



**The Ancient History of the Sudan:  
Image and reality  
By: Khidir Adam Eisa**

**Introduction:**

The Sudan, the largest country in Africa, has a very vast area which extends from Egypt in the north to Uganda in the south, surrounded by ten countries. These vast territories measure about 1,000,000 sq. miles, with different ethnic groups.

Sudan with its geographical position as heart of Africa, became a zone of interaction between the Hamitic Arabs and the Negro Africans. This unique blending of the different elements resulted in Sudan's unique cultures.

The different geographical zones and the natural resources of the country facilitated agricultural and animal husbandry and commercial activities through its ancient trade routes. From the archaeological point of view, large areas of its vast territories are still "Terra incognita" they are not yet fully explored, in spite of the great efforts of various academic and authorized institutes (2). (Khidir Asia, 1994).

**Historical sources:-**

The image of the ancient Sudan was referred to in the ancient world by a number of names, compiled to the historians and archaeologists by the help of the ancient documents, registered in ancient languages such as: ancient Egyptian language, Meroitic language, Greek and Arabic sources. Among those names the most ancient was "the land of bows" (Ta-seli = the pictorial relief of king Jer of the 18th Egyptian dynasty on Jebel Sheikh Suleiman near Wadi Halfa; now exhibited in the garden of the Sudan Nation Museum); Ta-Nehsu: the land of the Nahasu (Mahase tribe) Kas or Kush, Ethiopia (to the Greek = the land of black skinned people), Bilad es-Sudan (to the Arabs = the land of the black people). All these names or designations are given to the lands lying south to the black land (kmt i.e. Egypt south of 1st cataract at Aswan). Recently the term Nubia is frequently used to mean the land of ancient Sudan.

Inscriptions of various length and nature on tombs and temples-walls, as well as stelae, kings' Annals, and tomb stones, furnish us with important and interesting information of the image and reality of the history of the ancient Sudan.

Literary in complete images of the ancient history of the Sudan were also drawn by some classical writers early as the 5<sup>th</sup> C.B.C., like the Greek and Romans (Herodotus, Diodorus Siculus, Strabo, Pliny,



Olympiodour, Procopius ....), as well as the Arabs writers such as Ibn Khaldum, el-Magrizi, Ibn Salim el- Aswni, el- Aumari, and Abu Salih (adams1977,69).

The early travellers and archaeological Mission: It is undisputed that the real interest and the Scientific approaches of the study of Sudanese archaeology developed by the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> C. But since the 19<sup>th</sup> C. A number of travels visited the country, compiling information of great importance about its regions and their inhabitant .while the 19<sup>th</sup> century witnessed an increasing interest in the history of the country. Among those travels the accoutres of the following are the most important, such as the Swiss J.L. Burckhardt (1813-1814) who traveled up to shandi and kassala, and wrote in 1819 that the indigenous people informed him of them existence of ancient remains similar to these present in Luxor and the land of philac in Egypt (Burckhardt 1819,Liii). He described the ancient mounments he saw and reported interesting information on ethnographic and oral history of the country. Others such as Waddington and Harbury in 1822 (Budge 1907, vol. I,p38) and Hoskins in 1935, publishing description of the archaeological sites they sow in the Sudan. But the most interesting report are those of the works of linant de Bellefonds who visited in 1922 the sites of Musawwarat el-Sufra, Naga'a and the pyramids of Meroe.

(Begrawia). At the same époque, Cailliand visited various archaeological sites in the north and central Sudan, drawing and describing the monuments such those of Meroe (pyramid, and towns); Muswwarat, naga'a and was Ban Naga (Cauilland, 1826-7).

Between the years 1842-1944, Lepsies conducted an explanation to the Sudan to study its relations with the Egyptian civilization. He registered systematically the sites in the north and central Sudan. His work is regarded as the real departure of methodic archaeology in the Sudan and the beginning of tour connaissance of its richness. (Lepsius.....).

