well aware of the Christian religion and the Jacobite dogma, of the existence of Greek books and of the Nubian language, not forgetting the strict morals and impressive stature of the people. Some of these authors visited the area, and gave different accounts of the Nubian towns and their society, as

¹⁰³ Bongrani, 1991:13; De Simone, 1997: 112-124.

¹⁰⁴ The most famous example of this policy occurred in Egyptian reports on the outcome of the Battle of Kadesh, fought between the forces of Ramses II and the Hittites in or around 1247 BC. The Egyptians claimed victory in what has continued to be the subject of lively scholarly debate, as there is substantial evidence that either neither side won, or it was a clear defeat of the Egyptian forces.

¹⁰⁵ Diodorus of Sicily, *Histoire Universelle*. Book I.

¹⁰⁶ Pliny (the Elder), *Natural History*, VI, 35.

¹⁰⁷ Diodorus of Sicily, *Histoire Universelle*. Book I.

¹⁰⁸ Diodorus of Sicily, *Histoire Universelle*. Book I.

¹⁰⁹ Vantini, 1975: 308-320.

¹¹⁰ Cf. Chapter 1.

well as various aspects of their activities. The most reliable of these writers were : Ibn Selim el Aswani, Toth' al-Mas'udi (10th century), Abu Salih the Armenian (13th century), Al Umari and Ibn Khaldun(14th century) and Al Maqrizi (early 15th century).¹¹¹ Nevertheless, their descriptions of Nubia gave few details. For instance, one of the best descriptions, that of the traveler and philosopher Ibn Khaldun in the fourteenth century, is quite general:

With the Nubian's conversion to Islam, the payment of the *jizya* (capital tax) ceased. Then several clans of the Juhayna Arabs spread over their country and settled in it; they assumed power and filled the land with rapine and disorder. At first the kings of Nubia tried to repulse them by force but they failed in it; so they changed their tactics and tried to win them over by offering their daughters in marriage. Thus was their kingdom disintegrated, for it passed from the sons of the Juhayna from their Nubian mothers according to the non-Arab practice of inheritance by the sister and her sons. So their kingdom fell to pieces and their country was inherited by the nomad Arabs of the Juhayna. But their rule presented none of the marks of statesmanship, because of the essential weakness of a system that is opposed to discipline and the subordination of one man to another. Consequently, they have been divided until this day, and there is no vestige of central authority in their part of the country, but they remain as nomads following the rainfall like the Bedouin.¹¹²

Only with the travelers of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries did the external world once again begin to hear information about the 'Land of the Unknown'.¹¹³ For example, the travels of the Swiss John L. Burkhardt in Lower and Upper Nubia in 1813 and his published account in 1819 excited the cupidity of Mohamed Ali Pasha al-Mas'ud ibn Agha, then ruler of the Ottoman Empire, who did not hesitate to expand his holdings to the south in 1820. Just to mention a few other travelers who, along with many others, followed their own fascination with the area: the British explorers Barnard Hanbury and George Waddington,¹¹⁴ the Frenchmen Pierre Letorzec and Frédéric Cailliaud,¹¹⁵ the Bostonians George Bethune English and John Lowell, the Italian Giuseppe Ferlini, and Linant de Bellefonds and his companion Alessandro Ricci.¹¹⁶

Many of the European travelers were attached to the army of Mohamed Ali. Their writings and information paved the way for future scientific research in the area and today many museums around the world are indebted to them. Hence it can be said that while the Napoleon Expedition contributed to the birth of archeology in Egypt, Mohamed Ali's expedition contributed to the birth of archeology in Sudan.

In comparison with the accounts of its ancient history, the sources of information about modern Nubians are very modest. As Dafalla observes:

Unlike their ancient history, which has been thoroughly studied, little has been recorded in English about the social and economic aspects of the existing Nubian tribes. This, perhaps, is partly because the countless ancient Egyptian remains in the locality are more attractive to the visitors than the cultural life of the inhabitants. The famous travelers of the

¹¹¹ Vantini, 1975: 308-320.

¹¹² Ibn Khaldun, *Kitab al-'ibar*, published in *The Cambridge History of Africa*, 1977.

¹¹³ Burkhardt, 1818.

¹¹⁴ Waddington and Hanbury, 1822.

¹¹⁵ Cailliaud, 1826-1827.

¹¹⁶ English, 1823; Ferlini, 1838.

eighteenth and nineteenth centuries mentioned only random details which they came across in passing through Nubia.¹¹⁷

The intensive archeological activity conducted in the area over almost a hundred years has led to a great deal of publishing activity, of which only a relatively small part has concerned modern Nubia. Worth mentioning is the important work produced by Robert Fernea, an American anthropologist and member of the Sociology and Anthropology Department of the American University in Cairo. In 1960, during the UNESCO Salvage Campaign, he carried out a research project that focused its study on the human implications of the planned social and economic changes and development, and he concentrated on the documentation of various aspects of the lives of the people in Egyptian Nubia.¹¹⁸ He explains the motivation presented to the local authority for such research as follows:

Ample scientific and pragmatic justification existed for salvage ethnography in Old Nubia. The project proposal stressed such issues as ecological adaptation and labor migration. We offered to be of help to those responsible for planning Nubian resettlement by providing information about the characteristics of Nubian society; we became a means of communication between administrators and administered. The more general humanistic issue - that a unique human culture should be described before it radically changed or disappeared - we perhaps less successfully communicated.¹¹⁹

Another significant study was conducted by Hassan Dafalla, during his three years spent among the Nubians of Wadi Halfa (Sudanese Nubia). Dafalla not only accomplished his work of Commissioner, but also complemented it with an in-depth study of the reactions, thoughts and perceptions of the local people during the difficult period of the 'Exodus', a term he uses in his publication.¹²⁰

If most of the ancient history of Nubia has been narrated by others, its modern history has mostly been narrated by the Nubians themselves. Many of their writings are in the form of petitions, that describe the spirit and feelings of the Nubians of today who find their identity more and more endangered. One of these petitions, presented in the form of a scientific paper on the occasion of the 12th *International Conference on Nubian Studies* held at the British Museum in 2010, discusses the construction of new dams in Sudan, the displacement of people and the disorientation of identity.¹²¹

A genre of popular Nubian literature is the novel. Those who speak of 'Nubian' literature in this respect have been criticized for the use of Arabic language in the texts. The critics, primarily non-Nubians, tend to consider Nubian texts as a part of the Arabic literary tradition. Ahmed Sokarno Abdel Hafiz, a professor at the University of South Valley at Aswan, argues that

¹¹⁷ Dafalla, 1975: 68.

¹¹⁸ Fernea, 1973: xii.

¹¹⁹ Fernea, Preface to Kennedy, 1978.

¹²⁰ Dafalla, 1975. During the *Merowe Dam Salvage Archeological Project*, researchers have paid more attention to the local communities. The Humboldt University of Berlin has conducted an anthropological study 'Manasir Cultural Research Project', designed to document the cultural landscape and local material and non-material traditions of the Manasir inhabitants of the flooded area called *Dar el Manasir* (Cf. <http://www2.hu-berlin.de/aknoa/hune/daralmanasir>)

(cf. also Kleinitz C. and C.Näser, 2011, 255-280; Kleinitz C. And C. Näser, 2012).

¹²¹ Nur Ad-Din Abdel Rahman: 'A plan to rescue Nubia from destruction'. Presented to the 12th *International Conference on Nubia Studies*. London: The British Museum, 2-6 August 2010 (in press).

it is possible to classify this literature as Nubian when the criteria of definition are based on content, taking account of the setting, characters, events, the names given to the characters, and even the language used in the dialogues, all of which are part of the Nubian world.¹²² In this context, a rich and textured view of the experience of contemporary Nubia is being created. Modern and contemporary Egyptian art has also found Nubia a subject of fascination (Fig. 20). Artists such as Gazbia Sirrey, Mohamed Sheeb and many others have attempted to locate the 'Nubian' in Egyptian contexts (Figs. 21, 22). Many portrayals of Nubians and even Nubian-focused folk and popular music have caught the attention not only of the Egyptian public, but of the wider global community as well.

The issues raised in the above discussion surrounding the identity of Nubia and Nubians has only begun to scratch the surface of the multitude of meanings associated with these terms that have been generated over the millennia. Adams has identified at least six of these perceptions: the Egyptians' Nubia, the Greco-Romans' Nubia, the Egyptologists' Nubia, the Nubians' Nubia and the Afrocentrists' Nubia.¹²³ To these six perceptions, I would add another three: the Black Pharaohs' Nubia, the Sudanologists' Nubia and the non-specialists' views of Nubia. Although it is impossible to 'unite' these ideas into one cohesive whole, the following sections will highlight the past and present main trends.



Fig. 20: Small statues of Nubians in a private house in Cairo

¹²² Sokarno, 2005. This discussion is not isolated and it is related to a more general issue surrounding African literatures in European Languages, cf. M. Schipper, 1999: 150-170. A similar issue concerns the use of Berber, Arabic, French, Italian and Dutch by native African Berber authors, cf. Merolla, 2006: 71-74.

¹²³ Adams, 1994:17-22.



Fig. 21: Nubians in a painting by Mohamed Sheeb displayed in a shop in Cairo



Fig. 22: Nubian woman in a painting by Mohamed Sheeb displayed in a shop in Cairo

The Egyptians' Nubia

For a long time, the literature of foreigners in Ancient Egypt has raised many questions. From the reports of the Ancient Egyptians to the present-day media, what was written by outsiders has left only fragmented peeks into the realities of Nubian history.

Adams, writing about the Egyptian concept of Nubia, remarks on the prejudicial views found in ancient reports and refers to the Edward Said concept of the creation of 'the Other' as having been common in Egyptian views of Nubians. He writes:

It is a common tendency of all peoples to measure themselves against some 'Other'-a kind of human yardstick by which one's own superiority or inferiority can be gauged. For Ancient Egyptians, the principal yardstick was the Nubians, who represented barbarity as opposed to Egyptian civilization. The endlessly repeated epithet, 'wretched Kush', surely had the same connotation for Egyptians as had 'darkest Africa' for Europeans and Americans of the last century. Yet there was not, as far as we can tell, any racial dimension to the Egyptian prejudice. The Nubians were not inferior because they were black, but simply because they were not Egyptians. In fact the Egyptian prejudice evidently disappeared during the New Kingdom, when the Nubians did become 'Egyptians' in the sense of being culturally Egyptianized.¹²⁴

If creating an own identity in opposition to others denotes a common cultural strategy, it is important to identify the specific way it took place by analyzing its ancient construction and amazing continuity over millennia. Hieroglyphic texts, like Akhenaten's solar *Hymn to the Aten*, tell us how aware the Egyptians were of the variety of humankind, whom they considered to be the offspring of Ra, the solar deity. The hymn says:

You made the earth as you wished, you alone, all people, herds, and flocks, all upon earth that walk on legs, all on high that fly on wings. The lands of Khor and Kush, the land of Egypt, you set every man in his place, you supply their needs; everyone has his food, his lifetime is counted. Their tongues differ in speech, their characters likewise; their skins are distinct, for you distinguished the peoples.¹²⁵

The inscriptions in two tombs in the Valley of the Kings at Thebes West, belonging to the Pharaohs Sety I (Fig. 23) and Rameses III, are not restricted to depicting the diversity of the population of the Nile Valley, but also show representations of people from neighboring countries.¹²⁶ The scenes depict Egyptians, *Rmt*; Kushites (Nubians), *Nhesyw*; Libyans, *Tjhnw*; and Syro-Palestinians, *Aamw*, with a hieroglyph indicating each ethnic name written between each pair of figures. Each ethnic type is depicted with a distinctive complexion and in representative dress. The skin of the Egyptians is regularly represented as reddish brown, distinctly lighter than the black *Nhesyw* (Kushites).¹²⁷ By and large, they established a canon applicable to each of these groups, distinguished by details customary to their place of origin.¹²⁸ Beside this acknowledgment of cultural diversity, another concept that stressed Egyptian superiority was brought into play to distinguish Egyptians from others. Predating Edward Said's analysis of the West's prejudicial and

¹²⁴ Adams, 1994:17-18.

¹²⁵ Lichteim, 1973.

¹²⁶ Yurco, 1996.

¹²⁷ Hornung, 1990.

¹²⁸ Donadoni, 1990: 221-253.

superficial 'Orientalism', the Ancient Egyptians identified specific characteristics that drew a firm line between the concepts of 'us' and 'them'. The Ancient Egyptians considered that they were normal humans, and non-Egyptians were something their inferior.

However, it seems as far as the Nubians were concerned, some differences appear to have been even more exaggerated. Nubia was not Egypt, and hence considered a barbaric country like the others. Nonetheless, unlike the other conquered areas, Nubia was the 'daughter' of the god Hapy (the Nile) as was Egypt. Therefore, it had become a twin of Egypt, its *alter ego*, but in a negative sense. In Egyptian representations and texts, although both countries are characterized by the two natural elements, the Nile and the desert, Egypt is always linked to the Nile and Nubia invariably to the desert: the one fertile, the other barren and dead.

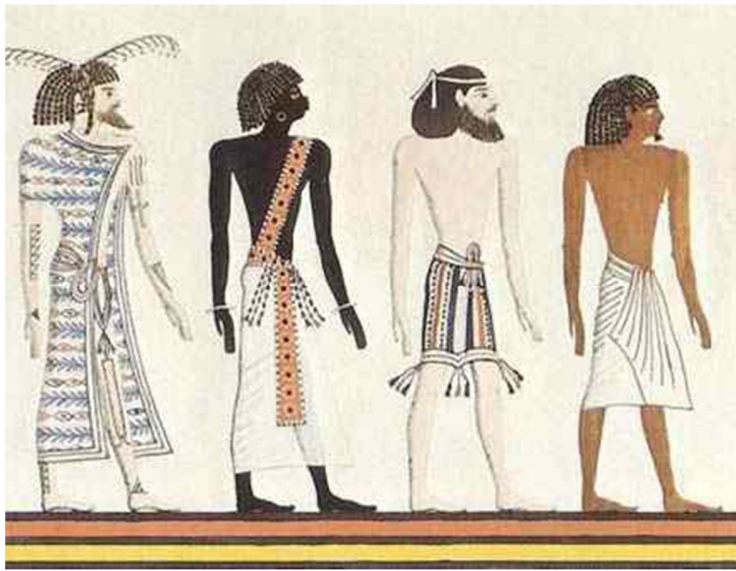


Fig. 23: Four peoples of the world: a Lybian, a Nubian, an Asiatic, and an Egyptian. An artistic rendering based on a mural from the tomb of Sety I, 1290-1279

The concept of dualism, which caused the Ancient Egyptians to conceive the world as composed of the opposition of two forces, is reflected in the political division of Ancient Egypt into two Lands. These two lands, Upper and Lower Egypt, were identified by various symbols of duality, as among them: the bee and the sedge, the White and Red Crowns, order and chaos. Nubia, in particular, was a yardstick in the sense used by Adams in his above quotation. Egyptian texts refer to 'wretched Kush', whereas the Asiatic people were only Asiatics.¹²⁹ The negative connotations of these symbols and such use of language, which went to great lengths to draw a stark, dramatic line between the two groups and areas, reveal the insecurities and the fears of instability which beset the Ancient Egyptians in their conquests of the southern lands (Fig. 24).

¹²⁹ Jackson, 2003.

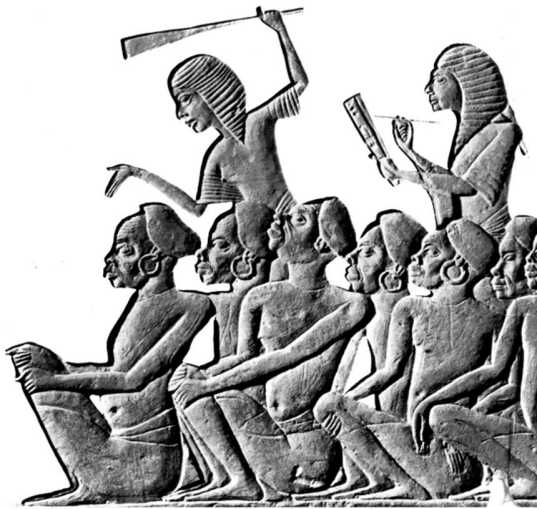


Fig. 24: Nubians depicted in the Memphite tomb of General Horemheb, about 1334 BC-18th Dynasty

There are other examples of this distinction between Egypt and Kush (Nubia). Egypt represents good and Kush represents its opposite. The anthropological opposition between Kush and Egypt contained in the ‘Myth of the Eye of the Sun’ provides yet another instance of the need of the Ancient Egyptian authorities to prove their strength and sovereignty over the land of Kush. In Ancient Egypt, where agriculture was very important, the color green became a positive symbol, represented in both vegetal greens and mineral greens. However, in the myth the author stresses the superiority of the vegetal green of the fertile Nile Valley to the mineral richness of the arid Nubian mountains. In popular mythology, the cat goddess, Tefnut, escaped to Nubia, only to return to Egypt and become again the Egyptian Hathor-Mut-Sekhmet:

[...] The desert of Kush has no products of the same value as the food that is found throughout Egypt, your country, more than mine! [...] Oh my Lady! This road which leads to Egypt is not the desert on which you had to walk for many days[...]¹³⁰

This geographical element was essential to maintaining the status of being an *Egyptian*. The story of *Sinuhe* who escaped, for reasons unclear, from Egypt when the ruler changed, tells how the hero lived among the Asiatics for a long period, until he felt the need to return to Egypt. He contacted the Egyptian king who welcomed his return: ‘You should not die in a foreign land. Take thought for your dead body and return.’¹³¹ When *Sinuhe* arrived in Egypt, he at first he seemed like an Asiatic to royal family and he says:

A load was given to the desert, and clothes to the sand-dwellers [...] I passed the night on a bed. I gave the sand to those who live on it and wood oil to those who rub themselves with it.¹³²

¹³⁰ Bresciani, 1994: 69-71.

¹³¹ Simpson, 1972: 68.

¹³² Simpson, 1972: 72.

And he became Egyptian again.

When the Egyptian pharaohs occupied Nubia, the geographical element that identified the land as 'alien' for Egyptian burials lost its relevance. Nubia, the 'Other', was a part of Egypt, and those who lived there, remained Egyptian and were not considered to inhabit a 'foreign' land. This is attested to by the large numbers of Egyptians lying in the cemeteries of the area, who do not appear to have lost their right to be Egyptians.

The Black Pharaohs' Nubia

The view of the Egyptians, particularly that of the pharaohs, reflected in the official character of the documents concerned illustrates the institutionalization of an inherent racism. Specifically, these documents reveal a form of 'racism' directed against those identified as Nubian and not as Egyptian, regardless of whether or not they lived in Nubia. Such a view had its roots in a dualistic ideology found at the basis of the ancient Egyptian self-construction.

The situation became more complicated when, in the 25th Dynasty, the pharaohs were no longer Egyptians but Nubians. What had been the 'black twin' had become essential and complementary to the other twin. The pharaohs of this dynasty variously called Egyptian, Nubian, or Ethiopic, lived in Egypt but their bodies were buried with all the honor due to a king in their homeland, Nubia, according to funerary customs which became more and more Egyptian. Some iconographic elements of these southern kings are Egyptian, some others are Nubian. The physical traits of the pharaohs in their representations vary according to their provenance. Art works produced in Egypt gradually became somewhat different from those produced in Kush, that are again different from those originating in the Kushite province. The kings' names are strictly Nubian. This case shows how Egypt and Nubia complemented each other (Fig. 25).

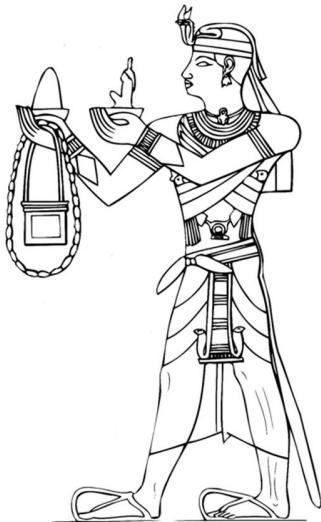


Fig. 25: King Taharqa - from the hypostyle hall of temple K at Kawa

The Greco-Romans' Nubia

At the opposite extreme from the Egyptian perspective was the admiring and romanticizing tendency of Greek and Roman writers, beginning already with Homer for whom 'Aethiopians' were the most righteous of men and beloved of the gods. A similar admiration is reflected in the romanticized descriptions of Meroe by Herodotus and Strabo, and in the popular 'Aethiopian' romances of the classical period. Here we can recognize another age-old propensity of human thought: the idea of a simpler and purer world, unpolluted by the complexities and failings of their present times. The 'other' imagined people become a yardstick by which we measure not our superiority but our fall from a condition of original purity. At an earlier age we find this idea expressed in the Garden of Eden myth and its numerous variants; at a later age it lives on in the 'noble savage' so dear to the imagination of Rousseau and other Enlightenment thinkers. The Graeco-Roman vision of Nubian life, no less than the Egyptian, arose out of ideological need of the viewer rather than from an attempt to understand its reality.¹³³

As stressed in Adams' earlier quotation, Greek and Roman authors seem to have created a mythic vision of *Aethiopia*. For the ancient Greeks, *Aethiopian* meant literally 'burnt-faced persons'. However, the Greeks of the seventh to sixth centuries saw in the *Aethiopes*, the people living south to the First Cataract as far as Meroe, heroic characteristics similar to those recalled in Homer's *Iliad*.¹³⁴

From the reign of Ptolemy II, writings on *Aethiopia* become available, with travelers in the area recording their observations. However, this picture provides only fragments of information, since most of the texts have unfortunately been lost. The Greco-Romans were the first Europeans to record the physical traits of people different from themselves. In their eyes, the *Aethiopes* were 'the yardstick by which they measured the color of people darker than themselves.'¹³⁵

The sources unequivocally show that they made a distinction between dark and less dark. Aristotle is known to have reported that *Aethiopes* were the darkest in the world.¹³⁶

Given modern and contemporary developments of racism, it is important to underline that in the Greco-Roman world a black skin color was not considered to be an element of inferiority. On the contrary, *Aethiopia* was regarded as an independent state of great military, political and cultural importance.¹³⁷

In classical science, philosophy, and religion, color was never the basis of a theory proclaiming the inferiority of blacks. When the Alexandrian theologian Origen declared that all whom God created He created equal and alike, whether Greek, Hebrew, Ethiopian, Scythian or Taurian, this declaration harked back to the unbiased attitude of the classical world toward Ethiopians.¹³⁸

On the other hand, the non-racist Greco-Roman views on skin color do highlight that the situation of Nubia during this period was different from that that had existed during the Pharaonic period. Nubia, in the Greco-Roman view, was no longer 'wretched Kush' and its situation benefited from the conditions that prevailed under the Hellenistic *oecumene* and the *Pax Romana*.

¹³³ Adams, 1994:19.

¹³⁴ De Romanis, 1999 : 84-87.

¹³⁵ Snowden, 1996: 106-108.

¹³⁶ Aristotele, *Problemata* 66: 898b.

¹³⁷ Snowden, 1970; Snowden, 1983.

¹³⁸ Origen, *De Principiis* 2, 9.5-6.

As seen in Chapter 1, the center of Nubian culture moved from Napata to Meroe farther south around 270 BC. Many innovations and developments occurred in the area and were admired by foreigners. For the first time Nubians expressed themselves in a local language, Meroitic, probably inspired by their knowledge of alphabetical writings, including Greek.¹³⁹

The respect of Greeks and Romans is also expressed, perhaps to an even higher degree, in the honor they had for the local religion. Diodorus informed us that the Meroites had instituted ‘the cult of the gods, festivals, solemn assemblies, sacrifices; in short, all the practices by which we honor the gods’.¹⁴⁰ Initially this respect was probably cultivated as a political instrument to obtain the sympathy and consensus of the local people, later it became a spiritual and ideal one.

Texts reveal that Egyptian religion was more advanced in pure theological speculation than that of the Greco-Romans who were fascinated by the Egyptian religious world. Consequently, Greco-Roman respect extended also to the south when Napata became the second house of the Egyptian god Amon.¹⁴¹ Many Egyptian deities were worshipped in the Greco-Roman world. Above all the cult of Isis left its imprint throughout the Roman world. During the Roman occupation, Egyptian temples were not commandeered in attempts to supplant the local religions, as happened in other countries, but continued to be active and vital parts of community life. Roman emperors were depicted in these temples as pharaohs worshiping local gods, examples of which are to be found in all temples of Classical period built in the Nile Valley from Egypt to Nubia.

These factors led to the formation of what today might be described as a political ‘condominium’ of Ptolemaic-Meroitic elements in a region behind the First Cataract where temples to Egyptian and Nubian gods were built and shared by both the Meroitic and Ptolemaic communities.

For their part, local Nubian kings were fascinated by Greek education and philosophy. Meroitic artists created works that clearly demonstrate external influences, including Egyptian and Hellenistic, but that simultaneously exhibit local elements that underline that the influence went far beyond copying. These works combined these Egyptian and Hellenistic elements with local themes of African/Nubian inspiration.¹⁴²

Meroe also excited the admiration of the Roman military world, when, in a tentative bid to occupy Nubia, they found themselves faced not a rude barbarian but an energetic queen. She astonished these erudite westerners when she did not hesitate to deface a statue of Emperor Augustus Caesar, taking the head back to Nubia as a prize and burying it in the doorway as a final act of disrespect (Fig. 26).

¹³⁹ Griffith, 1913.

¹⁴⁰ Diodorus of Sicily, *Histoire Universelle*, Book I.

¹⁴¹ Eide, Hagg, Pierce and Torok, 1994; Torok, 2002; Torok, 2008.

¹⁴² Wenig, 1970: 152; Eide, Hagg, Pierce and Torok, 1994; Torok, 2002; Torok, 2008; Edwards, 2004.



Fig. 26: The Candax- Queen of Meroe

This brief overview outlines how the ‘wretched Kush’ of the Egyptians developed into the fabled Meroe of the Greco-Romans. Visiting the archeological sites of Napata, Meroe and others in the area today, in particular during one of their magical sunsets, it is not difficult to image the splendor of this past.

The Egyptologists’ Nubia

Archeological explanations are no less shaped by archeologists’ assumptions than by the data they investigate.¹⁴³ The assumptions that have molded archeological interpretations of material evidence for Nubian history have been no less affected by the historical and social realities of the times in which the archeologists lived. Above all, these assumptions were complicated by colonial attitudes and activities in which the first researchers, most of them with an Egyptological background, operated.

The sheer number of the Egyptian monuments built in Nubia, that vary in their relative importance to those who researched them, offers an explanation of why, from the very beginning, Egyptologists have been so involved in this area. The volume of finds also explains why, for such a long time, the study of Nubia has been considered merely as an ‘appendix’ to Egyptology.

The work of the first Egyptologists, in both Egypt and Nubia, was fully immersed in the colonial period and inevitably absorbed its philosophy:

¹⁴³ Childe, 1939: 10-26.

[...] only light-skinned peoples could bring civilization to Africa and without their continued presence civilization would decline. If they compromised their racial purity, cultural deterioration was inevitable.¹⁴⁴

In this sense, Egypt posed a special problem. Recognized as one of the great civilizations of the ancient world, it was located on the African continent. The only solution was, therefore, to virtually detach it from the rest of Africa. As Leclant comments:

Such was the magnificence of pharaonic Egypt throughout the thirty-one dynasties of its pharaohs from the mythical king Menes (c. 3000 BC) to the Ptolemies (304-30 BC) and then the Roman Emperors (30 BC-395 A.D.) that for the longest time modern historians studied Egypt by itself. They did not pay attention to the fact that the Nile is a great African river and that in numerous details Egyptian civilization still bore many marks of its African origin.¹⁴⁵

Even the first specialists who to do scholarly work in Sudan with a real interest in the area had still not yet rid themselves of the aura of colonialism in which the superiority of Egypt over the Nubian culture pervaded the academic world. The publication of A. J. Arkell's *A History of the Sudan* in 1951¹⁴⁶ marked an important date in local historiography. It was the first book to attempt a summary of what was known about the early history of the Sudan in a form suitable for secondary schoolboys or first year undergraduates at Khartoum University. It has to be said that Arkell does not appear very sympathetic to the changes in the canons of art which occurred in Kush, and their gradual abandonment of Classic Egyptian art and language. He was inclined to dismiss all modifications as 'barbarization' rather than attempts to create a more indigenous art.¹⁴⁷

The massive presence in the area of such scholars greatly influenced the way in which it was interpreted. Increasingly, recognition that interpretations of the Nubian culture by Egyptologists lie at the basis of the prejudices that have accompanied Nubia since its culture became a serious field of study is now finally substantially revising the traditional perspectives and interpretations of Nubian history, its role and relationship to Egypt and its widespread impact on indigenous cultures. Although at present the attitude of the Egyptologists is changing, Adams observes:

While Egyptologist today are becoming more appreciative of the individuality of Nubia civilization than they once were, the tendency to regard Nubia still as 'their' territory seems to be as strong as ever.¹⁴⁸

Unfortunately, the area of Egyptian Nubia now immersed beneath the waters of Lake Nasser is no longer available for archeological investigation. The upshot is that research has been intensified in those areas of Nubia now found in what is considered to be modern Northern Sudan. The attitude of Egyptologists in the past, still not shed by some of them today, has subsequently produced the rise of a new generation of scholars who define themselves as scholars of 'Sudanology.' Their

¹⁴⁴ Trigger, 1994: 323-345.

¹⁴⁵ Leclant, 1997: 73-88.

¹⁴⁶ Arkell, 1961: 147, 176-177.

¹⁴⁷ Haycock, 2006: 58-80.

¹⁴⁸ Adams, 1994: 17-22.

approach to the country is largely from an Afro-centric rather than from an Egyptian or Middle-Eastern perspective.

The Nubiologists' Nubia

The International Campaign to Save the Monuments of Nubia, launched by UNESCO in 1960, at the request of Egypt and Sudan, represented the first large-scale cultural heritage salvation initiatives in the history of mankind. The Campaign won Nubia a prominent place in books, magazines and memoirs that told this story of an emerging conflict between culture and human development. The participation of almost fifty countries demonstrated that the conservation of the world's common heritage concerned all countries. Although this large work represented the last chapter in the history *in loco* of the people who had lived in the area for millennia, it is a bitter irony that it also allowed the entry of the history of Nubia into the Great Universal History (Fig. 27).

The involvement of a new generation of scholars contributed largely to this achievement. Coming from every corner of the world and free of the prejudices that in the past had massively conditioned interpretations of the history of the area, they can be considered the founders of 'Nubiology' as an independent scientific discipline.

It is no accident that most of them are not Egyptologists but anthropologists or archeologists without a specific interest in Egypt. Today Nubiology is a discipline that is internationally well recognized. At regular intervals, scholarly symposia are being organized on a global level. In these gatherings, Nubia is treated as an independent cultural entity and not as an appendix to Egyptology. Relations with and influences from neighboring countries, in particular Egypt, are treated as contributions to this culture and not necessarily considered as the main sources of its formation. In the framework of Nubiology, scholars can also devote themselves to specific branches such as Meroitic studies.

The International Society for Nubian Study, was formed in 1972, at the time of the first International Conference on Nubia held in Warsaw.¹⁴⁹ The interest of the Polish founders of the Society was primarily the study of Christian Nubia, a field in which they were the leading specialists. Almost immediately, the group embraced all branches and periods of Nubian history and archeology. The earliest members of the Society were chiefly the archeologists who were involved in the forty-eight international teams that had collaborated throughout the 1960s in the massive UNESCO Salvage Campaign. Their mission had been to rescue the monuments and to interpret the archeological record of Egyptian and Sudanese Nubia before the area was flooded forever by the newly constructed Aswan Dam. The Society, which is still very active, ensures the continuity of the organization of regular meetings of this scholarly community as well as the promotion of the new knowledge of Nubia ancient past.

¹⁴⁹ Michalowski, 1975.

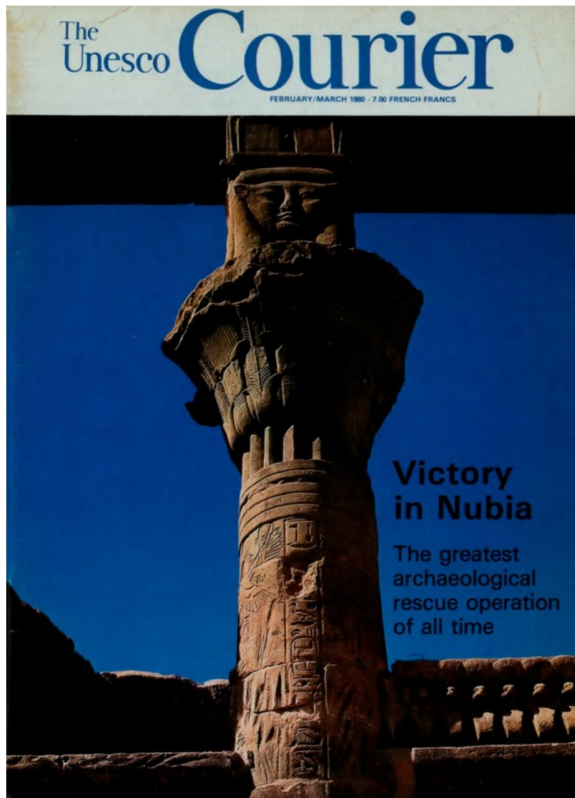


Fig. 27: Front- Cover of the UNESCO Courier February-March 1980

The Sudanologists' Nubia

The main perceptions of Nubia that govern the activity of modern scholars currently working in Sudan can be summarized as follows: Nubian territory, as interpreted from the historical records, spread from the First to the Sixth Cataracts for a specific and finite period of time. Such interpretations contract and expand the time span and the geographical extension of the millenarian history treated in Chapter 1. As can be seen from the previous discussions, they are just that, interpretations and, therefore, malleable, making consistent referencing problematic.

The construction of the High Dam at Aswan has hindered archeological research in Lower Nubia, and Upper Nubia is threatened. Therefore, Sudanology has been conditioned specifically by these modern circumstances. Nubiologists include anthropologists studying the Nubian people over time and space, in Egypt and Sudan. Nubiologists can also be museologists and are therefore blessed with being able to research all materials identified as Nubian, whereas archeologists who do fieldwork in Nubia can only work in the Sudan.

The *International Conference on Nubian Studies*, held every four years, involves scholars from around the world. 'Nubian' is still the designated area of concern but in more recent conferences the content might increasingly be better characterized as *The International Conferences on 'Sudanese' Studies*. Topics discussed are more frequently viewed by participants as appropriately 'Sudanese' in character. To this more academic aspect it is necessary to add a political one. The Sudanese Government tends to promote the archeology of Sudan as Sudanese archeology only, devoid of other appellations. Obviously, such a policy strongly influences new

museum displays and temporary exhibitions. However, if the current damming program announced by the Sudanese Government is implemented, I doubt that there will be a future for the new-born branch of 'Sudanology'.

The Nubians' Nubia

If the perception of Nubia in the past has been a complex issue, the situation is even more so when we look at the situation today. Contemporary Nubia does not exactly match its ancient configuration. As a territory, traditionally Ancient Nubia extended from the First to the Sixth Cataract. Present-day Nubia goes from the First to the Fourth, although the people at the Fourth Cataract are no longer perceived as being Nubians. Living between two centers of power, Egypt and Sudan, the perception that Nubians have of themselves is obviously conditioned by this geographical position. Hassan Dafalla¹⁵⁰ realized that there were great differences between the people of his Sudan and the people living in the borderline area of Wadi Halfa. Written from the perspective of a Sudanese official seeking to harmonize national internal differences, Dafalla's text indicates that Nubians from Wadi Halfa had much more in common with Egypt than with 'their' country Sudan. Furthermore, their self-perception reproduced a series of Egyptian stereotypes of the southern inhabitants (negroid, savage). The impaired power relationship between Wadi Halfa and the central government is hinted at the end of the quote, when they are said to encounter 'proud and respectable' Sudanese, that is, the officials who lead them to abandon their lands and to 'relocate' in an arid countryside far away from the Nile:

Until recently the common Nubian's knowledge of the Sudan in general was very scanty. When I first came to Wadi Halfa I was surprised to find that the Nubians were calling us Sudanese, and they talk about the railway express coming from Khartoum as 'the Sudan train'. The overwhelming majority of them had not seen the Sudan at all and they thought that rest of the country contained only negroid, savage inferior people. This should not be taken to mean that they considered themselves Egyptians, although a very big portion of them had seen Cairo many times, and had a better knowledge of Egypt than of their mother country. This was, first, because the city lights of Cairo were far more attracting and inviting for a holiday than Khartoum; secondly, and more important, the presence of their relatives working in Cairo would make their stay there easier; and thirdly, life was cheaper in Egypt than in the Sudan. In the meantime their contact with the Egyptians affected manners. They speak Arabic with a slight Egyptian accent and their greetings are full of the courteous verbosity for which the Egyptian are famous. Their rich men and notables wear *saidi jibbas*, and in their houses coffee is served in the Turkish *kanaka*, as the traditional *jabana* pot is unknown to them. Their definition of direction is typically Egyptian: they call the north Bahari and south gabli; and they are the only community in the Sudan who are in the habit of smoking the hookah, *shisha*. It was only when the question of their resettlement arose and we sent deputations from Nubia to visit the proposed resettlement areas, that they started to realize that their mother Sudan contained equally proud and respectable people and that its virgin land was full of good possibilities.¹⁵¹

Although land for relocation was offered to Nubians by the governments of both Egypt and Sudan, unquestionably the construction of the two dams in Aswan dealt a fatal blow to the continuation of

¹⁵⁰ Cf. Chapter 1.

¹⁵¹ Dafalla, 1975 :66.

a normal life for the Nubians living in the northern part of the area. The Kenzi and part of the Fedija lost their own homeland and had to move to alien tracts - in Egypt to the Kom Ombo region and in the Sudan to Khasma el-Girba in the Kassala region - far from the Nile Valley and had to adjust to a strange environments and a different way of life. Here they have developed a new sense of ethnic self-awareness as a result of the resettlement. Also those whose migration was not strictly linked to the resettlement but to job opportunities in the larger cities of Egypt or Sudan have developed a sense of ethnic self-awareness after losing their link to their native villages. Their traditions are kept, in particular in large metropolises such as Cairo and Khartoum, by the creation of clubs or *gama'iyya*.¹⁵² As Fernea says:

The Nubians 'gama'iyya', society, or social club, was the urban institution that, more than any other, played a key role in the Nubians struggle for a place in the city and in their upward mobility in the labor market. It was the *gama'iyya* that helped the migrants cope with the new problems of the city life and assisted them in the task of maintaining close contact with their rural communities [...] It was a meeting place where they could sit together and speak in their own language, about their own affair [...] The clubs were and still are also centers of communication and education.¹⁵³

Today there are differences between the 'resettled' Nubians and those who are still living in their own homeland. As for the latter, the Mahas and Sukkot groups which live in the area of the Third Cataract, although the barren and hostile cliffs of the Batn el Hagar have always represented a natural obstacle, share with the Fedija a language, domestic architectural styles and other cultural elements. They are proud to retain a definite sense of their special identity and history. Somehow, they represent the last refuge of a distinctly Nubian culture and tradition. In contrast, many of the Dongolawi living farther south, at the Fourth Cataract, no longer consider themselves to be Nubians and are much more involved in the context of the modern concept of Sudan.

In conclusion, in the modern area, the name Nubia has an ethno-linguistic rather than a geographical meaning, although the latter still continues to represent an important component of Nubian identity (Fig. 28).



Fig. 28: Nubians performing a Nubian traditional dance at Cairo Opera House

¹⁵² Geiser, 1989.

¹⁵³ Fernea, 1973: xii.

The Afrocentrists' Nubia

In the recent past, there has arisen a school of African and African American scholars who are bent on constructing an avowedly racist version of African history, in which all major cultural achievements on the continent are attributed to peoples who can be identified as 'black'. This development is of course a reaction against the unfavorable interpretations of European and American historians; an attempt to combat white racism with black racism. In the view of the black nationalists, the peoples of Sub-Saharan Africa were the originators of most of the institutions of higher civilization, which were subsequently transmitted to other, non-black populations in Europe and Asia. Since the Nubians are the first historically recognizable black African people, it is not surprising that Nubia plays a key symbolic role in the Afrocentric version of history: Umm al-Dunya ('Mother of the World'). The Nubians thus take the familiar mythological role of culture-giving heroes. In support of this view, the works of Herodotus and even Homer are recited as historically authoritative, while ancient Egyptian texts are conveniently ignored.¹⁵⁴

Adams's text is somehow critical of the work of Cheikh Anta Diop, the 'father' of Afrocentrism. However, to understand the birth of the Afrocentrist idea of Nubia we need to contextualize his work. Without discussing the merits of Afrocentrism, I think that the problem of Nubia 'biases' is rather linked to academic issues. The historiographical interpretations had their beginnings in an Egyptology that totally assimilated the study of Nubia, relegating the concept and field of Nubiology to being a sub-discipline or completely obsolete. As Egyptology became more refined and better documented, controversies arose that identified those scholars who viewed Egyptian history as including all events, artifacts and socio-cultural and political institutions related to Nubia. They found themselves facing a growing group of other scholars who were becoming more specialized in the particular histories of Nubia. As a result of these dedicated scholars, Nubiology is now a defined and respected independent field of study.

Out of these concerns and developments, coupled with further refinements in the histories of these areas as well as the impact of global issues related to modern Sudan, the field of Sudanology has emerged to cover the area of ancient Nubia situated in the geographical location of modern Sudan. In academic research, Sudanology has found itself in conflict with those still focused on a more traditional and generalized view of Egyptology that subsumes both Nubiology and Sudanology under its mandate. These controversial and somewhat politically motivated developments gained a new momentum when following the Salvage Campaign and the disappearance of Egyptian Nubia, research moved to the Sudan.

Afrocentrism became caught up in the tentative new studies by African scholars, of which Cheikh Anta Diop is the promoter. These studies use Egypt (and in particular Nubia where faces are 'clearly' black) to show that Africa is the continent containing some of the most ancient and illustrious cultures of the world.

Cheikh Anta Diop was the leading Senegalese scientist on the subject of the origins of the human race and pre-colonial African culture. His background covers several disciplines including History, Egyptology, Physics, Linguistics, Anthropology, Economics and Sociology, all of which he combined in his efforts to combat racist theories. He strongly opposed those who developed the idea of a separate evolution of various types of humankind, thereby denying the African origin of *homo sapiens*. He also tried to prove by any means he could find the validity of a theory which

¹⁵⁴ Adams, 1994: 17-22.

claims Ancient Egyptians were black.¹⁵⁵ He was convinced that as European culture had been built on the legacies of Ancient Greco-Roman culture, Africans had likewise built their own on that of Egypt. Therefore, he focused on racial characteristics, particularly skin color, allowing him to outline the ethnic affiliations of the Ancient Egyptians through microscopic analysis in the laboratory.¹⁵⁶

Even though the racial theories of Anta Diop were supported by some and rejected by others,¹⁵⁷ he surely succeeded in establishing the foundations of American Afrocentric Nubiology and Egyptology. This area is more than a scholarly field, it is also a political and educational movement. As such, it is advocated in popular books, often with humorous content, textbooks, and even educational posters sponsored by major breweries. Apparently, thus far, it has enjoyed considerable success in its educational aims.

In recent years, the results of these efforts have become increasingly part of the international *milieu* of Egyptological and Nubiological studies.¹⁵⁸ The Museum of Fine Arts in Boston holds one of the most important collections belonging to the 25th Dynasty of the 'Black Pharaohs'. Indeed this museum that has become one of the most significant for Afro-American scholars. It is no accident that the Museum and Center for Afro-American Artists in Roxbury has a semi-permanent loan of objects from the royal pyramids of Nuri and a cast of the tomb of the Kushite King Aspelta, including his 12-ton sarcophagus, still in storage at the Museum of Fine Arts. Ronald W. Bailey, an African-American professor from the Northeastern University of Boston, admits in his introduction to the *Proceedings of the Ninth International Conference for Nubian Studies* (held in Boston in 1998) that:

Academic opportunities were given to the Afro-American scholars only recently. This missing of opportunity has produced in the past the production, by such scholars, of writing on Nubia greatly exaggerated or misunderstood its significance.¹⁵⁹

The foreword and afterword of the catalogue *Nubia: Ancient Kingdoms of Africa* are significant.¹⁶⁰ Rita Freed, curator of the Department of Egyptian and Ancient Near Eastern Art begins the foreword clearly stressing the African dimension of Nubian culture:

¹⁵⁵ Diop supported his arguments with references to such Classical authors as Herodotus and Strabo. In particular he used the theory of Herodotus according which the Colchian (Georgian) people were related to the Egyptians and that they were 'black, with curly hair' (Herodotus, *History*, Book II.). He interpreted anthropological data (such as the role of matrilineality to conclude that Egyptian culture was a Black African culture. Linguistically he believed that the Wolof language of contemporary West Africa is related to Ancient Egyptian (Diop 1977; Diop 1978; Diop 1981: 86-110. Diop 1991; Moitt 1989).

¹⁵⁶ He tried to determine the melanin content of the Egyptian mummies. This method was criticized as the test was considered inappropriate for application to ancient Egyptian mummies, as a consequence of the effects of embalming and deterioration over time.

¹⁵⁷ Anthropologists and DNA specialists in general confirm the genetic linkages of Nile Valley peoples with other African groups, including some in East Africa, the Sahara and the Sudan, supporting the criticism made by Diop of the arbitrary classifications and splitting up of African people. However, they do not share other aspects of Diop's work, such as his ideas of a worldwide black phenotype (Keita, 1981).

¹⁵⁸ Beside the most famous works of Cheikh Anta Diop, Necia Desiree Harkless' *Nubian Pharaohs and Meroitic Kings: The Kingdom of Kush* (2006) gives sharp insight into the feelings of Afro-American scholars on the issue.

¹⁵⁹ Bailey, Preface to *Nubian Studies 1998*, (ed. Kendall, T. 2004).

¹⁶⁰ Haynes, 1992.

With the opening of the Nubia gallery at the Museum of Fine Arts of Boston, in May 1992, unique and wonderful ancient African cultures will be available to the public for the first time in this country in a permanent and comprehensive installation. Realizing the significance of Nubia, Boston City Councilor David Scondras pointed to the need for an introductory guide to these cultures and offered to assist in its publication.¹⁶¹

The Afterword of the catalogue to the exhibition, *Nubia: A Black Legacy* by Edmund Barry Gaither (director and curator of the Museum of the National Center of Afro-American Artists, Roxbury) also provides insight into the development in this area. The catalogue for one of the most important museums in the world makes the Afterword valuable not so much because of its content, that is typical of most papers produced by Afrocentrists, but because of its presence in the publication emphasizing the importance of the Afrocentrist theories:

Due to slavery and its aftermath in the Americas, African history has not been fully or fairly presented. As a result, African Americans and many others throughout the 'New World' feel that Africa's contributions to history and culture have been devaluated, misrepresented, or denied. Examining Nubia will, therefore, contribute to an overdue reassessment of Ancient Africa [...] For Africans and their descendants throughout the Americas, the civilization of Ancient Nubia is a symbolical legacy. They consider Nubia part of their own, broad heritage and view Africa as the source of their own, as well as many other diverse cultures that have had an impact globally [...] Symbols from ancient Egypt were embraced by popular culture. Pyramids, images of pharaohs or their queens, and other similar designs proliferated. The most widespread was the Egyptian ankh, which appeared on necklaces and jewelry. Lectures and numerous other presentations re-interpreting the history of ancient Africa assumed increased importance and popularity. Much of the discussion of ancient Egypt focused on the physical traits of early Egyptians. Frequently these discussions did not distinguish between Egyptians and Nubians. In both cases, figurative works with facial features, hair textures, and style associated with black people often occur. African-Americans could be aspects of themselves in ancient Nubian Egyptian art. Over the last three decades, important new perspectives on ancient Africa have emerged. These perspectives assert that Egyptian civilization was indebted to Africa to the south, including Nubia, for some its formative ideas and that Egyptian civilization provided much of the foundation of Greco-Roman civilization. Proceeding from this approach, Africa became not just the home of the earliest humans, but also the birthplace of civilization. Inspired by an increased appreciation of early African heritage, many African-Americans adopted or gave to their children names such as Nefertiti or Candace. Others probed ancient texts, including *The Book of the Dead*, seeking to gain greater personal knowledge of Egypt and Kush. Greater knowledge of Nubia will enhance our understanding of black heritage while assisting in the restoration of Africa to her place in world cultural history. Additionally, it will inspire and challenge young people of African descent everywhere.¹⁶²

The merits of Afrocentrism related to Black or White Racism is not the topic of my study. None the less, in the context of this work it is important to stress that Afrocentrism does not want to create a new paradigm of Egypt or Nubia on the basis of a self-constructed Afrocentric view. Afrocentrism reminds - perhaps in an exaggerated, but possibly understandable way - what the reality is: that Egypt and Nubia are both part of the African continent and that both are among the

¹⁶¹ Freed in Haynes, 1992: Foreword.

¹⁶² Gaither, 1992: 58-59.

most ancient cultures in the world. That Egypt, as an African country, was directly involved in the cultural dynamics of its continent has been broadly accepted. The many essays published in a volume edited by David O'Connor and Andrew Reid in 2003,¹⁶³ and those in the volume *Egypt in its African Context* edited by Karen Exell in 2011,¹⁶⁴ have enriched the debate and increased knowledge of the issue over the course of the last decade. Today, support for the Egypt-Africa connection is coming from different fields of research, mainly archeological, linguistic and genetic, but to what extent and in what way Egypt interacted with the African world still remains to be clarified. What the archeological work is bringing to light is the irrelevance of the race-based theory, as cultural identities do not necessarily match or relate to race.¹⁶⁵ As scientific research is gradually proving, Nubia strongly influenced the Egyptian culture at its formative stage during the fifth and fourth millennia BC. The nomadic pastoral way of life, first developed in Nubia, was adopted by most northern African cultures. This pastoral background in this geographical, linguistic, ethnic area is what links Egypt to Africa.¹⁶⁶

In conclusion, as we have seen, ancient people, modern different disciplinary trends, and Nubians themselves have perceived the area we call Nubia and the people who lived in it in different ways, and this has resulted in the creation of different paradigms. All these different paradigms lead to two realities: that of an 'Ancient Nubia' rich in history and archeological remains that deserves, if it is to be better understood and not belittled, to be approached in all its individuality; and that of a 'Modern Nubia', territorially restricted but inhabited by people who consider themselves the heirs and descendants of this history. It is clear that the two realities must be analytically distinguished, as everything else that pertains to the past and the present should be. What must be remembered is that distinguish does not always mean strictly separate. However important it is for the Nubians of today to know their past, it is often also important for the past to find verifications and responses in the present.

¹⁶³ O'Connor and Reid, 2003.

¹⁶⁴ Exell, 2011.

¹⁶⁵ Gatto, 2011: 21-29.

¹⁶⁶ Gatto, 2011: 21-29.

CHAPTER 3

The Emancipation of Museums: An Overview of Ideas

Before moving from the history and historiographical literature of Nubia to its ‘museumization’, it is necessary to understand how the museum has evolved over time and how it operates in different sociopolitical realities. Museums document and record the passage of time, but this process unavoidably affects them. Therefore this chapter explores the impact time has made on museums themselves.

Museums, born to satisfy the taste and values of the educated western elite of the nineteenth century, are changing their identity. Rather than functioning as an immutable, static and for some, arid place, it is progressively becoming an interactive tool for communicating with the world outside its doors, the living presence of what is displayed inside.

The language and terminology used in this chapter as well as the profile of those who are dealing with museum ‘emancipation’ are different from those of the ‘old museology’ and clearly show that the subject can no longer be characterized by *staticity* but, instead, by *dynamicity*.

Changing the Traditional Role of Museums

If the 20th century was characterized by conflicts of ideology, the 21st century is all about conflicts of identity. Following this new political trend, museums, scattered around the five continents, are breaking new ground in an effort to prove that the museum is not necessarily an obsolete, elitist institution, and that it has an essential part to play in the world of today and tomorrow. The consciousness of cultural identities, represented by cultural heritage, has led to the awareness that political emancipation is of little significance unless it entails cultural emancipation.¹⁶⁷

The traditional role of both science and humanities museums is unquestionably changing. Rather than focusing on preserving, studying and presenting their collections, museums can now be required to perform a variety of social functions, among them social inclusion, lifelong learning and awareness of group identities. This aspiration to effectuate a social evolution of museums is especially applicable in those museums where the function of objects is to tell the history of those who have produced them.

The complex system on which the museum is based will certainly create difficulties in addressing these new roles. The museum is basically formed by two components that are interdependent: first the collection that is indispensably supported by its technical, scientific and institutional apparatus. The relationship between the museum and the reality that it represents is, as Bloom *et al.*¹⁶⁸ have remarked, rhetorical rather than methodological or scientific. The dynamics of how the objects arrive in the museums are primarily linked to issues of power, politics, finance and other marginal factors, and have little to do with systematic research. This approach very often

¹⁶⁷ Bouchenaki, 1999 (Mounir Bouchenaki has worked with UNESCO for a long time, as Director of the Division for Cultural Heritage and earlier as Acting-Director of the World Heritage Centre and then as Assistant Director-General for Culture. In the last years he has also been Director-General of ICCROM- International Centre for the Study of the Preservation and Restoration of Cultural Property).

¹⁶⁸ Bloom, 1994:11.

leads to the creation, as Cliffords says, of ‘contingent fictions’ of other ways of life.¹⁶⁹

The social roles and responsibilities of museums are therefore many and varied; they can differ radically from context to context and organization to organization. They are influenced by many factors, including the needs and concerns of communities, the museum’s history and that of its collections, the way in which it is funded, the political priorities of its stakeholders and the financial and human resources it has available.¹⁷⁰ In 1992 Eilean Hooper-Greenhill wrote in the introduction chapter to the book *Museum and the Shaping of Knowledge*:

This fixed view of the identity of museums has sometimes been firmly held and, until recently, little has disturbed it. But it is a mistake to assume that there is only one form of reality of museums, only one fixed mode of operating. Looking back in to the history of museums, the realities of museums are changed many times. Museums have always had to modify how they worked, and what they did, according to the context, the plays of power, and the social, economic, and political imperatives that surrounded them. Museums in common with all the other social institutions, serve many masters, and must play many tunes accordingly. Perhaps success can be defined by the ability to balance all the tunes that must be played and still make the sound worth listening to. At the present time, in many areas where decisions are now being made about the funding and maintenance of museums, hard questions are now being asked about the justification of museums, about their role in the community, and their functions and potentials.¹⁷¹

J.D. Harrison states that museums have taken on these challenges in different ways. Some have generated confrontation in their approach, while others have encouraged an increased acceptance of diversity. In each case, the museum has had to address the questions of whose history is being constructed and whose memories are being negotiated by the museum, and ultimately whose voices will be heard and whose will be silenced. By looking at the processes of construction and negotiation, and their outcomes, and by recognizing the connections, the museum profession will be in a better position to be able to reconcile these differences.¹⁷²

As Bloom *et al.* say, certainly in the future, four forces are likely to direct museums: a proliferation of voices, cultural pluralism, the impact of the information age and challenges in education. Seven aspects of museums that need ‘to be approached with fresh insight’ in order to respond to these forces are: collection management, education potential, internal organization structures, the value of the museum to human experience, and representation of cultural diversity through all aspects of the museum.¹⁷³

Heritage and Identity

Since one of the main arguments of this study is the impact of heritage on identity issues, it is necessary to make some brief comments on these two topics, since their intrinsic meaning is not as simple as it might appear. The most tangible manifestation of heritage is the material. That is to

¹⁶⁹ These ‘contingent fictions’ created not only by museums displays but also by other culture practices as anthropology, travel writing and collecting by Western society, have been actively contested in post-colonial contexts (Cliffords, 1988: 22-229).

¹⁷⁰ Sandell, 2002: Introduction.

¹⁷¹ Hooper- Greenhill, 1992: Introduction.

¹⁷² Harrison, 2002: 29.

¹⁷³ Bloom, *et al.*:1994: 11.

say, a society that built monuments and produced material culture hereby attests to its power, intelligence and creativity; these products are concrete, they can be touched. However, there is also the world of ideas and practices covered by the heading of 'intangible heritage' or 'immaterial' heritage. Today, the expression of mankind's creativity in both its tangible and intangible forms is being approached more and more as an indivisible whole. One, in fact, is the material manifestation of the other.

International organizations like UNESCO are paying special attention to intangible heritage with the creation of several key projects and actions such as the adoption of the Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage at the Thirty-Second session of the UNESCO General Conference on October 17, 2003. The definition of 'Intangible Heritage' used in the Convention states that:

The Intangible Cultural Heritage means the practices, representations, expressions, and knowledge skills as well as the instruments, objects, artifacts and cultural spaces associated therewith - that communities, groups and in some cases, individuals recognize as part of their cultural heritage. This intangible cultural heritage, transmitted from generation to generation, is constantly recreated by communities and groups in response to their environment their interaction with nature and their history and provides them with a sense of identity and continuity, thus promoting respect for cultural diversity and human creativity. For the purpose of this convention, consideration will be solely to such intangible cultural heritage as is compatible with existing human rights instruments, as well as with the requirements of mutual respect among communities, groups and individuals, and of sustainable development.¹⁷⁴

The value of intangible cultural heritage has already been acknowledged by a number of countries that have a culturally diverse population and indigenous people. To date 140 countries from all over the world have ratified the UNESCO Convention on Intangible Heritage.¹⁷⁵ The Convention clearly states that cultural heritage should be preserved in its holistic vision in order to link past and present for a better future. As Sharon MacDonald and Gordon Fyfe contend:

What distinguishes humans from animals is our awareness of time. The concept of time is inherent to the concept of humanity. And in this awareness of time, we feel, above all, the weight of the past. Humans try to justify their actions in the present by invoking their past, the past of the community. In many prayers, and in agrarian and other rites, you will hear, 'I am doing this as my ancestors did before me', a justification of the present with reference to the past, but also to ensure development in the future. Everything is linked, from the past to the future. But heritage also helps to define the meanings of culture and power and is a political resource; and consequently, it is often accompanied by an array of different identifications and potential conflicts, not least when places and objects of heritage are involved in issues of legitimization of power structures.¹⁷⁶

David Lowenthal states that the past validates the present by conveying an idea of timeless values and unbroken lineages through restoring of subverted values. The sense of belonging to a place is fundamental to identity, people cut off from their past by migration or even by its destruction - deliberate or accidental - in war, often recreate what could or should have been there but never

¹⁷⁴ UNESCO Convention on the Safeguarding of Intangible Heritage, 2003.

¹⁷⁵ <http://www.unesco.org/culture/ich/index.php?lg=en&pg=00024>

¹⁷⁶ MacDonald and Fyfe, 2004: 58.

actually was. Inevitably, therefore, the past as rendered through heritage, also exacerbates the burdens of history. The atrocities, errors and crimes of the past, that are appealed to, legitimize the atrocities of the present.¹⁷⁷ Some think that museums need to explore and confront all aspects of the past, even if they are a sphere of contestation. Museums must become a site of truth and commemoration, as the Holocaust Museum in Washington is. In this spirit as well, Kanan Makiya, an Iraqi dissident, has proposed the construction of a Museum of Baathist Crimes.

The idea of some others is that in contexts of reconciliation and reconstruction of countries, the building of deeply damaged relations between nations, peoples or faiths can begin only when peace and stability have been achieved. Once the right conditions are in place, a nation can begin to debate its past.¹⁷⁸

Heritage is also an economic resource exploited everywhere as a primary component of strategies to promote tourism, economic development and rural and urban regeneration. This factor greatly influences the way in which heritage is processed, preserved and presented.

Turning to the idea of identity, the concept has become the subject of academic discussions and studies. As McLean states, at a macro level the contemporary transformation of identity has taken place against the backdrop of decolonization, imperial atrophy, globalization and the decline of the nation-state. At a national level, the challenge becomes one of reconciliation and of promoting national integration within the plurality and diversity of identity.¹⁷⁹

According to Newman and McLean, there are two interpretations of identity: the first is a 'fixed view' of it as unchanging over time and space. The other view sees identity as something fluid and contingent that, in a multicultural era such as today, changes over time and might be privileged over other identities and in particular contexts. This second and non-essentialist perception considers identity as a social concept, as it

gives us a location in the world and presents the link between us and the society in which we live. Identity can then be grouped into factors such as ethnicity, race, nationality, social class, and so on [...]¹⁸⁰

The concept of community is also very complex. A person can belong to one or more communities and identify them in a different manner. He or she can belong to a community defined by geographical locality, or by an ethnic community or a community focused on a particular industry. It is easy to understand, therefore, that for a museum the process of exhibiting an identity is a challenge. As Corsane says:

When heritage, museums and galleries, become sites and spaces where a multiplicity of voices can be heard and different representations found, they open up as places where dialogue can take place. They can challenge, inspire and act as resources for life-long learning. Thus is all positive. However, they can also become arenas of contestation that at times stimulate controversy.¹⁸¹

¹⁷⁷ Lowenthal, 1985.

¹⁷⁸ Lumly in Sandell, 2002: 31.

¹⁷⁹ McLean, 2005: 1-4.

¹⁸⁰ Newman and McLean, 2002:56-68.

¹⁸¹ Corsane, 2002: 1-22.

While multiculturalism is leading to the creation of specialized museums, far more difficult is the role of such museums if they are expected to make a contribution towards the construction of national identity.¹⁸² The concept of national identity or nationalism is not a simple one. Generally, nationalism is part of the human tendency to belong to a group. As Hugh Seton-Watson says: ‘All I found to say is that a nation exists when a significant number of people in a community consider themselves to form a nation, or behave as if they formed one’.¹⁸³

Michael Ignatieff explains that there are two forms of nationalism: a civic one based on patriotic sentiments and a shared set of political practices and values. The other form of nationalism is based on inherited ethnic characteristics. In both cases it is a mistake to think that a nation is something which pre-exists the present form of nation-state, or is a ‘natural’ or ‘innate’ entity.¹⁸⁴ As Benedict Anderson indicated in his well-known study *Imagined Communities*,¹⁸⁵ nationalism is somehow ‘invented’ and, more precisely, invented on the basis of a number of selected features. A particular group living within a nation-state can be regarded differently from the rest of the population and as such it can claim political independence but not necessarily a separate state, for example, the Aborigines in Canada, Australia and New Zealand. Minorities tend to consider themselves as ‘nations’ but rarely as ‘states’.¹⁸⁶ However, in the case of Native Americans, they are able to maintain a certain legal status that recognizes the legitimacy of their own internal nationhood within specifically designated geographical areas. Hence, the ‘Cherokee’ or ‘Navajo’ Nations design recognized communities that are confined to land allotted to them by the US government in the late nineteenth century. In this way, they are able to exercise legal rights concerning burial grounds and what those grounds contain.¹⁸⁷

Different nations can be contained within the boundaries of a single state, as many states can be part of one nation. In these circumstances, often, for political reasons, a sort of trans-national identity is promoted. This is the case of the Pan-Arab and Pan-African movements that consider themselves different from the Western world. Therefore, the creation of a national identity is subjective and also very relative. Consequently, representing any specific national identity becomes a complex and delicate task. The museum usually tends to simplify the diverse elements that make up the concepts of its displays and exhibitions. As a result, these displays often give a homogeneous, and therefore more readable picture of what they are trying to represent,

¹⁸²An example can be found in Sweden, that can be considered a new multicultural society with a relatively small number of established and recognized national minorities (the Sami, the Swedish Finns, the Tornedaler Finns, the Roma and the Jews) and larger groups of new immigrants who have come in different waves of immigration since the 1950s. This has led to the challenging decision of including ethnic minorities in Swedish Museums. Four museums have been created and federated under the general name of National Museums of World Culture and their collections are from ‘other parts of the world’, namely, mainly non-European collections (three already existed while one, The Museum of World Culture, was opened in 2004). According to the Swedish Government (1998) the mission of these museums is to play a specific role in dealing with the challenges of multicultural Sweden, through their international collections and networks. However, the politics of inclusion have tended to generate tension and conflict along two dimensions: (i) the relationship between museum employees and external stakeholders, especially concerning the decision-making process that determines what is to be exhibited and (ii) the symbolic and textual dimensions of display (Lagerkvist, 2006). For what concerns multiculturalism and museums cf. also Pieterse, 1997: 123-146; Hakiwai, 2002, 179-201.

¹⁸³ Seton-Watson, 1997: 5.

¹⁸⁴ Ignatieff, 1993:6.

¹⁸⁵ The process that, according to Anderson, creates ‘the imagined communities’ is: the territorialization of religious faiths, the decline of antique kinship, the interaction between capitalism and print, the development of secular languages-of-state and changing conceptions of time and space (Anderson, 1991).

¹⁸⁶ Ignatieff, 1993:5.

¹⁸⁷ For the Navajo Tribal Museum cf. Hartman, 1983: 30-35.

ignoring the depth and dynamics of the concepts and human civilization in all its variety. As Ashworth says:

In order to be useful in museums and be easily understood by the widest group of people, a 'rich and complex past' has to be reduced to a set of easily recognizable characteristics. Similarly, national identity is usually reduced to a few stereotyped qualities, representative personalities, and supporting mythologies.¹⁸⁸

The other major problem of the museum in the representation of national identity is the restrictions posed by its link with the power in society. For those who represent the power, the subjective elements that define a nation, created by the power itself, are real. Many of the conflicts that today affect the world are related to the collapse of the nation-state and, in most cases, are attributable to conflicts between civic nationalism and ethnic nationalism. Often museums are in the middle of these conflicts.

The explanations I have pursued in this chapter show, by the analysis made by those who are working on the process of 'emancipation' of the museum, the intrinsic significance of this institution, its strengths and its weaknesses. How it is materialized in the different realities in which the museum operates is the next area of exploration.

Impact of Museums on Societies

If the purpose of creating museums in European countries was to provide an educational tool for the elite and support development and national growth, in other parts of the world, such as what is known as the 'Global South', the museum mandate purpose was initially different.

Nnakenyi Arinzi was one of the best known and effective leaders of the African museum and heritage community and was instrumental in training and in raising the profile of African museum professionals in the international community. He describes the situation of African museums before and after independence and their needs for the future as follows:

In the beginning, Africans were not given solid professional training that would empower them, nor were they encouraged to make the museum profession their career. What generally emerged was a situation where Africans served as attendants and cleaners who had to accompany expatriates during fieldwork to help collect materials and clean excavated archeological objects. A few were taught how to operate a camera and move objects within the museum and in the field, but were denied the hard-core professional training essential for the profession. This scenario, by and large, created a dilemma for the museum ensuring that they could not develop a vision or a mission consistent with national goals and objectives. The scenario also entrenched the Western model stereotype on the museum, thus creating a contradiction that has continued to plague African museums over the years. How this dilemma is to be resolved has today become an issue in practically all museums in Africa [...] A striking phenomenon emerged in African Museums in the immediate post-independence years: they became active and effective vehicles for nationalism and for fostering national consciousness and political unity. They became tools for reaching out to the population and forging greater national understanding and a feeling

¹⁸⁸ Ashworth, 1994:13-30.

of belonging and togetherness. In a sense, they became the symbol of 'uhuru' (freedom) and change.¹⁸⁹

From Arinzi's text emerges a clear indication that independence has changed the mission of the African museum in terms of content. According to this view, the central mission of African museums today should be first of all to represent the local culture, in the past discriminated by the white elite who created the first museums on the continent. Another sphere of action and responsibility for African museums today is a type of corporate social responsibility that interacts with the communities they serve, taking into consideration local needs and problems related to health, urbanization and so on.

In Zimbabwe, for example, prior to independence, the government decreed that museums should not represent the Black Rhodesian culture. This decision was clearly devised to marginalize the local people and their culture. During the conflict that led to the end of the domination by a white minority, museums represented the conflict as a 'campaign against terrorism'.¹⁹⁰ Following independence, the Zimbabwean museums, managed by locals, represented the indigenous culture that is at the heart of the process of reconciliation in the country.

Besides recognizing minorities, governments might also be required to stress unity and to avoid emphasis on different ethnic groups within the country. For an example of this dilemma, we can look at Namibia, a country with a large number of ethnic groups. With independence, the government sought to reinforce the unity of the country using museums as a tool. Any policy that could raise ethnic feeling, and therefore undermine national unity, was avoided.¹⁹¹

Another case are the Kom in Cameroon. In 1970 they fought to get back the Afo-A-Kom, a ceremonial statue particularly important to their identity.¹⁹² The government gave this operation no support, but nevertheless it was pursued.¹⁹³ Such efforts to retrieve artifacts important to ethnic identities have become a powerful trend around the world. In countries such as Egypt, there have been a number of successes in retrieving objects from foreign countries. In the United States, efforts by Native Americans to retrieve the bones of their ancestors for ceremonial reburial and to block further excavation and destruction of ceremonial burial grounds, have also met with some success. (On the other hand, excavations are very relevant to the history of the peoples concerned, and hence to their own identities). The role of the museum is both one of being a social agent celebrating identities and legacies, as well as the stage upon which governments and special interest groups play out their conflicts.

Although one of the most important roles of African museums is the preservation and conservation of those objects and artifacts most closely tied to that of their people's identity in Africa, exhibitions and displays in some museums have been strongly influenced by audience

¹⁸⁹ Nnakenyi Arinze, 1988. The integral version of this text has been included in Annex II.

¹⁹⁰ Munjeri, 1990: 444- 456.

¹⁹¹ Schildkrout, 1995: 65-77.

¹⁹² The *Afo-A-Kom* is not among the greatest pieces of art but for its community of 30,000 people its meaning is inexpressible. This wooden statue was stolen from a storage hut in the Kom Kingdom in the northwestern part of the Federal Republic of Cameroon in 1966, and finished up in the hands of an American art-trader. It seems that Law Aw, the King (also called the Fon) of Kom, was so affected by this theft that he was believed to have been 'psychologically killed,' as he died soon after this traumatic event. The attempt to replace the statue with another did not bring peace to the community. Thaddeus Nkuo, first secretary of Cameroon in Washington and himself a Kom, demanded its return, explaining: 'It is beyond money, beyond value. It is the heart of the Kom, what unifies the tribe, the spirit of the nation, what holds us together. It is not an object of art for sale, and could not be'. (The lost totem: Time Magazine, Monday Nov. 5 1973).

¹⁹³ Vincent, 1995:80 - 85.

expectations. In Namibia, for example, there are two national museums, a historical one and the other for natural history and ethnography. In the Museum of History, visited almost exclusively by foreign tourists, local history is infused by a kind of nostalgia for the former German and Afrikaans dominant cultures, and presents the national identity through stories framed in and informed by European culture. The Museum of Natural History and Ethnography, visited mainly by local authorities, has a different dimension of the history of the country, a local dimension.¹⁹⁴ The use of museums for political purposes and consequently the display of the most convenient items for such scopes is defined by Enid Schildkrout as ‘selective amnesia’.¹⁹⁵ Although there is always a selection excluding other displays, ‘selective amnesia’ refers to the political choice to include and avoid certain topics and objects without informing the public of the reasons for these choices.

In the Middle East, the official role of museums tends to reflect the policies of national governments which are intent on building a national identity based on their epic and glorious pasts. These glorious legacies tend to erase other chapters of more recent history, less glorious, and often characterized by tensions and conflicts. The representation of these epic pasts, often embellished, exaggerated and dramatized, is targeted in particular at the foreign audience that, through tourism and other activities related to the promotion of this illustrious heritage, represents one of this area’s main economic resources.¹⁹⁶ In Lebanon, a land that for years has lived through chapters of civil war, state museums transmit a national identity still linked to the heritage of Phoenicians and Romans.¹⁹⁷ Along the same lines, Egypt, whose situation will be presented in more details in the next chapter, Turkey and other countries in the Arab region have pursued similar policies in the context of museums.

The use of museums in the Far East for state-ideology varies and changes. In China, for example, since the early 1990s museums have been shifting the focus of their exhibitions from socialism to patriotism. Museums in contemporary China are officially designated bases for patriotic education, but the content of the ‘patriotism’ that they are meant to promote remains in many respects vague or problematic. One of the key tensions here is that between a deep-rooted assumption of equivalence between the Chinese and Han cultures and history, and the multicultural reality of the contemporary People’s Republic - including as it does a range of non-Han groups such as Tibetans, Uyghurs, Mongols, and many other cultural groups. The progressive abandonment of socialism has in some ways exposed these contradictions more starkly in recent years. Meanwhile, the homogenous official vision of Chinese identity in general, and Han identity in particular, is contested either at the popular or the official level (or both) in the largely Han communities of Hong Kong and Taiwan, the Republic of China. In a rapidly commercializing and modernizing Communist China, the promotion of a state-centered patriotism has become a key instrument for the regime in its efforts to preserve its legitimacy, and museums represent a key element in this strategy. The imperial collection now displayed in Taipei, the capital of the Republic of China and the other part in Beijing, the capital of Communist China, is the glue that holds together the collective cultural heritage of the two countries.¹⁹⁸

In countries where theocratic power has a leading role, the memory of ancient civilization, considered to be pagan, represents a danger to religious identity. One pertinent case is

¹⁹⁴ Schildkrout, 1995:70.

¹⁹⁵ Schildkrout, 1995:65.

¹⁹⁶ Said, 1991: 80-91.

¹⁹⁷ Mackey, 1989.

¹⁹⁸ Vickers, 2007:365-382; Hamlich, 1995: 20-30.

Afghanistan. Here the conflict between the Soviet forces and *Mujaheddin*, led to the destruction of numerous monuments and museums. One of the hopes of the post-conflict era was the reconstruction of the Kabul Museum. When the Taliban toppled the government, they did everything possible to destroy all that was reminiscent of the ancient civilizations which had flourished in this part of the world. The most striking blow was the assault on the colossal Buddha figures carved into the cliffs of the Bamiyan Valley.¹⁹⁹ The destruction of many of the treasures held in the museum of Kabul although less striking was equally serious.

Areas composed of several different countries are thought to be defined as belonging to a unique entity as in the case of the Mediterranean Basin. At the Barcelona Conference in 1995, the then fifteen members of the European Union and the twelve countries of the Mediterranean Basin - from Turkey to Morocco (excluding Libya which was at that time under embargo) decided to create the so-called Euro-Mediterranean Partnership. The aim of the Partnership was to support a process of accelerated convergence in social, economic and political terms, creating an area of security, stability and shared prosperity. Indubitably the Barcelona Declaration has certainly stressed the concept of a unified Mediterranean identity,²⁰⁰ but the Mediterranean is notoriously marked by a north-south split, a colonial legacy, as well as an east-west dichotomy. The symbol of the latter is the Orientalism that characterizes the western construction of the Middle East. This dichotomy makes the creation of a Mediterranean identity difficult, and consequently it cannot be manifested in museum exhibitions. Today, some museums display specific products common to the Mediterranean basin but there is, as yet, no museum for Mediterranean civilization in its holistic vision.

A contextual concept in which museums are playing an important role has revolved around what has been termed the 'Aboriginal identity'. Groups whose members have reason to claim indigenous status within established states have found themselves challenged by the muting of their voices in political arenas. Chaliand writes:

Paradoxically, human beings as groups turn out to have fewer rights than individuals – unless they form a state. It is from this absence of their own states that the minorities of the world are suffering today, in that sovereign states [...] are denying them even cultural rights.²⁰¹

Today aborigines or indigenous peoples around the globe are struggling for official recognition of their identities in the states in which they live. This does not mean that they claim a separate state, although governments often fear that cultural identity struggles will give rise to neo-nationalist movements. In museums, the demand to recognize the identities and cultural legacies of these groups is becoming a reality. The southwest Pacific is a prime example of this trend. In the museums of the area a number of approaches are being considered: indigenous curation; indigenous motivation; indigenous audiences; and indigenous concepts relating to methods and character of collecting and display.

