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## AN INSCRIPTION OF A KING OF AXUMITES AND HIMYARITES FROM MEROE

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Among the most important written source materials pertaining to the history of Meroe is a Greek inscription of a king of the Axumites and Himyarites discovered on the territory of the Meroitic state at the beginning of the 20th century.

A. Sayce published a stela which he said had been uncovered in a Meroitic townsite and commented on the inscription made on it as represented in his own tracing (Sayce 1909: 189-190). At the beginning of the extant part of the second line of the tracing stood the name Ares. This led to the conclusion that the stela had been set up by a pagan king, a predecessor of Ezana, because the latter had made a campaign to Meroe (Kasu) having already broken with paganism.

It was from these data (the triumphal stela of the Axumite king, Ezana's predecessor, in the Meroitic townsite) that arose the assumption concerning the Axumite campaigns to Meroe. It was supported by C. Conti-Rossini (Conti-Rossini 1912: 237), U. Monneret de Villard (Monneret de Villard 1938: 37) and E. Littman (Littman 1950: 125). M.F.L. Macadam and L.P. Kirwan added "Abyssinian graffiti" (signs of Ethiopian writing) discovered on the external wall of the T temple in Gematon (Kawa) and on several pyramids of Meroe (Macadam 1955: 235-236, Kirwan 1960: 166-169). These signs remain undeciphered until the present time but they were interpreted as vestiges of the passage of the Axumite army which had defeated Meroe.

Sayce's ill-starred tracing remained at the level of an authentic publication of a monument until the end of the 1970s (Shinnie 1970: 55-57, 1978: 260-261) -- a fact which is the more surprising, since in 1961 F. Altheim and R. Stiehl published an excellent photograph of a slab kept in the Khartoum Historical Museum, proposed and organized text of the extant part of the inscription and a commentary to this part (Altheim, Stiehl 1961: 243-245) and in 1962 reissued an extended appropriate publication (Altheim 1962: 172-174, fig. 2). Possibly, a negative role with respect to the publication was played by Altheim's studies, in which the inscription was used for proving that Ezana ruled in the 5th century A.D. (Katznelson 1970: 255-256).

Finally, in 1972 L.P. Kirwan, introducing himself to the monument in the Khartoum Museum and the relevant recording in its accession book, called scholars' attention to the inadmissibility of using the Sayce publication (Kirwan 1972: 460). However, works on problems of Meroitic-Axumite relations whose authors turned to the Altheim and Stiehl publication made their appearance only in 1980 (Berzina 1980: 140-141, Burstein 1980). The present author worked from the photograph of the inscription, in which the name of Ares resists all efforts at both reading and reconstruction. S.M. Burstein, while correctly noting the influence of the Sayce conception on the text organization as proposed by Altheim and Stiehl, made, however, their division and reconstruction the basis of his conception. Burstein attributed the campaign registered in the inscription to an Axumite pagan king who had been one of Ezana's predecessors. He regarded the reference to the basileus in line 7 in the third person (all Axumite royal inscriptions in Greek are in the first person) as a pointer to the Meroitic king because "the title basileus, 'king,' is used in Axumite royal inscriptions in Greek only for rulers of significant kingdoms such as Axum or Meroe" (Burstein 1980: 3). As a result, according to Burstein, back in the 3rd century the Meroe king was a vassal of Axum. therefore one of Ezana's predecessors campaigned against the Noba tribes which had invaded Meroitic territory thus having violated the status quo. As the present author has already said and as will be shown further, the name of God Ares can neither be read in the inscription nor grammatically reconstructed. This nullifies the attribution of the campaign to the pagan king. As regards the basileus, Line 7, first, the reference to the Meroitic king is not recorded in any Axumite inscription in any language, so far. The only reference to foreign basilei is to be found in the Adulitana II inscription, which tells of the kings of the Arabites and Kinedokolpites of Arabia (74,6 25-27). Therefore Burstein's second statement is as unfounded as his first, which makes his entire construction untenable.

Now the present author will proceed to outline the conditions which attended the discovery of the slab and the slab itself and to make a careful analysis of the inscription, without which, as has been pointed out, no pertinent advance is possible. According to the Khartoum Museum's accession book, the slab fragment which bears the Greek inscription that refers to the king of the Axumites and Himyarites was discovered by a local inhabitant, the scene of the find is Meroe but the circumstances and exact location of the slab (the townsite or its environs) are unknown (Kirwan 1972: 460). The slab made from iron-stained sandstone had on top an inlaid relief whose survived part was a circle over the first line. A triangular piece of the slab's central Part

with fourteen lines of the inscription has come down to us. The lines contain from twenty-four to four letters each. Palaeography -- the size of the letters and the print (especially the writing of Α and Λ, Ε and C, ω) are similar to DAE IV 4, i.e., to Ezana's Greek inscription concerning the campaign against the Bega. Because the reconstruction of the size of the slab and inscription does not appear to be possible the present author proposes a partial reconstruction and the first attempt at translating the extant line.

βασιλεὺς ἁξωμεντων καὶ ὁμηρειτων  
 ἁπαλῆς ῥέω τῆς ἀντιδικήσαντας μέ  
 κατὰ καιρὸν παρακούσας ἀπὸ τῆς [ πόλεις  
 βασιλείου οὗς καὶ ἐξέπρόσθεα τὰς ὑπογεγραμμένας  
 ...] κλειθὲν παρελθὼν ἐνθ' αὐτὰ  
 ...] γεννᾶται ἕτερον δέκαρχον  
 ] σὺν τῷ βασιλεὺς μέχρι τῶν  
 ] τὰ πλεῖστα ἐν τῇ σελ...  
 στρατηγούς καὶ τέκνα αὐτῶν  
 ] ἐπὶ ἡλθεν αὐτέ[κα  
 ταῖς ὁμαῖς οὐκί[αυς  
 ] ἐπὶ φόρου[ς  
 χ[άλκρον [ καὶ  
 ἐπὶ τῶν κα [

1. Cf. Ezana's Greek inscriptions with regard to the anti-Bega campaign (DAE IV 4), lines 1-2: βασιλεὺς ἁξωμεντων καὶ ὁμηρειτων and with regard to the anti-Noba one (Çagnot, Nautin 1970), lines 6-7: βασιλεὺς ἁξωμεντων καὶ ὁμηρειτων],

Other parallels to this titulature in the Greek inscriptions of the Axumite kings are unknown. Altheim and Stiehl for some reason reconstruct: ἁξωμεντων variant DAE IV 4, which completely coincides in the writing of the title and in that of the ethnica.

2. The reconstruction of this line according to Altheim and Stiehl appears to be incorrect violating grammar norms and logical agreement between words. Introducing ἁπρῶ, the authors failed to cope with the text which followed. In the first edition they tried to divide it by

a stop after [.]ς , but even this was to no avail. Furthermore, before ρ , which can clearly be read at the beginning of the extant part of the line, not only is there no α , which Sayce has included in the line and Altheim and Stiehl have placed in brackets, but three parallel straight lines are clearly visible. Two upper ones are placed close to each other. Considering the specific features of the inscription's print, this can only be ≡ , i.e., ξ . ξ here is undoubtedly the last letter of the previous word. The present author assumes that this last letter belongs to the word "απαξ : cf. "απαξ ἐνίκησα in the late Greek inscription of Silko (Dittenberger 1903: 303-310 = Gauthier 1911: 205), line 4. For 'αντιδικοησαντ[ας με] compare Silko's inscription, line 22: 'αντιδικοι μου Part of the text is also set in the first person singular of praesens activi in Ezana's Greek inscription relating about the anti-Noba campaign, lines 10-22, and in his own inscription in Ge'ez concerning the campaign against the Sarane (DAE IV 10 = AI II lines 1-21).

