

The University of Dongola Archaeological Investigations at El-Kurru Royal Cemetery (Northern Sudan)

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Abstract: *This paper focuses on two seasons (2014-2015) of a five years project of archeological field work at the Kushite royal cemetery of El-Kurru (here referred to as Kurru), a village 15 km south of Jebel Barkal in Northern Sudan. The cemetery which was first excavated by G. A. Reisner in 1918/1919 witnessed the birth and rise of the Napatan State since it was a small chiefdom and its development into an organized State and eventually into a fully fledged empire extending over most of the Nile Valley from the Delta to the borders of Equatoria and took the name of the 25th Dynasty during the period between 750-650 B.C. Parallel to the political development of the Napatan State, the cemetery also reflects the development of the burial customs from local mortuary practices to a type with elements of Egyptian style. As it revealed the resting place of the 25th Dynasty kings, queens and their ancestors, it casted light on an important phase of the ancient history of Sudan. Yet 100 years elapsed since Reisner's excavations have left the cemetery in a poor state of preservation. Our survey and re-excavation revealed access to new features and located others, recovered extra finds that may throw light on the origin of the State, its nature, its economic basis, its political growth, its structure and development of all these . It is expected, when analyzed, to provide answers and stem new questions. Our mission has also embarked on restoring and protecting the site both for future research and potential tourism.*

Keywords: *Kush, Napata, Kurru, 25th.dynasty, Pyramids, Piankhy,*

Introduction

Kurru is a village in the suburb of the modern town of Merowe, 15 kms south of Jebel Barkal, at the 4th . Cataract, in Northern Sudan (Fig. 1). The name 'Kurru' is believed to be a distortion derived from an ancient language, the source of which is not yet known. The village rests on a sandstone plateau on the right bank of the Nile with a very narrow flood plain. An archaeological site of a Kushite cemetery is situated in the northern part of the village, intersected by two water channels originating in the plateau and flowing into the river. A few kilometres west of the village there are remains of a petrified forest believed to date to the cretaceous age (over 65 million years back).

The Kushite cemetery is situated on the

plateau, behind the village, with over 60 burial graves believed to date to the first half of the first millennium B.C., most of which house the bodies of the early Kushite monarchs and their ancestors who set the foundation of the kingdom which came to be known as Napata.

The burial ground covers an area of about 300 X 500 m. with two small water channels cutting through its surface, dividing the cemetery into three fields. The main field occupies the central part, with the other two parts located to the north and south (Fig. 2).

The cemetery witnessed the birth and rise of the Napatan State from a small chiefdom to an organized State and to an empire extending over most of the Nile Valley from the Delta to the boarder of Equatoria. The cemetery also



Fig. 1: The region of Napata, downstream of the 4th Cataract.

reflects the development of the burial customs from traditional burials of a type deeply rooted in the past Kushite cultures to types showing gradual development towards adoption of architectural elements of Egyptian style.

History of The Site

There isn't as yet a definite date for the beginning of the Napatan State. However, it was suggested that the emergence of a chiefdom round Kurru probably dated back to the dawn of the first millennium B.C. By that time the Egyptian New Kingdom domination over Northern Sudan was fading out, when some chiefs of a native family were establishing themselves as rulers of the region. Their burials occupy the uppermost of the plateau in forms of tumuli (mound graves). None of the names was recovered, whether for the lack of literacy, or unlikely, for the loss of inscriptive artefacts bearing their names. Alara, the last of those early chiefs (early 8th century B.C.) came to be known from inscriptions of some of his successors at a later date. He had

apparently set the foundation of a local State. His brother Kashto (760-747 B.C.) expanded his rule to Thebes, beyond the first cataract in Egypt. Kashto's elder son Piye, widely known as Piankhy (747-716 B.C.), brought the whole of Egypt under his domain. Stable conditions prevailed under Shabako (716-702 B.C.), Piankhy's brother. But series of conflicts erupted between the Kushites and The Egyptian princes of Lower Egypt during the reigns of Shabako's successors, Shitbitko (702-690 B.C.) and Taharqo (690-664 B.C.). By then the rising power of Assyria was advancing west and joining the conflict in support of one of the small States of Palestine. Fierce battles were fought during the reign of Taharqo and his successor, Tanwetamani (664-653 B.C.), and resulted in a final defeat and withdrawal of the Kushite from Lower Egypt. This brought the 25th Dynasty rule over Middle and Lower Egypt to an end, and limited the family's control to the area south of the 1st cataract where their State flourished for another 1000 years.

