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The Invention of Aithiopian Antecedence

Jeremy Pope
The College of William and Mary

Abstract
During the 1st century BCE, Diodorus Siculus reported claims of an "Aithiopian" origin for Egyptian civilization. This theory of Aithiopian antecedence was then repeatedly invoked by numerous ancient, medieval, and modern authors for the next two millennia until the middle of the 19th century CE, when Egyptologists drew its premises into question. For the nonspecialist reader, this article will include a brief epilogue summarizing current research on the earliest relations between Egypt and its neighbors to the south. Yet this study will not treat Diodorus as a source for prehistory, exploring instead some *mnemo*historical questions about his account that have received less attention in the published literature: When was the theory of Aithiopian antecedence invented? By whom? And upon what grounds was it advanced and accepted during antiquity?

In Book III of his *Bibliotheca Historica*, the Greek author Diodorus Siculus turned his attention to the lands and peoples south of Egypt (Fig. 1). Sections III.2 and III.3 of that work will be the focus of this study:

> Now, they relate that of all people the Aithiopians were the earliest, and say that the proofs of this are clear. That they did not arrive as immigrants but are the natives of the country and therefore rightly are called autochthonous is almost universally accepted. That those who live in the south are likely to be the first engendered by the earth is obvious to all…. They further say[1] that it was among them that people first were taught to honor the gods and offer sacrifices and arrange processions and festivals and perform other things by which people honor the divine. For this reason their piety is famous among all men, and the sacrifices among the Aithiopians are believed to be particularly pleasing to the divinity…. They also say that their piety towards the divine has clearly earned them the favor of the gods, since they have never experienced domination from abroad… (III.2).
>
> They say that the Egyptians are settlers from among themselves and that Osiris was the leader of the settlement. They say that the whole of what is now Egypt was not a

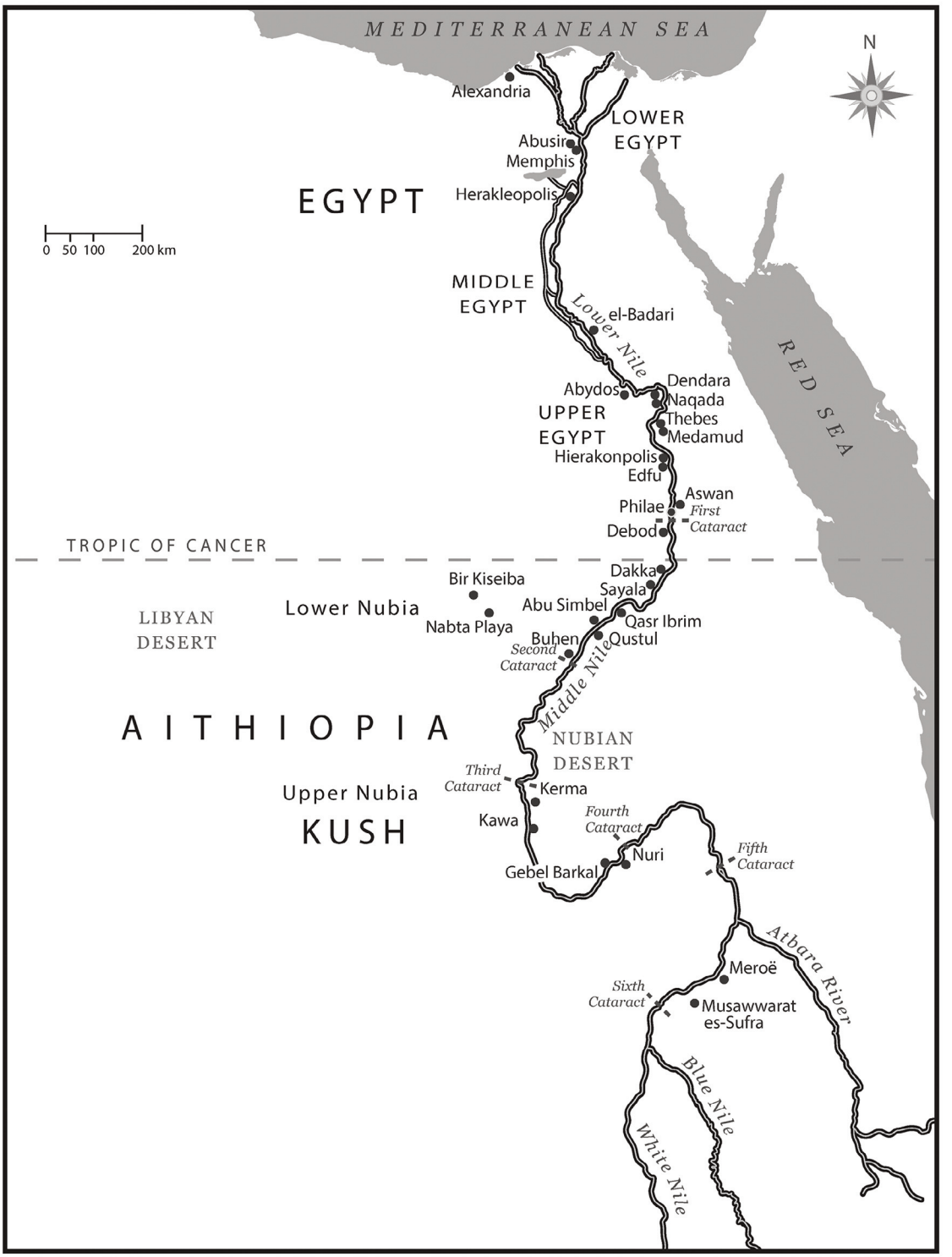

Figure 1: Map of northeast Africa during antiquity. Courtesy of the University of Wisconsin-Madison Cartography Laboratory.

country, but a sea at the time when the world was first formed…. The customs of the Egyptians, they say, are for the most part Aithiopian, the settlers having preserved their old traditions. For to consider the kings gods, to pay great attention to funeral rites, and many other such things, are Aithiopian practices, and also the style of their statues and the form of their writing are Aithiopian (III.3).[2]

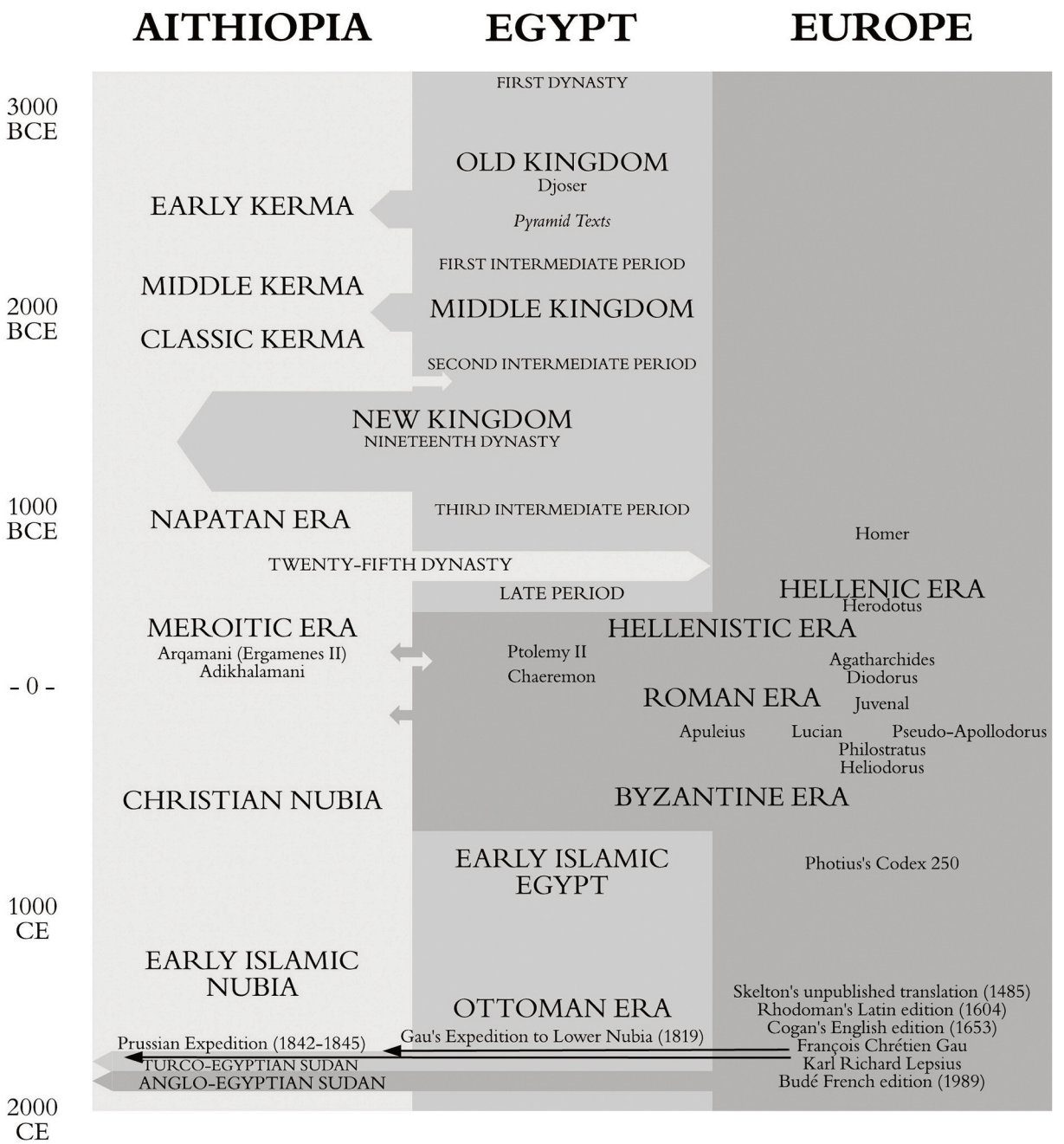

Figure 2: Schematic timeline of periods, events, persons, and texts mentioned in this article.

Diodorus's account from the 1st century BCE remains to this day the earliest known text to explicitly propose that ancient Egypt's original inhabitants and culture derived from Aithiopia.[3]

Yet Diodorus would not be the last author to entertain this theory of Aithiopian antecedence or to be influenced by its assumptions (Fig. 2). Less than a century after Diodorus published his account, even the Egyptian priest Chaeremon did not contest the assumed Aithiopian origin of Egypt's hieroglyphic writing system.[4] By the next generation, Aithiopia was evidently regarded by some in the Mediterranean world as the fount of Egypt's religion: the Roman satirist Juvenal ridiculed the superstitious woman who would "bring back water fetched from sweltering Meroë [the Aithiopian capital] to sprinkle in Isis's temple" at the Campus Martius in Rome.[5] His Greek successor, Lucian, claimed of astrology that "it was the Aithiopians that first delivered this doctrine unto men" and then "transmitted their doctrine incomplete to the Egyptians their neighbors."[6] Lucian's contemporary, Apuleius of Roman North Africa, mentioned the Aithiopians before the Egyptians as peoples "who excel through having the original doctrine" of Isis.[7] Another contemporary, Pseudo-Apollodorus, wrote that the mythic hero Eumolpos had been raised in Aithiopia, married an Aithiopian princess, and then settled in Greece as one of the first priests of Isis/Demeter.[8] A century later, the Greek sophist Philostratus asserted that the Aithiopian sages surpassed the Egyptians in wisdom,[9] and multilingual papyri encouraged the residents of Roman Egypt to invoke "Osiris the Kushite" and "Amun, this lofty male, this male of Kush who came down from Meroë to Egypt," and also to recite Isis's spells "in the language of Kush"—directly associating the Osirian, Amunite, and Isiac cults with Aithiopia's Kushite state.[10] By the mid-4th century CE, the Greek novelist Heliodorus of Emesa portrayed an Egyptian priest achieving "the apotheosis of the wisdom of Egypt" only after traveling "as far as the land of the Aithiopians" and thereby "supplementing it with the wisdom of Aithiopia," and the narrative's Aithiopian king, Hydaspes, instructed the Egyptian priests: "All these things of which you speak so proudly belong not to Egypt but to Aithiopia... the mother of your gods!"[11]

This ancient theory of Aithiopian antecedence survived in multiple iterations across the medieval and early modern eras,[12] but by the 19th century CE the growth of European empires had transformed its interpretation in at least two fundamental ways. Firstly, global disparities in wealth, military power, and political influence generated by merchant and industrial capitalism served to weaponize antiquity as historical precedent, so that ancient Greek and Latin descriptions of Aithiopia and Egypt were increasingly pressed into both justification and critique of modern racialized labor hierarchies resulting from the transatlantic slave trade and from European colonization of the so-called Global South.[13] Secondly, even before the establishment of the Anglo-Egyptian Condominium in Sudan, Turco-Egyptian reconnaissance, and then conquest of that country provided European travelers with greater access to the Nubian region, enabling them to check classical and biblical descriptions of Aithiopia and Egypt against their own firsthand observation. During a trip through Lower Nubia in 1819, François Chrétien Gau supplemented the ancient Greek and Latin sources with an expectation of his own: he assumed that Aithiopia's alleged cultural primacy would necessarily have left across the modern Nubian landscape ruins of the earliest stone architecture ever constructed by humankind.[14] Gau's presumption set the terms under which Aithiopian antecedence would be promoted by George Waddington, Barnard Hanbury, Michael Russell, and George Hoskins,[15] and then disputed by Richard Lepsius.[16] In 1844, Lepsius compared Manetho's king list to the inscribed architecture of Sudanese Nubia and discovered that none of those monuments predated Egypt's earliest documented pharaohs. Moreover, one of the royal tombs at Meroë, previously supposed by Hoskins to be older than Manetho's First Dynasty, had subsequently been found to contain unmistakable Graeco-Roman imports within a sealed context.[17] Lepsius concluded from this evidence that the theory of Aithiopian antecedence had been a "complete misunderstanding" on the part of the ancients.

