



THE VICTORIOUS AND THE DEFEATED: THE LEGACY OF THE EGYPTIAN NEW KINGDOM IN MEROITIC MARTIAL IMAGERY

Faïza Drici

Musée du Louvre

ABSTRACT

The kingdoms of Kush, especially Meroe (300 BCE–450 CE), present the opportunity to observe the result of continual relations between a land positioned far south in northeastern Africa and a multi-thousand-year-old Egypt to its north. Kushites used scenes of triumph and massacre to reinforce their royal ideology and political position in the same way that ancient Egyptians did. Warlike representations in the traditional repertoire of New Kingdom Egypt allow one to identify the iconographic codes reinvested with meaning by the Kushites and the features specific to Meroitic imagery. Paying attention to these cultural transfers contributes to elucidating the treatment of violence and to understanding military expressions in Meroitic civilization, as well as their origins, inspirations, and connections with ancient Egypt and the Mediterranean world. The objective here is to illustrate this well-known theme through lesser-known artifacts, but offering additional details to the famous architectural scenes, and to explain how this iconography has resisted change over time until merging with the Meroitic culture.

This work is one continuation of an in-depth study of Meroitic weaponry,¹ which ineluctably leads to an interest in comparative approaches to martial representations, particularly the figures of power in Egyptian-Kushite iconography.² It is not limited to representations on temple walls, which are well known and well studied,³ but on the contrary focuses on less impressive elements, to reach beyond the traditional architectural sphere. The implications of the repertoire of warlike scenes are enriched by considering rarer and less imposing examples exhibiting variations and diversity (weaponry, enemies, wildlife) not necessarily captured in large Egyptian wall scenes. Pieces considered here are for

the most part from the National Museum of Sudan (Khartoum) and the Metropolitan Museum of Art (New York).⁴

Nubia had a complex series of political interactions and cultural exchanges with its northern neighbor, largely based on its position as an intermediary between the Mediterranean world and sub-Saharan Africa. However, Nubians also lived in Egypt as respected members of society, and Nubian archers at times served as mercenaries in the Egyptian army.⁵ The “Land of the Bow” — *Ta Sety* — was famous throughout the ancient world for the prowess of its archers. Subsistence and trade products (food, ivory, animal skins) came from

hunting, and archery equipment (bows, arrows) appeared in Nubian rock art as early as the Neolithic period.⁶ Archers formed the core of Nubian armies that vied with Egypt for dominion of the Upper Nile Valley. Therefore, the skills of the Nubian archers were well known in the ancient world and made them valued members in the military forces of other lands.

The theme of violence is known in Egyptian iconography as early as Naqada II⁷ by the depiction of violent actions themselves or their results. Representations of Nubian and Egyptian warriors appear in paintings and reliefs in all periods of ancient Egyptian history. After the occupation of Nubia by the Egyptians during the New Kingdom, warlike representations appeared in Kush in Napatan times, and in an astonishingly rich way during the Meroitic period. Kushites selectively incorporated and adapted aspects of Egyptian iconography and material culture. The importance of this influence is visible throughout the Nile Valley, from temple walls to artifacts found in graves. Indeed, a whole range of symbolic representations is linked with the expressions of warlike power in Egyptian and Meroitic art: figures of triumphant sovereigns, ritual scenes of smiting, martial attributes such as weapons, defeated enemies, massacred and devoured prisoners, war animals, etc.

ARMED GODS AND SOVEREIGNS

In ancient Egypt, gods and kings are depicted in enlarged scale and in stereotypical positions, with martial attributes suggesting their role as keeper of order. Artifacts and bas-reliefs are decorated with many representations of sovereigns celebrating the military triumph of the empire over neighboring countries.⁸ On small finds—royal jewelry, ceremonial weapons, seals, scarabs, private stelae,⁹ sculpture elements, etc.—Egyptian kings (FIG. 1)¹⁰ and Meroitic princes (FIG. 2) are portrayed in a typical royal attitude, crushing their enemies by grabbing them by the hair and brandishing a mace in their hand. The giant triumphal scenes of Thutmose III (Eighteenth Dynasty) on a pylon of the temple of Karnak and of Ramesses II (Nineteenth Dynasty) slaying enemy prisoners in temples at Karnak and Abu Simbel are among the most famous examples.¹¹

However, in many lesser-known examples, partial remains leave only clues of these representations. The decoration of the temple of Mentuhotep II at Deir el-Bahari, utterly destroyed by stone robbers in antiquity, survives only in thousands of fragments. The example here (FIGS. 3a, 3b)—12 centimeters wide—comes from a scene in which the king was shown raising a mace in his right hand to smite a group of enemies whom he holds by the hair in his



FIGURE 1: Trial piece with the king Ramesses III smiting enemies (H. 9.2 cm; W. 11.2 cm). Egypt, New Kingdom (Twentieth Dynasty) (© The Metropolitan Museum of Art [90.6.144]; gift of James Douglas, 1890).