Several cultural centers have also been created: they are considered to be particularly appropriate institutions for displaying art and ceremonial objects and appropriate to the insertion of new cultural and political dimensions into the venues. Two examples of exhibitions of non-indigenous history in national museums have appeared in Australia: the Aboriginal exhibition at

¹⁹⁹ Bailey, 1997: 1-2.

²⁰⁰ Barcelona Declaration on Euro-Mediterranean Partnership, 27 November, 1996.

²⁰¹ Chaliand, 1980.

the National Museum of Australia (2001) and the Maori exhibit in the Auckland Museum (1998) in New Zealand. Both museums try to explore the non-indigenous national identity through the idea that these identities are based on three premises: a relationship with the land; the two nations highlighted are considered immigrant societies; and the construction of a national identity. The basic concept explored by both museums has been the inter-relationship between the environment and indigenous and non-indigenous histories. The exploration was to inform the displays in the galleries and create an environment in which the interaction between the viewer and the dramatic space of the displays could foster better understanding of the unique roles that the Aborigines of Australia and the Maori of New Zealand (Aotearoa) have played in the growth and development of the continent and the Australian and New Zealand states. However, much of the criticism that these exhibitions have met with has concerned a perceived imbalance between the representation of indigenous and non-indigenous cultures, complicated by problems of copyright-ownership.²⁰² Curators throughout the Pacific have to negotiate these issues in the displays they mount. But, it is argued, the results can sustain new forms of association and cultural exchange. Such an approach is not just 'open' to the minorities, but seems to respond indirectly to the Australian and New Zealand 'national' interest and unity: it justifies the existence of the main/dominant European immigrant component and legitimacy in Australia and New Zealand. In a few words, this approach implies that both Aborigines, the Maoris and the Europeans are migrants linked to the 'land', they are 'all' legitimately Australians and New Zealanders.²⁰³

If the voice of ethnic minorities has begun to be heard and respected in the context of national museums, the birth of eco-museums is the most clear expression of an institution aimed at preserving not only the cultural but also the natural heritage of minorities. Born in France in 1971, the concept of eco-museum has become a new trend for preserving ethnic cultures in Europe and both Americas. Their main target is the protection of unique ethnic cultures and folklore, and the promotion of local society and economy. Since in their remit the protection of the natural environment, living environment and original residence of ethnic people is basic to their birth and is particularly linked to situations of tension, border areas and areas at risk of destruction, they are considered a real rescue mechanism. Many of these museums have been built in the Basque country, in China and in Latin America.²⁰⁴

The holistic approach of eco-museums emphasizes the importance of the whole and the interdependence of its parts that provides a meaningful and significant context for a more complete vision, one which is multi-layered in terms of existing and impeding cultural damage.²⁰⁵

In the Basque region located on Franco-Spanish border and formed by a community of around 3 million people unified by an ancient language, the Euskera, sixty eco-museums of which forty-four were constructed in the post-Franco era, are playing a fundamental role in the preservation of the traditions of this people.²⁰⁶ In Asia, where a large number of ethnic groups such as the Miao, Dong, Buyi, Mongolia and Yao people reside, seven eco-museums are distributed in southwest, north and south China.²⁰⁷

²⁰² MacCarthy, 2007; Gore, 2007.

²⁰³ The Aborigines have been in Australia for at least 40,000 years, if not 60,000. The Maoris were a back migration from Eastern Polynesia in 14th century. In their turn they almost wiped out the Moriori who still survive in small groups mainly in the Chatham islands.

²⁰⁴ Davis, 1991:8-11; Corsane & Halleman, 1993: 111-125.

²⁰⁵ Diaz Balerdi, 2004. Two of these eco-Museums are the St Jean de Luz Eco-Museum located 15km to the south of Biarritz on the French Basque coast, and the Eco Museum of Basque Building in Artea (Bilbao).

²⁰⁶ The first museum, the Suoga Miao Eco-Museum, was built in 1998.

²⁰⁷ This nationalist policy has led to a 'population exchange' forced migration and de-naturalization of 1.5 million

Eco-museums are also being envisaged by Sarah Elliott from Newcastle University (UK) for the southeast of Turkey, a region that has suffered and still suffers considerable damage to its physical, societal and cultural landscape.²⁰⁸ In Turkey, the repudiation of the Turkish multilayered culture was begun in 1920 by Ataturk, whose plan was to build a state with a monolithic Turkish identity. This would be achieved by a progressive policy of the assimilation and subsequent eventual disappearance of the Kurds and other indigenous cultural elements. Only at the household level and in the countryside was it possible for the Kurds to preserve their language, music, religion and beliefs which form the cultural identity of the Kurdish people. More recently, this national policy has added an enormous water infrastructure program damming the great watercourses of the Tigris and Euphrates Rivers. Important archeological sites such as Samos and Seugma on the Euphrates have been lost (only a few of the others had ever been investigated). On the Tigris, Hasankeyf is threatened by the Illisu Dam.²⁰⁹ These archeological sites are of great significance to the local population, which, as in Nubia and other locations, were forced to relocate. With the proposal of the entry of Turkey into the European Community, elements of flexibility are beginning to appear and possible mechanisms of recovery as the proposal for the creation of eco-museums substantiates.²¹⁰

The few examples discussed in this chapter give an idea of how museums operate in different areas of the world in different realities and different contexts. The next part of the research shows whether and how museums have taken up the complex idea of 'Nubia'. Has this 'museumization' considered the current geographical and political reality of which Nubia is part and if and how it includes the recognition of ancient traditions.

Greeks from Turkey and 500,000 Turks from Greece.

²⁰⁸ Elliot, 2005.

²⁰⁹ It is one of the 22 dams of the Southeastern Anatolia Project, which purpose is to produce hydroelectric power, flood control and water storage. When complete, the dam will support a 1,200 MW power station and will form a 10.4 billion m³ reservoir. Construction of the dam began in 2006 and it is expected to be completed by 2015. The dam has aroused international controversy, because it will flood portions of ancient Hasenkeyf and necessitate the relocation of people living in the region. This is the reason that international funding for the dam was withdrawn in 2008.

²¹⁰ Elliot, 2005.

CHAPTER 4

Nubia in Museums : Dynamics of Circulation of the Objects and Research Methodology

Dynamics of Dispersion of Nubian Collections

Before presenting the comparative analysis of museum policies of to display or ‘not display’ Nubian collections and the ‘virtual tour’ of Nubia in museums on which I have based this analysis, I think it would be a good idea to make an outline of the main dynamics of dispersion of Nubian artifacts in the world. More detailed information on this topic will be presented in Chapters 6 and 7, in the sections assigned for each museum. The story of how an object arrives in a museum is part of the history of the object itself. Curators are increasingly aware of the importance of this secondary meaning and how these meanings add to our understanding of the evolution of interest in such collections and Nubian culture itself through the dynamics of its display.

In the Egyptian part of the Nile Valley, the looting of monuments had already begun at the dawn of the Pharaonic period. The story of trials and sentences for robbery in the Pharaonic era is recounted in a number of papyri.²¹¹ The conviction that magnificent treasures were hidden in the temples and that tombs were rich in burial furniture seems to have been transmitted orally from generation to generation in Egypt. An Arabic book of magic, of which numerous examples are known, entitled *Book of Precious Gems Buried and Mystery Concerning the Indications of Caches of Artifacts and Treasures*, provides a clear list of places where treasures could be found. It even supplies magical rituals to perform to take possession of them. The searchers for hidden treasures did not hesitate to destroy walls and sledge stelae that they believed were hiding access to the cache.²¹²

A more ‘official’ method was used by Persian kings and later by Roman and Byzantine emperors, who claimed possession of obelisks, sphinxes and statues in their Egyptian provinces intending to use them to embellish their capitals, Persepolis, Rome and Constantinople, or even their private villas, such as those of Diocletian and Adrianus.

In the fourth century, Christianity became the official religion of Egypt and with the arrival of Islam the orthodox religious atmosphere increased. Between the first and fourteenth centuries, religious orthodoxy led to the persecution of all that belonged to the pagan past. This often resulted in a *damnatio memoriae* which caused the destruction of many ancient monuments. The Nile Valley became difficult to reach and only those travelers whose destination was the holy cities of the Middle East, would stop for a few days in Cairo. In AD 391 the Emperor Theodosius I ordered the closure of all pagan temples in the Empire.

For centuries the area remained isolated, but the seventeenth century marked the resumption of long trips that preceded the rediscovery of Egypt by Napoleon Bonaparte’s expedition. The great exodus of works of art and artifacts abroad, in particular to Europe, began in

²¹¹ An important document that helps to understand the importance of burial and the afterlife in Ancient Egypt as well as the practice of crime and punishment in Egypt under the 20th Dynasty, is represented by the Amherst Papyrus, also known as the Leopold II and Amherst Papyrus. This document is part of the original court records dealing with the tomb robberies under Ramses IX. It contains the confessions of eight men who had broken into the tomb of Sobekemsaf I and a description of the reconstruction of the crime. It throws light on the practices followed in ancient Egyptian courts: eliciting confessions by beating with a double rod, smiting their feet and hands, reconstructing the crime on site and the imprisonment of suspects in the gatehouse of a temple (Peet, 1977:45).

²¹² Copies of this text were still in circulation in the early twentieth century. A curator of the Egyptian Museum in Cairo in 1900 stated that ‘This book has ruined monuments more than war and centuries’ (Vercoutter, 1992).

the early nineteenth century and involved several areas. The Nile Valley was one of the principal ones. If Napoleon's expedition to Egypt was a failure from the military point of view, it was successful from the point of view of expanding academic knowledge. Part of the expeditionary force consisted of two special committees of experts assigned to measure and sketch the main monuments of the country. This work was completed on Napoleon's orders between 1808 and 1822. With the famous Franco-Tuscan joint expedition to Egypt and Nubia (1828-1829) directed by Jean François Champollion for the Government of Charles X and for the Grand Duke of Tuscany by Ippolito Rosellini, archeology in Egypt, in the modern sense of the word, began. For fifteen months the expedition explored Egypt and Nubia up to the Second Cataract. Their publication *Travels in Egypt and Nubia* is considered to be the first scientific publication in archeology.²¹³

The Napoleon expedition and the publication of *La Description de l'Égypte* greatly excited the imagination of the Western elite who, eager to get a closer view of this exotic world, began to travel along the banks of the Nile.²¹⁴ One feature of these trips was the acquisition by Europeans of large collections of objects to display to friends and relatives and sometimes to a wider public. It seems that mummies were the favorite trophy.²¹⁵ The popularity of these finds resulted in a flourishing trade in antiquities, significantly sustained by representatives of the major foreign powers in Alexandria and Cairo. The famous consuls/pseudo-archeologists of the early nineteenth century combined their diplomatic duties with their passion for archeology. Assisted by local agents recruited from among those who came to seek their fortune in the Nile Valley, they made the fortune of museums in their motherland. Having been fascinated by Egyptian art during their terms of office in Egypt, these consuls assembled large collections of antiquities which were then shipped back to the great European cities.²¹⁶

It was between the eighteenth and the nineteenth centuries that travel and collections became strongly linked. The western colonization of the 'Orient' was, in fact, characterized by specific forms of knowledge that was expressed in surveys, explorations, mapping and statistical reports compiled by colonial officials and civil servants.²¹⁷

Although their enthusiasm cannot be doubted, it is important to remember that those who operated in the field of archeology and ethnology were not specialists, but men of the exact sciences, such as physicians or engineers. They were pioneers of the Enlightenment, of rationalism and scientific thinking. Travels, collections and museology gradually emerged as metaphors for colonial domination. The target of western colonial power was to define the nature of the past and establish priorities in the creation of a monumental record of a civilization.²¹⁸ Such a record of civilization, it was thought, would enhance knowledge and serve as a basis and foundation for solidifying power. On the relationship between power and knowledge, Foucault has written :

Power produces knowledge [...] power and knowledge directly imply one another; there is no power relation without the correlative constitution of a field of knowledge, nor any knowledge that does not presuppose and constitute [...] power relations.²¹⁹

²¹³ Rosellini, 1932-1840.

²¹⁴ For a short overview of the first travelers to Nubia cf. Leclant 1991:405- 415.

²¹⁵ Cf. Chapter 4.

²¹⁶ Tiradritti, 1999:12-22.

²¹⁷ Said, 1979.

²¹⁸ Vittorini, 2004: 21-34.

²¹⁹ Gordon, 1980: 27.

Through a justification which seems to me both racist and paternalistic, the colonialists wanted to show the superiority of the western world over the colonized one. Their purpose was to document and preserve a once illustrious heritage, but locals lacked the ability to understand and consequently the skill to manage it.²²⁰

While in Europe international exhibitions, world fairs, and museums – as self-conscious representations of the Empire – offered the general public the opportunity to learn and visualize the vast imperial expanse and to experience a ‘tangible sense of having traveled East,’ in many parts of the colonial empires and royal societies were quickly established to provide what we would nowadays call research facilities for travelers, European residents and gentlemen of all nations.²²¹

Another important characteristic of this time was the creation of societies of literary and scientific men and women. Their primary scope was to discuss the research findings of their members and to present, often as a gift, some of the artifacts they had discovered to some members of the society. Very soon these societies were being replicated in places in the empires as virtual trans-colonial communities of Western intellectuals and their scope extended to embrace the discussions of a variety of topics. The Laws and Regulations of the Egyptian Society of Cairo summarize its objectives as follows:

[...] to form a rendezvous for travelers, with the view of associating literary and scientific men, who may from time to time visit Egypt; to collect and record information relative to Egypt, and to those parts of Africa and Asia which are connected with, or tributaries to this country to facilitate research enabling travelers to avail themselves of such information as it may be in the power of the society to obtain, and by offering them the advance of a library of reference containing the most valuable works on the East.²²²

Foreign operations in Egypt were supported by the local authorities. Muhammad Ali (1769-1849), who had been appointed Viceroy of Egypt by the Ottoman sultan in Constantinople, had plans to modernize Egypt and was convinced of the need for outside assistance. He recognized the potential of the magnificent archeological heritage for attracting the attention and winning the sympathy of foreigners. He took the dramatic step of issuing *firman*s (a Persian word meaning ‘order, permit’), allowing them to have no difficulty in obtaining licenses to dig. Since these operations were still not governed by any law, the situation led to an active trade in antiquities and significant works of art left Egypt. Among the booty were complete parts of ancient buildings containing inscriptions and decorations. Nobody escaped this fever, even respectable specialists like Champollion, who, in a sense, is regarded as the father of Egyptology. He deplored this situation, but he did not hesitate to exploit it.

The situation became so acute that at a certain point if remedial measures had not been taken, it is not beyond the bounds of belief to claim that practically nothing would have remained in Egypt at all. Finally, the decision by Muhammad Ali to demolish the Pyramids of Giza and use the blocks for industrial purposes prompted French consul, Jean François Mimaut, to persuade the viceroy to issue a decree in 1835 to assure the protection of antiquities and to ban exports:

²²⁰ Said, 1979: 233.

²²¹ Vittorini, 2004: 21-34.

²²² Vittorini, 2004: 21-34.

Foreigners are destroying ancient edifices, excreting stones and other worked objects and exporting them to foreign countries. If this continues, it is clear that soon no more ancient monuments will remain in Egypt [...] It is also known that the Europeans have buildings dedicated to the care of antiquities; painted and inscribed stones, and other such objects are carefully conserved there and shown to the inhabitants of the country as well as to travelers who want to see [...] Having considered these facts, the Government judged it appropriate to forbid the export abroad of antiquities found in the ancient edifices of Egypt and to designate in the capital a place to serve as a depot [...] It has decided to display them for travelers who visit the country, to forbid the destruction of ancient edifices in Upper Egypt, and to spend the greatest possible care on their safekeeping.²²³

Among the western travelers to the Nile Valley in the nineteenth century, few ventured beyond the First Cataract where Nubia begins. Those who did discovered some of the magnificent temples built along the banks of the Nubian Nile Valley. The famous temple of Abu Simbel was discovered in 1813 by the Swiss explorer Johann Burckhardt.²²⁴

Impressed by his descriptions, the Italian Giovanni Belzoni went to Abu Simbel in 1815. During his tour he stopped at Philae where he took possession of a small obelisk in the name of the British consul in Egypt, Mr Salt. In his work *Travels in Egypt and Nubia*, he wrote that he took away from Abu Simbel 'two lion's head hawks', small seated statues and fragments of copper doors. Despite this, he declares that he was disappointed to have taken away so little from a temple that had remained inviolate for so long.²²⁵

Upper Nubia or 'Aethiopia', as it was called by the Greeks and Romans, still remained a mystery to the 'time travelers'. It was Burckhardt, who decided in 1813 to disguise himself as an Arab and challenge the mysteries of the 'land of the unknown'. His work, published posthumously in 1819, excited the greed of the viceroy of Egypt, Muhammad Ali, who decided to expand his empire and get his hands on the vast riches of the land. His army of 4,000 men, commanded by his son Ismail Pasha, left in 1820 to conquer the Upper Nile. The imposition of taxes and the trade in slaves and other goods locally available characterized this period of the Egyptian government in Sudan.²²⁶

Simultaneously, as had happened with Napoleon's intervention in Egypt, this military occupation also marked the birth of the history of its archeology. Napoleon's army had deliberately included a team of academics to study the country, in the army of Muhammad Ali there were officers eager to be the first to discover and document the legendary cities of Napata and Meroe. One of these was the Italian physician Giuseppe Ferlini.²²⁷ Between 1829 and 1835, Ferlini practiced in the Egyptian-Turkish army. During his tenure he obtained permission to conduct archeological excavations at Bragawya, the ancient Meroe, where he dismantled several pyramids in search of treasures. Fortunately (otherwise he would have dismantled all) he immediately found what he was searching for: a fabulous gold hoard in a hidden chamber near the top of one of the largest pyramids. This magnificent treasure, that had belonged to Queen Amanishaketo and was formed of assemblage collection of jewelry almost 16 pounds in weight, is unparalleled. Hiding the find from the workers who was assisting him, he was able to spirit it away. After various

²²³ Decree of Muhammad Ali, 15 August 1835, quoted in Reid, 2002: 21.

²²⁴ Burckhardt, 1819.

²²⁵ Belzoni, 2007.

²²⁶ Moorehead, 1984:139-208.

²²⁷ Ferlini, 1838.

vicissitudes,²²⁸ he sold it in halves to the kings of Bavaria. Only in 1992, with the fall of the Berlin Wall, would Ferlini's treasure be reunited in an exhibition at the Egyptian Museum, Berlin.²²⁹

Although the Ferlini treasure indubitably represents one of the main attraction of the German museums, it was the German Karl R. Lepsius who between 1842 and 1845, with the great expedition in Egypt and Nubia organized by the king of Prussia, give the birth not only to the scientific research on the topic in Germany and also in the Sudan.

These are just some examples, certainly the most popular, of how matters were run at the time. This mechanism, although controversial, led to the formation of many museums in the world, particularly in Europe.

The beginning of the twentieth century marks the beginning of scientific research in Nubia, but the exodus of antiquities did not stop. The systematic archeological research conducted in Lower Nubia for the construction of two dams at Aswan produced a large amount of material between 1900 and 1981. Following what is commonly referred as law fifty-fifty split of excavated objects between the missions and the country, a large amount of this material was allowed to go to foreign museums. As compensation or 'reward' for the work accomplished, Egypt sent entire Nubian temples abroad defined by Saroite Okasha, Ministry of Culture in Egypt during the Salvage Campaign, as 'new ambassadors extraordinary' (Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, Spain, USA).

The same policy was applied to the numerous excavations undertaken in Upper Nubia. The Boston Museum of Fine Arts was especially prominent in undertaking excavations in prominent locations in the first decades of the twentieth century, bringing to this American museum 'a collection of Nubian royal treasures unique in this hemisphere'.²³⁰ British excavations, as will be gone into in more detail later, were among the most important sources of the circulation of antiquities around the world. Some of these archeologists like John Garstang and the British Society EES (Egypt Exploration Society, initially called Fund), were giving collections in exchange for annual subscriptions that supported their excavations. The upshot of this practice is described below by the archeologist Margaret Serpico in her discussion of Egyptian and Sudanese collections in Britain, but they can extrapolated to other collections worldwide:

Significantly, many of the ancient Egyptian and Sudanese collections in the UK hold objects from known excavations, but again the size and scope of this material is largely unknown. For just under 100 years, beginning in the latter part of the 19th century, it was a common practice for museums to donate funds to an organization undertaking an archeological excavation and, in return, they would receive a portion of the finds. For the most part, the involvement of a museum in the system was dependent on the interests of a few individuals connected with the museum and the ability of the museum to raise funds in a given year, rather than through a formal, consistent policy by a museum to fund excavations annually. While some sites were excavated for only one season (typically 3-6 months long), often more than one site was excavated during that season and excavations at larger sites often continued for a number of seasons. As a result, objects in the collections can originate from one site or several different sites even if the museum subscribed for only one year. A museum also might have objects from only one year of an excavation that in

²²⁸ More details on this argument are narrated in the part of this work related to the museums where Ferlini's artifacts are today kept (Berlin, Munich, the originals; Bologna a few originals and some copies. In Turin only copies arrived but they were regarded as original on account of the particularity of their provenance).

²²⁹ Priese, 1993.

²³⁰ Kendall, 1996.

fact continued for several years. Moreover, objects from a single context, such as a burial or a building, were often split between several museums. It is also the case that many excavated objects were given to private individuals who had contributed to excavations and many such objects entered collections through subsequent donations by the individuals, often without transferring of any excavation documentation. The result of this is that, untraced and without specialist documentation, a significant proportion of these objects and hence these collections are at a high risk of obsolescence in the academic community. The general public loses in this as well, as much of the contribution an object can make towards engaging interest comes from understanding its history and context, information which is easily lost and subsequently impossible to recover.²³¹

Another dynamic of circulation of objects was the policy of exchange adopted by many museums.

The Norwegian archeologist Henriette Hafsaas says that there is limited discussion among archeologists about whether cultural heritage should rank as an essential element of universal human rights.²³² I think that this limitation is attributable to the still conservative mentality of archeologists who are still very attached to the scientific value of cultural heritage, very often leading them to neglect its social value. I personally experienced this when I established the Documentation Center on Nubia at the Nubia Museum in Aswan.²³³

Today the laws governing the export and looting of archeological materials are strict, particularly in Egypt. The law fifty-fifty split has been abrogated in Egypt that has adopted rigid policies and even forbids the export of materials outside the country for study or analysis. It is very also active in its policy of the repatriation of materials, at least of those taken away illegally.²³⁴

In the Sudan, although there is a law prohibiting the export of antiquities,²³⁵ the authorities are more flexible in their cooperation with missions working in the country. The foreign museums and universities conducting the rescue fieldwork in the Fourth Cataract region (Merowe Dam Campaign) had permission to take a share of the artifacts uncovered during the excavations to their institutions. The missions working in the Sudan regularly receive 10 per cent of the excavated artifacts, whereas those participating in the Merowe Dam campaign received up to 50 per cent of the 'museum-quality' goods (unique objects excepted) and almost all the potsherds and human skeletons.²³⁶ So far the Manasir living in the area, who are extremely opposed the archeologists' activities, have not objected specifically to the transfer of the archeologically retrieved artifacts out of the country. However, opponents of the current regime have seen this export of the past as a strategy to promote a country with an atrocious reputation abroad.²³⁷

²³¹ In 2006, Margaret Serpico carried out an audit of the Egyptian and Sudanese collections kept in Britain (Serpico, 2006: 6-7).

²³² Hafsaas, 2011: 65-66; Silverman and Ruggles, 2007.

²³³ Cf. Nubia Museum Sub-Paragraph.

²³⁴ An International Conference on *Recovery of Stolen Artifacts* attended by thirty countries was organized by Egypt in 2010. It was repeated, again with the support of Egypt, in Peru in 2011 during which was presented a list of unique artifacts, prepared in Cairo, and named the 'Wish List' of those artifacts which different countries in the world wish to retrieve. Recently, after the events of January and February 2011, with the support of ICOM (The International Council of Museums), Egypt, has produced *The Emergency Red List of Egyptian Cultural Objects at Risk* to fight against the illicit traffic of archeological artifacts. The purpose of the list is to improve both legal instruments and practical tools for disseminating information and to raise public awareness.

²³⁵ Ordinance for the Protection of Antiquities, 1999, National Corporation for Antiquity and Museums of Sudan, in Kush XVIII, 1998-2002.

²³⁶ Hafsaas, 2011: 64-65; Lawler, 2006: 40.

²³⁷ Hafsaas, 2011.

The constructions of dams, an activity which has gone on for almost one hundred years, made Nubia protagonist in the realm of salvage archeology. This position is certainly regretted by local communities and is the source of mixed feelings of sorrow and scientific intrigue by scholars. In such a context, the ‘salvage of cultural assets’ is seen unilaterally instead of recognizing the complex nature with which they (cultural assets) and the process involved interact and remain interdependent and inter-dynamic. The disjuncture between archeology and anthropology, clearly apparent in this interpretation, runs contrary to the ideal relationship between the two fields as a non-linear continuity from the past in to the present. To leave communities in a historical vacuum or to save monuments with a lack of historical context is not a victory. Depriving local communities of these fragments of historical continuity I believe goes too far. Thurstan Shaw has summarized this position clearly when he wrote:

If in many developing countries the concept of colonialism, is now making day, in the realm of cultural property, it is still strong. The territories have been handed back to the inhabitants, but many of their treasures have not. These countries want their own cultural property to contribute to their own process of growing to national maturity. It is entirely reasonable and natural that emergent nations should feel passionately about these things, and need them to establish their own identity, their own roots, and write their own history.²³⁸

Research Methodology and Logical Presentation of the Collections

The comparative analysis of museum policies of to display or ‘not display’ of Nubian collections worldwide, the subject of the next chapter, is based on the data obtained from an ‘analytical tour’ of Nubian collections kept both inside and outside Nubia and presented in Chapters 6 and 7. Here I introduce the methodology and the set of criteria I have used to locate, analyze and present the collections.

The material collected in Chapters 6 and 7 is the result of personal involvement in museum works, direct surveys, readings, and above all cooperation with many museum curators. My original intention to base the analysis of these collections on the inclusion of all scattered Nubian objects proved to be too ambitious. Visiting the location of so many objects dispersed around the world would be a difficult, if not unattainable task and therefore can not be considered to have been finalized, even though I have been able to include an impressive part of the legacy. The information collected depends on the state of each museum inventory. If, on account of the great ambiguity which sometimes characterizes the classification of Nubian objects, some of my information is limited or vague, I must apologize, with the caveat that this is ongoing research which hopefully will provide a solid basis for a more refined and clarified classification and interpretation over time.

The ‘tour’ helps to shed light on how Nubia has been understood, ‘created’ and silenced. As explained in the introduction to this research, the collections are examined in the light of their display or ‘not display’ policies; the history of their formation; identification of those instances when Nubia is presented as the subject of an independent academic discipline or, conversely, as an appendage to something else, or just simply a random choice. The tour broadens the understanding of whether these collections have a role in defining/creating a ‘Nubian’ heritage and the link of this process with the Nubians of today.

²³⁸ Shaw, 1986: 46-48. Cf. also De Simone, 2008, 225-230.

The presentation of the collections in Chapters 6 and 7 does not follow any fixed structure (better suited to a technical work of cataloguing) but is rather discursive. Each collection has its own story which I briefly outline, emphasizing the different elements of which it is composed. The analysis is based on several elements surrounding these collections as presented in the body of the text. Since I have found the collections in different categories of museums, it is clear that the analysis has taken into account the different mandate that each of these categories of museums has adopted and on the basis of this I have made my comments. There is no standard method to valorize a collection, especially if the contexts in which it occurs are different. Instead the standard must be the message that the collection sends. This has to be clear, although sometimes too complicated to be explained in simple terms. The analysis has also taken into account the typology and number of objects available in each museum. On these factors very much depends the putting on display, the mode and the duration of the exhibition.

Since museum exhibitions are not fixed but can change over time I have reported, as far as this was possible, the exact dates or approximate periods in which these collections were formed and displayed, also remarking on the changes that have occurred in the display over the years. Through personal visits or contacts with curators, I have monitored the data included in the research up June 2013.

Technical details of the collections themselves appear in footnotes. In this way the research serves both those more interested in the display policy of the objects and those archeologists and others who are more interested in their historical and artistic aspects.²³⁹

As the research is based on various interviews with curators, I have had to report such interviews in the form of quotations. Reporting the knowledge, perceptions, motivations and personal involvement of the curators helps to elucidate their role in the various aspects of the lives of the collections under their care and also helps with a better understanding of my comments. Since today Internet is a powerful tool for the promotion of knowledge, in the context of museums I have sometimes, when available, reported these on-line presentations.

Turning to the quantification of the numbers of objects held in each collection, many curators did not give precise figures since the collection has not yet been accessioned and recorded. In these cases, they have provided a range of objects rather than specific number.

For large collections, the huge number of objects made it only possible to gather general information. These are obviously the most well-known to the public, since they are displayed (at least partially) and located in important contexts. As such, it was possible to analyze the display.

When examining small/middle size collections, I have been able, in some cases, to obtain a complete list of objects, with all data, even though sometimes there are inaccuracies, especially in terms of allocation of material to one phase or the other of the Nubian history or in the location of sites. To avoid publishing other people's work,²⁴⁰ I have just given a summary of these lists. These collections are sometimes displayed, making an abbreviated analysis of them possible. Sometimes I have picked out individual items on which I have also reported in a note the item description for easier tracing. I considered it best to include these small collections in the main text since, rather than being purely and simply lists of objects gathered from here and there, they contribute much to the overall discussion of this research on the perception of Nubia and Nubians. Moreover, these small venues often provided interesting stories and more awareness on the idea of Nubia than more

²³⁹ I wish to clarify that this is not a work of technical classification of the collections but could be a very good basis and inspirational tool for it.

²⁴⁰ The compilation of a list is not as simple as it might appear. Behind it there is often a long and complex work of identification and classification.

important ones elsewhere. As a result I found 122 locations with Nubian artifacts scattered across five continents²⁴¹

Africa	22
Americas	20
Asia	1
Europe	77
Oceania	2

At the beginning of each section in Chapters 6 and 7, to guide the reader better, I have given more detailed information about the logical presentation of these collections. The tour begins with the homeland of the objects (Egypt and the Sudan). From this vantage point, it becomes possible to see how this heritage is perceived and presented by modern Egyptians and Sudanese. Moving on to the continent where the first Nubian collections (mixed with Egyptian ones) were formed, I discuss European museums. The ‘New World’ of the North American continent soon followed suit as new home for Nubian collections. The United States gave birth to the scientific idea of Nubia and witnessed the creation of the first Nubian Galleries. Trans-Oceanic collections in Canada and Australia benefited indirectly from the main phenomena of adventure, colonialism and scientific research that so impressed the societies of Europe and America. The last collections to be presented are those in Ghana, India and Argentina, where the appearance of Nubian collections might not have been easily expected, but where, in fact, various groups of objects from Nubia did arrive following the active participation of these countries in the Salvage Campaign of the sixties.

‘Nubian artifacts’, as defined in this research, are objects that originated in the land stretching from the First to the Sixth Cataracts of the Nile, with local characters different from those of the neighboring areas²⁴² and those of foreign inspiration or importation (Egyptian, Greco-Roman, Christian, Islamic). These last two assumed to be a local Nubian dimension. I have also included in the research those locations where I found collections from the neighboring deserts which research is increasingly tending to consider part of the ‘Nubian milieu’.

²⁴¹ Cf. Annex II.

²⁴² Cf. Chapter 1: Prehistoric, A Group, C Group, Kerma, Pan Grave, 25th Dynasty - also called Napatan and Kushite - Meroitic, X Group, Ethnographic.

CHAPTER 5

Nubian Collections: A Comparative Analysis of Museum Policies

The *display or non-display* policies of Nubian collections in museums throughout the world is the subject of this chapter and, and with Chapters 4, 6 and 7, forms the core of this research project in which I present and discuss the innovative data and analysis of my investigation on Nubia in museums. A survey of various museums and my exchange of ideas with many of the museum curators lays bare a number of relevant aspects for understanding the logic of display and the (re/de)construction of Nubia through exhibitions.

The concept of 'Nubia' often appears to be far from clear in the museological context. Nubia's lack of political boundaries, and its location in two different nations, has also complicated issues on the museological front. Nevertheless, the existence of cultural boundaries between the area traditionally called Nubia and its surroundings is an incontestable reality.

Undeniably, until now a sort of 'lack of social awareness' has characterized the policy of displaying Nubian artifacts in museums. A 'tour' of Nubian collections worldwide, represented in Chapters 6 and 7, will provide evidence for the arguments discussed here. Such a characterization has given rise to differing and often opposing constructions of Nubia's past, the most obvious being whether Nubia should be considered culturally as an individualized appendix of Egypt or whether it should be included as part of Egypt itself. Most of the Nubian collections, included those coming from Sudan, are in fact located in Egyptian contexts, both on exhibition and in storage. As discussed in Chapter 3, the complex system in which the museum is trapped has contributed to the worsening of this situation. Only in the last two decades has Nubia been displayed in a number of temporary exhibitions and permanent installations which have showcased material long dismissed as merely provincial versions of Egyptian art.

The concept of Nubia in museums has evolved in parallel with the knowledge of Nubia in the field of scientific research and can be divided into three stages: 1) exhibitions prior to the *International Campaign to Save the Monuments of Nubia* in the 1960s; 2) exhibitions following this Campaign; 3) recent exhibitions that are part of something which I would suggest characterizing as a 'Sudanological' stage. In Egypt and Sudan, identity and political reasons have also been influencing factors in the exhibition policy of Nubian collections. These stages have also determined the categories of locations where Nubian collections are today displayed or stored.

Academic Stages and Categories of Location of Nubian Collections

Exhibitions prior to the International Campaign to Save the Monuments of Nubia

These exhibitions are those in which Nubian collections were completely mixed with Egyptian ones, without any distinction between the two. These earlier exhibitions were an expression of their time. In the nineteenth century, European colonizers constructed the history of archeology around a number of paradigms displayed in museums throughout the industrialized world, and later transplanted to the non-industrialized nations of Africa. They followed the imperialist philosophy of presenting non-European material as an essential and exotic counterpart to the cultural development and identity of Euro-American society.²⁴³

²⁴³ Preziosi, 2006.

In Egypt, Nubian collections were distributed in the various museums of the country according to their historical period, to enrich Egyptian collections of different periods thematically and typologically. Until the sixties, at least in the context of museums, Nubia was in fact perceived as part of Egypt without any special need felt for it to have a separate space of its own.

Abroad, particularly in European museums, the first Nubian objects were introduced as part of what has popularly been referred to as the age of *Egyptomania*.²⁴⁴ The discoveries of European travelers merged with the romantic tendencies of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. Nubian artifacts were seen and presented as part of Egyptian collections with no distinction made between the two civilizations. The society at that time was not very much interested in the social value of the objects, but was attracted by their artistic aspects and in the legendary and exotic ambience the objects evoked. This trend also involved artifacts from Nubia. Meroitic objects were paid more attention because of their indisputable beauty and the mysterious aura of 'fabled Meroe'. The treasure of Queen Amanishaketo and Ferlini's story about its discovery, as well as materials referring to the *Black Pharaohs* of the 25th Dynasty,²⁴⁵ exemplify this approach. In these earlier exhibitions, the Egyptologists' perception of Nubia was paramount, and Nubia was not even considered an appendage of Egypt, but a rough, 'barbarous' version of Egypt itself. It is for these sorts of reasons that other Nubian material contemporary with the Pharaonic is often consigned to oblivion.

In the Sudan, the history of museums goes back to 1924 when a first site museum was established in Meroe. In Khartoum, a space with collections of archeological artifacts was created in 1932 in a building now used as a government office. Actually the first big archeological museum of the country, the Sudan National Museum, was constructed in 1971 in the framework of the *International Campaign to Save the Monuments of Nubia*. Others followed.

Exhibitions Following the International Campaign to Save the Monuments of Nubia of the 1960s

If, in recent years, museum professionals have begun to enter into dialogues about cultural and social identities, the recognition of Nubia as an independent cultural entity, and appreciation of the socio-artistic values of its artifacts, can certainly be attributed to the influence of the Salvage Campaign of the 1960s. The leading specialists in this Campaign were in fact anthropologists/archaeologists without a specific background in Egyptology. Therefore they were able to approach the study of Nubian history without inherited preconceptions.

In Egypt, the Campaign led to the creation of the first - and so far only - *Nubia Museum* which presents Nubian civilization from prehistory to the modern era. In Sudan itself, one of the

²⁴⁴ The Napoleon Expedition to Egypt gave birth to the phenomenon generally called *Egyptomania*, a sort of exotic sandstorm invading the western imagination. The impact that this phenomenon has had, and still generates, is manifold and concerns many fields. Among which the 'most cultural' effects, Verdi's opera *Aida*, the Glass Pyramid of the Louvre Museum, the Egyptian Bridge in St Petersburg, plus some others are perhaps the most famous. Among the most appalling, was the 'mummy' party, during which a mummy was unwrapped in an sphere of pseudo-scientific pretense. Likewise, craniums were used to identify Egyptians as black or white as part of the fledging field of eugenics, often interpreted as a justification for the inequality between lighter skinned peoples and the institution of slavery. Some others are more recent and quite *kitsch*, among them the Luxor Hotel in Las Vegas, where parties are organized with people dressed in pseudo-Pharaonic fashions, whose interiors include furniture and advertising material produced in the same style. More than a simple love of what was exotic, it was also commonly thought that *Egyptomania*, at least in the beginning, was a full part of colonial sentiment, expressing the desire on the part of some in the west to 'possess' what was eastern. Some interesting reading on the subject includes: Whitehouse, 1997; Ikram and Dodson, 1998.

²⁴⁵ Cf. Chapter 7.

results of the Salvage Campaign was the creation of the Sudan National Museum in Khartoum that displays the magnificent archeological heritage of Upper Nubia (North Sudan).

Abroad, the Campaign clearly had a stronger impact on American museums than European ones. In this respect, the American William Adams and the Canadian Bruce Trigger, leading personalities in the rescue work, with their unbiased approach signaled a turning point in the study of Nubia. The presence of Afro-Americans also indirectly contributed to invigorating Nubian studies in America. Whereas they have had to face various problems in addressing the African roots of Egyptian civilization, in Nubia, where the protagonists are unequivocally 'Black', the task has proved to be much easier.

Specific galleries for Nubia were mounted. Some of them trace the entire history of Ancient Nubia from the prehistoric period to the Islamic era. Institutions that focused their work on a specific site based the organization of the gallery specifically on the history of that site. In the absence of space, other museums have displayed some of their Nubian artifacts in specific showcases in their Egyptian galleries.

Some of the most important Nubian galleries opened following the Salvage Campaign, among them those at the Museum of Fine Arts of Boston and the University of Pennsylvania/Museum of Archeology and Anthropology in Philadelphia, are now closed. While Boston is awaiting funds to enlarge the gallery to be able to display as much as possible of the huge collections in possession of the museum, Philadelphia has shut down the Nubian door forever as the new display testifies.

Recent Galleries

Since the construction of the Aswan High Dam, Egyptian Nubia is no longer available to archeological research that has consequently moved to the Sudan. Among the researchers working in the area, this circumstance has resulted in the creation of a 'Sudanological' current of thought. This attitude is reflected in museum displays in which the term 'Sudan', and political reasons also have to do with this, is increasingly replacing that of 'Nubia' or being added to it.

The academic evolution of the concept of Nubia presented above has determined the display of its collections of objects in the below categories or types of specialized museums:

- 1) Egyptian museums dedicated to Pharaonic art (the most famous are in Cairo, Turin, Berlin). The fact that Nubian objects are part of this kind of specialized museum is already a sign that Nubia is seen as belonging to this field of specialization. In Cairo, the display and the comments on the labels (when they are there) still reflect the very traditional approach to Nubia as it was perceived by the archeologists working at the beginning of the past century summed up in the phrase 'the Land of the Unknown'. In Turin, the collection is also completely interwoven with the Egyptian one, making a Nubiological view invisible. However, in an exhibition area designated 'Nubia', the relocated temple of Ellesya is now displayed in an attempt to celebrate the Salvage Campaign and the achievement of the Italian mission in Nubia. In Berlin, the entity has become 'Ancient Sudan', that indicates a more recent trend. These variants, linked to the above mentioned stages, can be also recognized in Universal and University Museums below.

2) Universal and University Museums: both these contexts are not specialized in a field but they are repositories of various subjects or of a subject present in many areas or worldwide. It was in such museums, I found most of the Nubian collections. In most cases, they are displayed in Egyptian galleries where most of the time they are completely assimilated into the rest of the collection and where their Nubian provenance or nature is often barely mentioned, if at all. In some venues they are found in separate showcases set off from the rest. Separate Nubian galleries first appeared following the Salvage Campaign of the 1960s, although some of them are today closed, but others are now progressively becoming 'Sudanese'. Some of these separate galleries are dedicated to a specific site that usually was the excavation concession of the holding institution. In some of the university museums, the collections are in storage or only on temporary loan as objects for research.

3) Nubia Museum: the only one is the Nubia Museum of Aswan dedicated to the Nubian civilization from the prehistoric period to modern times. It is the direct Egyptian Authorities and UNESCO follow-up of the *International Campaign to Save the Monuments of Nubia* in the sixties.

4) National Museum: it is the Sudan National Museum in Khartoum. Actually every museum is a national museum in the sense that it belongs to the nation in which it is located. However, in the context of museum studies, the term 'National Museum' or 'Civilization Museum' is more often perceived to be the one offering an overview of the history of the country. The museum in Khartoum is, in particular, a museum of Nubian antiquities and makes this heritage appear as if it is the only one that could be considered as the 'official' national heritage in Sudan.

5) Other specialized archeological museums: Nubian artifacts are kept in the Coptic Museum in Cairo. Before the construction of the Nubia Museum at Aswan, where many collections moved in 1996, other specialized museums in Egypt were in possession of related Nubian antiquities (Greco-Roman, Islamic).

6) Site Museums: these museums are built close to archeological sites to display related artifacts. Those today spread throughout northern Sudan (Upper Nubia) are also very beneficial to local communities who live far removed from the center and from the opportunities it offers.

7) Regional museums: they serve not a city but an area in the country. Nubian collections are located in several regional museums of Sudan, in particular in the west of the country. Generally speaking, their display policy is to show the development of the history of the country from prehistory to the Islamic period, and the most recent history is that of the region in which the museum is located. The few Nubian pieces found in the regional museums of Egypt are meant to enrich the thematic collection (in particular Egyptian and Christian).

8) Ethnographic Museums: I found only three museums of this kind holding Nubian collections: the Ethnographic Museum of Khartoum which displays items from all over

Sudan, the Ethnographic Museum in Egypt, and the Museum of Ethnography - Adelhauser Museum in Freiburg-im-Breisgau.

9) Private Collections: I found private collections in Europe and in the USA that hold Nubian artifacts. These objects are considered 'Egyptological acquisitions'.

Having discussed the various stages of the concept of Nubia and introduced the categories of museums in which they are found, it is time to move on to attempt an analysis of the 'museumization' of Nubia in the countries of origin and abroad, taking into consideration the different mandates the above mentioned categories of museums have. Evidence of their scientific arguments discussed below will be presented in the 'tour' of Nubia collections in museums worldwide in Chapters 6 and 7.

Nubia in Museums in Egypt

Museums and Identity in Egypt

Until the mid-nineteenth century, European imperialist powers played on the differences between the industrialized 'West' and the underdeveloped 'East' to support specific political and economic agendas. In a 2003 essay, Donald Preziosi affirms that, during this period museum exhibitions of non-European material served socioeconomic and political agendas that presented an exotic version of the story detached from its present. In the case of Egypt, the Pharaonic era, because of its strong impact on the western imagination, through the lenses of the Orientalist view or process was able to erase both the realities of its own history and eclipse all other aspects and components of Egyptian history right up to the present.²⁴⁶

The late Palestinian scholar Edward Said describes this phenomenon in his now iconic use of the word 'Orientalism', an ideology based on an ontological and epistemological distinction between 'the Orient' and (mostly) the 'Occident'. Said summarizes it as a form of Social Darwinism in which 'the modern Orientals were degraded remnants of a former greatness'; the ancient, or 'classical', civilizations of the Orient were perceivable through the disorders of present decadence, but only (a) because a white specialist [...] could do the sifting and reconstructing, and (b) because a vocabulary of sweeping generalities (the Semites, the Aryans, the Orientals) referred not to a set of fictions but rather to a whole array of seemingly objective and agreed-upon distinctions.²⁴⁷

The first museums in Egypt began to appear in the late nineteenth century, when awareness of the importance of conserving cultural heritage began to emerge. The decision of the local Muslim ruler who for the first time ordered the creation of a museum to preserve endangered antiquities²⁴⁸ coincided with the emergence of Egyptology as a scientific discipline. This led to a shift in archeological activities as well as museums exhibitions from an abstract to a rational perspective.

The first collection of Egyptian antiquities located in Cairo was created in the district of

²⁴⁶ Preziosi, 2003.

²⁴⁷ Said 1979: 2 and 233. Quoted in Merolla 2013, see also [Http://old.unior.it/diprapa/conf_afr_2010/panel%2014.html](http://old.unior.it/diprapa/conf_afr_2010/panel%2014.html)

²⁴⁸ The museum was prompted by the Viceroy of Egypt, Mohammed Said's decision to create a space for the conservation of ancient endangered objects. At the time, this was considered the first action by a Muslim ruler to support the conservation of antiquities.

Boulaq in 1863. After various vicissitudes, it was transferred to its permanent location in Tahrir Square in 1902. This museum can be considered the first in the Arab region designed to be a museum and not just a temporary place for the display of archeological materials. During the same period, other museums related to other periods of local history were created. In 1892, Giuseppe Botti, a member of the Italian community in Alexandria, founded the Greco-Roman Museum. In 1902, the Islamic Museum was created by the Egyptian architect Mubarak Ali Pasha, although, by 1881, by decree of Khedive Muhammad Tawfik Pasha, the *Comité de Conservation des Monuments Arabes* was already beginning to collect Islamic artifacts in the Mosque of El-Hakim Bamrailla. The Coptic Museum was founded in 1908 by Marcus Simaika Pasha on behalf of the Coptic Church.²⁴⁹ In the same period, an Ethnographical Museum was created by the Khedivial Geographical Society (1895). In more or less the same period, a Botanical Museum (1898), a Geological Museum (1904) and an Entomological Museum (1907) were created. Apart from the one in Alexandria, all these museums were in Cairo. Later, in 1912, the Aswan Museum, that is considered to be the first regional museum in Egypt, was set up.

In recent years, the number of museums in Egypt has grown exponentially. Their multiplication has been encouraged by several reasons. First of all, they allow the conservation and display of many objects of great historical and artistic interest that, because of space, had been kept in storage for a long period. Significantly, the museums constructed in peripheral areas are very important to local dissemination of historical knowledge to the communities. In recent years, many of the numerous Islamic monuments in the country have been restored and re-used as museums or for temporary exhibitions. Other museums are devoted to local personalities of some significance in the country's more recent history or literature, or to a specific artifact (for example the Textile Museum).²⁵⁰ Whereas Pharaonic art as a unique subject of exhibition is only typical of site museums, whose basic target is tourism,²⁵¹ these other rural or peripheral museums are based on a display which incorporates Egypt's past and present.

The National Museum of Egyptian Civilization in Cairo (NMEC) - still under construction - will be a great example of how, today, Egyptian specialists conceive the history of their country in all of its developmental phases and in its holistic vision.²⁵² The NMEC will present Egyptian culture from prehistory to the present day. It is the first of its kind, not only in Egypt, but also in the Middle East region. A scientific committee, formed by a group of Egyptian experts, archeologists and anthropologists, prepared the concept of the museum, to which UNESCO gives technical assistance. The exhibits revolve around nine topics (arranged in five main entries): The Nile, Craft and Trades, Arts and Architecture, Government and Society, and Beliefs and Folklore. The report on 'Exhibition Philosophy' prepared by Egyptian specialists for UNESCO refers to Egypt as follows:

The civilization of Ancient Egypt was characterized by consistency and stability since time immemorial. For over five thousand years, Egypt produced great art, literature, and feats of

²⁴⁹In the original formulation, the Egyptian Antiquities Museum at the heart of Cairo came to represent an indigenous Egyptian culture and the other three collections were presented and viewed as ethnic diversions. Of the Pharaonic, Classical, Byzantine, and Islamic pasts, only the first would serve as a synonym for Egyptian. There would be some overlap between Pharaonic and Classical Antiquity in early museum collections, but the Coptic and Islamic traditions remained isolated (Doyon, 2008).

²⁵⁰ For the Egyptian Authorities' view on the concept of these museums cf. Hawass 2005; for a detailed analysis cf. Doyon 2008.

²⁵¹ For example the Imhotep Museum at Saqqara, The Solar Boat Museum at Giza.

²⁵² El-Moniem, 2005: 24-30.

engineering and science; these have provided us with an extraordinary heritage unmatched by any other ancient civilization. Pharaonic Egypt has fascinated humankind for millennia, and will continue to influence us far into the future.²⁵³

This concept is best reflected by the research Wendy Doyon carried out on the topic in cooperation with the American Research Center in Cairo. The result of the analysis, which was conducted in over twenty-five museums in the country, led to the following conclusion:

The structure of meaning in Egyptian museum display represents a formal relationship between archeology and national identity in Egypt. While adapted from earlier museum structures of colonial import, contemporary exhibition structures in Egypt signify Egyptian traditions from prehistory to the present. Most of the institutions integrate the representation of Pharaonic Egypt with the interpretation of succeeding cultures, including several themes of modern Egyptian history such as the development of agriculture, craft, technology and science. The basic narrative structure of Egyptian museum display is thus framed by a visual affinity of cultures through time. The primary use of time-frame in the arrangement and distribution of material culture throughout Egyptian museums, along with supporting methods of interpretation, illustrate an institutional pattern of cultural correspondence between historically distinct between archeology and national identity in Egypt. While adapted from earlier museum traditions, this visual correspondence is a function of both the unity and diversity of material culture through time impressions of prehistoric, Pharaonic, Greco-Roman, Coptic, Islamic and modern traditions form a collective representation of Egyptian heritage and identity.²⁵⁴

The new forms suggest that these cultural traditions are significant not in isolation from, but in relation to one another, as they share an essential 'Egyptian-ness'.²⁵⁵

While acknowledging the Egyptian specialists' efforts to valorize all the phases of their history, using museums to educate local populations about such subjects, the main attraction for foreigners is still Egypt's Pharaonic archeological heritage. Few people are unaware of the pharaohs and the pyramids that they built. However, Egypt has so much more to offer, one of the most obvious aspect being its leadership in the number of institutions related to the teaching of Islam that makes Cairo a point of reference for intellectuals from all over the Arab World.²⁵⁶

From the touristic point of view, although in constant competition with the Pharaonic heritage, these Islamic treasures and the intangible heritage of their context, also surely elicit a certain appreciation of their charm from the visitor. Cairo, where most of these monuments are located, is a fascinating city, that, for the tourists, thrillingly embodies the Orient as constructed by myriads of western texts, at a time other countries in the Arab region are somehow losing this intangible cultural dimension. Nonetheless, the primary reason for the mass flow of tourists that visit the country are the most popular remains of the Pharaonic period. The monuments related to other historical phases are common to other areas of the region, whereas the Pharaonic heritage is unique and belongs to Egypt only.²⁵⁷

²⁵³ National Museum of Egyptian Civilization in Cairo, *Exhibition Philosophy*, Ministry of Culture, UNESCO, 2004.

²⁵⁴ Doyon, 2007 : Abstract.

²⁵⁵ Doyon, 2008 : 13.

²⁵⁶ Also notable is the Coptic heritage, even though its monuments are much more simple than the majestic mosques and other Islamic monuments of the country.

²⁵⁷ The Egyptian Museum attracts around 1.7 million visitors per year, twice the average admission to all other major antiquities museums in Egypt combined (Doyon, 2008).

The tourist imagination playing on the idea of ‘exotic’ - however subject to criticism on scientific and ethical bases - ‘works’ well as an individual drive for people to visit Egypt, and has considerable economic power. It is evident that the touristic emphasis contributes to intensifying general identification of present-day Egyptians with this specific and unique period of their history. This archeological heritage, contributing greatly to the economic well-being of the country through tourism, has become intimately connected with the everyday life of the people who live here and is present virtually everywhere. The problem is that such a tourist gaze still fixes Egypt in a far-away past, although it also belongs to a past shared with Europe, and tends to neglect other historical periods of the country and the much more recent and present conflicts. In Egypt, as in several other countries in the Middle East, museums are not used as a sphere for competition, but as a space for reconciliation, moved by the conviction that once peace and stability will have been achieved, the country can begin to debate its past. Here, as explained in Chapter 3, museums tend to simplify what they represent giving a homogeneous and therefore more easily digested picture of what, in fact, is much more complex and diversified.

The events that began on January 25, 2011 as part of the general phenomenon called the ‘Arab Spring’, have currently absorbed the minds of most Egyptians. The social revolution in Egypt, prompted in particular by young people with the help of modern social networks such as Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, has also expressed itself in material products on sale in the streets of Cairo (Egyptian flags, images of the martyrs and so forth). This new chapter in Egyptian history will also be part of one of the most important museums in the country, the already mentioned National Museum of Egyptian Civilization (NMEC). Events of the 25th January 2011 will be added to its original concept by stressing their positive aspects: the involvement of young people and the nascent democracy.

Perceptions of Nubia in Museums in Egypt

Until the construction of the Nubia Museum in Aswan, Nubian collections in Egypt were displayed as part of a chronological ordering of Egyptian history, but without a specific gallery devoted to them.²⁵⁸ The general purpose of museums in Egypt as bodies devoted to tourism with its short-term, one-time only access, made such a choice reasonable. Nubian history was interwoven into the fabric of Egyptian history from the Orientalist view of the Europeans who had established the foundations of museum work in Egypt. Its distinct character has only recently been recognized as this research is dedicated to demonstrating.

Egypt is the only country where a ‘Nubia Museum’, designated as a Nubia Museum, exists.²⁵⁹ With the completion of the *International Campaign to Save the Monuments of Nubia* in 1981, a committee was organized by UNESCO Headquarters in Paris to discuss how best to advance the study of the artifacts of this civilization which had been collected. Those working in the field had become aware that the singular historical strand of Nubian history had an independent trajectory and complexity, although part of the cultural diversity of the geographic area where

²⁵⁸ The Egyptian Museum in Cairo contains coeval Nubian material; the Greek and Roman Museum of Alexandria, the Coptic and Islamic Museums in Cairo; the Aswan Elephantine Museum in the Nubian area. Only in the Coptic Museums was there a wing devoted to Nubian objects dismantled when the museum was rehabilitated.

²⁵⁹ The choice of this name for the museum did not happen automatically. To avoid possible ethnic sensitivity and show that Nubia and Nubians are fully part of the Egyptian national context, other names were proposed such as ‘Museum of Aswan’ and the ‘South of the Valley Museum’. When Amadou-Mahtar M’Bow (Director-General of UNESCO) called for the establishment of a ‘Nubia Museum in Aswan’ to display some of the most outstanding items discovered in the course of the rescue campaign in 1982, was the current name finally approved.

Nubia is located. However, the Egyptian authorities were still the only ones to attend,²⁶⁰ and who decided on the launching of a new *Campaign for the Establishment of the Nubia Museum of Aswan and the National Museum of Egyptian Civilization in Cairo*. The outcome of this meeting was the construction of the Nubia Museum of Aswan was begun in 1985. The recommendation made by the UNESCO experts concerning the exhibition program of the museum in the early eighties was the following:

To give an overall picture of a region that not only has its own, well-defined patterns and rich cultural heritage [...] but has also been deeply transformed in modern times due to the construction of the Aswan High Dam, and has been the scene of an international archeological campaign. Illustrated-through an interdisciplinary approach-the history of man and his environment, from the beginning to the construction of the Aswan High Dam.²⁶¹

This concept won the Nubia Museum the Aga Khan Award for Architecture in 2001.²⁶² The building of this museum, as well as the use of the term 'Nubia' in the name given to it, represents an acknowledgment of the Nubian culture as an independent cultural identity. In this capacity, it has found its place among the most important museums in the world.

Despite this acknowledgement, some scholars feel the museum is still beset by some weak points. Their main argument is that the entire organization of the museum is chronologically based on Nubia's interaction with Egypt, a point of departure I find quite understandable: the museum is located in Egypt and the government's intention was to emphasize the Nubian culture in its own right as well as to demonstrate how it has fitted into the wider context of the Egyptian culture. In her assessment of museums, Wendy Doyon in Egypt defines the Nubia Museum:

A celebrated example of new museum culture in Egypt, integrating as it does a traditional exhibition space aimed primarily at tourists with its role as a local community center. In this capacity, the museum hosts extensive school programs and public events that encompass the art, archeology, culture, and environment of the region. In some cases, and with the aid of foreign funding, museum-based programs for tourists have grown to include lectures, films, interactive guides, theme exhibits, and didactics.²⁶³

Although museum/community relations have been paid considerable attention in this manner, there is still room for improvement. The choice of Aswan, as a site for the museum, rather than Kom-Ombo, the place where the people were resettled, shows that the guiding force behind the choice was the needs of tourism, including the proximity to the archeological sites, and reasons of sustainability, rather than being perceived as an emotional compensation for relocated communities. Admittedly, Aswan is unquestionably culturally 'Nubian', whereas Kom Ombo is an Egyptian optional offered to Nubians. The Nubia Museum of Aswan is the Museum of all Nubians and not only of those resettled. It can serve the numerous Nubian community living in the city and its neighbors and can be easily reached by the Nubians living in Kom Ombo as well as by those

²⁶⁰ The Sudanese authorities were also invited to participate, but I have no information about the reason they did not attend the meeting.

²⁶¹ Nubia Museum, Architectural and Exhibition Program, EAO-UNESCO, November 1982.

²⁶² Cf. Chapter 6, sub-paragraph on the Nubia Museum of Aswan.

²⁶³ Doyon, 2008: 11; Abdel Wareth Abdel Meguid, 2005.

living in the Nubian villages that are now springing up on the shores of the Lake Nasser. Aswan is the economic, commercial and intellectual center of all the Nubians living in Upper Egypt.

There is a particularly interesting series of interviews conducted by Sally-Ann Ashton in several locations of Nubia from Aswan through the Northern Sudan to Khartoum. Curator of the Egyptian collection at the Fitzwilliam Museum in Cambridge, where Nubian collections are on display, she felt the need to consult local curators, so as to be able to understand their feelings, their perceptions and their scientific approach to Nubia.²⁶⁴

The most relevant questions addressed in these interviews dealt with the creation of the Nubia Museum of Aswan and the relationship between the curator and the academic staff and the community. Ossama Abdel Wareth, at the time director of the Museum and a Nubian himself, expressed the special meaning that the museum has for the people of Aswan:

When I spoke with the community about the creation of the diorama of the museum I told them that they should have conceived it as the mirror of their daily lives. The community, which feels separated from its heritage, opened their houses to me in Cairo and in Aswan where the objects, brought from their submerged homeland, were kept as relics rather than displayed. The traditional house for the Nubian is not a house but a sort of temple where design, colors, furniture, objects for decoration, and the common way of behavior of Nubians are part of this holy place (Fig. 29).

This warm interaction and feeling for the community runs even deeper. Ossama Abdel Wareth goes on to remark that, despite being an academic, in his eyes the Nubians are those of today with all their rich cultural baggage of unique traditions. Unlike many in the academic community, out of touch with the realities on the ground, Ossama is well aware of the Nubian community in their legacy. What amazes him is that most of the Nubians of today are proud of their past and he frequently ears older members of the community, sometimes totally illiterate, speak about the history of Meroe and its queens, temples, kings and so forth.

²⁶⁴ Cf. Chapter 7, Sub-section on the Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge.



Fig. 29: Interior of a Nubian house

The second interview was with Rageh Zaher Mohamed, former curator and currently Director of the Museum. Asked the question of who or what Nubians were, this Egyptian from a city in the Delta replied:

I like Nubian culture very much. Nubia has an old history. Nubians who live from Aswan to the Fourth Cataract have special traditions which are not only reflected in the history of the past but also in the history of today. I have heard from them many stories linked to their homeland and the villages that are now submerged. These traditions need to be preserved and the museum is doing its best to do this with several programs.²⁶⁵

The local community represents the largest touristic component of the Nubia Museum of Aswan,²⁶⁶ however, so far it has not been sufficiently engaged in the activities of the museum. Children are more involved than adults. This leaves a generational gap in understanding in the community. The biggest obstacle is that finding ways in which to engage the whole community in

²⁶⁵ Rageh Zaher is also a specialist in Nubian Islamic history. To a question of the role of Islam in Nubia, he replied that, like most other civilizations, Nubians went through, many religious changes; they were pagans and then became Christians and then Muslims. The Islamic religion was not an occupation, but just a mixing of people who met for different reasons like trade at which Muslims were skilled. Many Muslims married Nubian women since they are famous for their beauty.

²⁶⁶ The Nubia Museum earns a much smaller percentage of national museum revenue than the Luxor Museum, but on average receives more visitors. In 2005, 57% of the Nubia Museum's total visitorship (179,951) was non-tourist and 40% of those admissions were students from local schools, representing an average of 112 Egyptian students per day (Doyon 2008). Cf. also Kamel, 2010: 35-56; Gerbich, 2010: 57-69.

museum activities is, here as elsewhere, no simple undertaking.

In 2009 women from nearby Nubian villages were allowed for the first time to display and sell their domestically produced crafts that they had often offered on sale on the doorways of their homes inside the museum. The diorama of the Ethnographic Section sprang into life and, according to some interviews I had with locals and foreigners, the museum acquired an aura of a living place rather than being a static entity. This demonstrates that a deeper and more direct involvement of community in the museum's activities could provide a fuller realization of the museum's *raison d'être*.²⁶⁷

The *Ethnographic Interactive Village* of the Nubia Museum of Wadi Halfa (under creation)²⁶⁸ should, according to its concept, compensate the rather overwhelming archeological character of the Nubia Museum of Aswan. This should be achieved, as we shall see below, by the establishment of a synergy between the two museums, specifically oriented to community development.

The Children's Civilization and Creativity Center in Cairo, best known as the Children's Museum, has not forgotten to represent Nubia as part of the cultural diversity of Egypt and Sudan in its range of educational activities based on hands-on exhibits, inter-actives and computer games. In the River Nile Hall, children watch a videotape of scenes of the courses of the Nile from its sources to its mouth. The pictures are combined with a dialogue among children wearing the costumes of the various regions of the Nile Valley. The River Nile Hall exhibits three communities in their respective contexts: the inhabitants at the source of the Nile, the Nubia region and the countryside in Upper and Lower Egypt. The videotape also plays songs and music characterizing the culture and activities of the people of the Nile. In the new museum, a section on the rescue of the monuments of Nubia has been added to the existing concept that uses a film of the Salvage Campaign of the 1960s and also two interactive games: *Isis in Crisis - Rescue Philae Temple and Rebuild It on Agilka Island*, and *A Submarine to Rescue Abu Simbel* (Fig. 30).²⁶⁹

Since the creation of the Nubia Museum in Aswan, the Greco-Roman and Islamic Museums (located respectively in Alexandria and Cairo) have been deprived of their Nubian collections, but the Coptic Museum in Cairo still holds several objects which are currently in storage. Some Christian mural paintings have been moved to the new regional museums at Port Said, Ismailia, El Arish and Sharm el Sheik, the intention being to enrich the display related to this historical period.

Even though the bulk of its Nubian collection has been transferred to the Nubia Museum in Aswan, the Egyptian Museum in Cairo still possesses a large number of objects. The policy of display of such objects, as we shall see in more detail in Chapter 6, is still anchored in a strong Egyptocentric view reflecting a conservative historiographical interpretation of Nubia in the context of museums. The same holds true of the Aswan Elephantine Museum.

²⁶⁷ In the specific case, the Nubia Museum is one of the few in Egypt to have facilities to allow it.

²⁶⁸ The writer of this research has prepared the concept for this museum which will be discussed later.



Fig. 30: The Children's Civilization and Creativity Center in Cairo: Cast of Abu Simbel Temple

In recent years, a remarkable collection of artifacts, including jewelry, was found in the antiquities storage of Giza, fifty years after it had been discovered by the Cairo University expedition at the site of Aniba during the Nubia Salvage Campaign in the sixties. It seems that some of these artifacts will be used to enhance the display of the Nubia Museum in Aswan, others will be exposed at NMEC. Also selected for display in this last museum are some Christian mural paintings previously part of the Coptic Museum collection.

In conclusion, the creation of the beautiful Nubia Museum of Aswan, although not yet completely fulfilling its mandate, certainly represents an important contribution to Egypt's acknowledgment of this cultural entity called Nubia, a vital and living part of the cultural diversity of the country.

Nubia in Museums in Sudan

Geo-political Background of 'Making' Heritage and Museums in Sudan

Because of the various historical and political circumstances affecting Sudan, the framework in which Nubia is located and perceived in the Sudanese context is as different from that in Egypt, as is its geographical location. This political and geographical situation is also reflected in the policy defined by Jean Gabriel Leturcq of 'making heritage,'²⁷⁰ and, therefore, museums. A brief outline

²⁷⁰ In the article *Heritage- Making and Policies of Identity in the 'Post-conflict Reconstruction' of Sudan*, Leturcq critically examines the political instrumentalization of identity and cultural heritage in the Sudanese context. By taking the assessment of the concept of heritage as a mean of political recognition, he tried to understand how the Sudanese authorities, as well as dissident groups, are using the heritage-making process as a political resource and a means of pacification or, conversely, for political contestation (Leturcq, 2009).

of this geo-political background will follow here, as a means of locating these museums in the time and space in which they are currently operating.

The Sudan is a vast country, that, until recently, occupied about 8 per cent of the African continent. This dimension has been greatly reduced since South Sudan became an independent state at midnight on 9 July 2011. It is also a young country, born in the post-colonial era, and it is characterized by great geographical, ethnic, religious, linguistic and cultural diversity. This diversity has inevitably made it difficult to create a Sudanese identity.

From 1956, when it obtained its independence from the British, until 2005, the country was the scene of a major civil war fuelled principally by the dichotomy between northern Arab Muslims (including Nubia and the region of Khartoum) and southern African Christians and animists. From a religious point of view, the ethnic and cultural dichotomy is characterized as follows: North versus South, Muslim versus Christian, and Arab versus African.²⁷¹ In the sphere of power, the opposition, located in the economic margins (which also includes the Nubian region), competes with the center, represented by the Khartoum regime in whose hands is concentrated the decision-making power.²⁷² The position of Nubia in this context seems ambiguous as it is a member of the power group because it is Muslim and to the opposition since it is the margin.

This dichotomy between North and South has given rise to a 'divided nationalism'.²⁷³ By 1991, the conflict had extended to other regions, as among them the provinces of the Upper Nile, Kordofan, the Eastern Region and to Darfur in the west. War in the Sudan became a 'network of internal wars',²⁷⁴ involving many actors on different fronts, whether these were geographical or political.

In January 2005, the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) was signed in Naivasha (Kenya), by the Sudanese President Omar al-Bashir and John Garang, leader of SPLM (Southern People Liberation Movement). The purpose of CPA was peace building in the Sudan and the explicit recognition of the southern part of the country by the ruling elite of the North. CPA also included provisions for an interim period until 2011, when South Sudan would have held a referendum to decide about the possible secession of the region. However, the marking of the final separation of South Sudan from the rest of the country, on July 9, 2011, has still not ushered in the end of the conflict.

The Policy of 'Making' Heritage and Museums in Sudan

The following discussion highlights the current situation of the process, defined by Jean Gabriel Leturcq as *Heritage-Making* in the Sudan,²⁷⁵ and it addresses the question of how Nubia is perceived, in particular in the context of museums. The division of the heritage of the Sudan is rooted in the British colonial system. On the one hand, there is the Northern Nile Valley (Nubia), important to archeologists, and on the other, the other areas of the country relevant to anthropologists in particular. Archeological research in the North was developed in the early nineteenth century simultaneously with Egyptology. The British colonial regime used archeological data to demonstrate the superiority of Egypt to Nubia, and the archeological approach used for research was based on the paradigm of Evolutionism. This policy constructed a strong bridge between the perceptions of the Ancient Egyptians and those of the traditional

²⁷¹ Leturcq, 2009: 295-328.

²⁷² Woodward, 2003: 39.

²⁷³ Deng, 1995:101.

²⁷⁴ Johnson, 2006: 21.

²⁷⁵ Leturcq, 2009: 295-328.

scholars making these last quite worse. Nevertheless, the Sudan Antiquities Service was one of the first governmental offices to be created at the very beginning of the colonial era. The first Antiquities Ordinance was issued in 1905.

Unlike the North Sudan (Nubia), for almost a century other areas of the country were thought to be devoid of historical interest. Only in the twentieth century did the British initiate a series of anthropological research projects designed to acquire a better knowledge of the area. This marked the emergence of British African anthropology.²⁷⁶ At the same time ethnographic materials related to the different areas of Sudan were being collected. The Pitt Rivers Museum in Oxford has one of the most remarkable Sudanese ethnographic collections. Despite the enormous wealth of the ethnographic material the country has to offer, the only significant ethnographic museum in Sudan is that in Khartoum.

The National Corporation for Antiquities and Museums (NCAM) is the government body appointed to safeguard and promote the archeology of the country. It cooperates with various international partners, particularly museums and universities, that conduct archeological research especially in the Nubia region. Recently, the research has been extended to other areas that until now were archeologically untouched.²⁷⁷

In the Sudan, the importance of the archeological heritage of Nubia influenced not only the content but also the choice for the location of the first museum in the country created in 1924 at the famous archeological site of Meroe. Only a few other museums followed, two in Nubia, another in Khartoum and a couple in other 'peripheral' areas of Sudan.²⁷⁸ In 1971, in the framework of the *International Campaign to Save the Monuments of Nubia*, the Sudan National Museum of Khartoum, was built the first big museum of the country.

In 2005, NCAM began the construction of a network of various museums in different states of the country, because the few existing museums in the area had badly deteriorated. This plan included the renovation of old museums and the construction of new ones in the capitals of the regional states, as well as the creation of educational programs for schools and children.²⁷⁹ Museums are considered an essential tool in the reconstruction and reconciliation of the Sudan, an assertion affirmed by as by the first 'peripheral' museum to be constructed in the post-conflict era in Nyala, Darfur, an area still in the full throes of conflict.²⁸⁰ Abdel Rahman Ali Mohamed, former director of the Sudan National Museum in Khartoum and current Director of the National Corporation for Antiquities in Sudan states that:

Current objective of the Museums Section is to gain more space and organization structure to deal with the archeological artifacts and preserved sites. Furthermore a main goal in a country with a broad variety of ethnic groups is to meet with the local tribes and create places of identification for the people.²⁸¹

²⁷⁶ Abdel Gaffar, 2003.

²⁷⁷ French Mission to Zankor, Kordofan, Sudan.

²⁷⁸ Details on these museums will be given in Chapter 7.

²⁷⁹ This policy was also in line with the recommendations of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPC) which included heritage as an important tool in the process of peace building in the Sudan. CPA did state that it is difficult to reach a political agreement without achieving a cultural understanding first.

(Cf. <http://www.unmis.org/English/documents/cpa-en.pdf>.)

Planned Museums: Dongola; Wadi Halfa, Naga; Juba (capital of the independent South Sudan); Kassala (capital of the Eastern Region); El Obeid (capital of Kordofan); Wadi Madani (capital of the Gezira Region); Fashoda (Blue Nile State); El Geneina (Western Darfur State) and Al Damazin.

²⁸⁰ Some interpret this as a paternalist gesture since, the area is still indubitably being torn asunder by conflict.

²⁸¹ This view emerged in the many friendly conversations I had with him and he has also stated it officially in the

Whatever attitudes and policies might have been adopted, the immediate perception of any examining the situation of museums, is that the archeological material excavated in the Northern Sudan (Nubia) is the only heritage classified as a national antiquity. The other areas of the Sudan are still only researched 'ethnographically'. The Sudan National Museum of Khartoum is considered to be the state museum *par excellence*, and is, therefore, the expression of national identity. In reality, in content it is primarily a museum of Nubian archeology, admittedly still the best known and most important to the country at this moment. Khartoum is also the location of the most important Ethnographic Museum in the Sudan. It displays the richness and variety of the ethnography of all country, including Nubia.

Museums in Northern Sudan (Nubia) are basically site museums, whose purpose is to exhibit antiquities from the area besides improving local community knowledge. In these museums nothing is exhibited from other areas of Sudan.

Museums built outside the center of power (Khartoum) and outside Nubia, that possesses the most representative archeological heritage, are programmed to show the particularity of the culture of the area, most case an ethnographic one, but by exhibiting some Nubian archeological artifacts, they do make an attempt to show the cultural development of all of the Sudan from prehistory to the Islamic era.

The perception of Nubia expressed by local curators/policy makers echoes that of the Nubia Museum's curators, but does tend to stress, at least in the context of museums, the southern leadership. Those cultural phases that have developed on the Egyptian side of the area (like A and C Groups) are considered to be part of the Nubian general heritage, whereas all the Sudanese parts of the area are usually promoted, with nationalist aims in mind, as the 'heritage of Sudan.'

In the interviews conducted by Sally-Ann Ashton at the Sudan National Museum of Khartoum²⁸² with the curators Iklas Abdel Latif Ahmed and Amanu Nur el-Din Mohamed, this leadership goes even farther as the interesting observation made by Iklas Abdel Latif's reveals. She stressed the southern origin of the royalty, focusing on the black origin of several royal figures in Egyptian history: Narmer, the king who united Upper and Lower Egypt; the mother of the Pharaoh Amenemhat I (Middle Kingdom); and the wives of Pharaohs Akhenaton and Amenophis III. It is also intriguing that she mentions that the Sudan and Egypt, and therefore Nubia, are united through blood links or kinship ties.

State officials responsible for museums try to promote Sudanese culture on the basis of the concept of 'unity in diversity' and use the full potential of cultural provision: the monumental archeological heritage of the North (mostly Nubian) and the rich ethnographic heritage of other areas of the country. The archeological heritage of the North is undeniably the most important, but the ethnographic wealth of other areas of Sudan is equally remarkable.

In conclusion, the cultural dichotomy between the North and other 'peripheral' areas of the country, including the now independent South, is often thought to have originated in the *modus operandi* of British colonialism. The 'tangible' archeological heritage of the North (Nubia) on the one hand, and a multiplicity of regional and/or tangible ethnic heritage of the large Sudanese periphery (East, West, and South before the separation) have constituted the bulk of the sources on which British colonialism constructed its views of the Sudan. Jean Gabriel Leturcq affirms that:

CIPEG Meeting held in Hannover / Hildesheim in 2008.

²⁸² Cf. above the interview conducted by Sally-Ann Ashton at the Nubia Museum. These results also emerged during the numerous conversation I have had on the topic with colleagues both in Egypt and Sudan.