In the decades that followed Lepsius's intervention, Greek and Latin claims for Aithiopian antecedence quickly receded from public discussion among Egyptologists and classicists.[18] As archaeological evidence began to accumulate from excavations in Egypt and Sudan, scholars could no longer justify their predecessors' reliance upon classical testimony for the reconstruction of much earlier millennia. In addition, by the middle of the 20th century, scholars across multiple disciplines began to explain cultural change as the result of

internal societal processes, rather than as a product of the external stimuli of immigration and hyper-diffusion promoted by earlier archaeologists and by many ancient Greek and Latin authors.[19] Diodorus's Book III was consequently marginalized as an unreliable account of Aithiopian and Egyptian prehistory.

Yet there are more productive ways to assess Diodorus in his own historical context. The next three sections will *not* attempt to determine whether or not Diodorus's ideas about earlier millennia were correct, as judged against the methods and evidence available to us today in the 21st century CE. Instead, our analysis here will focus upon how a 1st-century BCE author writing in Greek came to articulate and popularize a theory treating such distant epochs of the Aithiopian and Egyptian pasts. This approach requires that we read Diodorus's Book III in pursuit, not of *pre*history, but of *mnemo*history:[20] When was the theory of Aithiopian antecedence invented? By whom? And upon what grounds was it advanced and accepted during antiquity?

Diodorus's Sources

For the benefit of the nonspecialist reader, one point should be immediately clarified: there are no compelling reasons to suppose that the theory of Aithiopian antecedence would have been a product of Diodorus's own imagination. Despite explaining the theory in detail, Diodorus never explicitly endorsed it, and, in another passage of the *Bibliotheca Historica*, he reported without criticism that:

> [T]he Egyptians have an account like this: When in the beginning the universe came into being, men first came into existence in Egypt…. [They] say that they are the earliest of all men and the first people among whom philosophy and the exact sciences of the stars were discovered, …. [that] it was they who first discovered writing and the observation of the stars, who also discovered the basic principles of geometry and most of the arts, and established the best laws (I.9.10, 50.1, 69.5).[21]

This apparent contradiction between Books I and III is in keeping with Diodorus's stated research philosophy to "record summarily … what each nation has to say concerning its antiquity" (I.9.4).[22] Moreover, Diodorus closed his Aithiopian ethnography with a clear delineation of his chosen sources for that material:

> Concerning the historians, we must distinguish among them, to the effect that many have composed works on both Egypt and Aithiopia, of whom some have given credence to false report and others have invented many tales out of their own minds for the delectation of their readers, and so may justly be distrusted.[23] Agatharchides of Cnidus, however, in Book 2 of his history of Asia, and the geographical writer Artemidorus of Ephesus in his Book 8, and some others settled in Egypt have investigated most of what I have written above, and have hit the mark in almost everything. For I have also myself talked to many of the priests during the time I visited Egypt, and came into conversation with not a few representatives who were present there from Aithiopia. It is on the basis of my careful questioning of these men and of my scrutiny of the writings of the historians that I have written this account in conformity with those in closest agreement (III.11.1-3).[24]

Nevertheless, the attribution of the Aithiopian *archaiologia* in Book III.2–3 to the sources named by Diodorus in III.11 is complicated by his penchant for using verbs with unnamed subjects (especially *φασί*, "they say").[25] Across the past six centuries of modern translation and commentary, this ambiguity has yielded three competing judgments of Diodorus's Aithiopian discussion: (1) that these passages express mostly Greek views of Aithiopia held by Agatharchides, Artemidorus, and Diodorus; (2) that the whole was instead reported by the "representatives from Aithiopia" either to Agatharchides in the 2nd century BCE or directly to Diodorus himself in the 1st century BCE; or (3) that Book III.2–3 combined substantial portions both from Greek authors and from Aithiopian representatives in a manner that can be carefully parsed by the historian through source criticism.

The judgment that Diodorus's III.2–3 was mostly an expression of Greek views is supported by several considerations. Firstly, large passages elsewhere in the same book (III.12–48) match both the wording and sequence of Agatharchides's *On the Erythraean Sea*, as reproduced and openly attributed in Photius's

Codex 250 from the 9th century CE—clearly indicating that Diodorus's claimed access to the works of Agatharchides in III.11.2 was no empty boast.[26] Secondly, the wording of III.2 suggests Diodorus's consultation of the research (*ἱστοροῦσι*)[27] of other authors and his confidence that a Greek audience had already accepted many of the assertions (e.g., "almost universally accepted," "obvious to all," "famous among all men"). Thirdly, Diodorus's III.2–3 is redolent of typically Greek ideas—from the pre-Socratic assumption that life began through the combination of heat and moisture (III.2.1),[28] to the Herodotean argument that Egypt was first formed by an accumulation of Nile silt (III.3.2–3),[29] the Euhemerized portrayal of Osiris as an historical figure (III.3.2),[30] the Homeric idealization of peoples living on the distant periphery of the known world (a perspective that modern scholars have called "Randvölkeridealiserung," III.2.3),[31] and even the specifically Agatharchidean emphasis upon geographic isolation as guarantor of peace and security (III.2.4–3.1).[32] On such grounds, translators from John Skelton (unpublished manuscript in 1485) to Charles Oldfather (Loeb edition in 1935) have specified only "formere auctorities" [*sic*] and "historians," respectively, as the sources of reportage in Diodorus's III.2–3, while identifying no information as derivative from Aithiopian informants.[33] The 1996 translation in the *Fontes Historiae Nubiorum* attributes the entirety of these sections to Agatharchides's lost book, *On Affairs in Asia*, interpreting this Aithiopian *archaiologia* largely as an expression of Hellenistic utopianism.[34]

By contrast, the assumption that the whole of Book III.2–3 was instead reported by the "representatives from Aithiopia" has been derived from the text's conspicuous use of reflexive pronouns. Chapter III.3 opens by noting that "[t]hey say that the Egyptians are settlers *from among themselves*" (*ἑαυτῶν ἀποίκους)* and closes with an allusion to "the many other things they say about *their own* antiquity and the Egyptian colony" (*περί τῆς αὑτῶν ἀρχαιότητος καὶ τῶν Αἰγυπτίων ἀποικίας*).[35] In the second Latin edition of the text published in 1604, Lorenz Rhodoman left the exact subjects of Diodorus's verbs unspecified in the body of his translation, but he added a marginalium to III.2, stating that *Aethiopes hominum primos se iactitant* ("Aithiopians boast that they themselves were the first of men").[36] In the first English edition of the text published in 1653, Henry Cogan echoed Rhodoman's interpretation, reading Diodorus's III.2 as a report of what "the Ethiopians boast" and III.3 as what "[t]hey of Ethiopia affirme [*sic*] further."[37] The attribution of these passages to boasting Aithiopians was then circulated even more widely by George Booth's English translation of 1700 that was reissued in 1814.[38] Cogan's and Booth's editions left a lasting impact upon European understanding of the text, as they appear to have been the only translations printed in a modern European vernacular prior to Lepsius's expedition in 1844.[39] Beyond scholars of Latin and Greek, European and American readers' acceptance of Aithiopian antecedence between 1653 and 1844 was therefore largely contingent upon whether they considered the ancient Aithiopians to be credible informants.[40]

Interpreters of Diodorus's III.2–3 have long been ambivalent about its proportion of Greek versus Aithiopian ideas, but it was not until the 1989 Budé edition that a translator carefully endeavored to parse the two components within the text. Bommelaer noted that the reflexive pronouns appeared *only* within III.3, and thus, *contra* Rhodoman, Cogan, and Booth, only those specific passages of III.3 could be confidently attributed to the "representatives from Aithiopia"; the preceding discussion in III.2, with its allusions to international consensus, pre-Socratic anthropogony, Homeric *Randvölkeridealiserung*, Agatharchidean isolation, and *ἱστορία* were instead attributed in the Budé translation to "les historiens"—presumably Agatharchides and Artemidorus, as later cited by Diodorus in III.11.[41] The upshot of this parsing was highlighted a few years later by Stanley Burstein:

> In a passage claiming that Egypt was an Aithiopian colony, the antecedents of the reflexive pronouns can only be the Aithiopians. In other words, Diodorus, or probably the source in which he found this passage and the accompanying citation of conversations with Aithiopian ambassadors, claimed to be quoting the views of Aithiopians in discussing the colonization of Egypt from Nubia.[42]

Other ideas contained within III.2–3 (e.g., Aithiopians' status as the earliest, most pious, and most divinely favored of all men) cannot be definitively sourced and may indeed be primarily

Greek in conception, but the Aithiopian colonization of Egypt and its alleged cultural vestiges are clearly reported in III.3 as Aithiopian claims obtained from Aithiopian informants. Burstein observed that this reading "seems not to have been considered by scholars," while concluding that, "[b]eyond this point, however, further analysis would not be profitable."[43]

Caution is certainly warranted, but an excess of it produces in this case an unintended and unnecessary effect: for readers new to Meroitic history, complete interpretive abstinence on the question of Diodorus's Aithiopian informants risks consigning these figures to the realm of the unknowable and immaterial. Thus, Rathmann's recent (2016) study of the *Bibliotheca Historica* concludes that the mention of these "representatives from Aithiopia" is "surely exaggerated" (*sicherlich übertrieben*), because their report emphasized religious culture rather than *Realpolitik*; he proposes that Diodorus's informants were not ambassadors but instead "the leaders of large caravans from the Aithiopian region."[44] It is unclear from Rathmann's description whether he envisions these as Aithiopian merchants or rather as *Ptolemaic* agents newly returned *from* Aithiopia as consulted by Agatharchides.[45]

Unfortunately, Rathmann's proposal makes no reference to any Nubiological scholarship on Aithiopian ambassadors, merchants, and travelers during the Graeco-Roman era, but the available literature is both substantial and instructive. Eusebius described Aithiopian ambassadors waiting at the palace gates to receive an audience with Constantine in the 4th century CE, and during the previous century, an Aithiopian man named Tami commissioned a Greek graffito on the island of Philae in which he acted as "ambassador" (πρεσβευτοῦ) and exercised prerogatives normally reserved for the high priest of Alexandria.[46] One of his Aithiopian contemporaries, Sasan, left a rough self-portrait (Fig. 3) and lengthy text in Demotic Egyptian in which he bore the title of Meroë's "great envoy (*wpte*) to Rome (*Hrme*)."[47] Texts produced by Aithiopians in their own (Meroitic) language still resist continuous

Figure 3: Graffito GPH 976 depicting Sasan, Meroë's "Great Envoy to Rome." Hadrian's Gateway, Philae. Third century CE (photograph courtesy of Eugene Cruz-Uribe).