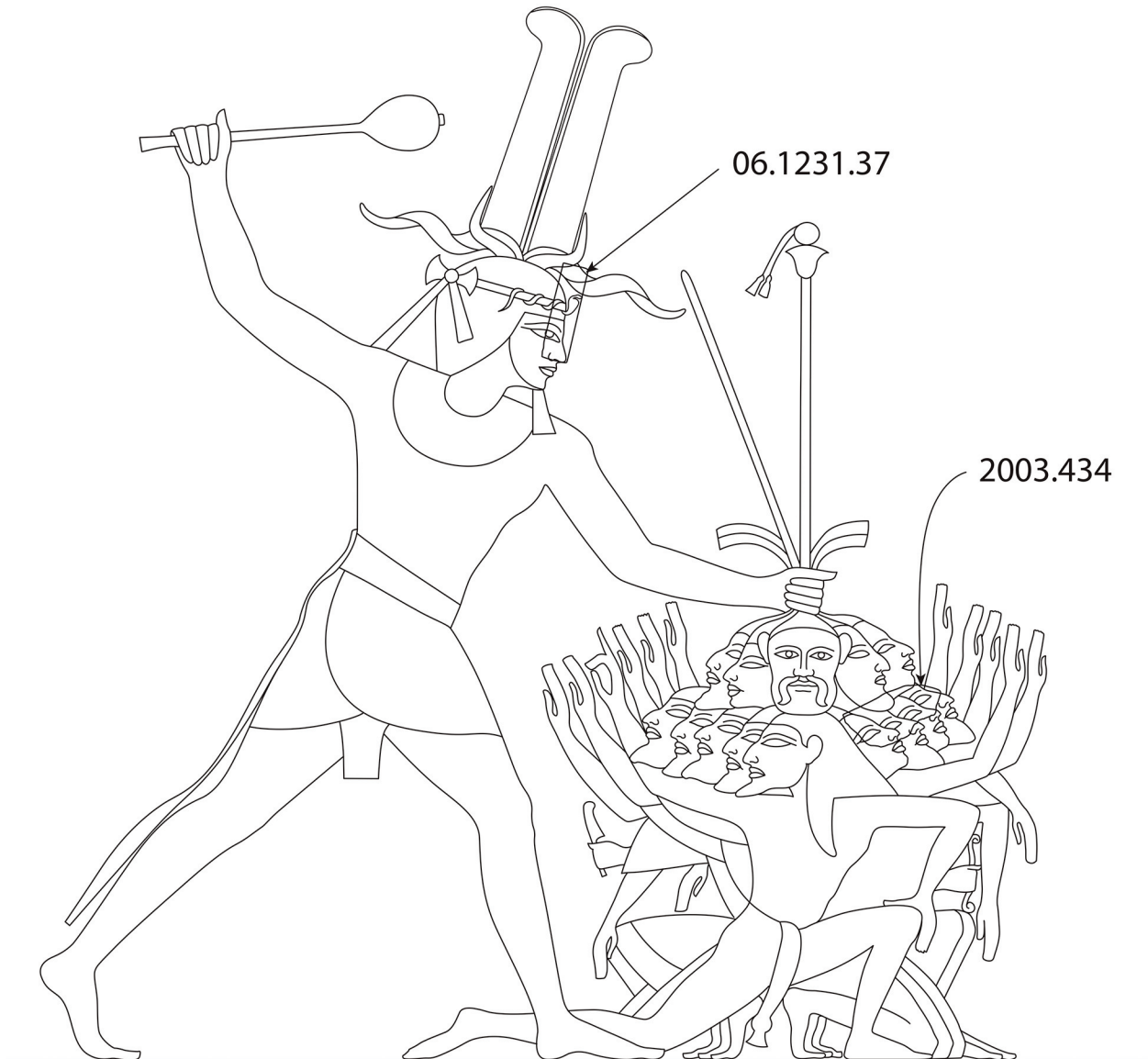


FIGURE 2: Fragmentary tablet with the prince Arakankharor executing enemies (L. 25.4 cm). Meroe City, 1st century CE (© Worcester Art Museum [192.145]; museum purchase; Bridgeman Images).



a

FIGURE 3: a: Relief fragment with parts of heads of prisoners (L. 12 cm). Deir el-Bahari, Middle Kingdom (Eleventh Dynasty) (© The Metropolitan Museum of Art [2003.434], purchase, Lila Acheson Wallace Gift, 2003). b: (© The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Department of Egyptian Art Archives; drawing by Scott Murphy, 2007).



b

left hand. The faces of two dark-skinned enemies, probably Nubians, alternate with two of yellowish-orange skin color, maybe Libyans or Asians.

The smiting scene is a recurring theme of royal iconography, which intends to exalt the sovereign power facing the enemy threat and to multiply images of the defeated. This punitive posture does not reflect a real act of violence intended to hurt or kill, but the image is a kind of symbol that would magically dissuade enemies. Sovereigns had the responsibility to protect and preserve the integrity of their kingdom in a literal sense, and more symbolically through the victory of cosmic order over chaos. To underscore the sacred nature of this charge and the necessity of the maintenance of order, these scenes of massacre emphasize the triumph of the ruler and the defeat of the enemy.¹²

IN ANCIENT SUDAN, a sandstone fragment of sculptured relief—14 centimeters wide—was found in Damboya in 1986, on the surface of the site (FIG.

4).¹³ What remains of this relief is the left foot of a royal figure wearing a sandal and the feet of six kneeling prisoners, the first one tied with a rope. To the right of the piece, the representation of a head suggests a scene in which an animal devours an enemy on the ground. Behind the kneeling prisoners, another character appears standing, probably a queen. The combination of these different elements suggests the depiction of a massacre. This fragment has many similarities with the tablet mentioned earlier (FIG. 2): they are both from the Island of Meroe (Butana) and sculpted from sandstone. However, it is not clear if they were used for ceremonies or as part of ornamentation.

In the different examples described above, many details are directly borrowed from Egyptian iconography:¹⁴ the king raising his weapon, the defeated warriors held by the hair, and the presence of animals. The image of the prisoner tied up or being eaten by animals emphasizes the role of conqueror. Although these representations initially



FIGURE 4: Fragmentary sculptured relief (L. 14 cm). Damboya, 1st century CE (El-Tayeb 1987, pl. X).

appear to be Egyptian in style, details show the Meroitic touch, such as the inclusion of a greater number of weapons in the image. The prince Arakankharor, represented on the sandstone tablet discovered in the ruins of the city of Meroe, holds not only a battle axe but also a sword in the same hand that grasps the prisoners; a different sword, its sheath decorated with geometric patterns, is attached to his belt (FIG. 2).¹⁵

Although the Damboya relief does not provide a definite example, it is appropriate to recall here another fundamental distinction between ancient Egyptian and ancient Sudanese artistic motifs: the depiction of Meroitic queens as warriors. Perhaps the most celebrated example is the well-known Meroitic relief of king Natakami and queen Amanitore on the pylon of the Apedemak temple at