The archeological heritage became valorized for the 'use' of the people from the political centre, i.e., riparian populations living on the Nile River banks, from where the Sudanese rulers and economic elites originated. Some of the possible effects of this increased gap might be a division reflecting general political trends - a tangible heritage of the dominant groups and an intangible heritage of the 'others'.²⁸³

However, this analysis is not reflected in what is happening in the northern part of the country where the Sudanese government continues to pursue a policy of damming which can be expected to bring about the disappearance of almost the whole Nubian area in a few years.²⁸⁴ On February 2, 2012, a tough email reached the inbox of Nubia specialists. The email was sent by Vincent Rondot, current *President of the International Society for Nubian Studies* (ISNS) and states:

[...] the government of Sudan has maintained its decision to build a dam at Kajbar and, amongst the various hydro-electric projects currently underway, this is undeniably the project with the most disastrous consequences for the archeological and historic heritage of the Sudan. As the President of the Society, I was asked to forward the attached message received from the National Corporation for Antiquities and Museums (NCAM); an appeal of our Sudanese colleagues for a salvage and study campaign before the construction of two dams, the first between Kajbar and the Third Cataract (Mahas country); and the second at Sherei (Fifth Cataract) [...]

Nubia in Museums Abroad

The policy of displaying Nubian collections outside Egypt and the Sudan is not overly concerned with questions related to social and identity issues. Instead they tend to be disciplinary developments related to the discovery of Nubia and the various perceptions to which this gave rise, the submerging of parts of its territory and the restriction of the bulk of archeological activity in the Sudanese part of the area, all of which played an important role. Nor are political factors overlooked, since most of the owner institutions of the collections are still linked to the countries of origin of the collections by on-going archeological activities.²⁸⁵

If academic trends play an important role in the selection of those objects to be exhibited, collections displays are also dramatically affected by a number of issues - such as museum targets,

²⁸³ Leturcq, 2009: 325.

²⁸⁴ A circular, quoted integrally in Annex III, had already been sent by Derek Welsby, former President of the *International Society for Nubian Studies*, on 25/09/08 to all the members of the society, informing them of the tragic decision, (albeit not final), of the Sudanese Government to build 12 Dams in Sudan, most of which were to be located in the Nubian area (Northern Sudan). For the already built Merowe Dam cf. also: Askouri 2002; Askouri 2004a; Askouri 2004b; Askouri 2007; Boulding 2008; Mojon 2007; Bosshard, 2005.

²⁸⁵ For the study of semiotic and metonymic strategies in museum exhibitions related to the subject of Europe and the Near East in the 19-20th centuries, cf. Reid, Frederick Bohrer (in Preziosi and Farago, *Grasping the World*) and Wendy Shaw (*Possessors and Possessed*). Shaw's work in particular illustrates the metonymic function of museums in shaping the identity of Near Eastern nations as a form of resistance to European colonial influence. She examines the distributive arrangement of antiquities in late 19th century Ottoman museums as an express effort to institutionalize a modern nationality in response to European imperial overtures. Her discussion of the adaptive use of Western museum structures in the Ottoman Empire relates to modern Egypt by demonstrating the repossession of a regional patrimony through the selective use and modification of inherited exhibition practices. The particular adaptations Shaw describes are dissimilar to those in postcolonial Egypt, but she establishes an important precedent with this work by emphasizing the political and cultural agency of reformulated display structures as self-reflective narratives (Doyon, 2008).

space limitations, aesthetic criteria, touristic programs and lack of funds - referred to earlier as part of the 'museum system'. These matters are often beyond the control of museum curators.

Criteria for exhibiting Nubian collections abroad evolved conceptually over time in accordance with the three stages outlined above. Europe is not only the first continent other than Africa to have received Nubian artifacts as part of Egyptian collections, it is also the continent with the highest number of museums holding such artifacts. The creation of these collections has been the result of the work of adventurers, colonialists and, at a later stage, scientific research. In Europe, Nubia is here generally embedded in Egyptian exhibitions/contexts. Initially Egyptian (and Nubian) material was presented in a non-systematic way to prevent the construction of a narrative or sequence which would have informed visitors about the existence of distinctive cultural histories in Antiquity. In fact, the displays were arranged to educate visitors about the rise of Western art.²⁸⁶

The Salvage Campaign of the 1960s as well as the shift of the archeological activities in the Sudan have played a role in carving out a 'single space' for some of these Nubian collections kept in Europe, although, in one way or another, they are still treated as part of larger Egyptian contexts. Chapter 7 will guide the readers through these variants (sometime contradictory) of displaying Nubia in the numerous museums of Europe.

In America, on the wave of the interest aroused by the *First Archaeological Survey of Nubia* (1907-1912) under the supervision of Americans, but above all by the general enthusiasm for the *International Campaign to Save the Monuments of Nubia* of the 1960s, in which Americans were innovators, Nubian collections first found their 'single space'. Here the first Nubian Galleries were created. Some of those institutions which have raised their voices against the Nubia bias, now again have Egypt as the main protagonist of their galleries. Despite this, a 'Nubiologist' current of thought is still kept alive in America by both the memories of this glorious American involvement in Nubia and the Afro-American community. Nubiology represents an opportunity for the tentative new studies of African scholars to show that African continent has generated some of the most ancient and illustrious cultures of the world.

In many museums, especially those which are currently involved in fieldwork in Sudan, 'Nubiology', principally for political reasons, is increasingly transforming into 'Sudanology'.

Now and then Nubian objects have undertaken long journeys, as a result of particular policies adopted by some archeologists or institutions. Australia and Canada, for example, never participated in rescue works in Nubia but they did benefit from the British strategy of giving findings in exchange of financial support to some British archeological missions. In Australia the objects are stored but in Canada, thanks to the deep and innovative involvement of some Canadians archeologists in Nubia, the Royal Ontario Museum of Toronto has a Nubian Gallery.

In Chapter 7, I have entitled one section 'Unusual Locations' and in it I present three collections kept in countries that had nothing to do with adventures or 'colonial' archeology, but, despite other priorities, were touched by the need to save the important heritage of Nubia. They are: Ghana, India and Argentina.

Their contribution to the salvage of Nubia was not only practically, but also symbolically important. Ghana and India keep the objects they brought back from Nubia in storage. In India, I found, to my amazement, many Egyptian collections, brought into the country by the British colonialists, on display. However, the Nubian collection, fruit of the only direct archeological activity of the country in Nubia, languishes forgotten in storage. In the last years Argentina has

²⁸⁶ Moser, 2006.

succeeded in organizing an 'Egyptian Hall', displaying part of the collection from the Nubian site of Aksha.

The Disjuncture of Archeology and Ethnography

Living for many years in continuous contact with the Nubian community both in Egypt and the Sudan, I clearly sensed their frustration not only aroused by the fate of their archeological heritage, much of which is today abroad, but also by the feeling of being marginalized in the context of archeological studies.

In the reality of these Nubians, threatened by more than a century by the specter of dams, and the water that used to be their primary source of life is now progressively becoming the tomb of their culture are caught up in the vortex of the most recent socio-political events that have affected all the region, the link with their immense archeological heritage located in museums or still *in situ* has become vitally important. It legitimizes their 'being Nubians' and their attachment to the land where they were born and where these monuments are located.

One result produced by this research has confirmed what I discussed at length in previous chapters: the archeology of Nubia, at least abroad, has submerged its ethnography. Only five out of the 101 museums abroad discussed in this research houses Nubian ethnographic objects. The Naprstek's Museum of Asian, African and American Cultures in Prague, the University of Pennsylvania/Museum of Archeology and Anthropology in Philadelphia, the Archeological Museum of Gdańsk, the Museum of Ethnography/Adelhauser Museum in Freiburg-Breisgau and the University of Aberdeen-Marischal Museum, in Britain.

The Prague Ethnographic collection is unequivocally from Nubia, collected directly from the now submerged villages during the Salvage Campaign. The 370 objects kept in the American museum are of uncertain provenance in the Sudan. Yet another confirmation of the lack of good research and thorough knowledge as far as this topic is concerned. Both collections are stored. The only institution with ethnographic material from the Sudan (including Nubia) on display integrated into an archeological display is the Museum in Gdańsk where archeology and ethnography complement each other, linking past and present. The collection in the Ethnographic Museum of Freiburg is almost unknown to the specialists in this field. Whereas archeological objects are anchored in archeological/Egyptological contexts, ethnographic collections are presented or stored in African contexts. This is revealed in the way the Nubia Campaign of the 1960s was particularly concerned with monuments, even though the living cultures which continue to exist is, as were the monuments, under threat.

Archeology and Ethnography, although their nature can be seen to run parallel, are seen as separate disciplines with different research methods. This is clearly reflected in museum contexts. The opening of archeological museums to a confrontation with the ethnographic 'world' is especially important in some specific cases like the Nubian one. They not only share similarities in the objects displayed but they are also associated by the particularly strong link with the territory of the provenance of such objects. The archeological museum was born of the need to preserve the past for the benefit of future generations and it has been strongly influenced by the complexity and contradictions of modern society. It is specifically its educational mission, that aims to communicate ideas and concepts of life inexorably distant in time, that makes it an ideal place for confrontation and cultural mediation. I am aware that this approach is difficult to apply in western society where, particularly ordinary visitors, are used to the split in the two disciplines. However difficult does not mean impossible. Educating about the archeological heritage in an intercultural key could be an interesting training experience, that can be done not necessarily through objects

but also through ‘less invasive’ virtual media.

In Nubia, characterized by so many conflicts of identity, evidence of the link between the past and the present are important and this is the reason I advocate this approach, that is being increasingly used in the Nubian area, both in Egypt and in the Sudan, for Nubian collections so vociferously.

Stored collections

One dramatic outcome of this research has been the discovery of the large quantity, above all in museums abroad, of Nubian material in storage. It seems that the destiny of Nubia is to be submerged, either by water or by dust. This fact appears to be related to the original organization of the Nubian collections that arrived in Europe and other regions of the world as part of Egyptian collections, with which they were later ‘naturally’ exhibited or stored.

Conservative views of the area as well as other museum restrictions (as argued in Chapter 3 and as we shall see in Chapters 6 and 7) have often played an important role in the relegation of Nubian artifacts to obscurity. The basic concept was to tell an ‘elegant’ version of the story rather than to include what was considered crude and peripheral. ‘Elegant’ in this sense refers to the beauty of a logical and mathematical proof or argument in which evidence that contradicts the hypothesis can be ignored as statistically insignificant. Consequently, the submersion of Nubia as a distinct subject for serious curatorial consideration has become almost irretrievably linked to the ensemble of points raised by this research. These include: the lack of a clear concept of ‘Nubia’ and of a scientific program, compounded by the long-term impact of the colonial perception of Nubia ingrained in the Egyptologist paradigm.

The Salvage Campaign of the sixties represented a great achievement in the field of preserving cultural heritage, as well as a major change in the interpretation and perception of Nubia. It was also a high profile demonstration of the advances of archeology in the sharing of which everybody, including museum curators, was interested. In the United States, the less strong Egyptologist ‘historical’ tradition - compared to that found in Europe - and the strong interest of the Afrocentrists, meant that the effect of the Campaign was stronger. This led to a change in policies for displaying Nubian collections. The origins of the artifacts, history and culture earned Nubian collections their own spaces in museum exhibitions in the climate of the Civil Rights movements. Unfortunately, in some cases this new attitude was a temporary enthusiasm which evaporated as soon as the exhibitions closed. Strangely enough, this process frequently occurred within the confines of those museums that had raised their voices against the Egyptological biases of both their predecessors and contemporary critics.²⁸⁷ The upshot is that the policies of many museums unfortunately remain unchanged. The historical backgrounds of European museums in particular are often pervaded by a patina of exoticism intermingled with legends and exciting stories of adventure. These romantic tales have fed the popular imagination almost as much as the collections themselves. In short, some museums are visited less often for their collections than for the story of how the collections were formed. When Nubia is showcased, it has to fit into this crystallized and exotic scenario. As a result, we often find an assemblage of pieces of fabled Meroe; temples as ambassadors that testify to the magnitude of the Salvage Campaign of the

²⁸⁷ The Nubian gallery of the Philadelphia, University of Pennsylvania Museum of Archeology and Anthropology is definitively closed. The gallery of the Museum of Fine Art of Boston is temporarily closed to be, funds permitting, properly displayed in a larger space. Also in Madrid the Nubian exhibition is currently closed for renovation work. In this case we don’t know if Nubia will be again part of the new display.

sixties,²⁸⁸ Black Pharaohs' artifacts, that in many cases are considered to be 'Egyptian' only and objects from other phases that show the less appealing periphery of Egypt. In many cases, the material witnesses to this peripheral appendix to Egypt remain in storage.

Most museum curators with whom I have interacted to produce this work have expressed the will to give Nubian material culture more emphasis, as we shall see in the next chapters. Often, unfortunately their positive attitudes do not result in concrete actions. In most cases this has been stymied by the above mentioned museum-system restrictions, the most important being those related to finance, space, touristic priorities and politics.

My conclusion, considering how long Nubian collections have been, and in many cases still are, relegated to storage, is that what has been most neglected is the recognition of the social and cultural urgency of their display.²⁸⁹ This is a confirmation of the argument presented in Chapter 3: if it is true that the 'museum' is undergoing fundamental and existential identity changes in an attempt to resolve and be sensitive to current issues of cultural identities that characterize modern societies, accordingly, as a consequence of its nature and systemic restrictions, the museum, as an ideological construct and active participant in the creation of history, is bound to face problems in addressing these new role. Specifically, the museum must clarify its role as part of the educational process, the repository and archive of histories or theater and entertainment. Socioeconomic and political realities play themselves out in such conflicts and venues. Those involved in the current evolution of museums have unprecedented opportunities to shape the messages of the past in the temporal realities of the present for a future as yet to be experienced.

The Lack of Return Policy

As we will see in the following Chapters, the dynamic activity of travelers and adventurers, as well as the international nature of archeological research in Nubia from its very beginnings, has led to a spectacular exodus of Nubian antiquities, now widely scattered in various institutions all over the world. In several of these institutions, the collections are so rich and the available spaces so small, that they have been confined to storages for decades, while storerooms of museums in the countries of origin are being more and more emptied, especially in Sudan.

Notwithstanding heated discussions on the subject, many institutions do not espouse a policy of the repatriation of objects, at least of those most significant to the local populations. Such policies have the advantage of advocating local histories and promoting local culture by making repatriated artifacts accessible to indigenous scholars residing in the country in which the artifacts originated. An argument raised against repatriation is that museums abroad are more accessible to

²⁸⁸ This is an overview of the relocated temples: In Egypt 14 temples were cut out and relocated in highest places of the same area organized in 5 clusters which, starting from north, are: Philae, on the nearby island of Agilkia; Kalabsha, Beit el Wali, Qertassi, Gerf Hussein on the nearby island of Kor el Ingi; Wadi es Sebu, Dakka and Maharraqa not far from the original site of Wadi es Sebu; Amada, Derr and the tomb of Pennut, nearby the original site of Amada; the two temples of Abu Simbel are moved 200 m. higher than the original location; the temple of Ellesya is at the Egyptian Museum of Turin; the temple of Dendur at the Metropolitan Museum of New York; the Gate of Kalabsha in Berlin; the temple of Taffa at the National Museum of Antiquities of Leiden; all the temples cut from the Sudanese part of the area (the temple of Ramses II at Aksha; the temple of Hatshepsut at Buhen; the temple of Khnum at Semna East – Kumma; the temple of Dedwn and Sesostris III at Semna West) were moved to the garden of the Sudan National Museum of Khartoum.

²⁸⁹ An interesting and useful report on how to improve the use of stored collections was produced by the Museums Association (MA) in Britain: *What's in store: Collections review in the North West* (2008).

visitors.²⁹⁰ The problem, as already said, is acute not only for Nubian culture, but extends to most African countries and cultures.²⁹¹

The display of the Nubia Museum of Aswan, unique in its kind, was formed by objects belonging to other museums of Egypt, some of which have now been completely deprived of their Nubian collection (the Greco-Roman and the Islamic museums). Nevertheless, none of the museums in the world, whose curators are often those who criticize the gaps that characterize the itinerary of the Nubia Museum, have offered any of the artifacts in their large collections, often stored in depositories and remained untouched for decades. The problem is that objects are usually considered purely a simply work of art, although they are imbued with a meaning that extends well beyond artistic merit. For example, without a doubt, the treasure of Queen Amanishaketo, today in Berlin and Munich, is one of the most significant collections of objects found in the Sudan. Yet the Sudan does not possess any object from this treasure which is imbued with such an inestimable symbolic value.

Although ethically correct, the return of these objects is, at the moment, only a pipe dream. The stumbling block is that they were legally acquired (even though often against the will or awareness of the local people). Nevertheless, dreams could still come true, if responsible authorities and museums are made aware of the crucial importance of these objects to the cultural 'salvage' of local communities and their identity. Such actions could launch a voluntary policy of at least partial repatriation. A first important step could be long-term loans, not only to foreign museums but also vice-versa. According to Thurstan Shaw,

Works of art are better studied and better understood in the milieu that gave birth to them, apart from the examination by technical equipment often not locally available. In this last sense, if the holding country really wished to fulfill its obligations towards the heritage of mankind, it could not only return the objects to the poorer country and shoulder the financial responsibilities, but also share its experience in handling and housing such objects in safe and secure ways.²⁹²

Viewpoints favoring the retaining of objects in environments where advanced curatorial conservation and preservation abilities and facilities are far more likely to be present than in the country of origin, argue that promoting a culture beyond a country's borders helps to break down insularity and isolationism and promotes international understanding. I have derived this insight from personal conversations with many of the curators I have met in the course of my career.

Relevant to this discussion is the wide range of local issues regarding repatriation even within a country's borders. For example, in North America heated discussion has arisen about the repatriation of Amerindian bones and skeletons claimed by communities so that they can be buried with all due respect.²⁹³ The sensitive religious and cultural issues involved in such discussions have also been reflected in similar controversies about the repatriation of artifacts. The Egyptian concern has been with reclaiming and restoring the longevity of its history and establishing itself as a qualified caretaker for artifacts removed from its land. In this discussion, body parts such as skeletons and bones for the purposes of reburial have not been an issue.²⁹⁴ In Egypt, a heated

²⁹⁰ Thomas, 1982: 3.

²⁹¹ Shaw, 1986: 46-48.

²⁹² Shaw, 1986:46-48. I agree with this vision since knowledge of the contexts from where the objects originated is essential to understanding the meaning of the objects.

²⁹³ See the Pitt Rivers Museum's proposal at <http://www.prm.ox.ac.uk/human.html>.

²⁹⁴ Needless to say that human remains from Nubia are among them.

debate has surrounded the repatriation of mummies, but no claim has been made for skeletons and bones, thereby significantly highlighting the distinctive nature of these debates in local contexts.

Points of Reflection and Discussion

From the time ‘of the land of the unknown’, great strides have been made in understanding and appreciation of the culture that developed between the First and Sixth Cataract of the Nile, commonly named Nubian. The work is far from finished, in particular in the context of museums. Nubian collections displayed or not displayed in different areas of the world distinctly show that a positive avalanche of ‘selective amnesia’ confusion still affects the meaning of what is Nubia. Historical circumstances, academic trends, priorities and the availability of space are factors that have often given birth to strange arrangements of material artifacts in Nubian exhibitions. The consequences of this ‘selective amnesia’ and the vagaries of time that have simultaneously interwoven themselves into Nubian history, has led to the construction of different paradigms of Nubian culture.

Museums are not forums for a limited number of scholars, but ‘open’ spaces where ordinary visitors are not aware of the complications behind the curtains of an exhibition of objects. Certain choices often depend on the system in which the museum itself is trapped rather than on curators’ views. This reality is no longer compatible with the social ‘mission’ many museums are adopting, which requires a greater awareness of the intrinsic meaning of each object.

Having discussed the scholarly approaches to Nubia and the ways in which it is being presented in museums, I have no definitive solution to offer. However, as a conclusion to this chapter, I round it off with some points of discussion to raise awareness for a renewed policy of display of Nubian collections locally and worldwide:

1) Despite the fact that the construction of dams is encouraging, the creation of museums as a kind of cultural emergency, in particular in the Nubian area, this research has laid bare a certain lack of ‘social awareness’ in the policy of displaying Nubian collections in museums worldwide. This contradiction is also evident in the scarcity of literature on the subject. I can safely say that, at this moment, this piece of research is the only one of its kind that has attempted to present a comprehensive idea²⁹⁵ of how Nubia, as idea and archeological presence, is perceived and presented in the context of museums around the globe. The research results clearly show the absolute necessity for a more detailed and inclusive assessment and interpretation of these collections. Precise information about the objects will help to develop strategies that will bring them to their fullest possible use.²⁹⁶ The creation of archives of documents related to the objects is another important aspect. Sometimes documents are the only link between the objects and their original context. I have personally experienced this with the establishment of the Documentation Center on Nubia at the Nubia Museum of Aswan.

2) What appears immediately blatantly obvious from this research is that most of Nubian collections are submerged either by Pharaonic artifacts in majestic Egyptian galleries or by the accumulation of the dust of storage. This policy has deprived the objects of their

²⁹⁵ Cf. Chapters 6 and 7.

²⁹⁶ Cf. the report *Collections for the Future*, Museums Association Enquire, London, 2005, 11.

individual complexity and trajectory and has prevented them to properly contribute to our understanding of the development, on all levels, of human civilization. The research has in fact noted a lack of appropriate explanations of the social meaning of single Nubian artifacts, usually displayed randomly to complement exhibitions of Egyptian galleries thematically, typologically or chronologically. A deeper analysis of their technomic, sociotechnic and ideotechnic meanings would reveal that they belong to an individual cultural entity, although part of the cultural diversity of the area where Nubia is located. Collections will accrue in significance when their objects are accompanied by information about their origin, utility, users, their role in the value-systems of the society concerned and so on.²⁹⁷

3) Coining new terms is a trend in the field of Nubian studies and the history of Nubia in general. In this research, I have often referred to this variety of terminology, that is undoubtedly related to the complex history of the area. In museums, the terms 'Nubia', 'Egypt', and the 'Sudan' to define the region between the First and the Sixth cataract vary according to the history of the context in which they are used. In some cases, even the term 'Ethiopia', that does not reflect a past or represent reality but the earlier interpretation of the area by outsiders, is used. *Kush* and *Wawat* (Upper and Lower Nubia as defined in the hieroglyphic texts) are also part of the choice of some museum curators to indicate the area. The situation becomes even more complicated with the terminology of the various cultural phases of the history of the area beginning from those coined by Reisner (A, C, X Groups and so on.). They are often used in Egyptological contexts without an explanatory text or chronological comparative table framework. Such a variety of terminology, unaccompanied by an introductory note on its use, is certainly misleading.

4) One aspect on which this research is particularly focused is the complexity of the term 'Nubia' and the problem of its geographical and cultural boundaries. Despite the awareness of the difficulty that this term poses when it is materialized in the context of museums, my research has identified shortcomings in the way museums present the problematic surrounding the term. Clarifying the problem rather than simplifying the display would greatly facilitate the understanding of non-specialized readers and visitors. Furthermore, community consultation and participation would bring more clarity to matters which are often not immediately obvious. Nubiology, as is archeology in general, has neglected the social aspects of the past. However, the dialogue between archeology, history and the vast body of ethnographic literature could lead to a better understanding of both past and present. In the case of the formation of modern ethnicities, the use of oral traditions for guidance and confirmation of particular interpretations of their data material is very useful. In Nubian collection displays, museums could shed new light on the visual reinterpretation of a number of historical events that have for so long been depicted as if no other interpretation seemed possible. With the help of researchers, a model similar to that developed for the audio-visual series *Verba Africana*,²⁹⁸ used for didactical purposes

²⁹⁷ Svašek, 2008: 203-204.

²⁹⁸ The *Verba Africana* series, under the direction of D. Merolla (Leiden University), publishes video recording of oral performances on CDRoms, DVD's and the Internet, for documentation, research and the e-learning of African languages and oral literatures. The video recording of such African oral genres as poems, songs and tales, is integrated

and for research, could also be produced for Nubia and used as a means to involve, inform and engage the local populations, as well as sources of information for students and tourists.

5) A better coordination among institutions holding Nubian collections, that pays heed to the above points, is worth deliberating on.²⁹⁹ As Wendy Doyon states, all forms of archeological representation, that is the production of meanings through a visual language of communicating the past, rely on the repetition of certain themes to establish social legibility. Museums are one of the most important media of archeology, adding a material dimension to the visualization of history. By observing patterns in the arrangement and composition of archeological displays, museum exhibitions can be read as visual narratives that negotiate ideological associations with the past.³⁰⁰ The patterns observed in the arrangement of Nubian collections are characterized by a variation of interpretations in the different locations. A major homologation in the presentation of such collections would not only clarify visitors' understanding but would also contribute to strengthening the individuality of this culture. Since part of the area no longer exists, virtual tours could be created from collection to collection, especially, among those that might complement each other.³⁰¹

The role of temporary exhibitions is also significant. Since the time of the Salvage Campaign in the sixties, many temporary exhibitions on Nubia have been organized worldwide, sometime involving several museums accompanied by the exchange of material and generous loans from the countries of origin. All very commendable but it has rarely happened that temporary exhibitions of archeological objects kept in museums abroad have been used to organize exhibitions in the countries of origin. There are numerous unique Nubian masterpieces of art preserved abroad that locals have never had the chance to see. To reverse this one-way policy, it is desirable that temporary exhibitions, exhibiting significant objects now kept abroad, may also be organized in countries of origin.

To tackle the problem of capacity-building activities in the management of collections, I would suggest a sort of North-South organization. Management of collections covers several areas, among them registering and cataloguing objects; care and preservation; and the interpretation and display of artifacts. Training in the first two topics would benefit the curators in the countries of origin of the objects, and take place abroad where the institutions are more advanced in these fields. In the meantime, this

into the presentation of relevant aspects, as among them language, form, content, performance, literary, social and historical context. The videos and the accompanying material allow researchers and the interested public to approach oral literary productions as 'total event' distributed in several 'layers'.

(<http://www.hum.leiden.edu/research/africanliteratures/verbaafricana/verba-africana.html>)

²⁹⁹ A good example is represented by the Association of Curators of Collections of Egypt and Sudan (ACCES) founded in May 2006. It is a Subject Specialist Network for museum curators responsible for looking after archeological collections from Egypt and Sudan in the United Kingdom in order to share information and good practices. (<http://www.acces.org.uk/>) (Cf. also Chapter 7).

³⁰⁰ Doyon 2008: 12; Bal, 1996: 201- 218; Bal, 2004: 23- 28; Bennet 1998: 25-35; Moser, 2001: 262 - 283; Moser, 2006.

³⁰¹ Just to give some examples, the Nubia Museum of Aswan, with a collection from the area between the First and Second Cataracts, could virtually connect, through images of objects and sites, with the Sudan National Museum in Khartoum and its collection from Sudanese Nubia. Those institutions that have worked in different sectors of a single site could virtually join in with their objects.

would help the countries of origin to become independent and self-sufficient in these fields. Training on content issues should take place in the countries of origin of the collections in order to benefit curators of museums abroad. In this respect I want to mention what emerged in the audit of the Egyptian and Sudanese collections kept in the Britain carried out by Margaret Serpico from Petrie Museum of Egyptian Archeology, University College London.³⁰² The audit, based on the information provided by Cornucopia, the Museums Libraries and Archives Council (MLA) database,³⁰³ aimed to make information about the content and scope of Ancient Egyptian and Sudanese collections in the Britain fully available to the public for the first time.³⁰⁴ The audit, as Margaret Serpico says, has produced, besides the targeted results, an additional and unexpected result:

Recent publications have emphasized the need to increase public engagement with collections. This engagement can take many forms, including display, on-line access to objects or associated knowledge, publications, scholarship, loans to other museums or to non-museum venues, open storage or study tours and handling sessions. Concomitant with that goal, however, is the recognition that all of these avenues of access need to be underpinned by fundamental knowledge of the objects in the collection: the most basic need is for museums to be clear about what their collections contain. This necessity for documentation has highlighted a paradox whereby the growing demand for a better understanding of the contents of a collection as a means of making it more dynamic is restricted by the general lack of specialist curatorial knowledge.³⁰⁵

The approach used by Sally-Ann Asthon of the Fitzwilliam Museum³⁰⁶ is a good example of the policy I would suggest. On account of a lack of knowledge, the context of the origin of the objects often risks remaining no less problematic than the discovery of their intrinsic and spiritual value.

Nubia Museums in Synergy: Wadi Halfa and Aswan

Below I present a personal experience of approaching the subject of Nubia in museums. In 2005, following a joint mission to Nubia organized by UNESCO, the Sudanese and Egyptian authorities signed a memorandum of understanding to cooperate in the field of cultural heritage. One point of cooperation on the agenda was the creation of the Nubia Museum of Wadi Halfa, thought to be the

³⁰² Serpico, 2006. The project was part of the Museums Libraries and Archives Council (MLA) 's Subject Specialist Network initiative.

³⁰³ Aware of the large number of Egyptian [and Nubian] collections present in Britain and the scarcity of detailed information about them, a survey organized by staff of the Petrie Museum and the British Museum, with funding from the Museums Libraries and Archives Council (MLA), has striven to provide an audit of British holdings of Egyptian [and Nubian] material. Museums, Galleries and historic houses were sent questionnaires asking for details of the size, provenance and approximate make-up of their Egyptian holdings, and their experience in curating an Egyptian collection. The information from over 200 replies was standardized and added to Cornucopia (<http://www.cornucopia.org.uk/>), the MLA database of collections. It is now possible to search Cornucopia reliably by site-name, object type and excavator or collector name (Hardwick, 2010).

³⁰⁴ The data generated by the survey are of great use to the ACCES, the Association of Curators for Collections from Egypt and Sudan, in the future planning of increased assistance to collections, notably with regard to documentation, public access and development of education resources (Serpico: 2006, 6).

³⁰⁵ Serpico, 2006: 6.

³⁰⁶ Cf. Chapter 7, sub-section on the Fitzwilliam Museum.

counterpart of the Nubia Museum of Aswan, which Egypt opened in 1997.³⁰⁷ As a researcher and a UNESCO expert in this field, I developed, in cooperation with the local authorities and the Nubian community, a museum concept which aims to build on the achievement of other museum displays of Nubia while trying to overcome the shortcomings indicated in the present research.³⁰⁸

Wadi Halfa

Before presenting the new museum concept, it is necessary to introduce Wadi Halfa as a modern historical site. Wadi Halfa is located in northern Sudan, on the east bank of the Nile, a few miles south of the border with Egypt, only 50 km away from the famous site of Abu Simbel, in the core of the Nubian area. Like all 'big-border' cities, it has always had a strategic function. Throughout its history, it was the most important post on the Egyptian frontier, as it was situated at the terminus of the navigation route from Aswan. Moreover, it was located at the end of a dangerous cataract, the Second, which made it almost impossible to navigate the river there. The ancient Egyptians, whose presence in the place was preceded by that of others for thousands of years, built massive fortresses on the Second Cataract whose primary function was to control trade with the South.³⁰⁹

The modern town of Wadi Halfa was founded in the nineteenth century. During their occupation of the country, the British made it their headquarters, and during the Second World War, it was a communication post of the Allied Forces. In order to facilitate their activities in the country, the British built a railway whose construction began in 1877 under the governorship of General Gordon.³¹⁰ Wadi Halfa was certainly the most important town between the First and Second Cataracts, with all the administrative offices, schools, a mosque and an important market at its core.³¹¹ The modern Nile Hotel was architecturally the most appealing building of the city. Until the destruction of the city in 1963, its rooms housed rich traders, administrators and tourists in the winter as well as famous international personalities, in particular academics, during the Salvage Campaign. Although the strip of cultivable land was limited, it was very fertile and rich in palm trees. The famous Date Palm Avenue, shaded with two rows of thick date palms, was also the first of its kind in the country.

The character of border city, port of arrival and of the departure and transit of people representing a variety of cultures, strongly influenced the character of the population. The residential area was, in fact, divided into tribal and national sectors. The 11,000 inhabitants and the distribution of its quarters are living proof of the diverse and heterogeneous character of the population.³¹² If Wadi Halfa, as every border city, displayed this heterogeneity of population and therefore of traditions, the villages, isolated and reticent to mix with other ethnic groups, that were part of their district, were a reflection of what was then Nubia. Many of these villages were

³⁰⁷ De Simone, 2007.

³⁰⁸ De Simone, 2007.

³⁰⁹ The fortresses of Buhen, Mirgissa, Semna, Kumna.

³¹⁰ Barakat and Daud, 1959.

³¹¹ Mubarak, 1903: 38.

³¹² Traders of Syrian and Egyptian origin lived in the northern market area. In the East, the Arkawit quarter was occupied by Elegait, Kenuz, and families of Egyptian origin, while Kenuz families and non-Nubian Sudanese workers used to live in the Tippets quarter. Migrant Egyptians occupied the Basalawa quarter. They had migrated from Upper Egypt searching for a better standard of living and settled here adopting Sudanese nationality, but without forgetting their traditions of Egyptian *fellah*. A community of black people from the Nuba Mountains of Kordofan lived in the Gebel district. The only district to be inhabited only by Nubians and with Nubian characteristics was the Dabarosa one. (Described by Dafalla 1975:15-19; personal communications by old members of the Wadi Halfa community).

composed of beautiful traditional houses, examples of the architecture that along with the Nubian language is the most representative aspect of modern Nubian culture. It was here that the traditional architecture and the language of the Nubians were kept almost intact.³¹³

The remains of the ancient civilization, scattered all over the area, were sources of pride to the people living beside them.³¹⁴ The history of the High Dam and the *International Campaign to Save the Monuments of Nubia* in the Sudan is the history of Wadi Halfa and its district. The construction of the High Dam raised the awareness among Nubians that the loss of their monuments could cause something the loss of more than a simple building of mud: that of their identity.

The monuments of the area, the city of Wadi Halfa, and twenty-seven surrounding villages were drowned by submerged in the waters of Lake Nasser (or Lake Nubia as it is obviously called in the Sudan). Fifty thousand people were relocated in foreign places, at Khasham El Qirba, in the Kassala area, 300 km. east of Khartoum. The new environment has placed restrictions on a number of the activities that characterized the social life in the previous location, as among them the observance of the ceremonies linked to the Nile³¹⁵ and the daily life of the extended family. In Wadi Halfa area, the family network was based on sharing the same house and the wealth of palm trees, that created a form of social cohesion.³¹⁶ The compounds of the new areas have limited space for shared family life. To sum up: values, patterns of social relationships, ways of subsistence, art as expression, language, local architecture and the fashioning of objects to be used in everyday life are now in danger of disappearing.³¹⁷ Nubians are struggling to save their past and their continuity, their identity is undergoing dramatic changes and even disappearing, linguistically speaking, in the context of the new places in which they live. Connecting with the past is important to saving a people's future, and in this respect museums can play a key role. In spite of the strong pressure by the Sudanese government to force the indigenous dwellers of Wadi Halfa to leave the area in 1964, a few of them refused to budge, preferring to stay in their homeland that had contributed so much to the formation of their identity. In the beginning these inhabitants persevered and continued to live on the banks of Lake Nubia (Lake Nasser) enduring desperately difficult living conditions, until they finally settled in their current location. The city of Halfa today spreads out at least 50 km southward away from the original location of the city and consists of a series of connected villages. The Nubia Museum of Wadi Halfa is planned to be built in the locality of *Ahir el Bohaira* (The End Lake), on a piece of land of 9.69 *feddan*: (40,720 m²) obtained by community and authorities participation.

The museum will also be built by local community participation. Paraphrasing the words of the famous Egyptian Architect Hassan Fathy, the museum can fulfill the dream of those old Nubian pioneers to preserve not only the antiquities by the creation of its buildings but also by allowing Nubians to participate in the revitalization of their folk architecture and their intangible local heritage. Hassan Fathy has written:

³¹³Wenzel, 1972.

³¹⁴ The involvement of Nubians in the Salvage Campaign of the 1960s was notable, despite the sadness for what they were losing at the same time.

³¹⁵ Kennedy, 1978.

³¹⁶ Cf. Chapter 1.

³¹⁷Fernea, 1973. Although the survey was limited to Egyptian Nubia, its analysis can be also applied to the Sudanese part of Nubia. In the framework of the project for the creation of the Wadi Halfa Museum, an Ethnological Survey of the Nubian communities of Wadi Halfa is currently being carried out. A first phase was executed by the UNESCO Cairo Office and implemented by the Nubian Language Society in Khartoum. Most of the members of this Society are from Wadi Halfa.

The vernacular architecture traditions witnessed in Old Nubia prior to the construction of Aswan High Dam in Egypt and the subsequent flooding of Nubia, mean more than just a unique aesthetic and ingenious method of building. It represented an 'owner-builder' system by which architecture could express all the intricacies of the community's socio-economic, political and cultural heritages. The processes involved in constructing and completing buildings were in many ways important to Nubian culture than the material end product they yielded. The structures of Old Nubia were the manifestation and perpetuation of a necessary social environment based upon communal interaction and harmonious interdependence. The cooperative effort which was so essential in the creation of a Nubian village not only served to strengthen social ties, but developed a firm sense of place and the bonds of pride and mutual respect which are so strongly tied to community achievement.³¹⁸

The creation of this museum can offer a new platform for all future relevant social, cultural and economic development of the city. If this museum is successful, it will encourage many forcibly displaced immigrants to return to their homeland.

A new museum concept

The planned Nubian Museum of Wadi Halfa has been conceived as a cultural space where the local environment, traditional architecture, the Nubian community and their intangible heritage and archeological artifacts interact as integral parts of the same whole.

The community, in cooperation with the authorities, is contributing to the museum creation by symbolic remuneration or voluntary work. This obviously does not represent a condition but a symbol of interest.³¹⁹

In the proposed concept, the museum will have a dual function: 1) to preserve Nubian contemporary culture and, 2) to connect it with its millennial past of which it is a direct continuation. This dual function has to be put into practice in an appropriate manner if we want to avoid what happened with the Nubia Museum of Aswan: this museum has been primarily transformed mainly into a place of commemoration of the past and its link to the present is weak. If this mistake is to be avoided, the new museum needs to be above all a community-based museum conceived as a compound, including a building for the historical and archeological artifacts and an *Interactive Nubian Village*. This combination will constitute a sort of eco-museum emphasizing the importance of the whole and the interdependence of all its parts which will be presented below.

The building for the historical-archeological artifacts will display an archeological collection composed principally of objects discovered in Wadi Halfa during the *International Campaign to Save the Monuments of Nubia* in the sixties. The collection, currently kept in Khartoum,³²⁰ where it was moved when the old museum in Wadi Halfa was closed, will be brought back to the original homeland after more than fifty years. This building for the historical and archeological artifacts will consist of five major display halls. A first gallery will introduce

³¹⁸ Fathi, 1999: i.v.

³¹⁹ Owing to the current economic difficulties, the fund raising for the museum is not going as quickly as might have been hoped but, despite this, the community is not stopping its efforts. Training programs in traditional architecture, commenced by UNESCO, are continuing in order to allow the community to participate both in creating the museum building and to its future maintenance.

³²⁰ The largest pieces of the collection are stored at the National Museum in Khartoum, all the rest is in the storage at the Khalifa Museum.

Nubia from Prehistory to Islam. This gallery will be a reduced version of the Sudan National Museum in Khartoum, offering the local community a comprehensive idea of ancient Nubian civilization. The gallery, for those who visit Wadi Halfa from Aswan, will offer a complementary view of those missing elements of the Nubia Museum of Aswan caused by a lack of pieces originating from Sudanese Nubia.

By placing objects and images in their original context, a second gallery will present *The International Campaign to Save the Monuments of Nubia* that, in the Sudan, is the history of Wadi Halfa. Intertwined with the archeological display will be an exhibition of ‘the exodus’ of the resettled local communities. No less than the stones, these communities were moved but in many cases the proper documentation of their ‘story’ has been neglected. This topic is still missing in the Nubia Museum of Aswan.

A third section will focus on the history of the city of Wadi Halfa: situated in the core of the Nubian area and entry point from Egypt to Sudan, it has been always strategically important in the history of the country. The city was the headquarters (1895-1898) of the British-led forces whose purpose was to defeat the forces of Abadallah El Taayishi, the second leader of the *Mahdia* Rebellion. These events led to the construction of the famous railway which runs from Wadi Halfa, to Khartoum.

A fourth space will be dedicated to the links between Wadi Halfa and the Nubian Desert. The gold-mines of this desert were the principal lure for the Pharaohs and will be also the main subject of this room, which at its center will feature a model of the beautiful archeological site of Berenix Panchrisos, discovered in the middle of the desert.³²¹

Finally, there will be an area for temporary exhibitions serving not only to create events and attract potential visitors, but also to educate the community about new cultural subjects. This room could also be a space for dialogue with present-day cultural forms (songs, films, TV, Internet) as these are experienced by Nubian youths.

An *Interactive Nubian Village* will be the other and more ‘original’ component of the museum compound. The village will be used to revive and protect the intangible Nubian heritage. It will be integrated into the local environment and constructed, as in traditional architecture, of local *jalous* (mud-bricks). The mission of the Nubian Museum of Wadi Halfa is to compensate the mostly archeological character of the Nubia Museum of Aswan by emphasizing and protecting the intangible heritage of the Nubians. In the Wadi Halfa Museum this heritage, captured in the Ethnographic Section of the Nubia Museum of Aswan in the form of a diorama, is performed by people bringing a sense of ‘living history’.

The objective of this museum concept, emphasizing the role of the *Interactive Village*, will be to preserve the traditions of the modern Nubians through concrete activities. The role of professional folklorists and folklore institutions in documenting and preserving the records of the endangered traditions of Nubia has sustained the traditions themselves by supporting the practitioners. This support for the practitioners has entailed a shift from artifacts (tales, songs and customs) to people (performers, artisans, and healers), highlighting their knowledge and skills. This approach will enlarge the scope of intangible heritage and the measures to protect it.³²²

The first component of the *Interactive Village* will be *The Nubian House*. As farming is known to have been the main work of Nubians throughout history, the local Nubian houses reflect farming principally as a social activity through their motifs and decorative styles. For the ancient

³²¹ Artifacts and images of the Eastern Nubian Desert are exhibited in Varese, Italy, at the ‘Dependance’ of Villa Tosplitz (Cf. in Chapter 7 related sub-section).

³²² Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, 2004: 221-222.

farmers, the *Nubian House* was much more than a mere family dwelling. It represented their entire daily life on the banks of the Nile and all the rituals to which this gave rise, inspiring the decorative style of the houses. These farming traditions will be depicted in the *Nubian House* together with the original folk art of Nubia, in which decorative symbols refer to different religions and different cultural influences, as among them ancient rituals, African cults, Christianity, Islam and so on.³²³

Rashid Adam, architect/designer of the museum and a Nubian himself, has selected three models of Nubian house in North Sudan to be reproduced in the museum building. The façades will be similar to those of some houses recorded in an archive of photographs by Marian Wenzel before the construction of the Dam (Figs. 31, 32, 33). Some of these photographs show the name of the house's owner. In such a case, the house in the museum will be named after him.



Fig. 31: Ancient Fedija houses before their submersion

³²³ The first two houses are under creation with the support of community members, specifically women, trained with the technical support of UNESCO Cairo Office to use their folk heritage in decorating Nubian houses. In Old Nubia, women decorated their dwellings.



Fig. 32: Wadi Halfa Museum (General plan of the museum which recalls the layout of an ancient Fedija village: Rashid Abdelfattah Adam's drawing)



Fig. 33: Wadi Halfa Museum (Façade of one of the houses of the *Interactive Village*: Rashid Abdelfattah Adam's drawing)

The shift in perspective from artifacts to people is clearly differentiated by the other components of the *Interactive Village*. A group of Nubian traditional houses constituting the *Handicraft Centre* will be devoted to the production and display of eight different forms of Nubian

handicrafts.³²⁴ Of particular concern is the general neglect of the production of art and handicrafts as the community had to adjust to adopting new lifestyles to cope with its new environment.

As Ossama Abdel Wareth, former director of the Nubia Museum of Aswan and a Nubian himself states:

The arts and crafts, as essential parts of the cultural material folklore, embody and reflect the history and beliefs of the Nubians. Today very few Nubians below the age of twenty are knowledgeable about these traditional arts and the folklore associated with their intangible heritage and history, while members of the older generation with the knowledge and skills are passing away the museum has to recognize the potential loss of Nubian cultural wealth with the passage of the older generation (this holds for all cultures everywhere) as well as to seek practical ways of stemming this loss in a particularly fragile socio-historical context. A feasible approach is to facilitate opportunities for the older generation to educate and train interested members of the younger generation. This is a realistic attempt to resuscitate Nubian handcraft skills, and to involve young Nubian women in income-generating activities.³²⁵

The museum will also host a *Centre for Revitalizing, Promoting and Teaching Modern Nubian Language (Nobiin language)*. *Nobiin*, the language of the modern Nubians, is considered an endangered language and faces the risk of extinction. The new generations of Nubians, raised elsewhere, speak almost exclusively Arabic. It is predicted that, in less than twenty years, the *Nobiin* language will completely disappear, if appropriate measures are not being taken. The revitalization of the Nubian language is one of the tasks of the Nubia Museum of Wadi Halfa. An inclusive program will be prepared in cooperation with members of the local community, interested in this field, to transmit this language to the community at large using different curriculum levels to address child and adult groups. The curricula will be designed to use documented oral culture such as folk tales, songs, poems for children and adults, proverbs, tongue twisters and folk history.

Another space in the *Interactive Village* will be devoted to the *Nubian Theatre* in an effort to preserve and sustain Nubian music, singing and musical instruments. The *kisir*, used for different folk dance performances characterized by handclapping and agile body movements, is one of these instruments. These dances, which include both male and female participants, are also accompanied by the use of various folk percussion instruments. The *Nubian Theatre* will not only be a tool by which to preserve traditional Nubian music and songs, it will also keep alive the atmosphere of the village. Special musical events will be organized on a regular basis and perhaps institutionalized on a fixed day so as to become events that could attract visitors. These events could also include new music (in Arabic as well) to draw attention to modern cultural forms.

A space will also be devoted to the *Nubian Cuisine*, and there will be a *Nile Ships and Boats Cruises Centre*. The *Nubian Cuisine* will serve typical Nubian meals and is included in the *Interactive Village* of the museum to ensure the preservation and promotion of Nubian food. The products will be supplied through the idea of the *Local Farm*, created in dedicated parts of the land near the lake, to be cultivated by the local farmers using traditional Nubian farming tools and a traditional water-wheel for irrigation. Moreover, the presence of the lake has inspired the architect

³²⁴ The exhibition and workshops will focus on the following subjects: pottery; woodwork; palm-frond weaving; cotton textiles; jewelry; women's ornaments; traditional farm tools; a Nubian wedding display; a traditional Nubian therapy display; and a Nubian ruler's house (*goortin noog*) display.

³²⁵ Abdel Wareth Abdel Meguid, 2005: 225-226.

to add to the original concept the local activity of sailing within the museum project landscape. Sailing on the waters (once those of the Nile) could attract many visitors to the site. The sailing activity will take place on the lake and nearby there will also be a sort of display/workshop in which tools and techniques for making and preserving local boats and ships will be on display.

Nobiin, along with Arabic and English, will be used to label the whole area to ensure that the character of the museum is properly demarcated and will allow locals and visitors to familiarize themselves with this language. Ethno-archeological research, covering a number of archeological topics, will be also be activated. The greater part has been devised to show how the archeological record is formed and how to work back from the record to the behavior and society that produced it. Ceramic ethno-archeological studies, for example, include such topics as production, style, longevity, use, disposal and function, as well as changes in any of these areas.

Museum Tourist Development Strategy

Although issues relating to tourism development are not relevant to this dissertation, they do need to be addressed briefly since tourism will play an important role in the success of the museum. Museums located in peripheral areas are often afflicted with problems of maintenance and operability on account of their failure to attract large hordes of tourists, and those who do come are often not very affluent, and because of their marginalization by the authorities.

One of the practical problems of the Wadi Halfa Museum is not its construction, but the design of its future cultural and tourism *raison d'être*, that has to be done in a way that it ensures that it is sustainable, successful and able to attract visitors. Wadi Halfa, although seen by Sudanese as a remote area, is located on the border of Egypt and this makes it a strategic place. Abu Simbel, considered to be one of the most famous archeological sites of the world and situated just 50 km north from Wadi Halfa, represents a vantage point in the touristic master plan of the museum. It will certainly encourage the large number of tourists who visit the famous temples of Abu Simbel on a daily basis to visit Wadi Halfa with a two-day visa extension for the Sudan.

Included in this holistic vision, which also embraces Egyptian Nubia, is the fact that Wadi Halfa lies at the heart of the Nubian area and can take advantage of tourists coming from both north and south. It will represent the core of the Nubian area, a scientific and cultural center of propulsion for the region between the First and the Third Cataract of the Nile, rich in important archeological sites and beautiful Nubian villages. A specific tour to Nubia, with trained guides, commencing from Aswan and continuing through the sites of Lake Nasser, culminating at Wadi Halfa, or continuing farther south, could offer a deeper and clearer view of the history of Nubia. At the moment, the surviving monuments are explained in a vacuum of local history and a modern context.

Wadi Halfa can also be the entry point to the Eastern or Nubian Desert with its interesting gold- mines and archeological remains. This tour can be facilitated by the historical Wadi Halfa-Khartoum railway, that crosses the most barren part of this desert. Here, besides the archeological remains, visitors can also have interesting encounters with the local Bedja and be able to appreciate their particular and unique traditions.³²⁶

This concept proposal has been specifically designed to make the Wadi Halfa Museum into a dynamic institution and an integral part of the Wadi Halfa community, linking past and present to make a better future.³²⁷

³²⁶ Briggs *et al.*, 2009.

³²⁷ The foundation-stone of the Museum was laid on April 22, 2008. The ceremony accompanying it was also shared with Nubians who came from Egypt, specifically from Aswan (Fig. 34).



Fig. 34: Nubians from Wadi Halfa and Aswan celebrating the laying of the foundation stone of the Nubia Museum of Wadi Halfa (04/ 21/2008)

CHAPTER 6

Visions and Evolutions of Nubian Collections in Their Homeland

There is only one place where this tour of the Nubian collection worldwide can begin, the homeland of the collections: Egypt and the Sudan. The criteria of presentation set out below coincide with the display policy adopted by each of the two countries. The description of the museums in Egypt follows a chronological order. From my point of view, Egypt is the country where it is easiest to follow the conceptual evolution of Nubian collections display: from the 'Land of the Unknown', exemplified in the Egyptian Museum in Cairo, to the creation of a Museum of the Nubian Civilization in Aswan/Nubia. It must be noted that, before the creation of the Nubia Museum of Aswan that absorbed most of the collections owned by other museums in the country, Nubian artifacts were distributed in museums according to their historical period: Pharaonic and contemporary Nubian items in the Egyptian Museum in Cairo,³²⁸ the rest in the Greco-Roman, Coptic and Islamic Museums. The last locations in which they are presented in Egypt are the few objects displayed in new museums and a 'Sudanese curiosity' at the University Museum of Alexandria.

In the presentation of the museums in the Sudan, the criteria followed have taken into consideration the different display policies in the various states that make up the country. I shall begin with those located at the center of power: Khartoum. Here we find what are considered the most important museums for both archeology and ethnography, the Sudan National Museum of Khartoum, where Nubian heritage might give the impression of being as the only official heritage of the country, and the Ethnographic Museum. I have also decided to mention the University of Khartoum that, although in possession of only a small collection on Nubia, is considered the center of the intellectual power.

Museums in the Northern State (Nubia) are the next stop on this tour. Here we find what are essentially site museums built near archeological sites. Their primary functions are the keeping and showing of objects from these sites. These functions have been enhanced by socially conscious efforts that are also of equal benefit to the knowledge of the local community.

This tour is completed with a look at the museums in the 'other' areas of the country, in particular the west of the Sudan where local museums that also contain of Nubian artifacts have a special mission. The target of these museums is to show ethnographic and historical artifacts of the local history and a collection of Nubian antiquities as a way of presenting a course for the cultural trajectory of the development of 'all' the Sudan from Prehistory to Islam.

The 'geographical' tour of the collections - subdivided among collections in the homelands and abroad - will of course be linked to the categories of museums discussed in Chapter 5 (Egyptian Museums, Universal and University Museums, Nubia Museum, National Museum, Other specialized Museums, Regional Museums, Ethnographic Museums, Private Collections).

³²⁸ Part of this Museum is formed by a large collection of artifacts from the X Group or Ballana culture.

Egypt: From the Egyptian Museum in Cairo to the Nubia Museum of Aswan

Egyptian Museum (Cairo)

A number of valuable artifacts were taken from the Sudan during the Anglo-Egyptian protectorate of that country. However, the greatest flow of Nubian artifacts arrived at the museum from the salvage campaigns.

The Egyptian Museum in Cairo was created during the same period as the *First Archaeological Survey of Nubia*,³²⁹ during which the remains of a hitherto unknown culture were brought to light. This huge systematic archeological activity, carried out over so large an area in such a short time, was considered a great event in itself. Unfortunately, the scholarly bias of the specialists involved, at the time part of a common western way of thinking, affected the interpretation of the Nubian materials, dismissing them as crude versions of the Egyptian material. Bowing to this judgment, the Egyptian Museum in Cairo never had a gallery specifically dedicated to Nubian culture and its development. Only one room, (at the time designated Room 44) displayed a selection of objects from one of the most important archeological discoveries of the area: the Royal Tombs of Ballana and Qustul.³³⁰ Although the room was virtually hidden away, the life-size copies of horses buried with the owners of the tombs drew public attention. The presence of this 'single space' can unquestionably be attributed to the need to show the magnificence of this particular discovery made during the *Second Archaeological Survey of Nubia* (1929-1931).³³¹

The rest of the Nubian collection was completely intermixed with the Egyptian collection, following the chronological order in which the ground floor of the museum is organized. The result is that the Nubian collection is almost invisible, perhaps even to the most careful observer. Its display reflects the traditionalist Egyptologists' perception of Nubia at the time.

Today the number of Nubian objects displayed has decreased notably. When the the Nubia Museum of Aswan was constructed in the nineties, part of the collection was moved there.

In an attempt to follow the 'invisible' Nubian tour of the museum, we can begin on the first floor balcony where items related to the Pan Grave, A and C Groups are displayed in three small showcases in a completely anonymous area (Fig. 35). The labels related to the Pan Grave material,³³² unchanged from the beginning of the last century, are illustrative of how the Nubian culture was considered a sort of mystery at the time. One says:

It appears that there were small colonies of this people scattered over Upper Egypt during the Second Intermediate Period who differ both in race and customs from Egyptians.

In the two showcases displaying A Group and contemporary Egyptian early-Dynastic artifacts as well as the best pottery production of the C Group,³³³ neither the nature nor the origin of these objects is mentioned.

The two models of a regiment of Nubian soldiers in painted wood, found in a tomb at Assyut, is displayed in the nearby room to highlight the greatness of the Egyptian craftsmen rather

³²⁹ The Egyptian Museum opened its doors to the public in 1902 and the First Archeological Survey of Nubia was conducted between 1907 and 1912.

³³⁰ Egyptian Antiquities Organization, 1980.

³³¹ Emery, 1938.

³³² The first showcase, dedicated to the Pan Graves, contains pottery, leather bags and sandals, parts of garments, and decorated animal bones from excavations at Mostagedda, Egypt (Brunton, 1937).

³³³ It includes beautiful incised pottery, the typical terracotta figurines with an apotropaic character, jewelry and amulets.

than comment on a part of the Nubian culture. This explicative gap is filled by a copy of this masterpiece of wooden art transferred to the Nubia Museum of Aswan where the link with Nubia is clearly emphasized.



Fig. 35: Egyptian Museum in Cairo: C Group pottery showcase

The Nubian tour continues on the ground floor, in the area dedicated to the New Kingdom. At this point, I wish to highlight one of the examples related to the terminological problematic surrounding Nubia. In one corner are displayed the stelae and lintels from the temple of Wadi el-Sebua that belonged to the Viceroy of Nubia, Setau, who is called in the labels, according to one of the many definitions of Nubia, ‘Governor of Ethiopia’.³³⁴ The use of an erroneous terminology, at variance with that which is considered correct, is certainly a misleading element with which visitors have to contend. A notable lack of information is glaringly apparent in the corridor dedicated to the 25th Dynasty and the Late Period.³³⁵ Here the famous stela of King Piankhi, among other objects, brought here from Gebel Barkal during the Anglo-Egyptian occupation of the Sudan and considered one of the most important epigraphic document of this period,³³⁶ has no label and no reference to its provenance.

The Meroitic artifacts³³⁷ are displayed in the Greco-Roman section and are labeled but simply to say that they are Meroitic. The nub of the matter is whether the average visitor understands what ‘Meroitic’ means, if there is no explanatory text or chronological comparative table framework that might elucidate it.

The last artifacts that we encounter in this Nubian tour of the museum are those of the Royal Tombs of Ballana and Qustul, no longer in Room 44 but in the nearby corridor where the lack of the life-size horses,³³⁸ now in Aswan, and of proper explanations impairs the visibility and the understanding of these objects (Figs. 36, 37). Several other artifacts belonging to the Nubian collections are still in storage.

³³⁴ Barsanti and Gauthier, 1911: 64-86.

³³⁵ The 25th Dynasty collection includes a lot of statuary.

³³⁶ Grimal, 1981.

³³⁷ These objects include statuettes, pottery, architectural elements, offering tables.

³³⁸ In one showcase, there is now only a life-size head of horse (Fig. 37).



Fig. 36: Egyptian Museum in Cairo: X Group (Ballana Culture), Meroitic and 25th Dynasty artifacts



Fig. 37: Egyptian Museum in Cairo: horse's head cast - Ballana Culture

The Egyptian Museum in Cairo is an interesting example of how Nubian culture was perceived at the dawn of its discovery: 'the Land of the Unknown'. Although I would recommend a general approach (namely, that Nubian collections should be displayed separately or more clearly presented to better highlight the cultural diversity of Egypt and the Sudan), in the case of the Egyptian Museum in Cairo I would say that everything should be left as it is to keep track of the history of Nubian exhibitions. With new explanatory labels to highlight the story of the archeological interpretation and display of Nubian cultural materials, it would represent an example of the traditional perception of Nubia in the context of museums.

Coptic Museum, Cairo

As we have seen in Chapter 5, Nubia is also being displayed in specialized museums according to its different historical phases. The Coptic Museum in Cairo is a specialized museum for Christian artifacts from wherever they might have been found in the Nile Valley. Since 1939,³³⁹ it has been the institution assigned to hold the most important collection of Nubian objects from the Christian period, many of which, following the Salvage Campaign of the sixties, were displayed in a Nubian Gallery in the old wing of the museum.³⁴⁰ The aim of the old Nubian wing was to show the Nubian dimension of the Christian artistic production of the area.

Although since 1997 the Nubia Museum of Aswan has absorbed most of the collection, the Coptic Museum continues to hold many objects of great importance³⁴¹ including a unique collection of manuscripts. In recent years, the museum has been subject to a large project of rehabilitation consisting in changes in the display, the installation of new showcases, the restoration of some artifacts and of the building itself. This new display, opened to the public on 26 June 2006, has a geographical arrangement of the objects. Only in a area of the first room the collection is displayed artistically.³⁴² A Nubian wing no longer exists and there are now a few artifacts dispersed over several galleries. The remaining objects would have still allowed a small meaningful individualized display of Nubia.³⁴³

The Ethnographic Museum in Cairo

To those attempting to obtain a perception of the feeling of European colonialists and of that society of 'pioneers of enlightenment', rationalism and scientific thinking,³⁴⁴ that held its meetings here, the Ethnographic Museum in Cairo is an interesting experience. It is located in the building of the National Geographic Society founded by Khedive Ismail as an independent organization on the 19 May 1875. The Museum, created in 1895, consists of five main halls labeled the Cairo Hall, the Africa Hall, Egyptian Ethnography and a general hall about Egypt. The organization of the museum is far from being either attractive or clear, especially for ordinary visitors. The display is very disorganized both in terms of showcases and labels, and this is compounded by the weak lighting.

Although the general organization of the museum leaves plenty of room for improvement, the wealth of information about the lifestyles of people in nineteenth-century Egypt and Africa is notable. Detailed information illuminates the habits and customs of Egyptians with special emphasis on geographical distribution. A whole array of different cultural customs are portrayed, including those for wedding ceremonies. Other topics include public baths, circumcision, smoking habits, women's ornaments, musical instruments and toys. There are also period paintings, statues and other artifacts.

³³⁹ In 1939, the Service of Antiquities decided to transfer the totality of the Christian antiquities exhibited in the Egyptian Museum, including those from Nubia, to the Coptic Museum. Since then, all finds from Christian sites have automatically gone to the Coptic Museum.

The outstanding collection was formed especially by the beautiful church frescoes from Abdallah Nirqi (the rest of these frescoes are part of the holding of the Museum of Leiden) as well as beautiful icons and texts from churches at Qasr Ibrim, Qasr el Wizz (notable is the famous codex of Qasr el Wizz) and from other Nubian sites (Gabra, 1990).

³⁴¹ They include the frescoes of Abu Oda, many of the gravestones from Sakinya, pottery, textiles, wood-work and basketry as well as a unique collection of manuscripts in Old Nubian and Coptic. (For the gravestones of Sakinya cf. Monneret de Villard, 1935:170 -175; Monneret de Villard, II 1935: 73 -74; Monneret de Villard IV, 1957: 172-173; Monneret de Villard 1933; Mina, 1942.

³⁴² Tomoum, 2010 : 27-33.

³⁴³ I would like to thank Ezzat Salib for his cooperation.

³⁴⁴ Cf. Chapter 4, 73-74.

How does Nubia fare in the arrangement? In the Cairo Hall (*Le Caire* Room) there are a few showcases exhibiting small statues of people in traditional dress from various regions of Egypt. The statues depict the types of people who perform different jobs. The Nubian, completely dark, with his white robe and turban depicts the trusted southern immigrant, keeper of many Egyptian buildings (Figs. 38, 39).

The Africa Hall (*L'Afrique* Room) displays various examples of handcrafted items, some of which were produced in the Nubian area (Figs. 40, 41). This arrangement - separating the African Hall from the Egyptian Ethnography Hall - including Nubian artifacts in both of them, reveals an obvious bias in the view of the creators of this part of the Museum: Egypt as separated from its continent and the ambiguous position of Nubia that is part of both.



Fig. 38: Ethnographic Museum in Cairo: showcase exhibiting small statues of people in traditional dress from various regions of Egypt (Room *Le Caire*)



Fig. 39: Ethnographic Museum in Cairo: Entrance to the *Le Caire* Room



Fig. 40: Ethnographic Museum in Cairo: Sudanese/Nubian *angareb* (Room *L'Afrique*)



Fig. 41: Ethnographic Museum in Cairo: Entrance to the *L'Afrique* Room

Aswan Museum, Aswan (Elephantine Island)

As has the Egyptian Museum in Cairo, this museum has a traditional perception of the idea of Nubia. Nonetheless its geographical location, the history of its creation and the formation of the collection that interests us, have established a special and inseparable relationship with Nubia which makes it one of the most fascinating museums on the long list presented in this research.

The first link with Nubia, of a geographical nature, is its magnificent position that overlooks the first of the six cataracts that characterize the Nubian Nile Valley (Fig. 42). The museum is located on the island that is considered the border between Egypt and Nubia. The second link, the historical one, is the fact that the museum was originally the home of the main author of the project that changed the fate of Nubia forever. His name was Sir William Willcocks, a British civil engineer who proposed and designed the Aswan Dam. The building dates back to 1898, but the Antiquities Organization transformed it into a museum when the construction of the dam was completed in 1912. It is the oldest regional museum in Egypt, and it was founded to hold material from Elephantine Island and the Aswan area in general.



Fig. 42: Aswan/Elephantine Museum

The third link is related to contents. The period of the creation of the museum coincided with the termination of the *First Archaeological Survey of Nubia*, therefore it became one of the first homes for many of the artifacts unearthed during this survey. Today, most of these materials are part of the collection of the Nubia Museum.³⁴⁵

³⁴⁵ Cf. Nubia Museum sub- section.

In the nineteen most of the collection of this museum moved to the new Nubia Museum of Aswan. However, various objects from Nubia continue to be part of the museum holdings.

Four rooms in Willcocks's house contain, in chronological order, materials related to different periods of Pre-Dynastic and Pharaonic Egypt.³⁴⁶ Intermingled with these materials are a few items from Egyptian Nubia.³⁴⁷ The captions, unchanged from the time of the establishment of the museum, do not provide the precise names of the sites of provenance but only bear the general indication of 'Nubia'.

Although not directly dedicated to Nubia, this museum has a history linked to it, in spite of a certain lack of historical and archeological awareness related to some holdings. For example, a stela, currently the most important piece from Nubia in the museum, is located in the circular corridor (added later by the Egyptian archaeologist Labib Habashi) where Christian and Islamic artifacts are displayed. The stela is hidden by a heavy wooden frame and seems to resemble the many others exhibited in the same area. Only a few know that it is of paramount importance to the history of Christianity in Nubia; it is the foundation stone of Ikmindi, one of the most important Christian city-fortresses of Lower Nubia.³⁴⁸ Probably when the largest part of the collection was moved to the Nubia Museum, where a *maquette* of the city-fortress of Ikhmindi is on display, the significance of this stela was not understood. This is confirmed by the caption which indicates that it is a 'Sandstone stela containing 15 lines in Greek language - Greek period'. In fact, the language of the stela is not Greek but Old Nubian.

The importance of the stela was confirmed in a letter accompanying the photos that Sergio Donadoni of the University of Rome La Sapienza (Italy) sent to the Nubia Museum in 2000 when it was enriched by the photo gallery *Nubia Submerged: through their eyes with their own words*, of which the author of this work was the motivator and curator.³⁴⁹ The photo gallery is devoted to submerged Lower Nubia and houses a permanent exhibition of 168 photographs of those sites either today underwater or those dismantled and relocated elsewhere. The photos were taken by people who participated in the several salvage campaigns.³⁵⁰

The photo gallery exhibits a photograph of the stela kindly provided to the writer of this research by Donadoni who, at the time of the Nubia Campaign, investigated Ikhmindi. In a letter communicating his willingness to provide the photo Donadoni wrote:

I received the request to supply some photographs on our excavations and activities in Nubia, and passed the list on to Rome, where our archives are kept. I take this opportunity to suggest that you ask the Nubia Museum in Aswan to display the stela of Tokiltoeton, found by us at Ikhmindi, that we deposited in the Aswan Museum (Elephantine). It testifies to the advent of Christianity in Nubia. It is a document of particular importance, that is worthy of being displayed rather than reproduced.³⁵¹

³⁴⁶ Old Kingdom, Middle Kingdom and New Kingdom periods.

³⁴⁷ Red-polished and polished black topped pottery as well as Pre-dynastic palettes.

³⁴⁸ Donadoni, 1959; Donadoni, 1981: 64-65.

³⁴⁹ Marino and De Simone, 2000.

³⁵⁰ More details will be given below in the section on the Nubia Museum.

³⁵¹ Italian original version of the letter: 'Ho ricevuto a suo tempo l'invito a fornire alcune fotografie relative ai nostri scavi e alle nostre attività in Nubia, e ho passato allora l'elenco a Roma, dove è conservato il nostro archivio [...] Con l'occasione le suggerisco di chiedere al museo di Aswan che sia esposta l'iscrizione di Tokiltoeton, trovata da noi ad Ikhmindi, che testimonia l'ingresso del cristianesimo in Nubia e che è stata da noi depositata nel Museo di Elefantina. E' un documento di particolare importanza che varrebbe la pena di presentare piu' che di riprodurre'. (Sergio Donadoni, 3/01/2000).

This stela, still anonymously displayed at the Aswan Museum, would be better used enriching the Christian section of the Nubia Museum. A few other materials from the Aswan Museum are in the storage.³⁵²

Nubia Museum, Aswan

Its success has been in integrating the past, present and future by creating an educational institution dedicated to Nubian history, a contemporary focus for the revival of Nubian culture and a museum designed to promote and preserve cultural artifacts for the future in a single building.³⁵³ (Fig. 43)



Fig.43: Nubia Museum: External wall bearing the name of the Museum

With these words the Nubia Museum of Aswan received, with nine other museums in the world, the Aga Khan Award for Architecture in 2001 from among the original 427 projects submitted to the jury. The construction of this museum represents the crowning glory of the Nubia Salvage Campaign, symbol of international cooperation and the history to the present-day Nubians.

The need to create a house for the artifacts from the area that was going to be submerged forever clearly emerged at the very beginning of the campaign. A contract to build the museum

³⁵²I would like to thank Athef Naguib from Aswan/Elephantine Museum and Ossama Abdel Wareth for providing me with the complete list of stored objects, of which I include here only a summary. They consist primarily of a great quantity of coins (Ptolemaic, Roman, Byzantine and some with no date). There are god-goddess statuettes, beads, amulets, some jewelry of various materials, daily utensils and hunting equipment and pottery. It is impossible to give most of these objects a precise site provenance or date.

³⁵³ *The Aga Khan Award for Architecture, 2001- The Eight Cycle, 1999-2001: Nubia Museum, Aswan, Egypt.* Aga Khan Development Network. July 3, 2002. <http://www.akdn.org>

was signed in 1967, but it took more than a decade before it became a reality. Constructions began in 1980 and the museum opened its doors to the public, in the presence of President Hosni Mubarak, on 23 November 1997.³⁵⁴

The building was designed by the Egyptian architect Mahmoud el-Hakim, and the museum display was planned by the Mexican architect Pedro Ramirez Vasquez. Both reflect the new and innovative architectural concern of the late seventies. Built to offer a complete picture of Nubia throughout time, the museum design incorporates spaces and galleries devoted not only to artifacts but also to the geography, geology, ecology and the economic and social life of the area. The result is a remarkable achievement in holistic architectural design and content, blending with the traditions and the sands of Nubia. The museum nestles on a series of terraces reminiscent of a Nubian village or *nugu*, molding architectural forms into the surrounding environment (Fig. 44, 45).

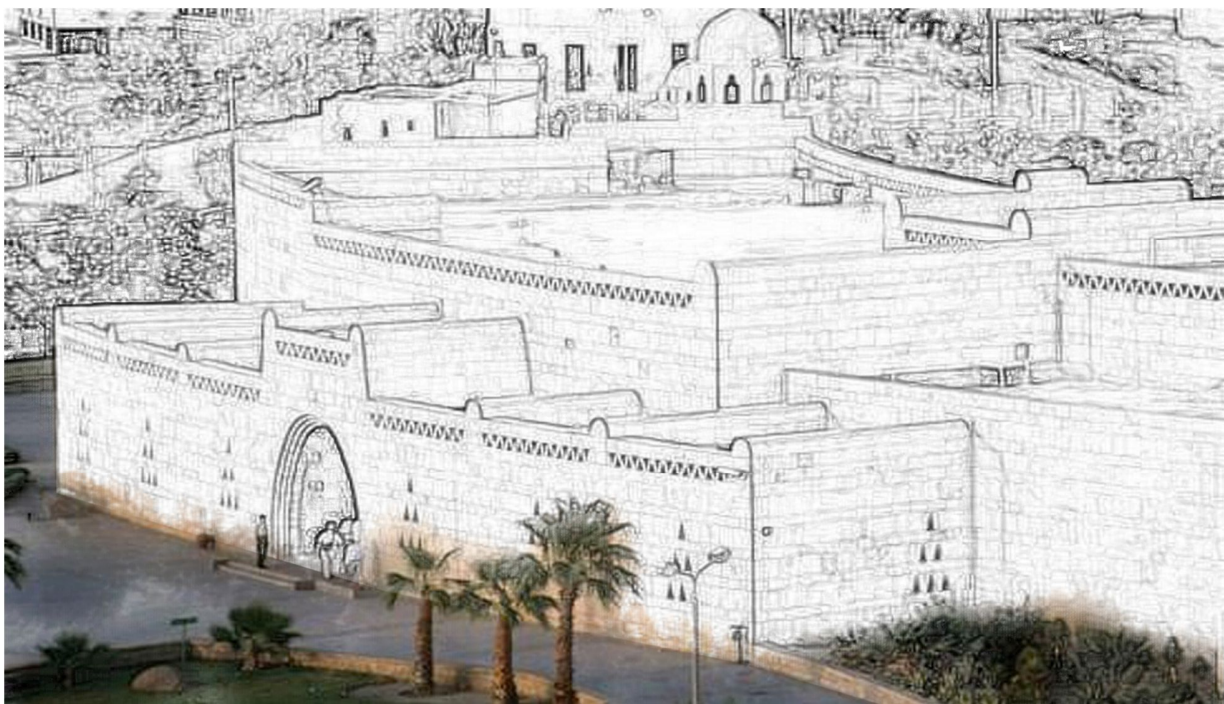


Fig. 44: Nubia Museum: View

³⁵⁴ Gaballa, 1997.



Fig. 45: Nubia Museum: Entrance to the main building

Traditionally these complexes once stood along the banks of the Nile, blending with terraces or appearing as a straight line rising slightly above a non-contoured riverbank (Fig. 46). This melding with the surrounding area exemplifies Nubian concerns and, on a practical level, provided camouflage for the inhabitants.³⁵⁵



Fig. 46: Nubia Museum: A watercourse and lakes running in the Open Air Museum

The museum includes more than 3,000 objects excavated from various sites in Nubia, during the Salvage Campaigns that commenced at the beginning of the 1900s and terminated in 1981 with the UNESCO campaign. They had previously been kept in the Egyptian, Coptic and

³⁵⁵ De Simone, in press.

Islamic museums in Cairo, the Greek-Roman Museum in Alexandria, the Aswan Museum on Elephantine Island and in several storage facilities scattered all over the country.

The artifacts in the ethnographic section were collected from the Nubian communities of Aswan and Cairo. The display of the objects is organized chronologically beginning from the prehistoric period and finishing in the modern era. As they come from the Nubia Salvage Campaign, the collections are devoted to Lower Nubia in particular. Only a few objects, also found in Lower Nubian contexts, are representative of the cultures developed in Upper Nubia.

The route is one way, directing an uninterrupted flow of visitors, preventing any doubling back and getting in the way of the people behind. All the objects are well lit and labeled in state-of-the-art showcases. Efforts have been made to evoke the original surroundings of the exhibits, now of course lost, by the regular insertion of scale models of buildings from the historical periods represented.

The prehistoric section includes a large collection of material,³⁵⁶ partially displayed in the open-air museum. Moving chronologically, the route continues into the world of the A and C Groups the first cultures that represent the original way of life of the Nubians before Egypt began to influence it. The A Group and C Group cultures are introduced principally by the effective use of text panels in the display. A selection of objects produced by both Groups, in particular ceramics, are among the most striking artifacts displayed. An A Group tomb shows burial customs. The section also demonstrates how Egypt began to fit into Nubian history.

The excessive and strategic use of Pharaonic objects in the exhibition has often aroused heated discussions among scholars who consider these objects an attempt to absorb the simpler material culture of Nubia into the Pharaonic wealth of material.