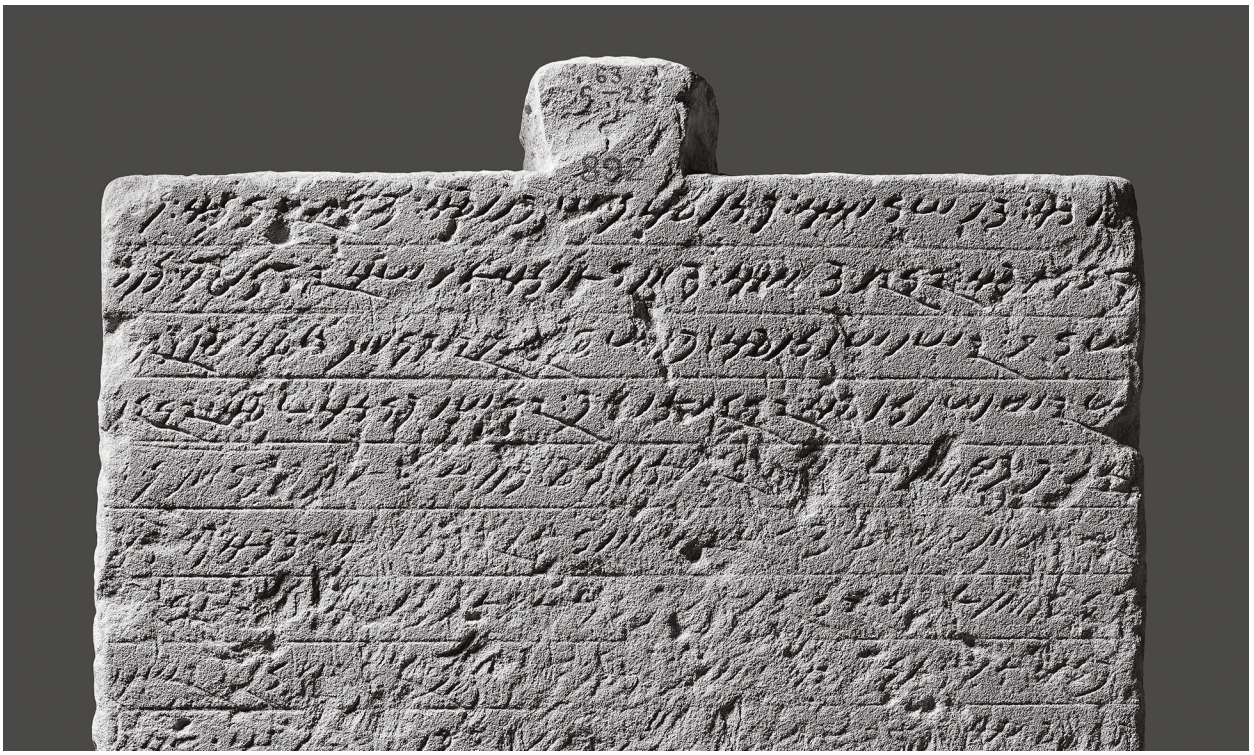

Figure 4: Detail of Meroitic offering table BM EA 892 (REM 0129) from Faras, near Abu Simbel. The words *apote* and *Arome* appear together in line 4 (© The Trustees of the British Museum).

Figure 5: Two Aithiopians of the "Meroitic Delegation" depicted in the Temple of Isis at Philae (photographs, two combined, courtesy of Eugene-Cruz Uribe).

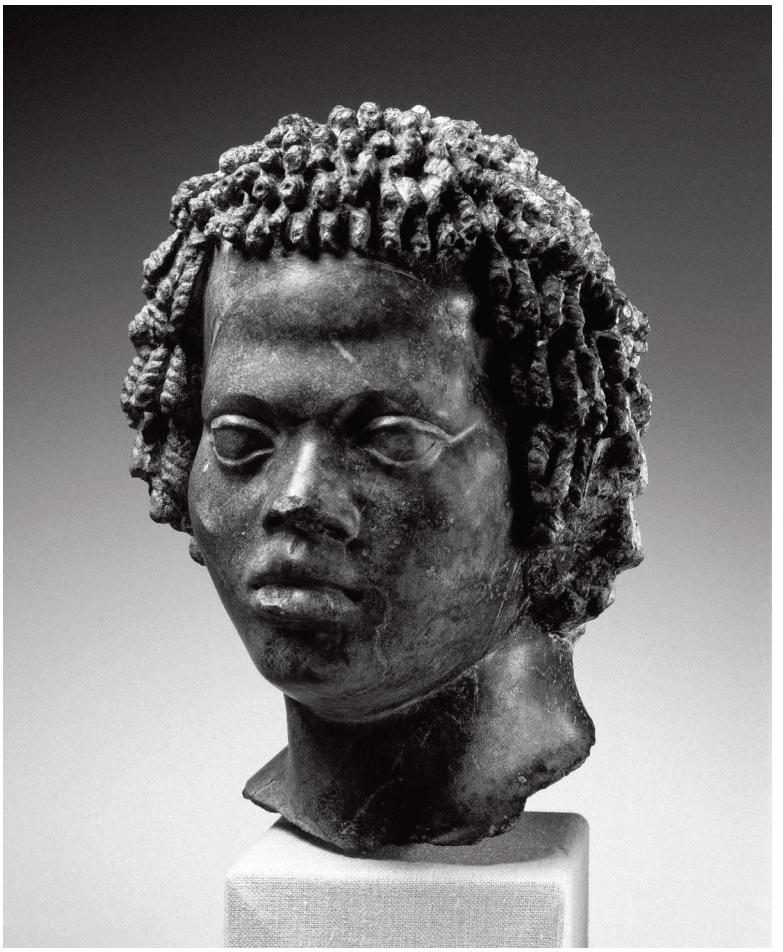

Figure 6: Dark grey marble head representing an Aithiopian (Brooklyn Museum 70.59). Probably from Asia Minor. Second century BCE (© The Brooklyn Museum).

translation,[48] but even in these the same title is easily recognized through a sequence of apparent Egyptian loanwords: *apote Arome* (e.g., Fig. 4).[49] While such travelers from the south depicted themselves only in the form of graffiti (e.g., Fig. 5),[50] the presence of Aithiopians in the Mediterranean world was portrayed with vivid naturalism by Hellenistic sculptors in the centuries preceding Diodorus (e.g., Fig. 6).[51] Some degree of Aithiopian travel abroad can hardly be doubted, not only for the Roman period but also for the late Ptolemaic era,[52] and thus there is little reason to assume that the "representatives from Aithiopia" must instead have been Ptolemaic commercial agents of Egyptian or Greek nationality. As Kenneth Sacks has astutely observed, Diodorus mentioned the Aithiopian informants in Book III.11 as a potential *corrective to* the writings of historians (*τοὺς λόγους τῶν ἱστορικῶν ἐξελέγξαντες*) such as Agatharchides, whom he had mentioned in the preceding line—and, in at least one other case (III.48.4), Diodorus directly contrasted Agatharchides's account with that of "observers."[53] The most likely explanation is that the "representatives from Aithiopia" would have been travelers of Aithiopian nationality whom Diodorus himself consulted during his stay in Alexandria.[54]

The possibility that these Aithiopian informants held a specifically *political* rank must also be given more serious consideration than Rathmann has attempted. Rathmann's objection—that they must have been merchants rather than ambassadors, because their report emphasized religious culture and not *Realpolitik*—erects an artificial distinction between Aithiopian religion, politics, and trade. In this regard, the information that Diodorus received from the Aithiopians may be compared to the aforementioned text commissioned by Sasan, the "great envoy to Rome": in both cases, emphasis is

laid upon religious piety, and specifically upon the Osiris cult,[55] at the expense of what a political historian might consider practical or secular details. Moreover, studies of Meroë's international trade have concluded that it was "primarily a state enterprise, a monopoly of the Crown," in which case Rathmann's "leaders of large caravans from the Aithiopian region" could actually be identical to the very Aithiopian ambassadors whose potential involvement he has doubted.[56] In fact, it would be rather surprising for Diodorus to rely upon the word of traders who were unaffiliated with the Aithiopian court, as "Hellenistic historians and geographers in general seem to have preferred the evidence of official sources, considering the testimony of private persons such as merchants to be, in Strabo's striking phrase, 'useless for the purposes of history.'"[57]

Diodorus's personal consultation with Aithiopian ambassadors would not, however, require that the whole of III.3 consisted of exclusively Aithiopian ideas. After all, the Aithiopian claim that the Egyptians were "settlers from among themselves" is followed immediately in the text by the euhemerization of Osiris and a typically Herodotean explanation of Nilotic hydrology.[58] Rather, the interweaving of apparent Aithiopian and Greek ideas in III.2–3 is better understood as a dialogic product of Diodorus's interview, in which the Aithiopians would have at times confirmed, at others corrected or supplemented, his Greek expectations with claims of their own. David Frankfurter has characterized this phenomenon in Graeco-Roman Egypt as "stereotype appropriation"—"a dynamic process of buying into, internalizing, and exploiting the roles offered by a dominant culture."[59] Diodorus's interview with the "representatives from Aithiopia" must be viewed within the competitive multicultural setting of 1st-century BCE Alexandria, where "one intellectual response by all groups was to argue for the chronological primacy of their own founding legends and hence of their respective races."[60] Greek stereotypes of Aithiopian autochthony, piety, and divine favor would thereby have been answered by claims of the Aithiopians' own making: the original settlement of Egypt by Aithiopian colonists and the resultant derivation of Egyptian culture from Aithiopia. The questions that remain to be explored are: whether these claims were invented by Diodorus's informants themselves during the 1st century BCE or were instead passed down orally from prior generations, and upon what material the ancient invention of such a theory could have been based.

The *Inventors* of Aithiopian Antecedence

Even though the *Bibliotheca Historica* is the earliest known text to explicitly propose the theory of Aithiopian antecedence, we have seen thus far that Diodorus himself is quite unlikely to have been the theory's inventor. The most economical solution might therefore posit that the immediate sources for that claim—his Aithiopian interviewees—were solely responsible for its invention. Yet Occam's razor is a clumsy instrument for historical research; the scholar who wields it carelessly in pursuit of the "simplest" explanation is prone to eliminate viable alternatives prematurely.[61] In fact, claiming Egyptian traditions as part of Aithiopia's cultural patrimony would seem to have been more advantageous to Aithiopians during earlier periods of history when they were more directly involved with Egyptian affairs of state. In the discussion that follows, we will focus only upon those periods in which *contemporaneous* evidence shows direct Aithiopian intervention in Egypt coupled with equally direct references to Aithiopia as either refuge or homeland in nationalist propaganda.[62]

The most recent such epoch for Diodorus's Aithiopian interlocutors would be the aftermath of Greek conquest in Egypt. Contacts between the Ptolemaic and Aithiopian courts may have been cordial at first,[63] but in 275–274 BCE the troops of Ptolemy II Philadelphus invaded Lower Nubia to commandeer the trade in gold, ivory, and elephants.[64] By the close of that century, the surviving records indicate that the Ptolemaic regime faced a large rebellion led by Upper Egyptians and "the army of the Kushites."[65] In the wake of that conflict, the Aithiopian kings Arqamani (Ergamenes II; Fig. 7) and his successor, Adikhalamani, succeeded in reclaiming Lower Nubia from Ptolemaic hands, so that the rebels of Upper Egypt were now bordered immediately to the south by territories held by their Aithiopian allies.[66] Such circumstances alone would seem conducive both to an Upper Egyptian idealization of Aithiopia and to Aithiopian claims to ownership of Egyptian culture.

The scenario is more than hypothetical, because the feud between the Ptolemaic and Aithiopian regimes was not confined to the battlefield. The Ptolemies had vilified past foes during the Syrian War by highlighting their association with Seth-Baal,

Figure 7: Relief of Arqamani (Ergamenes II) from Dakka. Late 3rd century BCE (photograph courtesy of Dennis Jarvis).

enemy of Horus and Osiris;[67] they now employed the same propaganda against Aithiopia, even though no cult of Seth appears to have existed there. Texts commissioned by the Ptolemaic kings at Edfu began to describe Kush as the land of Seth, and at Dendara one reference to Kush was negated by means of a Seth hieroglyph with a knife stuck in its back.[68] Due to a paucity of contemporaneous texts from Nubia, we still remain poorly informed about any rhetorical counter-campaign that the Aithiopians may have waged, but two developments of the era are especially noteworthy: Arqamani's tomb at Meroë proclaimed for the king an unconventional Horus name that emphasized his southern origin—"The-Kushite-Whose-Manifestation-Is-Divine"[69]—and upon his coffin bench Arqamani's scribes attempted for the first time to translate the entirety of an Egyptian epithet into the Meroitic language by writing the latter with Egyptian phonetic hieroglyphs.[70] It would therefore appear that Aithiopians of the period were articulating their national identity in new ways at the same time that they made common cause with Upper Egypt.[71] The oral tradition asserting Egypt's cultural debt to Aithiopia may indeed originate from this 3rd-century BCE milieu—more than a hundred years before it was repeated to Diodorus and first documented in his *Bibliotheca Historica*.