By the beginning of this century, a number of prospections took place in the northern part of this century (Reisner-ASN1907-1911).Later, many other expeditions. Contributed significantly to our knowledge, by leading scientific archaeological concession, such as the University of Pennsylvania at Khranog and Firka (woody and Randall Maciver, 1907-1911); Griffith (Leclant, 1969, p.245-262) leading the oxford University Expedition to Faras and Sanam (1910-1913); the Liverpool university Expedition led by Garastang to the town Meroe and its



popular cemetery (garastang 1910-1914. Adams 1977, p.75) The methodological archaeological works of Reisner director of "Harvard –Boston Expedition" between 1916- 1923 were the most of remarkable (his survey south of Aswan and excavations at Kerma, Kurru, Nuri, Begrawia (Ancient Meroe) As a matter of fact, it is due to his works that

The approximate chronology of the ancient history of Sudan was drawn (by him). (Reisner, 1918-1919, 1923; Durham 1950-1963). Other missions were also engaged in important archaeological activities in central Sudan, such as that of the University of Humboldt in the Butana and Muswarat el-Suffra (Hintze 1959, pp.171-196; 1962-1971; Leclant 1973, p.21). To the south of Meroe, the ancient capital of the Kushite Empire, was that of the Sudan Antiquities Service at Umm Kadada and Wad Ban-Naga. Around Khartoum, there was the University of Khartoum Expedition to Surrab and the British Institute in Eastern Africa Expedition at Soba East. The earliest mission which worked south of Khartoum was that of "Wellcane Expedition" to Jebel Moya in the region of Sennar (the Blue Nile) in 1910-1914 (Addison, 1949). The British Institute East Africa Expedition in Equatoria and Bahrel-Gazal, and the Bergen University in the Upper Nile Province, also led uncompleted surveys.

Up today, a large number of foreign and National Missions are leading extremely important and remarkable inquiries and excavations in the various geographical regions of the Sudan, at the following sites and areas: Sedeirga, Sali Abri, the Mahas Project (north of the 3rd cataract), Kerma, Kudruk, Sileim and Letti Basin, Kawa, north of Khandag survey, (on the west bank of the Nile), old Dongla, Wadi Hawar, Wadi Magadem survey, Jebel Barkal area, Hamadab Survey, Damer, Begrawia-Atbara survey, the town of Meroe, El-Hobagi, Muswarat el-Suffra, Naga'a, Wad Ben Naga-Shandi survey, Geili-Sagai- Kabshi, Kadero, Suba East, the Blue Nile East Bank Survey, the White Nile Survey, Wadi Alagi gold mines the Red Sea South of Port Sudan Survey, and Kassala and Gash Delta. Some other regions of the Sudan, are still waiting future archaeological investigations such as: the Middle Nile region (Abu Hamal – Atbara reach). Eastern Sudan, Central Sudan south of Khartoum, Southern and Western Sudan (Khidir Eisa, 1994).

#### **The Historical Period and Archaeological Reality:**

The final and real story of Ancient Sudan is not yet written, and its general scene is not yet, as well, drawn clearly. This fact is due to the



lacuna in historical and archaeological evidences and researches, which should cover the whole land of ancient Sudan. As a history of a country couldn't be written from researches executed in only part of its (the lucky regions of the north).