To give an idea of the impact of the display on Egyptologists and their reaction to this 'new typology' of museum, below are some comments the Egyptologist Olaf E. Kaper, part of an article on the Nubia Museum he published just after its opening. Aware of the location of the Museum (in Egypt), Kaper comments objectively on the presence of Egyptian/Pharaonic artifacts in the display and their role in highlighting the longstanding relations between the two areas and their interdependency:

The museum presents the history of Nubia in the terms coined for the history of Egypt. The terms Old, Middle, and New Kingdom are used throughout, which is rather artificial but it has the advantage, apart from being familiar terms of reference for the visitor, of highlighting the intimate association of the Nubian culture with the Egyptian. The museum displays highlight these connections specifically.³⁵⁷

I hasten to add that most of the Pharaonic objects in the Nubia Museum are from Nubia and therefore an integral part of the story that the museum wants to tell. The colossus of the Pharaoh Ramses II, originally part of the external court of the temple of Gerf Hussein and now exhibited in a central area of the museum, has been one of the main targets of criticism. I agree with Kaper that the exhibition of this statue and similar architectural elements reflect the technical expertise and achievements in excising, reassembling and saving these big monuments of which Abu Simbel and

³⁵⁶ They consist of rock drawings (petroglyphs) and flint tools.

³⁵⁷ Kaper criticizes only the artificial way in which the Egyptian objects are grouped. The method follows an artistic rather than an historical criterion. He considers this policy a falsification on the part of the museum (Kaper, 1998: on line. cf. Annex V).

Philae are the most striking examples.³⁵⁸ The colossus of Ramses II is flanked by the beautiful pieces of the 25th Nubian Dynasty originally from Napata, their southern capital, and from Luxor, the northern capital.³⁵⁹ If the dimensions of the colossus of Ramses makes it a cynosure, the beauty of these pieces certainly do not make any less of an impact on the attention of the visitor (Fig. 47).

The second part of Kaper's article reveal that a more explicit clarification is required:

[...] Elsewhere, the chronological order of the objects in the museum has been sacrificed in favor of a more modern visual arrangement. The Kerma ceramics (four vessels) are displayed in the New Kingdom hall together with ceramics from Napata, Meroe, as well as the C-Group culture[...] The Meroitic culture was centered in Sudanese Nubia, and this important historical phase has, consequently, received only scant attention in the current museum display. Only some of the famous decorated ceramics from this period are shown and some of the characteristic funerary statues known as *ba*-birds. The scanty attention however is due not to neglect but simply to the lack of objects.³⁶⁰



Fig. 47: Nubia Museum: Statue of Ramses II surrounded by 25th Dynasty objects

The random presentation of some objects, favoring an artistic rather than an historical conceptual display, was adopted, as Kaper indicates, because of a dearth of artifacts. Most of the objects 'sacrificed' for an artistic display originate from the Sudanese part of the area and very few from Egypt. Unfortunately, in the textual part of the display (panels, captions, available guides), no explanation is given for this choice. The dearth of artifacts and the need to fill gaps in the museum itinerary has sometime penalized other contexts of Egypt, both in museums and on sites.³⁶¹

³⁵⁸ The chapel of the Viceroy of Nubian, Setau, carved on a cliff at Qasr Ibrim, and reassembled in the museum in the same area as the colossus is another example of the sense of these displayed architectural pieces.

³⁵⁹ Among the artifacts displayed here are some that deserve to be mentioned: the head of King Taharqa, the statue of the notable Harwa, *the dream stela* of Tanutamun, the statue of Horemakhet from Karnak among many others.

³⁶⁰ Kaper, 1998: on line.

³⁶¹ The Greco-Roman Museum in Alexandria and the Islamic Museum in Cairo have been deprived of their Nubian collections; the Coptic Museum has lost many of its masterpieces, de-motivating the authorities/curators to display, during the rehabilitation work, what is left. The recently reassembled temple of Gerf Hussein at Kalabsha is missing one of its colossal statue of Ramses II that was a pillar of the external court.

The criticism of the display gaps gives me the opportunity to bring this topic to a close with an observation: many academics think that a historical display should highlight all the phases of Nubian culture in the context of this Museum that is meant to be much more than a simple museum, as it contributes to the legitimation of the existence of a “Nubian culture”. The logical and ethical outcome would be that this would encourage other museums in the world to donate some of their artifacts (they have often stored- several copies of one typology of object) to the Nubia Museum, to fill the gaps in the present dearth of objects and historical periods. The historical and artistic display would then converge into a more complete and holistic presentation of Nubian culture and identity.

Moving chronologically, the life-size horses, as they did when they were displayed at the Egyptian Museum in Cairo, lend a weighty emphasis to the collection of Ballana and Qustul and represent an attraction not only for adults but also for the numerous children who visit the museum daily. The Christian and Islamic periods are represented in a small number of well-selected objects.³⁶²

As discussed in Chapter 5 if displays are to be fully comprehended they need to be complemented by other media. The whole collection of archeological artifacts exhibited in the Nubia Museum includes, within the display area, educational commentaries, wall texts, as well as films in Arabic and English. Maps, diagrams and models as well as Egyptian objects combine to give the visitor an idea of how Nubian history developed and of how events in Nubia fit into the greater context of Egyptian history.

Continuing the journey through the history of Nubia, model reconstructions of the distinctive Nubian folklore introduce us to the last chapter of the Nubian Kenzi in their own land. This last section of the museum display is considered by many visitors to be the most attractive (Fig. 48, 49). Its success owes much to the skills of the interior designer but the contribution of the local community, that has opened its doors to the museum curators responsible for selecting the artifacts, has been irreplaceable. The community’s houses and suggestions have generated most of what is displayed in this section. The models include distinctive Nubian architecture and reveal every aspect of life, including hand-painted decorations and woven baskets. Models of individuals carrying out household, social, and agricultural activities bring the ‘ancient way’ to life for members of the younger generation who might otherwise have no knowledge of the life led by their parents and grandparents. There is even a painting of the Post Boat that used to stop at each of the forty-six districts of Nubia *en route* from Shellal to Wadi Halfa, south of Aswan, in the early twentieth century.

³⁶² The delicate church frescoes from Abdallah Nirqi, as well as beautiful icons from churches at Qasr Ibrim, have been transferred here from the Coptic Museum in Cairo and the institution of monasticism is represented by the objects found in Qasr el-Wizz, the most fully investigated monastic establishment in Nubia. Christian funerary architecture is presented in the reconstruction of a tomb. Alexandros Tsakos told me that more attention could be paid to the display of more manuscripts, in particular those written in Nubian. The Islamic display, represented mostly by tapestries and texts, includes some stunning textiles from the fourteenth century AD, found at Gebel Adda and Qasr el-Wizz and important texts.



Fig. 48: Nubia Museum: Ethnographic Section: Women sit in front of the house making mats and basket



Fig. 49: Nubia Museum: Ethnographic Section: Wedding party

The museum route terminates in an area in which panels tell the story of the construction of the High Dam and the principal achievements of the UNESCO Salvage Campaign, placing particular emphasis on the removal of the temples of Philae and Abu Simbel.

Although an area of the museum was programmed for rotating exhibitions on a regular basis to attract visitors as well as expand the community's knowledge of different topics, in fifteen years just two semi-permanent exhibitions have been organized in this area, one of which had a purely Egyptological content.³⁶³ From time to time the museum does organize temporary exhibitions, but these are not based on a systematic policy and not set up in this specific space.

The outdoors, intermixed with the remains of the pre-existing Fatimid cemetery, complete the museum itself.³⁶⁴ There is a prehistoric cave with replicas of primitive drawings of animals; a watercourse and lakes; an open-air amphitheatre for the performance of traditional Nubian folk music and dance. A typical Nubian Kenzi house, only recently furnished and opened to the public, is one of the most striking parts of the open-air museum.

In the last decade, with UNESCO technical support, the academic dimension of the museum has been enhanced by the creation of a Library and a Documentation Center on Nubia. The author of this work has implemented both activities.³⁶⁵ The motivation behind the Documentation Center is not purely scientific, there is an especially strong ethical incentive. Part of Nubia no longer exists. Reports, maps, photos, notes, accounts, are all that remain of it. Despite this, various of these who are in possession of many such 'survived pieces' of Nubia are reluctant to share them, even in the form of copy, with the local community of scholars. Another instance of academic versus ethical reasons.

The Nubia Museum has been built as more than just a place to display objects but also to be a cultural space for the local community. The present impression is that this mandate is somehow still marginal. The Educational Department is engaged in activities for children: pottery and basketry workshops, traditional costume making, theater performances, journal writing and annual exhibitions are certainly organized to show the children's achievements. This might lead to the supposition that that the problematic does not concern community as such and there is a latent fear that involving adults might turn the museum into a place for 'Nubian activism', in the negative sense of the expression. My feeling is rather different. I think that the Nubia Museum is somehow still perceived as an archeological museum the sort of institution in which community participation has traditionally had a marginal role.³⁶⁶

³⁶³ A Temporary Exhibition Hall located on the left of the main entrance to the museum was set up for just such purpose. However, since 1997 only two exhibitions have been organized in this specific area: one on the Prince of Elephantine Heka-ib, (purely Egyptological but with outstanding pieces) that was held from 1997 till 2008, and the other on the ex-Czechoslovakian excavations in Nubia during the Salvage Campaign of the sixties that has been on display since 2009. In a corner of the same room, on permanent display there are 4 mummies of the Roman period, found at Koshtamna during the *First Archaeological Survey of Nubia* (1907-1912). They were formerly kept in the Aswan/Elephantine Museum.

³⁶⁴ On display there are 80 items from the Egyptian and Coptic Museums; 22 rock drawings from various sites in Nubia and 26 objects saved from the Kalabsha and Sebu'a areas.

³⁶⁵ De Simone, 2006; De Simone, 2009: 173-178.

³⁶⁶ To cover the gap related to community activities, the Governorate in the village of Garb Sehel, has developed a survived Nubian village on the West Bank of Aswan, a project on community based eco-tourism. However, since culture tourism planning is never without side effects, although this project has increased the economic incomes of the community, it has also certainly dramatically changed the traditional behavior of the Nubians that is fully part of their intangible heritage. In the village the project has created a real phenomenon of 'Disneyfication' according to the term introduced by the British sociologist Alan Bryman (Bryman, 2004). Bryman uses this term, generally in a negative sense, to refer to the process of transforming a real place into a 'Disney park'. Through the Disney park's four trends

It is also important to note that Aswan is the last stop on a trip to the Nile Valley. Visitors who have undoubtedly bought Pharaonic souvenirs all over the country expect to buy publications on Nubia and in particular souvenirs and handcrafts of this area in the Nubia Museum. They are doomed to disappointment as the two museum shops offer only Pharaonic items.

To sum up, the Nubia Museum of Aswan, its name, the architectural style of its premises and its geographical position represent an evolution of the idea of Nubia in the museum context. Using different kinds of media, the display reflects its view of this Nubia concept and how it has evolved over time. If the route has some historical and cultural gaps, especially pertaining to the cultural phases in the part of Nubia which today belongs to the Sudan, this is no doubt owing to either an insufficient or a complete lack of objects from that area. A careful observer will certainly note that the gaps in the paths are filled with explanatory panels, pictures and models. The link between the Museum and the community, as explained above, should be improved, but is symbolically very strong. The Museum represents the space that tells the story of the formation of an identity that has its roots in ancient times, of which the Nubians of today are proud and which is part proud and which is part of the cultural diversity of today Egypt.

Connecting Sites and Objects: The Exhibition 'Nubia Submerged' at the Nubia Museum of Aswan

It is important to give a specific space to an exhibition included in the Nubia Museum, as this method is helpful to creating an understanding of yet another approach in the museological perspective and perception of Nubia. In a corner of the Temporary Exhibition Hall of the Nubia Museum, a section curated by the author of this work is dedicated to vanished Nubia: *Nubia Submerged: through their eyes with their own words* (Fig. 50).³⁶⁷



Fig. 50: Nubia Museum of Aswan: Panel to the exhibition *Nubia Submerged*

This section was actually set up in 2000, three years after the opening of the museum and was supported by the Scientific Office of the Italian Embassy in Cairo in cooperation with the museum staff.

of theming, hybrid - consumption, merchandising and performative labor, this process polishes everything thought negative or ugly, transforming it into something altogether more pleasant and approachable.

³⁶⁷ Marino and De Simone, 2000.

The 164 photographs are unique. They were taken by those involved in the rescue work in the area right from the beginning in 1900. They document the breadth of the work as well as the individual visions of many of those who saw the projects through to their conclusion. The commentaries to the photos invoke the spirit of the time and visions of how they viewed this heritage: finding the 'link,' the connecting path in our human story between the remains left by others and our mind's eye is the *raison d'être* for the *Nubia Submerged* exhibition.

Following a geographical north-south path, the exhibition highlights the history of the various salvage campaigns and their main features: the enthusiasm of the first archeological missions, at the beginning of the past century, eager to discover a hitherto unknown culture; the technical challenges faced by the UNESCO campaign in the sixties and the involvement of local populations in the rescue of their heritage.

The charm exerted by *The First Archaeological Survey of Nubia* is expressed by the words of its director George Andrew Reisner that is used in the label to comment on the photo of Shellal, the site that Reisner was to use to develop his detailed typology and chronology of Nubian culture and history:

In September, my attention was drawn to the broad sandy plain east of the railway station at Shellal by the mass of Coptic potsherds lying on the surface along the valley edge ... the level plain in which lies Cemetery 7 is formed by a hard substratum with a broad low ridge across the western end, a few knolls in the middle and a series of ridges running out from the eastern and south-eastern sides] (G.A. Reisner 1910).

The huge efforts and technical achievements of the salvage of the temples in the UNESCO Campaign are evoked by the words of Silvio Curto, used in the label of the photo depicting the saving the temple of Ellesiya:

The moment finally arrived for carrying out the extraction of the temple and this was a very difficult task. Between 1962 and 1963 the Nile had regularly decreased, however, in 1964 the phenomenon was not repeated. By September, the Torinese expedition could only observe from the boat, a few holes in the temple wall over the door which rose over the turbulent waters [...] The dire predictions which we mentioned before having materialized, the project of salvaging the monument found itself forced to limit the scope of its activities. We had to give up hope of being able to strengthen the rocks and explore the surrounding area. In such an extreme case we decided to save the temple from the increasingly high waters of the dam, prompted the Antiquities Service to organize a team of their most experienced workmen to remove the temple. On the 19th we were grounded, isolated from the world. With a couple of derricks and tackle; rock saws; an electric generator; torches and a little food, the workmen worked frenetically twenty-four hours a day for twenty days cutting entirely and perfectly all the inscriptions and reliefs from the rock façade and the upper part of the socle. Carrying the block one by one directly to the boat, in the end the total number of reliefs and inscriptions came to 66 blocks . Most were one-ton cubic meters each, but many were larger. After 5 days, the Nile became to rise another time and soon the boat was floating toward Wadi es- Sebua and the precious contents were unloaded safely (S. Curto, 1970, translated from the Italian).

The involvement of Nubians, who often paid for their participation with their own lives and were then forgotten, is commented on in this account of the French mission at Mirgissa, on the label which accompanies the photos of this site:

On returning towards the motor-boat, we saw it well out from the landing place, and drifting rapidly downstream with Hussein [Nafadi] on it. He appears to have been moving the boat along the bank of Dabenarti without having the engine running and got adrift somehow just before we appeared. He tried to get the engine going, but we could not hear whether he succeeded; he managed to get the boat round, meaning to go through the cataract head-on-but before the boat was much more than broadside - on to the stream he was in the cataract. The boat went down at once, and Hussein jumped or was thrown clear, as we saw him once swimming – below the cataract. After that he was not seen, and the local men say that he must inevitably have gone into a second cataract, which is only about 150m below the first. When last seen in the boat, Hussein had got his coat off, and was at the tiller trying to hit the rapids bows-on] (Diary of the Excavations of Mirgissa Fort: November 14, 1931-February 3, 1932).

This exhibition has been set up to create a link between the objects displayed and their original context and to remind also to the public of what has been irremediably lost, often overshadowed by the acknowledged worldwide success of the salvage campaigns. The intrigued face of the then Minister of Culture Farouk Hosny and other people who attended the opening was a sign that this second meaning had achieved its aim.

Nubia in the New Museums of Egypt

Over the last few years, Egypt has constructed many new museums for various purposes. Some of them are regional museums certainly built for the sake of improving community knowledge but also to highlight pieces of art kept in dusty storage rooms for many years. Some Nubian pieces of the Christian period, in particular mural paintings, have been sent to these museums: two at the National Museum of Alexandria, six at the Museum of Sharm el Sheik, one at the Museum of Suez, one at the Museum of El Arish in Sinai and one at the Museum of Minia. Some others are destined for the National Museum of Egyptian Civilization in Cairo.

The concept of these museums is to educate local communities and provide information about the development of the history of Egypt in its various phases. The scope of these paintings, detached from the churches of Nubia during the Salvage Campaign of the sixties, is to enrich the Christian display. Their Nubian provenance is clearly mentioned in the labels.

A Sudanese ‘Curiosity’ in Alexandria

The relationship between the University of Alexandria and Nubia consists in its participation in the Salvage Campaign of the sixties with a mission to the site of Gebel Adda.³⁶⁸ The Faculty of Medicine also cooperated with the University of Michigan, under the direction of James E. Harris, in a field research study of the craniofacial variation in the ancient Nubians from Gebel Adda and Ballana (AD 250 to AD1300).³⁶⁹

However the collection I want to discuss at this point does not come from these periods of fieldwork but has been donated by the Sudanese authorities. I define the collection a ‘curiosity’

³⁶⁸ El Amir, 1963.

³⁶⁹ The original archive of this Anthropological Study is kept at the University of Michigan. James Harris, who was the director of the mission to Nubia, wishes to donate the archive to the Documentation Center on Nubia at the Nubia Museum of Aswan.

since it is the only ‘Sudanese’ display defined as a such that I found in Egypt.

The University Museum was formed by three sections: The Egyptian, the Greek-Roman and the folklore section. The ‘curiosity’ is located in the Egyptian hall and consists in a collection of 160 objects from Sudanese Nubia, as said³⁷⁰ donated to the museum by the Sudanese authorities and considered an important part of the museum’s acquisitions. This collection is almost unknown to the public at large or to researchers. Although I have lived in Egypt for a number of years and have specialized in Nubian studies, I was not aware of its existence until I began this research. The objects were displayed along with the Egyptian collection but in a showcase labeled ‘Sudanese Collection’. There is no descriptive catalogue of these objects. Only a few of them are published in scientific periodicals.³⁷¹

The name of this display might raise the question of whether its existence is attributable to recent and current trends in Sudanology. Judging from academic and sociopolitical interests, it actually refers instead to the ‘modern’ origin of the objects that were donated by the Sudanese authorities. Local Egyptologists are not involved in the current of Sudanology because they do not work in Sudan. Besides this, they show very little interest in contributing to a new Nubia paradigm that might contradict interpretations based on traditional Egyptological approaches. My impression is that this collection, although small, is greatly appreciated by the museum staff, not only for its content value, but also for the fact that it was a donation by the Sudanese authorities. The museum is currently closed.

Museums and Collections in Khartoum, Sudan as a Centre of the Power

Sudan National Museum

The Sudanese tour of Nubia in museums commences with the museum where Nubian heritage appears as to be presented as the expression of national identity and the only heritage classified as national antiquities: the Sudan National Museum of Khartoum (Fig. 51). Built in 1971 with UNESCO technical support, near the spot where the Blue and White Niles meet on the south bank of the Blue Nile, the Sudan National Museum houses the most important collection of Nubian antiquities in the world. It displays artifacts from the Paleolithic to the Islamic period from every single site excavated in North Sudan.

The collection is growing annually, as the finds from many national and international archeological expeditions working in the Sudan are being catalogued each year.³⁷² The objects are displayed in three main areas: the Main Hall on the ground floor, the Christian Gallery on the first floor and the Open Air Museum in the garden.

The main gallery is organized chronologically, beginning with Prehistory and ending in the Meroitic period showing objects from the key sites in North Sudan and the neighboring deserts³⁷³ (Fig. 52).

³⁷⁰ El Saady Hassan has provided me with a complete and detailed list of objects which I summarize as follow: most of the items are dated Early Khartoum and consist of various daily utensils and hunting equipment. Seven Paleolithic hatches originate from Atbara area. Items from later periods include five 25th Dynasty *shawabtis* from Nuri as well as potsherds from Meroitic and Christian Periods with no precise provenance.

³⁷¹ El Saady, 2008.

³⁷² Welsby, 2004.

³⁷³ Prehistory, specifically the Paleolithic period, is illustrated by a group of materials from the Early Khartoum site and Wadi Howar; objects from Sheinab represent the Neolithic and Late Neolithic. Lower Nubian cultures of the A and C Groups are represented by material from the Second Cataract sites (Ashkeit, Serra East and Faras). They are shown in the same area as the contemporary Upper Nubian Kerma culture. Relations with Egypt are highlighted by



Fig. 51: Sudan National Museum in Khartoum: Main Gate



artifacts from the area of the Second Cataract (forts) and from the New Kingdom Egyptian towns founded in the area of the Third Cataract: Sai, Soleb, Sedeinga, Sesebi and Kawa. The Napatan region is the main source of objects, in particular statues and stelae, illustrating the history of the 25th Dynasty. The gallery ends with Meroitic material from the most representative sites of this cultural phase, Meroe, Musawwarat es Sufra, Naga, and some materials of the contemporaneous Roman Period.

Fig. 52: Sudan National Museum in Khartoum: Main Gallery

With its amazing collection, the Christian Gallery on the first floor is unquestionably an important part of the museum. Of particular interest are the wonderful paintings from Faras, detached from the walls of various churches by the Polish Mission during the UNESCO Salvage Campaign³⁷⁴ (Fig. 53). The gallery, originally organized on the basis of esthetic criteria, has recently (2007) been rearranged thematically.³⁷⁵ Alexandros Tsakos explained the change as the attempt to ‘make sense’ of the materials presented in the exhibition:

The new exhibition was completed with a rearrangement of the architectural elements and the construction of new independent spaces for the display of the various medieval inscriptions. A lot more should be done in the Gallery before one considers the work completed, it is a reality that after two months there, an awareness of the structures, of the contents, and of the importance of the exhibition was awakened in the minds and hearts of all those involved in the project.³⁷⁶



Fig. 53: Madonna protecting a Nubian princess (Mid-12th century fresco from Faras Cathedral (Sudan National Museum in Khartoum))

³⁷⁴ Michalowski, 1962: 3-8. Michalowski, 1965; Michalowski, 1966; Geiser, 1967.

³⁷⁵ This work was conducted following the UNESCO project ‘Preservation of the Endangered Objects of the National Museum of Khartoum and the Archeological Museum of Jebel Barkal’, of which one of the specific aims was the enhancement of the display in the main hall and the improvement of the museum security system. Mallinson, 2006.

³⁷⁶ Tsakos, 2008. More details on this projects are give in Annex VI.

As a UNESCO expert monitoring this activity, I fully supported the idea of this change which highlights the content but in no way diminishes its esthetical side. The change was also welcomed by the national and international community of scholars.

Following the Salvage Campaign of the sixties, a number of important monuments from Sudanese Nubia have been relocated in the Open Air Museum. Friedrich Hinkel, the German architect, who loved the Sudan deeply and who carried out the work, comments the relocation of the monuments as follows:

As a result of the building of the High Dam at Aswan, the temple of Ramses II at Aksha, the temple of Hatshepsut at Buhen, the temple of Khnum at Semna East - Kumma, and the temple of Dedwn and Sesostris III at Semna West were considered suitable for removal [Figs. 54, 55]. The monuments are re-erected in the Garden of the Sudan National Museum according to the same orientation of their original location surrounding an artificial strip of water symbolic of the Nile. Walking in this part of the garden, visitors have the view of at least one of the temples on the other side of the water. Transparent structures enclose each temple so as to give protection against unfavorable weather conditions. Also the five granite columns from the Coptic cathedral in Faras West and the tomb of Djehuti-hotep found their new place in the museum garden.³⁷⁷



Fig. 54: Sudan National Museum in Khartoum: Nubian Temples

³⁷⁷ Hinkel, 1965: 96-101.



Fig. 55: Sudan National Museum in Khartoum: Nubian Temples

A new annex is under construction to display the Islamic collection.

An indication of the perception of Nubia that has prevailed in the arrangement of the Sudanese Museum is given by the entrance to the Main Hall on the ground floor: it indicates the importance of the modern context, as well as of the southern leadership. This can be perceived in a panel which had been displayed beside the door to the entrance of this Hall until a couple of years ago. The panel, with a chronology of Nubian history, mentions the 25th Dynasty as the ‘Sudan in Egypt’. Following this line of thought, at the entrance we find a large map of the modern Sudan and a big statue of the 25th Dynasty Pharaoh Taharqa in front of the door welcoming visitors (Fig. 56).



Fig. 56: Statue of the 25th Dynasty Pharaoh Taharqa in front of the door to the Main Hall

To understand what this museum represents for a Nubian, in 2009 I invited Mohamed el-Khedir, who lives in Khartoum but whose family originally came from the Wadi Halfa area, to visit the museum and to give me his impressions. His comment was the following:

The SNM is considered to be the most important museum of Sudan. The contents of the museum mainly focus on the exhibition of archeological artifacts relating to all phases of the history of the country. The display contains collections related to different civilizations of Nubia. It must be noted that the labels of the display are in need of additional information, such as the name of the item, its place of origin and the local use of it. To be noted [is] the lack of ethnographic objects belonging to modern Nubian culture. On the other hand there are many objects of the archeological collection that are similar to those still used by Nubians. Although the labels are not sufficient to describe the richness of Christianity in Nubia, the gallery devoted to this period is undoubtedly the richest.³⁷⁸

In addition to this comment, he has prepared a detailed list³⁷⁹ of those objects from the past in the museum collection that have survived in the material culture of Nubians today. In his eyes, they testify a continuity in the cultural development of this northern part of the Sudan and prove the existence of a Nubian identity that has its roots in this ancient and glorious past.

I have posed the same question to two Sudanese of non-Nubian origin, Omar Babekir, from Kassala (engineer) and Ahmed Hussein from Nyala-Darfur (teacher). Their reply was almost the same: the Sudan National Museum represents the most important museum in the Sudan and the objects are a testimony to the great civilization that developed in this country. They added with regret that so many people living in peripheral areas of the country have never seen it.

In substance, in its content the Sudan National Museum, considered the most important of the nation, is a museum of Nubian archeology. This might lead us to believe that Nubian archeology, as celebrated in this museum, is the only 'official' heritage of the country. The choice of the name of the museum might only help to buttress this perception, although it is primarily because it is the first big museum to be constructed in Sudan. The exclusive presence of Nubian artifacts is based on two reasons: 1) at the time these objects were the only well known ones available, and 2) the museum was built in the context of the International Nubia Salvage Campaign of the sixties. I think that the proud rather than critical reply of the two non-Nubian Sudanese is a sign of their awareness of the *raison d'être* of this museum and of the context in which it was built.

The National Ethnographical Museum of Sudan (NEMS), Khartoum

Despite the wealth of artifacts and the great tradition in the field of anthropology in the Sudan, there is only one large ethnographic museum in the country located in Khartoum.³⁸⁰ In order to explore the potentialities and weaknesses of the ethnography of Nubia in this museum, a survey was conducted in 2009 in cooperation with the Nubian Language Society of Khartoum whose members are all Nubians, some of them specialists in folklore.

The museum, created in 1955, displays artifacts and cultural and folkloric materials from the different ethnic groups in the Sudan, including a separate section about the northern Nubians. Although Nubian artifacts have a separate exhibition space, they are not highlighted in a proper

³⁷⁸ I would like to thank Mohamed el Khedir, Omar Babekir and Ahmed Hussein for their comments on the Sudan National Museum.

³⁷⁹ Cf. Annex VII.

³⁸⁰ In 1955, the Antiquities Department transformed the building of the British Army Club into a museum to display the numerous and various artifacts coming from all over the Sudan, including Nubia. They had been stored since 1945.

way and the information that accompanies them is inadequate. Another fly in the ointment is that some of the Nubian artifacts are also displayed in other sections as part of the heritage of other ethnic groups, as will be shown in Annex VII. There is no specific reason for these inaccuracies. The museum, just as some others, simply needs to be updated.

Scholars of ethnography should continue to strive to collect and document modern Nubian artifacts which are rich in interest and well-worth studying. The modern part of the Nubian culture has obviously been neglected compared to the greater interest that the archeology of the area has received on account of the salvage campaigns.³⁸¹ Much of this living heritage has been lost in the past because of this neglect, and even more will be lost in the future if the planned dams become a reality.

The Ethnographic Museum of Sudan is one of the few to display modern Nubian artifacts. This field ought to be the subject of serious scrutiny and careful inspection, otherwise there is a serious danger that this gap in the study of Nubia could mislead researchers working in this field. The objects need to be better presented and explained more succinctly because their existence is linked to many aspects of the daily life of modern Nubians.

In the future it is to be hoped that this heritage will not be confined to local museums but will also become part of Nubian exhibitions abroad. Modern artifacts can easily be collected from local communities who, I am sure, will be happy to contribute in promoting modern Nubian material culture outside Nubia. Such a step will serve to minimize the disjuncture between the practice of Nubian archeology and its interactions with contemporary Nubians.

University of Khartoum, Khartoum

The University of Khartoum has a leading position in the field of archeology in Sudan and cooperates actively with the National Corporation for Antiquities and Museums. As another contribution to the composition of the Nubian puzzle, I want to point out the presence of a small collection of objects in the Department of Archeology of this University. The artifacts have not yet been displayed, but kept in a storeroom awaiting the establishment of a museum on the university premises. Some are at the drawing lecturer's office where they are used for student training.³⁸²

Sites Museums in the Northern State of Sudan (Nubia)

The museums built in the Northern State of the Sudan or Nubia are mostly site museums. This kind of museum has essentially been built for the display of the artifacts from nearby archeological sites. However, they are also highly beneficial to the improvement of the knowledge of the local community, in particular if outside archeological sites and therefore without any access restrictions.

The problems arising from peripheral museums are various: limitation of objects, that sometimes affects the historical objectivity of the display; limitation of funds, generated by marginalization by the central authorities and by low tourist attendance, often creates problems for museum maintenance, security and updates; community issues are also involved, since most of the

³⁸¹ Cf. Chapters 1 and 2.

³⁸² A few complete jars from a Post-Meroitic site north of Omdurman called Sarorab as well as a piece of a broken female statuette and potsherds from a Neolithic site called al-Sour. S. Intisar el Zein (Personal Communication, 2010). In the former Sir Lee Stack Tropical Laboratories premises, built by the Welcome Trust in 1925 and attached to Khartoum Hospital (University property), a Pathology Museum will shortly be set up. The Pathology Museum will exhibit tropical and traditional medicine interactively. Abdel Rahman Ali (Personal Communication, 03/21/2012).

time, the involvement of the local community in these peripheral museums is higher than that in museums located in large cities.

Site museums in the Sudan differ from site museums in Egypt. Usually the latter are located inside the archeological site and built to serve the interests of foreign tourist, while local communities are almost completely cut out.³⁸³ In Northern Sudan they are almost invariably built at the request and with the involvement of the community. Therefore the creation of these museums is often surrounded by interesting stories that add meaning and context to these collections and to the very *raison d'être* of the museum. They permeate the display target, thoughts on the idea of Nubia, the hopes and fears of the communities, the position of the central government and the maintenance of the museum. With this in mind I shall discuss them briefly below.

Gebel Barkal Museum (Karima)

One of the oldest site museums in North Sudan is the Gebel Barkal Museum, built on the eastern side of Jebel Barkal, at Karima. This site museum is located in one of the most important archeological areas of North Sudan, whose the sites are listed as UNESCO World Heritage.

The project for the construction of the museum was launched in 1970s by the Sudan Antiquities Service under the auspices of its Commissioner for Archeology Nigm ed-Din Sharif and completed in 1979. Initially this small 'essential museum' was a sort of museum/storage for the artifacts from excavations conducted in the temples, pyramids and palaces of Gebel Barkal after 1970. It also accommodates the antiquities from the old Museum at Meroe, which was badly damaged by two great floods of the Nile in 1978 and 1988. It also contains Sudanese arms and armor of the nineteenth century (Mahdiya period).

The multiplication of findings by the various missions working there (American, Italian and Spanish) and the presence of a School of Archeology at the University of Dongola in Karima had two effects: it led to the nomination of a representative of the National Corporation of Antiquities and Museums *in situ* and to the conversion of the concept of this building from being a 'storage depot' into a fully fledged museum. The first Sudanese curators and inspectors were sent to the site and to the museum by the Antiquities Authorities in 1997. Since then national and international experts and community members have made various attempts to reorganize the premises and improve the museum, cataloguing and photographing the most significant artifacts.³⁸⁴

The old storeroom of the pottery findings of the Italian missions was turned into the cell to house the reconstruction of a Christian era box-grave. It now contains the naturally mummified body of a bearded adult. Informative posters complement the collection. Such events as the organization of temporary exhibitions have become a regular part of the museum activities.³⁸⁵ This museum, although very simple, is significant to the local community of people and scholars

³⁸³ Cf. the Imhotep Museum at Saqqara.

³⁸⁴ In April 2004, the archeologist Timothy Kendall, Field Director of one of the missions working in the area, attempted to catalogue and photograph the most prominent possessions of the local museum, as part of his plan to create a Barkal Research Center in the area, so far uncompleted. The local staff, in cooperation with the Greek archeologist Alexandros Tsakos, carried out a full reorganization of the museum premises. By May 2004, with the financial support of the 'friends of the Barkal Museum' in Khartoum and mobilized by the local team and Tsakos, the first gallery of the museum building was opened to the public, but the other two remained closed: one to be used for a temporary exhibition and the other as the storeroom of the museum. In February 2005 the latter was rehabilitated and the objects arranged methodically. The National Corporation for Antiquities of Sudan (NCAM) undertook the construction of the entrance of the museum.

³⁸⁵ Perhaps to obtain the loan of the very important stele of Pianky to London for the exhibition 'Sudan Ancient

The Kerma Museum (Kerma)

The Kerma Museum is located in the North Sudan, in the area of the Third Cataract of the Nile.

Kerma was the place where the First Nubian Empire, whose the remains were discovered by the American archeologist George Reisner in the first decades of the last century.³⁸⁶ The investigation of the site by a Swiss team³⁸⁷ is continuing and is still reaping success. There are many archeological remains here and the most imposing of them is certainly the Deffuffa.³⁸⁸

In 1999 a Sudanese High Committee for the Cultural Complex of Kerma was formed to cooperate with the National Corporation for Antiquities and Museums of Sudan (NCAM). The aim was to reinforce the importance of the area, to preserve its movable heritage and present it to the local and international community. The Committee also proposed the construction of a local museum which began in 2003 funded by a Sudanese-Swiss partnership.

The museum, which presents the history of the site and its surroundings, opened its doors to the public in January 2008, and is located near the archeological site and has direct access to the ancient city. The structure of the building with its vaulted roof pierced by triangular openings which allow daylight into the museum galleries reflects local Nubian architecture (Figs. 57, 58, 59).



Fig. 57: Kerma Museum: View

Treasures' at the British Museum in 2005. All the work achieved in the museum were presented on a poster during the Eleventh International Congress on Nubian Studies held in Warsaw in late summer 2006 (Murtada Bushara Muhamed, A. Tsakos, *The Renovated Museum at Gebel Barkal*). The detailed information for the description of this museum has been borrowed from the text of this poster which complemented the data I obtained during personal visits to the museum and the discussions with the poster designers.

³⁸⁶ Reisner, 1923; Bonnet, 1990.

³⁸⁷ For a complete bibliography of the work of the Swiss mission to Kerma cf. the Web site: www.kerma.ch

³⁸⁸ Cf. Chapter 1.



Fig. 58: Kerma Museum: The *deffufa* in the background



Fig. 59: Nubian house before its submersion

The purpose of the museum is to present the history of the site and its surroundings using materials found in the area and displayed over a surface of 500 square meters.³⁸⁹

In a central room, that serves as the focal point of the building, seven huge statues of the Black Pharaohs of the 25th Dynasty are on display in an interesting setting,³⁹⁰ (Fig. 60) stressing (as in the Museum in Khartoum) the idea of southern leadership.

³⁸⁹I have been provided with a complete and detailed list of the objects in this museum by Abdel Rahman Ali Mohamed. Here I give a summary: pottery from the Kerma necropolis (West and East), École des Filles and Alibakit-Napata construction (IH2). Also from Kerma are some offering tables and other cultic objects. Dukki el Gel is the source of many architectural fragments (*talatat*, stele, lintels, columns, inscribed blocks), *plaquettes*, cartouches, statues and statuettes. There is also a lintel from Sedeinga. The prehistoric material has come from is the site of El Barga.

³⁹⁰ This room includes central columns and a podium about 70cm high on which are exhibited the statues of the Black Pharaohs, their figures are highlighted by a white backdrop.

The inhabitants of the modern town of Kerma are in daily in contact with their glorious past, not only because they live near the archeological site, but also because the past is very well beautifully explained in the museum. Various small rooms open onto a central hall where the objects are displayed in forty display cases illustrating the history of Kerma and its evolution over time (Fig. 61).³⁹¹ They regard the museum not just as a scientific space, it is also a venue for entertainment and will certainly serve to give a greater boost to the cultural tourism that is hoped will be attracted by the recently constructed asphalted road. A few years will have to pass before it will be possible to tell whether this road will bring this untouched part of the world into the era of globalization.



Fig. 60: Kerma Museum: 25th Dynasty statues



Fig. 61: Kerma Museum: Ethnographic display

Merowe Dam Museum

Although I have categorized this museum as a site museum, in reality its archeological sites have been lost, disappeared under the water of the Merowe Dam which has submerged 173 kilometers of the Nile Valley at the Fourth Cataract and forced 78,000 people to be resettled elsewhere.³⁹²

³⁹¹ Three scale models of the Mesolithic hut from el-Barga (7500 BC), the proto-urban agglomeration of the Pre-Kerma (3000 BC) and the ancient city of Kerma (2500-1500 BC) show the traditions of the local inhabitants and the evolution of the settlements throughout history, from the period of the huts up to the construction of the monumental architecture. The reconstruction (life-size) of three tombs belonging to different periods of history shows the evolution of architecture and funerary rituals; in some galleries several pieces of blocks with engraved or painted representations of Napatan (25th Dynasty) and Meroitic period, discovered at the site of el Dukki Gel, are also displayed. The New Kingdom is represented by various stone statues and figurines.

³⁹² The inhabitants of the flooded region were forcibly displaced along a timeline corresponding to the proximity of their land to the dam site: the Shaiqiya of Hamadab to Al-Multaga in 2003, the Shaiqiya of Amri to Wadi Muqaddam in 2007, and the Manasir to Al-Mokabrab and Al-Fidah in 2008 (Hafsaas, 2011).

Following the decision to build the Merowe Dam, NCAM (National Corporation for Antiquities and Museums of the Sudan) proposed the construction of a museum at Al-Multaga, the first resettlement site.³⁹³ Later, this plan was altered by NCAM which proposed the construction of the museum at the dam site rather than at the place where the inhabitants had been relocated. This change of plan was strongly opposed by the representatives of the local community of Manasir, who took this decision as an insult. In their eyes, the proposed new museum site represented a symbol of the destruction of their own homeland and also the homeland of the neighbouring Shaiqiya tribe.³⁹⁴ The diatribe came to an end with the creation, with the support of the Dam Implementation Unit, of a new museum and tourist resort in Merowe, in the 'park' directly downstream from the *Old Beit el Athar* of Merowe that does not exactly serve the Fourth Cataract but the region of Merowe and Napata.

The museum was officially opened by President al Bashir on 3 March 2009 - the same day he inaugurated the Merowe Dam. It is essentially an archeological museum with an exhibition presenting artifacts from Prehistory to the Islamic period.

If the hope of the resettled local community to be able to keep the land has gone forever, they have not abandoned their dream of having a cultural space in which their historical remains continue to be preserved. During the rescue campaign participated in the fieldwork, the Norwegian archeologist Henriette Hafsaas wrote in a 2011 article:

The heritage that archeologists uncovered in the Fourth Cataract will become an important focus for identity maintenance in the future, as the people of the Fourth Cataract have been uprooted from their familiar natural and cultural landscape. It is thus essential that they have access to the interpretations of their history as well as the collected remnants of their heritage, so that they can use archeology to form their own narratives and understandings of their past and thus grasp the implications for their present and future.³⁹⁵

Damar Museum

Damar differs from the concept of other museums built in North Sudan, but does resemble those built in other regions of the country. The goal of the museum is to present the development of the history of the Sudan chronologically from Prehistory to Islam. The material exhibited comes from all over North Sudan. The Islamic period is particularly highlighted in the exhibition of images of the Gubba mosque. Some of the artifacts belonging to this period have been collected from the local community.³⁹⁶

The emphasis on the Islamic period is because the Wadi el Nil Centre for Archeological Research is located in Damar. Since the area is very rich in remains of this period, the Centre focuses on the Ottoman and Mahdia periods.

Planned museums in the northern Sudan

Other site museums in northern Sudan are planned or under construction. The construction of a small site museum in the Butana Desert, at the Fifth Cataract of the Nile in Sudanese Nubia, began

³⁹³ Ahmed, 2003: 40.

³⁹⁴ Askouri expressed his feelings in these words: 'Our history is given to another community' (Sudan Tribune, 27 February 2007). In: Hafsaas, 2011: 64-65.

³⁹⁵ Hafsaas, 2011: 65.

³⁹⁶ The display includes objects related to the following periods: Paleolithic: 2; Mesolithic: 10; Neolithic: 14; A Group and C Group: 15; Kerma: 16; New Kingdom: 20; Napatan: 12; Meroe: 22; Post-Meroitic/Christian: 12. Abdel Rahman Ali (Personal Communication, 2010).

in 1985. This museum is intended to display items from the city and the royal cemeteries of Meroe. The structure of the museum has been designed to reflect the architecture of Meroitic houses and was inspired by the houses of the Meroitic priests located near the temple. After a long break, the construction of the museum resumed in 1999 and is ongoing.³⁹⁷

A museum for the archeology and the modern history of Dongola is planned to be built in an old colonial building in the area. At Naga, experts from the Egyptian Museum in Berlin are raising funds to build a site museum near the archeological site which they have been excavating for some time.³⁹⁸

Museums in the Western Sudan: Nyala, Sheikan and Sultan Ali Dinar

In the Western Sudan there are several museums. They are far away from the monumental archeological heritage of the North Sudan (Nubia), that they cannot ignore as it is the most representative of the country, but they have their own local heritage that in most cases is ethnographic. The concept of these museums reflects this reality: a local ethnographic collection and a Nubian archaeological collection from Prehistory to the Islamic Period. This concept shows the dichotomy discussed in Chapter 4 between the importance of the archeological heritage of Nubia and the richness and diversity of the ethnography of the rest of the Sudan.

The *raison d'être* of the museum in Nyala, inaugurated by the President of Sudan Omar Al Bashir on 12 July 2006, is to show what is considered to be the heritage of the area, combining ethnographic materials and a collection of archeological artifacts from Nubia, whose function is to present the shared cultural development of the diverse areas of Sudan.³⁹⁹ Significantly, Nyala is the capital of South Darfur, an area in full conflict. In spite of this, as proof that heritage plays an important role in the process of rebuilding the whole country, the Sudanese authorities have promoted a policy of building museums even in areas that so far have been considered to be peripheral compared to the cultural heart of the country, generally considered to be the north (Nubia) and the area of Khartoum.

The collection in Nyala is exhibited in five rooms. The first room contains objects belonging to the A Group, Kerma and the Middle Kingdom. The exhibits in the second room are from the Egyptian New Kingdom and Napata; the third hall houses Meroitic objects; the fourth the post-Meroitic, Christian and Islamic periods. The fifth room is dedicated to the ethnography of South Darfur.⁴⁰⁰ The other peripheral museums at Fashir and El Obeid have a similar concept.

The El-Fashir Museum in Northern Darfur State, created in 1971, is housed in the residence of Sultan Ali Dinar, who was the Great Sultan of Darfur and ruled until 1916 when his kingdom was overthrown by the then British Government of the Sudan. Part of the museum still

³⁹⁷ I would like to thank the Sudanese architect Khaled Babikir Awad El Karim for his cooperation.

³⁹⁸ The creation of the Nubia Museum at Wadi Halfa has been presented in detail in Chapter 5.

³⁹⁹ Abdel Rahman Ali has provided me with the complete and detailed list of the objects, that I summarize here: various prehistoric items, with no specific site provenance, with the exception of one cluster that comes from Wadi Howar. Pottery, tools, jewelry made of different kinds of stones dated to the A Group, Kerma, Middle and New Egyptian Kingdoms. A large number of objects belong to the 25th Dynasty: royal and divine statuettes and *shawabtis*, pottery, jewelry, beads. From the Meroitic period, the collection contains a Isis statuette, a *shawabti*; containers of different material (pottery, granite, glass, ceramic, ostrich-shell); tools. Dated to the post- Meroitic period are a grinder and a bottle.

⁴⁰⁰ Khaled Babikir Awad El Karim (Personal Communication, 2010).

holds some of the Sultan's possessions, including his throne. The rest of the collection derives from Northern Sudan (Nubia).

El-Obeid is a town in North Kordofan State and home to the Sheikan Museum. The name Sheikan is derived from a site near El-Obeid, where the Mahdist forces vanquished a large British force in a battle in 1880. The museum was initiated in 1965 and holds a substantial number of historical and ethnographic elements that reflect the various stages of Kordofan history. The museum also exhibits archeological artifacts from the Early Stone Age (Paleolithic) to the Funj Islamic era (1405-1820). The museum likewise displays some interesting relics and items from the Sheikan battle.

This 'virtual tour' of Nubian collections, kept in museums in Egypt and Sudan, has provided evidence to support the analysis presented in Chapter 5, unveiling the visions and evolution in the 're/deconstruction' of Nubia, by looking at its cultural material, in its own homeland. Geopolitical motivations and different perceptions and approaches have also irrevocably influenced the exhibition of these collections.

Egypt is the place to which the beginning of the evolution of the concept of Nubia in museums can be traced back. Archeologically embedded in the wealth of Pharaonic in particular, but not forgetting Coptic and Islamic materials kept in different museums of Egypt, Nubia merged into a single place where it is presented, from its origins to the present day, as a cultural entity in its own right. This evolution can certainly be traced back to the great impact on Egypt of the *International Campaign to Save the Monuments of Nubia* in the sixties. This Campaign is still considered one of the greatest events involving preservation of cultural heritage and international solidarity, that Egypt, perhaps the whole world, have ever come across.

In the Sudan, the situation is different. Here the archeological heritage located in Nubia, North Sudan, enjoys the greatest fame and as a such the most important. Other areas of the country, with the exception of some sites, have principally been studied and 'exploited' ethnographically. This reality has strongly impacted the policy of 'making museums' in the country. The most important museums of Archeology and Ethnography located at Khartoum, centre of the power, are testimony to this policy. In the Sudan National Museum of Khartoum, a Nubian archeological collection, the only one on exhibition, is presented as it is the expression of national identity. In the Ethnographic Museum, Nubia is just a component of the variety of other ethnographic artifacts belonging to other areas of the Sudan, that are an expression of the modern cultural diversity of the country. In North Sudan (Nubia), site museums have multiplied, creating a link between the past and the present of the local communities. In other areas of the country, away from Khartoum, the 'centre of the power', and from Nubia, Nubian collections, as said above, are used as a way of presenting a scheme for the cultural trajectory of the development for 'all' the Sudan from Prehistory to Islam, while the modern history is illustrated by local ethnographic materials.

CHAPTER 7

A 'TOUR' OF NUBIAN COLLECTIONS ABROAD

Exhibitions abroad differ from Nubian collections in Egypt and Sudan that, as seen in the previous chapters, are based upon various socio-cultural, political, and methodological motivations. We can say that, abroad it has been largely academic disciplinary divisions and trends that have played an important role in the appreciation, interpretation and exhibition of Nubian collections. Nor should we overlook the historical events that have characterized the discovery of Nubia; the submerging of part of its territory and the restriction of most archeological activity in the Sudan. Although political motivations are also indirectly involved, social reasons are still very marginal. Through the history of their formation, collections abroad, sometimes embellished with very colorful stories, show how the interest of foreigners in Nubia evolved or decreased over time.

The tour abroad commences with European collections that were the first to be formed. Their creation was the result of the work of adventurers, colonialists and later scientific research. I present the museums in separate groups on the basis of shared elements among these groups.

The first group of museums to be presented are the four pillar Museums: the Louvre Museum, the British Museum, the Egyptian Museum in Turin and the Egyptian Museum in Berlin, which were the protagonists in the development of adventure, Egyptomania, colonialism, scientific research and where we can trace the evolution in perceiving Nubia historically, culturally and 'museologically'. The next group of museums located in Western, South and Central Europe are those that, although not in the same league as the main protagonists, the above mentioned 'pillars', did follow the same paths benefiting from adventure, influenced by Egyptomania, operating during the colonial period and substantially contributing to research in the field.

Three museums located in the same part of Europe illustrate unique perspectives and varied collections: The Fitzwilliam Museum, The Natural History Museum of London and the Exhibition of the Eastern Nubian Desert at Varese.

The power of British policies favored the circulation of the objects uncovered during expeditions throughout the world, most of which found their way back to Britain. In this research they serve as the foundation for studying a consistent group of collections located in Britain.

Another group of collections, located in the same area of Europe (West, Central and South), are grouped together under the title 'Pieces of the Nubian Puzzle', since it includes hidden or small collections as well as single objects that help to recompose the pieces of the puzzle that characterizes the history of Nubian collections.

The European 'tour' terminates with the presentation of two groups of collections kept in Scandinavian Countries and Eastern Europe. Countries in these areas have often shared work, interests and policies.

The size of the notes often exceeds the normal range. The reason is that such information makes it possible for people who are more interested in the technical archeological part of the research to have an immediate insight into it.

The Pillar Museums: Paris, London, Turin, Berlin

The European tour begins with the four museums I have categorized as the 'Pillars' or foundation for Egyptian/Nubian collections in Europe: the Louvre Museum, the British Museum, the Egyptian Museum in Turin and the Egyptian Museum in Berlin. They are not only in possession of the oldest

(in the sense of formation) and largest collections, but they have also played an essential role in the evolution of those dynamics that characterized Nile Valley archeology: adventure, colonialism and scientific research - that as regards Nubia, specifically developed from Nubiology to Sudanology - or where Egyptology is still as influential as when it began.

Louvre Museum, Paris

The Louvre Museum, considered to be one of the most important in the world, has always had strong links with the Nile Valley. It is important to present this museum first since it is located in the country whose historical events (the Napoleon Expedition) contributed so much to the formation of Egyptomania. The term, coined to describe both the passion in Europe and America for anything Pharaonic and the popularity of this fashion, has connotations beyond 'love' or 'imitation', but also and particularly at that time, meant 'possession' of Egyptian artifacts.

Contrary to what many might think, it was not the great Napoleonic Expedition that brought Nilotic material culture to the Parisian museum because the loot from such expeditions was confiscated by the British army in 1808 and presented to the British Museum. France also lost the opportunity to buy the first important collection (perhaps the biggest of the time) that the French consul in Egypt, the Italian Bernardino Drovetti, collected and then sold to the king of Piedmont in 1820 for the Egyptian Museum of Turin.

The main contributor and motivator behind the Nile Valley collection in the Louvre Museum was Jean François Champollion. Considered, in a sense, to be the father of Egyptology for having deciphered hieroglyphs in 1822, he persuaded the French king, Charles X, to purchase three of the major collections that at the time were for sale (the second Drovetti collection, Durand and Salt). In May 1826, when an Egyptology section was created at the Royal Museum of the Louvre, by an order of King Charles X Jean François Champollion was appointed its curator. In 1828-1829, the famous Franco - Tuscan Expedition to Egypt and Nubia was organized by the government of Charles X of France and by the Grand Duke of Tuscany. The expedition was under the direction of Champollion and Ippolito Rosellini and can be considered the first with a scientific character. It is possible to claim that with it, archeology, in the modern sense of the word, began and it also enriched the collection of the museum enormously.⁴⁰¹

A Nubian collection covering almost all phases of the history of the area arrived in the Louvre from the Nile Valley. Many of these objects were found in French and British excavations, but the origin of many others is still unknown.

Beginning our discussion with an overview of the collection, with technical details in footnotes, followed by a look at the process of its acquisition, we will travel a path intended to aid our understanding of the paradigm of 'museumization' and the various perceptions of Nubia as these were analyzed in Chapter 5. For information about the collection, I am greatly indebted to the detailed article published by Aminata Sackho-Autissier entitled *Le Soudan au Musée du Louvre: un aperçu de la collection*.⁴⁰²

The first objects to have come from a secure context are those from British archeological activities in the area - in particular Garstang's excavations at Meroe.⁴⁰³ In 1937 France also paid

⁴⁰¹ Rosellini, 1832-1840.

⁴⁰² Sackho-Autissier, 2006-2007: 313-322. The title of this article erroneously also includes the part of the collection which originated in Egyptian Nubia.

⁴⁰³ Garstang, 1910, 1911, 1912, 1913, 1914. The objects (mostly acquired by Georges Benedite in London between 1913 and 1928) consist of: a small flat-bottomed cup (discussed in Kendall 1996:461-467); fine Meroitic vessels; jars; small bottles; a seal, a faience palette; two elements of architectural decoration in the form of grapes;; a faience column cylinder (Pierrat-Bonnefois 2005: 190 - cat.508); a small figure of the god Apedemak bearing a Meroitic

for the annual subscription to the Egypt Exploration Society Work in order(Point 2) to acquire a share of the objects found. This is a good example of how this sort of ‘scientific solidarity’ worked at that time. Today that type of sharing of objects is impossible in Egypt and much more difficult in Sudan.⁴⁰⁴

In the sixties, France participated in the International Campaign to Save the Monuments of Nubia, both in Egypt and Sudan. The objects which are part of the holdings of the Louvre Museum are those of the University of Strasbourg mission, directed by Jean Leclant and Jean-Philippe Lauer, in Egyptian Nubia⁴⁰⁵ as well as those from the excavations of Jean Vercoutter, one of the key personalities in the Salvage Campaign of the sixties in the Sudan.⁴⁰⁶

The investigation of these sites produced objects of great importance. Mirgissa, excavated by Jean Vercoutter, was the location of one of the main Egyptian fortresses in the area and a center of an Egyptian colony occupied from the Middle to the New Kingdom. Here Nubians and Egyptians lived together. The objects found at Mirgissa, part of the museum holdings, shed light both on the fortress and the life of the colony.⁴⁰⁷ In 1971, Jean Vercoutter also directed the University of Lille excavations on the island of Sai (Sudanese Nubia).⁴⁰⁸

From the large necropolis of Sedeinga come several other objects⁴⁰⁹ that resulted from the division of a collection between the French mission, which excavated the site, and the Sudanese Government in 1966. They are among those few to be displayed in the showcase set aside for Nubia/Sudan.⁴¹⁰ As mentioned above, some objects in the Nubian collection, dating to all periods of Nubian history, have no secure context.⁴¹¹ A statue that came from Korosko, but originated

inscription with the name of King Tanyidamani on the dorsal pillar (acquired from the antiquarian Maurice Nahman in Cairo in 1909); two offering tables (coming from the tombs n. 362 and 307).

⁴⁰⁴ One of the objects from the excavations at the site of Amara is the stela of the Vicery of Nubia Ousersatet (Amenophis II reign); the lintel of a private chapel belonging to an officer of Amenophis II (given by the Egypt Exploration Society-EES- in 1951); some objects from Sesebi are dated to the Egyptian New Kingdom, while a group of terracotta jars and cups were found in post-Meroitic (X Group) tombs (published in Edwards, 1994:166-169, figs. 4-5).

⁴⁰⁵ The mission worked at the site of Tumas (Leclant, 1965: 6-11). The majority of the objects come from funerary contexts and consist mostly in: terracotta vessels; a bracelet made of shell; beads made from bone and shell; a pearl pendant. They are all dated to the A and C Groups. The only object from a different site and context is a sandstone block from a Meroitic temple at Khor el-Hamid. It is published in Vandier 1966: 235-236 and Sackho-Autissier 2006. A metal goblet dated to the X Group period, found by the Egypt Exploration Society at Qasr Ibrim (Egyptian Nubia), was donated to the museum in 1963.

⁴⁰⁶ In 1969, Jean Vercoutter submitted a ‘Preliminary Report on the Sudanese Monuments and Sites likely to be submerged by the Sudd el Ali Scheme’, to the president of the Sudan, El Azhari. The report was to be presented to UNESCO as part of a petition for assistance. During the campaign, he became the director of a joint mission with Argentina at the site of Aksha. France shared then a number of objects with this country. From this mission the museum gained possession of five goblets and vessels found in the A Group cemetery (Vandier, 1973: 108-109).

⁴⁰⁷ Flint weapons (heads of javelins and spears) found in the fortress; 16 masks or fragments of mummy masks made of stucco and dated to the Middle Kingdom and Second Intermediate Period; 18 bowls typical of the Middle Kingdom (J.L. de Cenival 1958:12); male statuette dated to the Second Intermediate Period; a sandstone female statue dated to the end of the 12th Dynasty or to the 13th Dynasty (Gratien, 1994: 140-142).

⁴⁰⁸ From here come two foundation deposits dated to the reign of Thutmosis III-Egyptian New Kingdom (Vandier, 1973: 92-93, fig. 4-7); typical ‘tulip’ Kerma vessels (Vandier, 1973: 108-109); a group of post-Meroitic (X group) vessels made of terracotta (Vandier, 1973: 108-109).

⁴⁰⁹ They come from the large Napatean-Meroitic necropolis and are mainly terracotta bottles (Leclant,1985:185-204); vessels and cups dated to the Meroitic Period; two fragmented sandstone heads of birds.

⁴¹⁰ Berger-el Naggar, 1999: 31-34.

⁴¹¹ C Group and Kerma vessels (some of the C Group bowls are legacy of Raymond Weill, 1950-1992, others were acquired from M. Morel in 1903): Kerma tulip cup, (donation of Atherton Louise and Ingeborg Curtis); a large group of artifacts are dated to the 25th Dynasty, the most striking of which is the stela of the ‘Third Year’ of King Aspelta

from the Sudan, is considered to be the most important piece in the Nubian collection. It is an Egyptian *naophorous*,⁴¹² probably dating back to the Late Period (664-330 BC).⁴¹³

In 1995 the museum acquired a collection of bronzes dated to the X Group.⁴¹⁴ They are displayed in the south wing of the palace, on the Visconti court. In the same hall are displayed sculptures and mural paintings rescued by the Polish excavation at Faras during the Salvage Campaign of the sixties.⁴¹⁵ They are in the depot of the National Museum of Warsaw and are testimony to the exchange policy of material adopted by many museums worldwide.

Unquestionably the Louvre collection is typologically and thematically significant enough to deserve to have a gallery devoted to its display. In the 1990s, the last action of the Grand Louvre project consisted in the renewal of the Department of Egyptian Antiquities. It led to a new display concept for Roman and Coptic Egypt as well as for Nubia, although administratively it all continues to be part of the Department of Egyptian Antiquities. This independent space for Nubia, although symbolically important, might stress, in the eyes of visitors, the idea of a Nubia that evolved into maturity in ancient Egypt, shedding its earlier status of 'wretched Kush'.⁴¹⁶ The new location consists of a small showcase in which objects are organized chronologically; it is located on the south landing, immediately at the exit from the majestic Egyptian gallery on the first floor of the Sully Section. In this showcase there are only a few objects from the Nubian collection, the rest are dispersed in the Egyptian, Roman and Coptic galleries. Aware of the inadequacy of this display and of the large number of objects available, the curators had planned a new organization of the collection that will allow them to arrange a larger exhibition in which the display will be both larger and more coherent. The plan was that it would consist of the room Nubia-Sudan in the areas south of the Visconti court to display all the collection in the possession of the museum, plus some material on long-term loans from the Sudan.⁴¹⁷ Unfortunately, it seems that this new gallery, planned and longed for by the curators and experts in the museum, cannot be implemented on account of technical problems that have arisen.

I wish to conclude this section on the Louvre by recalling the great exhibition *Meroe un empire sur le Nile*⁴¹⁸ that the museum organized in 2010 under the direction of Michel Baud, who

from Sanam (J. de Rouge's donation in 1874; published in Guerneur, 2005: 521-523); faience seal (acquired at Thebes by Revillout in 1889 and published in Letellier, 1977: 43-52); copper *situla* bearing the name of Queen Maletarata (Tyszkiewicz's donation, published in Guerneur, 2005: 515); *shawabtis* made of serpentine belonging to the King Senkamanisken (from his pyramid in Nuri - n.3); 5 pieces of wooden furniture. One of them is a foot of a bed or chair, a similar piece to this is kept in the British Museum (unknown origin, acquired in 1948. (Cenival 1958: 8). For the similar object in the British Museum cf. Quirke and Spencer (eds.) 1993: 212, fig. 162). Various objects from the Meroitic period are: two ithyphallic statuettes of Amon made of serpentine; two sandstone heads of a bird-*ba*.

⁴¹² The term 'naophorous statue' is derived from the word *naos* which in Greek means shrine. This name was given to the statues of gods held in front of a functionary or a priest who might be either kneeling or standing statue.

⁴¹³ Acquired in 1934.

⁴¹⁴ Three flacons; two pitchers; a small seal; a thurible and a *coffret* from a tomb of Ballana-Qustul (Benazeth, 1999: 79 - 80).

⁴¹⁵ Decorated fragment of a sandstone lintel (Meroitic but re-used in the cathedral. Published in Seipel, 2002: 105, cat. 35); fragment of a lintel dated to the VII century (Seipel 2002: 117, cat. 48); fragment of relief from the sanctuary apse dated to the VII century CE; the two mural paintings dated to the VIII and the X century (Seipel 2002: 68, cat. 3 and 79 cat. 12).

⁴¹⁶ Cf. Chapter 1.

⁴¹⁷ Aminata Sackho-Autissier, 2006. In view of the opening of this new gallery further research has been conducted to identify objects of uncertain provenance and dating, among them an anthropomorphic statue of Amun, of which similar models have been found at Kawa (Macadam, 1955; pl. XXXV, n. 2085. Another is part of the holding of the Egyptian Museum of Munich (Wildung, 1997; 242, cat. 269).

⁴¹⁸ Baud, 2010.

passed away prematurely in September 2012.

British Museum, London

The British Museum houses one of the largest collection of Egyptian and Nubian antiquities and these have been acquired by the museum since its foundation in 1753.

Napoleon's forces were defeated in 1798 at what has become known as the Battle of Aboukir Bay or the Battle of the Nile. In 1801, as already mentioned, the British Army confiscated all the Egyptian antiquities the French had assembled and these were subsequently deposited in the British Museum. The British consul in Egypt at the time, Henry Salt gave his share to the collections to both the British Museum and the Louvre, but at a price. Acting for Salt as the principal agent in these deals was the Italian Giovambattista Belzoni.⁴¹⁹

The collection has continued to be enriched by other artifacts in the form of donations, acquisitions, exchanges with other institutions in the world and the excavations of the museum in the area. In the absence of a complete list of the objects, I shall try to outline the importance of this collection and how it is 'treated' in the museum, examining the most important objects, the dynamics of their arrival in the museum and the policy of their display.

The first Nubian objects arrived at the British Museum in the twentieth century in the form of donations and some of them, on display, are among the most important in the collection.⁴²⁰ Between 1897 and 1905, E. A. Wallis Budge conducted an unsystematic search for portable monuments in the Sudan for the Museum. He also negotiated the acquisition of a large and important relief, dating to the second century BC, from the Pyramid Chapel of a female ruler at Meroe.

The Museum, being the most important in the country, obviously derived great benefit from the intense archeological excavations conducted by British archeologists following the foundation of the Anglo-Egyptian Protectorate of the Sudan. The way the 'fruits' of their excavations are evident not only in their homeland but also in many museums around the world is very impressive.⁴²¹ Various of these British excavations were conducted by the Egypt Exploration Society, the British association whose members received substantial financial support from many museums around the world, and in return these received consistent numbers of objects from the excavations.⁴²²

⁴¹⁹ Belzoni, 2007.

⁴²⁰ Some of these pieces are among the most important and are now exhibited. One of the first to contribute was Lord Prudhoe, who in 1835 made a gift to the museum of a pair of lions (for this reason called the 'Prudhoe Lions') found at Gebel Barkal but originating from the temple of Amenophis III at Soleb. Besides this pair of lions he also made a gift of a stela from Semna. Another stela from the Second Cataract, from Buhen to be exact, was donated by Sir Charles Holled Smith. In 1835, the museum purchased the statue of the Viceroy of Kush, Paser, found at Abu Simbel. Later in the century, Lord Kitchener made a gift of a small faience amulet purchased at Gebel Barkal.

⁴²¹ One of these archeologists was Francis Llewellyn Griffith who conducted excavations for the University of Oxford at the sites of Faras and Kawa between 1912 and 1930. He is also famous for having provided the key for the decipherment of the phonetic value of the letters of the Meroitic language. The museum has several objects from the excavations of Henry Wellcome at Jebel Barkal, Jebel Moya, Saqadi, Abu Geil, Meroe and Faras. Henry Wellcome (1853-1936) was an American with British nationality who established the Wellcome Medical Research Laboratories in Khartoum, that the local authorities now wish to turn in a museum. With the African explorer Henry M. Stanley, he sponsored the first archeological excavation in Central Sudan. Some of the objects from these excavations are now part of the museum holdings.

⁴²² From the excavations of the Society in Sudanese Nubia at the sites of Sesebi and Amara, investigated before and after the Second World War, and at Buhen in the late 1950-60s, the museum holds a good collection of Pharaonic objects. The ruins of Qasr Ibrim (Egyptian Nubia) have been the source of various artifacts of organic material such as wood, leather, and papyrus. This was also the provenance of part of an obelisk, re-used in a building, dated to the

Other objects were obtained from the Sudanese government in 1922.⁴²³ Part of this donation is also the famous bronze head of Augustus that was buried under a threshold on the orders of the Meroitic Queen. It is now displayed in the Roman Room of the Museum.

Some Nubian objects originated from the excavations conducted by the Museum at the site of Mostagedda in Egypt. They are mostly Pan Grave artifacts (pottery and weapons; battle-axes), which highlight the productions and the activities of the Nubians living in Egypt.⁴²⁴ From Egypt there are also important objects found on the antiquities market, among them the dispatches from Semna found at Thebes, that shed light on the political and security situation of those Egyptians living in Nubia at the time.

Recently the museum has amassed a considerable collection of material from the excavations of the British Institute in Eastern African at the medieval site of Soba East and from the Sudan Archeological Research Society surveys and excavations in the Northern Dongola Reach and at Gabati.⁴²⁵

Another recent acquisition by the museum is an important prehistoric pottery collection from the excavation of Fred Wendorf in Nubia.⁴²⁶ Of the same period is the prehistoric collection donated by Antony Marks. These two donations are evidence of what has been argued in Chapters 3 and 5: the 'strategic importance' of an object for a museum is often guided by attraction rather than significance. From a museological point of view, prehistoric collections, are discriminated against since they are not considered very appealing, therefore their owners often have no difficulty parting with them as a donation.

Part of the more recent entries into the museum is the collection from Kolubnarti, donated by William Adams,⁴²⁷ and some items, donated by the Sudanese Government in gratitude for the active British participation at the recent Fourth Cataract Rescue Campaign.⁴²⁸

The Egyptian collection of the British Museum is displayed thematically in various rooms, and the Nubian collection is reunited in the Raymond and Beverly Sackler Gallery (No. 65).⁴²⁹ As I understand it, the idea of this gallery is to give an overview of material production in the Nile Valley beyond Egypt, including, even if only for a later period, Ethiopia. This is demonstrated by the fact that Room 66 is set aside for Ethiopia and Coptic Egypt (Fig. 62).

Eighteenth Dynasty.

⁴²³ They are mainly Kerma materials and *shawabtis* from Nuri belonging to the Pharaoh Taharqa.

⁴²⁴ Brunton, 1937.

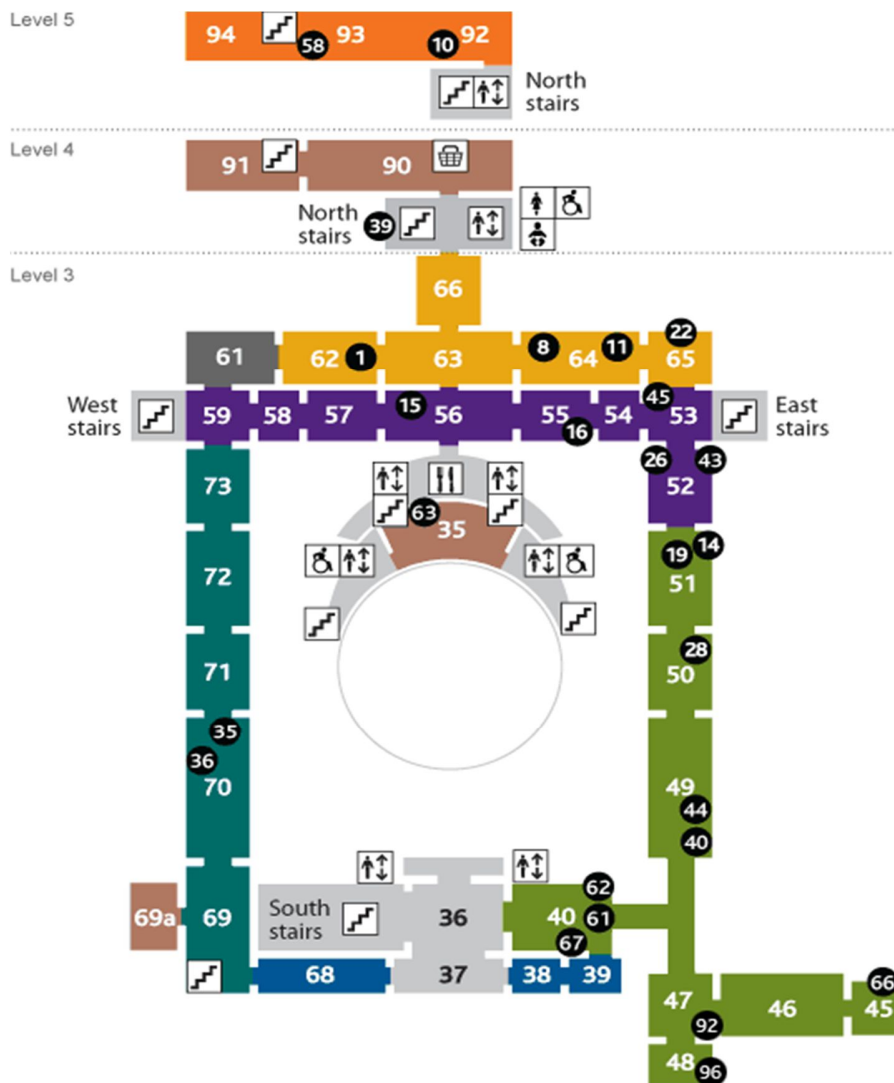
⁴²⁵ The majority of the findings from the Dongola region dates to the Kerma Period, whereas those from Gabati are from the Kushite era up to medieval times.

⁴²⁶ It consists of 14, 285 potsherds from Egypt and Nubia (Nile valley and neighboring deserts). Those from Nubia originate from the Nabta-Kiseiba area, the Nubian Nile valley (Second Cataract and Debba-Korti regions) as well as from the southeastern Sudanese Butana Region.

⁴²⁷ It consists mostly of ceramics, miscellaneous items and many textiles.

⁴²⁸ They consist in osteological material, ceramics, petroglyphs, rock gongs and samples.

⁴²⁹ The Nubian Gallery at the British Museum was created in 1992.



Ancient Egypt

- 61: Egyptian life and death: the tomb-chapel of Nebamun
- 62-63: Egyptian death and afterlife: mummies
- 64: Early Egypt
- 65: Sudan, Egypt and Nubia
- 66: Ethiopia and Coptic Egypt

Fig. 62: British Museum: Exhibition plan

One of the curators of the gallery, Derek Welsby, is one of the leading scholars involved in the *Merowe Dam Salvage Archaeological Project* conducted during the past decade. His view is reflected in the gallery in which items and images from this last dramatic chapter of the land of

Nubia are now also displayed.⁴³⁰ This highlights how exhibition choices are often prompted by specific experiences in the area.

The concept of the gallery also needed to take into consideration the modern context of the Sudan as the panel *Sudan, Egypt and Nubia*, displayed at the entrance, shows. However, terminologically speaking this panel could be, misleading. Although it is justifiable and understandable in the eyes of an academic or a visitor aware of all the problems surrounding the idea of Nubia, it is probably not as easy to understand for a regular visitor who will certainly wonder whether ‘Egypt’ means all the objects from that country, excepting the Nubian part and ‘Nubia’, all those from the area that we define culturally as such, if the answer is affirmative, what is meant by the ‘Sudan’?

These qualifications aside, the contribution of the British Museum to the field of Nubian studies, in particular in recent years, has been one of the most significant, adding to both academic knowledge of human history in this area and to wider public awareness. Among its many efforts to draw the world’s attention to the history of this area was its organization, in cooperation with the National Corporation for Antiquities and Museums of Sudan, of one among the most significant exhibitions on the Sudan ever held to date: *Sudan Ancient Treasures*, that was among the largest in this field.⁴³¹

Egyptian Museum, Turin

The third museum which we encounter in this European tour of Nubian collections is the Egyptian Museum in Turin which is second only to the Cairo Egyptian Museum in its collection of Pharonic artifacts.⁴³² As discussed in Chapter 5, the fact that a Nubian collection is displayed in a ‘Egyptian Museum’ is an eloquent sign of identification. As we have seen, the Egyptian Museum in Cairo has a most traditional approach to perceiving and presenting Nubia. In Turin there is evidence of another way of perceiving and presenting Nubia, as I shall argue after the presentation of the collection and casting some light on the sometimes very colorful channels of the eventful history of some of the objects.

The first Nubian antiquities arrived in Turin in the early 1800s, composed of the collection formed by Bernardino Drovetti, the French consul in Egypt from 1810, with some brief interruptions, until 1829. Drovetti became a close friend of the viceroy of Egypt Muhammad Ali, who supported all of his fruitful operations as an art dealer. When Drovetti thought he had collected enough objects to be sold to prestigious buyers, he proposed the acquisition of the first collected group of objects to King Louis XVIII of France. The king was obliged to decline the

⁴³⁰ In a laboratory at Giltner Hall at Michigan State University (MSU, 409 Nubian skeletons are being studied by graduate and undergraduate students of Forensic Anthropology and Bioarcheology. The 409 skeletons (on loan from the British Museum) - dating from the sixth to fifteenth century - were rescued some years ago from gravesites on Mis Island, before the submersion of the area. The analysis of the bones will help to understand the ancient Nubians’ diets, health histories and lifestyles.

⁴³¹ Welsby and Anderson, 2004; in Hafsaas, 2011: 61 (from Collins, 2008: 291), tell the full story behind the organization of such an exhibition, that coincided with the appearance on TV screens in full force of the atrocities in Darfur.. As a consequence, the British Museum had to cancel the plan to charge admission fees and had instead to encourage the visitors to donate money to aid organizations working in the Sudan (Alberge, 2004). John Ryle, Professor of Anthropology, and Africa editor of the Times Literary Supplement, wrote a review of the Sudan exhibition quoting Ali Askouri’s article (2004b) about the impact of the Merowe Dam on the local people - an article focusing on human rights violations. Ryle (2004) criticized the British Museum for treating these aspects of the Merowe Dam salvage campaign with discretion and for cooperating with the Sudanese government by its collaboration with NCAM (National Corporation of Antiquities and Museums in Sudan).

⁴³² Roccati, 1999.

offer because of the high price Drovetti asked, but offered the possibility of this deal to the king of Piedmont, Charles Felix, who could not let such a unique and rare opportunity slip. In 1820, he acquired the collection for the Turin Museum which became the first museum in Europe to display a large and valuable Egyptian collection.