3. Altheim and Stiehl reconstruct the line basing themselves on DAE IV 4, lines 6-7: 'ατακτησαντων κατὰ καιρὸν.

4. Altheim and Stiehl reconstruct the second half of the extant part of the line proceeding from Adulitana II, 74, 6, lines 4-5: τὰ υπογεγραμμένα "εὐνη , but replace "εὐνη by πόλις in accordance with the verb ἐκπέρω . The first half of the line's extant part remained unanalyzed because Altheim proposed the reconstruction of ...]εἰαίσις only as β]εγαίσις whereas the ethnicon of the Bega does not occur in this form in the Axumite inscriptions in Greek. As can be seen from the photograph, ε is preceded by a remnant of the letter -- a stroke made right to left, apparently, from α or λ . Considering that it is followed by four vowels this can be λ . Consequently, the logical reconstruction is (αἱ) βασιλ] λειάλ, οἷς

5. κλειθέν = κληθέν in accordance with DAE IV 4 line 25.

11. In the photograph one can clearly read 'ομαῖς . In the first edition Altheim and Stiehl for some reason constructed 'υμαῖς , but in the second reconstructed 'ομαῖς . Apparently, 'ομαῖς = 'υμαῖς.

For lines 6-10 the present author adopts the Altheim and Stiehl reconstruction reliably based on parallels from DAE IV 4, Adulitana II, and the Sembrutes inscription.

The present author proposes the following translation of the inscription's extant lines:

- 1 ... basileus of Axo>mites and Homerite<s
- 2 (I) immediatel>y attack those who rivall<ed me
- 3 in ti>me did not submit contrary<
- 4 King>doms to them, and (I) destroyed the
- 5 a<fore- mentioned cities
- >the said ones, heading for this pla<ce

6            >originating from another te<n  
 7            >with the king as far as (=until)<  
 8            >most of all in Seu<...  
 9        ch>iefs and (their) child<ren  
 10        >(I) came immediate<ly  
 11        >to your hom<es  
 12        >besides the frui<t (=tribute)  
 13 c>opper (=bronze, = from copper)<  
 14y>ears 21 (=24)<

5. "The said" could also be "the summoned." "Heading for this place" is translated as "arriving here" by S. Burstein.

14. Another possible translation is: "<on> the 21st (=24th) year <of the (rule)>."

Now the present author can offer a reconstruction of the inscription's content. The king of the Axumites and Homerites attacked the people (their ethnicon is lost) who had rivalled him and, contrary to warnings, refused to submit to his order (its exposition is lost) in time. Therefore he did not spare their kingdoms(?) and destroyed their cities (their names are to be found in the broke-off part). The subsequent events, the outline of which contains a reference to another king, the chiefs and their children, defy reconstruction. The concluding part, lines 12-13, relates about offerings -- either a tribute imposed by the victorious king or his own sacral gifts. The last line apparently gives the date of the inscription -- the 21st/24th year of the victorious king's rule.

In terms of content the inscription under study coincides with Ezana's inscriptions concerning the anti-Noba campaign. Three appropriate inscriptions have survived in Axum: in early Ge'ez (Axum's official language), in Greek and in Sabaeen (DAE IV 11=AI III; Caquot, Nautin 1970; Schneider 1974: 767-770). Only the first two lend themselves to reading. Of these, the inscription in Ge'ez yields the most ample exposition of the events (Bauer 1979: 169-174) saying that Ezana led a campaign against the Noba, who had invaded the (Kasu-Meroe) land oppressing the neighbouring peoples. Previously, Ezana had twice delegated missions to the Noba calling upon them to end their misdeeds. The Noba refused to heed the warnings and outraged the emissaries saying that they were in a position to stand up to Ezana by preventing him from crossing the Takkaze (now the Atbara). At the Takkaze crossing the Ezana troops defeated the Noba subsequently invading the Noba-occupied Kasu territory. The Axumites killed and took prisoner the Noba chiefs and priests and recaptured their own cities of straw as well as the stone cities wrested from the Kasu by the Noba. This campaign, which, according to the Greek inscription,

began on Magabit 8 (March 4), 349 (or 355, or 360), ended in a complete rout of the Noba.

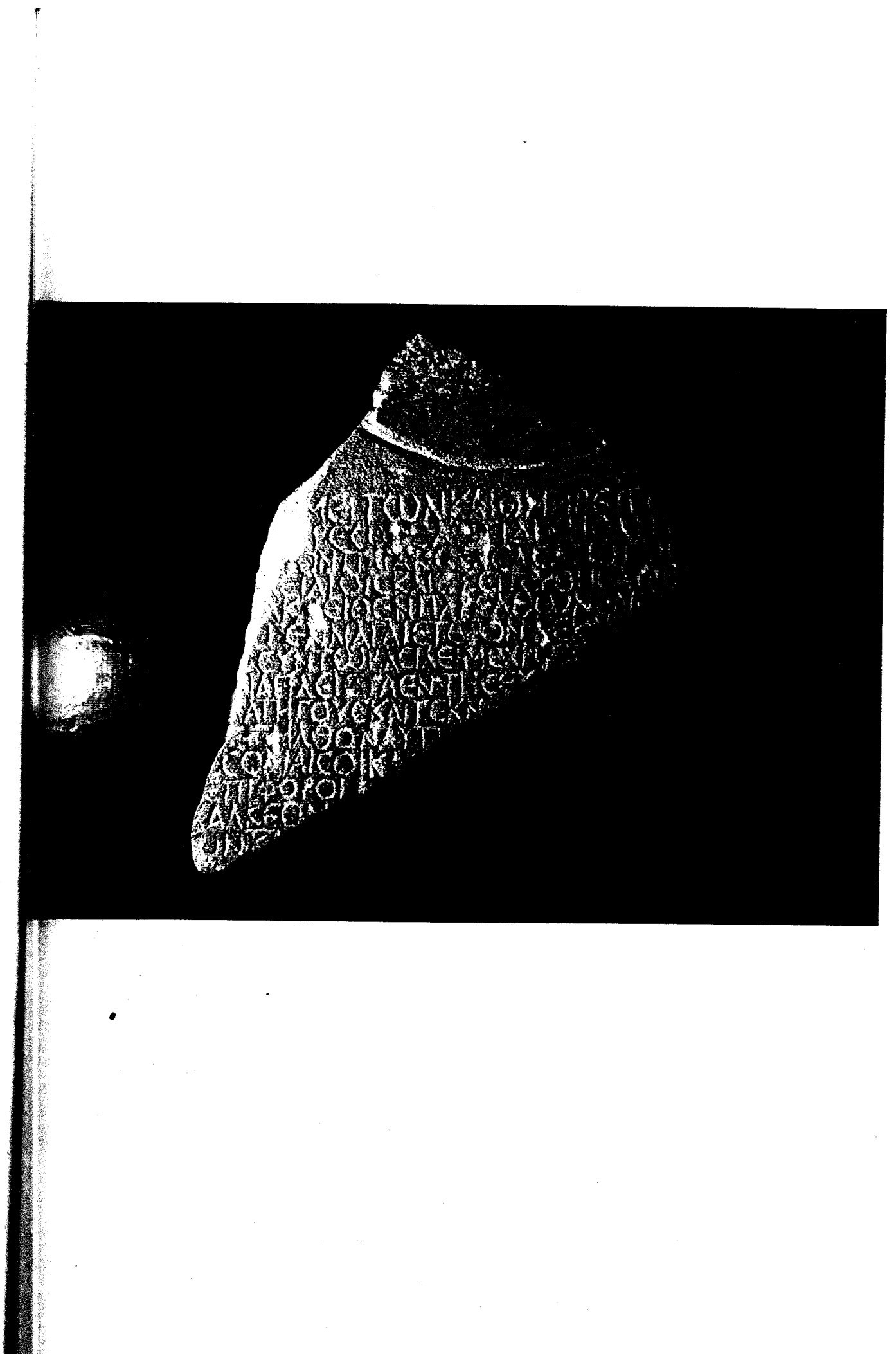
Details such as the warning issued to the enemies, their refusal to accept the submission proposal, the challenge to the author of the inscription which came from his rivals and, finally, the capture and destruction of the named cities are known from the entire body of Axumite epigraphics only in Ezana's inscriptions concerning the anti-Noba campaign and the Meroitic inscription of the king of the Axumites and Himyarites. At the same time, the inscription from Meroe is different from the aforementioned ones as well as from all the other Greek and non-Greek inscriptions of the Axumite kings containing a direct address -- an address in the second person: "to your hom<es" (line 11). This is quite natural for a commemorative and edificatory monument erected on an alien territory. Although no ethnicon or toponym has survived in the inscription under study the slab discovery area (a Meroitic townsite or its environs) makes it possible to assert that the events took place on Meroitic territory and that the memorial was set up in or near Meroe, its capital.