### **The pre-historic periods (the stone ages):**

Interest in pre-historic archaeology in Africa, i.e. the period before the discovery of writing, increasingly advanced after the 2<sup>nd</sup> world war. Eut since the 19<sup>th</sup> C and early 20<sup>th</sup> C. scholars started to define and draw certain pictures to the development of man who manufactured, according to his needs, various types of stone implements(e.g. hand-axes, knives, scraps...etc) which were found by archaeologists. They described and classified them according to their type and forms. The general characteristics of life man in those periods was a primitive one, as a hunter-gatherer and living in caves(old and middle stone ages). While later, during the New Stone Age, which is generally known as the Agricultural Revolution or the Revolution of food production (Gordon Chille), he was able to domesticate animals instead of only hunting. He knew the art of plantation, textile pottery making and use. A complete new look to life was achieved by them, when he started to live in groups and settlements:i.e. he enled a communtiy life, installing the base of the later settled advanced and developed life.1

### **The old stone Ag (paleolithic period) (700,000-6000...40,000B.C)**

The archaeological researched in the different regions of the Sudan proved that man in this period “reached the climax of highly specialized hunting cultures”, with his finely chipped stone tools, bone and wood and ivory ones (e.g. sharp flints, arrows, hand axes, knives, sickles, and scrapers).The earliest object ever found in the Sudan, was the skull of senga on the blue Nile (found in 1942) and also at Abu Hujar, while the most representative site of this period is “khor Abu Anga; in omdurman (Akell 1961), where Arkell found tools probably dating to before 12,000 B.C. Other sites are:wadi seru west of the Nile, 24 Km north of omdurman; Khor el-Hodi near the confluence of Atbra river and the Nile, wadi el-shick Hilal north of Jebel Nakharu, near Nuri (south of the 4<sup>th</sup> cataract; near the Tangasi,wadi Garb(west of Dongla),wadi Khori, wawa, Sai island, Abri, near wadi Halfa and west of the Nile(7 sites of this period were discovered); Jebel el-sahaba site (north of Halfa, 50 skeletons were discovered dated approximately between 12,000-8,000 B.C. by the southern Methodist University ) (sudan National Museum No.18685) (Adams 1977).

They buried their dear near their settlements, provided with some funerary furniture; which might indicate the beginning of religious thinking(in life after death).



### **The Middle Stone Age(Mesolithic period):-**

This period in the Sudan is referred to also, as the Early Khartoum culture(Arke11 1961), after the studied sites at the present Khartoum Hospital and railway station, roughly dated to before 7000 B.C. Man of this age lived on fishing and hunting of animals(wild) and fruits collection, adapted to moist conditions, “living in semi-permanent camps, though without constructing dwellings”(Adams 1977).His major tools were stone Knives more developed than the previous age, bone-harpoon for fishing, and for the first time probably in Africa, he manufactured pottery vessels decorated simple lines(wavy and zigzag and dots).

Other sites of this culture were discovered at:El-sabaloga(5<sup>th</sup> cataract),Goz Iman, Mitimir, Kassala, Khor shambat, Gebel Abrog, Wadi Syedna(Surruab Bauda), Sagai, Khabashi.....etc.

### **The New Stone Age(Neolithic Period):-**

In the sudan, this age followed the Early Khartoum Culture. It is regarded as an advanced development of the Middle Age, its precedent (Early Khartoum). Its famous center is at El-shahinab site(Arke11) north of omdurman. In this site cultural continuity could be traced in the decorated pottery and more refined stone implements, while fishing and food collection continued as no evidence of agricultural activities were found. Some evidence of animal domestication could be traced (goats). Arke11 produced some C14 date of some of the finds, to approximately 5060+/- 40 and 5446 +/- 380 years.

Other sites of this date are: in the second cataract area (Weindorf) near wadi Halfa, excavated during the campaign of saving the Nubian Antiquities(the inundated area), Batn el-Hagar(Belly of stone) area, shag el-Doud and other sites in the Butana, Kedro, Geili, Sagai, Kabashi, Jebel Geri, Atbara river, Kassala area, Jebal Moya, Kadada, Kudruka.....

The period, between 3800 B.C. and 3100 B.C. is regarded as an interval period, lacking exact information on the cultural development in the Sudan, which is Know in the Egyptian history as the pre-dynastic period.

Generally speaking, the so far discovered sites of pre-historic dates, are rather few, and we hope more sites will be uncovered in the near future, so as to shed more light on those culture.