The single Nubian object in Drovetti's collection is a seated ram in gray granite, that holds between his forelegs a small mummiform figure of a Pharaoh. It seems that the object had been bought by Drovetti at Thebes (Luxor) in Egypt, at the time a major center for the trade in antiquities. The place of origin of the object is the temple of Soleb (Sudanese Nubia), built by the Egyptian Pharaoh Amenhotep III on the occasion of his jubilee. It is said that devastating rains destroyed Soleb about 1,000 years ago, obliterating its ancient monuments, parts of which were then re-used in other structures or at a later date transported to various museums around the world. It seems that the twin of this lion is that in the Berlin Museum.⁴³³

Part of the Drovetti collection that arrived in Turin was a series of models of Pharaonic and Roman temples built in Nubia produced by the Marseilles sculptor J. J. Rifaud, a collaborator of Drovetti. It seems, from some paintings that date to the next few years, that Rifaud visited Nubia in 1816.⁴³⁴

During the same period, the collection was enriched by a donation from Count Carlo Vidua, considered to be a great scientist, '*un des voyageurs des scientifiques les plus intrépides tout les temps*,' who accompanied Champollion and Rossellini on their mission. He was the principal advocate for the purchase of Drovetti's collection.⁴³⁵

In 1860, a parcel arrived in Turin by train. The contents of the package were reproductions of about thirty beautiful pieces of jewelry and a small pyramid. It was the gift of the physician and traveler Giuseppe Ferlini of Bologna, discoverer of one of the most significant finds in terms of artifacts that had occurred in the Sudan: the discovery in Pyramid No. 6 at Meroe of the treasure of Queen Amanishaketo.⁴³⁶ The doctor's attempt to sell the treasure in Italy failed because the price he asked was too high, so Germany was the successful bidder. To avoid the frustration of having deprived his country of this wonderful treasure, in 1860 Ferlini offered a copy to the museum of Turin with this comment:

Displayed to public gaze, they will serve as a reminder to generations to come of the discoveries of an Italian, never seen either before or after him, (such a facsimile) is sufficient for to right the wrong done me in Munich and Berlin, that conceal the name of the discoverer.⁴³⁷

Additional copies were given to the Museum of Bologna.⁴³⁸ Although the collection in Bologna was initially semi-dispersed, the one in Turin was always kept on display as a unified whole. Despite that fact it is composed only of copies, it represents the only complete reminder of this extraordinary treasure.

⁴³³ Leospo, 1999:165-167.

⁴³⁴ Cat. 7101-7114.

⁴³⁵ The donation consisted of two Christian sandstone stelae, found at Coluscia (Faras South) in Sudanese Nubia, bearing inscriptions in Greek. Archeologist F.L. Griffith says that the place of origin of the two stelae was the church at Nabindiffi, which the count had visited in February-March 1820. (Griffith, 1922: 565-600; Valtz, 1999: 172-174).

⁴³⁶ Priese, 1993.

⁴³⁷ 'Esposti alla pubblica osservazione serviranno per ricordare ai posteri le scoperte di un italiano, che né prima né dopo di lui niuno veduti (questi fac simili) essendo sufficiente il torto che ricevo da Monaco e da Berlino che si tiene occulto il nome dello scopritore' (Davoli 1993: 39-53; Bergamini, 1999:167-169).

⁴³⁸ Davoli, 1993: 39-53.

In 1902 the museum's director Ernesto Schiaparelli conducted the first archeological mission mounted by the museum in Egypt, that was funded by the Italian government. Since 1910, among the various sites excavated by the museum is Gebelein, some of the finds from which form part of the museum holdings. They shed valuable light on Nubian production in Egyptian territory.⁴³⁹

In 1933 Ugo Monneret de Villard, an Italian architect, was one of the first scholars to take an interest in the study of Christian antiquities in Nubia and to realize how neglected this area of research had been in previous investigations. His publications constitute a scientific basis for the study of this period. He investigated many Christian sites in Nubia among them the necropolis of Sakynia (Egyptian Nubia). The finds from his excavations constitute the most important collection of epigraphic material of the Christian period in the Turin Museum.⁴⁴⁰

In the sixties, Italy participated in the International Campaign to Save the Monuments of Nubia, to which it dispatched several missions. It was one of the only three nations of the world to respond to the appeal launched by Egypt in the fifties, before the great appeal made by UNESCO. The *Soprintendenza Archeologica del Piemonte*, that was affiliated the Museum in Turin, sent a mission to the area of Dehmit in Egyptian Nubia. The mission was funded by a benefactor and directed by Silvio Curto.⁴⁴¹ The only item donated to the museum from this mission is a prehistoric graffito depicting an ostrich. Some vessels belonging to the A Group period, found in Tamit, Egyptian Nubia, were donated to the Museum by the University of Rome *La Sapienza*, that investigated the site under the direction of Sergio Donadoni.⁴⁴²

The gratitude the museum and Italy received for their participation in the rescue campaign was the donation of the Temple of Ellesiya. The rescue of this beautiful temple was directed by Curto, then director of the museum.⁴⁴³ This small temple was carved into the rock by Pharaoh Thutmose III around 1450 BC. The temple was donated to Italy by Egypt in 1966 and was rebuilt in the museum in 1970. Initially Egypt, although grateful to Italy and to Curto who worried about the technical difficulties posed by the work, was reluctant to make this donation and would have preferred to reassemble the temple close to those relocated in the area. However, it was decided that sending the temple to Turin would have advantages, explained by Säve-Söderbergh as follows:

Originally it had been intended to keep the temple in Nubia, even though it was regarded as a gift to Italy, but later it was decided it should be moved to Turin. UNESCO had backed this alternative on the grounds that, if left in Nubia, it could not compete with the much more imposing monuments, such as Abu Simbel and Kalabsha. Few visitors would have

⁴³⁹ Donadoni Roveri, 1994. Numerous Nubian artifacts were also brought to light at the site of Gebelein, including C Group pottery, mother-of-pearl armlets, stone and faience beads and pottery with incised decorations, as well as basketry and pottery belonging to the Pan Grave Group. Some of these finds were donated to the Museum by the Egyptian Government (D'Amicone, 1999: 160-164).

⁴⁴⁰ The excavation of 500 graves unearthed 321 stelae written in Greek and Coptic. The stelae were published by Monneret de Villard in 1833 and by Togo Mina in 1942, the same year in which twenty-three of them disappeared. Investigations were conducted, to no avail, in the Greek-Roman Museum in Alexandria and the Coptic Museum in Cairo, where almost all the finds from the Greek-Roman and Christian periods were kept. Twenty-two out of the 321 stelae reached, in mysterious circumstances, the Museo Nazionale Romano, Rome. In 1968 they were donated to the Museum of Turin. So far there is no news about the three missing stelae (Monneret de Villard, 1935-1957; Mina, 1942; Valtz, 1999: 172-174).

⁴⁴¹ Curto, 1962: 135.

⁴⁴² Donadoni, 1965: 126-128.

⁴⁴³ Curto, 1970: 3-7.

seen it, whereas in the Egyptian Museum of Turin, housing one of the world's outstanding Egyptian collections, it would be a central exhibit, complementing the many other Egyptian pieces of art, not least a remarkable statue of Tuthmosis III, the king who was responsible for constructing the speos of Ellesiya. It would, moreover, be of considerable interest to the many students and scholars who visit the Turin collection annually. The Egyptian Government accepted these arguments and ceded the monument to the Egyptian Museum of Turin, the city which had provided the financial backing.⁴⁴⁴

The last Nubian object to reach the Turin Museum was a golden necklace with rams' heads, dating to the Meroitic period, and donated to the Museum by Maria Stella Fasano in 1991. The Nubian collection of the Egyptian Museum of Turin developed over time under the policy, as that of most other European museums, of enriching the Egyptian collection.

The display policy is to exhibit the artifacts chronologically on the ground floor thematically on the first floor. The meeting with Nubia begins in Hall 1, dedicated to New Kingdom statuary. Here is displayed the ram from Soleb and Rifaud's models of the temples. The idea is to stress the intensive building activity Egyptians carried out in Nubia, most prominently expressed, in the construction of temples. Next to this room and linked to it conceptually is the *Nubian Hall* in which the Temple of Ellesiya was rebuilt. In 1991, on the occasion of the Sixth International Conference of Egyptology held in Turin, the museum was expanded. The façade of the temple was rebuilt, with the addition of stelae and graffiti as in the original location.

On the first floor other Nubian artifacts are intermixed thematically with Egyptian to emphasize the close relationships which Egypt and Nubia have had for over four millennia. However, although the exhibition is comprehensible to academics or attentive observers, it is certainly less so to normal visitors. Nubian artifacts are, in fact, overshadowed by the majesty of the Egyptian collection and, rather than celebrating Nubia, the *Nubian Hall* seems to celebrate the victory of the Nubia Campaign as an event and Italian participation in it⁴⁴⁵ (Fig. 63).

⁴⁴⁴ Translated from Italian in Säve-Söderbergh, 1987: 143.

⁴⁴⁵ In 1999 the Museum organized an important travelling exhibition: *Napata e Meroe: Templi d'oro sul Nilo*. It highlights how Egyptian and Southern (Nubian) elements were intertwined, eventually resulting in the dynasty of the Black Pharaohs.



Fig. 63: Turin Museum: Nubian Hall (The Ellesya Temple)

The Egyptian Museum and Papyrus Collection, Berlin

This is also an Egyptian museum. Here we have evidence of the third stage through which the display of the Nubian collection has evolved, the Sudanology stage, the evidence of which is that Nubia is presented in a room as ‘Ancient Sudan’(Fig. 64). In the museum this evolution was motivated, as shown below, by the deep and long-standing involvement of the Egyptian Museum of Berlin in archeological activities in the Sudan.

Thanks to the expedition led by Richard Lepsius in 1842 - 1845, the Egyptian Museum in Berlin is the leader in the field of scientific investigation in Sudan. The great expedition, organized by the King of Prussia, was in many respects the follow-up to the Franco-Tuscan mission, with the important difference that the Prussians penetrated beyond the Egyptian border. Upon his return to Germany, Lepsius was appointed professor at the University of Berlin and published his 12-volumes work *The Monuments of Egypt and Nubia*.⁴⁴⁶ Following this expedition, the museum received approximately 1,500 important objects as a gift from Muhammad Ali. The scientific activity of the Berlin Museum has never waned, and the museum has been conducting important excavations at the Meroitic site of Naga since 1995.⁴⁴⁷

Although the Lepsius’s expedition objects represent the first major core of the Nubian collection, the museum has also engaged in a policy of exchange with other museums and institutions working in Nubia. Objects from the excavations of George Reisner at Kerma (1910 - 1915) were obtained from the Museum of Fine Arts of Boston that had supported this expedition,⁴⁴⁸ other objects were obtained from the Museum of Vienna and belong to the

⁴⁴⁶ Lepsius, 1849.

⁴⁴⁷ From this site the Museum holds some reliefs coming from Temple 200.

⁴⁴⁸ Reisner, 1923.

expedition of Austrian Academy of Sciences conducted at the sites of Kubbaneya and Toshka (1911-1912).⁴⁴⁹ Others are from Aniba where they were found by the German Sieglin Expedition.⁴⁵⁰ Of course, the museum would not be the same without the contribution of the British excavators, as the objects of Griffith and Garstang prove. Finally, from the site of Musawwarat es Sufra, excavated by the mission from the German Humboldt University, the museum holds some objects found at the site in the 1960s.

Certainly the most famous group of objects related to Nubia owned by the museum is the treasure of Queen Amanishaketo. This was found by the Italian physician Giuseppe Ferlini⁴⁵¹ in 1834, in the upper part of the largest pyramid of Meroe, in a small hidden chamber. Contained in a pot was a hoard of precious jewelry: seal rings, necklaces, earrings, bracelets and amulets decorated with Pharaonic and Hellenistic motifs.⁴⁵² It can be safely considered one of the most important and most popularly attractive discoveries from the Sudan.

Ferlini introduced his treasure to the world and invited buyers. In 1839, a portion of the finds was acquired by the Royal Bavarian Art Collection; the remaining portion proved difficult to sell, probably because of the unusual style of the jewelry, which cast doubt on the authenticity of the find. This doubt was only removed a decade after Ferlini's discovery, when Richard Lepsius, who had recommended its acquisition for the Berlin Egyptian Museum in 1842, arrived at Meroe.

The fate of the Nubian collection of the Berlin Museum also befell the Egyptian collection, that was moved from one location to another until its final exhibition, in 2009, in the *Neues Museum*. Here it was given a new exhibition concept and design. On the ground floor, the Nubian collection has been displayed in a room called *Ancient Sudan*.

The new Sudan Gallery in the *Neues Museum* Berlin, has been commented on by Dietrich Wildung, its main motivator and curator, as follow (note that Wildung in his commentary never uses the term Nubia but always refers to the Sudan):

Based on Ferlini's Amanishakheto treasure [Fig. 65] and the objects recovered by Lepsius' expedition, the Egyptian Museum Berlin, from its inauguration in 1850 to the early 20th century, was the most important museum presentation of the ancient Sudan, including large scale wall decorations showing the pyramids of Begrawija and the reliefs of the Lion Temple at Naga. Following its destruction in World War II, the renovated Neues Museum was reopened in October 2009. A special gallery is devoted to Ancient Sudan, divided into two parts. In a series of large showcases, a selection of pottery illustrates the historical evolution from Neolithic to Post-Meroitic. On the other side of a chronological axis defined by the Semna Stela, the Nastasen Stela and the altar from Wad Ban Naga, the art of Meroe is represented by three large sections of reliefs from the temple Naga 200. As long-term loans from the Republic of the Sudan they demonstrate the importance of archeology as mediator in the international dialogue. A small treasury displays the jewelry of Amanishakheto. In the multidisciplinary concept of the *Neues Museum* the Sudanese Gallery demonstrates the role of ancient Sudan as an integral part of the ancient World. An additional large-scale showcase in the entrance room of the museum (history of Egyptology) is devoted to the activities of the Berlin Museum in the Sudan, the excavation and restoration at Naga and the project of a site museum.⁴⁵³

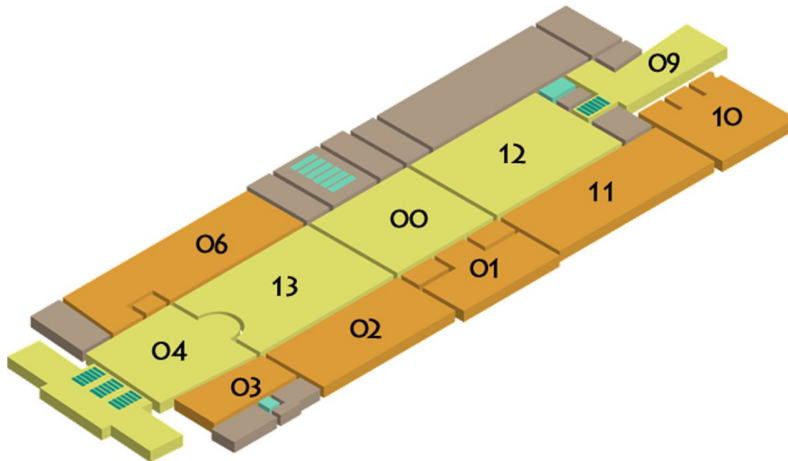
⁴⁴⁹ Junker, 1922, 1926.

⁴⁵⁰ Steindorff, 1935.

⁴⁵¹ Cf. also Egyptian Museum of Turin and Civic Archeological Museum in Bologna.

⁴⁵² Priese, 1993.

⁴⁵³ Wildung D. "The New Sudan Gallery in the Neues Museum of Berlin". Paper presented to the 12th *International Conference on Nubian Studies*, British Museum, London, August 2010.



Archeological Promenade

Room 0.00: Time and History
 Room 0.04: God and Gods
 Room 0.09: Netherworlds and Eternity
 Room 0.12: Journey to the Underworld-
 Egyptian Courtyard

Room 0.13: World Order

Egyptian Nile Valley

Room 0.01: Nile Valley Habitat

The Ancient Sudan

Room 0.06: The Ancient Sudan

Journey to the underworld

Room 0.10: Afterword

Fig. 64: Egyptian Museum in Berlin: Exhibition Plan Level 0



Fig. 65: Egyptian Museum in Berlin: Objects from the Ferlini's Amanishakheto treasure

Lepsius' work and that of his successors has made the Berlin Museum one of the leading institutions in the study and promotion of Nubian culture, especially in its most profoundly Sudanological meaning, as the name of this gallery shows. This attachment to Nubia/Sudan is also shown by the numerous exhibitions that the museum periodically organizes in cooperation with other institutions, in particular the Museum in Munich.

A part of one of the Nubian temples of Lower Nubia, the Kalabsha Gate, was presented to the Federal Republic of Germany in 1971 by the Arab Republic of Egypt in gratitude for Germany's participation in the rescue of the Nubian temple threatened by the Aswan High Dam. The blocks of this temple were found being reused as building material in the foundations of the Temple of Kalabsha. The gate is currently exhibited in Berlin-Charlottenburg.

The Berlin Museum is also engaged in a project for the construction of a museum at the site of Naga that the institution has been investigating for several years.

Perceptions of Nubia in Other Important Collections in Central, Southern and Western Europe

In this group I included those museums that, although not as great protagonists as the 'pillars', are still considered important actors in the Nubian adventure. Their presentation roughly follows the chronological order in which these collections were formed.

Munich benefited greatly (as did Berlin) from the magnificent discovery of Giuseppe Ferlini who was, as indicated above, one of the most famous (and debatable) 'adventurers' to visit the Sudan. Here, for long time, the masterpieces belonging to Queen Amanishaketo have overshadowed the rest of the Nubian collection made up from the finds of American and British archeological expeditions.

Vienna and Leipzig occupied a very respectable place in the rescues campaigns of Nubia of the beginning of the of the past century. Vienna continued the tradition by also participating in the UNESCO Campaign of the sixties. Both countries also brought back 'respectable' collections from these excavations.

Most of the Nubian collection in Brussels was obtained through financial subscriptions and contributions to British excavations. Leiden, Madrid and Geneva began their Nubian adventure with the UNESCO Campaign in the sixties for which in return they were rewarded with generous donations of objects and also 'Ambassador' temples. Today those in Leiden and Madrid are a great tourist attraction. Geneva does not have any temple to boast of but, as a compensation, it has objects from the excavations of the sixties and also an important collection from one of the most important archeological sites of Sudan, Kerma, the pride of Swiss archeological activities in the Sudan in more recent years.

In this group, I included other two locations that are outstanding not just for their collections but also for the personalities of the specialists involved. This is the case in Lille where great scientific and personal efforts are hidden within a museum's storage depot and in Pisa that enshrines interesting stories of passion transformed into science at its best.

The important involvement of such museums and institutions in Nubia and the passion and dedication of some of the scholars involved impacted also the representation of Nubia in museums are the subjects of the sub-sections below. These museums provide evidence that supports many of the arguments discussed in Chapter 5. Some of these museums, aware of the inadequacy of their displays, have recently renewed them giving the Nubian collections their own space. Others, although recognizing Nubia as a cultural entity in its own right, believe that the close contacts with Egypt legitimize a combined exhibition of the archeological materials of both cultures.

For other collections, there seems to be no hope, at least for the moment, of emerging from the depths of the storage depots to which they have been relegated for decades. Their richness, as well as the historical importance of the events that have produced them, cry out for the proper exhibition of these collections.

In those museums where Nubian collections were displayed and now have been consigned to oblivion so that renovation work can be carried out, the question of whether these collections - now depleted of the enthusiasm generated by the effects of the Salvage Campaign of the sixties - will remain in oblivion forever, as has happened elsewhere, or whether they will resume the place they deserve. At the moment, the enthusiasm for this Campaign is instead being perpetuated in those museums and locations where the presence of majestic 'temple ambassador'⁴⁵⁴ somehow overshadows the rest.

State Museum of Egyptian Art in Munich, (Munich)

Even though never directly involved in field work in Nubia, this museum pays great attention to its Nubian collection. In the new location to which the museum has been recently moved, the Nubian collection has been allocated its own space.

The method of acquisition of the collection and its old display belong to the first of the three stages delineated in the evolution of the concept of Nubia in museums, presented in Chapter 5. The collection pertains to the stage prior to the Salvage Campaign of the sixties, when Nubian objects arrived to Europe mainly through the discoveries of European travelers and adventurers, and was presented as part of Egyptian collections, with no distinctions between the two civilizations.

The collection of the Bavarian state was created in the sixteenth century by Duke Albrecht V and was enlarged especially by Charles Theodore, Elector of Bavaria, and King Ludwig I of Bavaria. It displays artifacts from all periods of the history of Ancient Egypt.

Ludwig I of Bavaria acquired the first Nubian collection of the museum and it was destined to become the most important: the famous treasure of Queen Amanishaketo.⁴⁵⁵ Through the good offices of the Munich Egyptologist Baron Von Bissing the museum acquired a little-known but rich collection of Nubian pottery. Most of it comes from a secure archeological context and the majority originates from Reisner and Garstang's excavations.⁴⁵⁶ Besides this group of vessels, there is also a group of reliefs, some statuary and some minor art objects.⁴⁵⁷ Apart from a few objects in museum and exhibition catalogues, plus short notices in the excavation reports, this material has remained unpublished for far too long a time. This is a good example, as discussed in Chapter 5, of the assertion that the historical backgrounds of European museums are often linked to romantic tales that have fed the popular imagination and that the collections displayed need to be slotted into the scenario that tends to highlight certain pieces and relegate others to oblivion. In 2010, Sylvia Schoske, curator of the collection, shared with me future activities and plans for the collection:

Due to the lack of space, there are currently few objects on display in our permanent exhibition. Since last year a small exhibition prepared at the International Pottery Museum of Weiden (northern Bavaria) has formed the basis for the concept of a separate Nubian room in the future permanent exhibition at the museum's new building. During the last years we prepared, mainly in cooperation with the Egyptian Museum in Berlin, several traveling exhibitions on different topics concerning Ancient Nubia: *Gold of Meroe* and *Sudan: Ancient Kingdoms of the Nile*. The first one *Gold of Meroe*, focused mainly on the

⁴⁵⁴ This is the definition, as already mentioned, given by Sarwat Okasha, Minister of Culture in Egypt at the time of the Salvage Campaign, to the role of these temples worldwide.

⁴⁵⁵ Schoske, 2008.

⁴⁵⁶ The pottery can be attributed mostly to the A and C Groups, Pan Grave, Meroitic and X Group.

⁴⁵⁷ Priese, 1993.

treasure of Queen Amanishaketo and from 1992 it was exhibited in Berlin, New York, Toronto, Turin, Iphofen (Bavaria) and in Munich, on the occasion of the International Meroitic Conference held in 2000. *Sudan: Ancient Kingdoms of the Nile* was the result of a cooperation initiated in 1996 among various museums in the world. The exhibition was formed thanks to loans from Khartoum, New York, Boston, Philadelphia, Berlin, Munich and few others. It was exhibited in Munich, Paris, Amsterdam, Toulouse, Turin and Mannheim. For two years, in an annex of the museum just outside Munich, we presented a complete overview of Nubia from Prehistory to the Christian period. These exhibitions were complemented by a number of conferences and specialized guides. I also produced a small kit for children to compare the different cultures. I think no other museum in the world organizes so many exhibitions on this subject involving so many destinations. Moreover, as already mentioned, in our forthcoming new museum, (to be opened probably in 2011) there will be a special room devoted to Ancient Nubia. The concept of this permanent gallery, such as the temporary exhibitions, is to show artifacts belonging to the different Nubian cultures as well as to stress the various connections between Egypt and its southern neighbor(s), in addition to influences from South to north and vice versa. So Munich has deep knowledge and experience of how to present the different Nubian and Meroitic cultures to different groups of visitors, both adults and children, in capitals and small towns. I hope this can give you just an idea of what we have done in the last 20 years to promote knowledge of this topic.⁴⁵⁸

Sylvia Schoske's comments clearly indicate the great care the museum takes in the promotion of Nubian culture, confirmed by the significant number of temporary exhibitions and the planned Nubian Room. After my interview with Sylvia Schoske, another exhibition, *Naga: Royal City*, was mounted in cooperation with Berlin and the Sudanese authorities. In June 2013, the Museum moved to the new location and the dream of the Nubian gallery became a reality.⁴⁵⁹ The room is devoted to the theme 'Nubia and the Sudan' and it is organized more or less chronologically.⁴⁶⁰ As well, some pieces have been highlighted outside these chronological display cases.⁴⁶¹

Sylvia Schoske told me that in order to explain the different cultures and the relationship between Egypt and Nubia/Sudan to the visitors, the projection of a map and the media station are enough to give all the necessary information commencing from 10 000 BC.⁴⁶² The 'room text' introduces the gallery as follows:

A look at the Ancient Sudan provides a wider and more differentiated image of the history of the Nile Valley, which is traditionally centered around Ancient Egypt. Nubia, the area between the 1st Cataract in the north and Khartoum in the south – i.e. southern Egypt and northern Sudan – long stood in the shadow of the Pharaonic kingdom, by which it was usually ruled. It was the presence of gold in the Nubian desert that made the country so interesting for its more powerful neighbor; even its name probably came from the Ancient

⁴⁵⁸ Sylvia Schoske (Personal Communication, 2010).

⁴⁵⁹ Since 2012, located in the Residenz, the former Royal Palace of the Bavarian Monarch, the Egyptian Museum has recently been moved to the *Kunstareal*, a museum quarter in the city center of Munich.

⁴⁶⁰ The objects are arranged in showcases according to the following periods and subjects: The Image of the Nubian in Egypt; Neolithic Cultures; The A-Group Culture; Egypt in Nubia; The C-Group Culture; The Culture of the Pan-Grave People; The Kingdom of Kerma; The Kingdom of Napata; The Kingdom of Meroe; The Gods of Nubia; The Meroitic Script; The Art of the Nok Culture; Post-Meroitic Cultures.

⁴⁶¹ One showcase contains the treasure of the Queen Amanishakheto of Meroe, the statue of the 'Meroitic Venus', the statue of a Meroitic Isis, and freestanding heads of Shabaqa and Meroitic Amun.

⁴⁶² Sylvia Schoske (Personal Communication, July 2013).

Egyptian *nub* = *gold*. Ancient Nubia was the focus of an intensive north-south dialogue, the corridor between Africa and the Near East. African influences were manifold; they were particularly tangible in the early phase of Ancient Egypt: rituals and elements of royal regalia, sacrificial burials, the equal status of women, the appearance and characteristic traits of certain deities – all stimulated and influenced by the south. Nubia mediated between East Africa, the cradle of humanity, and the Mediterranean world, one of the apotheoses of human evolution. In short, Nubia was the protagonist in the historical dialogue between Europe and Africa.

Among the distinguished guests who attended to the opening of the Room ‘Nubia and the Sudan’ were Sudanese authorities. The Sudan has in fact contributed to this exhibition with the loan of several objects (Fig.66).⁴⁶³



Fig. 66: Mr. Khalid Musa, Head of the Sudanese Mission to Germany, delivering a speech at the opening ceremony of the Room ‘Nubia and the Sudan’

University of Leipzig-Egyptian Museum, Leipzig

The Egyptian Museum of Leipzig also pays great attention to George Steindorff’s work in Nubia and considers the collection which have come from this expedition one of the most important holdings of the Museum. The collection is subject to continuous scrutiny by researchers and is promoted as much as possible.⁴⁶⁴ The museum staff, as shown below, are making efforts to improve the display of such objects, despite the restrictions imposed by the museum system.

In order to help the Egyptian Government rescue the monuments of Lower Nubia threatened by the first Aswan Dam, between 1910 and 1912, the Egyptian Museum of Leipzig organized the Sieglin Expedition directed by George Steindorff. The site granted to the German

⁴⁶³ The paper *The Ancient Civilization of the Sudan in the National Museum of Munich*, published on the Web Site of the Sudanese Embassy in Germany, highlights this longstanding cooperation between Germany and the Sudan that also resulted in the generous loan which the Sudanese authorities have made to the Museum of Munich for this new display (www.sudan-embassy.de).

⁴⁶⁴ In 2004 a CD Rom was produced: Spiekermann, A. *Aniba-Die Graber der Spiekermann, A. Aniba-Die Graber der A-und C Gruppe*. Steindorffs Grabungen im unternubischen Aniba 1912/1914 und 1930/31 (Leipzig, 2004).

mission was the important city of Aniba, for a time the capital of the area.⁴⁶⁵ A large number of objects found during the investigation of the site are now part of the museum holdings.

Indeed, Aniba objects form the bulk of the Nubian collection of this museum, but others from different sites in the area have arrived in the museum through various channels. The entire collection covers the time from Prehistory to the Christian period. Unfortunately, many objects were lost during the Second World War.⁴⁶⁶

In the old exhibition, Aniba materials were dispersed throughout various sections of the museum, following a chronological as well as thematic order. For example, a special display dedicated to the C Group was organized in the Middle Kingdom section, whereas materials from Tomb 'S 91' were displayed in the area devoted to the New Kingdom. Some of Aniba *shawabtis*, were exhibited in a showcase to enrich the theme of the funerary cult in ancient Egypt. Most of the objects, especially ceramics, were in storage.

In 2009 I had a talk with Friederike Seyfried, who was working at the time for this museum, and she explained to me the concept upon which the collection would be displayed in the new location:

In the new museum a separate room will be devoted to the Aniba materials. It will recount the history of the site and highlights as well the work of the German Sieglin Expedition. Some objects will continue to be displayed along with the Egyptian collection while a public open- depot will be created not only to show objects, for which there is no space in the permanent galleries, but also for study. Through these various exhibition methods the entire Nubian collection is exposed.⁴⁶⁷

This time curators' hopes have become a reality. Today the Nubian collection is displayed in the Room 112 (Kerma and Aniba), the most beautiful in the museum with its wooden paneling and stucco ceiling decorated with griffins. The collection is displayed in individual compartments and shows some material from Kerma and the objects from Aniba, including a barrel-shaped coffin, among the 1912 finds in Tomb 'S 90'.

Museum of Fine Arts, Vienna

In contrast to the two previous museums, in Vienna, active participation in the field is not yet reflected in the museum and the collection (at least most of it) is one of those that, despite its importance, lies in the depths of the museum storage depot.

The involvement of Austria in Nubia dates back to the beginning of the last century when the Government of Egypt decided to build the first Aswan Dam. In the years 1911-1912 the Austrian Academy of Sciences obtained permission to excavate the important sites of Toshka⁴⁶⁸ and Arminna⁴⁶⁹ in Lower Nubia. The excavation was directed by Hermann Junker. During the same period, it was also beginning to investigate Kubbaneya, the area near Aswan.⁴⁷⁰ Some of the

⁴⁶⁵ Steindorff, 1935.

⁴⁶⁶ Kalabsha (lost: 1); Sebuia (lost: 1); Aniba: 2042 (lost 348); Qasr Ibrim: 3 (lost: 12); Karanog (lost: 12); Gebel Adda (lost: 2); Faras: (lost: 1); Semna:1 (lost: 2); Sarras: 2 (lost: 6) Shalfak (lost: 1); Mirgissa (lost: 3); Kerma: 127 (lost: 35); Meroe: (lost: 11); Kuri (lost: 31).

⁴⁶⁷ Friederike Seyfried (Personal Communication, 2009).

⁴⁶⁸ Junker, 1926.

⁴⁶⁹ Junker, 1925.

⁴⁷⁰ Junker, 1920; Junker, 1922.

objects brought to light during these excavations are now at the *Kunsthistorisches* Museum of Vienna.

This engagement of the Austrian Academy in Nubia continued with its participation in the Salvage Campaign of the sixties during which it had a mission in the area of Sayala.⁴⁷¹ Many objects found during this expedition are also part of the museum holdings.

The work of Junker and his successors during the salvage campaigns has been very important, and has produced a collection rich enough to allow the creation of a display dedicated to the history of Lower Nubia and of its archeological salvage from the beginning of the last century until the sixties. Despite this, almost a hundred years after the first participation of Austria in the rescue of Nubia, nearly all these materials are still in storage. Until a few years ago, the only object on display was a Pharaonic clay slipper coffin (inv.no.7996), exchange with the Egyptian Museum of Leipzig. It had been found during the excavations of the German Expedition Sieglin at the site of Aniba.

Recently some ceramic pots and jewelry have been exhibited in the Egyptian gallery as part of the section dedicated to everyday objects. Apart from the name of the site of origin, no other element emphasizes these materials as Nubian.⁴⁷² Despite most of the Nubian collection are in storage, the museum staff is very interested in studying it as well as in the possibility of displaying it. However, here, as in many other places 'museum system restrictions' have triumphed over both the importance of the collection and the curators' wishes.

The Musées Royaux d'Art et d'Histoire of Brussels

This is one of those museums that benefited from the policy adopted by British archeology. By paying a subscription to the excavations, at the end of each expedition, it received a collection of objects.⁴⁷³ The Nubian collection is formed by 300 objects from the Sudan. The most significant artifacts are now displayed as an integral part of the Egyptian collection but in a kind of separate section devoted to Sudanese Nubia. The other objects are stored with the Egyptian collection.⁴⁷⁴

National Museum of Antiquities, Leiden

The direct involvement of this museum in Nubia goes back to the Salvage Campaign of the sixties. The excavations carried out by the museum at the Central Church of Abdalla Nirqi, north of Abu Simbel, and at the Meroitic village of Shokan in the same area brought the museum a collection of objects from both sites.⁴⁷⁵

⁴⁷¹ Bietak, 1966; Bietak and Engelmayer, 1963; Bietak and Schwarz, 1987; Bietak and Schwarz, 1998.

⁴⁷² I would like to thank Regina Holtz for her cooperation.

⁴⁷³ The collection consists of materials covering a time ranging from Prehistory to the Meroitic period but not including the Lower Nubian A and C Groups. The objects consist in: decorated and undecorated pottery; *shawabtis* made of stone and faience belonging to the Napatan period; objects made of mica; jewelry, cultic objects; bronze weapons; ivory objects and so on (Garstang's excavations at Meroe in 1909/1910 (2); Griffith's excavations at Faras in 1910/1911 (3), and Sanam in 1913/1914. Personal communication from Limme Luc Chief of the Section for Egypt, Middle East and Iran). Belgium also participated in the Salvage Campaign of the sixties, sending three experts to the Documentation and Study Centre for the History of the Art and Civilization of Ancient Egypt (DCC) (architectural and epigraphic records). It has made photogrammetric and epigraphic records of five monuments in the Sudan and has contributed to the cost of transposing the temple of Semna.

⁴⁷⁴ From 9 March to September 2007, about 50 objects from the collection were displayed at the Musée Royal de Mariemont in the exhibition 'Pharaons Noirs: Sur la Piste des Quarante Jours.'

⁴⁷⁵ The objects from Shokan number 1,540, while those from Abdalla Nirqi number 150. Maarten Raven and Christian Greco, to whom I offer my heartfelt thanks for their usual cooperation, have passed me a complete and very detailed list of the Nubian collection in Leiden. Here I just give a rough overview of the collection based on this list: *Abdalla*

However, the arrival of Nubian artifacts in the Museum preceded this involvement in Nubia. After its acquisition of the very large d'Anasty Collection of Egyptian antiquities the Museum became among the most important owners of Nilotic artifacts.⁴⁷⁶ In May 1913, as recorded in the inventory books compiled by Jan Hendrik Holwerda, as the result of an exchange with the University Museum of Philadelphia a group of objects from Aniba in Egyptian Nubia, entered the museum holdings.⁴⁷⁷ In August 1963, another important group of objects, originating from Qasr Ibrim and dated to the X Group period, arrived in the Museum.⁴⁷⁸

The museum's excavations in Nubia made Leiden one of the privileged destinations of the 'Ambassador Temples'. In this case, the Roman temple of Taffa,⁴⁷⁹ today rebuilt in the entrance hall of the museum. Hans Schneider comments on the donation of this temple as follows:

The temple of Taffa arrived in Rotterdam on 18 January 1971 and on the same day it was transported to a warehouse in Leiden for storage. However, Egypt had parted with the temple on two conditions: it had to be rebuilt in a heated, enclosed space, as the Nubia sandstone would suffer if it was exposed to the air. The Egyptians also expressed a wish for the temple to be housed in the National Museum of Antiquities of Leiden. The temple would be a natural addition to the museums' Egyptian collection, one of the best in the world, and moreover the museum is the main link for a number of scientific and cultural connections between Egypt and the Netherlands. Arranging the blocks according to layer and preparations for rebuilding, which included casting a concrete platform for the temple, were carried out following the recommendations of Hassan el-Ashierly, an Egyptian architect and Egyptologist. The rebuilding itself was carried out by the museum, a project which in all respects was unique for the Netherlands.⁴⁸⁰

The majestic temple of Taffa is certainly one of the masterpieces of the Egyptian and Nubian collection of the Museum. Besides providing an impressive welcome for visitors, it also forms a prestigious backdrop for various events (Fig 67).

Nirqi: from this site the museum hold 154 objects, they are all of Christian/Coptic period and can be summarized as follow: pottery (bowls, jars, chalices, lamps, lids, basins, scales candlesticks, etc.). Some of them are complete many others are just fragments; sandstone bowls; bone objects; a palette; a bronze incense burner; glass beads, pottery; iron rings; cruciform amulets; a wooden box; wood and stucco icons. *Shokan*: the objects are of Meroitic/ Greek Roman period and consist in: many potsherds; several types of ceramic wares; tools; beads (alabaster, glass, coral, faience, pottery, glass, ivory); jewelry (bronze, glass etc.); archer's rings; different kinds of tools; decorative elements; *ba* statues; a clay coffin; *ostraka* in Meroitic and Demotic. *Qasr Ibrim*: 39 objects: Meroitic: bronze disk and bowl; glass perfume bottle; offering table; fragment of a statue. Greek-Roman-X Group: several ceramic bottles and beakers and 1 amphora; Christian: funerary stele; decorated fragments; Coptic: pottery. *Aniba*: 37 pottery objects some of which painted and embossed (amphora, jar, beakers, pots, bowls, spout beakers); animal-bull. Many beads (pottery, alabaster, glass, bone; glass, coral).

⁴⁷⁵ Schneider, 1979.

⁴⁷⁶ The collection spans the Ancient and Classical Worlds and the early history of the Netherlands from prehistoric times to the medieval period.

⁴⁷⁷ The objects were donated, with another group of Greek artifacts, in exchange for Dutch antiquities.

⁴⁷⁸ In the inventory book compiled by Prof. Klanses the following news is mentioned:

'Egyptian antiquities donated by the Egypt Exploration Society of London from the excavations conducted by W.B. Emery at necropoleis 192 and 193 dated to the X Group period (IV-VI centuries A.D.)', (cf. W.B. Emery and R.P. Kirwan, 1929-1931, p. 268 (translated from Dutch).

⁴⁷⁹ Schneider, 1979.

⁴⁸⁰ Säve-Söderbergh, 1987:140-141.



Fig. 67: National Museum of Antiquities of Leiden: Taffa Temple

Although much of the Nubian collection is in storage, those pieces exposed in the Egyptian gallery are clearly indicated as Nubian and provided with commentaries, maps and related images of Nubia (Fig. 68).



Fig. 68: National Museum of Antiquities of Leiden: Showcase displaying Nubian artifacts. Outside the showcase, hung on the wall, an explanation with photographs and a map of Nubia

In concluding this sub-section on the National Museum of Antiquities, Leiden, I wish to stress that Maarten Raven was one of the first scholars to contribute in the setting up of the Documentation Center of the Nubia Museum of Aswan. Aware of the importance that this archive will mean to Aswan, he donated, without a moment's hesitation, copies of the documentation related to the museum's excavations in Nubia, an instance of ethical considerations prevailing over academic reasons.⁴⁸¹

The National Archeological Museum of Spain (Madrid)

The collection in Madrid also places the Nubian exhibition of this museum among those belonging to the second stage discussed in Chapter 5. The objects arrived here mainly through the participation of Spain in the Nubia Campaign of the sixties and benefiting from the contemporary wave of interest and enthusiasm, they inspired a permanent Nubian exhibition.

The *Museo Arqueológico Nacional* was founded in 1867 by a Royal Decree of Isabella II, and its purpose was to be a depository for the numismatic, archeological, ethnographical and decorative art collections compiled by the Spanish monarchs. During the International Campaign to Save the Monuments of Nubia, Spain participated in various missions both in Egypt and in the

⁴⁸¹ It should be recorded that he has already donated copies of the documents, although the collection from Shokan was still under study and as such still unpublished. This shows his trust in the professional integrity of Egyptian colleagues.

Sudan.⁴⁸²

The Department of Egyptian Antiquities and Near East holds a considerable number of objects from the excavations of these missions for the exception are a few Kerma jars given to the museum by Martinez Santa-Olalla.

Until recently, the collection was exhibited in the hall for Ancient Egypt, although in separate showcases with panels noting the objects on display and explanatory texts. The display was organized chronologically with showcases devoted to each period of Nubian history.⁴⁸³ One showcase was also devoted to the relationship between Nubia and Egypt during the New Kingdom.⁴⁸⁴ To avoid gaps, as in the case of the 25th Dynasty, texts and images have replaced the dearth of objects.⁴⁸⁵ The display ended with X Group and Christian showcases designated *The Post Meroitic Age*⁴⁸⁶ according to one of the definitions given to these two cultural phases. The whole room, painted in yellow ocher with the plinth lined with a blue canvas, was designed to give an impression of the landscape that characterizes the Nile Valley in Egypt and Northern Sudan (Nubia). The museum has been recently opened and the Egyptian and Nubian collections are exhibited in a room named *El Nilo: Egipto y Nubia* (The Nile: Egypt and Nubia).

The Ambassador Extraordinary of Madrid

Acknowledging its participation in the Salvage Campaign of the sixties, the Government of Egypt gifted Spain the Dabod Temple. Säve-Söderbergh comments on this donation thus:

The temple of Dabod was built by the Ptolomies in Lower Nubia in the third century BC. This small temple or rather chapel was originally surrounded by walls of sun-dried bricks with three large gates of stone, of which the third has collapsed. In 1968 it was given as a gift-in-return from the Egyptian Government to Spain in recognition for contributions to the Nubia campaign, specifically, to the salvage of Abu Simbel. This was done in accordance with a recommendation of the Executive Committee at a session in Madrid. The blocks were brought from Elephantine to Spain, and now there was the problem of how and where to re-erect the temple. The architectural structure of the monument- a chapel with the two gates in front and at some distance from it- gives it a form, 40m by 10m, which is awkward or even impossible to place indoors in a museum. So the basic preservation requirements concerning the gifts-in-return, that the monuments should be given to museums and that steps should be taken to ensure their permanent safety, were indeed difficult to meet. There were some discussions [of] whether the temple should not be re-erected rather in a part of Spain with a desert-like climate where it would not be exposed to such great variations of humidity and temperature as in Madrid. This alternative was, however, turned down and a site was selected in a park in the central part of Madrid, a hill not far from the Royal Palace and with a wonderful vista over the surroundings.

The temple was rebuilt on a concrete basement and a large pond was constructed in front of the temple proper, with the gates placed on a platform in the middle of the lake, mirrored

⁴⁸² Presedo Velo, 1963; Almagro, Ripoll and Montreal, 1964; Presedo Velo, 1964; Pellicer and Longueras, 1965; Garcia Guinea, 1965; Presedo Velo, 1965; Almagro, 1965; Lopez, 1966; Almagro, 1966.

⁴⁸³ Showcase n. 40: C Group incised bowls, some necklaces and cosmetics plaques from the necropolis of Mirmad-South and Kerma pottery.

⁴⁸⁴ Ceramics, carnelian necklaces; faience boats; alabaster vases for ointments; amulets; a coffin from tomb n.75 at Mirmad was displayed outside the showcases.

⁴⁸⁵ Showcase n. 43 was set aside for the 25th Dynasty and the Meroitic period, although the displayed materials were only Meroitic coming from the necropolis of Naga Gamus (dikes).

⁴⁸⁶ Showcases n. 48 and 49, entitled 'The Post-Meroitic Age,' exhibited X Group objects coming from Argin Nag-el Arab as well as Christian objects from Abkanarti.

in the water. On the platform the central road up to the temple as well as the alignment of the original adobe walls were marked with different types of stone. The setting is a complete success and the palm trees planted in this part of the park give one somehow a feeling of Egypt. So, despite the risks involved for its safety in the long run, this temple has also become a monument recalling to the inhabitants of the capital of Spain and to innumerable visitors the international solidarity between the member States of UNESCO and the brilliant success of the Nubia Campaign⁴⁸⁷ (Fig. 69).



Fig. 69: Madrid: Temple of Dabod

How should the discussion raised by the removal of these temples, now rebuilt on higher locations of the same area, in museums around the world, or in completely alien open air places, such as in this case be fruitfully pursued? The dilemma is that, although their removal to new places was going to save the monuments, such an action will have destroyed their integrity, as the monument will have lost its essential meaning when removed from its context. It is simply hot air to say that these decisions were forced choices that would never have been taken under normal conditions. To save the temples in their original context was physically impossible, so that a choice had to be taken so that not everything would be lost. The difficult decision of cutting and moving these temples to safer places was made in the knowledge and the hope that they would become 'majestic ambassadors' for Nubia worldwide.

⁴⁸⁷ Säve-Söderbergh, 1987: 141-142.

Museum of Art and History, Geneva

The *Musée d'Art et d'Histoire* was built from 1903 to 1910, thanks to a bequest from Charles Galland. Its archeology section has a collection of Nubian antiquities which originate both from the past excavations of the University of Geneva in the Salvage Campaign of the sixties at the sites of Tabo and Aksha⁴⁸⁸ and more recent ones conducted at the site of Kerma, in Sudanese Nubia.⁴⁸⁹ The former director of the museum Casar Menz comments on the display of the collections as follows:

Le Musée d'art et d'histoire est fier d'être depositaire, avec l'accord des autorités Soudanaises, des plus de mille cinq cents objets provenant des sites de Tabo, d'Akasha et de Kerma. Ces objets ont été présentés de façon provisoire, derrière la salle de la Préhistoire, avec une utilisation des éléments de l'exposition - Kerma royaume de Nubie de 1990. Dans le cadre de notre plan directeur, qui vise entre autres une meilleure mise en valeur de nos riches collections archéologiques, de loin les plus importantes en Suisse, nous avons réaménagé entièrement la salle des antiquités pharaoniques, rouverte au public en 2004. Vu la proximité culturelle et topographique des deux civilisations, il n'était que logique de présenter les antiquités nubiennes en étroite liaison avec notre fonds égyptologique. Avec l'inauguration de cette nouvelle salle, un vieux rêve a enfin pris corps. Notre mission première consiste à conserver et à étudier un patrimoine historique, à le diffuser tout en nous assurant que la transmission du savoir soit garantie. La nouvelle présentation des antiquités nubiennes et la publication qui leur est dédiée permettront au public de découvrir les témoins d'une civilisation fascinante dans tout son développement, de la préhistoire jusque à l'époque chrétienne.⁴⁹⁰

Menz' words ring with an unequivocal awareness of the distinction between the two cultures, although their continuous interaction over time also justifies their interaction at museological level at which their diversity is properly distinguished.

Switzerland has made very generous contributions to the construction of the museum at Kerma,⁴⁹¹ supporting the dream of the local community to have this cultural space so they can have a better grasp of their roots. This time the trans-national help has respected the vision of the local community rather than that of the foreigners, as has happened so many times in the past and in many other African countries.

Museum of Fine Arts, Lille

Lille is one of those locations where Nubia is regarded strictly as an academic topic rather than a one that will capture the popular interest. This is an instance in which the 'museumization' of Nubia, although unknown to the larger public, is certainly one of the most popular academic destinations for those people specialized in Nubia.

For a long time, the Institute of Papyrology and Egyptology of the University of Lille-Charles de Gaulle has been very involved in the archeological investigation and promotion of the area. From his successful excavations at the sites of Aksha and Mirgissa, and more recently at Sai, Jean Vercoutter, who has played a key role in the history of archeology in Sudan,⁴⁹² has brought

⁴⁸⁸ For the excavations at this site cf. Maistre's bibliography from 1969 to 1970.

⁴⁸⁹ Bonnet, 1990. For a complete bibliography on the Swiss mission's work at Kerma cf. the website, www.kerma.ch

⁴⁹⁰ Foreword to Chappard and Ferrero, 2006.

⁴⁹¹ Cf. Sub-section on the Kerma Museum.

⁴⁹² For some years, commencing in 1955, just before the *International Campaign to Save the Monuments of Nubia*, he

most of the Nubian collection in the museum to Lille.⁴⁹³ Until some years ago the collection was preserved in the above mentioned Institute. In 2006 it was transferred to the Museum of Fine Arts in Lille and kept in a well organized storage room, open to anyone who is interested in it.

For the importance of the excavated sites and the personality of the researchers involved, probably the collection would have needed a better venue. This is why the collection is well known to the researchers but not to the larger public.

University of Pisa: Egyptian Collections, Pisa

The Pisa collection derives from the archeological work of Michela Schiff Giorgini. This enterprising woman was very well known in the Sudan, especially among the older generation of Nubians fascinated by her courage in defying the desert dunes in her quest for the secrets of Pharaoh Amenhotep III. She transformed a passion into outstanding scientific results.⁴⁹⁴

She has conducted excavations among these dunes since 1957, under the patronage of the University of Pisa. Her work and her dedication to it led the University of Pisa awarding her an honorary degree in Arts and Humanities on October 16, 1971.⁴⁹⁵

Michela Schiff Giorgini's excavations have brought to light a great quantity of objects. Under the deposit in her will, almost all the artifacts went to the museum in Khartoum, but several hundred were given to the University of Pisa. As I see it, this ethical attitude marks a highly commendable example to be followed by more people. As stated in Chapter 5, places of origin should have to might to own significant artifacts that are markers of the identity of the local communities.⁴⁹⁶

The collection in Pisa is formed of artifacts, most of which date to the Pharaonic and Meroitic periods, with the exception of a few pieces from the Neolithic period, Group A and Kerma. Today they are part of the Egyptological collection of the University and represent a collection that is, as Edda Bresciani says, 'absolutely the most important, both for the personality of the donor and the character and richness of the collection itself'.⁴⁹⁷ This is the reason that the room where the collection is on display has been named *Schiff Giorgini*. In the perception of the museum curators, the collection is Egyptian in nature, and Sudanese in its provenance.⁴⁹⁸

New Approaches and 'Different' Collections

The interesting virtual approach to Nubia of the Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge

The Fitzwilliam Museum is experimenting with what might be called a 'double presentation' of Nubia: one through the physical objects in its gallery and the other through a virtual presentation of Nubia expressed in online galleries of photos of Nubia and interviews with modern actors in the

was Commissioner for the Archeology of the Sudan. In this capacity, when the possibility arose that the decision taken by the Egyptian Government to build the High Dam would also involve the Sudan, he prepared a detailed report of the threatened area in Sudanese Nubia for the then President of the Sudan to submit to UNESCO. Cf. Vercoutter 1959.

⁴⁹³ Vercoutter, 1964.

⁴⁹⁴ Schiff Giorgini, 2002; Schiff Giorgini, 2003.

⁴⁹⁵ Internationally, an important institution, *The Michela Schiff Giorgini Foundation*, based in Lausanne, holds a competition every year to award a prize designed to promote Egyptology, in its broadest sense. The Foundation is headed by an international committee.

⁴⁹⁶ Cf. Chapter 4.

⁴⁹⁷ Bresciani and Silvano, 1992.

⁴⁹⁸ Flora Silvano (Personal Communication, 2008).

area. These actors are modern Nubians and museum curators who together provide a multi-faceted and inter-dynamic picture of Egypt and Nubia through the eyes and hearts of those who have inherited these legacies. This approach of the museum towards both the Egyptian and Nubian collections reflects interesting changes and challenges for a country traditionally considered conservative on the subject.

This vision of the Nubian and Egyptian collections display is mainly the work of curator Sally-Ann Ashton, who is also responsible for the conception of the virtual representations of both these collections.

The Egyptian collection is displayed in Rooms 19 and 20 and Room 24, created in 1995, is dedicated to *Rome and Ancient Sudan*.⁴⁹⁹ The physical collections displayed in the galleries are complemented by several virtual tours, expressed in photos, film and interviews. One of the virtual galleries is entitled: “*Black to Kemet: Placing Egypt in Africa*”. By playing on the word *Kemet*, which means 'Black Land', used in the Pharaonic period to indicate Egypt, the exhibition claims the African roots of the country.⁵⁰⁰

To prevent the exhibition being reduced to no more than a show of objects organized on the basis of academic trends, without any connection to the reality of the places from where these objects come and from the views of those who today live in those places, a series of interviews were conducted on site by the curator Sally-Ann Ashton. She explains the reasons for conducting such interviews as follows:

These interviews were undertaken as part of a project to explore the scope of Nubian identity and cultural heritage and were filmed in Southern Egypt and Northern Sudan in the winter of 2010. The interviewees include members of the Nubian community, museum curators and directors and aim to give people an impression of how Nubian people identify themselves and how museums present Nubian, Sudanese and Ancient Egyptian history.⁵⁰¹

The approach of the Fitzwilliam Museum signals essential changes in the presentation of Nubia. These changes have actually been prompted by the desire of the curators to understand the idea and concept of Nubia better by employing different means to access that idea, and consequently transmitting it to the general public in a way far more inclusive than it was in the past. This method embraces both the academic and popular perception of the Nubians of today.

⁴⁹⁹ The Nubian collection presents, some objects that depict Nubians in Egypt. They open a window onto how Nubians were seen in Egyptian art and shed light on their activities in this country (policemen, attendants or simply enemies). Various objects represent women. As Alessandro Roccati explains ‘The establishment of a supra-regional organization, which takes place in particular during the Egyptian New Kingdom involves the acquisition of knowledge of physical and cultural differences and the pursuit of their description and representation, focusing on some of their specificities. They stand out in a craft that produces pieces of small dimensions but of great artistic value. This awareness of other realities, is particularly African and exotic, it was the start of a process that will lead, through the Mediterranean world up to the Roman Empire. It is accompanied by a mythical concept of the south where lies the scene of the divine adventures (like the myth of the ‘Distant Goddess’) and figures with extravagant features such as Bes and Beset his wife, monkeys and female figures with African characteristics as wet nurses creating a link with the world of women and children. On the other hand, Nubia will remain in the common imaginary the land of magicians and magic’ (Roccati 1999: 81-84). Obviously of outstanding importance are the 127 stelae, most of them funerary, from Egypt and Nubia. Written in Egyptian hieroglyphic, hieratic, demotic, Carian, Greek, Coptic and Arabic they provide a great deal of information on the history, religion, funerary customs, art and iconography, daily life and administrative systems of ancient Egypt and Nubia, covering, a span of time of almost 4000 years. (cf. Martin, 2005).

⁵⁰⁰ Cf. Annex VIII.

⁵⁰¹ Interviews are available in the Museum’s Web Site. Some of them have also been used in the analysis of Chapter 4.

A Rare Display of the Nubian Gold- Mines (Varese)

The presentation in this museum is related to the problematic geographical extension of Nubia. The term used by Adams, *Nubia: Corridor to Africa*, discussed in Chapter 2, has recently been considered to be too restrictive by some scholars. New researches point out that the area defined Nubia was not restricted to this 'Corridor' confined to the Nile Valley, but that, because of better climatic conditions, it also extended into the neighboring deserts.

This definition of Nubia as a 'Corridor' has also impacted museums exhibitions. Therefore, in this tour, I have been prompted to include this rare display of a collection originating from one of the Nubian deserts, the Eastern, which significantly marked the history of the adjacent Nile Valley.

Following the paths of the ancient explorers, Angelo and Alfredo Castiglioni, two Italian brothers, for many years have been investigating the most hostile deserts in the world, including the Nubian Desert. In Varese, Italy, they have created the CeRDO (Center of Research for the Eastern Desert). The center relies on the advice of the most important scholars in the field of Egyptology and Nubiology. For many years, the center has been engaged in the exploration of the Eastern Nubian Desert in Egypt, particularly those areas encompassed within the geographical boundaries of Nubia where the gold- mines were exploited down the millennia by Egyptians during the Pharaonic era, by the Greeks and the Ptolemies, the Romans, Byzantines, Copts and finally the Arabs after the conquest of Egypt by Islam.

Although the gold-mines were certainly the main attraction in the area, this desert was also a place of transit for many of those who from the Mediterranean, Egypt and Nubia itself on their way to the interior of Africa wished to avoid the dangers of the Middle Nile Cataracts. The activities of the gold mines, the people passing through and the so-called *Medja* who lived in this desert, who might be the ancestors of the modern Beja, inevitable left their traces and these have been documented by the Castiglioni brothers during their many years of exploration.⁵⁰²

Their most important discovery in this area is certainly Berenice Panchrysos, the 'Golden City' of Pliny the Elder.⁵⁰³ The French archeologist Jean Vercoutter writes that:

At the end of the nineteenth century, as the English army was preparing to assist General Gordon, besieged in Khartoum, a curious and wonderful legend was circulating in Egypt. There was, in some remote corner of the desert, a city abandoned and in ruins. Some passengers claimed to have discovered it, but no one had been able to find it returning to the place again. It was a 'ghost town' that you could see once, because a malicious genius - an *afrit* -who was the jealous guardian, made it disappear in the eyes of those who had seen it for the first time.⁵⁰⁴

In recent years, a small collection, composed primarily of ethnographic materials, has been displayed by the Castiglioni in the *Depandance of Villa Toeplitz* in Varese. Here, a room is dedicated to the Eastern Nubian Desert, especially to gold-mining activities there. Commentaries are provided through the words of the classical author Diodorus of Sicily (first century BC) who contributed to the knowledge of this area and paved the way for those who decided to challenge it.

⁵⁰² Castiglioni, 1993: 8-16; Castiglioni, 1991: 5-24; Castiglioni, 1992: 79-84; Castiglioni, 1993: 8-16; Castiglioni, 1991: 5-24; Castiglioni, 1992:79-84; Castiglioni, 1994:19-22; Sadr, Castiglioni and Negro, 1964: 69-75; Sadr and Castiglioni, 1994: 66-68; Castiglioni and Vercoutter, 1995; Castiglioni, 2007; Castiglioni, 2009.

⁵⁰³ Pliny (The Elder), *Natural History*. Book I; Diodorus of Sicily, *Histoire Universelle*.

⁵⁰⁴ Vercoutter, 1994: 63-68.

The objects exhibited consist mainly of lithic materials used to pulverize the gold, and drawings and photos give an idea of how the quartz was extracted and then treated. A large satellite image clearly shows the position of Berenice Panchrysos in the heart of the Eastern Nubian Desert. Some photos give an idea of the town and mines located in its surroundings.

Another room exhibits rupestrian drawings discovered during the Castiglioni's missions to Libya. They show great similarities to those in Nubia, offering the possibility to pursue comparative studies in this field. Other material, particularly fragments of Mesolithic pottery, are not displayed but they do serve as research subjects for the team and are particularly useful in mapping the prehistoric sites of the area.⁵⁰⁵ Unfortunately the collection at the Villa Toeplitz, as already mentioned, is almost unknown to the general public, perhaps even to most researchers.

Making Bones Speak: The Natural History Museum, London

Archeology includes the study of human remains, not just of human artifacts. The Nubian Pathological Collection in the Natural History Museum, that exhibits bones from Nubia, is the one that has raised, as we will see below, the most racist theories about Nubia. This collection derives from the famous *First Archaeological Survey of Nubia* and was collected by Sir Grafton Elliot Smith at the beginning of the past century.⁵⁰⁶ This survey was among the first to be conducted on the demographics of health and disease in an archeological population. The vicissitudes of the collection have been recounted in an article by Theya Molleson.⁵⁰⁷ In this article she stresses:

The arrival of the collection in London must have created great interest (overshadowed only by the discoveries at Piltdown) and various pathologists, experts in their own field, were it seems, allowed to remove especially delightful cases to their own office. This before they were fully catalogued. Many specimens doubtless were never returned to the Royal College and are now lost to the collection [...]⁵⁰⁸

The particularity of this collection lies in the fact that the analysis of it gave rise to the most racist ethnic theories about Nubia. In the light of late nineteenth-century Eugenics and other pseudo-scientific theories that attempted to adapt Darwinian theory to justify inequities based on race or socioeconomic status, the early researchers in Egypt and Nubia developed their own particular views. George Reisner, Director of the *First Archaeological Survey of Nubia*⁵⁰⁹ and his team, looked on Nubia as a long-term border between the 'Caucasoid' (White) and 'Negroid' races and, as it is well-known and disputed, in such an approach the former was considered the superior. Other theories such as those of the anatomist G. Elliot Smith, member of the *First Archaeological Survey of Nubia*, are just as prejudiced as they are racist:

⁵⁰⁵ I would like to thank the Castiglioni brothers for their help in producing this text.

⁵⁰⁶ Smith was one of the staff of the School of Medicine in Cairo with eight years of experience with Egyptian material derived from various sources, especially from the large series of skeletons from every period from both Upper and Lower Egypt.

⁵⁰⁷ 'More than 6,000 bodies were examined and, with external evidence of pathology, only some of those were retained for museums. The majority became part of the collection of the Hunterian Museum at the Royal College of Surgeons. In May 1941, the Royal College of Surgeons suffered severe bomb damage and large parts of both the collections and their records were destroyed. Over a period of years (1948–1968) most of the human skeletal material that survived was to the Natural History Museum. It included the Nubian Pathological Collection, and its card catalogue, although a few specimens were retained by the College. In 1968 the Nubian specimens from University College London were added to the collection' (Molleson, 1991).

⁵⁰⁸ Molleson, 1991: 136-143.

⁵⁰⁹ Reisner, 1910.

[...] the smallest infusion of Negro blood immediately manifests itself in a dulling of initiative and a 'drag' on the further development of the arts of civilization [...]⁵¹⁰

Such theories, alas, have influenced other scholars who were excavating in the area. The comment by Randall-MacIver and L. Woolley on the 25th Dynasty of Nubian kings who took control of Egypt for the first time reflects this insidious way of thinking:

[...] But soon the unflinching dynamics of race reasserted their force. If a short-lived and unstable black empire has occasionally extended its limits to within view of the Mediterranean, it has ultimately been repelled all along the line[...]⁵¹¹

A new generation of scholars who participated in the Salvage Campaign of the sixties revolted against these racist views. The conviction of the Canadian anthropologist Bruce Trigger, who was with Adams the leading American archaeologist in the Nubia Salvage Campaign, marked a turning point in the study of the Nubian area, was stated in 1978:

These interpretations of Nubian history had the fluidity characteristic of most racist thinking. The rulers of Kush generally were portrayed as 'Caucasoid' (Hamitic) when Kush was being described as a source of civilizing influences for the rest of sub-Saharan Africa, but these same rulers were characterized as Blacks when the region's achievements were considered in relation to those of ancient Egypt.⁵¹²

Recently a joint project between the University of Manchester,⁵¹³ and the Natural History Museum in London, has endeavored to make the bones speak again,⁵¹⁴ to support these newer approaches. Instead of simply denying the bones and the evidence they can provide to archeology, because of the taint of racism, the aim is to reaffirm the importance of the collection and to begin the reinterpretation of the materials in the light of modern archeological and paleontological research into Ancient Nubia. The other target is to locate the collection today dispersed over various places.

The University of Manchester also organized the temporary exhibition *Grave Secrets: Tales of the Ancient Nubians* (19 November 2011- 4 March 2012). The exhibition highlighted a Nubian timeline in an original and educational presentation. A couple of artifacts were displayed in groups representing the various cultural phases of the Nubian past from prehistory to the medieval era, accompanied by skeletal material dated to the same period. This skeletal material was selected by Elliot Smith on the basis of its interest to physical anthropology, and the remains on display are examples of facial characteristics, disease, dental health, trauma and causes of death.

⁵¹⁰ Smith, 1909.

⁵¹¹ Randall-MacIver, 1909.

⁵¹² Trigger, 1978.

⁵¹³ The University of Manchester is in possession of a small number of remains. The collection was once undoubtedly much larger. It is part of a teaching collection housed in the Faculty of Life Sciences.

⁵¹⁴ It is a joint project between the KNH centre of Biomedical Egyptology at the University of Manchester and the Natural History Museum in London. At the time of the *First Archeological Survey of Nubia*, 8,000 bodies were excavated, studied and preserved.

Cf. <http://www.knhcentre.manchester.ac.uk/research/nubiaproject/allthatremains/>

The Fruits of the British Archeology in Nubia and their Circulation in Museums of the United Kingdom

The following discussion analyzes a representative group of locations in which objects from excavations by British archeologists represent the most important part of the collections or in some cases is the only one. Illustrating the dynamics of the circulation of artifacts subject to the policies adopted by British researchers or institutions is a sound explanation of the presence of Nubian artifacts in many museums all over the world and in particular in Great Britain.

The Anglo - Egyptian colonization of the Sudan paved the way for intense archeological activities by British archeologists in the country. Their sources of finance favored a large circulation of the objects worldwide. They contributed greatly to the study of the archeology of the area and many museums around the world, and in particular in Britain, are indebted to them.

One of the most famous of these archeologists, known for his involvement in the circulation of the objects, was the late John Garstang, a professor at Liverpool University who , conducted an expedition on behalf of Liverpool to excavate the Town Site, the Lion Temple and the non-royal cemeteries at Meroe.⁵¹⁵ Much of the material excavated by Garstang was distributed to the financial sponsors of the excavations, most of whom were based in Northwest England and were wealthy landowners, shipping magnates or industrialists. The dispersal of this material included significant gifts to local museums, although usually sadly lacking in documentation. Fortunately, Garstang's original excavation records (including an important photographic archive) are housed at Liverpool University.⁵¹⁶ His activity was suspended with the outbreak of the World War I.

The Egypt Exploration Society (EES), previously called Egypt Exploration Fund,⁵¹⁷ is a leading British organization that has conducted archeological activities in the Nile Valley for 125 years. In exchange for an annual subscription, in the past the Society contributed considerably to the enrichment of museum collections around the world and in the homeland as we shall see below. As mentioned in Margaret Serpico's report, these dynamics of circulation have resulted in a great number of untraced, undocumented objects that are at high risk of being entirely forgotten by the academic community.⁵¹⁸

Therefore, over the last few years in Britain several projects have been implemented to shed more light on these collections (Egyptian and Nubian). Since 1988, the British Museum has been compiling information about British museums, institutions, universities, schools and historic

⁵¹⁵ Garstang, 1912.

⁵¹⁶ Snape, 2010.

⁵¹⁷ The Egypt Exploration Society is a Registered Charity (No. 212384) and a Limited Company Registered in England (No.25816). The general scope of the Society is:

‘Advances the education of the public with reference to ancient and medieval Egypt and countries in the same region, and promotes art, culture and heritage by raising knowledge, awareness and understanding of the language history, arts, culture, religion and all other matters relating to ancient and medieval Egypt and countries in the same region. The Society's current research strategy focuses on landscape development, environmental change and human interaction in the Nile Delta and Valley, including the Sudan. The current research projects range from excavation at major Delta sites, surveying the ancient capital of Memphis and mapping the changing river course at ancient Thebes to text-based and Archive research. The Society works closely with the Egyptian Supreme Council of Antiquities and is currently engaging with international partners to support and fund excavations and surveys at many other sites’ (<http://www.ees.ak.uk>).

⁵¹⁸ Serpico, 2006: 6-7; Cf. Chapter 5, 77.

houses that are believed might possibly hold ancient Egyptian and Sudanese collections. This information has been transferred to the database Cornucopia where is now fully searchable.⁵¹⁹

In May 2006 the Association of Curators of Collections of Egypt and Sudan (ACCES) was founded as a Subject Specialist Network for museum curators responsible looking after archeological collections from Egypt and the Sudan in Britain. Its main aim is to facilitate the sharing of information and good practice between fifteen core museums with large Egyptian and Sudanese collections, some 200 smaller collections elsewhere in Britain and a broader academic and public audience.⁵²⁰ Also worthy of note is the Garstang Project whose goal is to establish sustainable links of knowledge transfer between the Egyptological/Nubiological expertise at Liverpool University and regional Egyptology collections in the Northwest of England.⁵²¹

In 2006 the archaeologist Margaret Serpico conducted fan audit on behalf of the Petrie Museum, recording all the Egyptian/Sudanese collections kept in Britain. From this report it emerges that in Britain there are 195 collections reporting ancient Egyptian objects, twenty-seven of which also have objects from the Sudan (I do not know if under this definition she also includes objects coming from Egyptian Nubia). The total number of objects from both Egypt and Sudan amounts to 374,275.⁵²²

Naturally the collections vary in size. Roughly two-thirds of the collections contain fewer than 250 objects. Overall, the largest eighteen collections (calculated as those with more than 2,500 objects) together hold a minimum of 326,670 ancient Egyptian/Sudanese objects between them. Excluding the eighteen largest collections, there are 177 smaller collections in Britain together holding a minimum of 47,575 ancient Egyptian/Sudanese objects.⁵²³ From the survey it also emerged that there is specialized staff for only part of large collections, and that the numerous small collections are often in the need of specialists in the field, not to mention conservators.⁵²⁴ The latter are essential to the revision process of storages. Before being displayed, stored objects usually need restoration.

The Nubian collections that I found in Britain number thirty.⁵²⁵ Thirteen of them are composed of objects from both Sudanese and Egyptian Nubia; in fifteen collections there are objects only from the Sudan. There are only two museums with objects from Egyptian Nubia only.

I shall present these collections in three different groups: the first includes those museums where the exhibition of collections from Nubia has somehow been dissociated from the very traditional way of presenting them as completely embedded in the Egyptian collection. Gathered in the second group are those museums in which the Nubian objects are completely mixed with the Egyptian collection. The third group is composed of the stored collections and those on which unfortunately I do not have any clear cut information.

⁵¹⁹ Cornucopia is an online database of information about more than 6,000 collections in British museums, galleries, archives and libraries created by the Museums, Libraries, Archives Council in Britain (MLA): www.cornucopia.org.uk. A live searchable version of Cornucopia is available on Accessing Virtual Egypt, a website which carries a number of on-line resources initiated by the Petrie Museum of Egyptian Archeology. These include searchable catalogues of Egyptian collections in five museums; virtually reunited objects from major excavations; educational activities; a reconstruction of a major archeological site (www.accessingvirtualegypt.ucl.ac.uk)

⁵²⁰ Criscenzo-Laycock, 2010.

⁵²¹ Snape, 2010.

⁵²² Serpico, 2006: 8.

⁵²³ Serpico, 2006: 18. The survey does not give the exact number of the 'Sudanese' objects or the institutions where they are kept.

⁵²⁴ Most of the time, in small museums, conservators are employed only on a temporary basis for financial reasons.

⁵²⁵ The MLA database Cornucopia has been an important tool in tracking down the collections in Britain.

Group I

To this group belong the British Museum (London); the Fitzwilliam Museum (Cambridge); the Ashmolean Museum (Oxford); the Manchester Museum: The University of Manchester (Manchester); the National Museum of Scotland (Edinburgh); the Science Museum (South Kensington, London); the Natural History Museum (London).

Three of these museums have already been presented separately in order to highlight their specific characteristics: the British Museum is one of those museums defined as ‘pillars’ in the field of archeology of the Nile Valley having a gallery dedicated to Nubia. The Fitzwilliam Museum was highlighted for its innovative approach which consists in the interaction between the collection and the original context. The Natural History Museum is reaffirming the importance of a collection of human remains through the reinterpretation of the materials in the light of modern archeological and paleontological research into Ancient Nubia.

The Ashmolean Museum of the University of Oxford has a longstanding history in the salvage of Nubia. In the early twentieth century, at the time of the construction of the first Aswan Dam, it sent expeditions to Lower Nubia directed and largely funded by Francis Llewellyn Griffith.⁵²⁶ The Nubian collection kept in the Ashmolean Museum at Oxford originates from several sites found in both Egyptian and Sudanese Nubia.⁵²⁷ It is part of the Department of Egypt and Sudan.

On 2009, a new extension was added to the museum. A second phase of this museum redevelopment concerned the galleries for Egypt and Nubia that re-opened their doors to the public on 26 November 2011. The focus of the Nubian collection is still the shrine of Taharqa, considered to be the only complete ‘Pharaonic’ building in the country. The shrine is surrounded by the Nubian collection composed of pieces from various periods of Nubian history, most of which were discovered in British excavations.

The esthetics of this new display are certainly appealing and the name Nubia is still retained as a sign of the individuality of this entity (Fig. 70). Nevertheless, several collections from Nubia have disappeared, notably those related to the Christian period as well as the beautiful collection of funerary pottery from the Late Meroitic necropolis of Meroe. The number of mummies and coffins has doubled, respecting the initial idea behind these renovations, the intention to showcase objects that have been in storage for decades. The general concept submerges Nubia within an Egyptian milieu.

⁵²⁶ Griffith was the first professor of Egyptology at Oxford.

⁵²⁷ From Egyptian Nubia: *Aniba*: Woolley and MacIver, 1907-1910; *Qasr Ibrim*: Emery, 1961-1962. The site of Serra, in Sudanese Nubia, is erroneously included in the database among the sites of Egyptian Nubia; *Abu Geili*: Crawford, 1914; *Buhen*: Woolley and MacIver, 1909-1910, Emery, 1962-63; *Firka*: Kirwan, 1934-35. *Jebel Moya*: Wellcome, 1911-14; *Kawa*: Griffith, 1929-31. Kirwan, 1935-6; *Kosha*: Kirwan, 1934-5; *Meroe*: Garstang, 1909-10, 1911-12; *Nuri*: Reisner, 1916-18; *Sanam*: Griffith, 1912-13; *Saqadi*: Wellcome, 1913; *Sesebi*: Blackman, 1936-37. Cf. also Whitehouse, 2009.



Fig. 70: Ashmolean Museum: The Christian Levett Family Gallery

The Manchester Museum at the University of Manchester holds a collection of Nubian artifacts and a complete list has been kindly given to me by Karen Exell. They come from the following sites in Sudanese Nubia: Faras, Wadi Halfa, Buhen, Sesebi, Kerma, Kawa, El Kurru; Nuri; Sanam; Meroe.⁵²⁸ A few objects come from the site of Koshtamna in Egyptian Nubia.