The Archaeology

Unlike many of the Kushite royal sites whose locations and description came to be known via accounts of Greek and Arab geographers and travellers who visited the country, Kurru cemetery had escaped their attention, and no mention was made of it. No drawings, maps, or photographs appeared in any of those earlier publications. This might be due to the lack of attractive monumental features in the site,

similar to those at Barkal and Nuri (Fig. 1). The superstructures of the Kurru burials have, long ago, turned into rubbles due to extensive plundering through time.

Apart of two burials (Ku – 1, Ku – 2) of a late king and his queen (3rd century B.C.) whose names were not recovered, the cemetery at Kurru ceased to be used after the death of Tanwetamani and his mother, Qalhata, sometimes during the middle of the 7th century

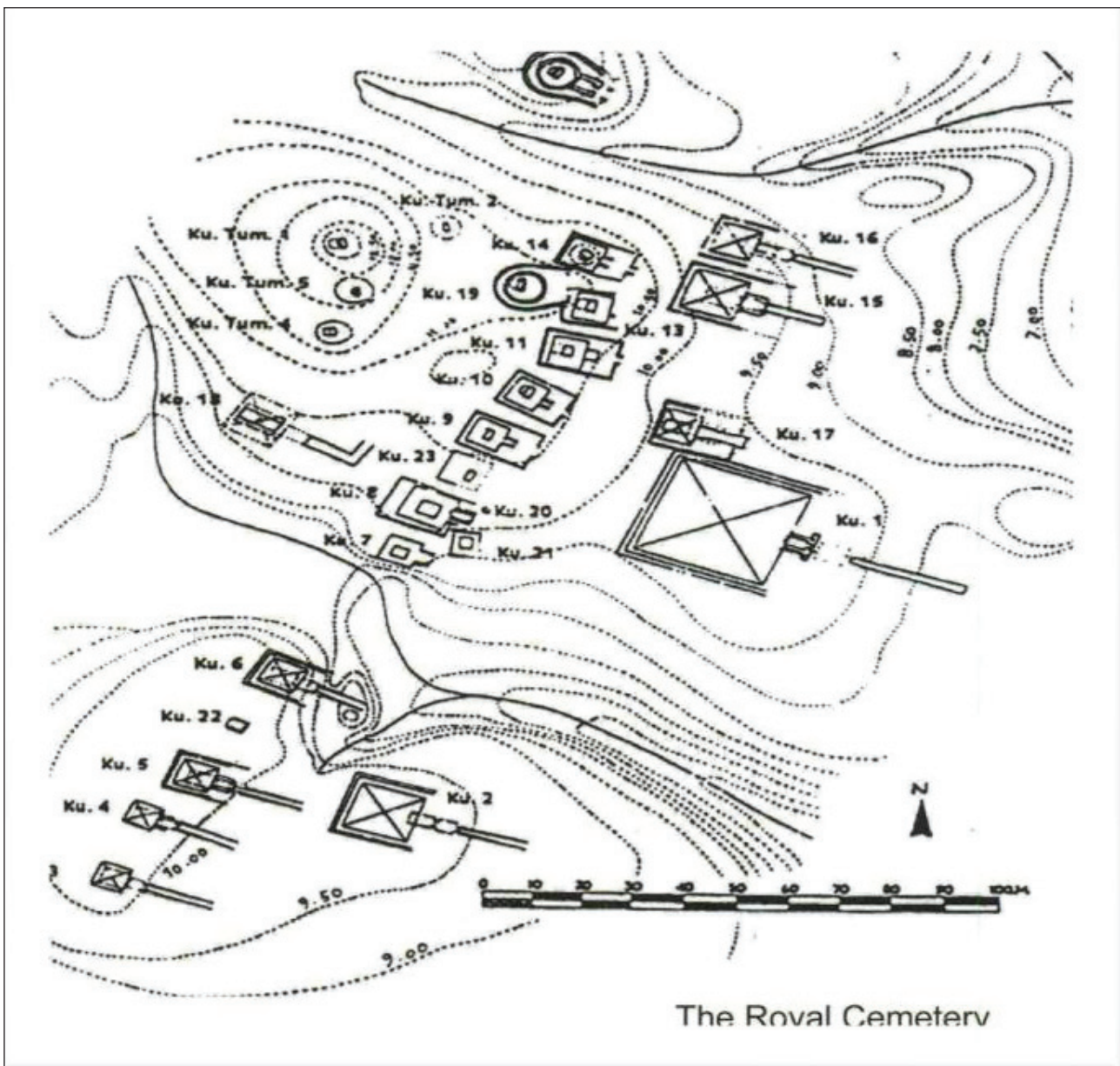


Fig. 2: The royal cemetery at Kurru.

B.C.(Fig. 2).

Previous Works

Archaeological investigations at Kurru began in the winter of 1918 while a joint expedition from Boston Museum of Fine Arts and The University of Harvard, headed by G.A Reisner, was conducting work at the sister sites of Barkal and Nuri . When Reisner visited Kurru first, he thought the site was an X-group cemetery (4th-5th century B.C.), a later cultural phase postdating the collapse of Kush. But when he failed to locate the burials of the 25th Dynasty at Nuri, he turned to investigate the mounds at Kurru (Reisner 1919). Accordingly, he turned to be the first scholar to conduct work on the site.

Reisner published a number of preliminary field reports in various journals (Reisner 1920) turning his dream of locating the burials of the 25th dynasty, whose names came to be known from Egyptian sources, into reality and placing Kurru on the archaeological map of the Nile Valley.

Reisner passed away in 1942 leaving behind huge bulk of data including a large collection of objects, field notes, drawings, figures and photographs, all waiting for detailed analysis, careful and meticulous comparisons and studies before passing it to publication. His assistant D. Dunham, then at Boston Museum, took the responsibility to shoulder this heavy task, not only for Kurru but for all the Kushite sites the reports of which were truncated by Reisner's death. The first volume, Kurru, came out in 1950 (Dunham 1950) then the rest followed (Dunham 1955.. etc). Yet all these volumes cover a sample of the data recovered. The bulk is stored at Boston Museum, the rest is distributed in other African, European and American Museums awaiting detailed studies and publications.