Nevertheless, other evidence suggests that the theory of Aithiopian antecedence could have even deeper and more complicated historical roots. For instance, disputes about the relative antiquity of

Aithiopian versus Egyptian culture already lurk behind Herodotus's account in the 5th century BCE. On the subject of circumcision, Herodotus equivocated: "As to the Egyptians and Aithiopians themselves, I cannot say which nation learned it from the other."[72] His comment serves as a reminder that debates over cultural primacy were already circulating in Egypt long before Alexander's conquest.[73] We must therefore consider the possibility that Aithiopian travelers and émigrés could also have been participants in such nationalist contests in Egypt much earlier than the Ptolemaic era.

Arguably the most fertile ground for the theory of Aithiopian antecedence would have been the Twenty-fifth Dynasty in the 8th and 7th centuries BCE, when Aithiopian kings actually moved their seat of government to Egyptian soil and exercised suzerainty over most of the country. Three characteristics of Aithiopian royal propaganda during this era resonate with the emphases of Diodorus's III.2–3: (1) the kings' ostentatious piety (cf. III.2.2–4), (2) the proud accentuation of their Aithiopian origin (cf. III.2.1, III.3.1), and (3) their keen interest in Egypt's earliest recorded history (cf. III.3.1–2)—including especially the origins of its arts and hieroglyphs (cf. III.3.4–5).

The Twenty-fifth Dynasty was marked in Aithiopian, Egyptian, and Greek sources by a piety that was ostentatious even by pharaonic standards. In his Great Triumphal Stela, the Aithiopian king Pi(ankh)y claimed to postpone military conquest in order to first participate in religious festivals,[74] and he advised his troops to purify themselves in the Nile before battle and then wait for the enemy to assemble its full forces, so that all of Thebes would know that "Amun is the god who has sent us."[75] After a battle was concluded, the text states that Pi(ankh)y rejected any suppliants who were uncircumcised or "eaters of fish," that he refused even to look at the wives and daughters of his conquered foes, and that he ultimately pardoned the rebels.[76] When the Greek historian Herodotus visited Memphis three centuries later, the ideal of the clement Aithiopian pharaoh was evidently still memorialized among the Egyptian priests, informing the biography of Herodotus's Aithiopian king Sabakos (Σαβακῶς)—likely a composite figure representing the whole Aithiopian line.[77] Frank Snowden therefore proposed that the Greek stereotype of the pious Aithiopian was rooted in the international reputation of the Twenty-fifth Dynasty; however, as Snowden admitted and Malvern van Wyk Smith now underscores, the same idealization had already been voiced by Homer a century *before* the earliest records of that dynasty.[78] This contradiction proves instructive for our present inquiry, because it suggests that the metaphor of *roots* could be misleading. Like the ideal of Aithiopian piety in Diodorus's III.2, the claim of Aithiopian antecedence in III.3 may not ultimately trace to a singular origin from which all subsequent variants sprouted in a vertical line of succession; on the contrary, the theory could have been the product of lateral or *rhizomatic* connections between Greek, Egyptian, and Aithiopian ideas that converged across the 1st millennium BCE to form a latticework of interlinked theories.[79]

A further reason to suspect that Aithiopian antecedence may have been promoted by the Twenty-fifth Dynasty is the evident pride with which they accentuated their Aithiopian origin. Their rivals for power in Egypt at the time were conveniently also of non-Egyptian extraction—the descendants of Libyan immigrants[80]—and thus the Aithiopian kings "consciously expose[d] the falsehood of such acculturation and stigmatize[d] Libyan ethnic groups as traditional enemies of Egypt." Robert Ritner has dubbed the resulting contest "Libyan versus Nubian as the ideal Egyptian,"[81] but it must be emphasized that the Aithiopian (Nubian) royal family did *not* seek to sublimate its own southern origin in order to appear Egyptian. On the contrary, a variety of art-historical evidence in Egypt shows the Aithiopians displaying regalia, costume, and coiffure that were distinctive to their line—e.g., double uraei, ram-headed pendants, and skullcaps for men, close-cropped or "curiously raised" hairstyles, tasseled frontlets, and wide capes with fringes or tails for women; their statuary likewise bore the rounded cheeks and nasolabial "Kushite fold" that had once stereotyped the faces of Aithiopian *enemies* in earlier Egyptian propaganda.[82] The kings retained their Meroitic personal names even within their formal royal titulary,[83] traced their own dynastic origins to Aithiopian locales,[84] and chose to be buried not in the necropoleis of Egypt but rather hundreds of kilometers to the south in their Aithiopian homeland.[85] The dynasty's repeated invocation of the "Myth of the Sun's Eye" may also indicate that an Egyptian tale had been turned to Aithiopian

advantage[86]: the essential characters seem to have been already popular in Egypt as early as the New Kingdom,[87] but at some point in the myth's development, the goddess Hathor-Tefnut was cast as the "Kushite cat" and her voyage to Egypt became specifically an arrival *from Kush*.[88] If this Aithiopian detail was not always present within the tradition, then it may have first come to prominence in Egypt as an historiola during the Twenty-fifth Dynasty, when a specifically Aithiopian royal priestess, Shepenwepet II, adopted the prenomen *Meritefnut* ("Beloved of Tefnut"), emphasized her role as the "Eye of Re,"[89] and graphically depicted the Myth of the Sun's Eye in a relief scene at Medamud.[90] The oral tradition recorded by Diodorus tracing Egyptian civilization itself to an Aithiopian colony would seem fully consistent with the larger program of royal propaganda during the Twenty-fifth Dynasty, even though no surviving text from the 8th or 7th centuries BCE specifically advances such a claim in argumentative form.

The theory of Egypt's origins reported by Diodorus's Aithiopian informants in III.3 may also echo the Twenty-fifth Dynasty's keen interest in Egypt's earliest history. Within the much broader phenomenon of archaism across the 1st millennium BCE, the Aithiopian pharaohs often highlighted the oldest available models. Prenomina of the Aithiopians Djedka(u)re Shabatako and Neferkare Shabako harkened back to some of the first surviving throne names from Old Kingdom Egypt—respectively, to the Fifth Dynasty king Djedkare Isesi and the Sixth Dynasty king Neferkare Pepi II.[91] Statuary and relief scenes commissioned by the Aithiopian kings likewise reflected the musculature, garment, and stout proportions of the Old Kingdom,[92] and two specific examples in Upper Nubia from Taharqo's Temple T at Kawa were copied with remarkable exactitude from the Fifth Dynasty temples of Sahure and Nyuserre at Abusir.[93] In direct imitation of the most archaic Egyptian style, columns of text in Taharqo's Kawa stelae III (Fig. 8) and VI were delineated into chronological sections by means of vertical palm branches (*gn.w*) in the same manner as Egypt's earliest royal annals (*gn.wt*) and especially the Palermo Stone—quite possibly the oldest king list and one that included not only the pharaohs of the First Dynasty *but even the names of their obscure predecessors*.[94] Partially on the basis of this visual similarity, some Egyptologists have

Figure 8: Detail of Taharqo's stela III from Kawa (Æ.I.N. 1707). Seventh century BCE. Columns 1, 5, 7, 9-11, and 15 (right to left) are each delineated at their right margin by a vertical palm branch that is curved inward at the top; all but column 1 are scored with horizontal lines further down their stalks to enumerate a specific regnal year (© Ny Carlsberg Glyptotek).

proposed that the Palermo Stone itself could be a Twenty-fifth Dynasty copy of a much older archival document.[95] The theory remains conjectural[96] but understandable in light of other Aithiopian monuments such as the Shabako Stone (Memphite Theology) that evinced a parallel inquiry into Egypt's origins.[97] The opening lines of this manifesto explicitly recorded that Shabako had "this book written anew" after he "had found it as a work of the ancestors, worm-eaten"; the inscription's similarities to the archaic orthography of Old Kingdom texts and its political exaltation of the Early Dynastic royal capital at Memphis indicate that Shabako's scribes had either skillfully imitated source texts from the 3rd millennium BCE, reproduced them verbatim, or instead used an intermediary copy from the 2nd millennium BCE that thereby bridged a span of twenty-five hundred years.[98] Among many other revelations, the Shabako Stone then offered an account of the origins of the cosmos, the unification of Egypt after Osiris's death, and the invention of "all trades," "all arts," and "all hieroglyphs."[99] The emphasis upon Egypt's Osirian genesis, the "style of their statues," and the "form of their writing" that one finds in Diodorus's III.3 during the 1st century BCE clearly emerged from a matrix of interrelated concerns like those articulated in the Shabako Stone six centuries prior, but the surviving evidence does not allow us to determine with confidence whether Aithiopian antecedence, specifically, was among the claims advanced during the Twenty-fifth Dynasty. No earlier period displays the same combination of direct Aithiopian intervention in Egypt alongside manifest Aithiopian interest in Egypt's origins, supplemented by references to Aithiopian piety and to Aithiopia as a refuge and homeland in nationalist propaganda.

We are therefore faced with two plausible scenarios for the invention of Aithiopian antecedence. In the first, the theory of Aithiopian antecedence would have been invented by Aithiopians—and possibly by other peoples as well—during the late 3rd century BCE, when Aithiopians emphasized their cultural affinities with Upper Egyptian rebels in order to counter Ptolemaic propaganda. In the second scenario, the fundamental theses of Aithiopian antecedence would have been asserted during the 8th and 7th centuries BCE as an effect of Aithiopian rule in Egypt under the Twenty-fifth Dynasty. If the first scenario stands justified, then the Twenty-fifth Dynasty would furnish not the inventors of Aithiopian antecedence but rather some of the ideological material that those inventors later used to construct their theory. If the second scenario instead proves correct, then the materials of invention must be sought before the 8th century BCE. For both scenarios, we must ultimately question upon what grounds the inventors of Aithiopian antecedence based their theory. What follows in the next section is *not* an assessment of the accuracy of that theory based on the excavated *pre*historic materials available to us today in the 21st century CE, but instead a *mnemo*historical analysis of the materials that would seem to have been available to the *ancients* in the 1st millennium BCE.

The Materials of Invention

In a landmark essay on "Kush in the Eyes of Egyptians and Greeks," Christian Onasch has asserted that Kush was "never idealized" by the Egyptians of "pre-Hellenistic times" and consequently had no role in Egyptian literature prior to Alexander's conquest.[100] From this assessment one might be tempted to conclude that the theory of Aithiopian antecedence was invented during the Hellenistic period *ex nihilo.* Yet Onasch's judgment requires important qualifications. Firstly, given the degree of Middle and Upper Egyptian political and military support for the Twenty-fifth Dynasty,[101] we cannot exclude the possibility that at least some Middle and Upper Egyptians maintained a positive view of Aithiopia and its regime during the 8th and 7th centuries BCE.[102] Secondly, pre-Hellenistic Egyptian texts did evince a (begrudging?) respect for Aithiopians as not only military but especially magical opponents.[103] In a related vein, it must be admitted that while Aithiopia and Aithiopians did not feature prominently in surviving works of Egyptian fiction from pre-Hellenistic times, the same cannot be said of their role in Egyptian religious texts.