Judging by the photograph (a point made by L.P. Kirwan), the slab could be the back of a stone throne -- part of Axum's traditional victory monument.

From Text DAE IV 11 it is known that in commemoration of the victory over the Noba Ezana set up throne-like monuments in Kasu and Axum. "And I have erected a throne at the confluence of the Seda and Takkaze rivers opposite a stone city which lies on this island" (lines 39-40). "And I have erected a throne here in Shado" (line 44). Shado is a small field east of Axum where memorial stelae, thrones and statues were put up. The inscription cited here was hacked out precisely on the back of a throne which once had stood in Shado. The throne referred to by Ezana in the beginning was erected at the Nile-Atbara confluence opposite a stone town located on the island. As regards the island the context furnishes solid evidence that it is Meroe Island. Earlier, Ezana named two stone cities in the area in question -- Alwa and Daro (lines 31-32). Daro (Diaron according to Aristokreon, Darden according to Bion, Daron according to Ptolemy) is identified with the ruins of Wad-ban-Naga (Vercoutter 1962: 263-299). As regards Alwa, it has been pointed out that it was the city of Meroe (Berzina 1981: 195-196). Because the reference to Alwa as the capital comes first and its location was north of Daro it should be assumed that the throne was set up precisely at this city. It is logical to compare the slab with an inscription discovered some place in the vicinity of Meroe to the monument referred to by Ezana, as was proposed by G. Wainwright back in 1942 (Wainwright 1942 = 1977:68).

To sum up. Palaeographic data show that the inscription of the king of Axumites and Himyarites from Meroe is similar to the Ezana's inscription about the anti-Bega campaign in Greek. The titulature opens on the formula saying "the basileus of the Axumites and Homerites" only in Ezana's known Greek inscriptions. The part of the inscription from Meroe under reconstruction is identical to that of the Ezana Axum inscriptions about anti-Noba campaign. Further, because the name of Ares on the Meroitic slab resists reading and even reconstruction the inscription can well have been made by a Christian king, i.e., Ezana after he had embraced Christianity. Finally, only one campaign of the Axumite king, namely Ezana, to Meroitic territory is on record. It took place some time in the middle of the IV century A.D. being directed against the Noba invaders of Kasu (Meroe). The aforesaid leads to the assumption that the slab with the inscription of the king of Axumites and Himyarites discovered around the Meroe townsite represents part of a throne set up here by Ezana. The inscription is related to Ezana's campaign against the Noba.





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## OPENWORK FRINGES FROM QASR IBRÎM

Elisabeth CROWFOOT

Among the ornamental features found in Meroitic textiles one of the most striking techniques is the lattice or openwork decoration which on numerous fragments precedes the end fringe. The earliest, by far the finest and one of the most elaborate of the borders, comes from Meroe itself; others have been illustrated from Karanog, Aksha and Qustul, but the wealth of material of this type from Qasr Ibrîm, varying widely in quality and design, is unparalleled elsewhere.

The basic fibre of all these examples is probably cotton. This identification made, in spite of their carbonisation, on fragments from Meroë at the Shirley Institute (British Cotton Industry Research Association), prompted F.L. Griffith to arrange for the examination there of samples from Karanog, originally published as linen (Wooley & MacIver 1910, 27); the results were given in his discussion "On the early use of cotton in the Nile Valley" (Griffith & Crowfoot 1934, 5-12). The small fragments from Qustul were also so identified (Mayer-Thurman & Williams 1979, 54, 61); the Aksha material is described simply as vegetable fibre (Vila 1967, 148, 175-6, 210). At Qasr Ibrîm, with the exception of one small and perhaps experimental flax piece found during the 1984 excavation season, the borders come from undyed cotton fabrics, though among possibly later examples the decoration is sometimes varied by the use of blue-dyed cotton or wool threads. In these the deterioration of the wool has often damaged the pattern areas, while the undyed all-cotton pieces, originally probably off-white, are sometimes strikingly well preserved.

The appearance of the decoration has suggested macramé or drawnthread work (*ouvrage à jours*) to archaeologists, but, as G.M. Crowfoot pointed out when describing the Meroë material (Griffith & Crowfoot 1934, 10) there is no knotting or inter-twining, and the pattern is made entirely by wrapping a continuous thread round groups of warp-threads, combining and separating them as required by the design. Many of the fringes have been deliberately torn off the woven pieces they decorated, perhaps to be preserved for re-use; some still have rough mending attempts, small fragments of main weave re-stitched to the top of the border; but it is clear from those where parts of the main weave are still attached that the warp threads are continuous, forming the foundation of the pattern work, the only additional threads being those used for the wrapping, and those added to make the tassels of the fringe. This structure is particularly

clear in examples where the blue wool wrapping thread has decayed, leaving the straight warps exposed. The only interlacing occurs in the edgings before and after the openwork pattern.

The construction of these borders varies very little. Fig. 1 shows a small selection of the patterns found at Qasr Ibrîm, including the most popular types which recur again and again, with very slight variations - in this type of handwork all depends on the skill and imagination of the weaver. The normal construction - a braided border at the beginning, an area of wrapped pattern on the bare wrap threads, a braided closing border, and a fringe - can be seen in all the fig. 1 designs, though in most the fringe has been omitted for reasons of space.

In the starting braid the appearance of a simple twine as drawn in fig. 1) is deceptive. All these borders so far dissected have proved to be of one type, a braid in which the wraps themselves are used to produce a narrow entwined band, from which they re-emerge at regular intervals (fig. 2a). To work this the free ends of the warps are necessary, and must have been untied from the loom-weights, and Z-plyed for use in the braid. The number of threads, on which the width of the braid depends, varies, though that shown here is the commonest construction; even the wide ending border of fig. 1.11, which looks like a fine tablet-weave, is of the same type.

In the open-work pattern, when the border had been completed, the weaver would probably have re-tied the warp-ends to the weights, to restore the tension needed for easy working. The wrapping thread, again Z-plyed but finer than the warps, is used in lengths; beginning at the selvage, a thread is tied to the first warp at the far end of the area intended for the pattern, leaving a long end hanging for use later in the fringe; it is wrapped all the way up the warp, passes through the starting border (fig. 2.e) and returns, wrapping down the warp, finishing again with a long hanging end.

In some examples the wrapping is close, completely hiding the wrap thread (fig. 1.4,5,10), while in the coarser ones (e.g. fig. 1.8,9,12,13) no attempt is made to keep the wraps edge to edge.

The length of pattern between the braids varies from c. 0.5-1.0 cm (fig. 1,2,3,4,8) to 3.0 cm for the very fine work of fig. 1.11 and 4.0 cm for fig. 1.5. When as in case of fig. 1.11, the pattern requires extra foundation threads, these can be supplied by using more than one wrapping thread - here they are in Threes - the extra fine threads lying with the warps for much of the pattern, but wrapped separately when needed to provide small details.

It might seem easier if the end-border were made after the starting border, and the pattern worked on an enclosed area; in 1984 however a small fragment was found (84.T/295), probably a child's lesson or a pattern try-out, which threw light on the method of construction. It consisted of a line of threads looped over a string to represent warps, which had been braided in a starting border; on the hanging ends were four repeats of the X pattern of fig. 1.3 - very similar to one from Aksha (Vila 1967, fig. 156.b) - untidily worked; the wrapping threads had been loosely knotted round the "wrap" ends, and no end border had been added.

