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# Insight into the Perception of the Divine and Royal Powers among the Kushites and the Egyptians

Luc Gabolde

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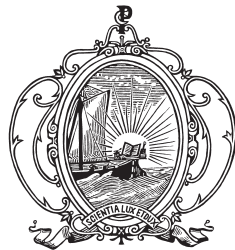
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# INSIGHT INTO THE PERCEPTION OF ROYAL AND DIVINE POWERS AMONG KUSHITES AND EGYPTIANS

Luc GABOLDE

## Introduction

The strength and power of Egypt's southern neighbours (here globally designated as 'Nubians'), can be traced back thanks to the research-work of numerous archaeologists to which many of the scholars attending the 13<sup>th</sup> conference of Nubian Studies have contributed.

It is hardly necessary here to mention the excavations of the royal cemetery L at Qustul or to recall the elite necropolis of the Sayala chiefdom<sup>1</sup>. Both sites revealed chiefdoms which could pit themselves against Egypt's rulers and challenge their authority.

In the Old Kingdom, quite impressive too was the seizure of Egypt's western and southern neighbours by Yam's rulers. When Harkhuf, sent by pharaoh Pepy II, visited Yam's ruler<sup>2</sup>, he mainly followed this ruler, so that Harkhuf's detachment appears to have only constituted extra troops for Yam's task force. Yam and the royal detachment led by Harkhouf were allied, and could thus share the booty. But obviously, Yam – that is Kerma's Chiefdom, as convincingly proposed by Obsomer (2007, 32-52) – had the leading role in the operation.

We might also consider the evidences from Elkab, brought to light by the research of Vivian Davies, recording the presence of Kush in Upper Egypt at the beginning of the XVII<sup>th</sup> dynasty (Davis 2003).

Moreover, the power of this well organised and cohesive state, at the far southern border of Egypt became evident when the Kushites invaded Egypt and founded the XXV<sup>th</sup> dynasty (Török 2009, 311-319).

These facts are well known. However, up to the New Kingdom era, the Egyptians have left written accounts of their campaigns with bragging reports about the submission of the Nubians, whereas the Nubians did not record for posterity their own version of the operations. Thus, we get the predominant feeling that the Egyptians were colonisers, as reported by I. Hofmann (1979), and that the Nubians were a colonized people

who, though defeated and subdued, were beneficiaries of – or submitted to – an egyptianisation process which had somewhat pervaded the 'upper classes' of their society. This view has been fortunately reassessed in the past decades (Zibelius-Chen 2013, 135-155).

The egyptianisation of the Nubians was certainly extensive among the elite (Gozzoli 2009, 184), though its members were most likely bi-cultural. But it was mainly characterized by a religious conversion to the Egyptian beliefs (Doyen and Gabolde 2017), which spiritual dimension became dominant. Moreover, it seems that the egyptianisation process did not truly spread to the rest of the Nubian population. As an example, Nubians continued to speak their own language, so that speaking of 'acculturation of the Nubians' seems inappropriate, since the Kushite culture was never obliterated<sup>3</sup>

It clearly appears that the Egyptians were confronted with a strong Nubian society, probably conservative, and with an assertive sense of cultural identity. In order to establish a mode of cohabitation conducive to mutually profitable trade and exchange, the Egyptians, even victorious, had no choice but to deal with this reality.

## Conciliation, Seduction, Coercion, and Imperialism

A few examples will clearly show that the Egyptians' policy towards the Nubians was, on the one hand, a subtle mixture of conciliation and seduction together with some rather coercive and imperialistic behaviour on the other.

A first aspect of the incorporation of Nubian religious concepts and beliefs into the Egyptian theology was the recognition by the Egyptians that the Kushites's divine entities could be comprehended as local forms of some Egyptian deities, as shown by the symbolic case of Amun at the Djebel Barkal.

<sup>1</sup> Török 2009, 41-43, with discussion and all the related bibliography.

<sup>2</sup> See Török's summary in *id. Ibid.*, 59-69.

<sup>3</sup> See Doyen and Gabolde *forth.*; Török 2009, XVI-XIX; Redford 2004, 44-5; Lohwasser 2006.

*The marvel of Djebel Barkal as nswt-T3wy*

As many scholars have already noticed, a passage on the stele erected by Thutmose III at the Djebel Barkal makes a clear allusion to the manner in which the local population may have called the site in the New Kingdom<sup>4</sup>. Addressing them the king states:



[...hm (?)]i sdmw rmt hnt-T3 nty m p3  
dw-w'b, ddw r.f nswt-T3wy m rmt, n rh.tw.f,

[... Speech of] My [Majesty (?):] Listen, people of the South (hnt-T3) who are in 'the pure mountain (p3 dw-w'b)<sup>5</sup>, which was called, among the (local) population 'Thrones of the Two Lands' (nswt-T3wy) (even) before it was known (of us)'

This passage seems to mean that in naming the mountain of Djebel Barkal – most likely already a sacred mountain – 'nswt-T3wy', the Egyptian had adopted almost the same form as the one used by the Nubians in their own language. The very fact that the Nubian pronunciation of the name of the hill sounded more or less like 'nswt-T3wy', which is a segment of an epithet of Amun, was, of course, considered by the Egyptians a marvellous, even miraculous, coincidence.

It would thus show that the Egyptians acknowledged the fact that their great dynastic god, Amun, could incorporate a previously unknown Nubian component. But it was also a way of extending the range of Amun's influence and thus the properties of the god. In fact, it was a means to justify the seizure of this country by Egypt.

<sup>4</sup> *Urk.* IV, 1238, 5-7; Kendall 2002; Kendall 2017.