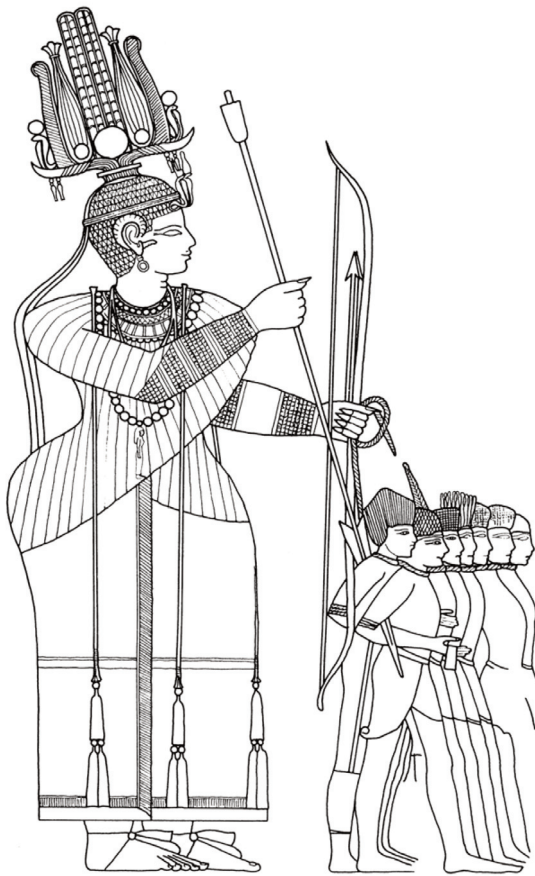


FIGURE 5: Pylon of the funeral chapel of the pyramid of Amanishakheto (Beg. N6). Meroe, North Necropolis, 1st Century CE (Lenoble 2006, fig. 6).

Naga.¹⁶ The style, the execution, and the iconography of this pylon shows a strong Egyptian influence and knowledge of pharaonic culture. Indeed, the iconographic program of the temples built by the rulers in the Island of Meroe offer a synthesis between Meroitic and Egyptian religious concepts. Here, the *qore* and the *kandake*¹⁷ are represented together symmetrically, face to face, of equal stature, ritually slaughtering the enemies of the kingdom. As in Egypt, the difference in size between sovereigns and defeated soldiers is an indication of social and power distinctions. There are still some differences between the male wall and the female wall: the king holds a mace and is surmounted by a hawk, while the queen holds a sword and is protected by a vulture. This iconography corresponds to a conception of shared power, original to Meroe and nonexistent in Egypt.¹⁸

Indeed, in Meroe, the kingdom was not ruled by the king alone but is better understood as a situation of collaborative power sharing. However, administrative and religious functions remained under the control of men.¹⁹ This raises the question of how other members of the royal family, such as queens, were able to represent themselves and to establish and communicate their own roles and status within the Kushite civilization. Queen Amanitore is represented on the pylon of the Lion Temple at Naga, with a sword in the right hand and the sheath hanging from her right shoulder. In the necropolis of Meroe, on the pylon of her pyramid, queen Amanishakheto wears the emblems of power and subdues the enemy: she holds a bow and some arrows and pierces a defeated king with her spear (FIG. 5).²⁰ *Qore* and *kandake* foster the notion of majestic omnipresence and predominance throughout the empire: Egyptian and Meroitic royal images were designed not to showcase individual physical features but to communicate the high status of the rulers.²¹

DEFEATED ENEMIES

Another expression of warlike power is illustrated by the depiction of defeated enemies and prisoners.²² This theme, which runs through all Egyptian iconography from its origins to the Late Period, is also present in Meroitic iconography, which multiplies the representations of humiliated and brutalized enemies in order to celebrate the theme of the triumphant king over the surrounding populations. If the most famous examples are found

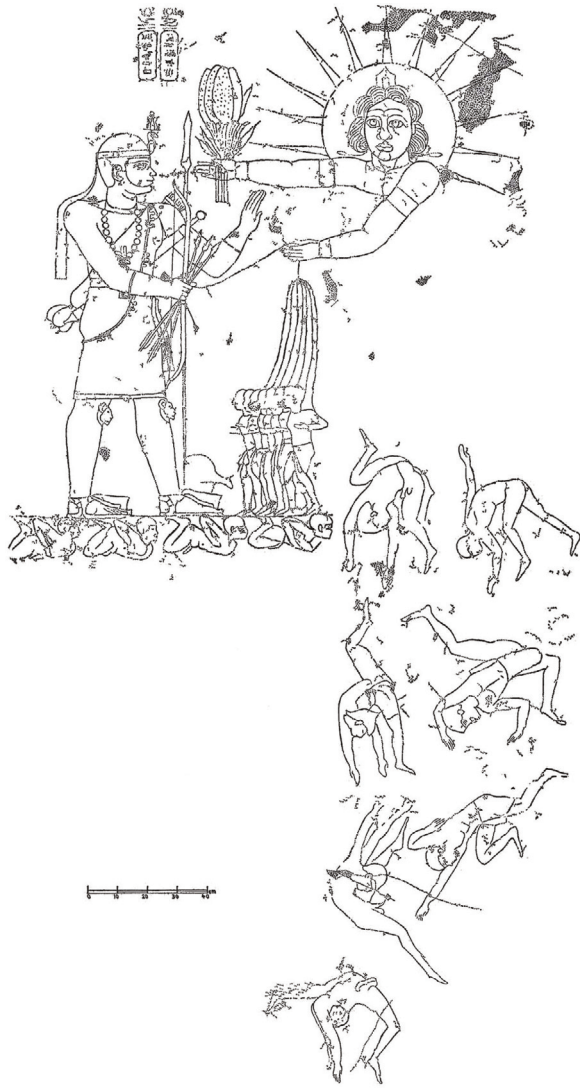


FIGURE 6: Rock drawing with king Shorkaror. Gebel Qeili, 1st century CE (Hintze 1960, pl. 8).



in Naga and Meroe, there are also a number of other more discreet examples.

In temple reliefs, the long processions of enemies crushed by the king or falling with their limbs dislocated, as in the representation carved into the cliff of Gebel Qeili in the Butana (FIG. 6),²³ are inspired by the Egyptian figurations of the New Kingdom. The famous representations of the Battle of Kadesh on the walls of the Ramesseum and the temple at Abu Simbel depict the fate of the Hittites falling and trampled by Ramesses II.²⁴ In Gebel Qeili, the presence of a solar deity, transmitting prosperity and fertility to the king Shorkaror through sorghum, finds similarities with Egyptian reliefs from almost every temple wall that also displays a god observing or approving scenes of domination/massacre by the king.. Another less well-known example of this Egyptian inspiration is a relief where western Asian soldiers are shown being trampled under the horses that pull the royal chariot, signaling the foreigners' defeat in battle by the might of the Egyptian pharaoh (FIG. 7).²⁵ The human body is used here in a metaphor conveying violent political messages against foreigners and external menaces.