Reisner's work, mostly published by Dunham, was cited in many publications forming a cornerstone for understanding the course of events of the establishment of the earliest Kushite civilization. Based on these publications, a number of articles and dissertations were published or written. Among those:

Dunham and Macadam contributed a paper in which they treated the genealogical relation of the Napatan royal family together with the chorological sequence, beside utilizing inscriptional evidence for identifying the royal names (Dunham and Macadam 1949)

Dixon questioned the claims of the Libyan and Egyptian origins of the Napatan royal family, refuting the basis for those claims and suggesting an indigenous origin (Dixon 1964).

In his PhD thesis Gasm el-Seed focused on the development of the burials architecture and compared their inscriptions to those of Egypt's (قسم السيد علي، ١٩٨٢).

Kindall published a long paper in the journal 'Meroitica,' presenting a revaluation of Reisner's conclusions based on the material Reisner recovered from Kurru's early tombs preceding KU-17 of Piye. With supportive data from Reisner's field diaries and some Egyptian evidence, Kendall modified Reisner burial evolution of superstructure, and the time span of the early Napatan genealogy (Kendall 1999).

A joint paper by the first author and Abdulla addressed the chronology of the Napatan royal family resting on a detailed study of the burials and using a number of variables such as the topographical location and orientation of each tomb, the burial superstructures, its substructure, the grave contents, etc. The conclusion supports the local origin and the steady and gradual development of the architecture and the State (محمد علي، عباس وعبدالله، عبد القادر ٢٠١٠).

F. Abdullah wrote an M.A thesis on the succession of the Napatan royal family, addressing the question of the short and long chronology of Napatan kings, based on Kurru and Nuri royal cemeteries (عبدالله، فخري حسن ٢٠١٠).

These works and others, combined, brought to light a previously covered episode and filled gaps in the history of the Sudan. Yet many issues remained unsettled or partly unsolved, and many questions remained unasked. Among these are:

1. The origins of: a) The Napatan royal family, b) the Napatan culture, and c) the Napatan State. These issues were seldom given the attention they deserved in the literature of this phase.
2. The lack of any economic basis which could set the foundation of the State in a region of poor resources (i.e. agriculture, grazing, mining, trade routes, etc.).
3. The absence of any traces of settlements in the region, whether residences, royal courts, administrative centres, or common people burials, etc, contemporary with the State.
4. The place and nature of the chronological phase the (Third Intermediate Period) linking the Kerma - Napata cultural and political systems.