<sup>5</sup> The Egyptian rendering, P3 dw-w'b, is literally, the 'pure mountain', but it meant in fact the local purified (that is, sacred) hill. It was subsequently used, by contamination, to characterize the hemispeos-shrine of Haremhab at Abu 'Oda or the hemispeos-temple of Ramses II. The transcription in hieroglyphic writing of Nubian words has been scrutinized by K. Zibelius-Chen (2011) and, for the specific case of Napata, brilliantly analysed by Yoyotte (2013).

There is no doubt that the Nubian terms which are hidden behind the Egyptian rendering *nswt-T3wy* are worth investigating – though the task promises to be hard. They certainly may inform us on what symbolic concept the Nubians attached to this specific site

Apart from the stele of Thutmose III at Djebel Barkal, two other mentions confirm the Nubian spelling *nswt-T3wy* for this geographical entity:

One mention, which Tim Kendall had already found, is that in the tomb of Huy, viceroy of Kush under the reign of Tutankhamun (Gardiner and Davies 1926, 10, pl. VI), and which reads:



'The chief of the Treasury he says: So spoke Pharaoh: you get prosperous from Nekhen down to 'Thrones of the Two Lands' <sup>6</sup>.

Another occurrence of this specific designation is encountered in Sethy I's year 11 stele from Djebel Barkal (Khartoum SN 2856 = Reisner, 1933, 73-78, pl. 8 = *K RI* I, 76, 7-8) :



'Be joyful, O Lords [... and Goddess] who preside over the (deified Cobra) of Nesut-Tawy (= Djebel Barkal)'.

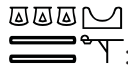
Finally, a last mention of this southern 'nswt-T3wy' appears to apply to the name of a site producing gold (probably a mine) in a list of provinces inscribed in the temple of Luxor. All of the personified territories bring mineral goods to the god. The list is dated to Ramses II<sup>7</sup>:



<sup>6</sup> Gardiner's translation is different: 'there is handed over to thee from Nekhen to "Nesut-Towe" '.

<sup>7</sup> Vercoutter, 1959, 130 and n. 29; Müller 1910, 84 sq. *K RI* II, 618, 4-5.

‘Speech of “Throne-of-the-Two-Lands” to the son of Ra Ramses-Miamun: “I come and I bring you [gold] in many bags”’.


At the top of the figurehead, his name: : ‘hill (*dw*) of “Throne-of-the-Two-Lands”’.

Then, other Nubian gold districts are listed, providing extensive confirmation of the far-southern location of the site:


 ‘Hill of Âmaw’<sup>8</sup>

 ‘Hill of Kush’

 ‘Hill of Nubia-Ta-Sety’

 (?) ‘Hill of Khent-[hen-nefer (?)]’

 ‘Hill of Abeg (?)’

(read:  ?), Ab(w) ? = ‘Hill of Elephantine (?)’

From this well-established set of occurrences of the expression *nswt-T3wy* in direct connection with the far south and particularly with the Djebel Barkal, some hypotheses may be drawn as to its precise signification for the Nubians.

We however first need to remember that, from its origins, the expression *nswt-T3wy* in the epithets of Amun is never, in Egypt at least, a toponym, as shown long ago by K. Sethe<sup>9</sup>.

It is also likely, though not proven, that the syntagm *nswt-T3wy* reflects a similar division in Nubian language between the first element based on the spelling *ns* and the second element based on the spelling ‘*T3wy*’. This partition is indeed confirmed by an isolated element *T3-w3w* we will examine later on.

The lexical analogies between the Meroitic and the Nilo-Saharan Languages, thoroughly studied by Cl. Rilly, allow to isolate the basic meanings of lexemes like *ns* in the North Oriental Sudanic languages:

- *ns/nasa/* or *nse/nas/* is first related to the notion ‘sacrifice’ (Rilly 2010, 88, 135, no. 24). However, this solution does not provide here a fully satisfying meaning, though the researches of P. Lenoble at Gebel Ardeb and Gebel Ab Amera have indeed put forward the possible existence of sacrifices on high points during the Meroitic age (Lenoble 1992; Leclant and Clerc, 1994, 461).
- There is also the lexeme *nas / nse*, meaning ‘great, tall’ (Rilly 2010, 475, no. 104), which is present in the names *Amanirenas* and *Nastasen*, and which could provide some possible solutions.

Two other lexical series – also identified by Cl. Rilly – may, however, constitute a slightly more fruitful basis for the lexeme:

The word for ‘horn’: Ⓐ \**nes-* ~ \**ner-* (‘sg. -ti’) (Rilly, 2010, 436, n° 33),

The word for ‘tooth’: Ⓐ \**nesil* (‘sg. -ti’) (Rilly, 2010, 439, n° 40).


Needless to say, both the horn and the tooth would fit extremely well with the spectacular shape of the pinnacle which strikingly towers above the Djebel Barkal (Figure 1).

Nevertheless, I will not ignore that such a proposition remains highly hypothetical, especially if we consider the long time-span between the New Kingdom and Meroitic times (more than a millennium). It might be worth further investigations at a future date.

Now, concerning the element *T3wy* which ends this expression, there are even fewer clues as to its signification in Nubian languages.

However, the lexeme is encountered elsewhere in a significant context. The well-known Ostrakon Deir al-Medina 1072 does indeed mention names directly connected with Kush and even with Djebel Barkal (Figure 2), including a summit / cliff / escarpment (*t3-dhnt*) called *T3-w3w*<sup>10</sup>:

<sup>8</sup> Gauthier 1925, I, 143: South-East Nubia.