⁵²⁸ Karen Exell has provided me with the complete list of the objects which I summarize here: *Faras*: Predynastic: pottery; palette quartz; grinder stone; stone tool implement; shell; anklet/armlet; Egyptian First Intermediate Period: pottery; shells; clay figurine; bracelet shell; beads; Egyptian New Kingdom: faience vessel, figures and inlay; kohl pots; beads; scarab; Meroitic: bronze mirror and mirror case; many beads; cornelian and silver ear-rings; scarabs, bronze bowls and anklet/armlet; nose-studs; copper kohl stick, silver inlay; pottery. *Wadi Halfa*, New Kingdom: Pottery figure. Purchase from Lord Grenfell in 1917. *Buhen*: Egyptian Middle Kingdom (12th Dynasty): limestone statue of a seated woman preserved from the waist down. Donation. *Sesebi*: New Kingdom (18th I Dynasty): bronze bowl and mirror; scarabs in steatite and faience; beads; plaque; pottery (model, figures); (19th Dynasty): scarab; Roman Period: pottery (lamp); No date: pottery (reel; three fragments of house model; disc; vessels; figures; mould; cups, lamp); amulet; wooden weaving equipment; sandstone artifact; reel (EES donations between the 1888-1889 and 1936-1937). *Kerma*: Egyptian Middle Kingdom (12th Dynasty): pottery; copper inlay; human remains; bronze razors; copper tweezers; (13th Dynasty): copper knife (exchange with the Sudan National Museum in Khartoum, 1926); the human remains are donations of the family of George Elliot Smith in 1980. *Kawa*: 25th Dynasty: textile- linen; faience beads; scarab; inlays; plaque; copper; amulet; bronze vase. Donation of Mrs Griffith in 1934. *El Kurru*: 25th Dynasty: amulet plaques; faience jewelry-religious- funerary equipment and amulet; bronze bowl. No date: faience figures-amulets. (Exchange with the Sudan National Museum in 1926). *Nuri*: 25th Dynasty: *shawabtis*; 26th Dynasty: faience *shawabtis* and vases. *Sanam*: 25th Dynasty: seals; amulets; bronze mirrors and bowls; pottery; glass vessel; scarabs; faience beads; gold and silver rings; ivory inlays; plaques; silver and copper ear-rings; copper figurines- amulet; 26th Dynasty: bronze bowls; pottery; mineral sample; iron miscellaneous equipment; shell blades in shell; travertine

Until 2012, the few objects on display were intermixed with Egyptian objects. Karen Exell, curator of the Egypt and Sudan collections at Manchester, explained the plans for the Nubian collection, in the framework of the renovation of the museum, in a personal communication in 2009:

A complete redevelopment of the galleries is planned. This will extend the geographical range to include the Sudan, and I hope to look at the Sudanese culture from the predynastic to the present day, as a culture or cultures within themselves and not just from the Egyptian point of view. Concerning the used terminology, in the database the material is classed as being from Sudan, while in the label description of the gallery they are defined as to be Nubian.⁵²⁹

In October 2012, the new galleries were opened to the public and the comment I had from Campbell Price, curator of the Egyptian and Sudanese collections, reads as follows:

When redisplaying our new Ancient Worlds⁵³⁰ galleries, which opened at the end of October 2012, we wanted to link our Egyptology and Archeology collections to put ancient Egypt in the context of the wider ancient world. There has specifically been a debate at Manchester in the last few years about how Egypt is represented in Africa, so our first chronological section is simply called 'Egypt in Africa' and is accompanied by a simple, un-labeled map of Africa with the Nile river indicated. This is also accompanied by a video introduction to the gallery from a girl called Mariam, whose mother is Egyptian and whose father is Sudanese. This sets the geographical location of Egypt in Africa, which seems often to be overlooked. Out of over 16,000 objects in the Egyptology collection, we have over 700 from Sudan and integrate these into our chronological displays. There are particular concentrations of objects for C-group burials at Kerma (telling the story of Egypt Second Intermediate Period relations with Nubia) and material from Kawa, Nuri and Sanam (with which we discuss the 25th Dynasty and Napatan and Meroitic culture)⁵³¹

In the National Museum of Scotland is a collection of antiquities from Sudanese Nubia.⁵³² Some objects in this collection are displayed along the several galleries of the museum with specific targets. The first meeting with Nubia is in the Grand Gallery

vases; Meroe: Meroitic Period: beads; Pre-dynastic: Pottery.

⁵²⁹ Karen Exell (Personal Communication, April 2009).

⁵³⁰ www.ancientworlds.co.uk

⁵³¹ Campbell Price (Personal Communication, 2013).

⁵³² This list of objects is included in Ghalia Gar el Nabi Abd el Rahman, 1993: 28 cups (fired clay; Meroitic period; from Faras and Meroe); 18 bowls (fired clay; C Group and Meroitic periods; from Faras); 10 jars (fired clay; Meroitic period; from Meroe and Faras); 11 pots (fired clay; Meroitic period; from Faras); 4 jugs (fired clay; Meroitic period; from Faras); 16 vases (fired clay; Meroitic period; from Faras); 3 vases (fired clay; Meroitic period; from Meroe); 5 bottles (fired clay; Meroitic period; from Meroe); palette (malachite; Pre-dynastic period; from Faras); ear-stud (quartz; Meroitic period; from Faras); beads (faience, glass, carnelian, stone, shell; C Group and Meroitic periods; from Meroe and Faras); mirrors (bronze; Meroitic period; from Faras); censer (fired clay; Christian period; from Faras); 3 finger rings (bronze; Meroitic period; from Faras); seal (faience, bronze; Meroitic period; from Meroe); 8 scarabs (steatite, faience; Egyptian 2nd Intermediate period and New Kingdom; from Faras); fibulae and pins (silver; Meroitic period; from Meroe); scepters staff (granite; Meroitic period; from Meroe); spear and javelin heads (iron; Meroitic period; from Meroe); arrow heads (copper; Meroitic period; from Meroe); 5 spindle whorls (bone, ivory, wood, fired clay; Meroitic period; from Meroe); 4 horses mounts (bronze; Meroitic period; from Meroe); statues (bronze, sandstone; Meroitic period; from Meroe); 4 amulets (faience; Meroitic period; from Meroe); 2 inlays (ivory, white clay; Meroitic period; from Meroe); offering tables (sandstone; from Meroe and Faras). According to Cornucopia, some objects also come from Amara.

the light-filled atrium with its soaring pillars and high windows which welcomes the visitors, and shows them the largest items of the museum to highlight Scotland's contribution to the world and reflect the vast diversity of the museum collection.⁵³³

To welcome the visitors to this gallery there is a sandstone statue of the Nubian god Arensnuphis, found at Meroe.⁵³⁴

Rising through the four storeys of the Grand Gallery, from the ground floor to the roof, *Window on the World* is the largest single museum installation in the UK. It showcases a spectacular array of items to represent the diversity of our collections, from science and technology to the natural world, archeology and cultures of the world to the history of Scotland. The museum's collections offer a window on the world. It is a place where the cultures of Scotland and the world meet, where the arts and sciences combine and where collections reflect human creativity and invention and the wonder and diversity of the natural world.

The world of Nubia in this area is highlighted by a group of beautifully painted and incised pottery vessels from Faras and Meroe.⁵³⁵

The last meeting with Nubia is in the *Ancient Egypt* Room which is part of the World Cultures collections. Here Nubian artifacts are intermixed with those from Egypt but with the provenance well marked.⁵³⁶ The most important Nubian presence in this room is a collection of six Kerma beakers from the burial discovered by Petrie in December 1908. The findings from this burial are considered among the most important holdings in the Museum collections. The tomb contained the bodies of a queen and a child.⁵³⁷

The consensus among those who have examined the beakers is that they are of such high quality they must have been manufactured in Nubia or by Nubians resident in Egypt, such as the community at Ballas. However, they were found in what is undoubtedly an Egyptian burial, and were suspended in nets among a larger assemblage of indigenous Egyptian pottery. Since the burial arrived in Edinburgh in 1909, the Kerma beakers have usually been displayed as part of the burial group.

The last museum in this group is the Science Museum (South Kensington, London). Here is kept a collection of human remains that are known to have come from the excavations of Henri Wellcome at Jebel Moya.⁵³⁸ Part of this collection is currently displayed in the Science Museum,

⁵³³ <http://www.nms.ac.uk>

⁵³⁴ Statue of the Nubian god Arensnuphis made of sandstone (found in the temple): Meroe, Meroitic Period, 100 - 50 BC

⁵³⁵ Griffith, 1910-12.

⁵³⁶ For example, some Meroitic bronze stamps in typical Egyptian style.

⁵³⁷ 'The burial suggests a connection between the queen and Nubia. Some of her grave goods would have been gifts from a Nubian ruler to the Theban royal family. The woman could have been ethnically Egyptian or indeed from many other ethnic backgrounds. Alternatively, there could have been a dynastic marriage whereby the woman would have been a Nubian princess given as a wife to the king of Thebes' (<http://www.nms.ac.uk>).

⁵³⁸ Addison, 1949.

(Wellcome, 1910-1914). Henri Wellcome was an American industrialist who became a British citizen in 1910. He established a number of chemical and pharmaceutical laboratories in England. He conducted various archeological and ethnographic expeditions in Sudan from where he brought back many objects. In 1913, he founded the Wellcome Historical Medical Museum. Although Jebel Moya is outside what is geographically considered Nubia, it is academically strongly associated with it and therefore part of this research.

Science & Art of Medicine Gallery,⁵³⁹ another part is in the storage depot (Blythe House) but it can be seen by submitting a request in advance.⁵⁴⁰ Some remains have been given on loan to The Wellcome Trust.⁵⁴¹

Group II

Part of the second group are the following museums and institutions: Petrie Museum: University College London (London); University of Cambridge, Museum of Archeology and Anthropology; Blackburn Museum and Art Gallery (Blackburn); Bolton Museum and Art Gallery (Bolton); City Museum and Art Gallery (Birmingham); The Egypt – Centre at the University of Wales Swansea; The Brighton Museum And Art Gallery (Brighton); and the Old Speech Room Gallery, Harrow School (Middlesex). All these museums have a traditional exhibition of Nubia with objects intermixed with the Egyptian collection.

In the Petrie Museum at University College London there is a collection of Nubian artifacts from both Egyptian and Sudanese Nubia. The Egyptian as well as the Nubian collections of the Petrie Museum are largely based on the work of W. M. Flinders Petrie (1853-1942), his colleagues and successors, found during their excavations in the Nile Valley from the 1880s to the present. The Nubian collection is composed of many objects from Neolithic to medieval Nubia. Petrie himself did not excavate in Nubia but found Nubian items, especially Pan Grave objects, in Egypt. Some of these are kept here, but the most spectacular, from a burial found at Qurnah in 1908, is now in the Edinburgh National Collection. The rest of the collection is directly from Nubia.⁵⁴² Stephen Quirke has commented the display of the collection as follows:

The display area is small for the size of the collection. A small number of objects from Nubian sites are displayed, mixed chronologically, with Egyptian objects but with provenance marked, e.g., classical Kerma vessels amid contemporary Second Intermediate Period pottery. The greater part is separate because provenanced material is displayed according to the site where it was found: so another Kerma vessel is in the first Pottery Case in a sequence of 36 in the first room of the museum. That case contains Nubian pottery of different periods; again, a selection of the Meroe material from the Henry Wellcome collection, from John Garstang's excavations, is displayed in one half of a display case of its own, as are pottery vessels of late Meroitic or post- Meroitic date from Qasr Ibrim. The rest of the collection is in storage.⁵⁴³

⁵³⁹ Three Neolithic infant feeding cups, earthenware, 1000-400 BC, (Wellcome Jebel Moya, Sudan, 1912); Neolithic mandible, 1000-401BC, excavated at Jebel Moya, Sudan.

⁵⁴⁰ Part of a skull showing a depressed fracture, prehistoric cemetery, Gebel Moya; Part of a skull showing a depressed fracture, prehistoric cemetery, Gebel Moya; Neolithic burial yielding urinary tract calculi from a Sudanese tribe, from Jebel Moya, 1000-400BC excavated by Sir H. Wellcome, 1910-1914; 4 human urinary tract calculi from prehistoric cemetery of Gebel-Moya, Sudan, excavated early 20th century; small fragments of a skull excavated from the prehistoric Ethiopian cemetery at Gebel-Moya, Anglo-Egyptian Sudan, by the expedition of Henry Wellcome, Sudanese, c. 50,000-10,000 BC; 2 metatarsals showing exostosis, from prehistoric cemetery at Gebel-Moya, Sudan; 2 pieces of incomplete metatarsal bone, sharing exostosis, from prehistoric cemetery at Gebel-Moya, Sudan.

⁵⁴¹ Neolithic infant feeding cup, black earthenware, 1000-400 BC, excavated by Wellcome Expedition at Jebel Moya. I was given these data in 2013 by the Museum staff whom I thank for their kind cooperation.

⁵⁴² From Egyptian Nubia, the materials are from the excavations of Emery (EES) at Qasr Ibrim; There are many more items from Sudanese Nubia: from the excavations of Fairman (EES) at Sesebi in 1938; Emery (EES) at Buhen in 1959, 1960, 1961, 1962, 1963, 1964; Griffith at Sanam in 1925-1926; Garstang (obtained through Wellcome) at Meroe in 1912 and the area surrounding Gebel Moya. Other items were acquired from the Sudanese Government through Arkell.

⁵⁴³ Stephen Quirke (Personal Communication, 2010).

The collection of the Museum of Archeology and Anthropology, University of Cambridge, comes from both Egyptian and Sudanese Nubia as well as from Egypt and the Sudan. Some objects have no specific site or provenance but are said to be from Nubia.⁵⁴⁴ Most of the pieces are stored and only a few are currently part of the small Egyptian display.

In the Blackburn Museum and Art Gallery are objects from the excavation of Emery at the site of Qasr Ibrim (Egyptian Nubia) and from the excavation of Blackman at Sesebi (Sudanese Nubia).⁵⁴⁵ When I contacted the Museums staff asking specifically about the Nubian collection the reply I got was the following:

Regarding our collection of Egyptology, we have mainly decorative items, like jewelry and pottery in our collection. We do not have a large amount [of objects] and the majority is kept in store. The display focuses on life in Egypt and contains jeweler, various pottery, some habit and a mummified body. The displays are intermixed with collections from all over Egypt. Unfortunately, the paperwork we have regarding the collection is very poor. We know that some of the objects were donated by William Flinders Petrie and some by John Garstang but do not know where many of the objects came from.⁵⁴⁶

The Bolton Museum has a small collection of artifacts from various Nubian sites in Egyptian and Sudanese Nubia, some of them intermixed in the Egyptian display. Others are in the storage. Tom Hardwick, curator at the Museum, with whom I interacted to obtain some information, despite the fact the objects do not have a personalized presentation, is perfectly aware of their nature.⁵⁴⁷

⁵⁴⁴ List of the objects:

Qau- Egypt: Beads (shell, faience, carnelian, stone/ Pan Grave Period/ Excavation of G. Brunton in 1923); *Thebes- Egypt*: 4 jars from Roman period or X Group? (in the past at the Fitzwilliam Museum); *from Egypt- no specification of site*: amulet from the 25th Dynasty (Collected by Mackintosh in 1930); queen bronze wearing ‘ Nubia’ wig and uraeus- Third Intermediate period (Hilton Price Collection); a Nubian women necklace with scarabs (Beck Mrs. J., Beck Collection); *Qasr Ibrim- Egyptian Nubia*: pottery from X Group Period(6 bottles; 9 cups; 3 amphora; jug; archer’s finger; bowl - from the Egypt Excavation Society’s excavations, cemetery 192. It seems that a lot of the Qasr Ibrim pieces have gone elsewhere now, they were formerly held by the Dept of Oriental Studies); *from Nubia- no specification of site*: nose ring in metal (Chester Greville J.); amulets (in ivory, silver, leather; Ridgeway donor); 2 bowls (from Wellcome collection); girdle; *Debeira West- Sudanese Nubia*: 27 potsherds of Christian pottery (donated by John Alexander); *from Buhen- Sudanese Nubia*: stela of Neferu from Middle Kingdom; statuette of Middle Kingdom; palette from Middle Kingdom; axe head from Middle Kingdom; concubine figure in ceramic from Middle Kingdom; cynocephalus ape in limestone from Middle Kingdom; Egyptian pottery from New kingdom Period (chalice; platter; 6 bowls; vessel; pot; fish; footed goblet; drinking flash; footed bowl; three footed objects; pottery from Meroitic period (bowl; necked jar); sculpture in stone from Meroitic period; beads from Meroitic period; Egypt exploration Society ‘s excavations in 1962-63-64); vessel from Middle Kingdom (collected by A.R. Wolmsley collection); *from Mirgissa- Sudanese Nubia*: 5 bread moulds; 2 vessels; pounder; brick -from Middle Kingdom- (Collected by A.R. Wolmsley collection - excavated by the French Mission); *from Wadi Halfa- Sudanese Nubia*: flint (Green F.W. Jesus College); *from Wadi Abu Um Araka- Sudanese Nubia*: 2 flints (Green F.W. Jesus College); *from Kerma- Sudanese Nubia*: Nubian potsherd (collected from the Education Department in Khartoum); *from Gebel Sheikh Embarak- Upper Nile*: Flint (Chester Rev. Greville J.); *from Sudan*: Nubian basket (Chester Greville J.); Nubian cotton (Backhouse M. donated on 28/2/2005); Nubian? necklace in shell; -*Unknown provenance*: finger ring in bronze of Roman-Meroitic period (Ridgeway collection). I would like to thank the staff of the Museum for the help.

⁵⁴⁵ : Qasr Ibrim (Emery in *ILN* 241); Sesebi (Blackman, 1936-37.

⁵⁴⁶ Museum’s staff (Personal Communication, 2010).

⁵⁴⁷ From Egyptian Nubia: pottery and shell bracelets belonging to the A Group from Kosthtamna, excavated in 1906 by Garstang; collection of pottery, stonework, small items, and textiles from Qasr Ibrim. From Sudanese Nubia the collection includes textiles and small items from the Napatan period originated from the cemetery at Sanam Abu Dom excavated by Griffith in 1912-1913 and from the Egyptian townsite Sesebi excavated 1936-1937. *Meroe*: 3 beakers in

In the City Museum and Art Gallery Museum of Birmingham there is a small collection of Nubian artifacts from both Egyptian and Sudanese Nubia.⁵⁴⁸ Phil Watson has described the collection and its display policy as follows:

A large collection from Amara is currently being studied at the Egypt Exploration Society in London; some potsherds from here are those identified by excavators as Saharan. These were transferred to the Museum by the excavators often following sponsorship of the excavations by the museum. There are other items (mainly pottery) without secure provenance which were donated by private collectors. There is no dedicated display space for Nubian material although a few pieces are on display within the Egyptian Gallery where they form part of the overall theme of the history of the Nile Valley civilization. On labels the objects are usually described as Nubian and explanatory text reference is made to Sudan.⁵⁴⁹

The Egypt Centre at the University of Wales Swansea also possesses a small group of objects found during Garstang's excavations in Meroe, Sudan. The presence of these 'Sudanese' objects in this Egyptcentre already sends a clear sign of how they are perceived. Some of them are displayed, others are in the storage.⁵⁵⁰

The Brighton Museum and Art Gallery holds a collection of Nubian artifacts from the Griffith excavations at the sites of Faras and Sanam in Sudanese Nubia. The Nubian and the Egyptian collection are both part of the archeological collection of the museum. The current display of Nubian objects in the two Egyptian galleries is introduced to the wider public on the Museum Web Site as follows:

The main gallery explores the excavation and background of artifacts, and displays the collection focusing on the lives and beliefs of the ancient Egyptians. In the smaller gallery, visitors can delve more deeply into the environment and technology of ancient Egyptian life, and learn more about the excavation of some of the objects. The displays focus on daily life, the afterlife, technology, environment and the wider world, which encompasses Graeco-Roman Egypt and Nubia, an ancient area located in modern times within the southern part of modern Egypt and northern Sudan.⁵⁵¹

A collection of Nubian objects is also kept at the Old Speech Room Gallery, Harrow School (Middlesex). Sophie Hawkins, curatorial assistant, informed about the provenance and display of these objects, as well as future plans for them:

fired clay (Meroitic); 3 bowls in fired clay (Napatan); jar sealing in fired clay (Egyptian New Kingdom); plaque in faience (Meroitic); tile in faience (Meroitic); lion statuettes in faience (Meroitic); relief of a royal head in sandstone (Meroitic). *Sanam*: 3 bowls in fired clay (Meroitic); amulets in faience (Napatan); scarabs in feldspar (Egyptian New Kingdom); beads in chalcedony and shells (Napatan); 2 figures of Osiris in bronze (Napatan); *Sesebi*: amulets in fired clay and faience (Egyptian New Kingdom); scarabs in feldspar (New Kingdom); female figure in fired clay (Egyptian New Kingdom); 3 animal heads in fired clay (Egyptian New Kingdom); 2 gilded tubes in copper (Egyptian New Kingdom); 2 finger rings in copper (New Kingdom); 4 earrings in silver (Egyptian New Kingdom); ear stud in calcite (Egyptian New Kingdom); 5 hair earrings in carnelian and jasper (Egyptian New Kingdom); comb in wood (Egyptian New Kingdom); *Gebel Barkal*: cloth fragment in wool (Napatan).

⁵⁴⁸ Qasr Ibrim: 51 objects; Buhen: 68 objects (Blackman); Debeira: 2 objects; Sesebi: 3 objects (Fairman); Amara: 4 objects (Fairman).

⁵⁴⁹ Phil Watson (Personal Communication, 2011).

⁵⁵⁰ Carolyn A. Graves-Brown (Personal Communication, June 2013).

⁵⁵¹ <http://www.brighton-hove-rpml.org.uk>

The Museum does have a small collection of Nubian objects in our Gardner Wilkinson collection, including five items from Gebel Barkal and one from Semna. Four of these six items are currently on display in the Gallery. In 2014 we will be re-displaying the Egyptian collection and Nubian material will certainly be included in this.⁵⁵²

Group III

In the third group are include those museum and institutions in which Nubian collections are currently stored and those about which I could not obtain any clear information, they are: Garstang Museum (Liverpool); World Museum (Liverpool); Reading Museum (Reading); Lady Lever Art Gallery (Liverpool); University of Durham Oriental Museum (Durham); Dorman Memorial Museum (Middleborough); Hunterian University Museum (Glasgow); The University of Aberdeen-Marischal Museum; Kelvingrove Art Gallery and Museum (Glasgow); West Park Museum And Art Gallery (Macclesfield- Cheshire); Leamington Art Gallery and Museums (Leamington); Atkinson Art Gallery (Southport); Leeds Museum Resource Centre; The Myers Museum of Egyptian and Classical Art at Eton College; and The Economic Botany Collections at Kew.

In Liverpool, the academic homeland of John Garstang, there are two museums in which I found Nubian artifacts. One is a museum dedicated to Garstang himself, established for the purpose of education in the School of Archeology, Classics and Egyptology at the University of Liverpool. The Museum, currently closed for renovation work, displays a representative number of objects gathered by Garstang in Egypt, Sudan,⁵⁵³ Jericho in the Levant and Sakje Geuzi in Anatolia. The Nubian collection kept in this museum is clearly Sudanese in nature and provenance. Despite this, it is embedded in the Egyptian collection, demonstrated by the fact that the objects displayed also indicate the key areas of strength in teaching and research in the School - Egyptology, Classical Studies and Prehistoric and Near Eastern Archeology.

In contrast, the objects kept at the World Museum of Liverpool originate from various sites in Nubia, from both Egypt and the Sudan.⁵⁵⁴ The largest part of the collection comes from Meroe and is also considered to be one of the most important in the museum. Despite its title, the

⁵⁵² Sophie Hawkins (Personal Communication, 2013).

⁵⁵³ The Garstang Museum of Archeology (University of Liverpool) has 84 glass negatives, antiquities, some field notes and pottery corpus from Garstang's excavations at Koshtamna (Cooke Ashley, Personal Communication, 2013).

⁵⁵⁴ The objects from Egyptian Nubia coming from Garstang's excavations consist of: 70 items from *Koshtamna*, originally property of the School of Archeology (SACE) at Liverpool University, acquired by the Museum in 1947. The collection consists in A and C Group materials including a skeleton, but also a mummy and double coffin, from the Third Intermediate Period; 4 objects from *Dakka* of which two items from Prof. John Garstang's survey work in the area in early 1900s – Roman- Egyptian Amphorae and Egyptian Middle Kingdom kohl pot. Two ostraca, with demotic inscriptions, were collected by Revd. Greville Chester in 1865; from *Qasr Ibrim* originate three items dated to the X Group period and donated in 1963 by the Egypt Exploration Society in return for the museum's support to their excavations in Nubia; the object found in the 9th pillar of the temple of Ramses II at Abu Simbel was purchased from J. Moger, Holland in 1967. From *Abu Simbel* there is also a relief fragment with the representation of Pharaoh Horemheb's head and titles. The objects from Sudanese Nubia are the following: 18 items from *Faras* donated in 1947 by the Royal School Museum to replace objects lost during the bombing of Liverpool in May 1941 when the museum was destroyed. The objects are from Griffith's 1912 excavations for the Oxford University Expedition to Nubia. All from the Napatan/Meroitic period except 1 A/C Group pot and 2 Byzantine/Coptic ostraca. 22 items from *Buhen* donated in 1964 by the Egypt Exploration Society in return for the museum's support of the Nubian rescue campaign. All from the 1962/3 and 1963/4 seasons and from the Pharaonic period. 460 items from Meroe. All in World Museum were donated by or purchased from John Garstang in 1947 and 1949 (List provided me by Cooke Ashley, curator of the collection).

Bienkowski and Southworth catalogue, *Egyptian Antiquities in Liverpool Museum*, also includes the Nubian collection.⁵⁵⁵ Commenting on the display, Cooke Ashley, curator of the collection told me on November 19, 2008 that:

In the Museum there is no special display area for Egypt in the present gallery that has been opened since 1976. However, new Egypt galleries are planned to be opened in 2008 and there will be a themed area (not planned yet) for Nubian sites.

In 2009 I received an email in which Cooke Ashley informed me that the renovation of the Egyptian gallery had been concluded, but unfortunately Nubia was not part of it. However, in 2013 when I contacted the Lady Lever Art Gallery to obtain information about the few objects from Nubia (Meroe) which the Gallery holds, I received this reply from Cooke Ashley:

Your email enquiry has been forwarded to me as curator of Nubian antiquities in National Museums Liverpool (NML). I'm attaching a list of our holdings in the Lady Lever Art Gallery and World Museum. At the Lady Lever Art Gallery none of the material from Meroe is on display. This is also true for World Museum where the bulk of NML's Nubian collection is held. The gallery at World Museum was refurbished in 2008 and I made a decision to reserve Nubian material for a future extension of the gallery as we were limited by time and space.⁵⁵⁶

Sally-Anne Coupar (Hunterian Museum-University-Glasgow), Jill Greenaway (Reading Museum), Helen Armstrong (University of Durham Oriental Museum), Ken Sedman (Dorman Memorial Museum) and the staff of the University of Aberdeen-Marischal Museum have kindly provided me information about the Nubian objects kept at their respective museums.⁵⁵⁷ In particular, when I received the news from the curator of the Dorman Memorial Museum, Middleborough, of the existence of a Nubian object in this museum, I just had to include it in this research. Strikingly, despite being just one object and not even typologically attractive, the curator was aware of its existence. Taking into consideration the great difficulties that I faced in this sense in other more

⁵⁵⁵ Bienkowski and Southworth, 1978.

⁵⁵⁶ There are 10 items in the Lady Lever Art Gallery which were acquired in 1914 from the Meroe Excavations Committee of which Lord Leverhulme was a member. These are the only Nubian items in the Lady Lever Art Gallery which is part of the Organization called the National Museum Liverpool (Cooke Ashley, Personal Communication, 2013).

⁵⁵⁷ *The Hunterian Museum-University of Glasgow* possesses a small collection of Nubian objects from Meroe (Sally-Anne Couper, Personal Communication, 2009). *The Reading Museum* holds a few objects from both Egyptian and Sudanese Nubia. Those from Egypt were found during the excavations of the Egypt Exploration Society at Qasr Ibrim between 1962-1963 and were donated to the Museum, most probably in exchange for a subscription to the Society (a *shawabtis* and two amulets). Some others come from the site of Derr (primarily pottery from the X group cemeteries 192 and 193 and one bronze bowl). Also those from the Sudanese site of Buhen were excavated by the above-mentioned Society (pottery, a stele, some un-worked amethyst, faience fragments, beads, a copper probe, two pottery axe heads, a clay missile, a loom weight and some items connected with copper smelting (Jill Greenaway, Personal Communication, 2009). At the *The University Museum of Durham Oriental Museum* are kept some objects from Buhen (Smith, 1976; Caminos, 1974); and from Qasr Ibrim (Mills, 1982) (Helen Armstrong, Personal Communication, 2009). The Dorman Memorial Museum holds a polished stone axe donated in 1931. The Museum does have more modern tribal items labeled Sudan from the Hadendoa, Beja, Baggara, Kanembo, Nilotic and Mahdist groups (Ken Sedman, Personal Communication, 2009). The Nubian objects at the *University of Aberdeen-Marischal come* from Griffith's excavations at Faras ad Sanam. The Museum also has some ethnographic artifacts some that come from Nubia (Museum Staff, Personal Communication, 2013).

prestigious contexts, this seemed to me a sign of the growing awareness of Nubia in museums. The objects of these museums are all stored.

Noraah Al-Gailani, Curator of Islamic Civilizations at the Museum at Art Gallery & Museum, Kelvingrove, has informed me about the Nubian collection kept in this museum:

Regarding the Nubian material in our collections, unfortunately, we no longer have an Egyptology specialist amongst our curatorial staff, and therefore we are unable to adequately assist you with your enquiry. However, I have looked at our collections database and have found the following objects [...] Please note that the listed material may not be all what we have, but only what is listed in our database at present.⁵⁵⁸

In the list of items, I have indeed come across inconsistencies. For example it is said that there are three shell bracelets which originate from Kostamneh, Nubia, whereas some Egyptian items come from Kostamna, the Sudan. I believe that Kostamneh and Kostamna actually refer to the same site that is in Egyptian Nubia and not in the Sudan. This is one of the several cases I found arising from the confusion that often characterizes the place of origin of Nubian artifacts. Not quite sure about what 'Nubia' does mean to a specialist in this field, Noraah Al-Gailani told me:

We also have a collection of Islamic material from the 19th century battle of Omdurman in the Sudan, but I suspect this is not the type of Nubian material you are looking for?⁵⁵⁹

Actually this argument overlooks the field of pure Nubiology. Nevertheless to a growing extent it is beginning to be part of the discussions at International Conferences on Nubian Studies. Noraah Al-Gailani had this to say about the policy of the display of the objects:

Unfortunately the only object on display is (1903.260.ab), which can be seen at Kelvingrove Art Gallery and Museum in the Ancient Egypt Gallery. All the others are in various museum stores in the city.

The object on display has only indirectly to do with Nubia. It is in fact a gray Egyptian funerary bone, dated to the New Kingdom, with traces of paint inscribed on the flat end. It belongs to a Viceroy of Nubia buried in Thebes (Egypt).⁵⁶⁰

The Atkinson Art Gallery owns a group of objects from Meroe. From June 1887, the

⁵⁵⁸ Cup (red pottery with blackened rim. Made in Egypt, Nubian, late Middle Kingdom); 3 shell bracelets (from Kostamneh Nubia. Predynastic period. From a collection of Egyptian antiquities. Egypt, Kostamneh Nubia); slate cosmetic palette in the shape of a bird with grinding pebble (from Kostamna, Sudan. Late Predynastic Period. From a collection of Egyptian antiquities); slate cosmetic palette in the shape of a fish with grinding pebble (from Kostamna, Sudan. Late Predynastic Period. From a collection of Egyptian antiquities); Egyptian cosmetic palette, fish shaped, (slate, type 42 H, Naqada III, Protodynastic Period, Sudan, Kostamna); 4 sandstone fragments (Nubian, Sudan); Egyptian gray funerary bone with traces of paint, inscribed on flat end (belonging to the Viceroy of Nubia, buried in Thebes, New Kingdom, Egypt); gourd vessel with slings mounted with shells, carried in a marriage procession (from Nubia, Upper Egypt. Bequeathed by the late William Turner, Baranflow, Helensburgh); vessel of basket work with slings mounted with shells, carried in a marriage procession (from Nubia, Upper Egypt. Bequeathed by the late William Turner Baranflow, Helensburgh); 2 specimen of silicified wood (from the Nubian Desert, Egypt.). I wish to thank Noraah Al-Gailani for his kind cooperation.

⁵⁵⁹ Noraah Al-Gailani (Personal Communications, 2013).

⁵⁶⁰ The Viceroys of Nubia were Egyptian officials who, were sent by the Pharaohs to Nubia to be governors of those lands during the New Kingdom.

Egyptian and Sudanese collection, which contains about 1,000 objects,⁵⁶¹ had been part of the Bootle Free Library and Museum. When the museum closed in 1974, the collection was taken to Southport for storage. When the Atkinson Museum Galleries open in 2014, this collection will be on display for the first time in forty years.

At the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew, there are 500 ancient Egyptian and Sudanese objects which are part of the Economic Botany collection. The collection from Nubia was brought back from Griffith's excavations at Faras in 1910-1912.⁵⁶² Mark Nesbitt, Curator at the Economic Botany Collection told me:

The seeds were received at Kew in 1912 and added to the Museum in 1913. They would have been kept in the Kew Museum until the 1980s, possibly on display but we have no details. Since then they have been in a research store, the Economic Botany Collection, as items 26584, 26881, 26879, 26880.⁵⁶³

Unfortunately, I was unable to obtain much information about the following Nubian collections.⁵⁶⁴ Despite my lack of success, I think it is important to include them as part of this topographical map, that, as I have often mentioned, will be gradually improved over time. The West Park Museum in Macclesfield is the home of almost 500 ancient Egyptian and Sudanese objects.⁵⁶⁵ The collection is the result of one of those old travelers' activities from which many museums worldwide benefited, in this case Miss Marianne Brocklehurst, friend of the famous Amelia Edwards, founder of the Egypt Exploration Society (EES). I have no information about the number or nature of these Sudanese objects, however they were certainly acquired in Egypt as Marianne Brocklehurst never visited the Sudan.⁵⁶⁶ At the Leamington Art Gallery and Museum there are seventy objects from Egypt and the Sudan. Since the objects from Egypt came from Garstang's excavations at Beni Hassan, I suppose that the objects from Sudan also originate from the same source. Some objects from Sudan must be part of the 1,500 Egyptian artifacts kept at Leeds Museum Resource Center, but others are part of the holdings of the Myers Museum of Egyptian and Classical Art at Eton College. The objects in the Myers Museum are from Buhen and both they and those from Egypt are often loaned to other museums or put on display in exhibitions worldwide.⁵⁶⁷

This tour through the many Nubian collections in Britain has been very enlightening for

⁵⁶¹ From Cornucopia.

⁵⁶² The category of objects from the Egyptian and Nubian collection consist in food/plant material; textiles; wooden items.

⁵⁶³ Mark Nesbitt (Personal Communication, 2013).

⁵⁶⁴ Curators did not respond to my e-mails.

⁵⁶⁵ Byrnes, 2013.

⁵⁶⁶ Marianne Brocklehurst was the daughter of a wealthy Victorian silk manufacturer. She is best known because of the diary she kept as she travelled through Egypt in 1873, collecting antiquities along the way. 'Although Marianne's passion for acquiring antiquities resulted in a valuable collection of Egyptian objects, it would be a mistake to consider her anything other than a collector, and a somewhat scruple-free one at that, although some accounts refer to her as an Egyptologist. She undoubtedly became very knowledgeable, but on her first visit she certainly operated outside the rules laid down by the Mariette's department. Unlike many collectors whose Egyptian collections were assembled by investment in legitimate excavations, for which they received a selection of artifacts in return, Marianne had a more hands-on approach. Some items in her collection were found by 'grubbing' in the sand at sites' (Byrnes, 2013; Andrea Byrnes is also working on the items collected by Marianne Brocklehurst and how they continue to be used in the museum she and her brother built.

⁵⁶⁷ Spurr, Reeves and Quirke, 1999; Schneider, Spurr, Reeves and Quirke, 2003.

building up an understanding of how they are perceived in a country that has played a leading role in the archeological 'events' in the area and how they are 'treated' outside the British Museum, the leading institution in this field in the country. Terminologically, Nubian collections stand out clearly from those Egyptian. They are almost always called 'Sudanese', even when they contain artifacts from Egyptian Nubia. In the context of exhibitions, one way or another these collections remain anchored to an Egyptian milieu, although there is a growing awareness among curators of their 'distinct' nature. So much so in fact, in some of the galleries that have recently undergone changes in their exhibition concept, they have tried to highlight these Nubian pieces for what they are. Remarkably, as elsewhere, there are large numbers of stored objects.

Pieces of the Nubian Puzzle in Central, Western and Southern Europe

The group of collections now under discussion is composed of 'pieces' found in various locations in Central, South and Western Europe. The stories behind these almost unknown collections serve as illustrative examples that help to improve our understanding of how Nubia has been conceived behind the more spectacular states of the most important museums, with the upshot that interesting details, sometimes overlooked in larger contexts, emerge from them. This is the reason that, rather than putting this section in an annex as a merely list of Nubian artifacts found here and there, they have been included in the main text, help to shed more light on the discussion of how the presence of a few/single objects or 'anonymous' collections are invariably accompanied by attitudes, human feelings and mindsets based on the perceptions of Nubia and Nubians. They are grouped according to their country of location and presented by country in alphabetical order.

France

There are four museums in France with only a single Nubian piece each. The French archeologist Dewachter was the first to locate and envisage them as 'pieces of the Nubian puzzle'. Dewachter's definition of a 'puzzle' is absolutely correct and puts the finger right on the crux of the problem. I wonder how many similar 'single' pieces are dispersed all over the world, completely embedded in the Egyptian collection or lying forgotten in storage depots. They are the most difficult to find because of the ambiguous way that still characterizes the classification of Nubian artifacts in museums. It is with this worrisome idea that colors Dewachter's appeal:

[...] la Nubie ne bénéficiant plus aujourd'hui du même souci, appartient-il désormais à chacun d'entre nous de signaler de façon appropriée tous ces éléments d'un même puzzle⁵⁶⁸

that I include these objects in the main body of the text. The fact that these four objects arrived early in the respective museums, or at least in Europe, gives a further insight in to the interest in Nubia shown by nineteenth-century western society.

At the Château Borely, Marseille, and at the Museum of Fine Arts and Archeology Joseph Déchelette, Roanne, there are two pieces from Nubia (probably Buhen and Aksha or Amara), that are part of the Egyptian collection.⁵⁶⁹ The Meroitic sculpture kept at the Musée des Beaux-Arts of

⁵⁶⁸ Dewachter, 1979.

⁵⁶⁹ In the *Château Borely*, Marseille, there is a simple rectangular piece of sandstone which contains, on the decorated part, a cartouche of Pharaoh Merenptah-Siptah (Catalogue des antiquités égyptiennes du Docteur Clot Bey, Marseille 1861, p.15n. 28; Dewachter 1979). This block arrived in Marseille with the collection Clot Bey. Its nature and its exact origins are uncertain. The material and the size of the cartouche suggest that it is a part of a centered royal or private stela. Some scholars prefer to see it as the central part of a lintel, or the decoration of a temple. F. Petrie suggested that

Grenoble⁵⁷⁰ and the bas-relief, that probably decorated the Roman Temple of Kalabsha in Nubia and now kept at the Archeological and Historical Museum Fenaille, Rodez,⁵⁷¹ are also part of an Egyptian display.

Germany

The Humboldt University of Berlin is one of those institutions very committed to archeological research in Nubia. It is also holder of a collection that, primarily because of the limitations imposed by funds and space, is kept in the storage.

The bulk of the collection comes from Musawwarat es Sufra where the University has conducted excavations for several years. A smaller number of objects is from elsewhere.⁵⁷² Cornelia Kleinitz, very well known for her commitment and dedication to the study of this area, has expressed her dismay, at the problems mentioned, in these terms

Some of the objects were displayed before the moving of the department to its current premises. In the new building there is no opportunity to display the collection in an adequate manner. We are hoping that University will be able to offer us an exhibition space within the next couple of years. We would like very much to display the collection.⁵⁷³

The staff of the University is involved in community participation and consultation about archeological projects in Nubia. One of the most important has been certainly the Humboldt University Nubian Expedition (H.U.N.E.) at the Fourth Cataract Rescue, that commenced fieldwork in the area in 2004. The University has conducted an interesting anthropological study

it was part of a foundation. C. J. Penon gives its place of origin as Upper Nubia, perhaps the site of Buhen. The *Museum of Fine Arts and Archeology Joseph Déchelette*, Roanne, which owns one of the most important collections of Egyptian antiquities in the Rhône-Alpes region, there is a fragment of a stela from Nubia which represents the Pharaoh Ramses II with a Hittite princess. The exact origin of this fragment is unknown, it might have been Aksha or Amara (Sudanese Nubia). The fragment was donated to the museum by the British collector Philipp Whiteway. It is displayed in the Egyptian collection (Loin du Nile. Guide des collections égyptiennes. Musée Déchelette (text by Marc Gabolde). Roanne, 1991).

⁵⁷⁰ Here is a fragment of sculpture made of limestone, once part of the collection of Uriage Castle (Inv. n. 1962) is kept. According to the Abbot Tresson, it is a fragment of the torso of a statue of the goddess Toueris. The special treatment of the chest and the presence of a skirt tend to lead it to be associated with a *ba* statue, characteristic of the Meroitic period. The *ba* was an aspect of the human personality, often translated as 'soul', that lived on after death. The *ba* was often represented in Nubia as a human figure with the wings of a bird. From the second to third centuries AD, in Nubia *ba* statues were placed outside tombs (Dewachter, 1979).

⁵⁷¹ It is a sandstone bas-relief (Inv. n. 289). An old catalogue says that this bas-relief decorated the walls of the Temple of Kalabsha in Nubia. The minutes of the *Société des Lettres, Sciences et Arts de l'Aveyron*, 10 April 1842, mentions that the fragment and four canopic jars were offered to this Society by Mr. Amans Tarayre who probably visited Nubia in the winter of 1841-1842. On the bas-relief is represented a king offering wine. Behind his head there is a legend. The fragment probably comes from a temple. Its thin and irregular contour confirms that it has been detached from a wall rather than being a free-standing block (Dewachter, 1979: 7-10).

⁵⁷² The collection is formed roughly by the following objects: architectural sculptures; ceramic vessels; fragments of glass vessels; loom weights; spindle whorls; worn, rounded stones; shells; grinding stones; beads, pendants; fragments of ostrich eggshell; amulets; jewellery (metal rings, etc.); arrow heads (stone and metal); a spear head; fragments of metal tools; nails; hooks; gaming pieces; polished stone axes; fragments of polished stone rings; a Ptolemaic coin; a metal trumpet; sandstone statuettes; fragments of libation tablets; bricks, fragments of a faience casket; silver fittings; small bits of gold; plaster casts of reliefs from Musawwarat (and Meroe); some sandstone blocks with graffiti; an objects apparently from Naga; some plaster casts of relief/inscriptions from Meroe. Some objects belong to the private collection of Fritz Hinze, as a papyrus with the text of the Book of the Dead (origin unknown). I thank Cornelia Kleinitz for the information on this museum.

⁵⁷³ Cornelia Kleintz (Personal Communication, 2011).

known as the ‘Manasir Cultural Research Project’,⁵⁷⁴ designed to document the cultural landscape and material and non-material local traditions of the Manasir inhabitants of the flooded area called *Dar el Manasir*.⁵⁷⁵

The collection of interest to us is kept in the Institute for the Research on Prehistory and Early History of Central Africa, University of Cologne, and it is linked, as the collection in Varese, to the geographical extension of Nubia.

Since 1980, the Institute in Cologne has been conducting surveys and excavations in the region of Lakya Arbain in the Western Sudanese Desert.⁵⁷⁶ Research in these remote areas is recent compared to those in the Nile Valley. From these excavations the Institute has brought back a rich collection of objects, on loan for study therefore not on display. It would be interesting to create a permanent exhibition of these findings, so that research that tends to extend the boundaries of what we call Nubia is also reflected in museums.⁵⁷⁷ I have presented a small display on one of these deserts (the Eastern or Nubian), located in a provincial area of Northern Italy. It is the only one of this kind I have come across.⁵⁷⁸

I mentioned this collection in the main text also because one of the results of this research indicates that so much material from Nubia is not displayed but kept for study. This gives me an opportunity to produce evidence of another problematic discussed in Chapter 5. Whereas in the Sudan it is still possible to bring material out of the country on long term loan for research purposes, it is forbidden in Egypt.⁵⁷⁹

Greece

The National Archeological Museum of Athens has no Nubian collection, but does own two outstanding objects from the 25th Dynasty.⁵⁸⁰ They are part of the collection donated to the Museum in 1880 by the expatriate Greek *connoisseur* Joannis Dimitriou, from Lemnos.⁵⁸¹ Thinking about these two artifacts, I realized how much terminology appears to have been complicated by their contextualization: they are Nubian in nature but displayed in a Egyptian context and qualified in the catalogue as being of Ethiopian/Nubian Period⁵⁸² (Fig. 71).

⁵⁷⁴ <http://www2.hu-berlin.de/aknoa/hune/daralmanasir>

⁵⁷⁵ The construction of the dam caused the flooding of a 170 km long stretch of the riverbanks along the Nile, including many islands and most Manasir villages and agricultural land. About 70,000 residents, mostly members of the Manasir tribe, have been relocated.

⁵⁷⁶ For publications of the excavations of this area cf. <http://www.uni-koeln.de/sfb389/a/a2/>

⁵⁷⁷ The bulk of this collection, as well as that originating from the participation of the Institute in the rescue of the Fourth Cataract, are formed mostly by lithic and ceramics, will be returned to the Sudan National Museum in Khartoum. For publications on the Fourth Cataract excavations cf. <http://www.uni-koeln.de/sfb389/a/a9/>. I wish to thank for the cooperation Friederike Jesse.

⁵⁷⁸ Cf. ‘Dependence’ of Villa Toeplitz (Varese).

⁵⁷⁹ Cf. Chapter 5.

⁵⁸⁰ They are two kneeling bronze statuettes of King Shabaqo and probably of King Taharqa; an extremely fine cast-bronze statuette of a lady named Takoushit (the Kushite girl), inlaid in silver.

⁵⁸¹ For this donation the Archeological Society in Athens awarded him the title of honorary president of the Museum. He bought the whole collection in Alexandria, Egypt, his place of domicile.

⁵⁸² Greek Ministry of Culture. Icom-Hellenic National Committee, 1995.

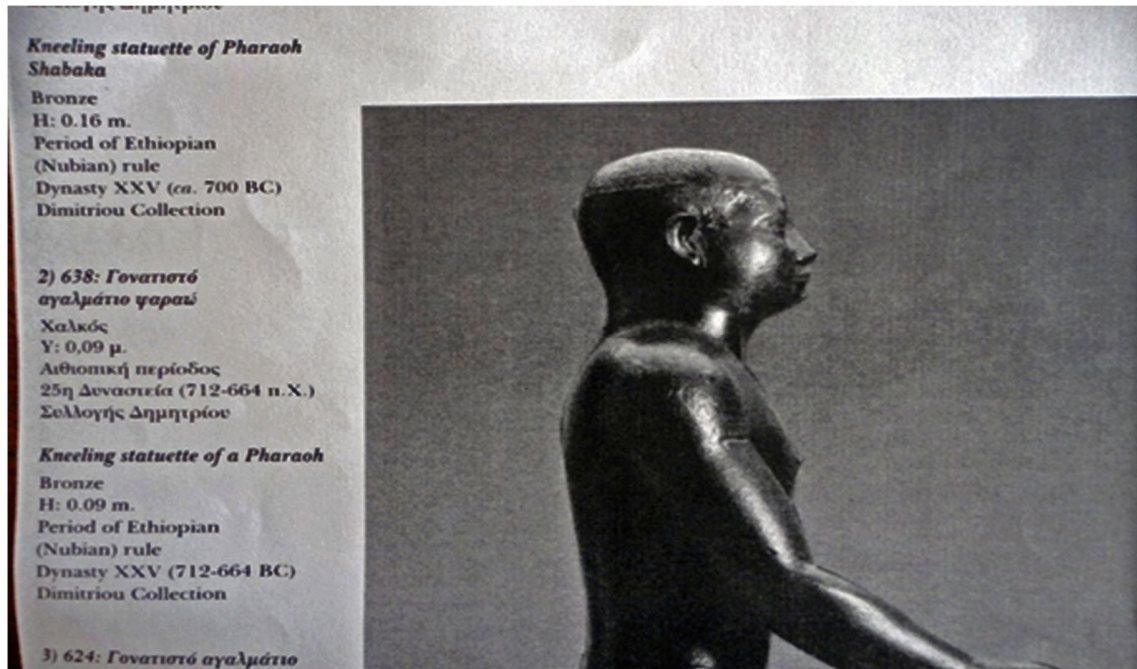


Fig. 71: Catalogue of the National Archeological Museum of Athens: page indicating the ‘Ethiopian’-Nubian objects

Italy

In Italy, I found various locations with pieces of the Nubian puzzle distinguished by complicated histories of adventure and patriotism (Bologna), illustrious backgrounds (Florence), important scientific involvement (Roma and Cassino) and small surprises (Rovigo and Faenza).

Beginning with the Civic Archeological Museum of Bologna, although it has only a few items from Nubia, it has stories worth telling regarding its pieces.

In 1843, Giuseppe Ferlini⁵⁸³ presented the Museum of Bologna, his native city, with two sandstone blocks, some copies of the golden objects and casts of two bronze bowls from the treasure found at Meroe.⁵⁸⁴ The items arrived in Bologna in 1836, after the first catalogue manuscript had already been produced. Between this year and 1843, Ferlini tried to find buyers for his collection of copies but it failed to raise much enthusiasm among researchers and local administrators, a tale that emerges from an examination of archive documentation. As a result, these local rejections in the history of its collection contributed to the dispersion of these Nubian objects.

Today the collection has been reunited, with the exception of a few copies of jewels and the wooden model of the pyramid.⁵⁸⁵ The two pieces of sandstone, that are the only originals in the collection, are an offering table (KS3157) and a relief (KS3156) that was detached, according to Ferlini, from the main pyramid of Meroe and dated to the first century BC. Ferlini considered this last piece very important because it served to date the pyramid and the collection.⁵⁸⁶ He writes:

⁵⁸³ Boldrini, 1981.

⁵⁸⁴ Probably a small wooden model of the pyramid was also part of this donation.

⁵⁸⁵ They probably remained at the Archiginnasio Palace that houses the Library and where, for some years during the 18th century, they were kept in the private collections donated to the municipality. Copies of the jewels were set on three small blocks of wood, one of which is still missing.

⁵⁸⁶ Kminek Szedlo, 1993.

For the utility of the archeological science I would wish to detach all these stones. But since for their big size and heaviness, I could not carry them across deserts, I detached a part of that located opposite to the entrance, which I believe is the most interesting, because on it is incised the cartouche [...]⁵⁸⁷

The Meroitic relief and the offering table are displayed in the Egyptian Gallery of the museum, and the copies of two small bronze vases are shown within the Roman collection.

Apart from the surprise of having found nothing from Nubia in the Egyptian Museum, second only to Turin, located in the region of Ippolito Rosellini,⁵⁸⁸ in Florence, there is evidence to support to what was discussed in Chapter 5 about the ‘categorization of the value’ of the objects to be displayed. The Nubian holdings in the museum are few, consisting of a single statue and a group of pots. Today the former,⁵⁸⁹ considered historically important and typologically appealing, is displayed to enrich the thematic of the 18th Egyptian Dynasty section. The group of rather imprecisely identified twenty-five pots is kept in storage.

Very often, university museums, that are owners of important and huge collections because of their involvement in the field, are also problematic because of their limited accessibility. In Italy a case in point is the Museum of the Near East at the University of Rome ‘La Sapienza’ that until a year ago, was located in Via Palestro, a central street of Rome.

The collection is one of the most important of its kind in Italy and comes from the past and current excavations carried out by the University in Nubia, in both Egypt and the Sudan.⁵⁹⁰ The collection, that was located in a ‘Nubian’ room,⁵⁹¹ is used for educational purposes. During my studies at the University, I was one of the students who worked on the classification of the material from the site of Tamit. However, gaining access for external students or visitors is very difficult or even well nigh impossible.

Some other Nubian pieces are kept at the University of Cassino, in Italy whose Department of Philology and History in recent years has been engaged in archeological research at major sites in Sudanese Nubia: Sai and Hillat el Arab. The latter is a UNESCO World Heritage Site.⁵⁹² The

⁵⁸⁷ ‘Per utilità della scienza archeologica avrei desiderato di staccare tutti questi macigni. Ma pensando che per la mole, ed il peso di essi non avrei potuto trasportarli pe’ deserti, staccai una parte di quello posto di fronte all’entrata, da me creduto il più interessante, perchè in esso è scolpito il cartello [...]’. The inscription on the piece, in very bad state of preservation, has been interpreted using a copy reproduced in the 18th century and kept at the Griffith Institute in Oxford (338). The interpretation of the hieroglyphic inscription seems to suggest that the piece does not belong to the pyramid of Queen Amanishaketo, from which the treasure came, but from a pyramid in the south necropolis of Meroe that is the most ancient one.

⁵⁸⁸ Ippolito Rosellini, as already mentioned elsewhere, with Jean Francois Champollion, between 1829-1829 directed the first scientific archeological mission to Egypt and Nubia.

⁵⁸⁹ The statue from Kalabsha, was probably brought to Italy by Ippolito Rosellini. It bears the cartouche of the Pharaoh Thutmose III. At a slave market, Rosellini, also strongly interested in the anthropological and humanitarian problems of the African continent, bought a Nubian girl, now buried in the British cemetery in the city, in order to free her.

⁵⁹⁰ The collection consists in artifacts that come from the excavations conducted by the University in Nubia during the UNESCO International Campaign at the sites of Tamit in Egyptian Nubia (Donadoni, 1965:126-128) and Sonqi Tino in Sudanese Nubia (Donadoni 1971:201-202). Worthy of mention from this latter place are 17 fresco from the church which arrived here from the Vatican labs where they were restored. In the same room there are also objects from the most recent excavations at Gebel Barkal (Donadoni and Bosticco, 1982: 291-301).

⁵⁹¹ The museum was formed by five halls: Sala Maggiore, Sala Minore, Annesso con Cortina Mediterraneo, Reperti Egiziani, Reperti Nubiani.

⁵⁹² With the University of Lille, Cassino shared a mission to the Island of Sai, and another mission is working at Hillat el Arab in the region of Napata, one of the most important archeological areas of Sudan and listed as World Heritage

University keeps material from both sites, most of which is used for research purposes. Only a small number of the objects, including those from Hillat el Harab, are on display in a showcase in the Rectorate of the University as a demonstration of the importance of the work of this University in Nubia.

Two unexpected locations holding a very few Nubian artifacts are The International Museum of Ceramics, Faenza, and the Academy of Concordi of Rovigo. I would never have imagined that the British circulation of Nubian objects could have also involved Faenza, an Italian provincial area.⁵⁹³ On mature consideration, I am perfectly aware of why the Museum of Faenza, famous for its ceramics, has as part of its holdings a beautiful Nubian ceramic from the Meroitic period donated to this institution by the Ashmolean Museum of Oxford.

The Academy of Concordi of Rovigo is in possession of twelve ‘Nubian’ *shawabtis*.⁵⁹⁴ In a wider context, as often happens with artifacts related to the 25th Dynasty, these *shawabtis* would not have even been considered as Nubian. However, in this small venue and with an interested collaborator who is a specialist in Nubia,⁵⁹⁵ their Nubian dimension could not have been highlighted better. The objects are currently not exhibited, but curators hope that this situation will change, if and when the Academy obtains a larger building.

To sum up, this small tour of Nubian puzzle pieces in Italy presents evidence to back up the arguments advanced in Chapter 5: the usual absorption of Nubian artifacts by Egyptian and in this case also by Roman artifacts, in Bologna; discrimination against some objects in favor of others in Florence; the valorization of objects on the basis of a specific academic background of the curators in Rovigo; advantages of the particular strategy adopted by British archeology in Faenza; with Rome as a striking example of accessibility problems created by some university museums that here, deliberately keep hidden one of the most important collections of Nubian antiquities in Italy.

Spain

The National Archeological Museum of Madrid has donated to the Historical Archeological Museum of La Coruna a group of vessels uncovered by the Spanish Archeological Missions to Nubia during the Salvage Campaign of the Sixties. They are dated C Group, Kerma, Pharaonic, Meroitic, X Group, and Christian periods,⁵⁹⁶ a notable span of time that allows a limited but

Site (Vincentelli, 2006; <http://dfs.unicas.it>). The objects from Sai are from Khartoum Variant and Pre-Kerma. Many of the objects are kept in the Laboratory of Historical and Archeological Research on Antiquities (LRSA).

⁵⁹³ They are two small vessels of Meroitic pottery, decorated with floral motifs, both from the site of Firka in Upper Nubia (Kirwan, 1939). The two jars were donated to the museum by the Ashmolean Museum in Oxford on 20 May 1953. They are in storage. I wish to thank Maira Torcia Rigillo who, informed me about these pieces in 2009.

⁵⁹⁴ They have no inscriptions or signs of paint and carry baskets on their heads. If the Nubian origin of the 12 *shawabtis* is certain, the same cannot be said for a small sphinx that is vaguely similar to those produced, in the first millennium, also in the Middle East. The archival material of the Academy is not very useful for identifying the donor who might have been the explorer G. Vals Pantellini, a principal contributor to the formation of the collection, or G. Miani who lived and worked in the Sudan. Both lived in the nineteenth century. No official document in the Academy associates them with the Nubian *shawabtis*. (Musso-Petacchi, 2011:37-53; Musso-Petacchi, 2011: 137-142). I would like to thank Simone Petacchi for his cooperation.

⁵⁹⁵ The *shawabtis* are being studied by Simone Petacchi, specialist in Nubian studies and collaborator of the Museum.

⁵⁹⁶ The following information is contained in the documents about the donation:

Necropolis of Mirmad: 8 vessels, one of them with decorated edge and a big amphora of white clay (Kerma??/Kherma ??, Tomb n.14); 3 vessels, one is a black incised ware with white incrustation; another is ovoid with a tall neck and a big amphora (Tomb n.62); 5 vessels, 1 ovoid of red ware with a graffito ; 1 globular vessel handmade (Tomb n.70); 1 bowl (Kherma-Kerma?); 2 bowls of black ware with incised decoration. *Necropolis of Nag'Saweara West- Masmis* : 2 vessels, 1 bottle and 1 patera) (Tomb n. 2; published in Masmis, Alto Egipto, p. 38.

meaningful display on the development of ceramic production in Nubia.

Unfortunately, the intention to use this donation to promote Spanish efforts in Nubia and Nubia itself in this peripheral area of Spain has failed. The collection is currently kept in storage, adding to the already alarming list of many others to which the same fate has befallen, and that, as discussed in Chapter 5, represents one of the sad results of this research.

Switzerland

The two pieces of the puzzle I found in Switzerland are worthy of note. One group is made up of objects and a great number of human remains from Kerma, kept in storage in the Museum of Natural History of Geneva.⁵⁹⁷ The other is an ethnographic Nubian collection kept in the Adelhauser Ethnographic Museum in Freiburg in Switzerland. It was probably put together either in the nineteenth century or at the beginning of the twentieth century, perhaps even as late as the First World War. It originally belonged to the University of Freiburg and was later sent to the Museum of Ethnography on permanent loan. I doubt that many, in Switzerland or outside, are aware of the existence of this collection. I myself only learned about it very recently.⁵⁹⁸

The reason for the inclusion of these two collections in this analysis is that the first collection adds more evidence to the list of the stored collections even if, in this case, the storage of part of it is understood and accepted. The display of human remains, as discussed in Chapter 5, is a debatable subject. My personal view is that, because of their nature, human remains should not be exhibited. As far as the rest of this collection, which consists of objects, its relegation to the storage depot is owing to the fact that this institution cooperates very closely with the Museum of Art and the History of Geneva in which a similar and much larger collection, as we have seen above,⁵⁹⁹ is displayed and well publicized.

Taking into account the ample space dedicated in this research to the disjuncture between archeology and ethnography, it is impossible not to include a second collection of this sub-section of this analytical ‘tour’, since it is the only case of an ethnographic museum abroad housing related Nubian artifacts. Because of its rarity, this collection might have deserved a place among the ‘pillar’ museums, but it is almost unknown to the public at large, even to most researchers. For this reason I have included it among the pieces of the Nubian puzzle. This is another piece of evidence of the earlier mentioned circumstance that, in the field of Nubian studies, archeology has largely submerged ethnography.

Vatican City State

Christianity is an important chapter in the history of Nubia.⁶⁰⁰ The archeological excavations of the sites of the flourishing cities of the three Christian Kingdoms of Nubia have produced a large

fig. 29.); *Necropolis of Nag Gamus, Masmis*: 3 anfore (Tomb n. 30; published in n. VIII Almagro, pp.85-87, fig. 78 and 79.); *Necropolis of Nuellah, Argin Sur* 4 decorate pottery (Tomb n. 9; published in Memoria n. VI Guinea, pp.31-35, fig. 9 and 12); 4 vessels, three of which are decorated (Tomb n. 14; published in Memoria n. VI Guinea, pp.44-46, fig. 19); 8 vessels, three of which decorated (Tomb n. 58; published in Memoria n. VI Guinea pp.86-88, fig. 9); *Necropolis of Nag el Arab*: 2 vessels, 1 bowl and 1 lucerna (Tomb n. 25; published in *Necropolis of Wadi El Arab V, Pellicer*, pp.48-49); 2 vessels, 1 bowl and 1 lucerna (Tomb n. 30; published in *Wadi El Arab V, Pellicer* p. 49); 2 pottery, 1 bowl and 1 lucerna (Tomb n. 246; published in *Wadi El Arab V, Pellicer* p.81). Salome Zurinaga (Personal Communication, 2009).

⁵⁹⁷ Jaqueline Studer (Personal Communication, 2011).

⁵⁹⁸ I was informed about this collection in 2009 by the German anthropologist Armgard Goo-Grauer).

⁵⁹⁹ Cf. Museum of Art and History of Geneva.

⁶⁰⁰ Cf. Chapter 1.

quantity of artifacts that now take pride of place in some museums in the world.

The involvement during the Salvage Campaign of the sixties of the University of Rome 'La Sapienza' in the excavation of some of these Christian sites⁶⁰¹ made the Vatican aware of it, prompting it to give the archeological mission economic support. From the excavation of one of the sites, Sonqi Tino in Sudan, eighteen frescoes were rescued.⁶⁰² These were later restored in the conservation labs of the Vatican Museum.⁶⁰³

The Comboni missionary Giovanni Vantini,⁶⁰⁴ a resident of the Sudan and himself an active member of the archeological mission, proposed the donation of one of these frescoes to the Vatican Museum, which it is not the only Nubian presence here. Alessia Amenta, curator of the Egyptian section of the museum, informed me that Omar Bashir, President of the Sudan, offered Pope John Paul II, copy, about 2 meters high, of a fresco from Faras depicting the Blessed Virgin.⁶⁰⁵

The frescoes of Sonqi Tino, depicting 'The Three Hebrews in the [Fiery] Furnace', is not exhibited in the Egyptian section, as might have been expected. Instead, it occupies a place in the Byzantine section of the museum, where it makes a contribution to the illustration of the Nubian taste in an art whose main aspiration is to describe, in tune with the sanctity of this location, the aspirations of man towards the Divine.

The Silenced Collections of the Scandinavian Countries

As the Scandinavian countries have shared experiences and choices in the Nile Valley, they also have much in common in the way they present Nubia, more often not exhibited in museum collections displays.

Scandinavian involvement in the Nile Valley began early. The Swedish linguist Akerblad was one of the rivals of the famed Champollion,⁶⁰⁶ and Anastasi, the consul of Sweden and Norway in Egypt, obtained a *firman* from Mohamed Ali to undertake archeological excavations.

The fruits of the British archeological expeditions also reached Scandinavia. Examples can be found in the Danish collections of the *Ny Carlsbergh Glyptothek* and the National Museum in Copenhagen.

When the *International Campaign to Save the Monuments of Nubia* was launched in the sixties, the Scandinavian Countries began to play a really proactive role. When Egypt and Sudan contacted UNESCO about launching an appeal to the international community to participate in the Salvage Campaign, its Director General, the Italian Vittorino Veronese, decided so some preliminary groundwork before the appeal was properly launched. The first of these steps was to

⁶⁰¹ Donadoni *et alii* 1962; Donadoni 1967; Donadoni 1970; Donadoni 1971.

⁶⁰² Donadoni, 1968.

⁶⁰³ Seventeen frescoes are today part of the holdings of the Museum of the Near East (cf. above) of the University of Rome *La Sapienza*. Cf. Donadoni, 1968.

⁶⁰⁴ Fr Giovanni Vantini (1923-2010) was a Comboni missionary who lived most of his life in the Sudan. In demand because of his knowledge in the fields of history and archeology, he participated in some archeological campaigns in Nubia. His main interest was, the Christian period. His *Il Cristianesimo nella Nubia Antica* (Verona: Museum Combonianum, 1985), still remains a pillar for the study of Nubia in this specific period. His command of Arabic was a crucial skill to him when he was writing his *Oriental Sources Concerning Nubia* (Heidelberg & Warsaw, 1975). I shall never forget the interesting numerous conversations I had with him or his 'colorful' guided tour of the Christian Gallery of the Sudan National Museum of Khartoum.

⁶⁰⁵ Alessia Amenta (Personal Communication, 2012).

⁶⁰⁶ With the Briton Thomas Young and the Frenchman Antoine de Sacy, one of the rival of Champollion in the race to decipher hieroglyphics.

establish an honorary Committee of Patrons under the chairmanship of H.M. King Gustaf VI Adolf of Sweden. Among the prominent members of the Committee was his granddaughter, Queen Margrethe of Denmark, who took an active part in the archeological work of the Scandinavian Joint Expedition (SJE) to Sudanese Nubia.

Within the framework of the Campaign, Scandinavian archeologists investigated a concession area on the east bank of the Wadi Halfa Reach in northern Sudan, between Faras and Gamai, over a period of four seasons (1961-1964). Denmark, Finland, Norway and Sweden financed the project that was directed by Torgny Säve-Söderbergh of Uppsala University. The Sudan granted the Scandinavian countries many of the findings from many different periods, ranging from Upper Paleolithic times to the Christian era. The formal division of objects between the Sudan and the Scandinavian countries took place four times, after each field session. The archives and collections from this mission are now divided among the Scandinavian members of the Scandinavian Joint Expedition (SJE).⁶⁰⁷ The remainder of the collections of the Scandinavian Joint Expedition is regarded as the common property of these countries and was initially divided between them in accordance with the preparatory work preceding the final publications.

Whereas some of the material from other archeological missions is still unpublished or not fully published after fifty years, the Scandinavian mission was among the first to produce comprehensive publications of the results of its work in Nubia. Although the publication of the results was completed in 1991, when the last volume was printed, the division of the finds between the participating countries and some documentation are still unchanged.⁶⁰⁸

Egyptologist Torgny Säve-Söderbergh, was not only the leader of the Scandinavian Joint Expedition, he was also a key specialist for the whole Campaign. He represented his country in the Executive Committee of UNESCO for the Campaign, and is the author of the comprehensive account of the project produced by this organization.⁶⁰⁹ In this account, he has given important guidelines for future campaigns of a similar nature.

Undoubtedly, prevailing imagination behind the Campaign was above all captured by the salvaging of the Abu Simbel temples and the technological challenges these presented. In June 1961, when Egyptian Government decided to select the Italian proposal for the removal of the two temples,⁶¹⁰ Swedish consulting engineers from VBB (Vattenbyggnadsbyran) were nominated to prepare a detailed study for the new project and to supervise the technical offside of the work.

Recently two commissions of scholars, one American and the other European, have been formed to protest against the new damming program announced by the Sudanese Government. Part of the European commission includes six scholars, three of whom are Scandinavian.⁶¹¹

This brief introduction sheds light on the involvement in and commitment of the Scandinavian countries to the archeological activities in the Middle Nile Valley. They especially distinguished themselves during the Salvage Campaign of the sixties. This interest has not yet had any real impact on the representation of Nubia in local museums. From a conversation with the Swedish archaeologist Hans-Åke Nordström, former head of the Nubian collections and archives

⁶⁰⁷ A comprehensive collection of high quality, representing major aspects of the Nubian cultural groups and periods, is kept in the National Museum in Khartoum. The Wendorf Collection, located in the Department of Ancient Egypt and Sudan at the British Museum, includes finds from and documentation of the pre-ceramic sites excavated by SJE.⁶⁰⁷ This is the result of the collaboration between SJE and the Combined Prehistoric Expedition. All the rest was shared among the Scandinavian countries.

⁶⁰⁸ I would like to thank Hans Åke Nordström who has given me this account of the SJE collections.

⁶⁰⁹ Säve-Söderbergh, 1987.

⁶¹⁰ It consisted in the lifting of the two temples with hydroelectric jacks.

⁶¹¹ <http://preservemiddlenile.wordpress.com>

at Uppsala University in 1998 and UNESCO expert in the Sudan during the Salvage Campaign of the sixties, I understood that here, as elsewhere, interest in Egypt has taken precedence over any curiosity about its southern neighbor, at least as far as museums are concerned.⁶¹² Most of the collections are kept in storage and the few objects exhibited are designed to enrich the Egyptian display thematically, typologically or chronologically. ‘Silenced collections’ seems the most appropriate title for them. Strangely enough, the ‘most silenced’ are the collections of the Scandinavian Joint Expedition, even though they are what made Scandinavian countries famous in the field of Nubian studies.

Sweden: Museum Gustavianum, Uppsala

The most comprehensive collection assembled by the Scandinavian Joint Expedition to Sudanese Nubia is housed in the Uppsala museum.⁶¹³ It consists of materials from settlements and cemeteries from the Early and Middle Nubian periods and New Kingdom sites as well as textiles from graves of Late Nubian date.⁶¹⁴

For many years the Textile Department of the Board of National Antiquities in Stockholm (*Riksantikvarieämbetet*) kept the main part of the collection that has only recently been moved to Museum Gustavianum in Uppsala.⁶¹⁵ The archives of the Scandinavian Joint Expedition were formed from documentation of the field excavations (diaries, descriptions, maps and photographs) and the original manuscripts and plates of most of the SJE publications. There is also a large collection of photographs from the work and life of the expedition itself, as well as notes, protocols, accounts and all the official correspondence.

The Gustavianum Museum is the only of the Scandinavian Museums to display objects from the important Scandinavian Joint Expedition. A great part of this collection is stored, although some objects are shown in the Egyptian collection room, in five separate showcases dedicated to different periods of Nubian history. Each showcase is located near the contemporaneous Egyptian display, organized chronologically. The intention is to give a glimpse of the development of Nile Valley production both in Egypt and Nubia.⁶¹⁶ The exhibition is accompanied by explanatory texts. The rest of the collection is located at Husbyborg, in a sort of museum/storage depot where all the collections of the University are kept.

⁶¹² Hans-Åke Nordström (Personal Communication, 2010).

⁶¹³ This account was originally written by Hans-Åke Nordström, former head of the Nubian collections and archives at Uppsala University in 1998, with some addition in 2007).

⁶¹⁴ For the Early Nubian period cf. Nordström, Håland, Björkman, Säve-Söderbergh, 1972; for the Middle Nubian cf. Säve-Söderbergh, 1991; for New Kingdom sites cf. Holthoer, 1977; for the textiles of the Late Nubian period cf. Bergman, 1991.

⁶¹⁵ It consists of rock drawings, including a small number of loose blocks and rock fragments as well as a number of casts made at the different sites, cf. Hellström *et al.* 1970: 1-2. For large stone objects, including some funerary stele and a large church capital of sandstone (cf. Gardberg, 1970).

⁶¹⁶ In showcase no. 1 A Group and Egyptian artifacts, found in A Group contexts, are displayed. On the other side are shown C Group and Pan Grave objects. In the nearby display is contemporaneous Egyptian material. Showcases number 2 and 3 are located in the gallery of the Egyptian New Kingdom and contain objects found in New Kingdom tombs in Nubia. Numbers 4 and 5 are devoted to objects of the Late Period, in particular the X Group. They are located near Egyptian showcases with contemporaneous material. Geoffrey Metz (Personal Communications, 2008).

Denmark: National Museum of Denmark and Ny Carlsbergh Glyptothek Museum, Copenhagen

A small collection of Nubian objects is kept at the National Museum of Denmark. Most of them originate from the British excavations at Kawa and only one from Kalabsha.⁶¹⁷

Some of these objects are on display in the Egyptian Section of the Department of Classical and Near Eastern Antiquities. The entire Egyptian exhibition is divided into thematic aspects to do with life (and death) in ancient Egypt and its special focus is on the two Egyptian sites of Deir el-Medina and Amarna. The Nubian artifacts on display are only used in their thematic aspect to enrich this section and are shown along with other items of similar type.⁶¹⁸ Other objects are stored.

The Nubian collection in the Ny Carlsbergh Glyptothek Museum originated from Garstang's excavations at Meroe and from those of Griffith at Kawa.⁶¹⁹ It is partially exhibited in the Egyptian section and partially stored.

Finland: The National Board of Antiquities, Helsinki

The National Board of Antiquities of Finland participated with the Joint Scandinavian Expedition in the Salvage Campaign of the sixties.⁶²⁰ The institution holds two collections from these excavations. One collection includes 2,000 vessels of New Kingdom date, mainly from the large

⁶¹⁷ *From Kawa:* Fragment of sandstone figurine depicting head and upper torso of king, wearing a short wig with uraeus and short false beard; flat faience figurine depicting couched lion; faience plate. The front part of this plate has a cartouche noted as containing the name *m3i-nfr-n-qnn* surrounded by uraei on either side. On the back side there is no decoration. According to the curator, this is quite possibly a misreading for the name of King Malonaqen; brown faience decorative wall inlay depicting lotus flower; green faience decorative wall inlay in the shape of a triangle; 2 green faience hemispherical buttons-like object; fragmentary row of 4 bronze uraei, all crowned with solar discs, evidence of gilding; from F.L.Griffith's excavations at Kawa, Temple of Taharqa: flat bronze relief, depicting the head of a falcon; bronze nail (partially preserved) scaraboid faience figurine at one end shaped as a ram's head; grey faience decorative wall inlay in the shape of a lotus flower; from the temple of Kalabsha derives a fragment of wooden dovetail jointed door latch.

⁶¹⁸ For example, a bronze statuette depicting a kneeling king with skull-cap crown and uraeus is exhibited under the theme 'Pharaoh and Kingship'; a double-faced faience relief depicting the symbols *djed*-pillar, ankh and was scepter is exhibited under the same thematic: Inv. no. 9381; height: 17.8cm; Hill, 2004: 192. Part of the same area is also a decorative blue faience wall inlay depicting a lotus flower (Inv. no. 9386); all these artifacts come from Temple A of Kawa. Exhibited under the theme 'daily life' are subsections buildings and materials as a decorative wall inlay in green faience depicting lotus flower (Inv. no. 9387). All these artifacts come from Temple A of Kawa. Exhibited under the theme 'daily life' are subsections buildings and materials as a green faience decorative wall inlay depicting lotus flower (Inv. no. 9388) from Kawa. D. N. Christensen (Personal Communication, 2009).

⁶¹⁹ *Meroe:* statue of a God (Sebiumeker), sandstone, Temple of Isis, Garstang; 2 sandstone offering tables; block of stone, wall surrounding the temple of Amun; 6 bottles; 3 stands for a vase or bowl; 19 bowls- fired clay; 4 different thumb-guards; spindle weight/loom; spearheads; 6 necklaces; fragment of an *uadjat*-eye; small vase with two 'ears'; two spindle weights; fragment of a cartouche with traces of an inscription; bronze figure of a monkey; two shafts with traces of inscriptions; fragments of blue tiles; uraeus statuette; head of a man; statuette of a female figure with no head; 2 bowls- bronze; bronze inlay of a lotus flower; vase/bowl with lid; black bottle; water jar with decoration around the neck; pillar with the God Bes; architrave with winged solar disc; head of a negro painted black (exhibited); 4 scarabs and amulets; statue of reclining man (exhibited); 4 vases- fired clay; fragment of a statue; beaker decorated in tongues with red dots; 2 decorated bowls; *Kawa:* Temple: bronze standing monkey with an outstretched arm (exhibited); bronze statuette of a God; bronze statuette of king Taharqa, (exhibited); bronze statuette of Mut seated; bronze statuette of Harpocrates; bronze statuette of Osiris standing; bronze scorpion; 2 horns-bronze; socket with a depiction of a shackled prisoner; winged solar disk; figure of Amun with *ankh*; statuette of a standing monkey, its forepaw raised in prayer (exhibited); statue of King Taharqa with an offering table. Head and lower legs are missing (exhibited); window grill shaped like as *sa*-amulet.