Some representations of prisoners symbolize the enemy in general, as on the gold knob at the top of the cane belonging to queen Amanishakheto, discovered in the northern necropolis of Meroe. On this object, the motif of the bound enemy is repeated ten times (FIG. 8).²⁶ Others appear as special enemies, characterized by their hairstyles, facial features, costumes, and weapons. Ethnic groups are therefore sometimes stereotyped: the neighboring tribes of Meroe are represented by prisoners with frizzy hair, and the Bedouins of the Eastern Desert are recognizable by their straight and spiky hair.²⁷ Roman soldiers are represented fairly accurately,

wearing short-sleeved tunics tied at the waist with large belts and wearing brimmed helmets with wide chinstraps (FIG. 9).²⁸ The Egyptians were the first to distinguish their neighbors, referring to real foreign populations, cultural identities, and specific historical events (FIG. 10).²⁹

FIGURE 7: Block from a relief depicting a battle (H. 61.5 cm; W. 115 cm). Asasif, New Kingdom (Eighteenth Dynasty) (© The Metropolitan Museum of Art [13.180.21]; Rogers Fund and Edward S. Harkness Gift, 1913).



FIGURE 8: Knob of cane showing bound enemies, from queen Amanishakheto's treasury (H. 2 cm), Khartoum (SNM 1968). Meroe, North Necropolis, 1st Century CE (© 2009 Musée du Louvre; Christian Décamps).



FIGURE 9: Line of kneeling prisoners (detail of stela), Khartoum. Naga, 1st Century CE (© Staatliches Museum Ägyptischer Kunst, München, Naga-Projekt).



FIGURE 10: Line of kneeling prisoners (detail of facsimile). Original: Theban Tomb 120; Sheikh Abd el-Qurna, New Kingdom (Eighteenth Dynasty) (© The Metropolitan Museum of Art [33.8.8]; Rogers Fund, 1933).



FIGURE 11: Statue of a kneeling and bound captive (H. 86.7 cm; W. 31.5 cm). Saqqara, Old Kingdom (Sixth Dynasty) (© The Metropolitan Museum of Art [64.260]; purchase, Louis V. Bell Fund, 1964).



FIGURE 12: Statue of a kneeling and bound prisoner (H. 43.9 cm), Khartoum (SNM 24937). Tabo, Argo, 1st Century BCE or CE (© 2010 Musée du Louvre; Georges Poncet).

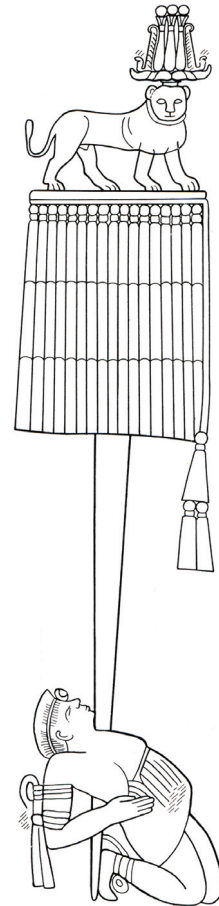


FIGURE 13: Banner emblem (© 2010 Musée du Louvre; Nathalie Couton-Perche).

Large sculptures of kneeling foreign captives—with arms bound behind their back at the elbows and with expressions of terror—appeared in Egyptian pyramid complexes (FIG. 11).³⁰ Small statues of prisoners known as execration figurines, placed in areas of mortuary monuments where battle and triumph scenes occurred, were sometimes ritually broken, presumably to reinforce the pharaoh's kingship.³¹ In Sudan, a prisoner statue

from Tabo represents the figure of a Bedouin: the man is kneeling and tied up, his head savagely thrown back (FIG. 12).³² This position is more painful than the position in which prisoners are habitually depicted in Egyptian examples. Here, the body was evidently to be stabbed by a stake, because a hole was pierced at the bottom of the neck, between the clavicles, and goes down to the base of the statue (FIG. 13).³³ These figurations are associated with



FIGURE 14: Bound prisoner figurine (H. 8.1 cm). Meroe City, 1st Century CE (© The Trustees of the British Museum [EA 65222]).

magical rites of execration performed on bound prisoners. The dramatized torture of these scenes, usually derived from the traditional repertoire of ancient Egyptian art, takes a particular turn when we become aware of the repetition of the vanquished enemy motif in Meroitic art. The Meroitic conceptualization of defeated enemies diverges in several aspects, such as in the extreme brutality of bodies depicted in positions of suffering, with ropes and arrows in the body (FIG. 14).³⁴

WAR ANIMALS

The depiction of animals associated with violence finds notable expression in the temples of Apedemak—warrior god and protector of Meroitic royalty—in Naga and Musawwarat es-Sufra.³⁵ Apedemak, a specifically Meroitic god represented with a human body and a lion head, does not exist in the pharaonic pantheon. In the African bestiary, the lion is an ambivalent figure: he is destructive, but at the same time he has a very protective role in being guardian of kingship, in both ancient Sudan

and ancient Egypt. The representations of Apedemak emphasize the scenes of his triumph: bows, quivers, arrows, and archer's thumb rings are an integral part of his iconography, suggesting his role as keeper of order.³⁶ Due to his military attributes, Apedemak has often been called a warrior god, but his primary role remains creative, with an important role in divine protection and the coordination of royal power.³⁷

The Middle and New Kingdoms have delivered a large number of lion representations. Statues of sitting or recumbent lions could surround entrances of sanctuaries and gates of royal palaces, a symbol of protective vigilance.³⁸ However, the lion is also represented as a terrible fighter, furious devourer of the enemies of Egypt, such as the statue of a lion holding a Nubian captive in Egypt (FIG. 15).³⁹ Here, the lion is not the instrument of the divine and domineering power of the kingdom, as on the temple at Naga described above; instead, he expresses the fighting nature of the sovereign, so that the great beast comes to embody the king. The arms of this Nubian are held freely at his sides with the



FIGURE 15: Statuette of lion holding a Nubian captive (H. 8 cm). Egypt, Middle Kingdom (Twelfth Dynasty) (© The Metropolitan Museum of Art [31.4.4]; Anonymous Gift, 1931).

palms turned outward in a gesture of voluntary submission. Furthermore, the image of the half-swallowed head of the enemy is frequent in early Ramesside art. The usual rendition shows a bound Nubian and a lion that holds the back of the man's head in its jaws (FIG. 16).⁴⁰ In Sudan, a lion statue guarded the entrance of the temple in Basa: the predator is erect on its hind legs, pressing down an enemy kneeling on the ground, tied up, the animal with its jaws on the top of the head of the vanquished (FIG. 17).⁴¹ It is clearly designed to demonstrate the military prowess of Kush.