<sup>9</sup> Sethe 1929 § 13, 1. It is for this very good reason that it is never followed in Egyptian script by any architectural or geographical determinative such as .

<sup>10</sup> Posener 1936, 40 and pl. 40; Fischer-Elfert 1997, 1-4; Zibelius-Chen 2011, 160, s.v. *nhsmsk*.

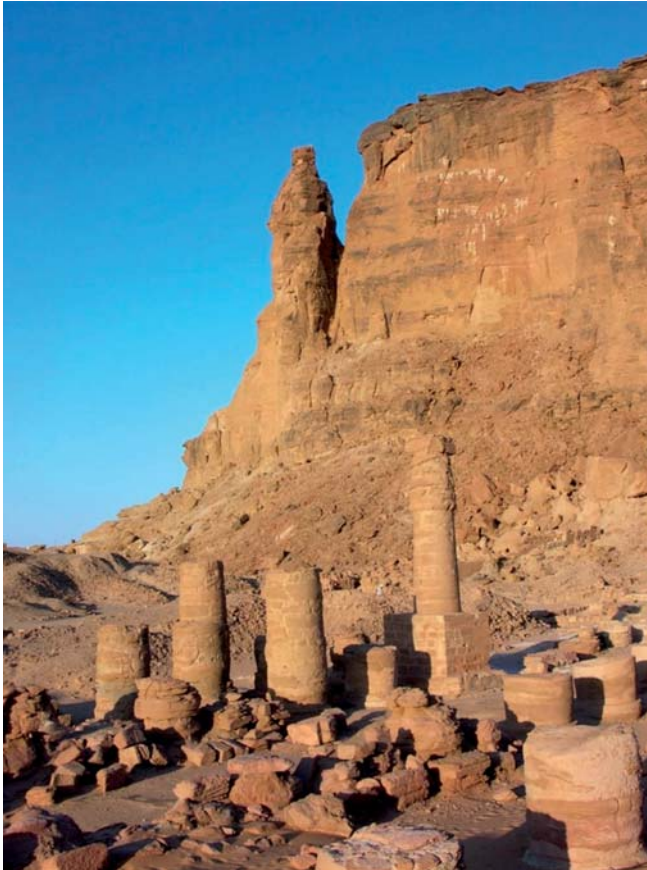
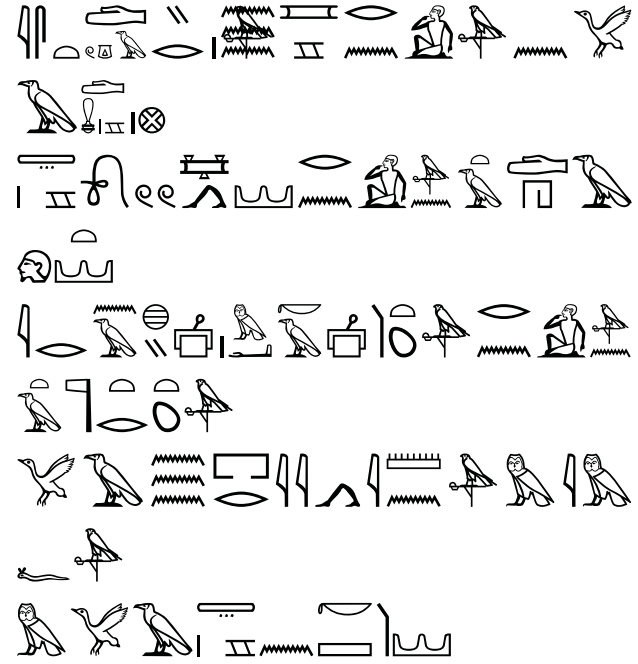


Figure 1. The pinnacle towering above the Djebel Barkal.




*ist Dwg3l rn n p3 dmi*  
*T3-w3ww rn n t3-dhnt*  
*ir N3hys3m 'k3s3 rn n t3 n3rt*  
*p3 mw pry İmn m im.f m p3 t3 n Kš*

‘As to ‘Degal (*Dg3l*)’, (it is) the name of the borough

and ‘(Jebel) Ta-waww (in egyptian ‘remote land’)', (it is) the name of the peak / cliff / escarpment (*t3-dhnt*),

As to ‘Nakhysmekas’, (it is) the name of the goddess,

(that is) the water from which Amun went out in the land of Kush’.

Taking into account the geographical context, it is tempting to postulate that | , *T3-w3ww* of the Ostrakon Deir al-Medina 1072 and *T3wy* in the Nubian syntagm transcribed *nswt-T3wy* refer to the same entity, an entity that is therefore related to a mountain or to a peak / cliff / escarpment<sup>11</sup>.

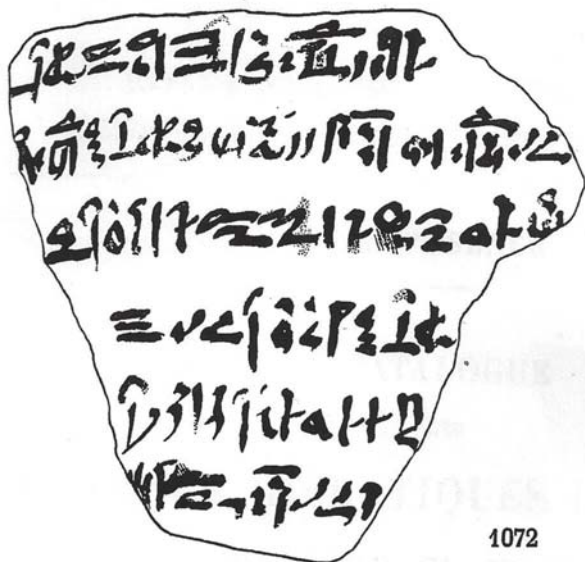


Figure 2. Ostrakon Deir al-Medina 1072.