⁶²⁰ Finland also participated in the Salvage Campaign with a general survey of the area south of Gemai (Sudanese Nubia) directed by Gustaf Donner. I have no information about collections formed by this mission.

Cemetery 185.⁶²¹ The other collection is composed of pottery and other findings from churches and settlements from the Late Nubian period.⁶²² The two collections are currently in storage.

Finland also participated in the Salvage Campaign with a general survey of the area south of Gemai (Sudanese Nubia) directed by Gustaf Donner.⁶²³ I have no information about collections belonging to this mission.

Norway: The Museum of Bergen and The Archeological Museum of Stavanger

Norway was another participant in the Joint Scandinavian Expedition and at the close of the expedition the lithic material from the early and Middle Nubian with all its relevant documentation was brought to the University of Bergen where is now stored.⁶²⁴ In 1963 an exhibition, entitled *Nubia and the Nile*, which traveled between Stavanger and Bergen was organized.⁶²⁵

In the Museum of Bergen, located in the Bergen Tower although it is officially affiliated to the University, in the Egyptian Gallery a small exhibition area is dedicated to the materials from Randi Haaland's excavations in Central Sudan and Nubia.⁶²⁶ Most of the material from these digs is still in the storerooms of the museum. The Norwegians wish to return them to Sudan as they have now been studied and published but the Sudanese authorities prefer to keep the collection in Bergen since the Khartoum museum storage depot is full to overflowing for the time being. This has again given me grounds for reflection. As the bulk of the collection dates from the prehistoric period, the local authorities do not feel any particular sense of urgency about repatriation. Had the collection been of a different nature, the storages in Khartoum would have been probably emptied to make space for it

At the Archeological Museum of Stavanger, the finds made by the Scandinavian Joint Expedition in the cemeteries of Late Nubian date as well as the relevant documentation (Meroitic, X Group and Christian) are kept in storage.⁶²⁷

**Eastern Europe: Homeland of the International Society for Nubian Studies
and Center for the Study of Christianity in Nubia**

The link between Nubia and the Eastern Europe began with the Salvage Campaign of the sixties. Although not well known to the wider public or even to many scholars in Eastern Europe, precisely in Poland, Nubiology, as we will see below, has been legitimated as a scientific discipline separate from Egyptology. The work conducted by Poland in Nubia has also authenticated its leading position in the field of the study of Christianity in the area.

Five countries in Eastern Europe contributed to the Salvage Campaign of the sixties: the former countries of Czechoslovakia, USSR and Yugoslavia as well as Hungary and Poland.⁶²⁸

⁶²¹ Holthoer, 1977.

⁶²² Gardberg, 1970.

⁶²³ Donner, 1967-1968: 70-78; Donner, 1990:1- 4; Donner, 1990: 3- 4.

⁶²⁴ Nordström, 1972.

⁶²⁵ A pamphlet in Norwegian was published at the time. The pamphlet does not list all the objects displayed but only mentions that the exhibits date from the Stone Age to Medieval times. Special reference is made to the Pharaonic stela, ceramics, scarabs, mirrors, canopic jars, palettes and mummy masks. All objects were found by the SJE.

⁶²⁶ Prehistoric finds from her excavations in Central Sudan are also accessible in the storerooms of the Historical Museum. They consist of Neolithic finds from the Khartoum region (Zakiab and Um Dereiwa) and from near Kosti (Rabak and Jebel Tomat) As well as Mesolithic finds from the Atbara (Aneibis, Abu Darbein and Damer). I would like to thank Henriette Hafsaas - Tsakos and Alexandros Tsakos for their cooperation (2010).

⁶²⁷ Säve-Söderbergh, 1981.

Poland is still continuing the work with the deep involvement of the Polish Government and experts, in Sudanese Nubia with, particularly for the Christian period, outstanding scientific results. The country has also played a leading role - with two archeological missions - in the more recent *Merowe Dam Salvage Archeological Project* in which Hungary, for a short time, was also involved.

Recently the Czech Republic has begun working in Sudanese Nubia. Despite its long absence from the field, in Nubia, the country has continued to promote the results of its excavations in the area during the sixties by mounting a series of temporary exhibitions. How Nubia is 'treated' in museum displays in this area of Europe is the subject of the subsections below.

The work in Nubia by the Center for Mediterranean Archeology and the National Museum of Warsaw

Poland excavated the important site of Faras, in particular its amazing Christian remains. The Polish excavation at Faras West, the ancient *Pachoras* (1961-1964), undertaken by the Polish Center for Mediterranean Archeology, acquired worldwide fame. Here the Polish mission excavated thirty-four archeological sites already investigated by other missions at the beginning of the century.⁶²⁹ The Christian discoveries at this site has made Poland a symbol of the study of Christianity in the Nubian area. Following the *International Campaign to Save the Monuments of Nubia*, the *International Society for Nubian Studies* was formed in Warsaw in 1972. The first task to which the Society addressed itself was the study of early Christian Nubia, on which Polish archeologists were the leading specialists. However, it was not long before the group began to embrace all branches and periods of Nubian history and archeology, thereby:

[...] providing a focus for those interested in the archeology and history of Nubia and Sudan, and seeking to promote awareness of the rich cultural heritage of this region.⁶³⁰

The tradition of the center in investigating Christian sites continued when Kazimierz Michalowski, director of the mission at Faras, transferred his activities to Old Dongola, Fourth Cataract, in 1964 where the mission is still working.

The Polish Centre of Mediterranean Archeology of the Warsaw University answered the appeal launched by the Sudanese government for the Campaign urgently put together after plans for the construction of the Merowe Dam were announced.⁶³¹

The fruits of Polish efforts in Nubia are well represented in museums. The Nubian collection from the excavations at Faras in the sixties is today part of the National Museum of Warsaw, displayed in the *Faras Gallery* inaugurated in 1972. The gallery, as are the excavations, is world-renowned. It contains an outstanding collection of objects and paintings from Faras dating the Christian period.⁶³² The bulk of it is at the National Museum of Khartoum displayed in the

⁶²⁸ Former Yugoslavia sent two architects to the DCC (Documentation and Study Center for the History of the Art and Civilization of Ancient Egypt). It has also contributed to the removal and restoration of Christian wall paintings both Egypt and Sudan.

⁶²⁹ Michalowski, 1962: 3-8; Michalowski, 1965; Michalowski, 1966; Michalowski, 1974; Michalowski & Gester, 1967.

⁶³⁰ <http://www.nubiansociety.org/>

⁶³¹ The two missions, during the six campaigns, investigated a 45 km long belt on the left bank of the Nile, as well as islands Saffi and Uli and the stronghold Dar el-Arab.

⁶³² The collection from Faras consists of over 60 paintings detached from the walls of the Cathedral. They are in tempera on dry plaster and are dated to the 8th and 14th centuries. The images represent divine personages and saints

Christian Gallery.⁶³³ From the excavations in Dongola the idiosyncratic glass vessels in the exhibition, along with those from Faras, demonstrate the evolution of the forms and decoration of Nubian pottery in the early Christian period.⁶³⁴

In 2010, its participation in the *Merowe Dam Salvage Archeological Project* enriched the collection with artifacts from the pre-Christian era, mostly from the Post-Meroitic period, with a scattering Kerma objects. They are now displayed in two showcases in the Gallery of Egyptian Art.⁶³⁵ Reconfirming the awareness of and interest in Nubia and its individuality, Monika Dolinska has declared:

We intend to rearrange the gallery to create more coherent display of Nubian art, including already owned Meroitic antiquities from Faras.⁶³⁶

In 2012 the permanent galleries underwent major renovation. The Egyptian and the Faras galleries are also due for renovated and will be opened in 2014.

The Poznan Museum

If the excavations at Faras, have made Warsaw an important destination for specialists on Christian Nubia, the archeological excavations of Lech Krzysznik in Nubia have done the same for Poznan turning it into a center where periodic meetings are organized on the prehistory of Nubia / Sudan.⁶³⁷

At the Poznan Museum, that specializes in prehistory, a display of Nubian artifacts was mounted in 2003, just before the archaeologist Lech Krzysznik, the motivator of this gallery, passed away.⁶³⁸

This exhibition, that gives an overview of the history of Nubia through the objects brought back from Sudan by Krzysznik and a group on long-term loan from Khartoum,⁶³⁹ is part of the 'Sudanological' stage of displaying Nubian objects. The gallery is in fact labeled *Archeology of the Sudan*, a growing trend among those institutions working in that country today. Along the same lines, an important temporary exhibition, organized in 2002 in cooperation with the National

as well as Nubian clerical and secular dignitaries. Besides the paintings from Faras, the gallery has also been enriched by architectural elements from the Cathedral, inscriptions, a set of glass vessels and other objects.

⁶³³ Cf. Sudan National Museum of Khartoum.

⁶³⁴ Michalowski, 1970:163-170; <http://www.ddg.artpl/nm/collections/faras.html>

⁶³⁵ The objects received by the Sudanese Government consist in over 100 pottery vessels, one decorated bronze cup, bronze arrow- and spearheads, stone archer rings, bronze and silver rings and bracelets, heaps of small beads made of ostrich eggshell, faience, glass, quartz, carnelian. The archeological sites from which they come are Es Sadda, Saffi, Hagar el-Beida, Umm Saffaya, El-Gamamiya, El-Ar, Shemkhiya, Musa, Ashkot, Dar El-Arab. One showcase contains Kerma pottery and beads, in an one late Meroitic and Post-Meroitic antiquities.

⁶³⁶ Dolinska, 2010.

⁶³⁷ In the past, Polish scholars had also made a valuable contributed to the study of this period, participating in the Combined Prehistoric Expedition during the Nubia Campaign and continuing their work at the site of Nabta Playa west of Abu Simbel.

⁶³⁸ There are over 100 objects on display and the core of the exhibition consists of 50 objects on loan from Khartoum. Other objects have come from the Museum's old collection, derived from the excavations carried out in the area (objects from Kadero; from new excavations of the Polish missions to Dongola Reach (temple at Sonyat), and the most recent work at the Fourth Cataract salvage campaign (long-term loans and objects from sharing).

⁶³⁹ Neolithic burial equipment (pottery, jewelry) from Kadero, A Group, C Group and Kerma pottery, Kushite bronzes and faience pieces from a cultic deposit from the temple at Sonyat, two Kushite royal *shawabtis*, Meroitic stone offering tables and ba-statues, post-Meroitic bronze vessels, a Christian funerary stela of Bishop Georgios from Faras, pottery and a mural with the Virgin Mary.

Corporation for Antiquities and Museums of the Sudan, was also entitled *Saving the Sudan's Ancient Cultural Heritage*. The purpose of the exhibition was to promote Polish archeological achievements in Nubia and the forty years of fruitful cooperation between Poland and the Sudan.⁶⁴⁰ Various objects are also in storage.⁶⁴¹

The Gdańsk Archeological Museum

This museum commenced its archeological adventure in Nubia in 1993. Its participation, in the last decade in the *Merowe Dam Salvage Archeological Project* is considered one of the most important chapters in this adventure to date.⁶⁴²

Since 1998 the museum has had a small but rather interesting permanent exhibition called: *Mystery of the Nile Valley. Sudan: Archeology and Ethnography*. Its display is unique among those I have analyzed in this research. It is formed by an archeological collection from Nubia⁶⁴³ and an ethnographic collection from all over the Sudan (Figs. 72 - 78).⁶⁴⁴

It is the first exhibition abroad that shows that the archeology of Nubia, the best known and most important in the Sudan, belongs not only to the Nubians, but to all Sudanese, and simultaneously highlights the links between the Nubian and the other cultural dimensions of the Sudan. The exhibition sends a message of unity to the different ethnic groups of Sudan whose conflicts are one of the causes affecting the stability and the peace of the country.

In the archeological exhibition, the terminology refers to both Nubia and Sudan, but the collection is mainly perceived by the museum's staff as being Sudanese rather than Nubian, a decision above all motivated by its geographical origin.⁶⁴⁵

⁶⁴⁰ Poznan Archeological Museum, 2002.

⁶⁴¹ In storage is everything that Lech Krzysznik and Bogdan Zurawsky were allowed to bring back to Poland from their various excavations in Sudanese Nubia, notably from Kadero (both settlement and cemetery). I would like to thank Andrzej Cwiek, Jacke S. Phillips and Laurence Smith for their help.

⁶⁴² The mission of the museum in the area covered 80 km of territory containing almost 500 archeological sites belonging to nearly every period of Nubian history. The Museum has hosted various events and symposia on the topic including, in 2009, a temporary exhibition on the rock art of the Fourth Cataract. For the results of this mission cf. the Museum publications *GAMAR*.

⁶⁴³ From the excavations of the museum in the Fourth Cataract Region and a few Neolithic objects from Kadero excavated by Poznan Archeological Museum. The objects on display are dated to the Neolithic, Kerma, Meroitic, post-Meroitic and Christian periods.

⁶⁴⁴ North (Kerma, Dongola) South (Damazin and Roseires), East (Kassala, Port Sudan and Suakin) West (Nyala, Jebel Mara Region). The objects on display are from Nubians, Bedja, Roshaida, Fur, Central Sudan and White Nile communities.

⁶⁴⁵ In 2009 a temporary exhibition with the rock art of the Fourth Cataract was organized in the museum basement.



Fig. 72: Gdańsk Archeological Museum: *Mystery of the Nile Valley. Sudan: Archeology and Ethnography* exhibition: Entrance in the form of a Nubian door



Fig. 73: Gdańsk Archeological Museum: *Mystery of the Nile valley. Sudan Archeology and Ethnography* Exhibition: Archeological installation wall paintings from the Holy Trinity Monastery at Old Dongola, 11th-12th century, representing a Nubian king and a praying man before a saint (facsimile). On the ground floor: Christian and Islamic pottery vessels from the Fourth Cataract region



Fig. 74: Gdańsk Archeological Museum: *Mystery of the Nile. Sudan Archeology and Ethnography* exhibition: Showcases displaying pottery vessels and jewellery from Late and Post Meroitic graves in the Fourth Cataract region. In the back- to front : ethnographic features from different parts of the Sudan



Fig. 75: Gdańsk Archeological Museum: *Mystery of the Nile. Sudan: Archeology and Ethnography*, exhibition: Ethnographic artifacts and photographs of related social contexts from different areas of Sudan



Fig. 76: Gdańsk Archeology Museum: *Mystery of the Nile. Sudan: Archeology and Ethnography* exhibition: Ethnographic installation - furnished hut from the Damazin region, south east Sudan, Blue Nile province

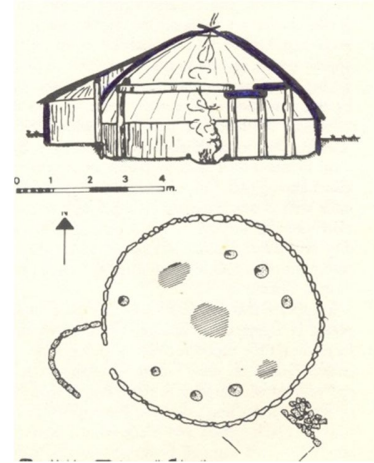


Fig. 77: Circular Nubian C Group house that is reminiscent of the typical African *Tukul*



Fig. 78: Gdańsk Archeological Museum: *Mystery of the Nile. Sudan: Archeology and Ethnography* exhibition: Ethnographic installation - on the left: Beja tribe male costume, eastern Sudan, Kassala Province and Red Sea. In the centre: furnished tent of the Rashaida tribe, Eastern Sudan, Kassala Province and Red Sea. On the right: Rashaida woman's wedding dress, eastern Sudan, Kassala, Province and Red Sea

Cracow Archeological Museum

Another collection of Nubian artefacts, the majority of it pottery, is kept at the Cracow Archeological Museum.⁶⁴⁶ Although the collection is part of the Egyptian holdings of the Museum, it is properly distinguished from it, as the publication of Joachim Sliwa, *Egyptian and Nubian Pottery in the Cracow collections*, confirms.⁶⁴⁷

The collection originates from the excavations of the Austrian Academy of Sciences at the sites of Kubania, Toshka and Arminna in Egyptian Nubia.⁶⁴⁸ Some of the objects were acquired at Kubania but all the others were obtained through a financial participation of the Cracow Academy of Sciences in the excavations.

Besides giving financial support, the Academy offered to the mission also an expert, Piotr Bienkowski, who participated in the excavations of Kubania and, interestingly, directed the excavations at the Coptic Monastery at Sheikha, confirming in the skills and the interest of Polish scholars in the field of Christian Nubia.

Hungary: The Museum of Fine Arts in Budapest

Hungary participated in the Salvage of Nubia in the sixties, with a mission sponsored by the Hungarian Academy of Sciences. Directed by Lazlo Castiglioni, this mission excavated the site of Abdalla Nirqi, north of Abu Simbel.⁶⁴⁹ As a consequence of this participation in the excavation of this site, about 500 objects, all dated to the Early Christian period, are now part the Museum of Fine Arts in Budapest.

As discussed in Chapter 5, confined by their lack of space, some museums display their Nubian collection in special showcases of the Egyptian gallery but with provenance and nature of the objects well marked. This museum is no exception. Here the artifacts of the Christian site of Abdalla Nirqi are exhibited in two showcases of the Egyptian collection to emphasize, as the curator says, the work of the Hungarian Mission in Egypt/Nubia during the Salvage Campaign.

Czech Republic: Czech Institute of Egyptology at the Charles University in Prague

The creation of the Ancient Egyptian Department of the Naprstek Museum was prompted by the work in Egypt of the Czech Institute of Egyptology at the Charles University in Prague. A considerable number of objects, over 650, part of the Institute holdings, derives from its participation in the Salvage Campaign of Nubia in the sixties. They were awarded to the Institute by the Egyptian authorities as a gesture of gratitude.⁶⁵⁰

The collection of objects from Nubia is divided into two separate groups: an archeological collection, that is in the care of the Department of Prehistory and Antiquity, and an ethnographic

⁶⁴⁶ Sliwa, 1982.

⁶⁴⁷ Sliwa, 1982.

⁶⁴⁸ *Kubania South* (A Group Cemetery): 7 jars, 6 bowls; *Kubania North* (C Group Cemetery with some A Group Burials): A Group jar, C Group jar and 2 black topped bowls; some pottery was purchased in Kubania and derives probably from the A Group Cemetery at Kubania South: 2 beakers, 5 jars, 2 cups, 1 vessel; *Toshka West* (cemetery 209), 8 C Group incised and polish bowls (Middle Phase), 5 Egyptian Middle Kingdom jars; *Arminna East* (Cemetery 211) 2 jars and 2 vessels of the late C Group.

⁶⁴⁹ Castiglione, 1965: 467-488; Castiglione, 1974: 227-28. Torok, 1967:14-19; Hajnoczi, 1974, 339-368; Barkoczi, 1974: 289-338.

⁶⁵⁰ Strouhal 1984; Vachala 1986: 130-131; Vachala 1987:166-179; Vachala and Èervíèek 1999; Verner 1974; Zába 1963: 45-51; Zába, 1967: 209-215; Zába, 1974.

collection, that is part of the Department of Ethnology.⁶⁵¹ It is one of the few institutions to have paid attention to the artifacts of the contemporary Nubians.

Museum system restrictions have prevented the display of these objects, despite the curators' desire to do so. The University places great emphasis on the work done in Nubia, and although the collection is not on permanent display because of limited space, it is exhibited from time to time in specialized temporary exhibitions.⁶⁵² The most recent of these temporary exhibitions has been on display since November 2007 at the Nubia Museum of Aswan and consists not only of ancient artifacts but also of panels, a video and tools used during the archeological work in Nubia.

Russia: The Hermitage and Pushkin Museums

The Russian Academy of Sciences joined the Salvage Campaign in the sixties, with a grant to the former USSR to carry out work in Dakka and Wadi Allaqi in Egyptian Nubia. The mission was directed by Boris Piotrovski.⁶⁵³ I was informed by Galina Belova, of the Russian Archeological Institute in Cairo, that some of the objects from this Campaign were given to Russia by Egypt and are currently kept at the Hermitage Museum.⁶⁵⁴

A few objects from Nubia are also kept at the Pushkin Museum. They are three Pre-dynastic vessels displayed among Egyptian objects of the same period. The labels give only a general indication of their Nubian provenance without any other details.⁶⁵⁵

Russian excavations in Nubia in the sixties focused on an area, on the edge of the Eastern Desert, not previously investigated and rich in interesting results deserving to be on display in museums.

The North American Show

As discussed in Chapter 5, today America is the place where the scientific concept of Nubia, as it was legitimized in the sixties, still survives, probably retained because it is seen as an important American contribution to the study and interpretation of the area. This reason might have led to a less perceptive concept of Sudanology but what is very clear, with the acknowledgment of Nubia as a scientific discipline, is the increasing influence of the Afro-American community in the academic milieu.

Museums as a vehicle to convey knowledge to a larger public are a reflection of this American involvement in Nubia. It was in America that the first Nubian galleries to receive worldwide acknowledgement were created, displaying the significant American achievements in the field. Contributions from the Afro-American community to curatorial issues related to these galleries and the organization of scientific venues is growing more and more important, relegating 'Old Continent' archeology to a secondary status.

America is the homeland of those scholars who have played a leading role in the birth of Nubiology as a scientific discipline. If it is true that it took the Salvage Campaign of the sixties to break down the Egyptocentric past completely, it is also true that the birth of a 'scientific Nubia',

⁶⁵¹ Strouhal, 1975; Stuchlík and Strouhal 1967; Onderka 2006.

⁶⁵² The ethnographic collection consists of pottery (also clay radio receivers) baskets, wooden dishes, paper flowers, textiles, toys, decorations used in interiors of houses and different tools. It was collected by Milan Stuchlík in the Nubian villages before they were submerged. I wish to thank Lenka Sukova and Josef Kander for their cooperation.

⁶⁵³ Piotrovsky, 1963; Piotrovsky, 1964a: 93-98; Piotrovsky, 1964b: 229-260; Piotrovsky, 1967: 127-140.

⁶⁵⁴ Galina Belova (Personal Communication, 2009).

⁶⁵⁵ Olga Vassilieva (Personal Communication, 2008).

although hampered by all its burden of biases, goes back to the beginning of the past century. The protagonists in this part of the tale were the American leaders of the *First Archaeological Survey of Nubia* (1907-1912), organized by the Egyptian Government and led by the Museum of Fine Arts of Boston and Harvard University Peabody Museum of Archeology and Ethnography.⁶⁵⁶

The American archaeologist George Andrew Reisner not only discovered and classified the indigenous local Nubian culture for the first time⁶⁵⁷ (until then silenced by the majestic Egyptian remains),⁶⁵⁸ but also introduced a methodology of archeological excavation, the target of which was not the discovery of the single (if possible artistically significant) monuments, but the valorization of every single element that might contribute to the reconstruction of the history of the concerned area.⁶⁵⁹ While Reisner was involved in Lower Nubia, the camera of James Henry Breasted's epigraphic expedition (1905 - 07) from Chicago Oriental Institute, was photographing the major monuments of the region for the first time.⁶⁶⁰ Some years later the most important of which would later be excavated by Reisner. It was in fact also Reisner who, once he had finished his work in Lower Nubia, moved to the Sudan (1916) to excavate the most important archeological sites of the area (the fortresses of the Second Cataract, Kerma, the important archeological sites of the Napatan region and Meroe).

Other important American archeological missions focused their work on specific important sites. One was the mission of the University of Pennsylvania directed by the British archeologists David Randall - MacIver and Charles Leonard Woolley, who excavated the sites of Areika, Buhen and Karanog.⁶⁶¹ The archeologists found the largest Meroitic cemetery which yielded a large number of magnificent artifacts but even more importantly a large corpus of Meroitic inscriptions that served to give the key for the phonetic value of the letters.⁶⁶²

Almost forty years later, the anthropologists William Adams and his Canadian colleague Bruce Trigger cleansed Reisner's concept of Nubia from its burden of racial biases and stressed the idea of the appreciation of Nubian culture in its own right rather as an appendix of Egypt. Some scholars argue, and I agree on this, that Adams's famous descriptive phrase 'Nubia: Corridor to Africa'⁶⁶³ is restrictive, although this was not attributable to his personal position on the issue but rather to the scanty information available on the neighboring deserts that is now available, thanks to new research.⁶⁶⁴

Various American institutions participated in the Salvage Campaign of Nubia in the sixties: the Oriental Institute of Chicago, the University of Pennsylvania (jointly with Yale University), the University of California, and the Combined Prehistoric Expedition considered to be the first

⁶⁵⁶ Cf. Chapter 1.

⁶⁵⁷ Reisner, 1912.

⁶⁵⁸ In 1904, in the report to the Egyptian Undersecretary of State, written in view of the construction of the First Aswan Dam, Gaston Maspero, Director General of the Antiquities Department in Egypt says: 'I visited the temples at Nubia, to check on their current state of repair and to decide what to do with them once the Aswan Dam had been built. My inspection took several weeks, from 3rd December 1904 to 21st January 1905, and I visited every site that seemed to be threatened [...] If we compare them to the sketches made of them and pictures taken of them in the 18th and 19th centuries, we must admit that they have been considerably damaged [...] it is time to do something about this if we want to save them'.

⁶⁵⁹ Cf. Chapter 1.

⁶⁶⁰ Breasted, 1908; Breasted, 1943:173-214.

⁶⁶¹ Randall-MacIver & Woolley, 1909; Mileham, 1910; Woolley & Randall MacIver, 1910; Woolley, 1911; Randall-MacIver & Wolley, 1911.

⁶⁶² Griffith, 1911.

⁶⁶³ Adams, 1977.

⁶⁶⁴ Cf. Chapter 1.

comprehensive survey and study in the field of Prehistory in Nubia.⁶⁶⁵ America was also present in the *Merowe Dam Salvage Archeological Project*.⁶⁶⁶

The weight of this scientific contribution so heavily influenced the history of Nubian archeology in America that local adventurers from ‘Old Continent’ archeology lost much of their impact. Among the American travelers I wish to mention the adventures of the Bostonian John Lowell (1799-1836),⁶⁶⁷ who was accompanied by the young Swiss academic painter Charles Gleyre and those of the Pennsylvanian Bayard Taylor (1825-1878).⁶⁶⁸ Lowell’s diary is very interesting and sensitive, of particular note are his outraged comments about the destruction caused by Ferlini’s work at Meroe. Taylor’s account is very valuable and rich in ethnographic data although some considerations are typically of their time interpretations of local achievements.⁶⁶⁹

After this brief excursion into the work and trends of the American specialists in the Middle Nile Valley, we move on to the presentation of the museums which reflect their activities.

American Museums and the Formation of Nubia as a ‘Scientific’ Concept

Museum of Fine Arts, Boston

In this American ‘tour’, the Bostonian Museum must take pride of place, since it is here that in 1992 the archeology of Nubia had the honor of being celebrated, a consequence of the size of the collection in all its individuality and magnificence.

American archaeologist Timothy Kendall characterizes the collection of Nubian artifacts held by the Museum of Fine Arts of Boston as, ‘the most outstanding of the hemisphere’.⁶⁷⁰ It is the fruit of the excavations conducted by the Museum in almost all the most important sites of Nubia, both in Egypt and in the Sudan. The collection traces the history of Nubia from Prehistory to the Islamic period.⁶⁷¹

⁶⁶⁵ The Combined Prehistoric Expedition was conducted under the leadership of Southern Methodist University of Dallas, with joint staff and financial participation by the Museum of New Mexico, Columbia University, the Fort Burgwin Research Center and such other international partners as The Egyptian Geological and Mineral Research Department, the Belgian Fonds National de la Recherche, the University of Gent, the French Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique, The University of Bordeaux, and the Polish Institute of History of Material Culture. Other major financial support for the expedition was donated in several grants from the United States National Science Foundation, the United States Department of State and the Smithsonian Institution. A total of 38 scholars from 6 different countries participated in the work of the Combined Prehistoric Expedition from 1961 to 1966. This demonstrates the size of the mission and is yet more proof of the amazing spirit of international cooperation that characterized this Salvage Campaign.

⁶⁶⁶ Mission of the Oriental Institute of Chicago; Joint mission of the Arizona State University and the University of California, Santa Barbara; Mission of the University of Delaware.

⁶⁶⁷ The primary source for Lowell’s travels in Sudan is his voluminous unpublished diary, that is preserved at the Boston Athenaeum, with slightly edited copy at the Museum of Fine Arts of Boston (cf. Kendall 1996).

⁶⁶⁸ Bayard, 1859.

⁶⁶⁹ Commenting on Taylor, the American archaeologist Timothy Kendall says: ‘His account, extremely valuable for its ethnographic data, is of peculiar interest in that it reflects what must have been a typical, though by no means universal, nineteenth-century reaction to the monuments of Sudan. This same attitude for almost another fully century would retard and confuse the discipline of Meroitic studies and the study of African civilization in general. To Taylor, and many of his contemporaries, it was inconceivable that the great stone cities of Kush had been built by peoples of the ‘black race’, whom they regarded as incapable of high cultural achievement. Rather, he asserted, they must have been built by Egyptians or by immigrants from India or Arabia, or, in any case, ‘by an offshoot [...] of the race to which we belong’[...]’ (Kendall, 1996: 156).

⁶⁷⁰ Kendall, 1996: 151-164.

⁶⁷¹ Publications of the excavations of the Museum of Fine Arts: Reisner, 1912; Firth, 1915; Reisner, 1923;

The trail of discovery has been delineated a number of times in this research. The finds housed in the Museum of Fine Arts Boston relate a fascinating tale of both the historical legacies of the area and of the historiographic intrigue that created the collection. Reisner's pursuits had led him to include not only a wider and more comprehensive area in Egypt, but also areas in Sudan. As frequently happens to research projects, politics intervened and the local authorities urged him to move south to explore what we now know as one of the richest sites for Nubian discoveries, Kerma. The site was threatened by another agricultural-irrigation project. Drought is posing an increasing danger to these sites, compounded by the intense local conflicts that have resulted in the loss of an untold number of lives, not to mention impoverishing and resettling many of the people in the area.

At the time of his excavations, - in addition to his duties as an archaeologist - Reisner served as an advisor to the Wellcome Institute expedition. Their concession included the Neolithic sites of Gebel Moya and Kaderu and the finds from these expeditions also travelled to the Peabody Museum at Harvard University, located in Boston, Massachusetts, in the US.

Orice Bates, an assistant of Reisner's on the Kerma excavations, moved on after the Kerma expedition had been completed to the Meroitic site of Gemai. Peter Lacovara says that Bates, obtained important Late Meroitic material for the Museum of Fine Arts and for Harvard.

Gebel Barkal, the Holy Mountain and the great royal cemeteries constructed around it, provided Reisner with some of his historically richest finds. These were enhanced by the discoveries made at El Kurru, Nuri, all of which found their way to the storage and exhibition areas of Boston. Lacovara colorfully describes these finds:

While [the] Reisner expedition uncovered many treasures from these pyramid-tombs, none of the royal burials of Kush has escaped looting robbers in antiquity. Only one tomb gave any hint of the immense wealth of its original contents, thanks to the fact that the ceiling of its outer chambers had collapsed before it could be completely robbed. This was the Tomb of King Aspelta. From beneath the rubble of the rock falls, Reisner recovered a number of gold and silver vessels, a group of elaborate alabaster vessels (some capped with gold foil) jewelry, a gold collar for the king's horse and three pairs of gold tweezers [...] ⁶⁷²

Aspelta, King and ruler of Kush (600 to 580BC) is one of the better known of the rulers of this kingdom. Reisner's finds, as described by Lacovara,

[...] had been buried in a set of nested coffins decorated with gold and inlaid with semi-precious stones. Unfortunately, the wood from the coffins had all the decayed and only the gold and inlays remained. The coffins were housed in a gigantic fourteen-ton granite sarcophagus decorated with the figures of protective deities and inscribed with funerary texts. This sarcophagus, the largest ever discovered, was shipped back to Boston via a special railway and now is a centerpiece of the Museum of Fine Arts Nubian Galleries. ⁶⁷³

Reisner and the Harvard-Boston Expedition also explored the area of Meroe during the 1921-1923 seasons and the remains of the Egyptian occupation during the Middle and New Kingdoms above

Bates and Dunham, 1927: 1-121, pls. 1-72, maps 1-2; Dunham, 1950; Dunham, 1955; Dunham & Chapman, 1957; Dunham, 1957; Dunham & Janssen, 1960; Dunham, 1967.

⁶⁷² Lacovara 1992: 61-69.

⁶⁷³ Lacovara 1992: 61-69.

the First Cataract. These sites, excavated during the period of 1923-1932, included Egyptian frontier fortresses.

The Meroe finds included, again according to Lacovara, 'a wealth of imported lamps, stone vessels and jewelry, in addition to items of exquisite local craftsmanship'.⁶⁷⁴ These were taken from over fifty royal pyramids located 'along the tops of two desert ridges'.⁶⁷⁵ Lacovara's description of the work done in these fortresses provides a colorful narrative for our collection of tales:

The Museum of Fine Arts excavated five of these forts, the pair at Semna ad Kumma, and at Uronarti, Shalfak and Mirgissa. Of particular interest among the Expedition's discoveries were the objects of daily life that had belonged to the inhabitants of the fortresses: not only weapons, but mirrors and jewelry of great beauty, as well as charming toys and examples of 'folk art' produced to make their harsh life more pleasurable. Indeed, the hardships of life in the area got to one of Reisner's crew so badly that he became obsessed with what he thought was the 'Loch Ness Monster', which he swore he saw swimming among the rocks of the cataract 'Reisner has been able to obtain a study collection of C Group material for Boston'.⁶⁷⁶

Other objects arrived at the museum by purchase, private donations and exchanges with other institutions in particular with the Museum of the University of Pennsylvania.

The Museum of Fine Arts in Boston is one of the first institutions in the world to dedicate a gallery to Nubia. After discussing the history of the creation of the Nubian collection, Peter Lacovara continues his article by emphasizing the importance of the creation of this specific gallery for its exhibition:

The opening of the gallery *Nubia: Ancient Kingdoms of Africa* at the Museum of Fine Arts of Boston, is a milestone in the long relationship between the 'Athens of America' and the lands beyond Egypt. With George Reisner's death in 1942, the Expedition's work in both Egypt and Nubia came to a halt; and then-curator Dows Dunham was left the herculean task of sorting through, cataloguing and publishing all the material of the Sudan excavations. He painstakingly worked with the Egyptian Department's gifted artist, Suzanne Chapman, to produce a whole series on the royal cemeteries of Kush, beginning with el Kurru in 1950 and ending with Excavations at Kerma VI in 1982. It was also Durham who first planned a Nubian Gallery for the Museum of Fine Arts in 1935-in the exact place where it recently opened. The gallery is only a first step in the plan for a much larger display on Nubian material in Boston [...] A crypt with the massive sarcophagus of Aspelta and a recreation of his tomb is planned, as well as expanded space display more material from the museum's several Nubia excavations.⁶⁷⁷

Despite the fact that importance of the opening of the Nubian gallery in Boston was unanimously appreciated, the long period between the formation of the collection and its exhibition has attracted criticism. R. Barley an Afro-American Professor at the Department of African-American Studies, Northeastern University in Boston, says:

⁶⁷⁴ Lacovara 1992: 61-69.

⁶⁷⁵ Lacovara 1992: 61-69.

⁶⁷⁶ Lacovara, 1992: 61-69.

⁶⁷⁷ Lacovara, 1992: 61-69.

Just over ten years ago in 1992, the Museum of Fine Arts (MFA), Boston, announced that it would open a permanent gallery of ancient objects from Nubia. While all applauded this decision, I and many other African Americans felt strongly that the announcement raised important concerns central to those of us who specialized in African and African American Studies. Since the 1920s, the MFA has housed the largest who led the pioneering joint Harvard University-MFA expedition to the Sudan, beginning in 1913. For every duplicate antiquity he found, Reisner was given permission to bring back the other to Boston. Why we ask? To be sure, many of these objects required complex conservation to make them 'exhibitible', and the collection also demanded a major allotment of gallery space-always in short supply at the Museum. At twentieth century racism, which had left the collection largely in limbo since Reisner's day.⁶⁷⁸

Besides their exhibition in the gallery devoted specifically to Nubia, other items, in particular Pharaonic objects found in Nubia, were displayed in the Egyptian gallery. Moreover, artifacts dated to later periods (Meroitic, Ptolemaic and Roman periods) were displayed in the Late Period Egyptian Gallery. Today the Nubian gallery is closed for work which should lead to an enlargement.

Museum of the Oriental Institute, Chicago

The Nubian gallery of the Oriental Institute of Chicago, *The Robert F. Picken Family Nubian Gallery*, is, for the ancient periods, conceptually very clear. The individuality of the collection is not only highlighted through its arrangement in a dedicated space and showcases, but also by the use of commentaries and detailed maps. An understandable promotion of the collection is also made through Internet as can be seen from the below images (Figs 79-88). This is obviously very important in view of the power the Internet commands today.

The gallery illustrates the history of Nubia, beginning with the A Group up to the Islamic period. The story is told not only through objects but also images and explanatory panels giving the contexts from which the objects originated.⁶⁷⁹

The Oriental Institute has been involved in research in Nubia since James Henry Breasted's epigraphic expedition of 1905-1907, when the expedition photographed the major monuments of the region.⁶⁸⁰ The Institute returned to work in the area during the UNESCO Salvage Campaign (1960-1964). In collaboration with the Swiss Institute of Architectural Research in Cairo, a first mission produced an epigraphic record of the Temple of Beit el Wali.⁶⁸¹ Later it moved to the south and excavated sites between Abu Simbel and the Second Cataract.

The Egyptian Government granted the Institute an export license for a large collection of objects recovered by the expedition as a reward for its participation. This collection formed of almost 5,000 objects from every period of the Nubian history, is one of the most important of the Institute's permanent holdings. The display of some of these objects has been arranged in two interim exhibitions: one of magnificent textiles at the Art Institute and a fine educational exhibition in the Oriental Institute Museum.

The exhibition in the Oriental Institute called *Vanished Kingdoms of the Nile: The Rediscovery of Ancient Nubia* received a 'Superior Achievement' award from the Congress of Illinois Historical Societies and Museums in 1992. It was closed and dismantled in 1996. In 2006,

⁶⁷⁸ Bailey, Preface to Nubian Studies 1998, 2004.

⁶⁷⁹ <http://oi.uchicago.edu/museum/nubia/>

⁶⁸⁰ Breasted, 1908.

⁶⁸¹ Ricke, 1967.

the new permanent exhibition, *The Robert F. Picken Family Nubian Gallery*, was opened after the complete renovation of the museum.

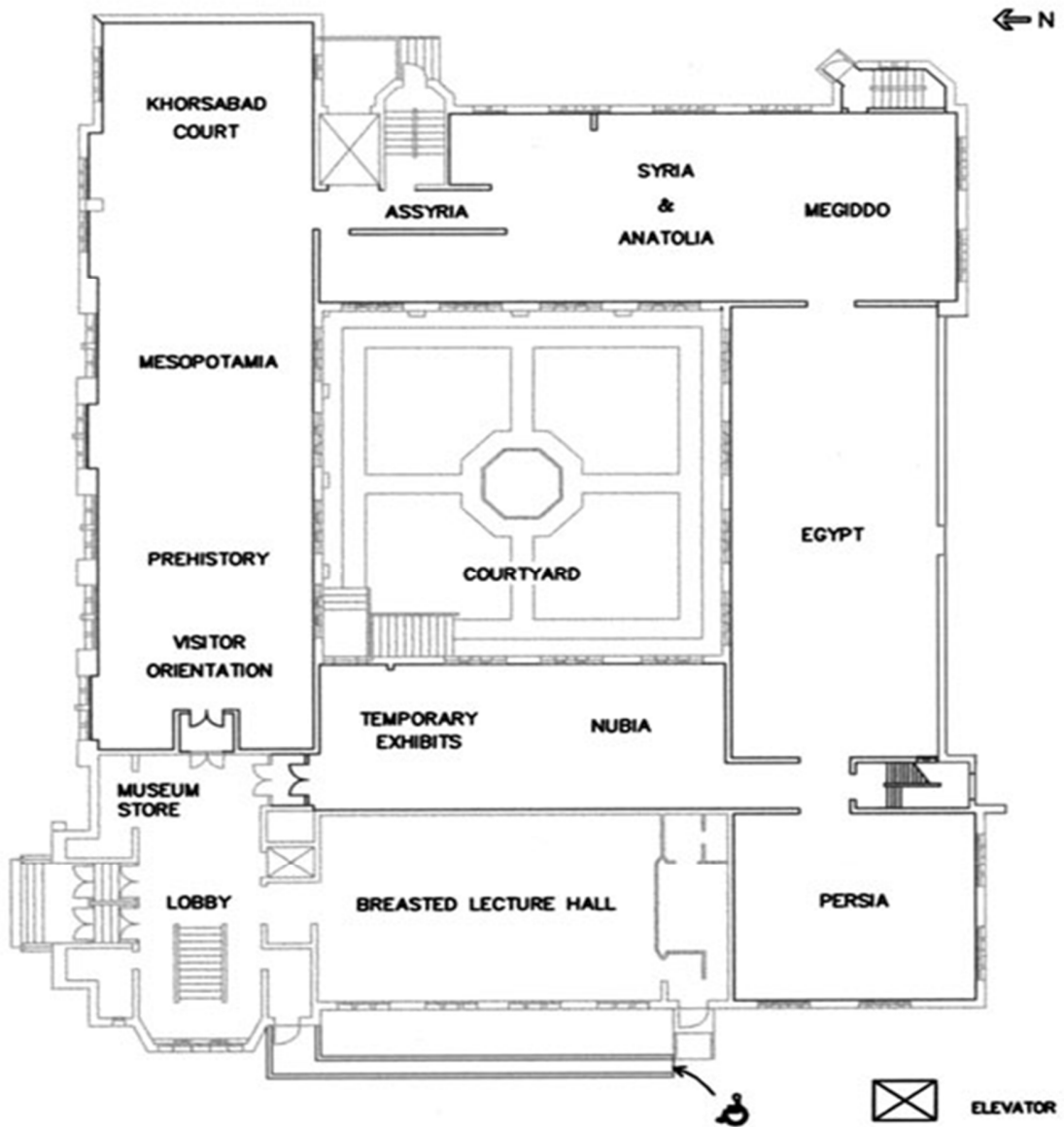


Fig. 79: Museum of the Oriental Institute, Chicago: Museum Galleries Plan (Museum Web Site)

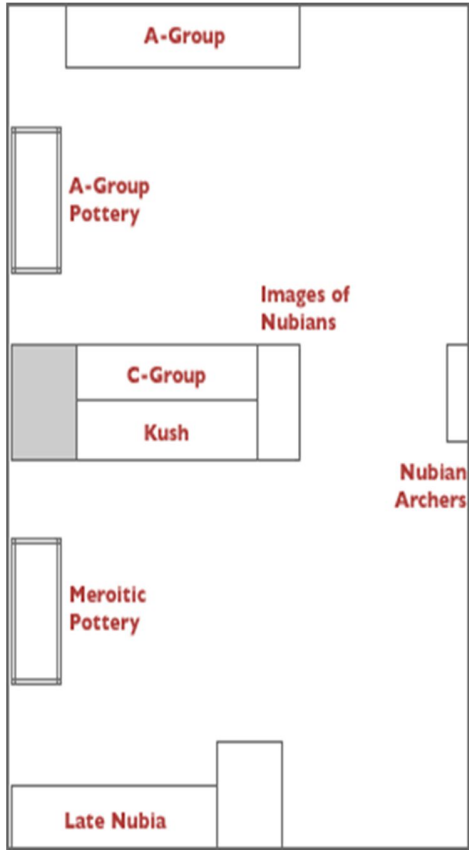


Fig. 80: Museum of the Oriental Institute, Chicago: Nubia Exhibition Plan (Museum Web Site)

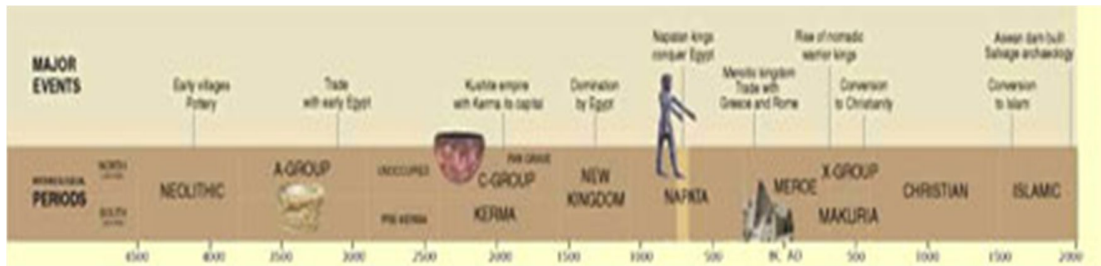


Fig. 81: Museum of the Oriental Institute, Chicago: Chronological Table (Museum Web Site)



Fig. 82: Museum of the Oriental Institute, Chicago: A Group (Museum Web Site)



Fig. 83: Museum of the Oriental Institute, Chicago: A Group's Map (Museum Web Site)



Fig. 84: Museum of the Oriental Institute, Chicago: C Group, Kerma, Pan Grave and Egyptians in Nubia (Museum Web Site)



Fig. 85: Museum of the Oriental Institute, Chicago: Map of C Group, Kerma, Pan Grave and Egyptians in Nubia (Museum Web Site)



Fig. 86: Museum of the Oriental Institute, Chicago: New Kingdom and Napatan (25th Dynasty) (Museum Web Site)



Fig. 87: Museum of the Oriental Institute, Chicago: Map of New Kingdom and Napatan (25th Dynasty) (Museum Web Site)



Fig. 88: Museum of the Oriental Institute, Chicago: Meroitic, X Group, Christian, Islamic periods (Museum Web Site)



Fig. 89: Museum of the Oriental Institute, Chicago: Map of Meroitic, X Group, Christian, Islamic period (Museum Web Site)

University of Pennsylvania/Museum of Archeology and Anthropology, Philadelphia

The Egyptian Section of the Museum of Archeology and Anthropology of the University of Pennsylvania holds a large collection of Nubian antiquities spanning all periods of Nubian history.⁶⁸² The collection is a legacy of the investigations the museum carried out in Nubia in the several salvage campaigns of the past century, as well as from exchanges with other institutions.⁶⁸³

This is one of those museums which, after the initial enthusiasm expressed in the field, confirmed in the 'museumization' of the objects and in the voices raised against Nubia biases, has now turned page and the main subject is again Egypt.⁶⁸⁴

Before 1980, the Museum had a permanent exhibit focusing on the excavations in Nubia. Along the same line a traveling exhibition with the significant title *Nubia: Egypt's Rival in Africa*⁶⁸⁵ (Fig. 90) was organized in the nineties. It coincided with the 'exciting' years following the completion of the Salvage Campaign of the sixties. The exhibition, one of the first of this kind, aroused a wave of criticism objecting to the old-fashioned and racist interpretation of Nubia by the new 'generation' of Nubiologists. David O' Connor, curator of the exhibition mentions in its catalogue (1994):

Why did Nubian history lie in general obscurity despite the consistent interest in it shown by generations of African-American scholars? Ethnocentric bias played a big role in the under appreciation of Nubia.⁶⁸⁶

⁶⁸² The collection includes roughly the following types of objects: khol sticks, spoons, adzes, rings, chisels, shears, spearheads, anklets, glasses, faience ware, bronzes-iron (lamp, rings, bowls, arrowheads, censers), wood (kohl tubes, boxes, spindle whorls), jewelry, ostraka, offering tables, inlays, amulets bed-legs, pins, foundations deposit plaques; funerary statues, funerary stele, stelae, pottery, alabaster ware, lamps, human and animal figurines, ware, rhomboidal palettes, grinders, archer's thumb ring (stone); daggers; *shawabti*; pectorals; daggers, axe-heads, architectural fragments, stele and so on. The nature of some objects is uncertain.

⁶⁸³ From 1907 to 1911, the Eckley B. Coxe Expedition, under the direction of David Randall and Leonard Woolley, conducted excavations at the sites of Areika, Buhen, Aniba, Karanog and Shablul from which the museum is in possess of several types of objects representative of the various phases of Nubian history. (Randall- MacIver and Woolley 1909; 1910; 1911a; 1911b; Griffith 1911); during the International Salvage Campaign of the sixties, a joint mission of Yale and Pennsylvania worked in the years 1961-1962 on the sites of Toshka and Arminna West (Simpson, 1963; Weeks, 1967). The two sites had already been extensively excavated early in the last century by the Austrian Academy of Sciences and many objects then unearthed are kept at the museum in Vienna (Junker, 1925; Junker, 1926). The objects from these last excavations have enriched the collection, principally with objects from the Christian period from the site of Arminna and provided those coming from the famous discovery of the tomb of the Egyptianized Nubian Governor Hekanefer (Simpson, 1963; Weeks, 1967). The museum also adopted a policy of exchange with other museums, thereby obtaining important objects from the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston (*First Archeology Survey of Nubia* specifically from the sites of Khor Bahan, Meris-Markos, Naga Wadi, Dakka, Sayala as well as from their excavations in Sudanese Nubia conducted in subsequent years in the sites of Kerma, Nuri, Kurru and Meroe). In the collection of the Museum, 51 objects identified as from the 25th Dynasty are also included; two of them are from Nubia.

⁶⁸⁴ 1) Roman Exhibit (Mediterranean Section); mixed with Roman material from all over the Greek-Roman world; 2) Daily Life in Egypt (Egyptian Section); 3) Animals in ancient Egypt (Egyptian Section); 4) Secrets and Science (Egyptian Section); 5) Egyptian Mummies (Egyptian Section).

⁶⁸⁵ O' Connor, 1994.

⁶⁸⁶ O' Connor, 1994.

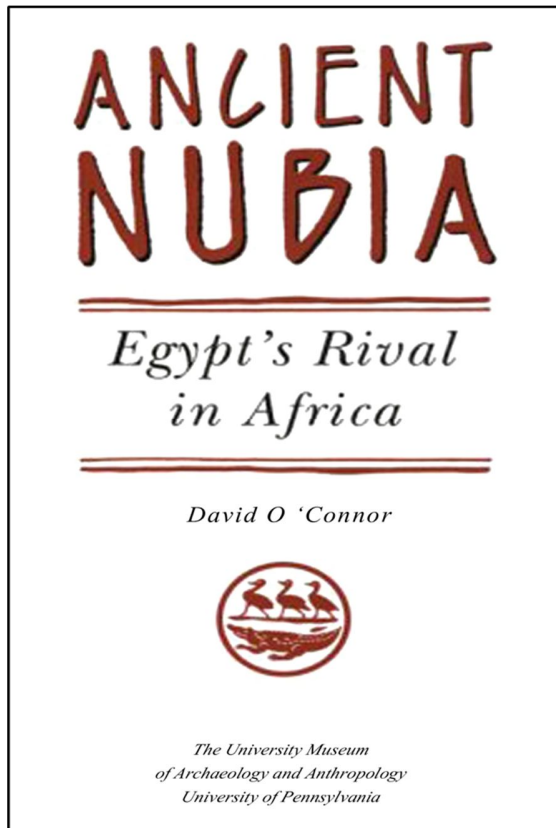


Fig. 90: Front cover of the Catalogue:
Nubia: Egypt's Rival in Africa

He notes that many Western scholars have conveyed the idea that Nubia was either backward in comparison with Egypt and other societies of the time, or that Nubians borrowed all of their advanced technologies and ideologies from Egyptians. As an example of ‘scholarly biases’ he cites the practice of translating the Egyptian words *heka* and *wer* as ‘ruler’ or ‘king’ when they refer to heads of Near Eastern kingdoms or states, but as ‘chief’ when indicating Nubian [leaders], although nothing in the text warrants the differentiation.

This exhibition was a landmark in the interest in Nubia of this Museum, but, when the Egyptian Section of the Museum was renovated, Nubia was no longer part of it. Although the rich collection, the technical details of which have been included in footnote (n. 628), would given the Museum a wonderful chance to mount an exhibition dedicated to Nubia in all its historical phases, and also an interesting exhibition on the historiography of their discovery, the opportunity was missed. On the Museum website this wealth of material is rather summarily treated as follows:

The Nubian expeditions investigated a variety of environments including urban, domestic, military, religious and funerary contexts. Combining this variety of manner of sites with a long-ranging chronology from early Pharaonic times to the Christian era, these early excavations ensured that the Museum’s Nubian collections would provide much insight into the diverse cultures of ancient Nubia and the relationship between Nubia and its (sometime) rival to the North, Egypt.⁶⁸⁷

⁶⁸⁷ www.penn.museum

Today only thirty-six Nubian objects are on exhibition, where they serve to enrich five topical displays related to Egyptian and Greco-Roman world.

In this museum, I also found one of the rare collections of Nubian ethnographic artifacts. The confusion which characterizes their classification is yet more proof of the lack of information and research in this field. Few of these ethnographic objects are specifically identified as being from Nubia; approximately 370 objects are just indicated as 'Sudan'. They once again demonstrate the dichotomy between Nubian archeological objects, usually placed in the context of Egyptological studies, and ethnographic objects generally considered to belong to an African context. Actually the archeological collection is stored in the Egyptian section by site and the ethnographic in the African Section.⁶⁸⁸

The Nubian 'Extraordinary Ambassador' to America

The American 'show' of Nubia does still live on in New York where the 'Nubian Extraordinary Ambassador' to America, the temple of Dendur, welcomes the visitors to the prestigious Metropolitan Museum. The temple, that was built by the Roman emperor Augustus on the West Bank of the Nile in Nubia, 80 km south of Aswan, left its homeland to undertake its transoceanic travel in June 1968.

The blocks of the temple, cut in 1962 during the UNESCO Salvage Campaign, were shipped to New York as a gift from the Egyptian Government to the United States, awarded to the Metropolitan Museum in 1967, where it was installed in the Sackler Wing in 1978⁶⁸⁹ (Fig. 91). Säve-Söderbergh's description of the reconstruction of the temple adds a colorful document to this story:

The additional elements into the modern setting [...] provided the viewer with an idea of the original setting of the temple [...] lights have been installed in the pronaos, the only completed decorated room in the temple, to facilitate public viewing from the temple façade's and side doors and photographs depicting the interior and details of its decoration have been incorporated into the educational material located on the south wall of the enclosure. If there is no doubt that the temple looks its best at night, when the stark contours of the enclosure have become blurred and indistinct, this is, after all, in keeping with the opinion of Amelia Edwards who visited the temple in 1874 confided the following, much-quoted, passage to her journal:

'[...] At Dendoor [...] we visited a tiny temple on the western bank. It stands out above the river [...] and consists of a single pylon, a portico, two little chambers and a sanctuary. The whole thing is a like an exquisite toy, so covered with sculptures, so smooth, so new looking, so admirably built. Seeing them half by sunlight, half by dusk [...] the rosy half-light of an Egyptian afterglow covers a multitude of sins, and steepes the whole in an atmosphere of romance.'⁶⁹⁰

⁶⁸⁸ I would like to thank Ms Chrisso Boulis for her cooperation (registrar record).

⁶⁸⁹ For an entertaining popular account of the reconstruction, cf. Having, 1993: 51-53, 58-63, 129, 162.

⁶⁹⁰ Cathleen Keller, Assistant Curator, Department of Egyptian Art, in Säve-Söderbergh, 1987.



Fig. 91: Metropolitan Museum, New York: Temple of Dendur

As demonstrated in other venues, the ‘Temples Ambassadors’ still have the power to keep alive the memory of the enthusiasm for Nubia aroused by the Salvage Campaign of the sixties. Unfortunately, a counterproductive effect could be that their majesty, directly related to Egypt,⁶⁹¹ detracts attention away from the purely Nubian collections. In fact, in most of those museums containing both an ‘ambassador’ and a Nubian collection, the first take pride of place whereas in most cases the collection has finished up in the oblivion of the storage depot or stripped of its individuality in the wider context of the Egyptian collection which overshadows it.⁶⁹²

The same fate has befallen the Nubian collection of the Metropolitan Museum. A substantial number of objects arrived in the museum quite a bit earlier than the temple.⁶⁹³ The importance of this collection, over seventy objects unearthed by the British excavations of the Oxford Expedition in Nubia, is highlighted in a article written in 1913 by the archaeologist C.L R.

⁶⁹¹ They are in fact Pharaonic temples or Ptolemaic/ Roman temples built in Egyptian style. The only link with Nubia is their geographical location.

⁶⁹² A list of the objects classified as Nubian, of which below I give a summary, was kindly handed over to me on 6/24/2008 by I. Stuenkel with the caveat that there might be some mistakes in it. According to the list, the first objects arrived in 1905, donated by J. Pierpont Morgan; *C Group*: 3 cups; beads; necklace; *Pan Grave*: 15 bucrania, antlers; *25th Dynasty objects* (royal statuettes (one is King Shabako); stelae (Shebitaqa and Shabaqa); beads; plaques; pendant; amulets; scarabs; *shawabtis* (Taharqa); statuette of Neith; *Meroitic*: scarabs; scaraboid; seals; beads; ring; stamp; fragmented vessel (Meroitic or Roman); a relief- cornice -block with the representation of the Baptism of Pharaoh (Rogers Fund 1911: from the temples of Harendotes a Philae); from the same place are two column capitals. From Faras; Gift of Oxford University Expedition to Nubia, 1926: 7 necklaces; amulet; 5 Meroitic bowls; 4 anklets; bracelets; earrings; seven rings; staff fragment; six Meroitic vessels. A seal (generally classified as Nubian and coming from Dongola); Egyptian point core; spherical painted jar; balls (Egyptian; from Ragagna?); scarab (Buhen?).

⁶⁹³ Williams, 1913: 200-208.

Williams.⁶⁹⁴ Captured on the crest of the wave of the interest aroused at the beginning of the past century by the discovery of a new culture, Williams's article states that the collection was exhibited, during the month of September in the same year, in the *Room of the Recent Acquisitions*.

Yale Peabody Museum, New Haven, Connecticut

Yale University participated in the International Salvage Campaign of the sixties, in a joint mission with Pennsylvania University. Their work focused on the sites of Toshka and Arminna (Egyptian Nubia).⁶⁹⁵ The upshot is a remarkable collection of objects which are part of the holding of the Department of Anthropology of the Peabody Museum⁶⁹⁶ while some others went to Pennsylvania University.

In this museum, despite the importance of its involvement in Nubia, once again we are faced with the situation that this tour has led us to expect: a Nubia 'museologically' either embedded in Egypt or left in storage. In the museum only one room is dedicated to Egypt and contains Egyptian artifacts mixed with Nubian objects from the late period (Meroitic and Christian) clearly specified as coming from Nubia. Even though a large part of the collection remains in storage, interest in Nubia is well and truly alive here. The collection, although part of it is exhibited in the context of Egyptology and part kept in storage, it has become the object of in-depth studies that make Yale an important destination for the specialists in this field.⁶⁹⁷

UCLA Fowler Museum of Cultural History, Los Angeles

This Museum is famous in the field of Nubian studies, first of all for the amazing number of objects: 60,000, brought back from the excavations of the archeologist Alexander Badawi at the Fortress of Askut during the UNESCO Salvage Campaign in 1962-1964.⁶⁹⁸

The museum does not have a specific policy for displaying the Nubian artifacts as most of the collection is in storage. There are just some pieces on display in the Fowler Museum Archeology Collections Facility.⁶⁹⁹

The study of this collection promises yet more interesting results on the coexistence of Egyptians and Nubians in the same context, in this case that of the fortress. It would be pertinent to dedicate a gallery to this aspect of Nubian history. The curator, Wendy Teeter, commented on the few objects displayed with these words:

There are no object labels. I do give the visitor a general understanding of Askut as being an Egyptian fortress site in the middle of the Nile where men stationed there often had Nubian wives, so that the artifacts represent a mixing of cultural tradition.⁷⁰⁰

⁶⁹⁴ Cf. Annex VIII.

⁶⁹⁵ Simpson, 1963.

⁶⁹⁶ The bulk of it is from cemeteries and is dated mostly to the Middle Nubian (Pan Grave and Group C) and to the late (Meroitic, Group X) periods. Other materials originated from the Egyptian/Pharaonic tombs of the 18th Dynasty.

⁶⁹⁷ The Middle Nubian collection is being studied by a colleague and friend, Maria Carmela Gatto, to whom I am deeply grateful for a fascinating exchange of ideas on this collection.

⁶⁹⁸ Badawi, 1963; Badawi, 1964a; Badawi, 1964b: 86-88; Badawi, 1965:124-131.

⁶⁹⁹ There are two small stela, a scarab, some blue indigo cloth, a seal, four small figurines and a couple of stone make-up containers that are in the fairly small area in between collections from West Mexico and California.

⁷⁰⁰ Wendy Teeter informed me that there are over 300 archive-sized boxes of materials. Up to date, there is no comprehensive digitized objects catalogue. There are volunteer students who are making various attempts to match the physical objects.

Here, as in Yale, though the collection is not displayed, is being actively researched by Stuart Smith and his students from the University of California, Santa Barbara. Smith is particularly interested in the identification of ethnicity in the archeological record and the ethnic dynamics of colonial encounters. He has produced several publications on the ethnic, social and economic dynamics of interaction between ancient Egypt and Nubia, based on the museum collection and other excavations he has conducted in Nubia.⁷⁰¹

American Pieces of the Nubian Puzzle

Harvard University Peabody Museum of Archeology and Ethnography, Cambridge, Massachusetts
The same reasons that have moved me to include the small collections of Europe in the main text rather than in annex, also apply to these small collections in the United States. I start with this museum that is one of the surprises of this American Nubian puzzle. Harvard is the 'academic homeland' of George Andrew Reisner, extensively discussed in this research, as the man to whom the discovery of Nubia is associated.

Reisner, Professor of Egyptology at Harvard University from 1907 to 1942, investigated the most important archeological sites of Sudan whose many artifacts, as we have seen above, are pride of the Museum of Fine Arts of Boston. For the same reason, it would normally have been expected (and most are convinced of it) also to find material from these successful excavations in Harvard. Astonishingly, the catalogue of the objects of the museum records only 116 objects for Nubia, of which eighty-five are archeological and thirty-one ethnographic.⁷⁰² From Reisner's work, only two derive from the historical *First Archaeological Survey of Nubia!*

In curator Susan Haskell's words:

At present, no material from Egypt is on exhibit. In storage, the Nubian material is with other objects from Egypt. We use 'Egypt'⁷⁰³ as the country name or Nubia and Lower Nubia as the geographic area of the country.

The American Museum of Natural History, New York and University of Colorado, Department of Anthropology, Boulder

These two university museums are discussed together, since they add pieces to the Nubian puzzle of the human remains. The collection of the *American Museum of Natural History*, New York, dates from the historical *First Archaeological Survey of Nubia* at the beginning of the past century. It consists of sixty human skeletons and skulls found at the cemetery at El Hesa (Aswan)

⁷⁰¹ Smith, 1995; Smith, 1998; Smith, 1999; Smith, 2003; Smith has directed the UCSB- ASU (Arizona State University) Fourth Cataract Archeological Expedition, a part of the Merowe Dam Salvage Archeological Project and he is still directing the UCSB University Dongola Reach Expedition at Tombos Excavations,.

⁷⁰² Susan Askill has kindly provided me with the complete list of objects which I summarize as follows: *Afyah (Egyptian Nubia)*: 25 potsherds of Late Predynastic (Late 4th millenium BC) ; *Abkah (Sudanese Nubia)*: beads made of different materials; rings made of silver, bronze, copper, iron; iron anklets; pottery; alabaster vase; basin; iron arrowheads; scarabs; thin iron knife or sword; *Gemai at the Second Cataract, East bank (Sudanese Nubia)*: 6 celt stone fragments; 3 hammer stones; muller fragment; maul, stone; 9 flint implements; utilized bone point, polished, curved, losses on back; tuft of gold thread; fragments of gold thread-Meroitic period; *Gemai Mound Z*: shell object; ivory; *Lower Nubia*: 2 tray baskets ; 2 baskets; bowl pebble polished and haematitic painted red brown ware; 5 broken food cover or hat; *Nubia cemetery 600*: shell amulets; *Nubia, cemetery 45 of the Nubian Archeological Survey*: celt, stone; *Nubia* :5 baskets with cover, 2 basket trays; 2 covered baskets; *Nubian Gemai?*: ceramic body sherd, large, red ware with black painted horizontal stripes; *Nubian Desert*: basket and cover.

⁷⁰³ Susan Haskell (Personal Communication, 2010).

and collected by Felix von Luschan during the excavation works. As we have seen above,⁷⁰⁴ recently a joint project between the University of Manchester and the Natural History Museum in London has been formed with the twofold goal of locating the entire collection of human remains from the *First Archaeological Survey of Nubia*, and creating a database of it as well as reaffirming the importance of the collection and reinterpreting it in light of modern archeological and paleontological research into Ancient Nubia.

The other collection has come from the more recent excavations of the Department of Anthropology of the University of Colorado at the medieval site of Kolubnarti.⁷⁰⁵ The collection consists of 450 human skeletons, some of which still have flesh adhering to the bones. For once we can say that ‘luckily’ they are not on display.

Michael C. Carlos Museum, Atlanta

In this museum there is a collection of Nubian antiquities, including items from several periods in Nubian history acquired by Emory University Professor William Shelton who traveled to Egypt in 1920.⁷⁰⁶ Among the Nubian artifacts there are also some mummies dated to the 25th Dynasty, that represent just some of an amazing collection that is part of the museum holdings.⁷⁰⁷

Despite its peripheral location, this Nubian collection, is displayed in a separate room connected to the Egyptian, Near East and Sub-Saharan Africa Art galleries. Indeed, it has to be said that sometimes awareness is far more likely to be found in small, remote rather than in large venues with well-established historical connections to Nubia.

Brooklyn Museum of Art, New York

In 1946 John Cooney visited Sudan to investigate a possible Brooklyn involvement in archeology there. Although a Brooklyn expedition to Nubia was never mounted, the Museum did become one of the supporters of the Sudan Antiquities Service’s two seasons of excavations at the site of Soba. This is one of those institutions which, thanks to a subscriptions to the British Egypt Exploration Society, holds a small number of Pharaonic as well as Meroitic objects from its excavations at Amara West and Sesebi, (Sudanese Nubia) in 1937-1938.⁷⁰⁸ No less than the previous one, this museum is another further ‘small-scale’ example of the awareness of Nubia as culturally detached from Egypt. The manner in which some of these objects are displayed is interesting. Most of the Nubian material is exhibited in two small showcases located in two different areas. The first is at the entrance to, not inside, the Egyptian gallery;⁷⁰⁹ the second, containing 25th Dynasty and

⁷⁰⁴ Cf. University of Manchester and the Natural History Museum in London.

⁷⁰⁵ Carlson and Van Gerven, 1977; Armelagos, Mielke, Owen, Van Gerven, Dewey, Mahler, 1972; Armelagos, 1979; Swedlund, Armelagos, 1968; Mielke, 1971.

⁷⁰⁶ These artifacts, that were acquired by the Emory University Prof. William Shelton who traveled in Egypt in 1920, include items that pertain to several periods of Nubian history: for instance, the high quality ceramic material from the A Group and Kerma cultures. The Napatan Empire of the 25th Dynasty is represented in the Nubian Gallery by *shawabti* figures of its important kings, as well as some beautiful bronze sculptures of the Pharaoh Taharqa and a Divine Votaress of Amun. An offering tray on loan from Boston Museum of Fine Arts is inscribed with texts in Meroitic (Lacovara, 2008: 45-52).

⁷⁰⁷ Many of these mummies were among the last acquisitions of the museum in 1999 when it purchased Egyptian antiquities from a small, private museum in Niagara Falls, Canada. The Egyptian collection of the Niagara Falls Museum was acquired in the early sixties and consists mainly of funerary material. Some of these mummies belong to the 25th Dynasty. A particularly interesting group is represented by the set of coffins belonging to Iawttay-Esheret, who served as ‘a great follower’ of the Divine Votaress of Amun during the 25th Dynasty.

⁷⁰⁸ Amara: Fairman, 1939:139-144; Fairman 1948: 3-11; Sesebi: Fairman, 1938: 151-156.

⁷⁰⁹ It includes Pre-dynastic pottery and a figure from the same period.

Meroitic artifacts has been placed at one end of the Africa gallery to emphasize the African aspects of the later Meroitic culture.⁷¹⁰ The Christian material and a few pots remain in storage because of lack of space, another indication of museum system restrictions.

The Walters Art Museum, Baltimore

The Walter Art Museum of Baltimore holds an interesting object of the Meroitic period⁷¹¹ that comes from the British excavation at Meroe led by Garstang. Another proof of the intensive circulation of the objects from such excavations. The museum also holds various items from the 25th Dynasty.⁷¹²

At the moment, only the Meroitic plaque is on display in the Egyptian Galleries. However, there are plans for a Nubian showcase in the galleries, where the other Nubian and some of the 25th Dynasty objects will also be displayed.⁷¹³

University of California/ Hearst Museum of Anthropology in Berkeley

Although this museum adds to the unfortunately ever growing list of those museums where Nubia is buried in the dust of the storage depots, at least at classification level, it represents a small example of awareness and accuracy in its treatment of its objects. In fact, I was lucky enough to be given by Joan Knudsen, an accurate list of a small collection of objects that is kept in this museum and originates from Abu Hamed in Sudanese Nubia.⁷¹⁴

Worcester Art Museum, Worcester

This is the last piece I was able to add to this Nubian puzzle.⁷¹⁵ I came across this beautiful piece of Meroitic art on the Internet, purely by chance.⁷¹⁶ By and large, apart from the more important and well-known collections, both the history of archeology in Nubia and the Egyptian collections have been my guides in locating Nubian artifacts worldwide. But not with this piece. The museum in fact has no Egyptian objects, but a collection called 'Ancient', composed of Greek and Roman antiquities, that also includes this object⁷¹⁷ On the museum website,⁷¹⁸ on which a beautiful image of the object can be found⁷¹⁹, its presence among this collection is commented upon as follows:

⁷¹⁰ It contains a Taharqa *shawabtis*, a large decorated Meroitic vase and the head of a funerary *ba* bird-figure. I would like to thank Ann Russmann of the Brooklyn Museum for her help.

⁷¹¹ It is a small, finely carved tablet bearing the image of a Meroitic prince, named Tanyidamany, smiting a group of enemies, whom he holds by the hair. Under his feet, a pet dog is shown attacking another enemy, while, in the sky behind him, a winged goddess protects him with her fan. Excavated at Meroe in the 1909-1910 season by John Garstang (Schulz and Seidel 2009: 174-177).

⁷¹² Among them are an unusual scarab, and some others belonging to Shabaqo (cat. Nos. 28) and Shepenwepet II (n.29) (Schulz and Seidel 2007: 71-73, no. 45). One part of this small collection is a *situla* bearing the names of Kashta and Amenirdis.

⁷¹³ Regine Schulz personal communication.

⁷¹⁴ The list of objects has been kindly provided to me by Joan Knudsen:

25 quartz hammer-stones; 3 quartz choppers; 2 large hand axe; 1 small hand axe; 2 ovoid hammer-stones; 3 ovoid choppers; 1 large blade-chopper; 1 small blade-chopper; 1 cobble pick; 2 small cobble picks; (1 mano fragment; 1 matate fragment; 1 spherical hammer-stone; 8 scrapers; 4 ceres; 2 petroglyph fragments.(From Abu Hamed : Sudanese Nubia).

⁷¹⁵ 6/4/2013).

⁷¹⁶ Sandstone relief of Prince Arikankharer Slaying His Enemies, AD 25-41. Acquired by the Museum in 1922.

⁷¹⁷ The museum is in possession of other collections of American, Chinese, European, Indian, Islamic, Japanese, Korean and pre-Columbian art.

⁷¹⁸ <http://www.worcesterart.org/>

⁷¹⁹ <http://www.worcesterart.org/>

Contemporary with early imperial Rome, the Meroitic civilization flourished along the fertile banks of the Nile River in the land of Kush in what is now the Sudan. This African dynasty traded not only with Egypt to the north but also with Greece, Rome, and peoples of the Near East. Consequently, official Meroitic art reflects the absorption of external influences adapted to serve local rulers.⁷²⁰

Private collections

One of the categories of location in which Nubian artifacts are kept is that of the private collection. In America I found three such private collections. Actually their Nubian artifacts were purchased as 'Egyptian objects', and as such considered important acquisitions.

The catalogue of the exhibition *Nubia in Antiquities*⁷²¹ mentions the existence of several Pan Grave bowls kept in a private collection in Boston. Probably they originally came from the excavations of the Egypt Exploration Society at Balabish in Egypt,⁷²² providing further evidence of the influence and presence of British archeology outside of England.

Christos G. Bastis, a Greek living in New York, began collecting Egyptian antiquities in the forties. He developed a genuine interest in this field, the original wellspring of which was the art of his own country. His collection in New York includes some interesting objects dated to the 25th Dynasty.⁷²³

The *Mercer Museum* in Fonthill, Pennsylvania, grew out of a private collection that was transformed into a venue specializing in the exhibition of pottery. These vessels were purchased by Henry Mercer in the early twentieth century (the exact date of the acquisition is unknown) and are dated about 2000-3000 BC. He exhibited them in the studio of his home in Fonthill mixed with the rest of the collection. In a room guide written by Henry Mercer, the Nubian material is described as follows:

Behind wire above paneling. Left. Collection of ancient Egyptian Vases, black rimmed red ware about two to three thousand BC, unglazed in two colors, illustrating earliest decoration of clay by fire known only in Egypt and Cyprus.⁷²⁴

Museum and Center for Afro-American Artists (NCAAA), Roxbury

The presence of Nubian artifacts, specifically from the 25th Dynasty in this museum, shows the pride of the Afro-American community in the 'Black Pharaohs' and the special link of this community with the Museum of Fine Arts of Boston that was the inspiration behind this exhibition.⁷²⁵ The 25th Dynasty is one of those prestigious dynasties that has made Pharaonic Egypt

⁷²⁰ <http://www.worcesterart.org/>

⁷²¹ Wenig, 1977.

⁷²² Wainwright, 1915; 202-203; Wainwright, 1920.

⁷²³ Two small bronze statues, one representing a lady, provenance unknown, and a Nubian king kneeling, that seems to be from Saqqara in Egypt (Von Zubern and Bothmer, 1987).

⁷²⁴ I would like to thank Sara Good, curator of the museum, for her cooperation (2009).

⁷²⁵ The National Center of Afro-American Artists fosters and presents contemporary, visual and performing arts from the global Black world. It has a teaching, visual and performing arts division. The Museum of the National Center of Afro-American Artists (NCAAA) is dedicated to the celebration, exhibition, collection and criticism of Black visual arts heritage worldwide. The Museum presents a wide range of historical and contemporary exhibitions in many media, including painting, sculpture, graphics, photography and decorative arts. Among the resources offered at the

one of the most famous chapters in the world history. The protagonists of the 25th Dynasty were both Southern and Black, and it is for this reason that they have become the leaders in this tentative new study by African scholars who are using Egypt, Nubia in particular, to show that Africa is the homeland of some of the most ancient and illustrious cultures in the world.