Remaining in the ambit of powerful Apedemak,



FIGURE 16: Handle depicting a lion subduing a Nubian (H. 3 cm, L. 4,3 cm). Qantir, New Kingdom (Nineteenth Dynasty) (© The Metropolitan Museum of Art [1989.281.92]; Gift of Norbert Schimmel Trust, 1989).



FIGURE 17: Statue of lion devouring a captive (H. 165 cm), Khartoum (SNM 441). Basa, 1st Century CE (© 2010 Musée du Louvre; Georges Poncet).

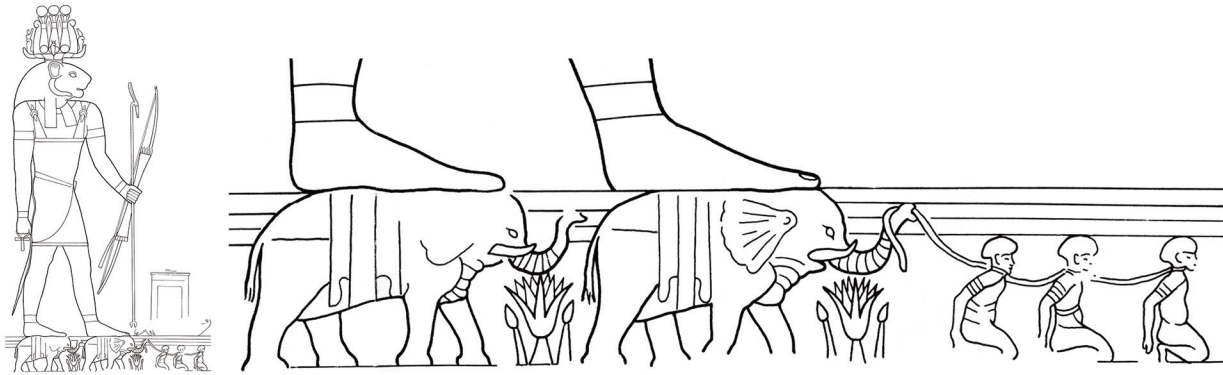


FIGURE 18: Two war elephants, surmounted by the god Apedemak, holding a line of prisoners on a leash. Musawwarat es-Sufra, Lion Temple, west wall (© 2010 Musée du Louvre; Nathalie Couton-Perche).

the pylon of his temple at Naga also shows influences from the Greco-Roman world. Under the great figure of king Natakamani as a warrior, the lion that tramples the enemy has strong parallels with examples from the New Kingdom but reflects Hellenistic codes. The head of the beast is presented in a three-quarter view, with wide eyes and a mane with wavy locks.⁴² The depiction of the head in frontal view is unparalleled in Egyptian art.

The introduction of the elephant in temple scenes also belongs to a military context, as shown in Musawwarat es-Sufra with the procession of animals that leads a line of prisoners (FIG. 18).⁴³ The elephant, in parallel with the lion with attached prisoners in adjacent scenes, performs a triumphant role here. On a bronze bell discovered in the tomb of king Takideamani, this time a vulture is figured eating the heads of enemies (Boston, Museum of Fine Arts 24.857, 24.859); a figuration of the same type is found on ring-stamps from the pyramid of Amanishakheto at Meroe (Berlin, Ägyptisches Museum und Papyrusammlung 1720).⁴⁴ Thanks to these representations of enemies hobbled, trampled, and devoured, magical protection was assured to the kingdom, warning anyone who would threaten it.

CONCLUSION

Kush's geographic position offered advantageous opportunities to interact with diverse cultures and ethnicities. Indeed, Egyptian contacts—especially the pharaonic occupation over several centuries—left traces through influences on royal and divine

representations during the Meroitic period, both in monumental media and on small objects. The representations of a triumphant king crushing enemies in a position of total submission, provided a powerful way to serve royal propaganda by exalting the supremacy of sovereigns. This is paralleled by depictions on the pylons of Egyptian temples of the New Kingdom and the Ptolemaic period.

Throughout their history the Meroites appear to have embraced the prisoner iconography developed in pharaonic Egypt. It is curious to see the Meroites using the same codes used by the Egyptians, even though Egyptians represented their Nubian ancestors via the same image of submissive prisoners. There is thus a clear resonance to this visual iconography. However, in its relations with neighboring civilizations, the Meroitic Empire did not show exclusive hostility towards Egypt, but, rather, these representations also included subjugated Africans, Asians, Romans, Greeks. In addition, they add distinctive elements and styles to indicate their Kushite identity, and some details are purely Meroitic, with significant differences from Egyptian iconography. For example, brutality is more visible, by the number of weapons and martial attributes represented, by the torture inflicted on enemies devoured by lions or vultures, and by the multiplication of war animals from the savannah. In addition, as time passed after the Egyptian occupation, other cultures and Hellenistic influence lead to new stylistic adaptations. It would be interesting to

understand how the chain of transmission was made between the different periods and cultures, but unfortunately the documentation is still insufficient to have a clear understanding.

The role of the army in the maintenance of the territorial integrity of the state of Kush should have been of great importance. Was Egyptian influence limited to purely symbolic inspiration, or did it also affect material aspects (weaponry, combat techniques, military status, etc.) and the art of war among the Kushites? Unfortunately, we are not even sure of the status of this army, whether it was a professional force (like the Roman or Egyptian army) or a militia raised in times of need. Some professional element must have existed, as the number of iron arrowheads found in the Island of Meroe confirms state-level production.⁴⁵ Judging from the weaponry recovered from graves, the evidence for the importance of archery is unquestionable for battle, war, and conquest.