Long before the Twenty-fifth Dynasty, Egyptian texts drew multiple associations between the land of Aithiopia and numinous power. In a Theban magico-medical spell from the Nineteenth Dynasty designed to protect against scorpions, the goddess Isis announced herself: "I am the *Nḥsy* (Aithiopian) descended from heaven" (Fig. 9).[104] Lana Troy explains: "Isis acts as the complement to the solar orientation of the scorpion goddess, representing the night sky aspect of the feminine prototype. The solar 'red' imagery of one is countered by the Nubian

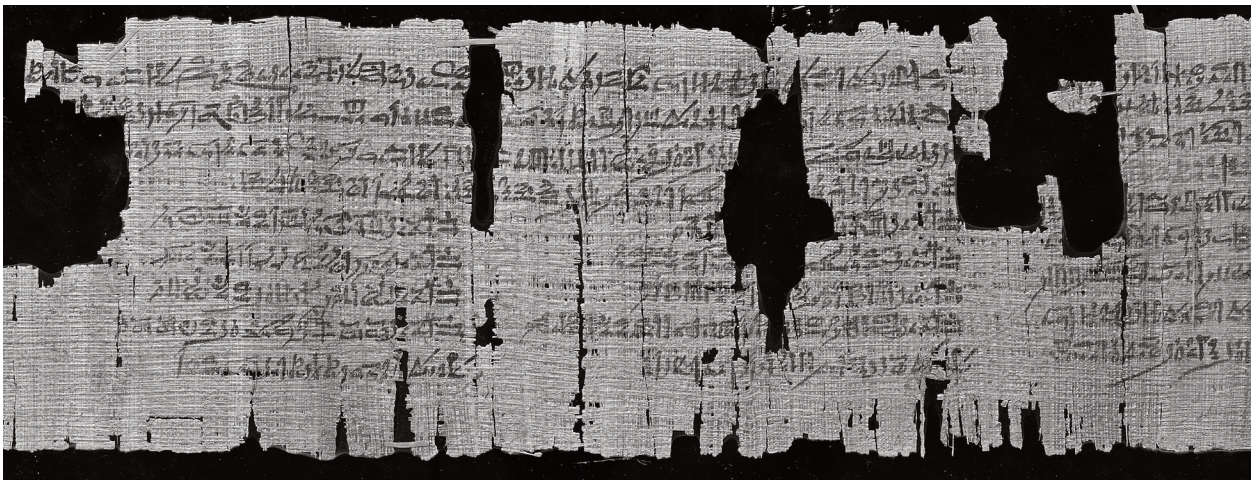

Figure 9: Papyrus Chester Beatty VII (Papyrus BM EA 10687), recto of sheet 2. Thebes. Nineteenth Dynasty (© The Trustees of the British Museum). Passage in the middle of line 3 describes Isis as "the *Nḥsy* (Aithiopian) descended from heaven."

'black' imagery of the other."[105] The Egyptian intent in terming Isis a *Nḥsy* may have been wholly symbolic, but it would be naïve to assume that such symbolism could not have inspired Aithiopian coreligionists to identify Isis as one of their own; a similar interpretive potential must likewise be considered for the frequent use of dark pigments for the image of Osiris.[106] Theban magical spells also invoked Egyptian deities by means of Aithiopian aliases and epithets vocalized in Meroitic and other non-Egyptian languages. Among the so-called Supplemental Chapters of the Book of the Dead, one equated Osiris with Sebiumeker (*šᶜ-pu-mᶜku*), a distinctly Aithiopian god known in later centuries from inscriptions at the site of Musawwarat es-Sufra.[107] The long interval between Osiris-Sebiumeker's appearance in the Book of the Dead and his later attestation at Musawwarat es-Sufra is a valuable reminder that some Aithiopian conceptualizations of the divine would have been articulated in oral traditions beyond the purview of the documentary historian. Another textual reference explicitly identified a goddess's alias as one that would be used by an Aithiopian (*Nḥs*): "Hail to thee, Sekhmet-Bastet-Re!... *Ḥrpgkšršb* is your name, so says the *Nḥs* of the archers of the Land of the *St*-Bow (Aithiopia)."[108] In still another spell, even greater geographic specificity is conveyed by a phrase written in Egyptian that localizes the god Amun as "He who rests to the northwest of the Mount at Napata in the Land of the *St*-Bow (Aithiopia)."[109] The "Mount at Napata" can be identified with confidence as the site of Gebel Barkal, the abode of "Amun of Napata who resides in the Holy Mount."[110]

Omission of this specific cult from Onasch's discussion is especially problematic, because during the New Kingdom the worship of Amun beyond Egypt's southern border furnished material that would prove highly conducive to the later valorization of Aithiopia. It is not uncommon for the deity of a colonial metropole to syncretize with the local god of a distant colony, but the association of the Theban deity Amun with a ram-headed god previously venerated in Aithiopia[111] was given further potency under New Kingdom colonialism by epithets granting him *political authority over Egypt*: Amun's cultic center at Gebel Barkal was hailed by Thutmose III as the "Thrones of the Two Lands," and again at Abu Simbel, Ramesses II lauded a ram-headed Amun both as overlord of Aithiopia ("Foremost in the Land of the *St*-Bow," "Who Resides in the Land of the *St*-Bow") and as superordinate god of royal legitimacy ("Lord of the Thrones of the Two Lands").[112] Timothy Kendall has recently proposed that the cult of Amun-Re-Min-Kamutef would have been associated with Aithiopia at least as early as the Seventeenth Dynasty.[113] Equally significant may be the fact that the cult of the ram-headed Amun was

then maintained within a region where Aithiopian elites had long enjoyed considerable political autonomy from Egyptian rule.[114] Such circumstances would have encouraged Aithiopians in Upper Nubia to conceptualize in their own terms the deities named in Egyptian texts but equally to interpret the Amun cult at Egyptian Thebes as part of a shared religious heritage. By the 8th century BCE, it was thus Amun of Napata who authorized Aithiopian claims *to Egypt* at the onset of the Twenty-fifth Dynasty.[115] The religious beliefs of New Kingdom Egypt and especially Aithiopia would have provided ample material for a later invention of Aithiopian antecedence.

By contrast, the material available from earlier centuries seems much less amenable to the invention of such a theory. When he first challenged the theory of Aithiopian antecedence in the middle of the 19th century CE, Lepsius speculated that it was a misremembrance of Egyptian kings returning from their exile at the Aithiopian site of Kerma in order to retake Egypt from the Hyksos invaders.[116] Yet nearly two hundred years of research in Egypt and Sudan have yielded no compelling evidence to support Lepsius's hypothesis, and it has long since been abandoned by scholars. In fact, Kerma is perhaps best known today for its cultural *distinctiveness* from Egypt of the Middle Kingdom and Second Intermediate Period: Kerma's archaeological remains suggest its political independence from Egypt, and they display a variety of architectural and artistic practices that cannot be adequately explained by means of Egyptian parallels, much less by Egyptian inspiration—e.g., oval temples with scalloped buttressing, massive tumulus burials, funerary beds, and elaborately decorated handmade pottery.[117] The logical corollary to this observation is that those same distinctive practices at Kerma would also have provided Aithiopians with little material upon which to claim an *Aithiopian* inspiration of *Egyptian* culture.

Granted, an Aithiopian visitor to Egypt during the early 2nd millennium BCE could have noted multiple similarities between these neighboring cultures along the Nile—from the White Crown, cartouches, winged sun-disk, sacred barques, stelae, mud-seal plaques, and anthropomorphized hippopotamus goddess (Taweret?), to the king's power over life and death, or the construction and maintenance of cultic installations at the sites of individual burials.[118] Yet we remain ill equipped to speculate about how or even whether Aithiopians and Egyptians *at that time* might have projected such ethnographic similarities into the sphere of mnemohistory as a theory of relations between the two cultures. If the inhabitants of Early, Middle, or Classic Kerma perceived a special affinity or identity between the gods of Aithiopia and those of Egypt, they left little clear iconographic or documentary testimony to that effect. In fact, when Thutmose III later addressed the "people of the Southland who are at the Holy Mount" (*rmṯw ḫnt(y)-tꜣ m pꜣ ḏw wꜥb*), he explicitly claimed that the mountain "was called 'Thrones-of-the-Two-Lands' among the people (*rmṯw*) *when it was not (yet?) known*" (among others?).[119] While it is not impossible that some theory of prehistoric relations between Aithiopia and Egypt could have been transmitted via oral tradition, the surviving texts from the whole of northeast Africa preserve only the faintest echo of Aithiopian oral tradition across the opening millennium of recorded history.

One partial exception is the appearance of the god Dedwen in the Pyramid Texts of Egypt's Old Kingdom. Some of those spells identified Dedwen as the "youth from the Land of the *St*-Bow (Aithiopia)"[120] and yet equated him with the deceased *Egyptian* king.[121] Egyptians of later millennia struggled to concoct an Egyptian etymology for Dedwen's name,[122] while their Aithiopian contemporaries continued to regard him as "a god of Kush" and to associate Dedwen specifically with Osiris.[123] As such, the figure of Dedwen may have proffered to later Aithiopians some valuable links to Egypt's earliest kings and Osiris worship. Yet those links are notoriously discontinuous: he is not attested in the earliest Pyramid Texts, appearing only after the expansion of Egyptian trade with the south during the Sixth Dynasty; no cult devoted specifically to Dedwen has been verified in Egypt during any period; and prior to the New Kingdom he appeared only as a subsidiary god even in *Aithiopian* temples.[124] Moreover, Dedwen stands alone as the only identifiably Aithiopian god mentioned in Egyptian documents during the Old Kingdom, and his earliest appearance in the Pyramid Texts is still several centuries later than state formation and the origin of hieroglyphic writing in Egypt and Aithiopia as recounted in Diodorus Siculus's III.3.

In its earliest surviving articulation from the 1st millennium BCE, the ancient theory of Aithiopian

antecedence would therefore seem to be a claim about prehistory that was based on no prehistoric evidence. That epistemological flaw emboldened many authors during the 19th century CE to not only pronounce on the theory's falsity but also to question the integrity of its ancient inventors. One anonymous critic at the time wrote in the *Edinburgh Review* with particular scorn: "We now dismiss the Ethiopians, with an admonition not again to appear before us with pretensions at once so lofty and so ill-founded, if they do not choose to be treated as impostors."[125] Ironically, such critiques manifested an epistemological flaw reminiscent of the one that they sought to deride: just as the ancient theory had assessed prehistory without prehistoric evidence, its 19th-century CE rebuttal assessed a theory from the 1st millennium BCE without considering the historical context of the 1st millennium BCE. The assertion reported to Diodorus that Egyptian settlement and culture had been derived from Aithiopia was based upon ethnographic observation of contemporary similarities between Aithiopia and Egypt—divine kingship, funerary practice, artistic style, and form of writing (III.3.3–6)—supplemented by hydrological deduction (III.2.3), prescientific speculation about the origins of life (III.2.1), and popular stereotypes of cultural difference (III.2.2–4). Moreover, the theory must be viewed against the backdrop of Aithiopians' political overtures in Egypt during the 3rd and 8th centuries BCE, their antiquarian fascination with Egypt's origins, and an Aithiopian nationalism inspired in part by religious thought from the New Kingdom. With a creative resourcefulness not unlike that of Virgil or Geoffrey of Monmouth,[126] the anonymous inventors of Aithiopian antecedence produced a bricolage from the eclectic but limited material at their disposal during the 1st millennium BCE. *Their* ancient theory of Aithiopian antecedence was a claim about prehistory invented *without the benefit* of prehistoric evidence.

Epilogue: The *Re*-Invention of Aithiopian Antecedence

In the century that followed Lepsius's refutation of Aithiopian antecedence, the study of prehistory was transformed by new linguistic, genetic, and archaeological methods. The growing database of vocabularies and DNA sequences facilitated a much more systematic reconstruction of past social conditions and biological connections, while the increasing attention to stratigraphic context and growing appreciation of transitory domestic architecture, excavated refuse, and utilitarian artifacts untethered archaeology from its reliance on ancient textual and iconographic propaganda. For the prehistory of northeast Africa, these technical advances across the 20th and 21st centuries CE have resulted in a spate of new, provisional theories positing various forms of Aithiopian antecedence, but their methodology and evidentiary basis are quite different from those employed by Diodorus's ancient informants.