In a main gallery, the Museum has objects, a semi-permanent loan, from the royal pyramids of Nuri as well as a full-scale painted and carved reconstruction of the burial chamber of the tomb of the Kushite King Aspelta, including a cast of his 12-ton sarcophagus. However, this is still in storage at the Museum of Fine Arts.⁷²⁶

This exhibition consists of a main gallery, that is an exact-scale re-creation of the Aspelta tomb chamber with sarcophagus, cut away on one side to enable its interior to be viewed and see the large anthropoid mummy case (gilded/re-created). The room itself has been carved and painted with faithful reference to the Reisner photos and descriptions of the original tomb chamber inside Nu. 8 (Nuri, Pyramid 8). Outside the entrance to this crypt gallery is a long hall-like gallery in which are displayed a selection of original objects from the Nuri royal tombs: pottery, *shawabtis*, foundation deposits, alabaster, and canopic jars, plus a few amulets. The labels and photo-panels discuss Aspelta as king, his pyramid and burial, and Kushite royal burial customs with particular focus on the Nuri site. The title of the display (which is permanent) is *Aspelta: A Nubian King's Burial Chamber*.⁷²⁷

Canada, Canadians and Nubia

Senior Canadian scholars have greatly contributed to the knowledge of Nubia and its culture. Alongside the American archeologist William Adams, the Canadian anthropologist Bruce Trigger is considered to have been one of the leading personalities of the Salvage Campaign of the sixties discussed here in such detail as the pivotal moment in the shifting of Nubia from its previous historiographical position as a mere appendix to Egyptology to an established position as an independent discipline. The choices of themes and trends in Canadian museums have been influenced by a number of well-known academics such as Peter Shinnie and Bruce Trigger.⁷²⁸

Museum are its African, Afro-Latin, Afro-Caribbean and African-American collections. It also has an extensive slide archive, and a rich variety of education programs for young people and adults (<http://www.ncaaa.org/exhibitions.htm>)

⁷²⁶ Kendall, 1982: 33-35.

⁷²⁷ I would like to thank Timothy Kendall for his cooperation (2008).

⁷²⁸ Peter Shinnie became Commissioner for Archeology in the Anglo-Egyptian Sudan. He was not only an excellent field archaeologist but also an innovator, fully aware that the best research is based on an interdisciplinary approach that meant the integration of archeology, social anthropology, ethnography and linguistics. His humane, liberal and interdisciplinary approach to research is expressed in his publications and his works. He excavated the Christian site of Debeira West and also for many years at Meroe. In 1953 he founded the journal *Kush* that today is the official journal of the National Corporation for Antiquities and Museums of Sudan (NCAM) and also set up the nucleus of what will become the Sudan National Museum. If Canada did not participate directly in the Nubia Salvage Campaigns, when he was appointed Head of the Department of Archeology at the University of Ghana, Prof. Shinnie, convinced President Kwame Nkrumah, a supporter of Pan-Africanism, to contribute to the UNESCO Campaign, making Ghana the only African country to share in this international effort (Shinnie, 1963, 1964, 1965). Another key personality in the history of Nubia in Canada was the late Prof. Bruce Trigger, a Canadian archaeologist, anthropologist, ethno-historian who taught for many years at McGill University in Montreal. He produced, as did Shinnie, many publications the most innovative of which, at least for Nubia, is certainly his *History and Settlement in Lower Nubia* (Trigger, 1965).

The Royal Ontario Museum in Toronto was never involved in fieldwork in Nubia. Despite its non-participation, the museum has a gallery dedicated to Nubia.⁷²⁹ The Redpath Museum of Montreal is the other Canadian Museum that has obtained a collection of Nubia, in its case through the efforts of Peter Shinnie.

The interesting history of the formation of the collection of the *Royal Ontario Museum* in Toronto has been aptly described by Krzysztof Grzymiski, in a detailed article published in 1987.⁷³⁰ Part of the collection was obtained through the particular strategy used by British archeology, frequently discussed in this research.⁷³¹ Another group of objects was received by the Royal Canadian Geographical Society, a major sponsor of the excavations at the site Gebel Adda during the Salvage Campaign of the sixties whose participants included N. B. Millet, curator of the Museum, as one of the members. The collection, as Grzymiski told me, is notable, considering that the museum never participated in the salvage campaigns.

The thinking behind the old gallery, set up almost thirty years ago was to outline the history of Nubia from 4500 BC to the Islamic period and it highlights daily life in Gebel Adda. The gallery featured collections of pottery and small objects used in everyday life. Access to this gallery was from the Egyptian section.

Unlike other museums that changed their trends following structural changes in the building, a new Nubian Gallery, with a different location and content, was opened in 2011. It is accessible from the Ancient Rome Gallery and is limited to the period from about 900 BC to AD 600, corresponding to the Napatan Meroitic through to Early Christian. The emphasis on the later periods is the outcome of the wealth of material from Meroe and Gebel Adda.⁷³² However, the re-alignment of the entrance was made to tie in with construction requirements.

Its relationship with the Egyptian gallery is not really crystal clear although, as the gallery is accessible to the adjacent section on Roman and Coptic Egypt, this opens the way for the display of some Christian Nubian objects. The pre-Napatan material is not displayed. The museum website describes the gallery in a brief paragraph:

Galleries of Africa: Nubia. Level 3

The first urban, literary societies in Africa south of the Sahara belonged to Nubians and their writing system was the second oldest in Africa. Our new gallery allows visitors to explore an extraordinary ancient legacy that stretched from Aswan in Egypt to Khartoum in Sudan through the lens of both ancient artifacts and ongoing current ROM archeological research.

The objects from the Wellcome excavation at Gebel Moya have never been displayed in the Nubian gallery. They have and will be kept in storage, but they are frequently used for educational purposes.⁷³³

The Redpath Museum in Montreal is one of those institutions in which the identification of the Nubian material is somewhat complicated, even though the computer catalogue based on the accession records kept by the museum staff indicates about forty-three items from Nubia, four of

⁷²⁹ Hambukol/Letti Basin Meroe projects. <http://www.rom.on.ca/collections/curators/grzymiski.php>

⁷³⁰ Cf. Annex XI.

⁷³¹ The artifacts were obtained by the British (Garstang, Wellcome and the Egypt Exploration Society), through acquisitions purchased in Egypt for Calgary University helped by the efforts of Peter Shinnie.

⁷³² Millet, 1963: 147-165; Millet, 1964: 7-14; Millet, 1966:10-14; Millet, 1967:53-63; Millet, 1969:153-157.

⁷³³ Krzysztof Grzymiski (Personal Communication, 29 January 2007)

which have been identified as being from John Garstang's collection in 1923.⁷³⁴ There is quite a bit of confusion related to the provenance of this material, as indicated in the discussion by David Berg,⁷³⁵ at the present the only work to discuss the problematical archeological context of the Garstang's Nubian material. Berg's article argues that there are two groups of Egyptian and Nubian objects in the Redtpath Museum.⁷³⁶

The Nubian material from Garstang's collection consists primarily of pottery and a few very large column drums. They were acquired in Egypt by Calgary University through the good offices of Peter Shinnie. As far as the curators are concerned, the Nubian collection is well and truly distinguished from the other, although part of it is displayed in different areas of the Egyptian gallery, either chronologically or thematically.⁷³⁷ Various objects are in storage.

Nubia in Australia

The Nubian objects in Australia are yet another demonstration of the large distribution of artifacts carried out by British archeology. At sometime, these objects have undertaken long journeys which as in the case of this museum, as in that of many others, has culminated in museum storage.

The largest collection of ancient artifacts in Australia, that of the Nicholson Museum of Antiquities, University of Sydney, was obtained over the years through bequests, acquisitions and excavations, that have built up collections of artifacts from Greece, Italy, Cyprus, Egypt, the Near and Middle East.⁷³⁸ The Nubian objects are treated as part of the Egyptian collection.

The objects, from Qasr Ibrim (Egyptian Nubia), were donated to the museum by the Egypt Exploration Fund in the nineteenth and early twentieth century in return for an annual subscription to its work.⁷³⁹ A few other objects have been dated back to the Meroitic period and their provenance is unknown. The objects are all in storage.⁷⁴⁰

At the South Australia Museum, Adelaide, is one of the mummies found at Koshtamna during the *First Archaeological Survey of Nubia* (1907-1912). It was collected by the Australian/British anatomist Sir Grafton Elliot Smith. Owing to value accorded to these kinds of 'remains' in the framework of Egyptological studies, the mummy is considered an important holding of the museum and displayed as such.⁷⁴¹

⁷³⁴ Barbara Lawson (Personal Communication, 2010).

⁷³⁵ Berg 1990:117-130 (on line <http://digital.library.mcgill.ca/page-turner-3/pageturner.php>).

⁷³⁶ It seems that the sites from which the Nubian material was obtained were Meroe and Koshtamna. For Koshtamna see Tooley I.E., *Excavations in Nubia 1906 Koshtamna, Dakka and Kubban*, PhD Dissertation University of Toronto.

⁷³⁷ Two pieces of pottery are displayed in the Egyptian gallery: one to enrich it chronologically, the other thematically. One inscribed funerary cone is displayed with a variety of other material related to the history of writing in Egypt. The museum holds two of these cones that bear an inscription indicating the kingdom of Kush. On account of their size, the three Meroitic column drums are in a single display area (Wenig, 1978: 91; Hofmann 1989; Trigger, 1994: 389-397; Discussed also in *Fontanus*, 1994).

⁷³⁸ www.usyd.edu.au/nicholson

⁷³⁹ They were found in Cemeteries 192 and 193 and the bulk consists in pottery, bronze bowls, jewelry and some beads. 46 celts (prehistoric hatchets) from Western Sudan originated from the excavations of Sir Henry Wellcome (1910-1914). They were found in the strata A (500-300 BC) and (Strata B 700-500 BC). A few other objects have been dated back to the Meroitic period and their provenance is unknown. A beaker with a portion is missing; a bowl and a jar with two handles.

⁷⁴⁰ Michael Turner (Personal Communication 2008).

⁷⁴¹ Four other mummies from Koshtamna are displayed at the Nubia Museum of Aswan.

'Unusual' locations: Ghana, India, Argentina

Up to this point, we have dealt with collections whose locations have had a long direct history with Nubia and with those collections that represent the indirect benefits of the fruits of this history. In this section are recorded three collections kept in countries that have had nothing to do with adventurers or 'colonial' archeology. Despite their other priorities, at the moment of the need to salvage the monuments, Ghana, India and Argentina all offered their contributions to the safeguarding of the heritage of mankind, that in this case is the heritage of Nubia. Ghana and Argentina worked at two specific sites in the Sudan, whereas India surveyed an area in Egyptian Nubia.

Museum of Accra

The appeal launched by UNESCO to Save the Monuments of Nubia touched the whole world. In Africa, apart from Egypt and the Sudan, the two countries directly interested, an expedition was sent by the University of Ghana.⁷⁴² Säve-Söderbergh describes the participation of Ghana as follows:

From Africa an expedition came from Ghana and explored the mediaeval town of Debeira, to obtain the maximum amount of information on domestic aspects of medieval Nubian life. Professor P. L. Shinnie, one-time Commissioner for Archaeology in the Sudan, was now head of the Department of Archaeology at the University of Ghana and because of his special interest and competence it seemed highly desirable that the University of Ghana should play a part in the international effort. Ghana's contribution would have a special significance in demonstrating that at least one African country was concerned with the attempt to acquire as much knowledge of the African past as possible before the waters washed away any remaining traces of early history for ever. The President of the country at that time, Dr. Kwame Nkrumah, decided that Ghana as an African country should contribute and directed that suitable funds be made available.⁷⁴³

A collection of artifacts,⁷⁴⁴ originating from Debeira, among them an important Christian mural painting, make up part of the museum holdings. Since they all come from the same site, it would be very interesting to display them, and show some domestic aspects of Nubian history in medieval times.

Archeological Survey of India (ASI), New Delhi

Different museums in India are in possession of Egyptian collections that arrived there through different channels.⁷⁴⁵ However, the only collection that is the result of the direct involvement of India in Nubia/Egypt remains in storage.

In 1962 the Archeological Survey of India (ASI) was the only institution from Asia to participate in the Nubia Salvage Campaign. The fieldwork was carried out in Egyptian Nubia, at the two sites of Afyeh and Tumas and the adjoining area located on the left bank of the Nile.⁷⁴⁶

⁷⁴² Shinnie, 1963: 257-263; Shinnie, 1964: 208-215; Shinnie, 1965 : 190-194.

⁷⁴³ Säve-Söderbergh, 1987: 199.

⁷⁴⁴ I have no precise information about the number.

⁷⁴⁵ Calcutta: Indian Museum; Jaipur: Central Government Museum; Baroda: Museum and Picture Gallery; Bombay: Prince of Wales of Western India; Hyderabad: State Museums; Lucknow: State Museum; Bombay: Framji Dadabhoy Alpaiwalla Museum; Delhi: National Museum. These collections have been published in Bresciani and Betro, 2004.

In 2009 Braj Basil Lal, Director of the Mission from ASI, informed me that a group of different types of objects and pottery was kindly donated to the mission by the Egyptian Government. He retired from ASI in 1972 and had to confess that he was not aware of their current location. The General Director of ASI in 2009, Urmila Sant, has clarified this point stating that the objects are in ASI but not on display.⁷⁴⁷ The Nubian objects kept in India deserve to be displayed for the following reasons:

- 1) The sites from which they come are almost unrepresented in other museums of the world;
- 2) They would highlight the participation of the only Asian country in such an international, world-famous rescue campaign the Nubian one;
- 3) They could stimulate, as Professor Lal stated, comparative studies between the C Group tombs and pottery and the Megalitic tombs and pottery from the South of India.⁷⁴⁸

Museum of Natural Sciences, La Plata

Unlike the other two locations included in this section, the Nubian collection in Argentina has been thoroughly researched by Argentinean scholars and shown to the public through its display in the Museum of Natural Sciences of La Plata.

The link between Argentina and Nubia was established by the participation of this country in the International Salvage Campaign of Nubia in the sixties. A joint Argentinean-French mission worked at the site of Aksha (Sudanese Nubia) from 1961 to 1963.⁷⁴⁹ This excavation brought Argentina 300 objects that are kept today in La Plata Museum of Natural Sciences.⁷⁵⁰ After several years in storage, above all because of a lack of funds, since July 2007 part of the collection has been exhibited in a room that, despite its focus on the display of the Nubian site of Aksha, is called 'Egyptian'. Most of the objects on display are in fact dated to the Pharaonic period, in this case not as the result of the discriminatory attitude of the curators but because most of the collection comes from what is considered the most important monument of the site, that happens to be the Pharaonic temple.⁷⁵¹ In July 2013, a new permanent exhibition "Fragmentos de Historia a Orillas del Nilo" opened its doors to the visitors in the Room XXIII of the Museum.

This 'virtual tour' of Nubian collections dispersed abroad provides evidence to support the arguments adduced in Chapter 5. What it has really revealed is that the evolution of the concept of

⁷⁴⁶ Lal, 1967:97-118. This article is the only publication available on the work.

⁷⁴⁷ Urmila Sant (Personal Communication, 26/6/2009).

⁷⁴⁸ Lal, in press.

⁷⁴⁹ Vercoutter 1962; 1963; Rosenvasser 1964; De Contenson 1966; Vila 1967; Chamla 1967; De Heinzelin, 1964:102-110.

⁷⁵⁰ The collections is formed by about 70 objects, from the Ramesside temple and the Seti I chapels. They consist in a lintel, sandstone jambs with the prenomens, nomens and epithets of Ramses II and Seti I. Fragments of inscriptions from pillars or pilasters from the forecourt. The collections also include fragments of inscriptions from a priestess's house and objects from the Governor's house, the funerary equipment from Beidir's tomb, objects from the Aksha later church (AD 800) and some Meroitic pottery, the funerary equipment from A, C, Groups, Meroitic and X-Group. (See Fuscaldo, 2002, 2010). Inscriptions with magic texts ; stele of lintel (male figure sitting in a chair with lion decoration. On the left, a woman with a lotus flower, is also sitting. From west part of the temple); stele of lintel (representation with Ramses II's name. From the wall that divided the storage yard from the housing estate of the temple bureaucrats); fragmentary inscription concerning the opening of a water well in the Eastern Desert on the way to Wadi Allaqi gold mines (from the north wall, entrance hall of the temple; stele pertaining to the courtyard of the Aksha temple (discovered in the temple, representing Wepawet and Ramses II deified; sarcophagus, AD 700 (with biographical data: name, titles, etc. Dardo Rocha's donation; funerary "package" (Dardo Rocha donation); scale model (1/72 the Aksha temple). This list of objects has been given me by Andrea Zingarelli.

Nubian and its valorization and perception in museums has passed through three stages, the first prior to the Salvage Campaign of the sixties when Nubian was archeologically embedded in the Egyptian, especially Pharaonic, milieu. The second stage was that following this Campaign that saw the birth of the first Nubian galleries. The third and most recent stage is linked to a 'Sudanological' conception of the area, awakened by the archeological activity that today has shifted to this part of Nubia.

Within these three stages, issues related to the complexity of the idea of 'Nubia' have created a number of geographic, terminological and temporal variants in the displays. This is a confirmation of the urgent need to revisit nature and use of this term, not only in the context of its 'museumization', but also, and in particular, to pinpoint the identity of those who now consider it, albeit unofficially, symbolic of their history and culture.

The most obvious result of the research is that, despite the evolution of the last two stages in some museums, Nubia still largely continues to remain archeologically anchored, one way or another, in the Egyptian context. Ethnographically, as shown by the few cases I met in this research (which is an indication that in the field of Nubiology archeology has subsumed ethnography), Nubia is more closely tied to the African milieu from which Egypt in contrast has been dissociated.

The other result that has clearly emerged from this research is linked to the large amount of stored materials. The main reason for this massive relegation of Nubian objects to storage depots is largely attributable to what has been defined 'museum system restrictions' (limitation of space, touristic programs, lack of funds and so forth,) a system that has favored the exhibition of Egyptian collections and penalized those Nubian ones, probably disregarding them as peripheral and less appealing than the former. To illustrate this fact more succinctly, the main text also includes those museums where there was little to analyze with the exception of the fact that nothing Nubian was exposed, despite the availability of the collection. Even though analysis has been as much part of this research as description, one of the goals of this book has been to present the richness of the Nubia collections and to draw attention to their fate - to languish virtually invisible - that should make us reflect on the 'biased' policy of display.

CONCLUSIONS

This work has tried to assess the interpretative models of the display of Nubian collections worldwide. Its basis has been the first reconstructive and analytical 'tour' of the state of art of Nubian collections scattered around the world.

The creation of a topographical map of Nubian collections worldwide, to serve as a platform from which to analyze the whys and wherefores of their display or non-display as the case might be, has been not an easy task. Owing to their ambiguous origins, the classification of these objects is still very confused, making their location a real piece of detective work and meaning alas that this map is still necessarily incomplete. Therefore, although the goal of this research is not the inventorying of Nubian collections but an analysis of their display, I have tried to base it on the widest possible range of views. I hope that it also represents a solid foundation for the compilation of a more refined inventory and classification of such objects.

Notwithstanding the difficulties in locating Nubian artifacts, the analysis presented in this research certainly provides an initial understanding on how Nubia has been understood, 'created' and silenced in the context of museums worldwide.

Nubian collections kept in these museums are extraordinarily diverse, ranging from prehistory to modern times. Therefore, they testify to the fascinating history acted out in this area by people of different backgrounds and with divergent technical and political structures. People who have interacted with each other over millennia to form the tradition and the culture of Nubia.

The material objects serve as documents and historical records of the complex Nubian past and present. The manner of acquisition and the history of display policies and exhibitions support the argument that the traditional concept of Nubia is derived more from sociopolitical considerations, academic trends and contexts rather than from the historical evidence itself.

Archeologically speaking, the concept of Nubia has passed through three stages of evolution: that of Egyptology, that of Nubiology and, most recently, Sudanology. Inside each of these three developmental stages, a number of geographical, temporal and terminology variants have characterized the display of Nubian collections in museums. In the countries of origin, Egypt and Sudan, geopolitical motivations as well as different perceptions and approaches have strongly influenced the exhibition of these collections.

Egypt is the place where the evolution of the concept of Nubia in museums is most evident. The first Nubian exhibitions were a reflection of the time at which the cultural policies were determined by the visions of those, especially foreigners, early researchers who perceived Nubia to be just an appendix to and peripheral component of Egypt. A vision that is exemplified by the phrase 'Land of the Unknown'. Nubia was subsumed by the archeological rich material culture of Egypt.

In Egypt, it was probably an event more than an evolution in thought that has granted Nubian material cultural its own space in the Nubia Museum of Aswan, the crown on the world famous *International Campaign to Save the Monuments of Nubia* in the sixties. The Museum also fills a major gap that so glaringly characterized this Campaign: the Museum is not just a space that celebrates the glories of the past, it is also a place where, through dioramas, images have been recreated of the life of the Nubians today, thereby establishing that essential common thread between past and present.

In the Sudan, the situation is different, or rather the opposite. Here the archeology of Nubia has no (local) rivals to overshadow it. Nationally it is undoubtedly the best known and consequently the most important. It stands out in all its variety and richness among all the other

museums in the country. Other areas of the Sudan have a rich ethnographic heritage, expressions of the modern cultural diversity of the country of which Nubia is part. The Ethnographic Museum in Khartoum displays this variety of ethnographic material from all over the Sudan reflecting the concept of 'Unity in Diversity'.

Abroad, the policy of to display or not to display Nubian collections in museums is determined by the events that have characterized the discovery of Nubia and the various perceptions that have accompanied it, aided by the shift in the archeological research in the Sudan. Identity and social issues are still felt only marginally in the exhibition choices of these museums. In the meantime, the link established by on-going archeological activities between many of these museums and the countries of origin of the collections emphasizes the political factor. Here too, the mode of exposure of these collections is intermeshed in the three stages mentioned above. Initially Nubia was completely absorbed into the context of Egyptian galleries. Thanks to the Salvage Campaign of the sixties, curators became more aware that the singular historical strand of Nubian history had an independent trajectory and complexity although part of a cultural regional milieu. Therefore, the first Nubian galleries were set up and an increasing numbers of museums became interested in mounting exhibitions highlighting the history and culture of this civilization and area. Today, some of those institutions with on-going archeological activities in the area prefer to use the term Sudan rather than Nubia for their exhibitions.

The lack of ethnographic material from most of these Nubian exhibitions abroad prevents me making a meaningful analysis of their exhibitions. Nevertheless, it does allow me to include one important piece of evidence as a final result of this research: in museums abroad Nubian archeology has subsumed Nubian ethnography. Only five out of 101 Nubian collections that I found abroad included Nubian ethnographic materials. Three of them are in storage, one is almost unknown to the specialists, while the one on which I can say a few words is the exhibition at the Museum of Gdańsk: in its simplicity, it has tried to patch up the threads of this complex skein that is the cultural diversity in the Sudan of which the Nubia of yesterday and today is a part.

An alarming figure recorded in the analysis of these Nubian collections abroad is the massive relegation of many of them to storage depots. If once this attitude was determined by clearly biased curatorial choices, today what has been defined 'museum system restrictions' (limitation of space, touristic programs, lack of funds and so forth) has favored the exhibition of Egyptian collections and penalized the Nubian ones, shrugged off as peripheral and less appealing than the former. I wonder why, in spite of this sad reality, museums abroad continue to ask, on long-term loans, materials from the countries of origin instead of making their stored materials available for temporary or permanent exhibitions to be set up to benefit the knowledge of their local communities.

In conclusion: to display or not to display Nubian collections worldwide is a dilemma that testifies to the existence of a healthy dose of 'selective amnesia' and confusion about the meaning of Nubia: what Nubia is. Nubian territory, as interpreted from the historical records, stretched from the First to the Sixth Cataract for a specific and finite period of time. Such historical interpretations and perceptions contract and expand the time-span and the geographic extension of the millenarian history of this area. They are just that, interpretations, and, therefore, malleable, a real hindrance making consistent referencing problematical. This emphasizes the need to revisit the sense of the term 'Nubia', not only for its academic use in the context of museums and scientific publications but also on behalf of those who consider it to be the symbol of their identity.

Certainly, as my research demonstrates, the Salvage Campaign of the sixties did play an important role in highlighting the individuality of the cultural elements that developed in that area,

traditionally defined as Nubia. However, the significance of their contribution to our understanding of the development, on all levels, of human civilization requires a more vigorous effort to organize the pieces of the puzzle that has been presented in this thesis.

Furthermore, the research underscores that the emphasis on the archeology of Nubia has dominated scholarly research, obscuring other aspects of Nubian life and culture. The interactive exhibition of archeological materials and the present-day productions of the living communities in which the collections reside, offers more opportunities for rediscovery and for educational enrichment. Museums are no longer spaces limited to an elite and its visions. Nor can they be so strongly influenced by what we have called the 'museum system' that is no longer compatible with the social role that some museums are increasingly adopting that requires a greater interaction with the outside world.

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Abbreviations

AcArch: Acta archaeologica. Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae (Budapest)

AFP : Agence France Presse (France)

AJSL: American Journal of Semitic Languages and Literatures (Chicago)

Archéo-Nil: Bulletin de la société pour l'étude des cultures prépharaoniques de la vallée du Nil (Paris)

ASAE: Annales du Service des Antiquités de l'Égypte (Cairo)

BdE : Bibliothèques d'étude, IFAO (Cairo)

BIFAO: Bulletin de l'Institut français d'archéologie orientale (Cairo)

BMFA: Bulletin of the Museum of Fine Arts (Boston)

BMSAES: (British Museum Studies in Ancient Egypt and Sudan (London)

BSFE: Bulletin de la Société française d'égyptologie (Paris)

CEDEJ: Centre d'Études et de Documentation Économiques, Juridiques et Sociales (Égypte/Soudan) (Cairo)

CIPEG: International Committee for Egyptology (Paris: International Council for Museums)

CNR: Consiglio Nazionale delle Ricerche (Italy)

CNRS: Centre National de la recherche scientifique (France)

CRIPEL: *Cahiers de recherches de l'Institut de papyrologie et d'égyptologie de Lille* (Lille)

EtudTrav: Études et travaux. Travaux du Centre d'archéologie méditerranéenne de l'Académie des sciences polonaise (Warsaw)

IFAO: The Institut Français d'Archéologie Orientale (Cairo)

ILN: The Illustrated London News (London)

JARCE: Journal of the American Research Center in Egypt (Cairo)

JEA: Journal of Egyptian Archeology (London)

JNES: Journal of Near Eastern Studies (Chicago)

JSA: Journal of Social Archeology, SAGE Publications (Thousand Oaks, CA)

JSSEA: Journal of the Society of the Studies of Egyptian Antiquities (Toronto)

KMT: A Modern Journal of Ancient Egypt (San Francisco)

LAAS: Liverpool Annals of Archeology and Anthropology (Liverpool)

LOHAP: Leadership Office of Hamdab Dam Affected People (Sudan)

MIFAO : Mémoires publiés par les membres de l'IFAO Institut français d'archéologie orientale (Le Caire)

PAM: Polish Archeology in the Mediterranean (Warsaw)

RdE: Revue d'égyptologie, Société française d'égyptologie (Paris. Leuven)

SARS: The Sudan Archeological Research Society (London)

SEP: Studi di egittologia e di papirologia (Pisa-Roma)

SKCO: Sprachen und Kulturen des christlichen Orients (Wiesbaden)

SNRec : Sudan Notes and Records (Khartoum)

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ANNEX I

Surviving aspects of Nubian cultures (by T. Kendall in Joyce L. Haynes: 1992)

“Nubians were among the most sophisticated and artistic peoples of the ancient world. Thanks to recent excavations and expanded interest in the history of Africa, we now are beginning to understand the everyday life of this ancient African civilization.

Many aspects of ancient Nubian cultures survive today, unchanged for more than thirty-five centuries, in southern Egypt, the Sudan, Ethiopia and perhaps beyond [...] Pottery very similar in decoration and manufacture to ancient types is still made and can be purchased in village markets of these countries. Today, Nubians created beds and stools in much the same way as those found in the graves at Kerma were made. Even now, in remote parts of the eastern Sudan, people use wooden pillows similar to ancient headrests. Modern-day Nubians wear leather sandals identical to those found in ancient graves.

Nubians still commonly place square amulets, similar in shape to ancient Kushite and Egyptian types, around their necks for protection against disease and misfortune. Today, the amulets are small leather pouches containing folded papers with quotations that are often from the sacred Islamic texts of the Koran. Ancient Kushites adorned themselves with gold jewelry; modern-day Nubians continue the tradition; likewise, some hairstyles have scarcely changed, as can be seen by comparing the ancient and modern methods of plaiting. Today, small children frequently have their heads shaved except for certain tufts, which area allowed to grow long, just as can be seen in ancient paintings.

From the markings on small, pottery female figurines, we know that some of the C Group women elaborately decorated their bodies with tattoos and patterns of scars. Many peoples of Nubia, the Sudan, and most of Equatorial Africa today continue the custom of adorning their faces with a series of distinctive permanent scars. Tattoos and scars may indicate social status or signify rites of passage. The arrangements of the scars varies from one group to another and may also serve as an identifying mark of one's tribal origin or affiliation. Many modern-day Sudanese wear facial scars identical to those that can be seen on Nubians represented in ancient Kushite, Egyptian, Greek, and Roman art. Some hairstyles of today are similar to those of the past.

One hallmark of both ancient and contemporary Nubian cattle herds is the presence of select oxen with artificially deformed horns. Today, these animals are seen primarily among the southern Sudanese, who keep them as pets and as objects of intense respect. Typically, the right horn grows naturally on these animals, while the left horn has been cut and forced to grow downward. Oxen with horns deformed in this way can be seen frequently in prehistoric Nubian rock drawings. Later, they appear in Egyptian art in scenes of Nubian war booty. Texts identify them as ‘oxen of the finest quality from Kush’. In Kushite art, later still, the same types of cattle appear in scenes illustrating Kushite war spoils that have been taken from the southern tribes. The Kushites themselves are represented owning cattle with both horns symmetrically deformed - just like the animals of the modern -day Shilluk people, who are now centered along the White Nile south of Khartoum.

Many features of the ancient Nubian burial customs have disappeared owing to the influences of centuries of exposure to the religions of the ancient Egypt, Christianity, and Islam. However, a number of familiar features have remained remarkably unchanged. Although funerary beds are no longer placed in graves, Nubian are still carried on them in procession to their graves.

Nubians are no longer buried with grave goods; however, food and water jars are still left at the foot of the graves after burial. This allows relatives to make offering to the spirit of the deceased as was done more three thousand years ago in Kerma, both today and in ancient times, grave mounds are covered with a surface of hundreds, some time thousands, of smooth, white desert "pebbles. The ancient meaning of these stones is not known; however today, each stone left of the grave represent a prayer that has been said for the deceased.

Another noteworthy characteristic of Nubian culture that has survived is the popularity of the sport of wrestling. In Egyptian art Nubians are depicted as champion wrestlers and are frequently shown performing. Today, in the southern Sudan, among the people in the Nuba hills, wrestling is the primary sport of men. They gather annually to compete in great wrestling festivals. The winner becomes the man most likely to win a bride."

ANNEX II

African Museums: The Challenge of Change (Nnakenyi Arinze, E.:1988)

“In the beginning, Africans were not given solid professional training that would empower them, nor were they encouraged to make the museum profession their career. What generally emerged was a situation where Africans served as attendants and cleaners who had to accompany expatriates during fieldwork to help collect materials and clean excavated archeological objects. A few were taught how to operate a camera and move objects within the museum and in the field, but were denied the hard-core professional training essential for the profession. This scenario, by and large, created a dilemma for the museum ensuring that they could not develop a vision or a mission consistent with national goals and objectives. The scenario also entrenched the Western model stereotype on the museum, thus creating a contradiction that has continued to plague African museums over the years. How this dilemma is to be resolved has today become an issue in practically all museums in Africa [...]

[...] A striking phenomenon emerged in African Museums in the immediate post-independence years: they became active and effective vehicles for nationalism and for fostering national consciousness and political unity. They became tools for reaching out to the population and forging greater national understanding and a feeling of belonging and togetherness. In a sense, they became the symbol of "uhuru" (freedom) and change.

Well-defined training policy, which continued up to the mid-1980s, contributed largely to the evolution of a corps of a skilled museum professionals who helped in reshaping a new focus for museums across the continent. It would appear that this was the glorious era for African museums as they enjoyed patronage both from government and the population; they were inspired to run progressive and challenging programs of activities, and they developed the capacity to challenge the stereotyped Western models that they had inherited. Furthermore, the well-defined training policy, which continued up to the mid-1980s, contributed largely to the evolution of a corps of a skilled museum professionals who helped in reshaping a new focus for museums across the continent. It would appear that this was the glorious era for African museums as they enjoyed patronage both from government and the population; they were inspired to run progressive and challenging programs of activities, and they developed the capacity to challenge the stereotyped Western models that they had inherited. Furthermore, they provided the appropriate national platform for launching the heritage of Africa to a global audience in a manner that brought pride and dignity to Africans. This was achieved in part through involvement in important national and international exhibitions. However, since the 1980s, with few exceptions, they have ceased to evolve and have become stagnant and confused. An era of decay has set in and this is now the current reality.

This has occurred for the nearly total dependence on government funding. It is thus of utmost importance that new strategies be developed for sourcing funds to instill some independence and autonomy [...] the reality in most museums today is that the objects on public display continue to accumulate dust and cobwebs. Such museums do not strike the right chord nor do they send the correct signals to the public.

First and foremost is the need for African museums to redefine their mission, their role and themselves. They need to break away from their colonial vestiges to create African-based museums that will be responsive to their communities. Issues such health, urbanization,

environmental problems and political evolution should be as important as the traditional questions of collecting, presenting, protecting and safeguarding the cultural heritage. The African museums should use its collection to enrich knowledge and integrate urban cultures and contemporary events into its sphere of activities. This means that the traditional definition of the museums is no longer relevant in Africa. A new definition with a strong African flavor is now necessary and Africans expect museums to develop appropriate methods and strategies for interacting with the public and to create innovative programs that will involve it. The African museums should have a new orientation and be capable of having an impact on public life and national development. Having learned from the experiences of the last fifty years, museums, in order to survive the next fifty years, must discard the classical Western model, which has tended to make them too cold and rigid. To do so means that African museums must develop a curatorial vision for it is no longer realistic to think that museums are created simply for the purpose of rescuing and preserving objects from the past. They must propose new possibilities of change, rather than remain as passive collectors of material culture, and must develop the ability to use limited resources to achieve maximum results. The curatorial vision demands that museums define their mission statements and mandate to the community and the nation very clearly and firmly.”

ANNEX III

Circular sent on 25/09/08 by Derek Welsby, former President of the *International Society for Nubian Studies*, to all the members of the society:

“Dear Members and Colleagues,

Many of you will be aware of the plans currently being discussed to construct many new dams in Sudan. Hassan Hussein (NCAM Director), addressing the Meroitic Conference in Vienna recently, mentioned the figure of 12 dams being considered within Sudan. Although final decisions on these dam projects have yet to be reached clearly there is an ever growing threat to the riverine areas of Sudan. Nowhere is this threat more acute than in the north where, for much of history, the bulk of human activity has been confined to the banks of the Nile. Of particular concern at present are the projected dams at Kajbar and Dal but others at the Fifth and Sixth Cataracts would be equally destructive. I would like to assure the membership that the Board of the Nubian Society, as a representative body of the international archeological community, is working close with the National Corporation for Antiquities and Museums to highlight the importance of the heritage of the threatened regions to the interested parties in Sudan. Recently we sent a letter to Hassan Hussein expressing our concerns and this was passed on to all the major stakeholders in Sudan including the Dams Implementation Unit. We are closely monitoring the situation. We are now in direct contact with the Dam Implementation Unit and through this and other channels hope that our voice will be heard by the decision makers in time to be given due weight in the decision-making process. Should efforts to abort these dam projects fail we will do our utmost to assist the National Corporation for Antiquities and Museums in the rescue projects whilst being painfully aware that these would be a very poor alternative to the maintenance of the status quo in Northern Sudan.”

ANNEX IV

Nubian Collections Worldwide

Africa

<i>Egypt</i>	
1	Egyptian Museum (Cairo)
2	Coptic Museum (Cairo)
3	Ethnographic Museum (Cairo)
4	Alexandria National Museum (Alexandria)
5	Alexandria University (Alexandria)
6	Aswan Museum (Elephantine Island- Aswan)
7	Nubia Museum (Aswan)
8	Suez Museum (Suez)
9	El Arish Museum (El Arish)
10	Minia Museum (Minia-Egypt)
<i>Sudan</i>	
11	Sudan National Museum (Khartoum)
12	Ethnographic Museum (Khartoum)
13	University of Khartoum (Khartoum)
14	Kerma Museum (Kerma)
15	Jebel Barkal Museum (Kareima)
16	Merowe Museum (Merowe)
17	Meroe Site Museum (Begravwiya)
18	Damar University Museum (ed-Damar)
19	Nyala Museum (Nyala, Southern Darfur State)
20	Fashir Museum (Fashir, Northern Darfur State)
21	Sheikan Museum (South Kordofan)
<i>Ghana</i>	
22	Museum of Accra (Accra)

Americas

<i>Argentina</i>	
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23	Museum of Natural Sciences (La Plata)
<i>Canada</i>	
24	Redpath Museum (Montreal)
25	Royal Ontario Museum (Toronto)
<i>United States</i>	
26	Brooklyn Museum of Art (Brooklyn)
27	Christos Bastis Collection (New York)
28	Fowler Museum at UCLA (Santa Barbara)
29	Harvard University Peabody Museum of and Ethnography (Cambridge MA)
30	Mercer Museum (Fonthill)
31	Metropolitan Museum of Art (New York)
32	Museum of Fine Arts (Boston)
33	Museum of the Oriental Institute (Chicago)
34	Museum and Center for Afro-American Artists (NCAAA) (Roxbury)
35	Private collection (Boston)
36	University of California/ Hearst Museum of Anthropology (Berkeley)
37	University of Colorado - Department of Anthropology (Boulder)
38	University of Pennsylvania/Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology (Philadelphia)
39	Walter Art Gallery (Baltimore)
40	Worcester Art Museum
41	Yale Peabody Museum (New Haven CT)
42	Michael C. Carlos Museum (Atlanta)

Asia

<i>India</i>	
43	Archeological Survey of India (New Delhi)

Europe

<i>Austria</i>	
44	Museum of Fine Arts (Vienna)
45	Museum of Natural History (Vienna)

<i>Belgium</i>	
46	Royal Museum of Art and History (Brussels)
<i>Czech Republic</i>	
47	Náprstek's Museum of Asian, African and American Cultures (Prague)
<i>Denmark</i>	
48	National Museum of Denmark (Copenhagen)
49	Ny Carlsbergh Glyptotek Museum (Copenhagen)
50	The University of Copenhagen (Copenhagen)
<i>Finland</i>	
51	National Board of Antiquities (Museovirasto) (Helsinki)
<i>France</i>	
52	Louvre Museum (Paris)
53	Museum of Fine Arts (Lille)
54	Borely Castle (Marseille)
55	Museum of Fine Arts (Grenoble)
56	Museum of Fine Arts and Archeology - (J. Déchelette) (Roanne)
57	Archeological and Historical Museum Fenaille (Rodez)
<i>Germany</i>	
58	Egyptian Museum and Papyrus Collection (Berlin)
59	State Museum of Egyptian Art in Munich (Munich)
60	University of Leipzig: Egyptian Museum (Leipzig)
61	Institute for the Research on Prehistory and Early History of the Central Africa - University of Köln (Cologne)
62	Humboldt University (Berlin)
<i>Greece</i>	
63	National Archeological Museum (Athens)
<i>Hungary</i>	
64	Museum of Fine Arts (Budapest)
<i>Italy</i>	
65	Egyptian Museum (Turin)
66	Egyptian Museum (Florence)
67	Civic Archeological Museum (Bologna)
68	Accademia dei Concordi (Bologna)

69	University of Pisa: Egyptian Collections (Pisa)
70	Museum of the Near East/ University of Rome La Sapienza - ex Department of Historic, Archeological and Anthropological Sciences (Rome)
71	International Museum of Ceramics (Faenza)
72	“Dependence” of Villa Toeplitz (Varese)
73	University of Cassino – Department of Philology and History (Cassino)
<i>Netherlands</i>	
74	The National Museum of Antiquities (Leiden)
<i>Norway</i>	
75	The University of Bergen (Bergen)
76	Archeological Museum (Stavanger)
<i>Poland</i>	
77	The National Museum of Warsaw (Warsaw)
78	Poznan Museum (Poznan)
79	Archeological Museum (Gdańsk)
80	Cracow Archeological Museum (Cracow)
<i>Russia</i>	
81	Pushkin Museum (Moscow)
82	Hermitage Museum (St. Petersburg)
<i>Spain</i>	
83	Central Madrid
84	National Archeological Museum: Department of Egyptian Antiquities and Near East (Madrid)
85	Archeological and Historical Museum of La Coruna (La Coruna)
<i>Sweden</i>	
86	Museum Gustavianum at Uppsala Universitat (Uppsala)
<i>Switzerland</i>	
87	Museum of Art and History (Geneva)
88	Museum of National History (Geneva)
89	Museum of Ethnography - Adelhauser Museum (Freiburg)
<i>United Kingdom</i>	
90	British Museum (London)
91	Petrie Museum: University College of London (London)

92	Natural History Museum (London)
93	The Science Museum (South Kensington, London)
94	Old Speech Room Gallery, Harrow School (Middlesex)
95	The Economic Botany Collections at Kew
96	Ashmolean Museum (Oxford)
97	Reading Museum (Reading)
98	The Brighton Museum And Art Gallery (Brighton)
99	Fitzwilliam Museum (Cambridge)
100	University of Cambridge, Museum of Archeology and Anthropology (Cambridge)
101	The Myers Museum of Egyptian and Classical Art at Eton College (Berkshire)
102	Leeds Museum Resource Centre (Leeds)
103	University of Durham Oriental Museum (Durham)
104	Dorman Memorial Museum (Middlesbrough)
105	National Museum of Scotland (Edinburgh)
106	Hunterian University Museum (Glasgow)
107	Kelvingrove Art Gallery and Museum (Glasgow)
108	The University of Aberdeen-Marischal Museum
109	Garstang Museum (Liverpool)
110	World Museum (Liverpool)
111	Lady Lever Art Gallery (Liverpool)
112	Atkinson Art Gallery (Southport)
113	Manchester Museum: The University of Manchester (Manchester)
114	West Park Museum And Art Gallery (Macclesfield- Cheshire)
115	Blackburn Museum and Art Gallery (Blackburn)
116	Bolton Museum and Art Gallery (Bolton)
117	Leamington Art Gallery and Museums (Leamington)
118	City Museum and Art Gallery (Birmingham)
119	The Egypt Center at the University of Wales Swansea
<i>Vatican City State</i>	
120	Vatican Museums - Byzantine Section

Oceania

<i>Australia</i>	
121	Nicholson Museum (Sydney)
122	South Australia Museum (Adelaide)

ANNEX V

Kaper, O.E., *The New Nubia Museum of Aswan* (on line, 1998)

“The museum presents the history of Nubia in the terms coined for the history of Egypt. The terms Old, Middle, and New Kingdom are used throughout, which is rather artificial but it has the advantage, apart from being familiar terms of reference for the visitor, of highlighting the intimate association of the Nubian culture with the Egyptian. The museum displays highlight these connections specifically. For instance, it includes a copy of the famous wooden tomb model of a group of Nubian archers that is in the Cairo Museum, and was found in Asyut in Middle Egypt, which attests to the presence of Nubian soldiers in Middle Kingdom Egypt.

The history of the town of Aswan itself has also been incorporated into the museum's displays, and for good reason. The border town of Aswan has always been under the influence of both cultures, as is evidenced, for instance, by the Middle Kingdom coffin of Heqata (formerly kept in the Egyptian Museum), who was a Nubian buried in Aswan in the Egyptian fashion.

Other, purely Egyptian artifacts from Aswan are also shown here, such as the powerful statues from the Heka-ib chapel and a head of Nectanebo II found on Elephantine Island. The New Kingdom area shows the most important interactions between Nubians and Egypt at this period, characterized in particular by the Egyptianization of part of the Nubian population. The small but significant *shawabti* of the Nubian Prince of Miam Hekanefer clearly shows this aspect. In this section, this is also exemplified by the colossal statue of Ramesses II, which was part of the rock temple of Gerf Hussein and the reconstructed chapel of Setau, originally carved in the cliff of Qasr Ibrim. The dismantling and reconstruction of the Egyptian temples is considered by the larger public to have been the principal task of the Salvage Campaign and was the Egyptian Government's main concern at the time. In this context I also place the contents of a small solar chapel which formed part of the Great Temple at Abu Simbel. These items: a shrine with statues, two obelisks, and four baboon statues, were brought to Cairo after their discovery in 1909.”

ANNEX VI

Tsakos, A. *Rehabilitation of the Christian Gallery at the Sudan National Museum in Khartoum* (UNESCO Report, 2008)

“The initial display in the first floor of Sudan National Museum was a first attempt to present the treasures of Christian Nubia with a stress on the amazing mural paintings found primarily in the town site of Faras.

A stress was also put on the cultural diversity of the medieval Nile Valley, especially when it comes to the crucial point of the religious adherence of the local population and this mainly for the centuries of the so-called post-medieval Nubia.

Although some paintings were placed in relation to each other according to their initial location in the five churches from where the exhibited murals came (Faras, Kulubnarti, Meinarti, Sonqi Tino, Abdel Gadir) [...] in most cases, the arrangement seemed random: for example, neither the rare and extremely interesting representations of the Holy Trinity were grouped together thematically nor the Archangels flanking the baptismal apse from the cathedral at Faras were set left and right from the central figure of Jesus!

So, we inevitably set the latter problem in the heart of our new concept which aimed precisely at reorganizing the display so as ‘it makes sense’ rather than really renovating the Gallery completely. Several other groups of murals were formed, namely one dedicated to the Archangels, one to the protection scenes, one to the Bishops of the Nubian Church, one to the Apse Composition (lower picture), one to the Christological circle (upper picture), one to the main focal points of the dogma, one to funerary customs, and one to the Warrior Saints. The last part of the display was dedicated to objects of the Islamic era of medieval and post-medieval Sudan, the exhibits spanning from the earliest monuments of the Arabic language in the country to the 19th century port of Swakin, through the kingdoms of the Funj and the Fur. The new exhibition includes of course showcases which display pottery demonstrating the evolution of medieval Nubian ceramic production, manuscripts found in the Middle Nile, objects of authority and ornamentation, figurines, crosses, items linked to the liturgy, textiles, lamps and objects of everyday life. The display was completed with a rearrangement of the architectural elements and the construction of new independent spaces for the display of the various medieval inscriptions. A lot more should be done in the Gallery before one considers the work completed, it is a reality that after two months there, an awareness of the structures, of the contents, and of the importance of the exhibition was awakened in the minds and hearts of all those involved in the project.”

ANNEX VII

Table of Nubian artifacts displayed at Sudan National Museum which are still in use in modern Nubian society

Kerma civilization

Artifact No.	Material	Emulated Modern Nubian artifact	Object Description	Label information
15943	Polished pottery	Similar to the contemporary <i>Daade</i> , pottery bowl one of the kitchen utensils in Nubia	Cylindrical decorated bowl (Diameter about 60-70 cm)	Polished pot from Abusir (North of Sudan)
N/A	Ceramic pot	Similar to the contemporary <i>Borma</i> , jar used for alcoholic drinks by Nuba tribes on the Dilling Mountains. The difference between the two objects is that <i>Borma</i> has only 3 spouts	A five –spouted jar made of ceramic	Ceramic pot with five spouts
21711	Pottery	Similar to the modern Nubian <i>Fukkee</i> used in the Northern Sudan as water pot. The <i>Fukkee</i> is much bigger in size	Small water pot with metallic holder	Small water pot, Serra West

Domestic tools

Artifact No.	Material	Emulated Modern Nubian artifact	Object Description	Label information
N/A	Pottery	Similar to the contemporary <i>Fukke</i> , water pot found in Nubian	Water pot of medium size	Label is not available
N/A	Pottery	Similar to the contemporary <i>koos</i> , a dish used for food in Nubia	Small dishes	Label is not available
N/A	Pottery	Similar to the modern Nubian <i>Diidee</i> used as cooking pot in Nubia	Pot	Label is not available

2. Personal ornaments

Artifact No.	Material	Emulated Modern Nubian artifact	Object Description	Label information
N/A	Beads and copper	Similar to the contemporary <i>gumurin alli</i> , local necklace used by women in Nubia	Variety of necklaces made of beads inter-threaded with some round pieces of copper.	Label is not available

Objects used in daily life work

Artifact No.	Material	Emulated Modern Nubian artifact	Object Description	Label Information
N/A	Leather	Similar to the contemporary <i>dir</i> , local shoes used in Nubia	A pair of shoes made of feather	Label is not available
N/A	Pottery	Similar to the contemporary <i>gufaad</i> , a local pot used in Nubia to burn herbs	Small hemispherical pot	Label is not available
N/A	Strings	Similar to the contemporary <i>karkaree</i> , a fishing net used in Nubian	Striped string net	Label is not available
N/A	Wood, metal	Similar to the contemporary <i>koshir</i> , a sturdy needle used in Nubia for making nets, mats and fastening sacks	Big metallic needle with wooden handle	Label is not available
N/A	Pottery	Similar to the contemporary <i>daadi</i> , cooking bowl used in Nubian	Cylindrical handle-less pot	Label is not available

ANNEX VIII

List of Nubian artifacts at the Ethnographic Museum in Khartoum

Artifact No.	Material	Folk Usage	Geographic location	Name of Nubian group currently using the artifact	Description	Current Nubian Name
N/A	Pottery	Grinder for Cereals	Wadi Halfa	All Nile-Nubians groups in Sudan	Grinder	<i>Nuurar</i>
N/A	Stone, wood	Grinder for cereals	Tribe <i>Nobiin</i> , Wadi Halfa	All Nile- Nubian groups in Sudan	Hand-mill made of stone with wooden Handles/quern	<i>Nuurar</i>
N/A	Pottery, pumpkin plant	Food container	No information is provided	All Nile- Nubians groups in Sudan	Hemispherical container made of red pottery with calabash-shell	<i>Sabalee</i> with <i>Dana</i>
N/A	Mud	Container with cover for storing bread	No information is provided	All Nile-Nubians groups in Sudan. Still widely used in Sokkot and Kidin Tuul areas.	Cylindrical mud container with cover	<i>Googa</i>
N/A	Black polished pottery	Pan	No information is provided	All Nile-Nubians Groups	A round pan made of pottery	<i>Deew</i>
N/A	Black polished pottery	Cooking pot with local stone-stove	No information is provided	All Nubians in Sudan. Still used in areas of Mahas, Sokkot and Kidin Tuul	Cylindrical cooking pot made of pottery set over three stones and an open bowl made of pottery to be used as stove	<i>Diidee</i> over the stove <i>ubartee</i>
II.3105	Red pottery	Dish	Nubian tribe	All Nile-Nubian areas of Sudan	Dish (bowl) with base made of red ware pottery	<i>Koos</i>
II.3106	Red pottery	Dish	Nubian tribe	All Nile-Nubian areas of Sudan		<i>Koos</i>
N/A	Black pottery	Another variety of Dishes	No information is provided	All Nile-Nubian areas of Sudan	Round bowl made of pottery	<i>Koos</i>
N/A	Mud	Container for storing food, especially date fruit	No information is provided	All Nile-Nubian areas of Sudan	Picture of a typical Nubian crops store	<i>Gussee</i>
II.3912	Colored veins from palm fronds	Tray cover to protect food	Wadi Halfa, Sokkot	All Nile-Nubian areas of Sudan	Round, colored cover made of veins of palm fronds	<i>Showir</i> or <i>shoyir</i>

N/A	Pottery, stones	Cooking pan set over a local stove made of three pieces of stone	No information is provided	All Nile-Nubian areas of Sudan	Picture of woman cooking the Nubian <i>kaabid</i> in a pottery pan with three stones used as local stove	<i>Deew over ubartee</i>
II.2015	Red pottery	Water pot	Meore area	This object is found throughout the whole Nubian area. Meore is a Nubian land inhabited by the Shaigiya tribe, an Arabized group in the North of Sudan	Red pottery jar with three legs and decorated sides	<i>Fukkee</i>
II.3923	Wood	Door lock	Sokkot, Nubian tribe, Wadi Halfa	It is found in most of the old houses of Nubia.	Wooden door lock with wooden key	<i>Kobid</i> with wooden key <i>Kosher</i>

Nubian artifacts displayed in other sections of the museum

Artifact No.	Material	Folk Usage	Geographical location	Name of Nubian group currently using the artifact	Description	Current Nubian Name
N/A	Wood	A water wheel used for irrigation of crops	From an island. [No mention is made of Nubia. However from the Arabic translation it could be the Al Gazira Peninsula in the Central Sudan]	This water wheel was considered the most important agricultural tool in Nubia. It is still found in Badin Island (Mahas area) and Sokkot villages.	Wooden water wheel. The oxen are missing	<i>Eskalee</i>
II.1096	Wood and string	<i>Sahuka</i> stick, agricultural tool used for sowing in wet land	Hadandawa tribe, Gash west [The information cannot be correct since Hadandawa is not a farming group)	It is used by most of the Nubians to cultivate the land	Long wooden stick with strings attached to the front side.	<i>Farree</i>
II.3944	Wood and leather	Cultivation tool used for winnowing chaff from the grains	Hadandawa tribe Gash Delta (this information is not correct)	It is found in Nubia, known to most of the Nile-Nubians	Wooden fork made of wood and leather.	<i>Kaarindi</i>

II. 1008	Metal and wood	Agricultural tool used for sowing the land	It is said that a group called <i>Fellatta</i> from West Africa who settled in Gash Delta introduced this tool; however the Sudanese name for this tool is <i>tooriya</i> , the Nobiin name is <i>tore</i>	It is found in Nubia, known by most of the Nile-Nubians	Hoe with a wooden handle	<i>Toore</i>
II.3299	Metal and wood	Agricultural tools used for cutting back weeds and grass	Delta Gash people	It is found in Nubia, known by most of the Nile-Nubians	Tool with metallic curving blade fastened at an angle to a long wooden handle	<i>Tirib</i>
N/A	Wood	Agricultural tool used for harvesting grains	Nuba tribe, Talodi	It is well known in Nubian	Stick with short handle	<i>Wasuu</i>
II.1099	Metal and wood	Tool used for cutting wood	No group specified	In all Nile-Nubian areas	Axe with a wooden handle	<i>Gama</i>
N/A	Leather and wood	Percussion instrument	No group is specified. However a woman is shown in a 'Jirjaar' Nubian dress	Wadi Halfa, Faddijja group in Egypt.	Round percussion instrument used by folk singers in Nubia	<i>Taar</i>

Artifact No.	Material	Folk Usage	Geographical location	Name of Nubian group currently using the artifact	Description	Current Nubian Name
N/A	Wood and the veins of palm fronds	Local bed	Darfur, Quranic school	Domestic tool used and made in Nubia	Bed made of wood bound up with ropes made of palm fronds	<i>Angree</i> or <i>Anga</i>
N/A	Metallic beads	Jewelry (ladies ornaments)	All parts of Nubia	This group of women's jewelry is widely used in Nubia especially by the older generation	Metallic rings; necklace made of beads; hand rings and bangles	Necklace: <i>gumurin alli'</i> ; wrist ring: <i>kimdi</i> ; ear ring: <i>baltaaw</i> ; big ear ring made of

						metal known in Arabic as <i>gamar</i> booba: <i>agash kisir</i>
II.3687	Wood, string	Stringed instrument used for playing music	String musical instrument (a kind of guitar known in Arabic as <i>rabbaba</i>)	Mahas, Sokkot area in Nubia	Five-string musical instrument used by folks for local songs. This instrument is also common in Nuba mountain and Beja area.	

ANNEX IX

Black to Kemet: Placing Egypt in Africa at the Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge
(www.fitzmuseum.cam.ac.uk)

“Kemet was one of the names given to Egypt by its ancient indigenous inhabitants. In a modern context the term Kemet has become associated with placing Egypt in its African cultural context. There are many links between ancient Egyptian and modern African cultures, such as headrests and hairstyles like the side lock. This and other evidence support the idea that it was an African culture in addition to being geographically in Africa. This exhibition invites the view to consider the appearance of the people of Kemet around 3000 years ago and to ask the question: ‘Were the ancient Egyptians Black? As we use the term in Britain today’. The ancient Egyptians called their country *Kemet*, which means ‘the black land’. Many people forget that Egypt is part of the continent of Africa and only think of the modern state as part of the Middle East. This is because Arabic is the main language and the country is predominantly Islamic, following the settlement there in A.D. 642 of people of Islamic culture. However, there are many links between ancient Egyptian and modern African cultures, ranging from objects such as headrests to hairstyles such as the side lock, and this and other evidence support the idea that it was an African culture in addition to being geographically in Africa. For these reasons Egypt is seen by people of African descent as part of their cultural heritage and history. The concept of Egypt as part of Africa is not a new one. Some of the earliest travelers to Egypt came from the ancient cultures of Greece and Rome, including Greek philosophers, mathematicians, scientists, writers and poets who came to learn from Egyptian priests. To the Greeks and Romans, Egypt was an African country, and their artists depicted the Egyptians as Africans, with black skin and tightly curled hair, described by the Greek historian Herodotos in fifth century BC as woolly.”

ANNEX X

Nubian objects acquired by the Egyptian Department (Williams, C. L. R.1913)

“The Nubian objects just acquired by the Museum were found at Faras [...] they illustrate the characteristic remains of three of the chronological periods which were defined in the course of the government excavation further north.

First, we have a considerable representation of the contents of a single grave of the A Group (Early Dynastic), having received twenty-one out of at least forty-four objects which this one burial comprised. All are hand-made and hand-burnished and display a feeling for form and representation of an Oryx and a geometrical figure [...] On the other hand, the tomb contained some vessels of fine black clay having thin walls, a highly reflecting black surface within, and a red-polished surface decorated with red patterns consist of hatched rectangles and other geometrical figures [...] Among the other objects in this grave were a bronze pierces, a stone mortar, a stone upon which to grind corn together with its grinder, parts of an ivory bracelet, a univalve shell, and some beads[...] made of garnet, carnelian, and glazed stone. From another grave a slate palette, in shape an oval with the ends cut off [...] The typical C Group pots are of two classes- bowls [...] with incised decoration... red black- topped pots. In addition to the pottery, the museums received a few oddments - a bone needle and some beads of shell and breccia. We have an interesting array of Meroitic objects [...] pottery [...] bronze bowls and numerous strings of beads.”

ANNEX XI

The Nubian Collection in the Royal Ontario Museum (Grzyski, C. 1987)

“The origins of the Nubian collection in the Royal Ontario Museum’s Egyptian Department can be traced back to the beginning of the century when Charles T. Currelly, the founder of the museum, purchased a number of pottery vessels in Egypt. With exception of two or possibly three C-Group bowls, the remainder of this unprovenanced group is composed of painted Meroitic jars, amphorae, and bottles, all purchased prior to 1910. So far, twenty-two vessels, acquired by Currelly have been identified as Nubian, but the actual number present in the museum’s storage rooms may turn out to be higher as research progresses. In 1930 Currelly purchased a red polished Meroitic bowl (said to have come from the McGregor collection) and a painted conical A Group pot from G.F. Lawrence, which represent the only other unprovenanced Nubian objects in the Toronto collection. The remainder of the ROM collection is well provenanced and contains several thousand objects excavated at the following sites.

Meroe: Garstang’s excavations at Meroe were underwritten by a number of wealthy individuals and institutions who, in return for their financial support, were given a selection of the finds. One of the major supporters of Garstang’s work was Sir Robert Mond, who has also a benefactor of the Royal Ontario Museum. According to the information contained on the catalogue cards, it was through the generosity of Sir Robert that the Museum obtained its 150 Meroitic objects in 1921. My recent research in the archives of the Royal Ontario Museum and the University of Toronto seems, however, to indicate that this was not entirely true. Letters exchanged in 1913 between Currelly and Garstang made reference to the Meroitic material in Toronto, and another letter sent by Garstang to Sir Edmund Walker of Toronto, dated 2 August 1911, clearly stated that Walker was one of the subscribers to the Meroe project. Thus, there can be no doubts that many of the artifact pre-dated Mond’s gift. Interestingly, only 53 objects were originally catalogued in the 921. (1921) series, and the remainder was only entered into the catalogue system in 1977. It is impossible to state at this age of research which of them were assigned to the museum as Walker’s share of the finds.

In 1985 the museum was fortunate in obtaining 17 small artifacts from the University of Calgary through the good offices of Prof. Shinnie. This group contained several small pots, spindle whorls, tuyere fragments, iron arrowheads, and pieces of iron slag. This particular gift was a special interest from display of view as it allowed the museum to incorporate the Meroitic iron production exhibit into the new Nubian gallery now being prepared.

Napata: In 1926 the Sudan Government, represented by the Commissioner of, donated 10 shawabtis discovered by Reisner between 1916 and 1918 during his excavations at Nuri. Sesebi (Sudla): The Royal Ontario Museum was from its inception a strong supporter of the Egypt Exploration Society and benefited greatly from this support through the division of finds from various excavations. Thirty-seven objects from Sesebi were presented to the Museum in January 1938, which had been excavated during the 1936-37 campaign directed by Blackman (1937). These artifacts belong to two distinct groups, one containing the New Kingdom objects, another comprising the X-Group (post-Meroitic) material. The exact provenance of these objects within the site is often difficult to determine and must await the final publication of the excavations being prepared by Morkot (1988). Jebel Moya: This most interesting site is actually located beyond Nubia. Nevertheless, a collection of objects including potsherds, figurines, grinding stones and many others excavated by the Wellcome Expedition is of interest to scholars engaged in the

archaeology of the Sudan. The Toronto collection was acquired in 1947 and numbers several hundred objects.

Khartoum: The 1944-45 excavations near the Civil Hospital at Khartoum were conducted by Debono and Arkell and the results were made widely known through a magnificent publication (Arkell 1949). What is perhaps less known is the fact that many of the "Early Khartoum" finds have been distributed to various Commonwealth collections, including the royal Ontario Museum, which acquired 111 artifacts-mainly lithics in 1950.

Qasr Ibrim: Another series of the already published material came from the 1961 excavations of the Late Meroitic and X Group cemeteries at Qasr Ibrim conducted by W.B. Emery (Mills 19820).

In 1963 twenty-seven objects were donated to the Royal Ontario Museum by the Egypt Exploration Society in return for this museum's contribution to the Society.

Buhen: Due to the lack of staff and funding, the royal Ontario Museum did not participate in the UNESCO sponsored salvage campaign in Lower Nubia. Nevertheless, arrangement had been made to enable the late Winifred Needler, then curator of the near Eastern Department, to join W.B. Emery's expedition to Buhen. As a result, a selection of 16 objects coming both from the Middle Kingdom fortress and from the Old Kingdom town were donated to the royal Ontario Museum in 1965 by the Egypt exploration Society. The majority of the objects have been published (Emery, Smith 1979; Smith 1976).

Semna South: The Oriental Institute, University of Chicago, expedition to Semna South were directed by L.V. Zabkar, and his staff including R.J. Williams of the Department of Near Eastern Studies, University of Toronto. A small share of the finds, comprising two copper bowls and five ceramics vessels, was thus assigned to the University of Toronto, which in turn passed this gift to the Royal Ontario Museum in 1969. Two of the pottery vessels were published in Zabkar's 1982 report.).

The core of the Nubian collection is formed by the material from Gebel Adda, a site excavated by N.B. Millet (1963,1964,1967), now curator of the museum's Egyptian Department. Several thousand objects that were brought to Toronto in 1973 and later on formally donated to the Royal Ontario Museum by the National Geographic Society, one of the major sponsors of the Gebel Adda project. The sheer size of the collection which dates mainly from the Late Meroitic Period onwards caused substantial delays with publication, but it is hoped that with the installation of the new Egyptian and Nubian Galleries more time will be available for the research and publication of this particular assemblage.

The Nubian collection of the Royal Ontario Museum is surprisingly strong in light of the museum's limited activity in the field. Fortunately, recent years have been marked by new developments in the life of the museum as a surface survey and later on an excavation project were undertaken in the Dongola reach area of Upper Nubia. Concurrently, courses on Nubian archaeology have been taught at the University of Toronto, continuing thus a tradition begun by Peter Shinnie at the University of Calgary . The growing number of students able to conduct research based on the museum's collection and field work augurs well for the future of Nubiology in Canada, and this represents, perhaps, the most fitting tribute to a scholar who was instrumental in developing Nubian studies both in the Sudan and in Canada."

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SUMMARY

Nubia, located in what is now the northern part of the Republic of the Sudan and Upper Egypt, is among the most excavated corners of the world. Here, for over a century, there have been ongoing large-scale archeological rescue operations spurred on by an extensive program of damming the Nile, which is leading to the gradual disappearance of the territory under water. This dramatic chapter in the history of Nubia threatens not only the loss of valuable knowledge about Nubia's place in the archeological record, but is also causing the displacement of local populations and the subsequent changes in their traditions.

This heightened archeological interest in the area has yet to have a similar impact on the representation of Nubia in museums. If this trend is not reversed, museums will become 'the only and sole alternative' venues where Nubian culture can still be admired and understood. Therefore, the responsibility of museums has never been greater. In forgotten nooks and crannies and in dark, dingy basements throughout the museum world, the artifacts of Nubia need to be sought out and released from the smothering dust of time so that they can be properly displayed in exhibitions that reveal the wealth of history and culture inherent in each of them.

The 'museumization' of Nubia, which I define loosely as covering the trend of museums around the globe to include exhibitions of Nubian culture and artifacts, is not an easy task. The geographical location of Nubia, the history of its archeological discoveries and the most recent developments that are encroaching on it have made it a contested field in etymological, geographical, linguistic and historical terms and approaches. In a nutshell, the display of Nubian collections in museums requires a profounder knowledge and major awareness of what the term 'Nubia' entails.

The objective of this research is to analyze how, as a concept and archeological presence, 'Nubia' has been dealt with so far, and with what battles it has to contend now that museums are changing their identity and trying to adapt themselves to the political trend of this century which is all about conflict of identity.

The 'analytical tour' of Nubian collections, presented in this research, includes museums within and beyond the boundaries of Nubia. It sheds light on how Nubia has been understood, created and silenced in the most important venues and smaller contexts. This analysis of the display of collections also serves to improve understanding of how Nubia has been conceived behind the scenes in the most important museums.

The Nubian collections kept in these museums display great diversity, ranging from prehistory to modern times. They testify to the fascinating history acted out in this area by peoples of different backgrounds, with divergent technical expertise and political structures; peoples who have interacted with each other over millennia, forming the tradition and the culture of Nubia.

The manner of acquisition and the history of display policies and exhibitions have both supported the argument that the traditional interpretation of Nubia has been derived more from sociopolitical and academic consideration and contexts rather than from the significance of historical evidence itself. If Nubia *in situ* is gradually being submerged by the waters of dams, in museums it is being submerged either by attractive Pharaonic artifacts in majestic Egyptian galleries or by the dust accumulating in forgotten storage depots.

This research has demonstrate that great progress has been made in the recognition and appreciation of Nubia and its culture, in particular thanks to the Salvage Campaign of the sixties. The Nubia Museum of Aswan, the only one, up to date, designated as a such, is the most striking example of this progress. In many other museums the significance of the contribution of this

culture to our understanding of the development, on all levels, of human civilization is going to require a more vigorous effort if the pieces of the puzzle that has been presented in this thesis are to be properly arranged. Cogently, the research also points out that the emphasis on the archeology of Nubia has always dominated scholarly research, obscuring other aspects of Nubian life and culture. The interactive exhibition of archeological materials and present-day artifacts and traditions of the living communities that produced them offers more opportunities for rediscovery and educational enrichment.

SAMENVATTING

Nubië, gelegen in het huidige Noord Soedan en Boven-Egypte, is een van de meest opgegraven hoeken van de wereld. Hier hebben meer dan honderd jaar grootschalige archeologische reddingsoperaties plaatsgevonden, als gevolg van een uitgebreid dammenplan dat leidt tot een geleidelijke verdwijning van het gebied. Dit dramatische hoofdstuk uit de Nubische geschiedenis veroorzaakt niet alleen verlies van waardevolle kennis van Nubië's plaats in de archeologie, maar ook de verplaatsing van lokale bevolkingsgroepen en de daarop volgende vernietiging van hun tradities.

Deze archeologische belangstelling voor het gebied heeft nog niet op vergelijkbare manier een impact op de representatie van Nubië in musea. Als er geen trendbreuk komt, worden de musea 'de enige en unieke alternatieve' plaatsen waar de Nubische cultuur nog kan worden bewonderd en begrepen. De verantwoordelijkheid van musea is daarom nog nooit zo groot geweest. In vergeten hoekjes en donkere kelders van musea over de hele wereld, moeten de artefacten van Nubië te voorschijn worden gehaald om op een correcte manier te worden uitgesteld op tentoonstellingen die de rijke historie en cultuur van al die artefacten onthullen.

De 'musealisatie' van Nubië, die ik losjes definieer als de trend van musea over de hele wereld om tentoonstellingen aangaande de Nubische cultuur en artefacten te houden, is geen gemakkelijke taak. Nubië's geografische positie, de geschiedenis van de archeologische ontdekkingen, de recente ontwikkelingen hebben het een omstreken gebied gemaakt in etymologische, geografische, linguïstische en historische termen en benaderingen. Het laten zien van de Nubische collecties vergt daarom een diepere kennis en een groot bewustzijn van wat wordt bedoeld met de term 'Nubië'.

Het onderwerp van dit onderzoek is te analyseren hoe er, als begrip en als archeologische aanwezigheid, met Nubië tot nu toe is omgegaan, en waarmee het wordt geconfronteerd nu musea hun identiteit veranderen om zich aan te passen aan de politieke trend van deze eeuw die gaat over identiteitsconflicten.

De 'analytische tour' van de Nubische collecties, gepresenteerd in dit onderzoek, omvat musea binnen en buiten Nubië. Het belicht hoe Nubië is begrepen, gemaakt en tot zwijgen is gebracht op niet alleen de belangrijkste punten maar ook in kleinere context. De analyse van het exposeren van collecties dient daarom ook om te begrijpen hoe Nubië wordt voorgesteld achter de coulissen van het toneel, bezet door de belangrijkste musea.

De Nubische collecties van deze musea laten een grote diversiteit zien, van prehistorie tot moderne tijden. Als zodanig getuigen ze van de fascinerende geschiedenis, die in dit gebied is bewerkstelligd door mensen met verschillende achtergronden, technische en politieke structuren, mensen waartussen millennialang een wisselwerking heeft bestaan waardoor de traditie en cultuur van Nubië zijn gevormd.

Het acquisitiebeleid en de geschiedenis van de wijze van uitstellen en tentoonstellen ondersteunen het argument dat de traditionele interpretatie van Nubië meer afstamt van (ontleend aan, afgeleid van) socio-politieke en academische wortels en contexten dan van de betekenis van de historische bewijsstukken zelf. Zoals Nubië *in situ* meer en meer onder water is komen te staan door de dammen, zo is het in de context van musea overstroomd door faraonische artefacten in majestueuze Egyptische galeries en verdwenen onder het stof van vergeten opslagplaatsen.

Dit onderzoek heeft aangetoond dat er veel vooruitgang is geboekt in de erkenning en

waardering van Nubië en haar cultuur, in het bijzonder dankzij de reddingsoperatie in de jaren zestig. Echter de betekenis van die bijdrage voor ons begrip van de ontwikkeling, op alle niveaus van de menselijke beschaving, vereist een krachtiger inspanning om des tukjes van de puzzel die in deze thesis zijn gepresenteerd op hun plaats te leggen. Verder wijst het onderzoek uit dat de nadruk op de archeologie van Nubië het wetenschappelijk onderzoek heeft gedomineerd, waardoor andere aspecten van leven en cultuur in Nubië zijn verwaarloosd. De interactieve tentoonstelling van archeologische materialen en tegenwoordige producten en tradities van de levende gemeenschappen waarin de collecties verblijven, bieden meer mogelijkheden voor het herontdekking en educatieve verrijking.

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CV SUMMARY

Maria Costanza De Simone was born at San Giovanni in Fiore, Italy, on April 1, 1964. She holds a High School Diploma in Classical Studies, obtained in 1983 at the *Liceo Classico* Vincenzo Julia of San Giovanni in Fiore.

In 1989, she was one of the first students of Egyptology to defend an MA thesis (*Tesi di Laurea*) on the “Cemeteries of the C Group of Lower Nubia” at the University of Rome ‘La Sapienza’, under the supervision of the newly created Chair of Nubian Antiquities. Since then, Nubia has become the focus of her academic life and professional carrier. In 1993 Maria Costanza again submitted a thesis specialized in Nubian Antiquities at the University of Rome ‘La Sapienza’ (where she later lectured temporarily) on the “Archaeological and Epigraphic Documents of the Viceroy of Nubia”. Her interest in the ‘museumization’ of Nubia arose in 1996 when she moved to Egypt with a one-year scholarship granted by the Egyptian Ministry of Education. The purpose of the scholarship was to support the classification of Nubian artifacts, in particular those related to the Viceroy, kept at the Egyptian Museum of Cairo. After the scholarship at the Egyptian Museum, she worked as expert before for the Italian Egyptian Center for Restoration and Archaeology (a field school based in Cairo), and after for the Italian National Research Council. In both institutions the activities have focused on training courses for Egyptian experts in the field of archeology and restoration.

In 2000, Maria Costanza De Simone was the curator of the Permanent Photographic Gallery : *Nubia Submerged: through their eyes with their own words* at the Nubia Museum in Aswan. This section, sponsored by the Scientific Office of the Italian Embassy in Cairo, is one of the most visited and most impressive section of the museum.

In 2002 Maria Costanza started to work as a UNESCO expert, based at the Cairo Office, where she has successfully implemented several projects in Egypt and Sudan. Her first assignment was the creation of the Library and Documentation Center on Nubia at the Nubia Museum in Aswan, a follow-up to the worldwide famous Salvage Campaign of the Sixties. In Sudan, she monitored the rehabilitation of the Sudan National Museum in Khartoum and, particularly importantly, in cooperation with the local authorities and the Nubian community, she developed the concept of the Nubia Museum of Wadi Halfa which is expected to be a community-based museum. It is actually conceived as a compound, including a building for the historical and archeological artifacts and an ‘interactive’ Nubian village for the preservation of the living heritage. In 2009, in cooperation with the Egyptian and Sudanese Authorities, Maria Costanza De Simone organized the 50th Anniversary of the appeal - launched by Egypt and Sudan to UNESCO - to Save the Monuments of Nubia. Such an international event brought together in Aswan the protagonists of the famous rescue campaign of the sixties to retrace, after half a century, the memories of the past and to envisage initiatives for a better future.

One of the most important aspects of Maria Costanza De Simone’s approach to heritage is community participation and consultation. She participated in the challenging project the ‘Mobilization of Dahshour World Heritage Site for Community Development’, considered a model for cultural development. It combines cultural heritage aspects, natural heritage dimensions, and community development components (UNDP/Spain MDG Achievement Fund).