These and many other issues remain to be addressed. But as the project is basically meant to address the promotion and management of the site, we could only partly start to address some of the above issues.

The Excavation and Re-Excavation

Our objectives for the five years project as submitted to QSAP, can be summarized as follows:

a- To conduct a survey in the site and its vicinity

for any archaeological features missed or ignored by the previous work.

- b- To test excavate, excavate and re-excavate, newly recovered features and those buried by drifting sands or filled with trash.
- c- To present the site by removing the previous rubble and that which may result of our work.
- d- To restore and protect the site for future generations and potential tourism.
- e- To analyse the finds recovered with the hope of casting light on any of the issues in question.
- f- To locate the removed stone blocks which were reused in various buildings in the village.
- g- To locate the sources from which the stone blocks were quarried.

Almost a whole century has elapsed since Reisner's works at Kurru. Despite his great achievements, the time he devoted to the excavations was not more than three months. His work has resulted in large amounts of rubble. The natural rugged topography and the intersecting water channels together with 100 years of negligence during which natural agents and human factors filled the burial pits, staircases and chambers with drifting sands and trash, have left the site in a poor state of preservation (Fig. 3).

As mentioned in the foregoing account, the two channels cut their courses through the surface of the site dividing it into three fields: a central field in the middle where most of the burials are; a northern field across the northern channel occupied by some of the queens' burials; and a southern field housing also some queens' burials and the royal horses' burials (Fig. 2).



Fig. 3a: The stairway and outer chamber of Ku-3, before clearance.



Fig. 3b: The entrance to Ku-4 before clearance.

The Central Field

In the central field, the topography has coincidentally set the burials in a sequential order from west to east. This was recently supported by a detailed study of architectural and other mortuary variables of the burials (محمد علي، عباس وعبدالله، عبد القادر ٢٠١٠). Accordingly, we embarked on the upper-most (western) part of the central field where 4 tumuli burials of the Chiefs (Tum 1,2,4,5) assumed to be the ancestors of the kings who were buried further east. Those were re-excavated by removing the drifted sands and the trash down to the bottom. Here, the superstructure of each tomb was made of rough stones into a circular mound forming a dome over the burial. The substructure, as shown by the re-excavation, is a shallow circular or oval pit, sometimes with a side niche, apparently

for offerings, as indicated by its size. Next to these, to the east and north are 2 burials (Tum 6 and 19) with features similar to the previous four burials, but differ in their superstructures by having horse-shoe shaped enclosures made of well-cut sandstone blocks and a chamber in Ku -6. Large numbers of similar burials (i.e. circular stone superstructures with circular or oval burial pits) have characterized the burial customs of bronze age cultures of northern Sudan (Arkeell 1961) and have also been found in the eastern desert of Northern Sudan (Magid et al. 1995). Such facts indicate that the Kurru type burial is widely spread and deeply rooted in the history of the mortuary practices of the Sudan (Fig. 4 a & b).

Immediately in front of the tumuli lies a line of 11 mastabas (Ku 7-14 , 20,21,23). All were

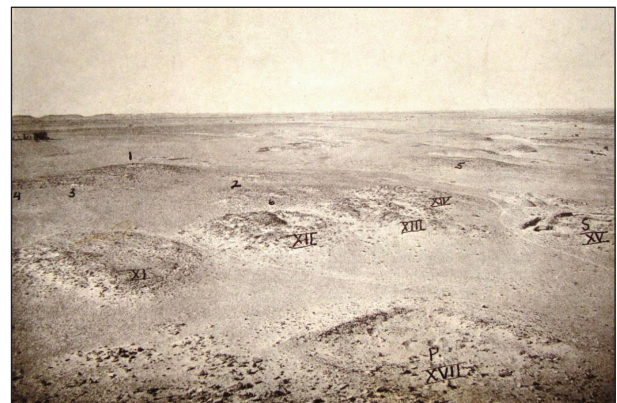


Fig. 4a: Tumuli burials at the cemetery before excavation (1918).