One of the more developed of these recent theories tracks profound cultural change in Nubia between ca. 8000 and 5000 BCE, followed by significant Nubian influence on Egypt between ca. 5000 and 3000 BCE (Fig. 10).[127] Analyses of settlement patterns evince rather sparse habitation of the Egyptian Nile before 5000 BCE, in contrast to the more substantial network of sites attested along the Nubian Nile and among the western playas of Lower Nubia.[128] From that broad southern region, linguistic studies and morphological and genetic analyses of excavated bones *may* point to an earlier domestication of cattle in Nubia than in neighboring Egypt—possibly as early as ca. 8400–7000 BCE at Bir Kiseiba, Nabta Playa, and Wadi el-Arab near Kerma, but more securely by the 6th millennium BCE at multiple sites on the Nubian Nile.[129] The same era witnessed the invention of pottery for both cooking and storage across a wide swath of the southern Sahara, including multiple sites on the Nubian Nile.[130] A growing body of scholarship has related these Nubian pastoral and ceramic innovations to improvements in infant health, familial mobility, and economic security among herder populations,[131] as well as to social differentiation and an expansion of ritual and social networks,[132] with notable effects at Nabta Playa such as labor organization, a solar calendar, and large stone sculpture.[133] Moreover, several lines of evidence have been taken to indicate that at least some of these "Nubians moved north towards Middle Egypt" after 5000 BCE:[134] the emerging Badarian culture of Middle Egypt shared with the older Nubian pastoral complex a preference for seasonal campsites over permanent settlements, the interment of cattle, as well as a concentration of wealth not in domestic spaces but instead on and around similarly-postured human burials that included such characteristic grave goods as cosmetic stone palettes, female figurines, and black-mouthed

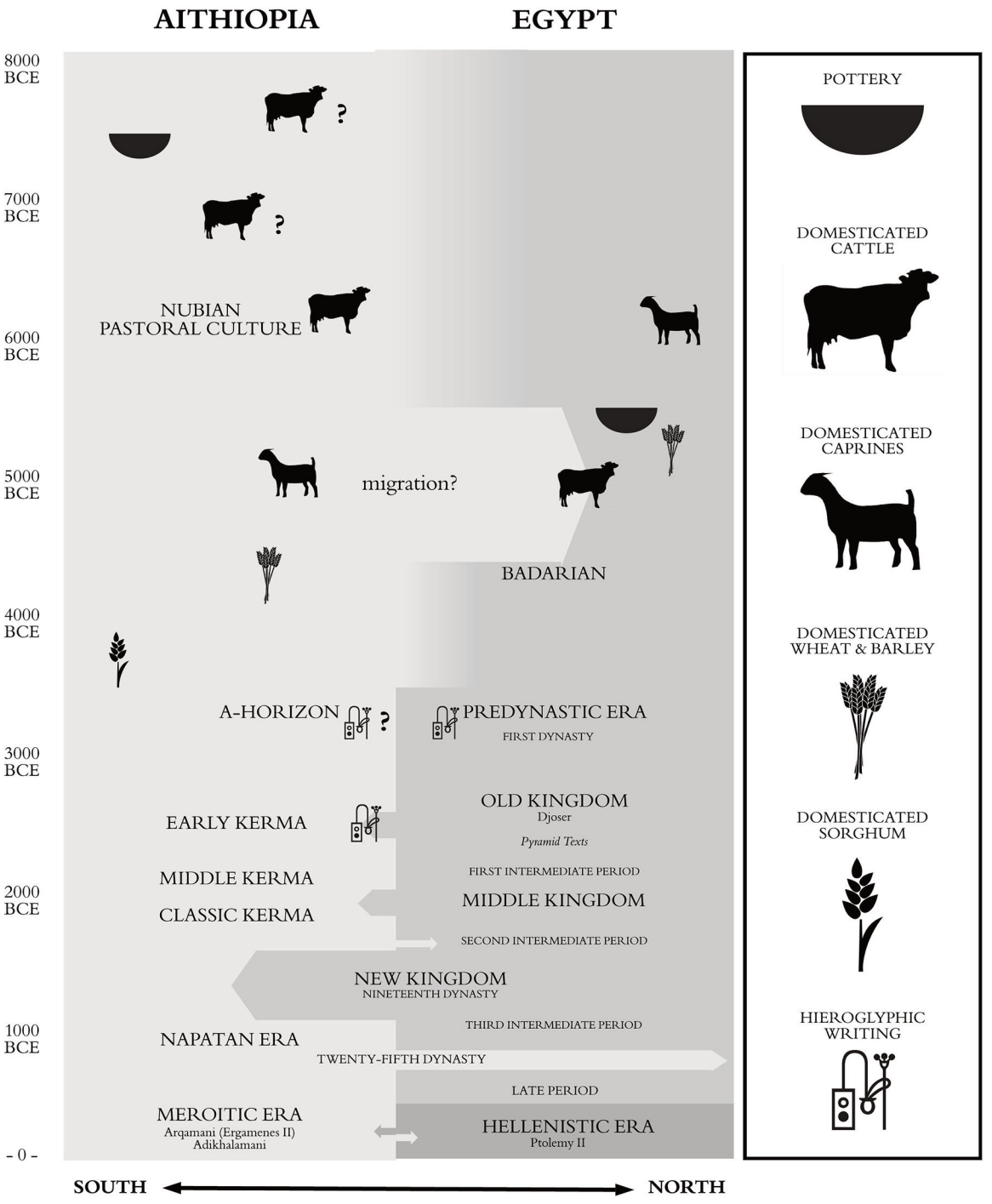

Figure 10: Schematic timeline illustrating one recent theory of Aithiopian antecedence. Boundaries between Aithiopia and Egypt are represented only after state formation during the A-Group and Predynastic eras. Icons likewise represent only the approximate first appearance of that innovation in each region.

pots with a red ochre wash.[135] The Nubian pastoral complex shows continuous development into A-Horizon Sayala and Qustul in Lower Nubia and eventually to Early Kerma,[136] whereas the related Badarian culture in turn links to Predynastic Hierakonpolis, Naqada, Abydos, and thus to pharaonic Egypt.[137] Several conclusions within this scenario bear a superficial resemblance to Diodorus's Book III, from the settlement differential between prehistoric Egypt and Aithiopia (cf. III.3.2–3, III.2.1) and the early development of astronomy and large stone sculpture in Aithiopia (III.3.4, cf. Lucian's *De astrologia* 3, 5), to the apparent migrations from Aithiopia to Egypt (III.3.1) and the resultant similarities in funerary practice across the two regions (III.3.4). Maria Gatto's conclusion from this chain of prehistoric cultural links is also one that would likely have met enthusiastic approval from Diodorus's Aithiopian informants in the 1st century BCE: "To sum up, Nubia is Egypt's African ancestor."[138]

Despite such similar conclusions, this recent theory of Aithiopian antecedence differs markedly from its ancient predecessor—not only in its methods and evidence, but also in its underlying philosophy. Most fundamentally, the newer theory was forged in an intellectual environment wary of contests for cultural primacy and their hyper-diffusionist excesses.[139] As a result, it posits not a singular Aithiopian colony at Egypt's origins but instead a transitive series of links connecting A-Horizon Nubia to Predynastic Egypt via their shared regional heritage. The recent iteration of Aithiopian antecedence is further consistently balanced by acknowledgments of formative *Levantine* influences upon early Egypt, such as the introduction of agriculture and domesticated caprines.[140] In contrast to the ancient interpretation of Heliodorus and the 19th-century view of Gau, the newer theory also recognizes that tremendous cultural development and differentiation occurred in both Egypt and Nubia during the 4th and 3rd millennia BCE *subsequent* to the proposed migration(s) from Nabta Playa to Egypt.[141] Mark Lehner clarifies the relationship between the two by cautioning: "It makes sense, but not in a facile, direct way. You can't go straight from these megaliths [at Nabta Playa] to the pyramid of Djoser."[142] The re-invention of Aithiopian antecedence emphasizes much subtler milestones of collective achievement: viz., the advent of pastoralism and pottery. While the anthropologist will recognize such changes in subsistence, food preparation, and storage as the very foundations of social development, they have often been overshadowed by a popular fascination with monumentality, iconography, and literacy as the grandiose trappings and propagandistic instruments of social hierarchy. Public interest has thus gravitated toward the question of which region manifested *those* traits *first*—Lower Nubia or Upper Egypt—a debate that seems for the moment ensnared in logical circularity.[143] The re-invention of Aithiopian antecedence is not dependent upon an answer to that question.s

We must therefore be careful not to conflate the newer theory of Aithiopian antecedence with its Diodoran predecessor. Observing the eclecticism of Aithiopian religious culture during the Hellenistic era, Dietrich Wildung muses: "Do basic aspects of Egyptian religion which have been taken over by Meroe *originate from the south*, from the prehistoric civilizations of Nubia and northern Sudan, thus *coming back to their origins after thousands of years* in a slightly Egyptianized fashion?"[144] The possibility is intriguing, but it should not be taken to suggest that Aithiopians had unwittingly preserved Egypt's earliest culture across the millennia in a static ahistorical vacuum. Indeed, the Aithiopians who promoted Aithiopian antecedence during the 1st millennium BCE were not the "living ancestors" of the Egyptians but rather their living *contemporaries*,[145] and like the Egyptians, they theorized their most distant past through an intellectual process of invention.

Abbreviations

BD	Book of the Dead
BM	British Museum
MFA	Museum of Fine Arts (Boston)
SNM	National Museum of Sudan (Khartoum)

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Notes

1 For the translation of *φασί*, I follow the more circumspect reading of Bommelaer, rather than the recent *Fontes Historiae Nubiorum* translation, "they write" (see Note 2): Bommelaer 1989, 3.

2 Eide et al. 1996, 644–645. Following the example of the *Fontes Historiae Nubiorum*, I use throughout this essay the spelling *Aithiopia(n)* to differentiate the ancient toponym (that includes Sudan) from the modern nation of Ethiopia; *Aithiopia* also encompasses desert and riverine populations as far south as Khartoum that evinced significant cultural affinities even as political boundaries changed over the millennia. For reasons clarified in the body of this article, I have omitted here the bracketed asides that many translators have used to explain the presumed subjects of Diodorus's verbs.

3 Diodorus's reliance upon Agatharchides of Cnidus will be discussed here. Due to space constraints, this essay will not address the oft-repeated claim that earlier Egyptian sources memorialized the southern territories as "Land of the Ancestors" and "Land of the Gods"; I intend to explain the errors of those readings in a future article to be submitted to an audience of Africanist historians and archaeologists, as previously delivered in lecture form: Pope 2012.

4 FGrH 618 F 2, first paraphrased in 1160 CE by Joannes Tzetzes for his *Exegesis in Homeri Iliadem* 1.97: Jacoby 1995, 147; Van der Horst, 1984, 24–25 (Fr. 12). From Tzetzes's paraphrase, we may only infer that Chaeremon did not refute the assumption, but it is not clear whether he endorsed it.

5 *Satire* VI.526–529 in Braund 2004, 282-283. That some Romans actually made such a pilgrimage is suggested by a Latin graffito left at Musawwarat es-Sufra south of Meroë: Łatjar and Van der Vliet 2006, 193–198.

6 *De astrologia* 3, 5 in Harmon 1962, 350–351.

7 *Metamorphoses* XI.5 in Griffiths 1975, 74–75.

8 *Bibliotheca* III.15.4, in Frazer 1921b, 108–109, and

Bibliotheca II.5.112, in Frazer 1921a, 232–233.

9 *Life of Apollonius* VI.11.10 in Jones 2005, 129. Philostratus used the terms *Aithiopian* and *Indian* as designations of the same group, but he consistently remarked their linkage to the Egyptians and the Nile. For the same confusion in later centuries, see Mayerson 1993, 169–174.

10 Papyrus London-Leiden ro. IX.33, vo. XX.1–5, in: Griffith and Thompson 1904, 74–75, 192–193; Griffith and Thompson 1905, pls. labelled "IX" and "Verso XVII–XX"; Koenig 1987, 105–110; Thissen 1991, 371; Dieleman 2005, 138–139. See also Leitz 2002b, 296.

11 *Aithiopika* IV.12.1, IX.22.7: Morgan 1989, 436, 553. For the date of Heliodorus's novel, see discussion and references in Hägg 2000, 195–219, esp. 195.

12 For the promotion of Aithiopian antecedence in the post-classical *Ethnika* of Stephanus of Byzantium, see Billerbeck 2006, 90–91; the manuscript tradition of Stephanus's work is summarized in Diller 1938. For the manuscript tradition of Diodorus's work, see: Lacqueur 1992; Bravi 2008, 117–128. For Diodorus's modern reception, see: Burke 1966, 135–152; Sacks 1990, 206; Orriols 2015, 333–363; Nothaft 2016. Diodorus appears to have had less influence than Homer in medieval Europe: De Medeiros 1985, 184–193.

13 This pertains especially to modern interpretation of the Septuagint and the Vulgate. The literature on this topic is immense, but a useful starting point for readers is Trafton 2004.

14 Gau 1822, vii, 6–18; the term for "statues" in Diodorus's III.3.4 is *ἀγαλμάτων*, with no apparent architectural connotation. Gau's assumption may have been derived from that of Bruce 1790, 380.

15 Waddington and Hanbury 1822, 171, 181–184; Russell 1833, 139–140; Hoskins 1835, v, 72–77, 84. Other proponents of Aithiopian antecedence before 1844 include: De Chasebeouf 1796, 330–331; Bruce 1790, 380; Bruce 1800, 237; Bruce 1805, 262–263, 268, 310, 321, 479, 485–490; Grégoire 1810, 20–23; Everett 1827, 214; Anon. 1828; Jean-François Champollion's "Notice sommaire sur l'histoire d'Égypte, rédigée à Alexandrie pour le vice-roi, et remise à son altesse le 29 Novembre 1829," in Hartleben 1909, 427–428; Heeren 1838, 396; Everett 1840, 45; Poe 1841, 53. Birch later referenced the theory without dispute but remained noncommittal: Birch 1850, 385–396 esp. 390–391.