<sup>11</sup> On the question of the escarpment potentially linked to the lexem *t3-dhnt*, see now the critical discussion of Yoyotte 2003.

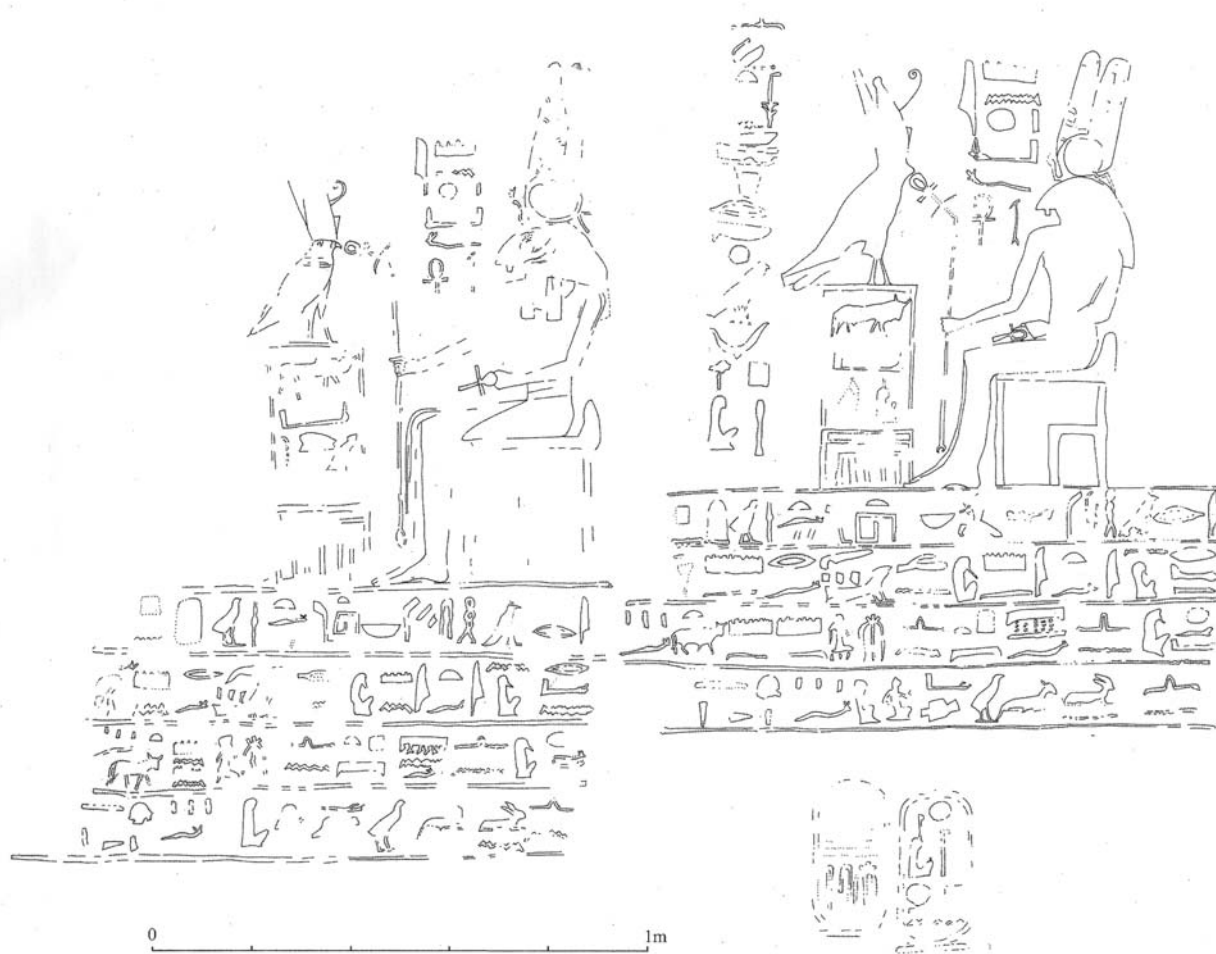


Figure 3. Criocephalic representations of Amun at Kurgus, after Davies 2001.

The reduplication of *w / ww* is indeed attested elsewhere and seems conceivable<sup>12</sup>.

Though it is not presently possible to determine more precisely the significance of *T3-w3ww / T3wy* in the Nubian language, it appears that the global sense of the expression transcribed *nswt-T3wy* by the Egyptians possibly dealt, in Nubian, with notions of ‘horn’ or ‘tooth’, associated with those of ‘peak / cliff / escarpment’ or ‘mountain’.

Whatever the meaning – probably rich and complex – of the syntagm *nswt-T3wy* in the Nubian language, the Egyptian acceptance of its divine dimension is the

undeniable sign of their willingness to share spiritual concepts with the Nubians. They meant nothing less than ‘your sacred place is our sacred place’. Furthermore, we know that the Egyptians were all the more eager to welcome the Nubian words and that they credited them with great magical properties as already demonstrated by Y. Koenig<sup>13</sup> from his research on religious hymns and medical treatises.

#### *The Ram as emblematic figure of Amun*

The Egyptians did incorporate into their religion another element of the Nubian spiritual conceptions, namely the ram. It is well known that the apparition of the ram as a symbolic figure of Amun dates back to the reign of Thutmose I<sup>st</sup>.<sup>14</sup>(Figure 3).