Fig. 4b: Ku-1 after clearance.

cleared to the bottom. Here, the superstructure turned into a flat-topped rectangular shaped mastaba made of well-cut sandstone blocks, most of which have been removed; a chapel and a rectangular enclosure wall were added (Fig. 5). The burial pit is rectangular in shape with a side niche. At the end of the row, in the southern side, lies mastaba-8 (Ku-8) which looks more of a proto-pyramid than a mastaba, as shown by its high standing side walls. Its substructure is a rock-cut rectangular pit. Judging from this burial location, shape, form, and architecture it was suggested to be the burial of king Kashto, the first in the line of the Kushite kings to reach Thebes. No name was recovered from any of these mastabas. But Ku-20,21,23 were assumed to belong to chief Alara, one of his wives and a wife of Kashto (Reisner 1919: 245-46). It was also suggested that these mastabas were actually remnants of pyramids which were crowning the substructures (Kendall 1999). This looks unlikely, as Ku-8 of Kashto, the last in the line of mastabas, was made mostly of unshaped stones of various sources and forms, and does not seem to be preceded by a line of pyramids.

Down the Slope, in the middle of the central field are the burials of 3 of the 25th dynasty Pharaohs (Peyi Ku – 17, Shabako Ku – 15, Tanwetamani Ku – 16. West of the mastabas lies Ku -18 of Shubitko). Here, the architecture stepped into a fourth phase. The superstructures of these pyramids were removed in antiquity, but the foundations of most, when cleared, are in situ, made of large sandstone well cut blocks over the burial chambers where a stairway was cut into the bed-rock leading to one or two rock-cut burial chambers of varying lengths, breadths and heights (Fig. 6). Ku-17 and Ku-18 have one chamber, while the other two (Ku-15 and Ku-16) have two chambers. Ku-17, 15 and 18 were unearthed down to the floor of the chambers, 3m below revealing a rock bench in



Fig. 5: Ku-10 (mustaba) after clearance.



Fig. 6a: Depiction in Tanwetamani burial chamber (Ku-16).



Fig. 6b: King Tanwetamani in the middle of two sons of Horus (Ku-16).

both cases, apparently meant for the royal bed to be laid (Fig. 7). Ku-16 of Tanwetamani and Ku – 5 of his mother Qalhata, remained intact, to a great extent (See below).

In Ku – 16 the paintings of the two burial chambers are intact. The decorations covering



Fig. 7: Ku-18, the burial chamber of King Shubitko.

the walls and the roof of each chamber, are done on plastered surfaces with different colours. The king is shown on the south wall of the outer chamber with uraeus, an indication of his control over Sudan and Egypt, and has round his neck a representation of Amun. Beside him stand two sons of Horus (Fig. 8). Also on the other walls of the chamber is a representation of Isis and Nephth together with a depiction of the solar disk.

The inner chamber shows the sarcophagus of the king depicted on the south wall flanked by deities watching him passing to the afterlife. The other walls show depictions of priests, the ‘Ba’ which represents the soul of the king, the ‘ankh’ which is the sign of life, and many Egyptian hieroglyphic signs.

The lower part (eastern) of the central field is occupied by a pyramid (Ku-1) and what seems to be a mortuary temple. This part of the central field was assigned a separate concession licensed to the University of Michigan, under

the directorship of Dr. Geoff Emberling. During the 2014 field season, the University of Dongola has contributed some financial support out of its project budget to that work. Now the work is in progress under a separate budget to investigate pyramid Ku-1, the temple, and the paintings in Ku-5 and Ku-16.

Ku-1 is the largest and the only standing pyramid in the cemetery and the only burial with 3 rock cut chambers. It is believed to be of a late date. Reisner failed to fully excavate it due to a possible collapse of the ceiling in the inner chamber.

Down the slope, east of Ku-1, on the edge of the northern water channel, Reisner had unearthed the top of a mortuary temple with an outer hole leading to an inner section with sandstone columns. It appears to be leading to a group of rock-cut room. Both Ku-1 and the mortuary temple are subject to further excavation by the Michigan team (Emberling



Fig. 8: Ku-5, the stairway leading to the burial chambers of queen Qalhata.

2013).