For the end braid the warps would again have had to be untied. This is of a similar type to that at the beginning, but sometimes narrower and coarser, twining over a larger number of warps (fig. 2.b); alternate warp ends are again left hanging, until used in the cord that holds the fringe tassels.

This braiding technique is already familiar as a finishing border from the excellent illustrations of the Scandinavian Joint Expedition's Late Nubian excavations; in the coarse woolen textiles from their Meroitic and X-group burials the braids take a variety of forms, this being the commonest, but end in fringes or warp-end cords (Sergman 1975, 34-38).

The fringe (fig. 2.b) incorporates all the hanging threads. The ends of the long wrapping threads are tied, and the added threads to make the tassel folded over the knot (fig. 2.c); the warp ends pass through the loop inside the tassel, and are combined in a firm cord to hold the tassels in line. The wrapping threads then tie round the tassel, leaving their ends concealed inside it. When blue wrapping threads have been used, their hanging ends are knotted to carry the tassel, but remain concealed inside it, an extra piece of undyed thread being used to tie round.

The appearance of the tassels varies, depending on the number of threads added - neat flat fringes, with from three to six threads folded for a six to twelve thread tassel, or layers of heavy tassels, where anything up to twenty or thirty threads can be added, making the tassels stand out in a double or treble row. The added threads are always thick and plyed, and the weight no doubt often caused their tearing away from the garment.

The original length of the fringes cannot be estimated; much has probably been lost by wear and decay, the best lengths preserved are about 8-10 cm. The fringe illustrated from Karanog, with a design very like fig. 1.11, appears to be longer (Woolley & MacIver 1910, pl. 108,5).

There are more variations in ending than in beginning. In a few cases there is no end braid, rather small tassels being made to include the hanging warps; in fig. 1.11 there have obviously never been tassels, warp-ends and fine wrapping-thread ends simply left hanging in a flat thin fringe. A few small neat borders have no fringe, but the warp ends wound into circles, wrapped with blue cotton, making a double row of blue bobbles.

The patterns show considerable ingenuity - the straight and curved bars and triangles (fig. 1.1,2,8,9), simple lattice leading to everincreasing numbers of diamonds (fig. 1.4,5) - this includes most of the patterns employing blue wrapping, which depend for variety on fillings with blue outlined in white (fig. 2.d) or white with blue - lattices or hexagons with alternating decorated or plain figures (fig. 1.10), a popular form with many variations; and elaborate designs squeezed into tiny borders. The lattice-based patterns are not only the most popular but obviously the strongest; designs without a strong diagonal structure are unsatisfactory, liable to break along straight lines (fig. 1.14), or curling up and breaking from their borders, as in the unique fig. 1.15. Another unique pattern, fig. 1.6, is so far the only one found with an extra band of braiding in the middle of the pattern.

At Ibrîm the pieces are too small to show from what garments or coverings these fringes came. At Karanog in one burial the innermost shroud had a "fine open border with a string-like texture resembling macramé work" (Woolley & MacIver 1910, 27), but some of these pieces must have decorated the edges of garments, women's shawls and skirts, and the long wrapped skirts or kilts of the men; the heavy fringes particularly suggest the swing of a skirt -edge, rather than the wrapping of a corsepe.

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The patterns show considerable ingenuity - the straight and curved bars and triangles (fig. 1.1,2,8,9), simple lattice leading to everincreasing numbers of diamonds (fig. 1.4,5) - this includes most of the patterns employing blue wrapping, which depend for variety on fillings with blue outlined in white (fig. 2.d) or white with blue - lattices or hexagons with alternating decorated or plain figures (fig. 1.10), a popular form with many variations; and elaborate designs squeezed into any borders. The lattice-based patterns are not only the most popular but obviously the strongest; designs without strong diagonal structure are unsatisfactory, liable to break along straight lines (fig. 1.14), or curling up and breaking from their borders, as in the unique fig. 1.15. Another unique pattern, fig. 1.6, is so far the only one found with an extra band of braiding in the middle of the pattern.

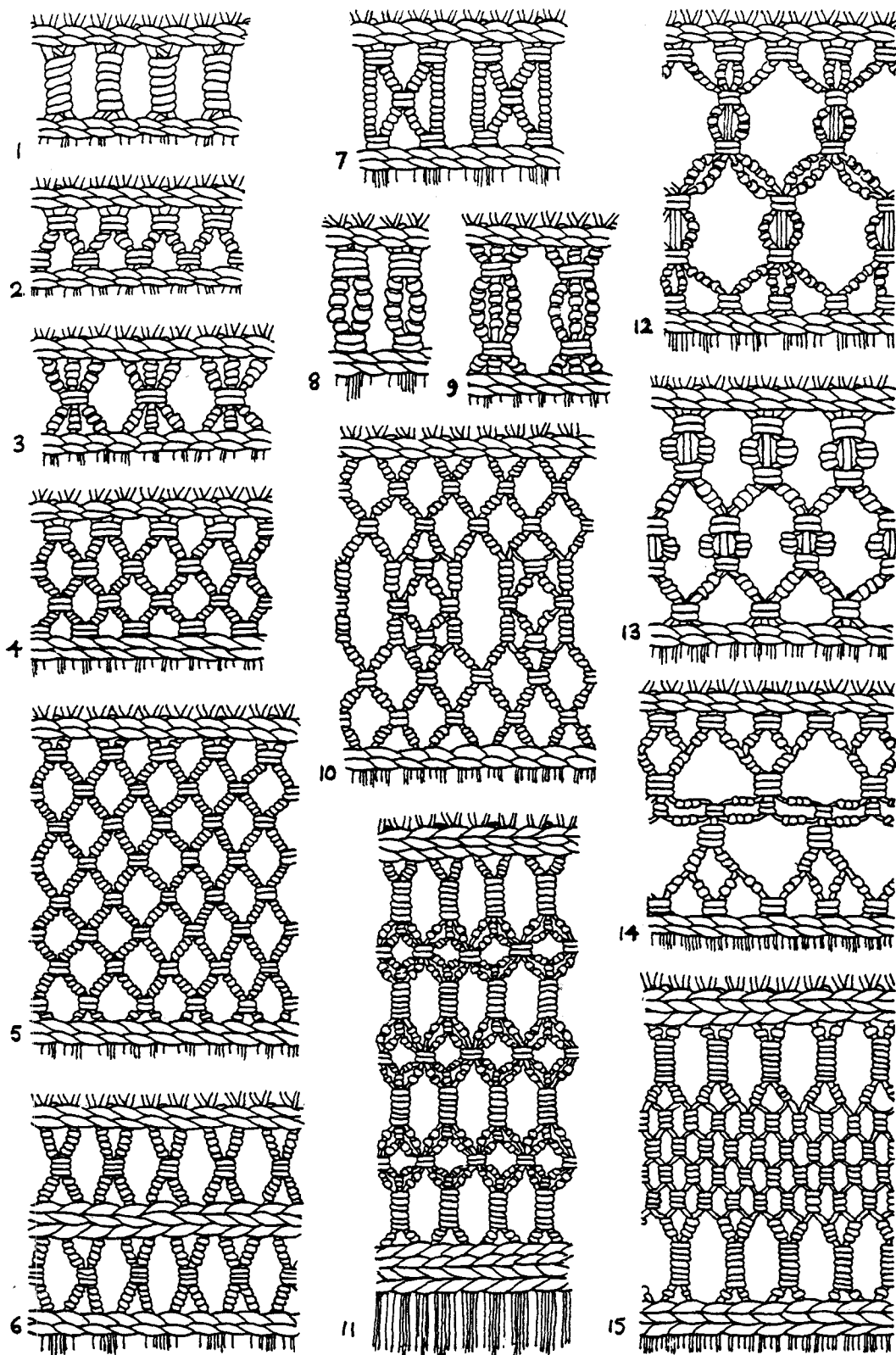
From the pieces are too small to show from what garments or coverings these fringes came. At Karanog in the burial the innermost shroud had a "fine open border with a string-like texture resembling macramé work" (Woolley & MacIver 1910, 27), but some of these pieces must have decorated the edges of garments, women's shawls and skirts, and the long wrapped skirts or kilts of the men; the heavy fringes particularly suggest the swing of a skirt-edge, rather than the wrapping of a corpse.