### The cultural Groups:

Reisner and firth were the first archaeologist to survey the area south of the Ist cataract(south of Aswan damp), discovering a number of sites and

Archaeological material which can not be of Egyptin origin, but contemporaneous to its cultural phases, and that is why they named them after Roman letters ( A,B,C...etc). the most important site which compiles those cultures is that of shellal, where the earliest cultural group which Reisner called "A", dates back to about, 3100 B.C.He regarded that epoque as the beginning Of the Nubian(or ancient Sudanese) history, as following the end of the Neolithic period. Their material culture reflected further development in human life and knowledge: the diffusion of agriculture, usage of copper, the appearance of local settlement architecture.

(the site of Afych), the usage of black and red pottery, and the appearance of the tradition of funerary furniture in a wide range, reflecting the belief in the other life(composed of pottery vessels, grinders, copper, tools, amulets,{bracelets, pendants,...etc} beads of stone and shells).

In their tombs, no artifacts dating to the after the end of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Egyptian dynasty were found, so its end was proposed to about 2800B.C. The major sites at, Its and 2<sup>nd</sup> cataract, Faras Gemai, Batn el-Hagar, Sadenga between Abri and Dolgo, Kerma, Afyeh, Abka, kudruka.

The end of the "A" group was followed, according to Reisner, by a period of cultural deterioration, poorness and and lack of information between the beginning of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Egyptian dynasty and the end of the 6<sup>th</sup> Egyptian dynasty (i.e. the old kingdom period 2500-225.B.C.).

This period was called by him, the B-group culture. Prof. H.Smith studied the tomb of this group which he found either emptied or scattered material and though that it is not a separate cultural group, but a continuation of the A-group culture which during its weaknesses caused by the inimical attitude of the Egyptians towards Nubia after the formation of the old Egyptian kingdom(Adam, 1977; H.Smith 1964).

Recent studies of B. Gratiens tried to prove again the separate identity of the B-group population as predecessors of the A-group culture, in the same region.

By the end of the old kingdom in Egypt, and during the period called by Egyptologist the First Intermediate period (2240-2150 B.C. ), appeared in Nubia a new independent culture with characteristic objects



and different funerary customs, called by Reisner the C-group. It came after the A and B group' cultures, dominated that part of the Nile Valley (bet. 1st and 3<sup>rd</sup> cataracts), till the country was invaded and completely Egyptianized during the 16<sup>th</sup> B.C. (i.e. the New Kingdom period).

The C-group people were essentially pastoralists, and settlers of small camps, and sometimes lived in small villages.

In spite of the numerous contacts with Egypt, their culture continued to develop independently, without adopting neither the technology nor the religious beliefs or the Egyptian writing. Among their important characteristics is the pottery which was hand-made, in form of bowls which were frequently, decorated with geometric motifs (incised on the surface of the pot, and filled with white paint).

The northern limits of the C-group culture were found near Koubanich village in Egypt, and the southern up to Aksha and Semna.

But traits of this culture were also found in Bt el-Hagar (area between Halfa and Abri), and similar pottery in Kassala area. (R. Fattovich).

### **The Middle Egyptian kingdom (11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> dyn.) relations with Ancient Sudan:-**

After re-installing internal political and security affairs, the rulers of the Middle Egyptian kingdom turned their attention towards Sudan (the 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> dynasties) as we learned from their kings' inscriptions found in various sites in Nubia (Gabalain stelae, rock inscription in the 1st cataract, inscriptions near the village of Abd el-Gadir, south of the 2<sup>th</sup> cataract, Semna stelae which seems to be a southern boundary stela of King Sesostri 111 of the 12<sup>th</sup> dynasty. (Arkell 1961, Garinei 1961).