<sup>12</sup> Such reduplications have indeed been recorded though they remain unexplained as recalled Zibelius-Chen 2011, 289-290, in her comment regarding *mnṯwi* which seems to be identical with PN, *mnitwwi / mnṯwi*, an individual name also recorded in grafito Ph. 419 mentioning a *Manitawawi* (*Fontes Historiae Nubiorum* III, 973, no. 246: ‘*Mtewwi*, identical with the *mnṯwi* of no. 249 (p. 979) and the *Manitawawi* (*Mnit(4)wwi(5)qo*) of no. 267 (p. 1026 = REM n° 0105)).

<sup>13</sup> Koenig 1987, 105-110. See also Wüthrich 2010, 21-23.



Figure 4. Head of a ram, Boston MFA 20.1180, from Kerma Tumulus III, dated to classical Kerma.

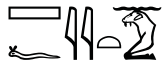


Figure 5. Ram with spherical ornament between the horns, after Bonnet 1986, 46, fig. 9.

<sup>14</sup> Originally, when Amun appears as a deity, in the XI<sup>th</sup>-XII<sup>th</sup> dynasties, at Thebes, it is an anthropomorphic god. See Gabolde 2014; Sethe 1929, 22-25.

<sup>15</sup> I thank M. Ullmann for having drawn my attention on this important element. For the bark shrine of Amenhotep I, see PM II/2, 63-64, Karlshausen 1995, and Karlshausen 2009, 32-34 and 154-239.

Though the presence of ram heads at the prow and stern of the portable bark of Amun – attested from the reign of Amenhotep I onwards (calcite bark shrine of Karnak<sup>15</sup>) – might give the impression that the criocephalic representation of Amun was older than the conquest of Nubia, these elements are however less conclusive than they seem to be at first sight. These figures may, in fact, be more likely related to the notion of (magical) power associated with the divine prestige

(, *šfyt* 'prestige', (see Manniche, 1978) than to any sacred animal. As a matter of facts, one may note that the ram with curved-horns (*ovis platyura*, *i.e.* the animal which was associated with Amun) adorned the bark of Khnum at Elephantine (at least in the reigns of Hatshepsut and Amenhotep III<sup>16</sup>), even though the animal associated with this god was clearly known as a different one (the *ovis longipes paleoegyptiacus*), a ram with wavy horns (Bickel 1991). A similar discrepancy is noticeable with the bark of Nekhbet (Sobekhotep II and Amenhotep III), which bears falcon heads in place of the expected vulture's protome<sup>17</sup>. In that respect, the ram heads of the bark of Amun cannot conclusively be interpreted as an assimilation of the ram with the god.

The first representation known of the ram-headed Amun (confirmed by a text) was precisely located in Nubia (at Kurgus) and was concomitant with the victorious campaign of Thutmose I<sup>st</sup> against the kingdom of Kerma, which cannot be a mere coincidence. In the pastoral Nubian society of the kingdom of Kerma<sup>18</sup>, the existence of a ram-deity can be inferred from a very small number of clues<sup>19</sup>. First, there is the finely elaborate quartz ram-head found by Reisner in tumulus III at Kerma and dated to Classical Kerma, though it could belong to the series of Egyptian objects found in the tomb (Figure 4). Such a representation finds an echo in

<sup>16</sup> DE I, 37,2 ; Karlshausen 2009, 57-59. For Chr. Eder, the bark of Khnum, at the Dynasty XIII, would have been adorned with *ovis longipes* heads (2000, 13, fig. 7; 21, fig. 10). However, the preserved block of the scene only shows the upper part of the naos.

<sup>17</sup> Eder 2002, 219, pl. 24; 221, pl. 26; 261, pl. 65b; 262, pl. 66; 263, pl. 67; Karlshausen 2009, 55-57.

<sup>18</sup> On the pastoral background of the Nubian societies, see Emberling 2014; Doyen and Gabolde *forth*. The pastoral way of life is coincidental with nomadic customs. Emberling (*ibid.* 126) stressed, for example, 'the significant mobile component of its population, and its resulting control of large territories from relatively small centers'.

<sup>19</sup> See Wildung 1984, 181-182; Kormysheva 2004, 109.

ram remains found subsequently by Bonnet in burials dated to Early Kerma (Bonnet 1984; Chaix 1993) and showing the ram's heads with specific spherical ornaments attached between the horns (Figure 5), although it seems to concern sacrificed animals in human tombs. Be that as it may, at a later date, this finery may have furthered the assimilation of the ram with the solar deity Amun<sup>20</sup>.

Once more, as it had been the case for *nswt-T3wy*, it appears that the Egyptian decided to merge their dynastic deity Amun with a still rather mysterious pre-existing Nubian divine entity embodied in a ram figure. The recognition of the divine quality to the idol worshiped by a people once considered as an enemy is, here again, the clue to the attention the Egyptians paid to the Nubian beliefs. Furthermore, through such a diplomatic act, the Egyptians paved the way for a peaceful relationship.

#### *Animal embodiment of divine entities*

In that respect, it is noteworthy that, beside the ram, the Egyptians also had a metaphoric use of other animals. When addressing the Nubians, they used bull, lion or falcon pictures, apparently avoiding having to resort to human representations.

The research carried out by Vivian Davies at Kurgus has indeed highlighted the exceptional composition of the pictures engraved by Thutmose I and Thutmose III on the rocks of Hagar al-Merwa. One observes that the divine or royal powers are not represented by human figures, but only by animal or animal-mixed figures: Bull, (Figure 6), lion (Figure 7), and falcon.