The Southern Field

The re-excavation at the Southern field across the channel revealed 5 of the queen's pyramids (Ku-2, 3, 4, 5, 6). The latter 4 are situated on the high-ground of this field aligned in a row facing east. Here also the pyramid structures were removed in antiquity, but the clearance exposed part of the foundation and the surrounding wall, which meant to enclose the pyramid and the chapel. The staircases were cut in the bedrock leading to rock-cut burial chambers. In Ku-3, Ku-4, and Ku-6, tons of hard and soft soil mixed with gravel, stones and trash, were removed all the way to the floor, 2 m below. The chambers were very well cut in the sandstone with regular angles and well-cut entrances. A sandstone bench was placed in the centre of the inner chamber of each for the burial bed to be laid on (Fig. 10, 11). Some alabaster basins were recovered (Fig. 12). The names of these queens (Nebri, Konsa, Qalhata and Arti) were found earlier inscribed on some of the finds (Dunham1950).

Ku-5 of queen Qalhata (707-690 B.C.), like that of her son (Ku-16), is better preserved. Qalhata, daughter of Piye, and sister-wife of Shubitko, is the mother of Tanwetamani. Here the superstructure has long been removed, with the exception of few traces of the pyramid foundation. The paintings and inscriptions in



Fig. 9: Ku-1, the stairway and the pyramid.



Fig. 10: Ku-15, the inner burial chamber of king Shabaka, after clearance.



Fig. 11: Ku-6, the burial chamber of queen Arti, after clearance.



Fig. 12: Marble basins from Ku-3.

both chambers were intact. The drawings on the roof also represent the solar disk. On the walls, she was shown in life and death well-dressed in both cases. In life, escorted by 2 of the 4 sons of Horus. In death she lies in her sarcophagus surrounded by gods and a priest offering her the ‘ankh’ sign (Fig. 13).

Conservation of the two paintings of the two tombs will be undertaken as part of the other concession.

Down the slope lies Ku-2, a pyramid of a queen of a late date, whose name has not been recovered; supposedly she is a wife of the king buried in Ku-1 (Dunham 1950). The superstructure has been removed, and the burial itself is in a poor state of preservation. It was partly cut in a formation of sandstone overlaid by a layer of limestone. This imposed precautionary safety conditions that posed a threat of collapse of the burial; hence, Reisner abandoned the excavation. In our second season, slow rate attempts were made to clear the staircase and the outer chamber. Those helped remove more than 2m of solid rubble. The inner chamber awaits excavation.

The Northern Field

Across the northern channel are 5 shaft burials given the numbers Ku-51 - Ku-55; they belong to some of Piye’s wives. Two of them were re-excavated (Ku-51 and Ku-52). Both were rock-cut shaft rectangular burials. Both were filled with drifting rubble and trash, and both showed no trace of superstructure or stairs. Both were cleared to the bottom, down to about 2.75m deep. In length and breadth they measured about 4m×2.50m. A sandstone or mud brick bench was set at the floor for resting the deceased’s bed. The rest of these burials are to wait further work.

Few metres to the northeast, under the houses of the village is a row of horse burials of 25 royal horses belonging to 4 Kings of the 25th dynasty



Fig. 13: Ku 18, queen Qalhata inside her sarcophagus.

(Piye, Shabako, Shbitko and Tanwetamani). The name of each king was inscribed and attached to his horses (Dunham 1950). Being in and under private houses, these burials are easy to trace, but it would be difficult to re-excavate.

Other Objectives

Some of our other objectives, partly conducted during the two seasons, were:

A-The Survey

The question regarding Kurru as a burial ground for the royal Kushite dynasty, and most likely, its earliest administrative center, lies in the core of our objectives, as is already said. No habitation (sites or cemeteries predating the rise of the Napatans royal family) are, as yet, known in the area. Few middle Achuelean artifacts and a Neolithic site were reported (Mohammed-Ali per.com; Garcea 2006). A long chronological hiatus followed the end of the Stone Age till the rise of the Napatans (ca.900 B.C). When a magnetometer survey in the site resulted in no subsurface features, a walking survey in the vicinity of the village searching for earlier settlements and/or burials suggestive of ancient habitation sites was attempted. In two locations few burials were recovered:

15 km. west of the site, on the edge of Mehaila desert few graves of circular superstructures, 2m. in diameter, revealed few potsherds



Fig. 14: Removing one of the many rubble heaps.

recalling Bronze age types; these remained to be analyzed.