During this period, literary and archaeological evidence showed that the land of Kush was under the domination of the Egyptian pharaohs. The domination of Nubia was double targeted; an economic one; to safeguard the flows of the Sudanese products (animal and forestry elements) and their mineral sources, and protect their trade routes. On the other hand, they were keen for the protection of southern boundaries. This is reflected clearly in their constructions of a large number of strong and great fortifications between the great fortifications between the first and the third cataracts at the sites of: Aniba, Kuban, Samna W. and Samna E. All this proved the great importance the Egyptians gave to the lands of the south.

This domination came to an end by the beginning of the 13<sup>th</sup> dynasty, and Nubia was again a free land till accession of the 18<sup>th</sup>





dynasty. This period between the 13<sup>th</sup> and the 17<sup>th</sup> dynasties is known as Hyksos rule of Egypt (second inter period).

### **Kerma period(2000-1580B.C.):-**

This is referred to as a separate culture after the name of its major archaeological site near the modern town of kema el-Balad, north of Dongola. The site is excavated by Reisner in 1913-1916, giving extremely important information on a key site of Sudanese archaeology.

It is characterized by certain local industries such as bronze arms, leather and woodworks decorated as unique in the world, due to its fines and beauty. Besides the locally produced objects. Reisner found a number of elements of Egyptian origin or production (pottery, scarabs, car arelies, fragments of statues) which led him to regard it as an Egyptian colony(Reisner 1923), and a trade center. He thought that the western Deffufa, the large mud-brick monument in the centre of the site, was the most southern frontier of the Middle kingdom of Egypt, and the town of kerma was the residence of the Egyptian ruler, while part of the Eastern Deffufa, was the burial place of the Egyptian rulers.

Many objections faced Reisner's theory, after proving the local burial customs and funerary furniture (Junker, 1921; Hintze, 1964).So it is proved that, kerma was a local culture, and the town was the centre of national rulers.

This is ensolidated as well by the archaeological evidence uncovered recently by the university of Geneva Expedition of kerma, led by prof. Cl. Bonnet (Bonnet 1978-1979). He re-excavated and studied the Deffufa building, which proved to be of religious nature, and discovered the various architectural elements of the town of kerma which Reisner did not touch (houses, places, important official buildings....etc). While in the Eastern Deffufa, he discovered the various periods of the burials of kerma people and rulers, and dated its appearance as a local African culture to before 2000 B.C.

Although not have many sites of this culture were yet discovered, but it seemed to have extended from Mirgissa in north up to Bugadumbush, south of Dongola (opposite to Golid town and north of Nawa village).

They have many aspects in common with the C-group culture, which was contemporaneous with it, such as the burial on beds, animal sacrifices the round superstructure of burials and some industries.

While they differ in largeness of the kerma burials as well as their custom of human sacrifices. It seemed that, kerma people were more



advanced than the C-group people, with centrally organized social and political systems. The Kerma Sovereigns seem to have regained their role which they lost to the Middle Kingdom Pharaohs, controlling their land, people and trade; forming equal sovereign identity and relations with their neighbour invaders of Egypt, the Hyksos (Asiatic), and a literary evidence reflected the feeling of the princes of Thebes in saying: "I sit united with an Asiatic and a Nubian. Each man in possession of his slice of this Egypt" (Gariner, Egypt of the Pharaohs).

It might as well be, as many scholars believe today, the nucleus or the first stage or period of the kingdom of

Kush which dominated the political and cultural affairs of the Nile valley, later on So, Kerma site, one of the most important archaeological sites in the Sudan is still a fertile antiquity of special interest and vitality to our history, culture and tourism.

### **The Egyptian New kingdom:**

The second Intermediate period (13<sup>th</sup> – 17<sup>th</sup>) which was marked by the lack and scarcity of detailed information on Egypt and ancient Sudan, ended with the discovery of the last king of the 17<sup>th</sup> dynasty (Kamose) of the collusion of the Kermite rulers of the Hyksos of lower Egypt, which urged King Kamose to engage himself in the sanction of the Hyksos out of the land of Egypt. After they dealt with the Hyksos, they turned their attention towards Nubia, and its invasion took place under the reign of King Ahmose I the founder of the 18<sup>th</sup> dynasty (in his 22<sup>nd</sup> year of his rule). He regained for Egypt the lands which were occupied by the Nubians.