REFERENCES

- Baud, Michel. 2010. "Culture d'Afrique, modèles égyptiens et influences méditerranéennes." In Michel Baud (ed.), *Méroé, un empire sur le Nil*, 76–89. Paris: Musée du Louvre.
- . 2010. "Méroé et ses lions." In Michel Baud (ed.), *Méroé, un empire sur le Nil*, 90–92. Paris: Musée du Louvre.
- Desroches-Noblecourt, Christiane. 1973. *Grand temple d'Abou Simbel: la bataille de Qadesh*. Cairo: Centre de documentation et d'études sur l'ancienne Égypte.
- Doxey, Denise M., Rita E. Freed, and Lawrence M. Berman. 2018. *Arts of Ancient Nubia*. Boston: Museum of Fine Arts.
- Drici, Faïza. 2015. "L'armement méroïtique: la panoplie de l'archer." *Égypte, Afrique & Orient* 78: 67–70.
- . 2017. "Combat réel et combat symbolique au Pays-de-l'arc: les collections d'armes de Kouch." *Cahiers de recherches de l'Institut de papyrologie et d'égyptologie de Lille* 30: 159–174.
- Dunbar, James H. 1934. "Some Nubian Rock Pictures." *Sudan Notes and Records* 17.2: 139–167.
- Dunham, Dows. 1963. *The Royal Cemeteries of Kush V: The West and South Cemeteries at Meroe*. Boston: Museum of Fine Arts.
- . 1982. *Excavations at Kerma VI: Subsidiary Nubian Graves*. Boston: Museum of Fine Arts.
- El-Tayeb, Mahmoud. 1987. "Sculptured Relief from el-Hasa (Sudan)." *Journal of the Society of the Studies of Egyptian Antiquities* 17: 56–57.
- Fischer, Henry G. 1961. "The Nubian Mercenaries of Gebelein during the First Intermediate Period." *Kush* 9: 44–80.
- Gamer-Wallert, Ingrid. 1983. *Der Löwentempel von Naq'a in der Butana (Sudan) III. Die Wandreliefs, 2. Tafeln*. Wiesbaden.
- Haaland, Gunnar and Randi Haaland. 2007. "God of War, Wordly Ruler and Craft Specialists in the Meroitic Kingdom of Sudan." *Journal of Social Archaeology* 7: 372–392.
- Hall, Emma S. 1986. *The Pharaoh Smites His Enemies: A Comparative Study*. Munich: Münchener Ägyptologische Studien Heft 44.
- Hayes, William C. 1953. *Scepter of Egypt I: A Background for the Study of the Egyptian Antiquities in The Metropolitan Museum of Art: From the Earliest Times to the End of the Middle Kingdom*. Cambridge: The Metropolitan Museum of Art.
- . 1959. *Scepter of Egypt II: A Background for the Study of the Egyptian Antiquities in the Metropolitan Museum of Art: The Hyksos Period and the New Kingdom (1675–1080 B.C.)*. Cambridge: The Metropolitan Museum of Art.
- Hill, Marsha. 1999. "Kneeling Captive." In Dorothea Arnold, Krzysztof Grzymalski, and Christian Ziegler (eds.), *Egyptian Art in the Age of the Pyramids*, 441, cat. 174. New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art.
- Hintz, Fritz. 1960. "Vorbericht über die Butana-Expedition 1958 des Instituts für Ägyptologie der Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin." *Forschen und Wirken* 3: 361–399.
- Hue-Arcé, Christine. 2020. *La violence interpersonnelle en Égypte au Nouvel Empire et à l'époque gréco-romaine*. Wallasey: Abercromby Press.
- Janzen, Mark D. 2013. *The Iconography of Humiliation: The Depiction and Treatment of the Bound Foreigner in New Kingdom Egypt*. PhD dissertation, University of Memphis.
- Kendall, Timothy. 1982. *Kush: Lost Kingdom of the Nile*. Brockton: Brockton Art Museum.
- Kröper, Karla and Dietrich Wildung. 2006. *Naga, Royal City of Ancient Sudan*. Berlin: Ägyptisches Museum und Papyrussammlung.
- , Sylvia Schoske, and Dietrich Wildung (eds.). 2011. *Königsstadt Naga. Grabungen in der Wüste des Sudan. Naga Royal City. Excavations in the Desert of the Sudan*. Munich: Staatliches Museum Ägyptischer Kunst München.