At Dahaseira, at the Southern edge of Kurru village, circular mound graves surrounded by scatter of potsherds are also recovered and still await analysis. Work will continue in the coming seasons with the hope that some of these graves can be chronometrically dated to shed light on the apparent chronological hiatus separating the Stone Age and the historic era in the area.

B-Removing the Rubble

The rubble heaps of the 1918/1919 excavation and the current work in the site resulted in huge rubble mounds of sand stones and trash, forming the site's most prominent feature. Dominating the landscape, these rubble mounds stand in the way of visitors blocking every access to the site features, obstructing the passage of the drainage for the rain water, and turning unlikely any attempt for a full-scale magnetometer survey. As Reisner's excavations were conducted in a very short time, we assumed that every mound belonged to the tomb right at its back, as all tombs are facing east where the heaps are.

Mounds were removed, first by loosening the soil, then carrying it by wheelbarrows to a point where a backhoe could lift it into a truck to dump it at a point out of the site and its buffer (Fig. 14). Part of the site is now open to light, but much remains to be done, despite the high

cost in labor and budget (Fig.14).

While the heaps were being removed, two sub-activities were concurrently ongoing.

Every mound was sectioned and a sample of the rubble was sifted in search of any archaeological objects that might have escaped attention. The close search for any larger objects in the heaps yielded good results: inscribed sandstone blocks and potsherds were found in abundance. And the sifting brought to light a number of broken shawabties yielding parts of royal cartouches. Few soft stone fragments, blue in color, were picked from the rubble. They might have been used, among others, for painting the chambers. Fragments of metal objects including ornaments were recovered. All finds were currently under analysis.

C-Restoration

The absence of most of the tombs' superstructures, or parts of them, is suggestive of them being removed and reused in other constructions, most likely within the village. Some of them were expected to yield inscriptions or carved decorations. Locating them may provide information of some value. A brief survey in the village and inquiries among the villagers resulted in the following:

- 1- Some of the blocks were taken to a nearby Muslim cemetery.
- 2- Three other localities in the village were identified.
 - a- An ancient deserted mosque.
 - b- An ancient deserted residence.
 - c- Reisner's camp.

Those in (a) and (b) above were built of regular shaped mason cut with smooth surfaces, similar in size and shape, to those of the royal cemetery. The others in Reisner's camp were broken blocks, reused after he failed to restore or relate them to any particular tomb.

This has also inspired the inquiry regarding the quarries that have provided the stone blocks for the tombs. Tentatively, two areas were located. Their investigation is yet to be undertaken.

It was also noticed that huge petrified tree trunks of a type similar to those of the Petrified Forest, spread over various parts of the sites. A distribution map is to be drawn to see whether they were related to the site in any functional manner.

D-Protection:

According to the UNESCO plan, the boundaries of the site and its buffer zone cover about 4.2 kilometers in length. Its topography is interrupted by two channels, as mentioned, dividing the site into three sub-fields, characterized by natural rocky mounds. The whole site is currently surrounded, on three sides, by houses and gardens.

Since the time of Reisner, security of the site remain a dream. Following the UNESCO boundaries, we decided to build a 1.5m high mud wall harmoniously compatible with the surroundings. Clay soil had to be brought from areas over 20 kilometers away. From a dug well water was first pumped through pipes into an artificial pond close to the site, then in barrels carried by trucks to the builders. Ten teams were involved; each consisted of 4-5 men. The work is in its initial stage, and the channels in the course of the wall, remain to be dealt with (Fig. 15).

Results and Remarks

The two seasons of work conducted by our five seasons project at El-Kurru royal cemetery have brought positive results, and provided answers to questions. Yet it should be mentioned here that when Reisner was conducting this work (A.D. 1918-1919), Eliot Smith theory of Egyptocentric hyper diffusionism for culture changes was fashionable. Others developed



Fig. 15a: Part of the 4.2 km mud wall protecting the site .



Fig. 15b: Building of the mud wall in process.

similar opinions of cultural diffusion to explain the rise and fall of cultures. The Napatan culture and State were not an exception then. Its origin kept swinging between Egypt and Libya till it proved otherwise (Dixon 1964).