They occupied and restored the fortresses of the Middle Kingdom and invading the land of Kush up to the 4<sup>th</sup> cataract under Thutmose I (Kurgus boundary stelae, south of Abu Hamad), establishing direct administration responsible to the king in Egypt. The rulers bore a number of titles such as the "Viceroy of Kush", "the king's sun of Kush" etc. (Arkell 1961, p. 84), making use of the fortress as administrative centers e.g. Kuban, Aniba, Serra, and Buhen.

The presence of the Egyptian rule in Nubia was demonstrated by the large number of hieroglyphic inscriptions on the rocks of cataracts (3<sup>rd</sup> cat.) and temple walls which they erected in all regions of Nubia during the reign of the successive kings of both the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> dynasties, dedicated to various Egyptian Gods, such as at Faras, the magnificent temple of Buhen (dedicated to God Horus, the icon-headed God), Semna (east and west), Amada, Akasha, Soleb (the most magnificent in all Nubia), Sadeinga, Sessabi, Kawa, Barkal... etc.



Besides temples they also constructed towns and fortified ones such as Amara Sessebi, Barkal,(Napata), Argo, Kewa.

Due to this intensive settlement of the Egyptian in Nubia(towns and temples) appeared many Egyptian cultural elements among the local population, as well as their belief in Egyptian Gods. This period is generally regarded as peaceful and prosperous era, both in Egypt and Nubia. But by the end of the New kingdom period (end of the 20<sup>th</sup> dynasty), appeared in Egypt political disputes and competition to the throne internal riots and wars and increasing unrest and general corruption. All these factors strengthened the power and riches of Nubia between the 20<sup>th</sup> – 24<sup>th</sup> dynasties, and then, Nubia started to intervene in the Egyptian internal Affairs. Nubia by then rich in minerals(Gold...etc), precious stones, ivory, ebony,spices, oils, cattle,tigers, ostrich eggs, and feathers, leathers, grains, woods...and elements which formed the main exports of Nubia to Egypt.

The kushites activities besides trade with Egypt, extended labour in the army as they were famous of being vigorous fighters, administrator and various other jobs, as the Egyptian stated and illustrated. Kush became a known power in the ancient world ready to play a major role in the Nile Valley and neighboring countries during the following period.

#### **The Sudanese 25<sup>th</sup> dynasty of Egypt:-**

The period between the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> dys. and the 24<sup>th</sup> dys. was marked by lack of detailed information, political culture instability in Egypt, now called, as well the third intermediate period. It was followed by the 25<sup>th</sup> dyn. According to menetho's division of the history of Egypt named by the Greeks as the Ethiopian dyn., which was ,as a matter of fact kushite or Sudanese dynasty as proved by various archaeological and linguistic evidence denying the theories of their libyan or Egyptian origins(J.Lecant, 1965,p.354-349). Being in stronger position than Egypt in military, economic and social aspects, they were able to march northwards and conquer Egypt, the conquest was started by king kashita and completed by king peye (piankhy).

They were followed by four kings in the rule of Egypt and kush (Shabako, Shebtaka, Tahraqa, and Tanroitamui) from both capitals, Thebes and Napta.

They Lost it after various military interventions of the Assyrians, and at last the last kushite king in the rule of Egypt, Tanwritamani, retreated back home and ruled in his home capital, Napta, about 654 B.C The greater of his kushite dynasty, was the



subject of the ancient and classical documentation. Proving themselves in politics, they influenced the Egyptian civilization on their own taste, and were influenced as well by many Egyptian cultural traits, e.g. religious practices and belief (i.e. Egyptian Gods like, Amon, Horus, thoth...etc, temples and pyramids, languages, funerary furniture, court life,...etc), probably in their own and local adaptation, as were shown in the sites (although various other sites existed in Nubia) of kawa, kurru, Napata and Meroe, the most important sites of that epoch.