In the Chamber of the Ethiopians at Philae, the hems on the skirts of the Meroitic dignitaries in two cases have a suggestion of patterned fringes (Griffith, n 98,111, pl. XVIII); and among some less certain suggestions of fringed garments one at Karanog, is clear, a seated woman from a bronze bowl, her overskirt draped across her lap, with a criss-crossed border from which a long fringe falls down her knee (Wooley & MacIver 1910, pl. 27, G. 187).

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1 Patterns from Meroitic openwork fringes, Qasr Ibrîm.

- |             |              |              |
|-------------|--------------|--------------|
| 1. 76.T/305 | 7. 74.T/279  | 12. 80.T/351 |
| 2. 78.T/276 | 8. 74.T/335  | 13. 84.T/109 |
| 3. 76.T/216 | 9. 76. 3(b)  | 14. 82.T/121 |
| 4. 74.T/203 | 10. 76.T/126 | 15. 84.T/305 |
| 5. 84.T/164 | 11. 74.T/23  |              |
| 6. 76. (b)  |              |              |

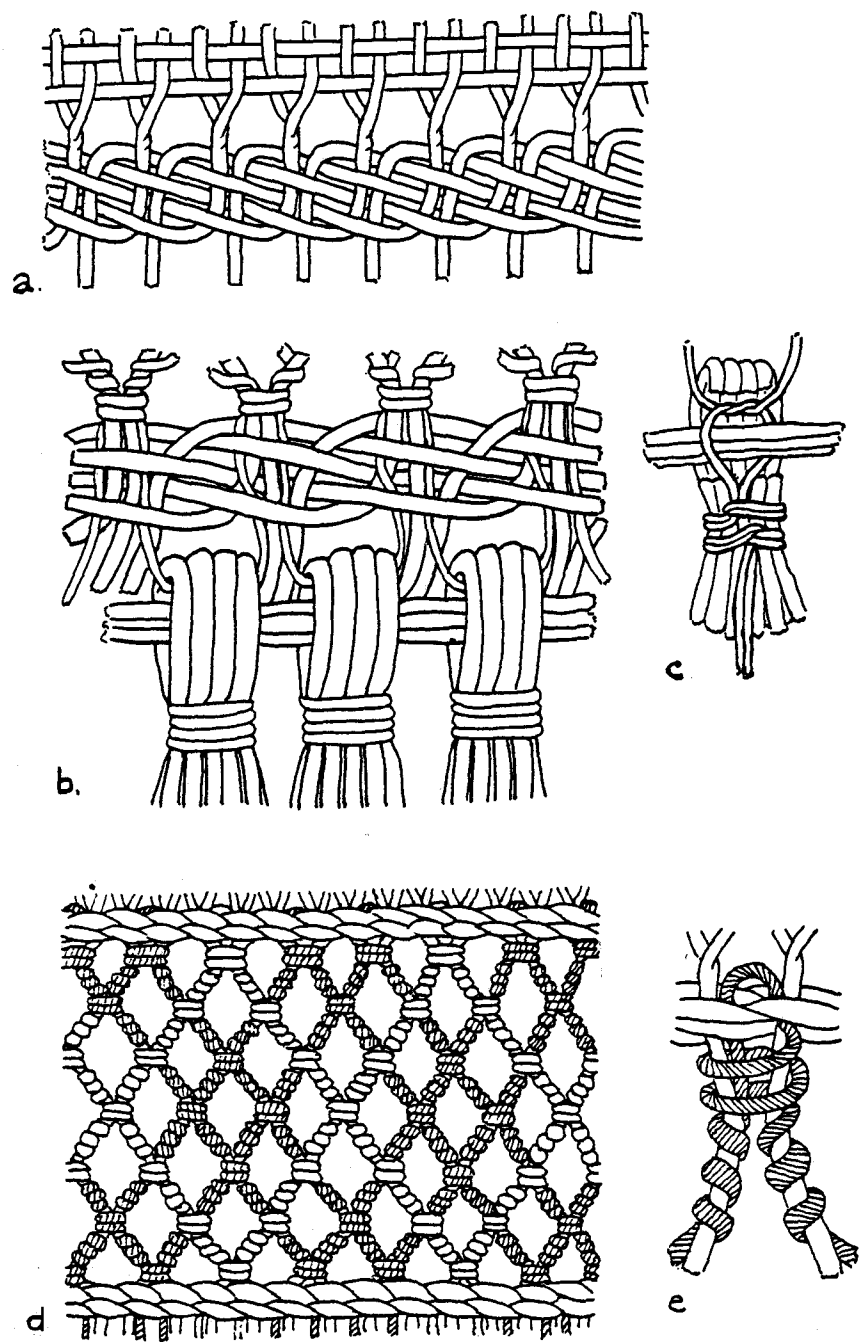


Fig. 2

- (a) Starting braid
- (b) Ending braid with fringe
- (c) Wrapping thread tying fringe tassel
- (d) Border with blue and white wrapping
- (Wrapping thread with return through starting braid)

## A NOTE ON TOKHARIAN AND MEROITIC

Clyde Ahmad WINTERS

There are affinities between Tokharian, the name of the Kushana language, and Meroitic, in the shape of the characters, grammar and vocabulary which may point to these languages being cognate languages. Also both the Tokharians who lived in Central Asia and the Kushites of the Meroitic Sudan were called Kus.

In 1973, Fr. Hintze found comparisons between Meroitic and the Ural Altaic group. Most Meroitic experts rejected this comparison. But the recognition of a relationship between Meroitic and the Ural Altaic group is interesting because there is a certain Ugrian substratum in Tokharian. Moreover(1) there is considerable data which suggest to many Ural Altaic experts that there is a relationship between this group and African languages. Prof. Helmi Poukka of Helsinki University presents a convincing case for the unity between Magyar and Egyptian(2). In addition, Rev Zoltan Szabo, of the United States, has presented linguistic evidence linking Magyar with the Manding and Bantu Languages(3).

In recent years considerable progress has been done in relation to Meroitic grammar by I. Hoffman (4), and Fr. Hintze (5). This material makes it possible for the first time to compare Meroitic grammatical points with other languages, based on lexical phonological and grammatical criteria as proposed by Hintze in his Meroitische Grammatik.

Hintze and Hoffman, has provided us with a discussion of the suffixes and prefixes of Meroitic. There is agreement between Meroitic and Tokharian in certain suffixes and prefixes. Below is a list of these similarities, the Tokharian terms are taken from A.J. van Windekens, Le Tokharien confronté avec les autres langues Indo-Européennes.

### Meroitic

### Tokharian

#### Prefixes

p

p-s

y

p, pa-, imperfect prefix  
yopsa, 'in, between'  
y, element joined to i, e.

#### Suffixes

(y)i

-i, used to form nouns

<u>ke</u>	- <u>k</u> , k(e) reinforcement of pronouns & adverbs
<u>te</u>	- <u>te</u> , demonstrative: this, that
<u>ke-s</u>	- <u>ksa</u> , affix used to form indefinite article
<u>te-s</u>	- <u>ts</u> , affix of plural; tsa, ttse, 'of'

#### Meroitic

#### Suffixes

#### Tokharian

<u>-o</u>	<u>-o</u> used to change nouns into adjectives
<u>-to</u>	<u>-to</u> , plural fem
<u>-te</u> , locative	<u>-te</u> , locative
<u>-n</u>	<u>-ne</u> , <u>n</u> locative postfix
<u>-w(e,i)</u>	<u>-we</u> , suffix used to form verbs
<u>-l</u>	<u>-l</u>
<u>-li</u>	<u>-äly</u> , diminutive

There is also affinity between a couple of Meroitic (Mer.) words and Tokharian (T.), including Mer. gore 'ruler' and T. oroce 'the grand king'; and T. sah 'race' and Mer. s 'Man'. This s, is interesting because it agrees with the radical sa form, for man, posterity in Black Africa. For example, Agau asau, aso; Oromo asa; Yoruba so 'produce'; Kikongo sa, se; Mana su 'race'; Malinke Bambara si, sey; and Baule yasua.