The royal embodiment of the king in a lion may apparently have echoed some local lion-deity. The possibility that such a Nubian lion deity underlies the Amun of Kawa 'the lion which is ahead, which is in *Gempaaten* has indeed been considered as very likely by Kormysheva (1996, 137). Such a divine entity is definitely encountered later on with the strictly Nubian Apedemak.

By promoting the animal figures, the Egyptians probably regarded it as the most appropriate way to address a pastoral people who considered animals as a

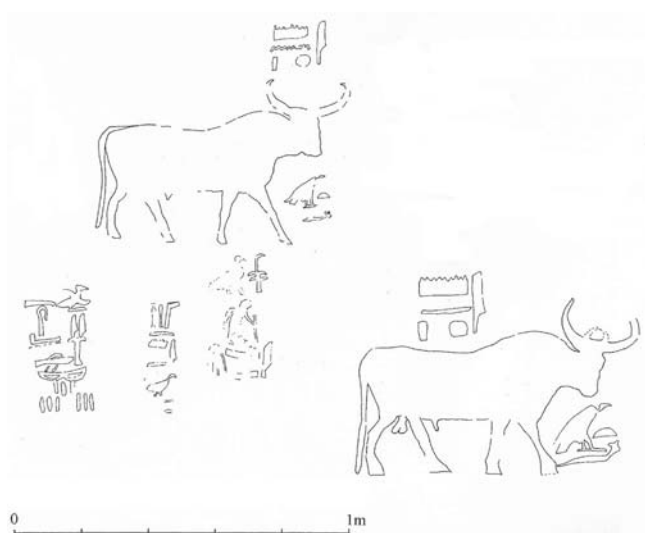


Figure 6. Bull of Kamutef at Kurgus, after Davies 2001.

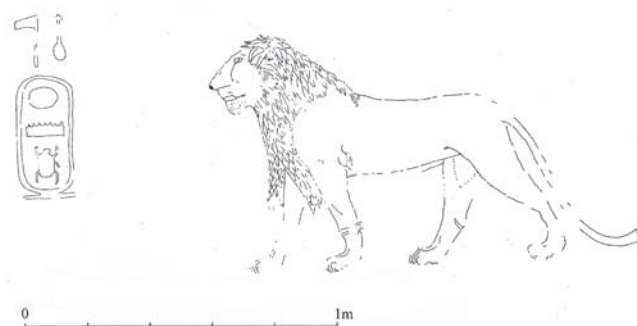


Figure 7. Lion representing the king at Kurgus, after Davies 2001.

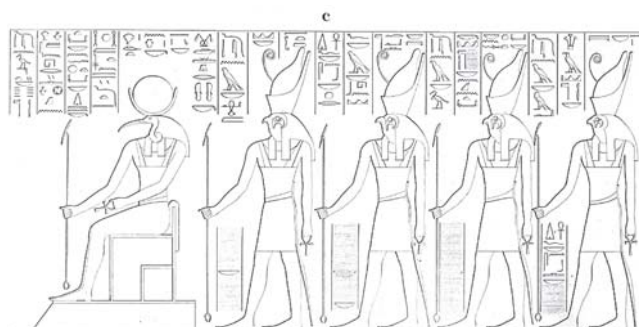


Figure 8. Nubian Horus (Abou-'Oda, L D III, 122e): Miâm, Buhen, Baki (Quban), Ma-ha (Abu-Simbel).

<sup>20</sup> See Chaix 2006, with the examination of the potential link with spheroid rams representations of the Atlas District already alluded to in Camps 2013.





Figure 9 a-f. Fragments from Sai with mentions of the local Horus: 'Horus, bull lord of Nubia-*T3-Sty*'.  
 or 'Horus, bull lord of Nubia-*T3-Sty* who dwells at Thebes'.

form of wealth<sup>21</sup>. It also seems likely that the Nubians, like the Egyptians, used to see in some specific wild animals a natural expression, if not the embodiment, of some powerful divine entities.

**The Sai case**

Sai Island presents a good example of some specific aspects of the Egyptian religious policy in Nubia.

<sup>21</sup> As proven by the extraordinary set of paintings found in tomb K XI at Kerma and their series of animal depictions (Bonnet 2000, 65-102; esp. 95 for the interpretation of ownership). Whereas Bonnet suggests a possible Egyptian influence (2000, 101-102), Török (2009, 151) rather rejects it. These represent possible possessions of the sovereign in the context of a society of hunters and herdsman.

*Amun at Sai*


The temple of Sai, founded by Thutmose III, was essentially dedicated to Amun as shown by many documents including a statue of a viceroy of Nubia [Nehy] of Thutmose III<sup>22</sup> mentioning precisely [*Jmn*] *nb nswt-t3wy hnt(y) Š'ṯ* . There was possibly also a cult of Ahmose and Amenhotep I<sup>23</sup>.

<sup>22</sup> Mentioned by Devauchelle and Doyen 2009, 35 and to be published by Fl. Thill.  
<sup>23</sup> Gabolde 2012.


*Horus 'Bull lord of Nubia-T3-Sty'*


However, another deity was worshiped there, as already noticed by Vercoutter (1959, 73): a Horus, 'bull lord of Nubia-T3-Sty'<sup>24</sup>. This deity will be more thoroughly studied by Vincent Rondot and Florence Thill, but it is worth mentioning it here, as it reveals the ingenuity of the Egyptian theologians in Nubia.