- Lenoble, Patrice. 2001. "L'arsenal de Méroé et le monopole royal du fer dans l'Empire méroïtique." *Mediterranean Archaeology* 14: 209–217.
- . 2006. "Aux armes souverains ! L'arsenal funéraire des empereurs méroïtiques." *Kerma et Méroé. Cinq conférences d'archéologie soudanaise (2005)*, 17–26. Khartoum: Section française de la direction des antiquités du Soudan.
- and Vincent Rondot. 2003. "À la redécouverte d'el-Hassa. Temple à Amon, palais royal et ville de l'empire méroïtique." *Cahiers de recherches de l'Institut de papyrologie et d'égyptologie de Lille* 23: 101–115.
- Luiselli, Maria M. 2011. "The Ancient Egyptian Scene of 'Pharaoh Smiting His Enemies': An Attempt to Visualize Cultural Memory?" In M. Bommas (ed.), *Cultural Memory and Identity in Ancient Societies*, 17–18. London: Continuum.
- Matić, Uroš. 2019. *Body and Frames of War in New Kingdom Egypt: Violent Treatment of Enemies and Prisoners*. Philippika 134. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag.
- Partridge, Robert B. 2002. *Fighting Pharaohs: Weapons and Warfare in Ancient Egypt*. Manchester: Peartree Publishing.
- Petschel, Susanne and Martin von Falck (eds.). 2002. *Pharaoh siegt immer: Krieg und Frieden im Alten Ägypten*. Freiburg: Universitätsverlag.
- Prakash, Tara. 2020. "The Prisoner Statues in the Metropolitan Museum of Art and the British Museum: From the Late Old Kingdom to Today." *Studien zur Altägyptischen Kultur* 49: 191–215, pls. 10–26.
- Rilly, Claude. 2010. "L'écriture et la langue de Méroé." In Michel Baud (ed.), *Méroé, un empire sur le Nil*, 145–159. Paris: Musée du Louvre.
- . 2017. "Le statut de la Candace, mère du roi." In Olivier Cabon et al. (eds.), *Histoire et civilisations du Soudan: de la préhistoire à nos jours*, 230–235. Paris: Soleb.
- Roehrig, Catharine H. 2008. "Relief Fragment with Vanquished Enemies." In Joan Aruz, Kim Benzel, and Jean M. Evans (eds.), *Beyond Babylon: Art, Trade, and Diplomacy in the Second Millennium B.C.* New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art.
- and Marsha Hill 1992. "Ancient Art: Gifts from the Norbert Schimmel Collection: Egyptian." *The Metropolitan Museum of Art Bulletin* 49.4: 32–33.
- Rondot, Vincent. 2010. "Les dieux de Méroé." In Michel Baud (ed.), *Méroé, un empire sur le Nil*, 189–201. Paris: Musée du Louvre.
- Sackho-Autissier, Aminata. 2010. "Natakamani et Amanitore, un 'couple' de souverains bâtisseurs." In Michel Baud (ed.), *Méroé, un empire sur le Nil*, 74–75. Paris: Musée du Louvre.
- . 2010. "Les candaces, des reines régnantes." In Michel Baud (ed.), *Méroé, un empire sur le Nil*, 178–179. Paris: Musée du Louvre.
- . 2010. "Le thème de l'ennemi vaincu dans l'art méroïtique." In Michel Baud (ed.), *Méroé, un empire sur le Nil*, 182–185. Paris: Musée du Louvre.
- Sales, José das Candeias. 2017. "The Ritual Scenes of Smiting the Enemies in the Pylons of Egyptian Temples: Symbolism and Functions." In Joanna Popielska-Grzybowska and Jadwiga Iwaszczuk (eds.), *Thinking Symbols Interdisciplinary Studies*, 257–365. Acta Archaeologica Pultuskiensia 6. Pultusk: Academy of Humanities.
- Schulman, Alan R. 1988. *Ceremonial Execution and Public Reward: Some Historical Scenes on New Kingdom Private Stelae*. Orbis Biblicus et Orientalis 75. Freiburg: Universitätsverlag; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht.
- Shaw, Ian. 2019. *Ancient Egyptian Warfare: Tactics, Weapons and Ideology of the Pharaohs*. Oxford: Casemate.
- Smith, Stuart Tyson. 1998. "Nubia and Egypt: Interaction, Acculturation, and Secondary State Formation from the Third to First millennium B.C." In James G. Cusick (ed.), *Studies in Culture Contact: Interaction, Culture Change, and Archaeology*, 256–287. Carbondale: Southern Illinois University.
- . 2003. *Wretched Kush: Ethnic Identities in Egypt's Nubian Empire*. London—New York: Routledge.
- . 2013. "Revenge of the Kushites: Assimilation and Resistance in Egypt's New Kingdom Empire and Nubian Ascendancy over Egypt." In Gregory Areshian (ed.), *Empires and Complexity: On the Crossroads of Archaeology*, 84–106. Los Angeles: Cotsen Institute of Archaeology.
- Sukova, Lenka. 2001. *The Rock Art of Lower Nubia*. Prague: Charles University in Prague.
- Török, László. 1989. "Kush and the External world." In Sergio Donadoni and Steffen Wenig (eds.), *Studia Meroitica 1984: Proceedings of the Fifth International Conference for Meroitic Studies*, 49–

215. Berlin: Akademie-Verlag.
- . 1997. *The Kingdom of Kush: Handbook of the Napatan-Meroitic Civilization*. Leiden—New York—Köln: Brill.
- . 2002. *The Image of Ordered World in Ancient Nubia Art: The Construction of the Kushite Mind (800 BC–300 AD)*. Leiden: Brill.
- . 2009. *Between Two Worlds: The Frontier Region between Ancient Nubia and Egypt, 3700 BC–AD 500*. Leiden: Brill.
- Webb, Virginia. 2016. *Faience Material from the Samos Heraion Excavations*. Wiesbaden: Reichert Verlag.
- Welsby, Derek A. 1996. *The Kingdom of Kush: The Napatan and Meroitic Empires*. London: British Museum Press.
- Wilkinson, Charles K. and Marsha Hill. 1983. *Egyptian Wall Paintings: The Metropolitan Museum of Art's Collection of Facsimiles*. New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art.
- Wilkinson, Richard H. and Paul Pearce. 2017. *Pharaoh's Land and Beyond: Ancient Egypt and Its Neighbors*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Wöss, Florian. 2015. "The Representation of Captives and Enemies in Meroitic Art." In Michael H. Zach (ed.), *The Kushite World: Proceedings of the 11th International Conference for Meroitic Studies*, 585–600. Vienna: Verein der Förderer der Sudanforschung.
- Zabkar, Louis V. 1975. *Apedemak, Lion God of Meroe: A Study in Egyptian-Meroitic Syncretism*. Warminster: Aris & Phillips.
- Fellowship at The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York (2018–2019). I am also extremely grateful for the support of the Egyptian Art Department in my research on ancient Sudanese Met collections.
- ⁵ Fischer 1961, 44–56; Török 2009, 75–78.
- ⁶ Dunbar 1934, 144, pl. VI; Suková 2011, 128–129, pl. 65.
- ⁷ Three scenes from Hierakonpolis—the painting on Tomb 100, the cylinder seal in ivory and the palette of Narmer—are the first attestations of the theme of the pharaoh smiting his enemies. The well-known Narmer ceremonial palette relates the unification of Upper and Lower Egypt by the king. See Hall 1986, 4–6, figs. 5–8; Partridge 2002, 158–162, figs. 218–219; Luiselli 2011, 13–15; Shaw 2019, 14–16, 21–24.
- ⁸ Luiselli 2011, 17: "Pharaoh smiting enemies is quoted at least 90 times over 3000 years of Egyptian history. Thus, it is probably the longest-lasting and best-attested iconographical motif of Egyptian culture."
- ⁹ Schulman 1988.
- ¹⁰ Hayes 1959, 370; Hall 1986, 39, fig. 76.
- ¹¹ The decoration of the temples of the New Kingdom attains its great development and reflects the warrior spirit of the rulers of this period. Thutmose III evokes his military campaigns in Syria and in Nubia, and Ramesses II his victory over the Hittites at Kadesh. See Hall 1986, 16–17, figs. 28, 55–56; Partridge 2002, 248–255, figs. 331–340; Shaw 2019, 63–67.
- ¹² Sales 2017, 258.
- ¹³ El-Tayeb 1987, 56, pl. X; Lenoble and Rondot 2003, 111.
- ¹⁴ Török 2002, 40–48.
- ¹⁵ Hall 1986, 45, fig. 89; Sacko-Autissier 2010, 75, fig. 75.
- ¹⁶ Gamer-Wallert 1983, pl. 1, 7; Hall 1986, 44–45, fig. 88; Török 1997, 461–467; Török 2002, 226–241; Sacko-Autissier 2010, 74–75; Kröper et al. 2011, 112–123, figs. 151–152.
- ¹⁷ Welsby 1996, 25–27; Török 1997, 213–214; Sacko-Autissier 2010, 178–179; Rilly 2017, 230–235.
- ¹⁸ While in Meroe this situation is common, in Egypt it occurs only in the event of regency and