Bryan G. Haycock (6), speculated that wide may mean 'youth'. The term wide for youth is similar to T. wir 'youth'. This use of wide for youth and wir, may indicate affinity because d, l, and r, are all interchangeable letters in Meroitic. Therefore in Meroe 7, where we have gere : b wide, this could be read as follows, 'the ruler(is) young'.

The fact that the Meroitic peoples worshiped Ma'at and Amun, a common god of the ProtoSaharans suggest that languages such as Dravidian and the Manding group may be helpful in translating some of the vocabulary of Meroitic (7). For example after comparing the use of ke, ge in the Manding and Dravidian languages I believe that I may have discovered the proper reading of Mer. ge. The terms ke, ge in the Manding group means 'act, to be, to do, make, pursue' etc. in Dravidian these terms mean 'to do, to be', etc. Given this affinity ge may also mean 'to do, pursue, to be', etc. As a result ge te, probably means 'make this, make that' etc.

My tentative findings indicate that many common phrases found in Meroitic inscriptions may be interpreted by Tokharian words. in EK 32 (reproduced in Kush 8, pl. 29) there is a dead woman holding a small child and the following inscription Sre-tk-li : mte ge-te. I believe

that Sre tk li : mte ge-te, can be interpreted in T. Cert-k liyune mate kate : 'Weep with little moisture, don't make it spread'. I believe that the so called word marker :, is really the T. suffixe -une, which is used to form the abstract noun and substantive verbal forms in Tokharian e.g., papsu 'observe', papsune 'observance'. For example, Mer. ge 'to pursue', geune 'pursuance', etc. Other possible readings of Meroitic words using Tokharian include the following:

Meroitic	Tokharian
<u>ttn</u> <u>tbē</u>	<u>te tn</u> 'to thy' <u>t(e)</u> (that) <u>b</u> (Mer. plural element) <u>ē</u> (here) 'that (are) abundant here'
<u>tr(e)</u> <u>mtelē</u>	<u>te re</u> 'this indeed' <u>ma te le</u> 'much of that indeed'
<u>le</u> <u>nyi</u> <u>mle</u>	<u>re</u> 'indeed' <u>n yi</u> 'I go' <u>mre</u> 'he indeed'

In conclusion, scholars have long been aware of the Indian elements in the culture and religion of the Meroites, such as the influence of the snake and elephant motifs in Meroitic art. Since these same elements appear in Kushana art, whose to say that some of the Meroites were not of Kushana origin.

Philostrates in Vide Appolonius, said that the Gymnosophists of Kush had descended from Bramin who fled India after the death of their king. This story seems to agree with the Chinese documents, that say the Kushana began their Westward migration in 176 BC, after their king was killed in western Kansu by the Huns. How do we know that non of these Kushana migrated to Meroe, given the fact that I. Hoffman makes a strong case in Wege und Möglichkeiten eines Indischen Einflusses auf die Meroitische Kultur, for the importation of Indian elephants by the Meroites, could they also have imported a new script as well?

As mentioned earlier these readings are speculative, until they can be tested by other Meroitic experts. These findings though, should not be totally rejected, because Sir Henry Rawlinson deciphered the cuneiform writing using the Agau and Galla, both Cushitic languages in addition to south Arabic to interpret the inscriptions, of the people (Akkadians & Sumerians) that inhabited West Asia.

This makes it clear that just because Meroitic and Tokharian are separated by great distances, this does not mean that there was not a relationship between the Kushana and Kushites 2000 years ago.

#### Footnotes

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## LES PEINTURES RUPESTRES DU DJEBEL MOYA - SOUDAN

ZOHEIR HASSAN BABIKER

La coutume de peindre les roches n'a pas été attestée au Soudan pendant le Palaéolithique, et son introduction dans ce pays pourrait être associée avec des groupes néolithiques venant du Sahara. Ce déplacement s'est achevé par le fondement de plusieurs campements néolithiques sur les berges du Nil. Mais cet art était connu et pratiqué au Sahara depuis le Palaéolithique Supérieur. Cependant, l'origine des peintures rupestres du Sahara apparaît pour le moment fort obscure; les rapprochements avec l'Egypte ou l'Afrique du Sud sont peu convaincants.

Selon G. Bailloud, ce style d'art était déjà diffusé dans une vaste portion du Sahara avant la diffusion de l'élevage des bovidés (1).

En Nubie Soudanaise O.H. Myers découvrit en 1948 la grande station des chasseurs d'Abka (Ile Cataracte) qui a livré beaucoup de traits culturels du Groupe C de Nubie (2). Selon P. Huard et J. Leclant, la culture de ce groupe semble avoir couvert le Sahara Tchadien (3).

Toutefois, dans la région du Soudan Central, ce style d'art ne semble pas avoir été connu, et c'est seulement dans la région du D. Moya que nous le rencontrerons. Dans cette région, nous avons trouvé deux groupes de peintures rupestres. Le premier groupe concerne les peintures du D. Moya tandis que l'autre groupe concerne une seule représentation d'une girafe trouvée au Djebel Alka à environ 2 km au nord du D. Maya.

Au Djebel Moya, le rocher sur lequel ces peintures figurent n'est pas situé sur le site d'habitat néolithique, mais les figures sont rassemblées sur un rocher de granite isolé au sommet d'une petite éminence à 7 m environ au-dessus de la plaine et à environ 1 km au sud-est du site.

Le panneau fait face au nord et il mesure environ un mètre carré. Il rassemble deux girafes d'un côté et un bovidé, une antilope et les traits d'un éléphant de l'autre côté. Pour les habitants actuels du village du D. Moya ce rocher est connu comme "Hagar Al Zaraf" c'est-à-dire "le rocher des girafes".

En ce qui concerne la patine, on remarque que les girafes sont peintes en rouge violacé linéaire alors que les autres animaux sont peints en chamois sur un fond gris chamoisé foncé.

Par ailleurs, au Djebel Alka, un seul sujet a été représenté. Il s'agit d'une girafe en rouge foncé linéaire mais d'une taille beaucoup plus petite que celles du D. Moya. Le rocher sur lequel figure cette girafe fait partie du petit massif d'Alka. Le panneau mesure à peu près un mètre carré. Mais aucune trace d'habitat n'a été trouvée au Djebel Alka.

Nous avons cherché au D. Moya à reconnaître quel matériel préhistorique pouvait être associé aux peintures que nous avons pu reconnaître. En effet, la correspondance n'est pas aisée à établir, car les peintures du D. Moya et celles du D. Alka ne sont pas associées avec des remplissages et semblent dépourvues de tout matériel archéologique. Cependant, dans l'état actuel des recherches on ne peut que les associer au site néolithique du D. Moya où nous avons des preuves incontestables d'un habitat permanent.

Pour nous, la plaine où se trouve le rocher des peintures du D. Moya semble avoir servi de pâturage aux animaux des D. Moyans. Etant donné la rareté de surface habitable sur le site du D. Moya, les occupants du site auraient été obligés d'exploiter d'autres secteurs pour faire paître leurs animaux. Comme déjà signalé, nous avons des preuves de domestication des bovidés au D. Moya.