First let us point out that there is apparently no deeply anchored Nubian tradition of a falcon cult in Nubia<sup>25</sup>. Therefore, the cult of Horus in Nubia appears to definitely be an import from Egypt<sup>26</sup> (Figure 8). These Nubian Horus are vaguely mentioned in the Kuban stele as follows:


 'the Horus Lords of Nubia-T3-Sty'.

At Sai, the god Horus appears as:

 'Horus, the bull lord of Nubia-T3-Sty', on a dozen documents (Figure 9 a-f).

 'Horus, bull lord of Nubia-T3-Sty who dwells at Thebes', on at least three fragments from Sai, to which one may add the two representations from Ellessiya and Djebel Dosha<sup>27</sup> (Figures 10-11).

<sup>24</sup> Though the parallelism is interesting, it is not quite comparable to the Amun

'Bull of Nubia-T3-sty'  (but not 'lord' of Nubia-T3-sty) from the site of Sanam: Kormysheva 1994, 251; Guerneur 2005, 504, 519-524.

<sup>25</sup> Although at Philae, according to the classical sources, the falcon is supposed to have been brought to the spot from Ethiopia: Strabo, *Geography* XVII.1.49, 'Here, also, a bird is held in honour, which they call a hawk (...) They said that it was an Aethiopian bird, and that another was brought from Aethiopia whenever the one at hand died, or before. And in fact the bird shown to us at the time mentioned was nearly dead because disease.'). Note that this tradition is an Egyptian one, not a Nubian one and, moreover, that it is of rather late date.

<sup>26</sup> Kormysheva 1996, 139. She also notes (p. 141) that, significantly, the cult of Horus was never adopted later on by the Meroitic kings and was thus exclusively linked to the Egyptian conquest of Nubia. However, Horus is certainly present at the temple of Apademak at Naga as well as in his temple at Musawwarat es-Sufra where he appears regularly amongst the local pantheon (Wildung 2001, 146; LD, Abt. V, pl. 61; pl. 67 a, c; Hintze 1971, pl. 30-31; 44-45). See also Kormysheva 2013, 153-154.

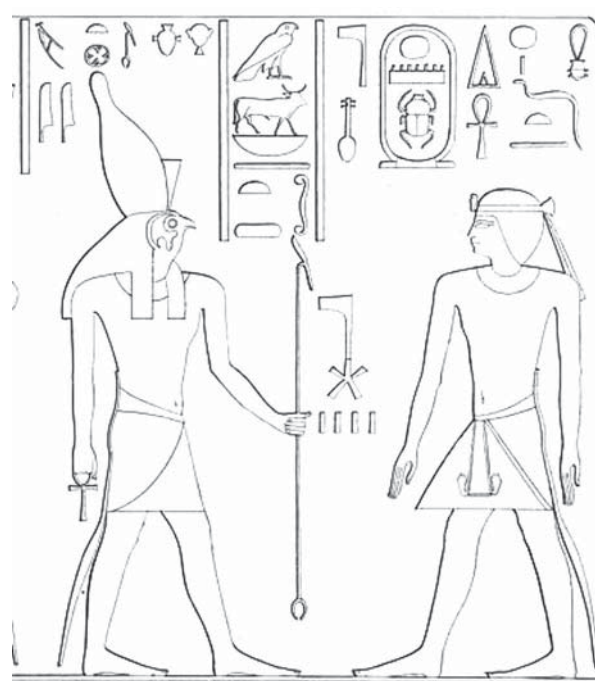



Figure 10.  'Horus, bull lord of Nubia-T3-Sty who dwells at Thebes' at Ellessiya, (LD III, pl. 46c).




Figure 11.  'Horus, bull lord of Nubia-T3-Sty who dwells at Thebes' at Djebel Dosha, LD III, 59e. (N.B.: Recent examination of the relief by W.V. Davies, whom I warmly thank for this information, concludes to a falcon-headed deity instead of a human headed one as shown in LD).



Figure 12. Stele from Sai and Djebel Adu (n° 393 / S.1100).

As there is no temple dedicated to the cult of Horus at Thebes (Gabolde 2005, 39, n. 26), the only possible interpretation of ‘Horus ... who dwells at Thebes’ is that we are dealing here ‘with a designation of the king’. This hypothesis is even more likely when one considers that the administration moved to the southern capital precisely between the reign of Thutmose I and the joint reign of Hatshepsut and Thutmose III. Hence, the reigning king was physically the Horus dwelling at

<sup>27</sup> W.V. Davies very kindly informed me that his recent examination of the representation of this Horus at Djebel Doshā has revealed that the god was not figured with a human aspect and wearing a double crown as published in LD III, 59e (Fig. 11) but as a falcon headed deity. I thank him for this crucial data and the authorization to mention it here. The iconography of Horus, ‘Bull lord of Nubia-*T3-Sty*’ appears thus quite consistent over all the known representations of the deity.

Thebes. The following two clues reinforce this assumption:

First, in one occurrence (stela n° 393, S.1100, from Gebel Adu) the god Horus of Sai is designated as *Hr k3 nht nb t3-Sty* with a sequence *Hr k3 nht* ‘Horus, victorious bull’ which definitely belongs to the royal epithets (Figure 12). The evolution *Horus-Bull* and then *Horus-victorious bull* is even paralleled by the evolution of the royal titulary, though with a different period. Second, in a speech of god Sopdou in Karnak’s *Akhmenu*, the god says to Thutmose III (*Urk.* IV, 574, 12-16):



‘You are the Horus lord of Nubia-*t3-Sty*’

Consequently, it seems that the numerous Horus of Nubia, and particularly the Horus of Sai, ‘*the Bull lord of Nubia-t3-Sty*’, were nothing less than the divine representatives of the king in Nubia.