16 Lepsius 1852, 148, 267. For other critics of Aithiopian antecedence, see: Meiners 1775, 47–61; Heyne 1784, 75–106, esp. 85; Anon. 1835, 45–72; Pückler-Muskau 1985 [1844], 593, but cf. 424–425; Gliddon 1844, 58–60; Taylor 1852, col. B; Taylor 1854, 229–237.

17 Hoskins 1835, 74; Ferlini 1837, figs. 12, 14–15; Boldrini 1981, figs. 24–25, 31–33; Priese 1993, 28 fig. 25.

18 For continued support of Aithiopian antecedence after 1844 by authors outside of the professionalized disciplines of Egyptology and Classical Studies, see, e.g., Moses 1998.

19 Trigger 1994, 323–345; Champion 2003, 127–145.

20 As famously articulated by Assmann 1997, 8–9.

21 Oldfather 1933, 34–35, 174–177, 238–239.

22 Oldfather 1933, 32–33; Sartori 1984, 492–535. For recent discussion of this approach, see Sulimani 2011.

23 Oldfather 1935, 112–113. I have quoted these lines from Oldfather's translation, as they are not included in the *Fontes Historiae Nubiorum*: cf. NOTE 24.

24 Eide et al. 1996, 706; Bommelaer 1989, 13.

25 Oldfather 1933, xxv.

26 Schneider 1880, 221–254; Burstein 1989, 37, 58–171, 176–182.

27 Although not necessarily limited in post-classical Greek to the writings of historians, specifically: Eide et al. 1996, 644 n. 302.

28 Blundell 1986, 24–53; See also: Diodorus's I.7.4; Lesky 1959, 27–38, esp. 33.

29 *Histories* II.5–13 in Godley 1920, 278–289. Nevertheless, the characterization of Egypt as "gift of the Nile" is perhaps best understood as Hecataean: Brown 1965, 60–76, esp. 68.

30 Winiarczyk 2013. See also Diodorus's I.17–23 in Oldfather 1933, 54–73.

31 *Iliad* I.423-424 in Green 2015, 36; Braunert 1959;

Aalders 1975, 64–73; Ferguson 1975, 15–22; Gabba 1981, 50–62, esp. 58–60; Hartog 1988, 44; Romm 1992, 45–81.

32 Burstein 1989, 168; see also Diodorus's III.47.8.

33 Salter and Edwards 1956a, 224; for the date of Skelton's manuscript, see Salter and Edwards 1956b, xxxii; Oldfather 1935, 89.

34 Eide et al. 1996, 638–650. See also: Lesky 1959, 38; Dihle 1962, 207–233, esp. 222–223; Dihle 1994, 106; Török 2011, 1–3.

35 This grammatical feature is apparently consistent across the surviving manuscripts, but I can only claim personal inspection of Florence Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana 70,1 folio 158^{v}.

36 Rhodoman 1604, 143–144. The earlier Latin edition of Bracciolini (drafted in 1449 but published in 1472) left the subjects of Diodorus's verbs completely unspecified: Bracciolini 1472, no pagination; for the date of the original Bracciolini manuscript, see Nothaft 2016, 713.

37 Cogan 1653, 113–114.

38 Booth 1700, 85–86.

39 The editions of Estienne (1559), Wesseling (1745), and Dindorf (1826, 1828–1831) did not translate into a modern European vernacular. For a summary of consecutive editions, see Stronk 2017, 28–29, 547–549.

40 E.g.: Bruce 1805, 487; Hoskins 1835, 75, 77. Cf.: Meiners 1775, 55, 57; Anon. 1835, 72, *contra* 62–63. For objections to the theory that were based instead upon its deviation from Christian Holy Writ, see: Boemus 1520, fols. 7r–v; Lanquet 1549, 3–5.

41 Bommelaer 1989, xiv–xvii, 3–4; for reservations about the translation as "historians," see NOTE 27.

42 Burstein 1992; subsequently published: in Burstein 1995, 29–39, and Burstein 1999, 118–126.

43 Burstein 1995, 35–36.

44 Rathmann 2016, 96, 100; cf. Rathmann 2016, 90 n. 298.

45 For this explanation, see also: Peremans 1967, 432–455, esp. 447–455; Burstein 1989, 32–33.

46 *De vita Constantini* IV.7 in Cameron and Hall 1999, 155–156; Bernard 1969, 197–201, pl. 80, on which see Eide et al. 1998, 1023–1024.

47 Pope 2008–2009; Pope 2014b, 577–582; Cruz-Uribe 2016, 38–39, 266, 272. For evidence of earlier diplomatic contacts between Persia and Kush, see discussion and references in: Török 2011, 101. Arrian likewise claimed that an Aithiopian embassy had visited Alexander in 324 BCE, but it must be remembered that Arrian's account was written five centuries later: *Anabasis* VII.15.4, in Hammond and Atkinson 2013, 210.

48 Rilly 2007; Rilly 2009; Rilly and de Voogt 2012; Hallof 2022.

49 Hofmann 1978, 265–278, esp. 270–274; e.g., REM 0129 in Leclant 2000, 288–291.

50 E.g., REM 0097–0111 in Leclant 2000, 216–253; foot graffiti GPH 237, 890–892, in Cruz-Uribe 2016, 226, 228.

51 Bothmer 1971, 126–127. The fact that the features of this statue match ancient Greek descriptions of Aithiopians (see NOTE 52) does not, of course, require that the man depicted be of specifically Kushite/Nubian ancestry—although the odds would seem to favor such an identification during the 2nd century BCE; for the date and provenance of Brooklyn 70.59, see private correspondence from H. Jucker to B. V. Bothmer dated 12 July 1970. I thank Yekaterina Barbash of the Brooklyn Museum for granting me access to Bothmer's files.

52 Snowden 1970; Vercoutter 1976, 133–285; see now esp. Ashby 2020, 65–66.

53 Oldfather 1933, 234–235; Sacks 1991, 85–86. For the possibility that Diodorus employed such observers as a corrective to "Herotodos and his successors," see Burstein 2012.

54 As proposed by F. Chamoux in Desanges 1993, 525–541, esp. 538–540, and Burstein 2012; *contra* Walbank 1968–1969, 476–498, esp. 491. For Diodorus's visit to Alexandria and its date, see: I.44.1–4, I.46.7, I.83.8 in Oldfather 1933, 156–159, 164–165, 284–287; Sacks 1991, 161. *Pace* Desanges, the contrast between Egyptian and Aithiopian writing systems in III.3.5 is more likely to have been attempted in the century after Aithiopians had devised a separate (Meroitic) writing system,

rather than before they had done so; in either period, the claim that hieroglyphs (of any variety, Egyptian or Meroitic) were used by all classes of Aithiopians finds no confirmation in the epigraphic evidence. The text's misguided excursus about symbolic hieroglyphs appears to be marked as Diodorus's own analysis: III.3 closes with allusion to the "many other things" that "the Aithiopians also relate … about which there is no pressing need to write," and it is then followed in III.4 by Diodorus's remark that "I should say something … about the Aithiopian writing." Desanges 1993, 533–535. For the origins of Meroitic writing, see: Rilly 2003, 41–55.

55 Pope 2008–2009, 77, 93–95; Pope 2014b, 579–581.

56 Edwards 1996, 29, 89.

57 Burstein 1989, 32; see Strabo XV.1.4 in Jones 1930, 5.

58 Burstein 1995, 39 n. 35. However, for a possible Meroitic context behind the euhemerization of Osiris, see Yellin 1991, 362, with particular reference to a monument contemporaneous with the life of Diodorus: Boston MFA 21.11808, on which the queen takes Osiris's place between Isis and Nephthys. I thank Janice Yellin for her consultation on 29 April 2020; any errors of interpretation are entirely my own.

59 Frankfurter 2000, 162–194, esp. 174; Frankfurter 2001, 225–226.

60 Sacks 1991, 64; Hadas 1959, 83–104, esp. 91–92; Wacholder 1968, 451–481.

61 One initial reason to suspect that the theory of Aithiopian antecedence could have been older than the 1st century BCE is the fact that theophorous Egyptian personal names during the preceding century already promoted an Aithiopian avatar of the god Horus, associating him not merely with a former Egyptian colony like Buhen but actually with the foreign state of Kush. For *Ḥr-ỉgš* (replete with foreign determinative) during the 2nd century BCE, see: Papyrus BM 10561, l. 29, in Shore and Smith 1960, 277–294; Lüddeckens 1977, 283–292, esp. 289–290; Winnicki 2009, 482–484.

62 The absence of such criteria thus excludes from our discussion here two groups who later Greek authors claimed had once deserted Egypt for Aithiopia: the "Asmach" during the Twenty-sixth Dynasty and Nectanebo II's loyalists in the Thirtieth Dynasty. See: Herodotus, *Histories*, II.30–31, in Godley 1920, 309–310; Diodorus XVI.51.1 in Sherman 1952, 380–381. Also omitted here for lack of sufficient evidence of Aithiopian propaganda is the Aithiopian incursion into Egypt during the late 4th century BCE; see discussion in Eide et al. 1996, 537.

63 As argued by Török 2011, 20–21, on the basis of Aithiopian royal titularies and Hecataeus's portrayal of the Aithiopian king Aktisanes.

64 Theocritus, *Idyll* XVII.86, in Hopkinson 2015, 252–253; Diodorus I.37.5, in Eide et al. 1996, 655–656; Agatharchides, *On the Erythraean Sea* I.20, in Burstein 1989, 52; Buhen graffiti of Pasimenes, Jason of Cyrene, and Melanippus, son of Numenius, in Eide et al. 1996, 538–541. See discussion in Török 2009, 384–389.

65 Demotic portion of bi-scriptural decree of Ptolemy V on eastern front of Mammisi at Philae, l. 4., between shoulder and hand of superimposed female figure (temp. Ptolemy XIII), in Abth. 6, Bd. 11, of Lepsius 1849, Bl. 31, 34; the first few words are reconstructed from the hieroglyphic parallel text. See also: Aswan graffito 43 in Bresciani et al. 1978, 141–144, tav. XLI.

66 Priego and Flores 1992, 13–15, 28, 38–40, 47, 61–63; Winter 1981, 509–513.

67 Thissen 1966, 15, 55; Koenen 1959, 103–119, esp. 106–112.

68 Scene 11, l. 6, scene 12, l. 4, in Chassinat 1931, 86, 128, pl. CXLVI; Fairman 1935, 26–36, esp. 28–29; Blackman and Fairman 1944, 5–22, esp. 13; niche of east wall in western Osirian chapel no. 2 at Dendara, 360, text adjacent to fourth baboon in Cauville 1997, 195.

69 Textband 5 of Lepsius 1849, 304; Dunham 1957, 16 fig. D 24B. By contrast, the writing is markedly different (the Osirian epithet *wp-š^{c}.t*?) on the north wall of Beg. N. 7, col. in front of king, in Chapman and Dunham 1952, pl. 4E.

70 Dunham 1957, fig. 35; Rilly 2004, cited in Török 2011, 5; Török 2009, 390. Also noteworthy during the reign of Arqamani II is an increase in royal iconography related to Osiris—precisely the deity emphasized by the theory of Aithiopian

antecedence as reported to Diodorus (III.3.2). See discussion in Ashby 2020, 192.

71 Among the potential audiences for this propaganda, the newly annexed territories lying *between* Upper Nubia and Upper Egypt would seem particularly important: through royal patronage of the Lower Nubian gods Arensnuphis and Mandulis and the hieroglyphic rendering of Meroitic language, Arqamani II and Adikhalamani facilitated the reincorporation of Lower Nubia into a broader, transregional identity. See: Török 2009, 393–395; Ashby 2020, 47.

72 *Histories* II.104, in Godley 1920, 392-393.

73 See also: *Histories* II.2, in Godley 1920, 274–277; Plato's *Timaeus* 22b in Waterfield 2008, 9–10. As noted by Sadler, Genesis 10:6 lists Kush before Mitzraim (Egypt) among the sons of Ham, suggesting that the Priestly (P) writer(s) ca. the 7th century BCE may have perceived Kush as the eldest scion. However, the sequence could also have been motivated by geography; *pace* Sadler, the placement of Put (Libya) after Egypt would not necessarily disprove a south-to-north sequencing, as northern Egypt in recent centuries had been closely associated with Libyan dynasts. Sadler 2005, 28–29.