Par ailleurs, la présence de pointes de flèches au D. Moya ainsi que la représentation d' animaux sauvages semblent indiquer que les D. Moyans pratiquaient la chasse. Cette activité avait probablement lieu dans les plaines autour du D. Moya et peut-être vers l'est jusqu'aux berges du Nil bleu, où des animaux devaient se rassembler autour de cette source d'eau permanente. Aujourd'hui, les animaux représentés dans les peintures rupestres se trouvent au Parc Naturel de Dinder à environ 60 km à l'est du D. Moya, et nous avons eu l'occasion de les voir. Il semble que ces animaux étaient obligés de quitter la région du D. Moya en raison de l'occupation et du déboisement continuels de cette région.

Comme nous l'avons déjà signalé, les peintures rupestres trouvées au D. Moya et au D. Alka sont les seules de ce genre dans cette région et leur présence associée à un habitat néolithique nous fait penser aux influences et échanges culturels que les D. Moyans auraient pu avoir avec d'autres communautés néolithiques.



Du rapide tour d'horizon auquel nous venons de procéder, il ressort que, malgré la distance importante qui sépare l'Ennedi et le D. Moya, des correspondances plus ou moins étroites peuvent s'observer entre les divers styles picturaux des deux massifs. En effet, à Djoki, à 2 km au nord-est de Fada dans la région d'Ennedi, G. Bailloud a découvert quelques peintures rupestres parmi lesquelles on trouve trois girafes en rouge violacé linéaire qui rappellent celles du D. Moya (4).

La rareté de ce style d'art dans la région du D. Moya montre que cette région avait reçu cette activité de l'extérieur et, dans l'état actuel des choses, tout laisse croire que la région d'Ennedi fut le centre d'où cet art aurait pu gagner le D. Moya. D'autres parallèles sont visibles dans les outils lithiques et la poterie où, dans les deux régions, on rencontre la "wavy line pottery".

Par ailleurs, dans la région de la cataracte de Dal et Sarkamatto, A. Vila et son équipe ont découvert environ 13 stations de gravures rupestres (5). Celles-ci rassemblent peu de sujets, tout en étant assez nombreuses sur les rochers de la plaine de Dal, elles sont isolées sur de larges espaces et jamais très éloignées du Nil. Les sujets les plus fréquemment figurés sont des bovidés, mais on rencontre aussi des éléphants, des girafes et des autruches.

D'autre part, dans la région de Semna-est et celle de Saras, F. Hintze nous signale la présence de peintures rupestres dans 23 sites. Des girafes, autruches, antilopes, gazelles et bovidés ont été représentés (6).

Récemment, A. Vila a découvert dans le Djebel Fau, au sud de Khartoum, une figuration humaine piquetée fin, de grande dimension (1,68 m). Selon J. Leclant, elle rappelle à la fois les peintures des Têtes Rondes par la coiffure et les peintures prédynastiques du Groupe C Nubien par le galbe du corps auquel s'est adjointe une petite queue (7).

Egalement dans la région d'Abka au nord du Soudan, l'expédition scandinave a pu repérer 494 stations de gravures rupestres. Comme dans le site du D. Moya, des girafes, des éléphants et antilopes ont été représentées. Toutefois, contrairement au D. Moya, la technique employée au nord du Soudan était différente. En effet, toutes les représentations ont été gravées ou piquetées et la peinture ne semble pas avoir été utilisée (8).

Comme déjà signalé, les peintures rupestres du D. Moya manquent d'éléments de datation, mais comme nous l'avons déjà montré, leur association avec l'habitat néolithique ne peut pas être écartée. Le fait qu'elles soient les seules dans cette région et qu'elles ne soient séparées du site du D. Moya que par une courte distance à l'intérieur du même massif, sont en faveur de cette idée.

#### notes

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- 2- O.H. Myers, 1949, pp. 375-76.
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- 8- Hellström Pontus, 1970, vol. I, p. 14.

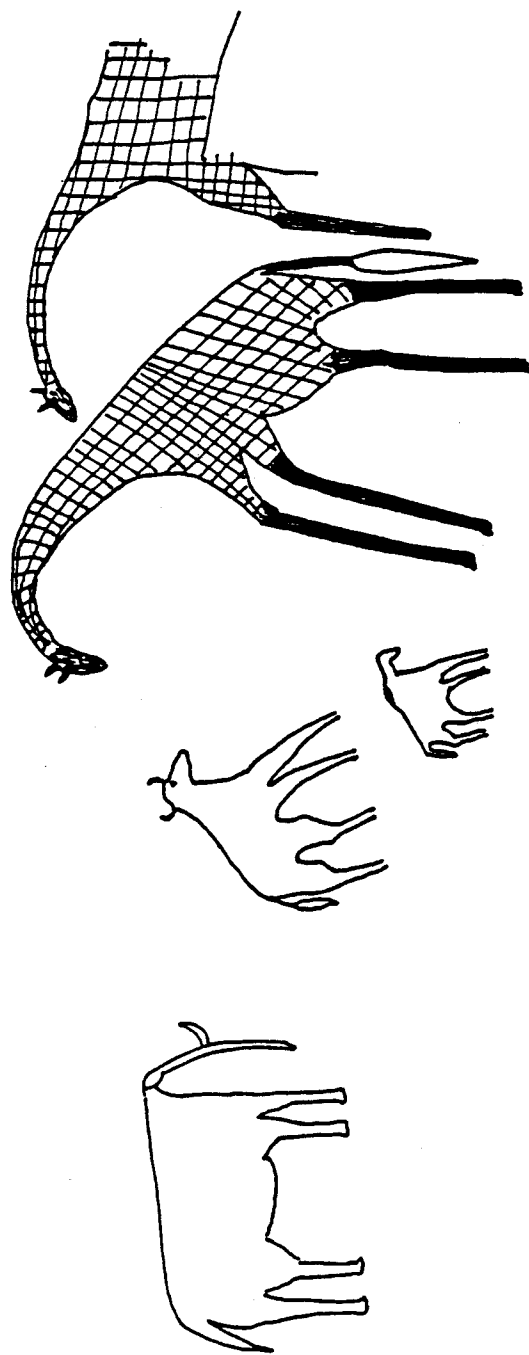


FIG.1. — PEINTURES RUPESTRES DU DJEBEL MOYA  
DIMENSIONS DU PANNEAU 1<sup>m</sup>,10 x 1<sup>m</sup>.