However, the re-excavated burials revealed access to hidden features of architecture, casting more light on the stairs, the chapels, the arched doors, the chambers, and the rock benches, etc.

The clearance shows how the architecture of the tombs has, in its sub and superstructures, locally developed from tumulus mounds over circular pits of a type deeply rooted in the local mortuary practices of the region, later with side niches, to a tumulus with horse-shoe enclosures over a rectangular pit, to a mastaba, then to a rock-cut chamber overlaid by a pyramid. More important, is the close architectural link between

the burial types and within the same types. The removal of some of the rubble heaps has allowed for part of the site panorama to show up. The finds recovered, namely the pottery when analyzed, may fill gaps in our knowledge, not only within the Napatan culture sequence, but also of its origin. The fence, when finished, will hopefully bring a long phase of the site's negligence to an end. Yet much more remains to be done before our dream comes true.

Before we close this paper, it seems in order to recapitulate. Our work, through the portions set above, has shed light on the following:

1. The ethnic origin of the Napatan royal family is no longer a matter of dispute. The early chiefs of Kurru rose of a local family before they took advantage of the administrative hiatus after the Egyptian withdrawal from Northern Sudan. They established themselves as rulers over the region. Rapidly they expanded their authority north and south to form a State over Egypt and North and Central Sudan.
2. Napatan burial customs were purely local till the time of Egypt being ruled. Despite the fact that some Egyptian cultural elements were adopted, most of the local practices remained in use; having the deceased laid on a local bed is a case in point.
3. Unlike the Egyptian pyramid where the body was laid in a room inside the pyramid, the Napatans were buried in sub-surface rock-cut chambers well below the base of the pyramid.
4. Though Napatans worshiped some Egyptian

deities, they nevertheless developed others of their own.

5. Rather than the patrilineal system of Egypt, the Napatans followed a matrilineal system of succession.
6. Napatan monarchs kept local names throughout the history of the kingdom for over 1000 years.
7. The royal regalia of the Napatans, even when sharing few elements with the Egyptians (such as some crowns), they kept some of their own, including the head band.

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ملخص: تركز هذه الورقة على موسمين من العمل الأثري الميداني في الجبانة الملكية الكوشية في الكرو، على مسافة ١٥ كلم عن جبل البركل شمالي السودان، التي عملت بها بعثة أمريكية مشتركة مع جامعة هارفارد ومتحف بوسطن للفنون الجميلة خلال شتاء ١٩١٨/١٩١٩م، بقيادة جورج رايزنر. كشفت الجبانة عن ميلاد ونشأة دولة «نبتا» من مشيخة صغيرة إلى دولة، ثم امبرطورية امتدت على نهر النيل من الدلتا حتى حدود الشريط الاستوائي، خلال الفترة (٧٥٠ ق.م – ٦٥٠ ق.م). وإلى جانب التطور السياسي، عكست الجبانة تطور العادات الجنائزية من اتباع ممارسات محلية إلى مداخل تبرز تأثيرات مصرية. وبما أن المدافن قد حوت رفات ملوك الأسرة الخامسة والعشرين وأسلافهم، فقد سلطت الضوء على حقبة مهمة من تاريخ السودان الحضاري. غير أن المائة عام التي انقضت منذ تنقيبات رايزنر عرضت الجبانة إلى إهمال متصل، عملت خلالها عوامل طبيعية وبشرية على إزالة الكثير من أجزاء المدافن وغابت بعضها تحت الرمال والنفايات والتعديلات. كشفت أعمال جامعة دنقلا في الموقع عن ظواهر أثرية ظلت مخفية في الموقع، وعثرت على مجموعة من اللقى الأثرية، وسلطت الضوء على بعض الاستفسارات التي ظلت مطروحة، وفي الوقت نفسه طرحت علامات استفهام جديدة. إن موسمين من العمل الأثري مكننا بعثة الجامعة من موقعها في كلية الآداب في كريمة من إجراء تنقيبات ومسح ميداني في الموقع وما حوله، كشف عن بعض الظواهر. كما أن تحليل المادة الأثرية المكتشفة يسلط الضوء على جذور تلك الحضارة وطبيعتها ومركزاتها السياسية والاقتصادية، وقضايا حضارية أخرى. تعمل البعثة كذلك على صيانة الموقع وحفظه وتهيئته للباحثين والوفود السياحية.

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