74 Cairo JE 48862, ll. 25–26, in Grimal 1981a, pl. I.

75 Cairo JE 48862, ll. 9–12, in Grimal 1981a, pl. I.

76 Cairo JE 48862, ll. 63–64, 126–154, in Grimal 1981a, pls. IV A–IV B, II B–II C.

77 *Histories* II.137–140 in Godley 1920, 440–447; Kahn 2003, 49–58; Török 2014, 75–79; Lloyd 1988, 91.

78 Snowden 1970, 144–148; Van Wyk Smith 2009, 250–251.

79 I owe the metaphor to Dorman 2013, 2–7.

80 For the Libyan ancestry of the Twenty-Second Dynasty, see the Pasenhor Stela (Louvre IM 2846), ll. d10–d13, in Malinine, Posener, Vercoutter 1968a, 30–31 no. 31; Malinine et al. 1968b, pl. X no. 31. For the Libyan ancestry of the Twenty-Fourth Dynasty, see discussion of unpublished stela in Yoyotte 1961, 121–181, pls. I–III, esp. 153–154 §48.

81 Ritner 2008, 305–314, esp. 306.

82 Russmann 1974; Wenig 1978, 49–61; Török 1987; Lohwasser 1999, 586–603; Lohwasser 2001, 210–225; Lohwasser 2006, 121–125; Hallmann 2007, 15–27; Leahy 2014, 61–95, esp. 67–68.

83 Zibelius-Chen 2011, 216–219, 271–273.

84 Kawa IV (Khartoum SNM 2678 = Merowe Museum 52) in Macadam 1949, pls. 7–8; Kawa VI (Khartoum SNM 2679 = Merowe Museum 53) in Macadam 1949, pls. 11–12; Berlin ÄMP 2268, ll. 8–12, in Schäfer 1901, Taf. II.

85 Ku. 15–18, in Dunham 1950, 55–71, pls. XVI–XVII, XXI–XXIV; Nuri 1, in Dunham 1955, 6–16, pl. III.

86 Robisek 1989; Dallibor 2005, 92–93.

87 See Ostrakon Berlin Inv. 21443 in Spiegelberg 1994 [1917], 7 Abb. 2.

88 Papyrus Leiden I 384 cols. III.16, III.18, IV.2, IV.13, IV.21, IV.27, V.8, VIII.7, VIII.10–11, IX.30, XI.3, XII.11, XV.28 in Spiegelberg 1994 [1917], 16–21, 26–29, 32–35, 40–41, Taf. II–IV, VII–VIII, X–XI.

89 Pope 2013, 177–216, esp. 206–207.

90 Von Lieven 2009, 173–181.

91 E.g., Nilometer quay records 30 and 33 in Oriental Institute negative no. 8744 B; cf. Von Beckerath 1984, 183, 185.

92 Extensive references in Russmann 1974, 22–23.

93 Macadam 1955, 61, 63–64, pls. IX a–b.

94 Kawa III (Ny Carlsberg Glyptotek Æ.I.N. 1707) and Kawa VI (Khartoum SNM 2679 = Merowe Museum 53,) in Macadam 1949, pls. 5–6, 11–12. Cf.: Schäfer 1902, Taf. 1; Wilkinson 1992, 119; Redford 1986, 65–69.

95 Wilkinson 2000, 23–24; Helck 1970, 83–85.

96 Cf. Baines 2007, 179–201, esp. 183; Baud and Dobrev 1995, 23–92.

97 BM EA 498 in: Breasted 1901, 39–54; Junker 1940.

98 Junge 1973, 195–204; Iversen 1990, 485–493; Krauss 1999, 239–246; Peust and Sternberg el-Hotabi 2001, 166–175; Gozzoli 2006, 238; El Hawary 2007, 567–574; El Hawary 2010, 67–209.

99 See discussion in Assmann 1999, 382–395.

100 Onasch 1977, 331–336, esp. 333, 336.

[101] Cairo JE 41013 in Maspero 1910, 9–10 §VII; Leclant 1963, 74–81, figs. 1–5; Priese 1970, 16–32; Cairo JE 48862, l. 8, in Grimal 1981, pls. I, V; Kruchten 1989, 126; Pérez Die 1992, 74 §57, 140 fig. 28, 167 Lám XXV; Lull 2002, 222; Pérez Die 2009, 318; Schulz 2009; Perdu 2011, 225–240.

[102] Pope 2019.

[103] E.g., correspondence from Amenhotep II to viceroy Usersatet, ll. 10–11, in Boston MFA 25.632, as discussed in Darnell 2014, 239–276, esp. 276 fig. 1. See also: Koenig 1987.

[104] Papyrus BM EA 10687 (Chester Beatty VII), ro. 2, l. 3, in Gardiner 1935, 62, pl. 36.

[105] Troy 1986, 69.

[106] Griffiths 1982, 628; Wilkinson 2003, 119–120.

[107] BD 163 in Pleyte 1881, pl. 57; Rilly 2007, 12–13. *Pace* Zibelius-Chen, the variant writing with phonetic *m* cannot be readily dismissed as a scribal error and therefore seems to favor Rilly's interpretation: Zibelius-Chen 2011, 199, 219–221. For Sebiumeker at Musawwarat es-Sufra, see Hintze 1962, 23 Abb. 2, 32 Abb. 11, 33 Inschr. 15, Taf. XI d (leftmost col.), Taf. XV a (rightmost col.).

[108] BD 164 in Pleyte 1881, pl. 76. For "Land of the *St*-Bow," see: Vinogradov 2000, 23–34.

[109] BD 164 in Pleyte 1881, pls. 55–56, with slight variant in Koenig 1987, 106.

[110] See multiple references in: Leitz 2002a, 355; Kendall 1997b, 161–203. For various interpretations of the "Mount" in other texts, see Pope 2014a, 88–93.

[111] See discussion and extensive references in: Kendall 1997a, 76–77; Davies 2017, 69–70; Minor 2018, 255.

[112] Boston MFA 23.733, l. 33, in Reisner and Reisner 1933, 35, Taf. V; Donadoni, El-Achirie, Leblanc 1975, 22, 58, pls. X, XLVII.

[113] Kendall 2019. I thank Timothy Kendall for sharing with me a draft of his paper in advance of its publication. The argument is based in part upon Papyrus Boulaq 17 (Cairo CG 58038): see Luiselli 2004.

[114] Morkot 1991, 294–301; Morkot 2000, 84; Morkot 2001, 227–251.

[115] Khartoum SNM 1851 (Barkal sandstone stela) in Reisner 1931, 76–100, Taf. V; Cairo JE 48862, 47086–47089, in Grimal 1981a, pls. IV. For the date of the Barkal sandstone stela, see now: Lohwasser 2016, 121–137 esp. 125; Lohwasser and Sörgel 2022. For the view that the stela refers to Pi(ankh)y's rule in Egypt, see most recently Török 2018, 10–12.

[116] Lepsius 1852, 267.

[117] Honneger and Bonnet 2010, 22–24; Bonnet 2014, 81–93, esp. 88–92; Kendall 1997a, 53–73, 83–97.

[118] Khartoum SNM 62/8/17 in Wildung 1998, 100 fig. 100; Williams 1991, 74–91, esp. 80, 87 n. 3, figs. 8a–b; Minor 2012, 115–117; Howley 2017, 219–227, esp. 221.

[119] Boston MFA 23.733, l. 33, in Reisner and Reisner 1933, 35, Taf. V. For the possibility that this Egyptian epithet might have been a folk etymology of the Meroitic name for Gebel Barkal, see Lohwasser and Sörgel 2022, 16.

[120] Pepi I's spell 31, Mernere's 375, Pepi II's 430, in Allen 2005, 105, 232, 281. See also Almansa-Villatoro 2018, 175.

[121] Pepi I's spell 512, Mernere's 391, in Allen 2005, 180, 234.

[122] Konosso inscription of Thutmose IV, first vertical col. above the god, in Abt. 3, Bd. 5, of Lepsius 1849, 69 e; Kákosy 1966, 3–10, esp. 5. For modern attempts, see: Gauthier 1920, 36; Pätznick 2014; Almansa-Villatoro 2018, 176.

[123] Cairo JE 48866 (Aspelta's Enthronement Stela), l. 2, in Grimal 1981b, pls. VIa–VI; horizontal line at top of block B2 from Barkal temple 700 (temp. Atlanersa) in Priese 2005, 139–152 esp. 148 fig. 9-02.

[124] Almansa-Villatoro 2018, 176; Howley 2017, 222.

[125] Anon. 1835, 72.

[126] Virgil's *Aeneid* famously claimed ancient Greek civilization as the heritage of his fellow Romans, while Geoffrey of Monmouth's *Historia regum Britanniae* (*De gestis Britonum*) likewise traced a similar origin for the Britons via the mythical hero Brutus, descendant of Aeneas: Powell 2015, 202–206; Reeve 2007, 6–31. See also discussion of the latter in Bush 1932, 39–41.

[127] Wengrow 2003, 121–135; Edwards 2004, 49–59; Wengrow 2006, 26–29, 44–59; Gatto 2011, 21–29; Wengrow 2014, 95–111. I have deliberately avoided in this discussion the terms Mesolithic, Neolithic, Early, and Middle Holocene, because their intended meanings vary too widely in the published literature. Due to space constraints, the present discussion will not address: Ehret et al. 2004, 1680–1681; Bar-Yosef 1987, 29–38. Cf.: Militarev 2002, 135–150; Olszewki 2006, 19–26. Also omitted here: Wilkinson 2003; cf. multiple reviews in Wilkinson et al. 2004.

[128] Kuper and Kröpelin 2006, 803–807; Gatto 2011, 21.

[129] Gautier 2001, 609–635, esp. 625–630; Ehret 2006, 1019–1055; Honneger 2007, 201–212; Chaix 2009, 1–5; Honneger 2010, 77–86. Cf: Grigson 2000, 38–60, esp. 46–48; Usai 2005, 103–115, esp. 104; Linseele 2012, 16–18; Brass 2018, 107–109.

[130] See extensive references in Pope 2013a.

[131] Caneva 1983, 7–28; Handwerker 1983, 5–27; Arnold 1985, 125–136.

[132] See esp.: Gatto 2011, 24–25; Wengrow et al. 2014.

[133] Malville et al. 1998, 488–491; Wendorf and Schild 1996, 575–582.

[134] Gatto 2011, 24; see also Hassan 1988, 135–185.

[135] Wengrow 2003, 126–130, 132–134; Nelson and Khalifa 2010, 133–148; Gatto 2011, 25; Wengrow et al. 2014. Regarding "Tasian" culture, see Wengrow 2005, 55 n. 19. For the sake of brevity, I have not explored here the finer distinctions between the Khartoum region vs. the northern Nubian Nile.

[136] Williams 1986; Smith 1993, 361–376; Bonnet 1991, 112–117, esp. 113.

[137] Midant-Reynes 2000, 152–186.

[138] Gatto 2011, 26.

[139] Trigger 1994; Holl 1997, 58–65; Champion 2003, 127–145.

[140] Wengrow 2005, 126; Gatto 2011, 22; Wengrow 2005, 23–26. For domesticated sorghum in Sudan, see now Winchell 2017. For the theory that even domesticated cattle may have been introduced from the Near East, see again Brass 2018, 107–109.

[141] E.g., Gatto 2011, 25–26; Edwards 2003, 137–150; Williams 1991, esp. 79. One component of this differentiation was linguistic, as one or more Nilo-Saharan languages eventually became predominant in riverine Nubia, where an Afroasiatic language may have initially held sway: El-Sayed 2011, 46–49; Zibelius-Chen 2014, 267–309; cf. NOTE 48.

[142] Slayman 1998.

[143] Rensberger 1979, A1, A16; Williams 1980, 12–21; Adams 1985, 185–192; Williams 1987, 15–26; Williams 1996, 95–97; Wegner 1996, 98–100. A pair of examples must suffice here to demonstrate the shared problem of circularity in the debate: Williams proposes that the occupant of Abydos tomb U-j could be Nubian, even though his tomb was found in Egypt and reveals no clear connection to contemporaneous Nubia; conversely, Wegner concludes that the Qustul Incense Burner must be an Egyptian import, because its iconography matches that found in Egypt, even though the materials, object type, and sunken relief style are all more characteristic of Nubia during the period when the object was deposited in a Lower Nubian tomb. For a recent treatment, see Roy 2011, 212–220.

[144] Wildung 2004, 177 (emphasis added).

[145] Keim 2014, 51–65; Pope 2017.