The king was thus dwelling in Egypt while his deified replica was installed in Nubia. In that respect the Horus ‘Bull lord of Nubia-*T3-Sty*’ seems to have played the same role at Sai as the one played by the deified Amenhotep III at Soleb, where the god Nebmaâtêr was ‘the living image (of the king) on the earth’, embodying the divine presence of the king in that remote country (Figure 13) (Bickel, 2013, 59-82).

## Conclusion

As often, the one-sided version given by the Egyptian texts of the events that occurred in Nubia has modified our perception of the relationship between the Nubians and the Egyptians. It minimised or even eliminated the diplomatic attention and compromises the Egyptians paid to the Nubian culture, beliefs and society. This ideological veil can easily be noticed in other contexts, as, for example, in the case of the Egyptian-Hittite peace treaty in which the Akkadian diplomatic version is clearly less flattering than the hieroglyphic version (Kestemont 1981).

Once this veil removed, it appears that the Egyptians took into account and even adopted some genuine Nubian beliefs. They clearly integrated them into their own corpus of mythological views.

On the other hand, the Egyptians also required that the magical power of their pharaohs should be represented by deified entities in Nubia and therefore created

specific cults. It is for this purpose that the cult of some specific Horus was promoted in Nubia, like the Horus ‘Bull lord of *Nubia-T3-Sty*’ prominent at Sai. However, having no strong Nubian roots, most of these Horus cults vanished with the decline of Egypt’s political influence in the land of Kush.

### Abbreviations

DE = Collective, 1809-1826. *Description de l’Égypte ou, recueil des observations et des recherches qui ont été faites en Égypte pendant l’expédition de l’armée française*. Paris.

LD = Lepsius K. R., 1849-1859. *Denkmaeler aus Aegypten und Aethiopien* 1-12, Berlin.

REM = *Répertoire d’épigraphie méroïtique*. Paris.

Urk. IV = Sethe, K., H. W. Helck, H. Schäfer, H. Grapow and O. Firchow (eds) 1903-1957. *Urkunden des ägyptischen Altertums*. 8 Vols. Leipzig – Berlin.

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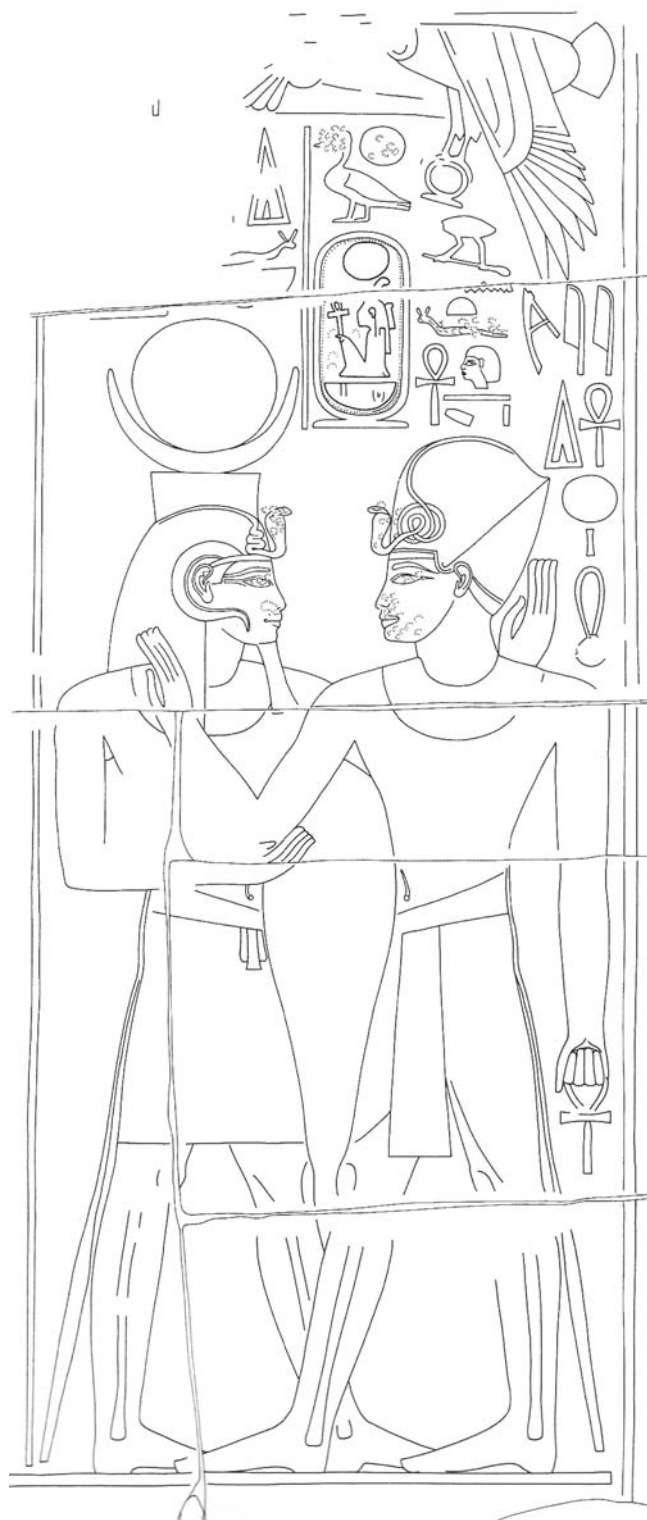


Figure 13. Deified Amenhotep III at Soleb. The god Nebmaâtrê is ‘the living image (of the king) on the earth’.

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