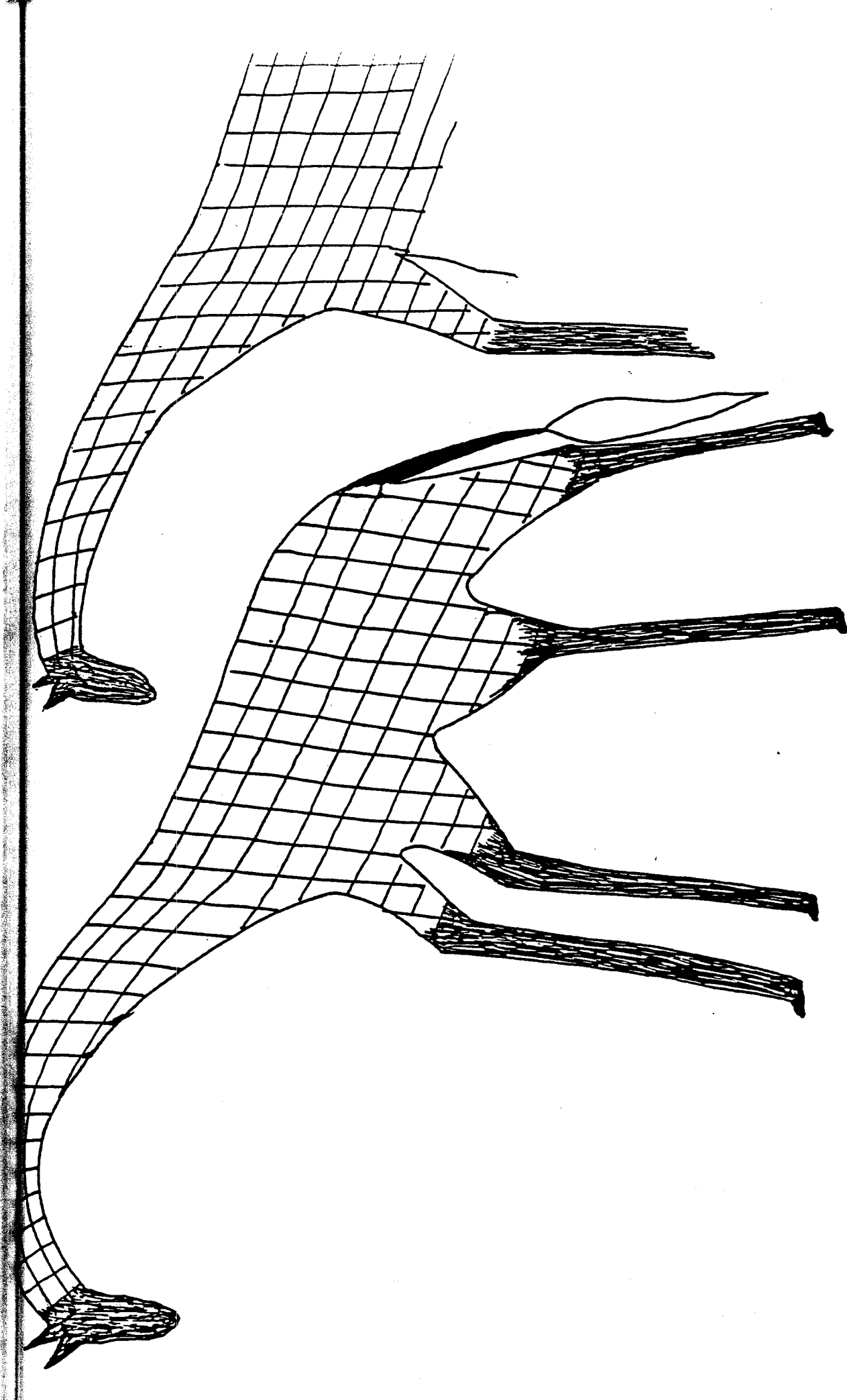


FIG .2. PEINTURES RUPESTRES DU D. MOYA

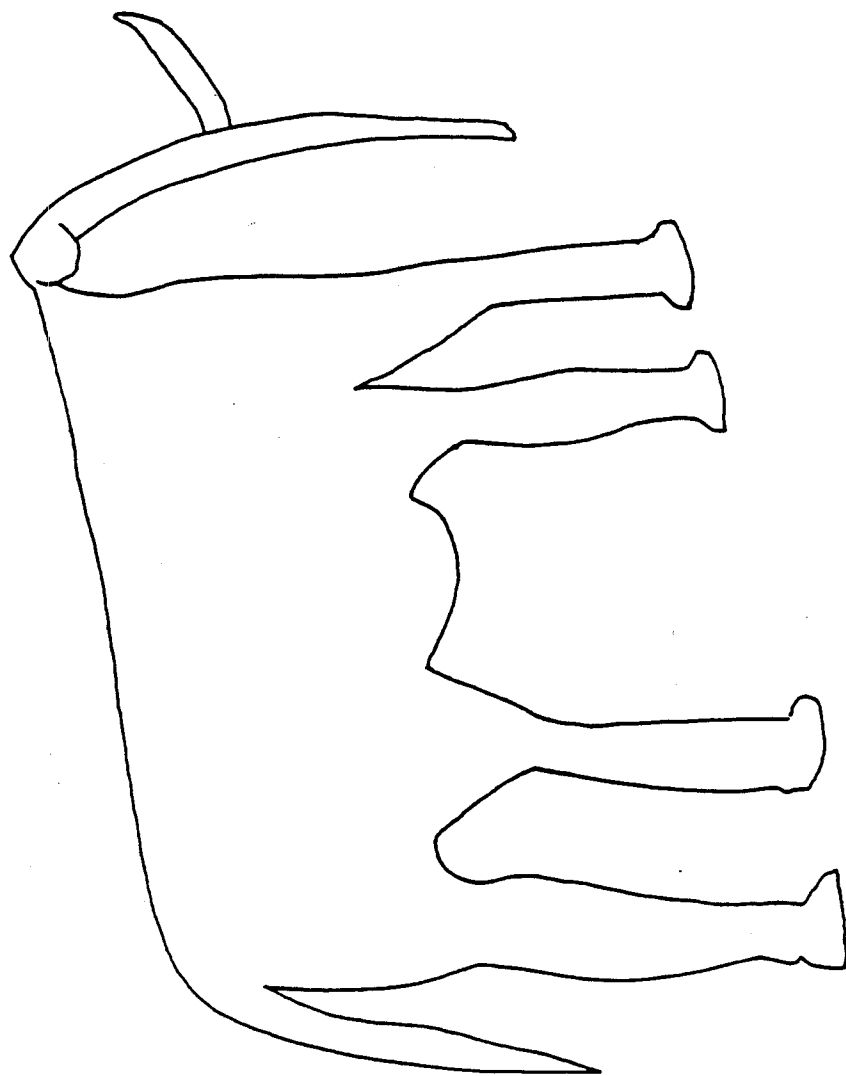
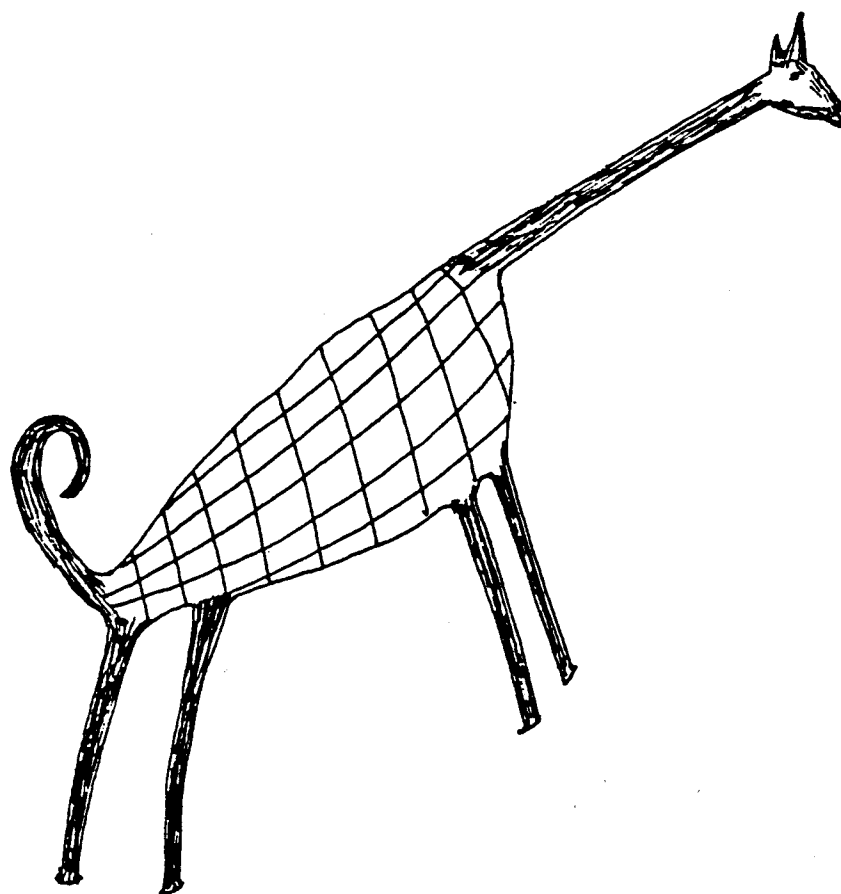


FIG. 3. — PEINTURES RUPESTRES DU D. MOYA  
DIMENSIONS DU PANEAU : 0<sup>m</sup>,45 X 0<sup>m</sup>,38.



4. — PEINTURES RUPESTRES DU DJEBEL ALAKA  
DIMENSIONS DU PANEAU : 1<sup>m</sup>,20 x 0<sup>m</sup>,90 .