### **Napata –Meroe period:-**

A distinguished period of its history the kushite empire flourished for a thousand years later. Their king ruled from the traditional capital of Napata (kurru – karema region), and later on from Meroe (the capital at the present village of Bajrawa north from the town of Shendi). It seemed that the kushite empire extended in vast regions, bordering in the North Egypt (in lower Nubia), but how far it ruled southwards is still problematic as no scientific archaeological excavations or surveys were done. The presence of some sites of this period along the Blue Nile (Abu Geili, and Sennar area) as well as the white Nile might suggest that it extended beyond Sennar, and Kosti town probably up to the Upper Nile province, and possibly also in the west and East of the country.

This period witnessed the appearance of local cultural elements, with only very few Egyptian traits which survived till the end of the kingdom (some Egyptian Gods, few writings in hieroglyphy) the prosperity of this period was due to its stable political system and the regular succession of the kings, and the strong economy, based on agriculture, commerce, animal husbandry, mining and its various industries, helped by its favorable environment. They were able to invent their own language in the 3<sup>rd</sup> C.B.C, instead of depending on the Egyptian language in its earlier period (written in both hieroglyphic signs and cursive alphabet). They worshipped local gods (e.g. The lion god Apedemak, Arsenopolis, Sbuimker) besides Egyptian ones (Amon, Hator, Isis, Osiris...etc). Their art and industries were highly advanced as reflected in their funerary furniture (in pottery, golden and other amulets, statues...etc). Their monuments also showed fine reliefs and unique architectural elements in temples, pyramids, towns, palaces....etc.

Sites of this period were discovered all along the Nile Valley from South of Aswan up South of Khartoum: Philae and the area North and South of Wadi Halfa, in the 3<sup>rd</sup> cataract region, in Dongola Region, the



4<sup>th</sup> cataract region, the Island of Meroe and the Butana Region and areas South of Khartoum. Sites in the West and the East of the country are not yet studied. Their discovery is hoped in due course.

The present key sites of this period are: Sedeinga, Sai, 3<sup>rd</sup> cataract region, Kerma, Argo Island, Kurru, Barkal, Meroe, Nuri, Begrawia, Gebel Geili, Gebel Moya...etc

The question of the end of the Kushite Empire is still a matter of debate. But it seemed that towards the end of the 4<sup>th</sup> C.A.D, the state was facing a number of tribal raids from the East and South West. Indirect evidence was in about 330, that of the invasion of Ezana king of Axum. But probably, the central power diffused in the various regions of the Empire,

forming some kind of buffer or clan states, after the central administrations weakened due to the above mentioned reasons.

The next period before the advent of Christianity and its kingdoms in the Sudan is known to historians as the post-Merotic period (X-group), which adopted many Merotic cultural elements, but their rulers as well as the population were buried under mounds instead of pyramids as the preceding king did. Sites of this period were discovered all along the Nile, North of Khartoum up to Aswan in Egypt.

It is regarded as an intermediary period between the end of the Kushite state (if ever ended, as I believe in continuity and change in the ancient culture and history of the Sudan), and the establishment of the Christian kingdoms of Nubatia, Maquria and Alwa in the 6<sup>th</sup> century A.D.

On the whole, the history of ancient Sudan is not yet completely written. More archaeological excavations, surveys and historical researches are needed, particularly in the region still waiting the future attention and care of scholars and authorities, in central and south Sudan, as well as the East and West of the country, to enable us to have a more clear picture of its historical events and cultural diffusion in the interland, and its relation with neighboring countries of central, Eastern and Western Africa.

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