NOTES

- ¹ As part of my PhD dissertation, "Armes et guerriers de Kouch : de Kerma à Méroé, de l'objet à la tombe," Lille University (2010–2015). The book that I am currently preparing for publication includes a catalogue raisonné of Kushite weapons, from the Kerma kingdom to the post-Meroitic periods.
- ² This article is the written version of my lecture given as part of The Origins and Afterlives of Kush Conference, University of California, Santa Barbara (July 25–27, 2019).
- ³ Hall 1986; Schulman 1988; Luiselli 2011; Matic 2019.
- ⁴ I would like to thank Diana Patch and Marsha Hill for allowing me to conduct this study during my Andrew W. Mellon Research

- is therefore exceptional. Except for the Amarna scene from Hermopolis figuring Nefertiti as a decorative element of a ship (Boston, MFA 63.260), Egyptian queens never appear in the warrior posture, a status reserved to the king exclusively. See Hall 1986, 24–26, 45, fig. 39.
- ¹⁹ Török 2002, 262.
- ²⁰ Lenoble 2006, 20, 49, fig. 6.
- ²¹ This rule also applies to their accessories: for example, a unique and remarkable bronze quiver was found in the western cemetery of Meroe (Boston, MFA 24.963.1) with its set of arrows. It measures 40 cm, is cylindrical in shape, has a chain for transport and three bells, rendering it ineffective for hunting. It is decorated with bands of incised lines running around its circumference. Here, the quiver represents a ceremonial accessory and a symbol of victory, rather than a part of a warrior's equipment. See Dunham 1963, 204–206, figs. 147–149; Kendall 1982, 50–52, fig. 64; Drici 2016, 20–21, fig. 11; Doxey et al. 2018, 70–71.
- ²² Török 1989, 105–121; Wöss 2015, 585–600.
- ²³ Hintze 1960, pl. 8; Hall 1986, 46, fig. 90; Welsby 1996, 161, fig. 68; Sacko-Autissier 2010, 75, fig. 76.
- ²⁴ Hall 1986, 29, fig. 59.
- ²⁵ Hayes 1959, 340, fig. 214; Roehrig 2008, 263, fig. 163.
- ²⁶ Sacko-Autissier 2010, 183, fig. 231.
- ²⁷ Sacko-Autissier 2010, 182.
- ²⁸ Here, the group of kneeling enemies is depicted under queen Amanishakheto, who stands between Apedemak and Amesemi. See Wildung and Kröper 2006, 19, fig. 27; Rilly 2010, 157, fig. 208; Kröper et al. 2011, 36–37, 188–190, figs. 37, 218 (for the detail).
- ²⁹ Amenhotep III and queen Tiye enthroned beneath a kiosk, tomb of Anen. Painted at Qurna by Nina de Garis Davies for the Egyptian Expedition of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1931. See Hayes 1959, 238; Wilkinson and Hill 1983.
- ³⁰ From the Memphite Region, Saqqara, pyramid complex of Pepi II, probably. See Hill 1999, 441, cat. 174; Prakash 2020, figs. 15–18, 26.
- ³¹ Prakash 2020, 193: “The prisoner statue type changed dramatically over time. Each king's statues differed in notable ways, suggesting that the purpose and function of the prisoner statues as a genre evolved over the course of the late Old Kingdom [...] Furthermore, while all of the prisoner statues were placed inside the king's pyramid complex, the exact location of the statues within each complex varied and was not consistent.”
- ³² Sacko-Autissier 2010, 184, fig. 234.
- ³³ This is to be compared to the bronze plates representing enemies, the plates pierced to be fixed at the base of banners. See Sacko-Autissier 2010, 183, fig. 233.
- ³⁴ Welsby 1996, 60–61, fig. 20; Rilly 2010, 158, fig. 210.
- ³⁵ Zabkar 1975, 13–17; Haaland 2007, 372–393.
- ³⁶ Drici 2015, 67; Drici 2017, 159–160.
- ³⁷ Rondot 2010, 194–198.
- ³⁸ Vernus and Yoyotte 2005, 152–166.
- ³⁹ Hayes 1953, 225, fig. 141; Arnold 2015, 169–70, fig. 103.
- ⁴⁰ Roehrig and Hill 1992, 32–33; Webb 2016, 83, fig. 513.
- ⁴¹ Welsby 1996, 38, fig. 10; Baud 2010, 92, fig. 107.
- ⁴² Baud 2010, 82, fig. 86; Kröper et al. 2011, 70, fig. 81.
- ⁴³ Welsby 1996, 34–44, fig. 12; Baud 2010, 81, figs. 84–85.
- ⁴⁴ Sacko-Autissier 2010, 185, figs. 236–237.
- ⁴⁵ Drici 2017, 159–174.